

SACAVIN



COURIER

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

Winter 1986/87

No. 14.

The period between Christmas and the New Year invariably brings thoughts of what has occurred in the previous few months and what is to be looked forward to in those to come and so it is for us.

Early and late Autumn in 1986 brought us two memorable Sacavin events, firstly the:--

Visit to Lamberhurst - which took place on Saturday 6th September with almost 30 members and guests participating. A special coach was arranged with some joining it at Lincolns Inn Fields and others at the New Fantail Restaurant in Bromley - thence to Lamberhurst. A visit to a winery is always a special event as the vines are ripening, ready for picking, and so it was at Lamberhurst. A very detailed account of their wine producing processes was followed by a most interesting tour of the vineyards and cellars concluding with a tasting at which one of the wines was so outstanding it was chosen for the following Chapitre Dinner. Then, a return to the New Fantail Restaurant for Dinner concluded this very enjoyable Visit. The Commanderie's gratitude is extended to Senechal Chris Wilkinson and Chef de Voyage Nick Kyriakides, for its organisation.

The second pre-Christmas event celebrated the social highlight of our year, the:--

Chapitre d'Or - held on Monday 17th November in the Ball Room of the Dorchester Hotel. The Chapitre was so named to commemorate the 50th birthday of Senechal Chris Wilkinson and it was, in every way, an event of pure gold! The Grand Commandeur, Col. Hector Mackenzie, conducted the Induction Ceremony, ably supported by the Officers and especially Chef de Protocole, George Wilks, who made sure the oaths were properly sworn, the eulogies were given and the Optime Chorus was properly sung. We were also very delighted by the presence of M. Jean Baumard, the Vice Grand-Maitre, representing, at the Induction, the Confrerie in Angers. The new Chevaliers inducted were:--

Irene Harris - for her great contribution to the Commanderie by her dedicated nursing back to health of our Treasurer, Malcolm!

Poy Kirsch - for adding to 'L' of the Loire wines to the other important 'L' in his life, that of Lloyd's Underwriter!

Anton Mosimann - the most distinguished of Master Chefs extending his interest to the wines of Anjou.

Michael Rawling - Past Master and Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers, setting his sights upon the wines of Anjou!

Robert Wills - most distinguished engineer - head of Group for Bri-Tel - and now getting ahead with the wines of Anjou!

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Because of their distinguished contribution to our Order, the Grand Commandeur also made the following promotions:-

David Rutherford - our former Senechal, for his never failing cooperation in assisting us and especially in hosting so many of our Committee Meetings, became a Commandeur!

Frank Moody - he, too, was made a Commandeur in recognition of his support on all occasions and in acknowledgement of his valuable service as both 1st and 2nd Halberdier!

Marie-Terese Baird - was promoted to Officier in gratitude for the articles upon Plantagenet personalities, histories and customs that she regularly provides for the 'Courier' !

David Burroughs - also became an Officier, in recognition of the sterling way he carries out his duties as 2nd Halberdier!

The Ceremony concluded and the new Commandeurs, Officiers and Chevaliers duly installed, it was time to give full attention to the Dinner. The Ball Room looked even more beautiful than previously. A magnificent meal was set before us - carefully planned by our new Chevalier, Anton Mosimann, - and superb wines to accompany it had been chosen by our Senechal, Chris Wilkinson. Interspersed between the Courses were some very informative comments upon our repast from Chancellor Derek Sheen. The Grand Commandeur greeted the new Inductees and welcomed all to this most auspicious Chapter. New Chevalier Michael Rawling replied on behalf of the newcomers to our ranks.

The evening was more than a Chapter reunion, it was also a birthday celebration. With assistance from Chef des Beaux Arts, Leonard Salzedo, Chef de Protocole, George Wilks, had arranged a special Birthday Song with which he serenaded Chris, the words of which, to the tune of 'Simon the Cellarman', were:-

Our Senechal Christopher

Our Senechal Christopher keeps a fine store of wines of the Loire Vallee
Of Anjou and Touraine, the best wines of France,
For sale to the people of Thame, for sale to the people of Thame.
Of Lavon and Bouvet he never doth fail and there's always Vouvray and Chinon on sale
But, he never aileth he always doth say, while he keeps to a noble good ration each day
But yo ho, ho, his bulk doth show how oft the hanap to his lips doth go.

Dame Hilary too has her own domain from which she dispenses good fare
At Chough Cottage, too, we have tastings in Spring
With unstinted food and good wine; with unstinted food and good wine
Both Cordon Bleu dishes with pastry supreme and majestic helpings of strawberries
and cream

Of the vending of wines, too, she takes a good share,,
To allow the good Christopher office to hear
So yo ho ho, Chevaliers doth know, what debt to both Chris, and his wife we owe!

George was in excellent voice, Leonard accompanied him on the piano and the soprano descant was provided by Chevaliers Laraine Del Buono and Caroline Salzedo.

After Dinner, a new departure for our Chapitres, we had Dancing. This was the inspired idea of Chef de Cuisine Norman Billington who felt that a 50th Anniversary Chapitre should acknowledge popular tunes of fifty years ago. A small dance band played melodies of the 1936 vintage during the evening with an exhibition Fox-Trot - performed by dance champions -- once Dinner was over. This was so well liked that, in no time at all, the dance champions had all but been crowded off the floor so that members and their guests could display their own talents. This was certainly the jolliest Induction and Dinner we have had, as well as being one of the most memorable. The major efforts in giving us such a delightful evening came from Norman, himself, and Chevalier John Brooks, the Dorchester's Banqueting Manager who, with his staff, ensured that everything ran both smoothly and excellently well. The Commanderie's heartiest congratulations are due to Norman and John, and certainly not forgetting

our new Chevalier, Anton Mosimann, for seeing that the Chapitre d'Or was a truly Golden Chapter!

Mention of the promotion of Marie-Terese Baird, our Plantagenet historian, is the opportunity to include her second account of obnoxious French Queens of England, this one being:-

Isabella of France, wife of Edward II (1307-1327) - There is, in a dark corner of a dark cathedral in England, a statue of Isabella, 'the She-Wolf of France' which not only makes her look surprisingly wicked, but also shows an astonishingly wolfish look about the eyes.

All the same, there's no reason not to believe she was quite a nice girl to start with. Sister of Charles IV of France, she was known as 'La Belle' and was destined to become perhaps the most royal of all the queens of England, being the daughter of Philippe-le-Bel and of Jeanne of Navarre, whose blood was, if anything, just a shade more indigo than that of her royal spouse.

To try and understand how 'Isabelle La Belle' turned into 'The She-Wolf of France' it is only fair to relate the story of her arrival in England after her wedding to Edward II in Boulogne on 28th January 1308, a wedding attended by five kings, three queens and a goodly assortment of dukes and princes.

As the ship landed in Dover, an elegant and impetuous youth, our Edward, jumped ashore straight into the arms of another elegant youth. They embraced passionately under the bemused eyes of the young bride and her retinue who were watching the scene from the ship. Isabella had just witnessed the reunion of her husband with his lover, Piers Gaveston. Not a good start. Not an excuse, of course, by maybe a hint of doom for the young queen on her arrival in her new country.

Isabella had brought with her a massive wardrobe: six gowns of green cloth, six of rose-scarlet, six marbled and several more made of gold and silver thread, as well as a mountain of furs. She also owned two bejewelled crowns, several gold and silver cups, twelve great silver dishes and twelve smaller ones, fifty silver porringers and many more trinkets.

A chronicler has recorded that the French guests at the welcoming banquet were disgusted with the food, which, though lavish and plentiful, was 'badly cooked and lukewarm'. Dear old England, already then?

The wines saved the day. They had come from Anjou with the bride and were consumed in enormous quantities. The bridegroom, alas, celebrated his return home by selecting the finest of Isabella's jewels to pin on Piers Gaveston's chest. No chronicler came forward to record what the new Queen thought of that!

The association was a long-standing one. Indeed, Edward's father had been repeatedly bothered by the liaison and had, from time to time, brought it to an end, but never for very long. The old king had married, at the age of 60, Margaret of France, then aged 8, which made her only two years older than her stepson, the future Edward II. They grew up together in great affection and friendliness and Margaret was often asked by Edward to intercede when Piers was in danger. More often than not, she succeeded in influencing the old monarch, except on one occasion when the King, irked by a report that the chronicler of the Abbaye de Meaux had declared that young Edward was 'too much given to sodomy' told the young man to go away and stay away.

The young Edward, we are told, was strong and handsome in body but weak and foolish in character. He was considered altogether too democratic, since his real enjoyment in life lay in working with the labourers and getting his royal hands good and mucky in the fields and the forges. The people didn't like this invasion of their privacy.

As soon as Edward heard of his father's death, his first act was to recall Gaveston from exile and create him Earl of Cornwall, a title traditionally given to a member of the royal family. A vast territory went with the title and it was generally agreed

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that the new king had blundered rather badly and should have given the lot to one of his young step-brothers instead. A chronicler didn't mince his words 'Anon' he wrote 'he had home his lover, Piers Gaveston, and did him great reverence, worshipped him and made him rich and great'.

Well, the people didn't like that either. The Great Baronial Committee decided that the two affectionate youngsters should be transformed into a couple of sober married men. Edward, willing to oblige, gave Gaveston his niece, Margaret of Clare, daughter of his sister, thus putting his big labourer's foot in his mouth again. This exalted marriage, way above Gaveston's station, shocked the nobility even more than the absence of marriage had done.

Then, still clod-hopping about rather stupidly, Edward added insult to injury by appointing the beloved Regent while he himself journeyed to France in quest of Isabella 'La Belle'.

In April 1308, Gaveston was officially charged with having 'disinherited the Crown' by accepting the gift of royal title and lands. He was ordered to forfeit the loot and leave England by June, under the threat of a 'provisional' excommunication by Bishop Winchesley. Gaveston went in and out of exile with astonishing agility and each time he was known to be back in England, quarrels flared up amongst the nobles 'for' and 'against' with the 'against' fast gaining ground. By 1311, it was made clear to Edward that a refusal to exile lover-boy would end in civil war. Gaveston went. Gaveston came back. At the Christmast 1311 court in Windsor, he appeared boldly at the King's side. Edward reinstated him Earl of Cornwall and Bishop Winchesley, in righteous anger, declared him excommunicated.

So what's happening to Isabella meanwhile? Quite a few things. For a start and rather surprisingly, she gave the King four children. Between 1312 and 1321, she produced Edward, John, Eleanor and Joanna. Then, with that little bit of homework done, she gradually changed from the submissive wife who had helplessly endured the humility of seeing her own jewels adorning Gaveston, she turned into a formidable woman, bitterly determined never to endure humiliation again.

A great love and a great hate helped her along the path to revenge. Married to a weak, ineffectual man, she fell in love with a tough and determined man, above all with a truly virile man, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, who accepted and returned her love with cheerful enthusiasm. At the same time, Isabella developed a quite psychotic hatred for Hugh le Despenser, Edward's most valuable adviser who was, in fact, a very gifted and clever administrator. Queen Isabella, bent on his destruction, pursued him right up to the gallows.

The Queen had good friends. Thomas of Lancaster, for one, a worthy lad, who had thrown himself at her feet and sworn that he would not rest until he had separated the King and Gaveston once and for all. He found plenty of followers and the hunt was on. Edward and Gaveston, besieged in Newcastle, fled in secret to Tynemouth, leaving all their goodies behind. By the time Lancaster had caught up with them, they had separated willingly, Gaveston to Scarborough and the King to York. Undaunted the gallant youth directed his forces midway between the two and waited. He didn't have to wait long. Gaveston didn't like Scarborough one bit. He didn't find the accommodation up to his usual 'four star' standard. Besides, he was bored. He gave himself up to Pembroke, Surrey and Percy who had sworn 'on the Host' that they'd abide to the terms of the surrender which included, naturally, the safety of the wretched boy.

Unfortunately for him, Pembroke who was an honest man, had taken for granted that the other two were equally honourable. Having left Gaveston in their charge at his castle in Wallingford, he then felt a somewhat urgent need to spend a night with his wife who was residing a few miles away, at their manor in Brampton.

Early on the morning of June 10, Gaveston was rudely awakened by Warwick who roused him with the friendly words 'Get up, traitor, you are undone'; the, with the consent of Surrey and Percy, he took him to his castle in Warwick where he was thrown in a dungeon and, on June 19th, he was taken to Blacklow Hill and beheaded without further ado.

The King was prostrate with grief and wept bitter tears but didn't fail to notice, all the same, that Gaveston's demise meant the end of civil war. Relations improved between the royal pair. Who knows, maybe she even got her jewels back. The King was never unfriendly towards his consort. After all, had she not given him an heir? A contemporary chronicler wrote succinctly of the King 'He has achieved nothing plausible save that he has married royally and has begotten an heir to the throne'.

The King, bereft of Gaveston, found himself a new hobby. Scotsbaiting. He turned his attention to Scotland where he is said to have 'fought like a lion' against Robert Le Brus and had had to be dragged from the battlefield. Bannockburn, and the Saga of the Bruce do not belong to this little essay. There's just too much of it, isn't there?

Let's see what Isabella was doing. She dined and she wined. She was the only Queen of England of whom a chronicler has written that she 'wondrously enjoys the wines of her native country'. Wondrously indeed!

On the evening of 13th October 1321, Isabella, who was on a pilgrimage to Canterbury (no doubt complete with hip-flask) requested a night's lodging at the royal castle of Leeds, near Maidstone, of which Lord Badlesmere was the governor. Unfortunately, His Lordship was absent at the time and his goodly wife, who knew that her husband was in great disfavour with the King, panicked at the sight of the Queen and refused her admittance. Isabella, in a great fury, ordered her men to force an entry into the castle. Six of her men were killed. Isabella yelled for the King. Thirteen of the garrison were seized and hanged and Lady Badlesmere imprisoned in Dover Castle. Lord Badlesmere, minding his own business elsewhere, was informed that his castle had fallen to the King's troops.

Soon afterwards, Edward and Isabella, together for once, while visiting Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire, heard that Robert the Bruce had yet again set foot in England. The royal couple narrowly escaped capture, Edward by way of Bridlington while Isabella took ship at Tynemouth.

In 1322, Charles IV, brother of Isabella, became King of France and promptly reminded his English brother-in-law that he was expected to go and make homage for his possessions in France. The invitation was ignored. In the Autumn, Charles penned a reminder 'Dear Sir, unless ...'. Unless you want your lands sequestered, come and kiss my feet pronto. Endless squabbling followed. The Pope, John XXII interfered, as they always did.

Isabella, wide awake to the opportunities the situation offered, managed to persuade both the King and the Pope that she should go to France as her husband's ambassador. She departed in March 1325 and, quite soon, had cajoled the French King into giving her a little present, namely Gascony and Ponthieu, which he had absentmindedly confiscated. In view of this, Edward now declared himself willing to go and 'pay homage' but was dissuaded from doing so by Hugh le Despenser. Little did Hugh know that he was playing right into the hands of his mortal enemy, the Queen. She immediately suggested that, since Edward had changed his mind, he should send his son, Edward, then aged 13, in his place. The King, who was a bit stupid, as we know, agreed and Hugh le Despenser, very surprisingly, fell into the trap. The young prince was despatched to join his mother. On 21st September 1325, he did homage to Charles IV in Vincennes. Presently, who should join the happy little party but Roger Mortimer, the Queen's lover. Surprise, surprise. At the French court, the pair lived 'in open adultery'. The King summoned his erring wife back. She ignored him. A petition, carefully worded and signed by the bishops, urged her to return. She refused. Her estates in England were sequestered and the bishop of Hereford declared in Parliament that, should Isabella now return to England, she would no doubt 'suffer death at her husband's hand' but whether for treachery or adultery wasn't specified.

Before long, Isabella's brother, Charles of France, became rather embarrassed by her open adultery and suggested she took herself elsewhere. Isabella took herself and her retinue, plus her son and her lover, to the Court of Count William II of

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Isabella promptly offered her son in marriage to his daughter Philippa. People in royal circles did that sort of thing, rather like we bring a bunch of flowers or a box of chocolates to our hostess. Furthermore, she dropped rather heavy hints that she wouldn't be adverse to putting the young couple on the throne of England in lieu of the present King, her husband. But then, of course, she'd need a little help, wouldn't she? ... in organizing an invasion of England. A piquant situation where the Queen of England plots to invade her own country.

On 23rd September Isabella, wearing a suit of armour over her crimson robes, sailed for England with her 'army' and landed in Suffolk where she is said to have 'found favour with all'. Panic in London. Edward offered a reward of £1000 for Mortimer's head. Isabella countered by offering £2000 for the head of the King. Archbishop Reynolds went about waving a Papal Bull condemning the invaders. The Queen calmly marched on London. The King retreated to the west country. The gates to the city of London were flung open to Isabella. Bishop Stapleton who had been heard to say naughty things about the Queen, was decapitated with a blunt butcher's knife and his head presented to Isabella who received it graciously.

Isabella marched on Bristol. The King fled to Chepstow and then took ship to Ireland but adverse winds drove him back to Cardiff. He went into hiding in Glamorgan, was captured in the Abbey of Neath and, on November 16th, was formally deposed by the Estates of Parliament. Clad all in black, he tearfully agreed to abdicate in favour of his son. He was then imprisoned in Berkeley Castle. The She-Wolf of France then set to despatching her old enemies, starting, of course, with Hugh le Despenser. Under the gleeful eye of Isabella, he first had his 'bits and pieces' chopped off, then he was crowned with nettles, hanged, taken down before he was dead, and finally disembowelled.

She then turned her attentions to the King. It was arranged that his cell should be, at regular intervals, bombarded with the rotting corpses of animals. It was hoped that the stench would either drive him insane or infect him with pestilence. It didn't work. Edward II's assassination was so odious that one hesitates to relate it, but here it is in the words of Grafton's Chronicle:-

'He, being in sound sleep, persons came privily into his chamber, laid a great table upon his belly and with the strength of men at all four corners, pressed it down his belly. The King awoke and being sore afraid of death, turned his body. The murderers took a horn and thrust it into his fundament as far as they might, then they took a hot burning spit and put it through the horn into his body, thus killing him'.

It has been said that the reason for this particularly horrendous form of torture, apart from the only too obvious one, was that the dead King could then be dressed and shown to the public without bearing any visible sign of his death having been anything but natural.

Isabella was avenged. Not being a Plantagenet, she wasn't even bothered by any kind of remorse. Edward's heart was sent to her in a silver casket. Soon after the King's funeral, pilgrims started traipsing to the tomb of the 'Saint and Martyr'. Edward was never a saintly man. One can only assume that he gained the posthumous name of 'Edward the Martyr' because all his staunchest supporters had always been the bishops.

The new King, Edward III, now turned against his mother - the ungrateful wretch. He imprisoned Mortimer. Isabella's pretty plea 'Bel fitz, ayez pitie du gentil Mortimer' got her nowhere at all. Mortimer had the doubtful honour of being the first traitor to be hanged at Tyburn.

Isabella lived another 28 years. Her wish to be buried with Mortimer was, surprisingly, granted; but she also asked for her husband's heart, in its silver casket, to be laid upon her heart. And that, I think, is taking a macabre menage a trois a bit far!

1987 Subscription - The New Year is the time for good resolutions and, also, for the not-so-good prospect of many accounts needing to be settled! This is true

for our Active Members as for everyone else. This year's subscription is payable from 1st January. Members who do not pay by Banker's Order are very kindly requested to send their subscriptions (cheques made payable to 'Sacavin') as soon as possible to the Treasurer, Mr M B Harris, Harris, Kafton & Company, 28 Bolton Street, London W1Y 8HB. The rate remains unchanged at £5 per annum per member, £7.50 'spouse' rate (i.e. if both members). Members who do not pay by Banker's Order but would like to start can obtain the necessary form from the secretary (address at end of 'Courier').

The Programme Outline for 1987 offers an activity for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, events planned being:-

Annual General Meeting and Seminar - This year's AGM is on Monday 2nd March in the Orchid and Holford Rooms of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London W1, commencing at 6 p.m. Following our practice of the last few years, a Seminar is being held in conjunction with the AGM. Its programme will be a variant on the style we have had previously, and is being organised by Commandeur John Braun, one of the Founders of the Commanderie, here in Britain, and a former Officer of many years standing, and our Chef des Beaux Arts, Commandeur Leonard Salzedo. Taking 'Sound' as their theme, their Seminar is on "Wine to the Mouth, Music to the Ear" - a Composer and a Poet present an unusual blend of the senses - hearing and taste. Included will be a Tasting of six wines conducted by John Braun. The couplets for the oaths sworn by the new Inductees were written by John Braun (our Poet) whilst the music for the Fanfares for our Induction Ceremonies have been specially composed by Leonard Salzedo. We can therefore be sure this Seminar will be something completely different and entertaining as well as informative.

The AGM, itself, will be followed by the Vin d'Honneur and the AGM Dinner which, for this year, Chef de Cuisine Norman Billington has chosen a French menu. The Agenda for the AGM and Annual Report for 1986 are enclosed with this issue of the 'Courier' together with the Programme for the Seminar and AGM events and the Application Form to participate.

Visit to Goodwood House - A Dinner at Goodwood House is being planned as our Summer Event. It will be on a Saturday in June - most likely 13th June - but, if this is not possible, a date near to this will be confirmed. The present plan is to arrange overnight accommodation at a hotel in Chichester for members and their guests who would like to make a weekend of it. Coach transport will be arranged to and from Goodwood House. Final details, Application Form, etc., will be sent to all Active Members by end of March/beginning of April but, meanwhile, members could, perhaps, mark off the date(s) in their diaries if they are interested in joining in.

Visit to Anjou - Our Autumn Event will be our now almost traditional biennial Visit to Anjou. This is being planned for a little longer than usual and, although arrangements are still provisional and depend upon the Confrerie finally confirming that their Autumn Chapitre in Angers will be as it usually is, the last Saturday in September (i.e. 26th September 1987), expected dates are from Monday 21st to Sunday 27th September. If possible, the new hotel in Angers sponsored by C.I.V.A.S. 'La Godeline' will be the base for the Visit. Final details, Application Form, etc., will also be distributed to all Active Members end of March/beginning of April but those interested in taking part might like to note this, too, in their diaries.

1987 Chapitre - This year's Induction Ceremony and Dinner will be on Monday 9th November with the Ball Room of the Dorchester Hotel again the venue. Chef de Cuisine Norman Billington promises us a really Rabelaisian evening so please mark off this date in your diaries immediately! OPTIME!!

Address for secretary - Mrs Pat Salzedo, 363 Bideford Green, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 7TX - phone: 0525 371126.
