

SACAVIN



COURIER

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

No. 22

Winter 1990/91

With frosts still occurring early morning and late evening and some bitter winds, there is still a feeling of winter which, perhaps, is some excuse for this issue not making its appearance until spring is underway. The year, though, seems to pass more and more speedily as we take on more and more activities, the first of which, as autumn approached, was:-

THE CHAMPAGNE EVENING, held on Monday 3rd September as our glorious summer was drawing to a close. Organised by Roy Clements, then the First Halberdier, part of the interest was the unusual venue - the Headquarters of the SAAB Company in Piccadilly, - and all of the enjoyment was in the splendid Champagne Tasting conducted by Barry Worth of Laurent Perrier UK, also unusual in that, for Sacavin, we were turning our attention to wines other than those from the Loire. The number of members and their guests attending proved that chevaliers are not limited in their appreciation of good wine to those of Anjou and Saumur. Almost 80 representing Sacavin were present. For the benefit of the SAAB guests, Chef de Protocole George Wilks - duly robed and with his staff of office - described the background to our Order and the formalities of our Ceremonies. Barry Worth, a Director of Laurent Perrier UK, then presented a tutored tasting so that participants could sample:-

Laurent Perrier Brut NV

Laurent Perrier Rose Brut NV

Laurent Perrier LP Vintage 85

Laurent Perrier Ultra Brut

Laurent Perrier Grand Siecle

Very mellowed by the exceptional opportunity to learn from an expert the qualities of such a fine array of champagnes, a fork buffet accompanied by Laurent Perrier's Blanc de Blanc de Chardonnay completed a very convivial evening. The Commanderie's gratitude has already been expressed to Roy and to the UK's SAAB Management for their generous hospitality.

September is also the month when thoughts turn to the forthcoming vendanges, making it logical that our French colleagues hold their Chapitre des Vendanges towards the end of the month. The last Saturday is the usual time and there were several British Sacavin members present on Saturday 29th September at Greniers St Jean in Angers. At the Vin d'Honneur - Coteaux du Layon-Faye d'Anjou a.o.c. Chateau Montbenault 1975 was served - they were able to meet the new Grand Maitre, M. Pierre Gate, Senechal Derek Sheen, in his robes, represented the Commanderie at the Induction Ceremony. This was followed by a superb Dinner accompanied by the famous wines of our region.

Although there was a British representation, obviously very few of our members could be present and, as they are probably interested, the food enjoyed began with 'Saumon sauvage braise au vin de Loire et son beurre blanc', followed

by 'Mitonee de Veau a l'Angevine' then 'Cocktail de salades du marche et ses chevres frais' whilst the wine imbibed at appropriate intervals was Savennieres a.o.c. Domaine du Closel 1989; Anjou a.o.c. Rouge 1982; Saumur a.o.c. Brut, cuvee Saphir; Rose de Loire a.o.c., Domaine des Closserons 1989; Saumur a.o.c. Rouge 1989, cuvee des Hauts de Caterne; with Cointreau or Eau de Vie de Poire William served with the coffee.

Anjou and the Loire are the Plantagenet links that unite the Confrerie and the Commanderie. The first Angevin to rule England was Henry II whose qualities were made famous in the film 'The Lion in Winter'. Qualities that are tradition for Sacavin were displayed by the illustrious dynasty he founded, as observed in:-

NOTES ON PLANTAGENET KINGS AFTER HENRY II

Henry II's successor, known as Lion-Heart, was a true Plantagenet - bold and tempestuous, and yet at heart a poet.

He was followed by John, nicknamed Lackland, who had a genius for doing the wrong thing.

Henry III was perhaps the greatest patron of all the arts. He had around him more craftsmen and artists of every kind than did any English king after him.

Perhaps the most outstanding of the line, and one of the greatest Englishmen ever, was Edward I. An outstanding warrior, a superb administrator and a great European peacemaker, he laid the foundation of the British reputation for justice.

His successor, Edward II, was the first English king to take a personal interest in the theatre.

Edward III's reign started with a flowering of architecture and a burst of trading. Regretfully, there was war with Scotland but Edward was full of Plantagenet chivalry, even to the extent of losing an advantage in favour of fair play; (he may have been the inventor of that great English quality - much admired by foreigners). When he was in command of the English troops at the age of fifteen, the Scots invaded England. As his front lay on the River Wear, he offered to retire so that the Scots might have a proper foothold and room to fight!

The most maligned of the branch must surely be Richard II. He was in the highest degree the type of the whole House of Plantagenet. He was highly intelligent, supremely cultured and much ahead of his time. He perceived in a world gone mad with warfare that the one overwhelming necessity was peace. He encouraged all the arts and loved exquisite costumes and furnishings. With a taste and palate as cultured as his pursuits, he would have made a true Sacavin! If, for no other reason, he should go down in history as the inventor of the handkerchief!

The usurper, Henry IV, was the least typical of the Plantagenets. True, he had the energy and the courage, but he lacked the fire.

Henry V, who reigned for nine years only, has a particular significance for the Sacavins. He was a lover of music and no mean composer himself. Under his patronage, a song school was founded in Durham.

The reign of Henry VI saw a burst of church and university building. All Souls College at Oxford was begun, Eton and Cambridge left the drawing board and in France, now under English rule - roles had reversed - new universities were founded at Caen and Poitiers. Composers flourished, English sculpture blossomed and literature boomed. In his reign began the Wars of the Roses - a tragedy which would have been averted had Henry kept his wife Margaret of Anjou occupied with more homely tasks! Instead she espoused the cause of the House of Lancaster against York to the bitter end.

Although the first half of Edward IV's reign has little to add to the Plantagenet lustre, the period from his restoration to his death was brilliant. He patronised the new craft of printing, brought in by Caxton, and spent a great deal on the transcription of books in manuscript. He favoured history. It was also in his

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reign that a postal system was established. In music and architecture, too, great strides were made. It has been said that: "As the last unquestioned King of England, he saved his country from disintegration, and in setting the keystone of Plantagenet, laid the foundation of a new world!".

The last of the Plantagenet line is Richard III. He has had a mixed press but think of him as you will - the murderer of the Princes in the Tower or the firm suppressor of rebellion - it cannot be denied that, within his short two-year reign, the laws of England were for the first time written entirely in English.

From looking back on history we turn to a present with links with history in Sacavin's own:-

WEDDING OF THE YEAR, when Lucilla, the daughter of our late Grand Commandeur, Col. Hector Mackenzie, and his wife, our Officier Daphne, became the bride, on October 27th, of Sir Iain Noble. The wedding was held in the Cathedral Church of St Ninian in Perth with Lucilla given away by her brother, Capt. Roderick Mackenzie. Her younger brother Christopher, also a Chevalier, was Chief Usher. The ceremony was conducted by the Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, the Right Rev. George Sessford and the joyousness of the occasion must have been mingled with sadness, just for a few moments, with memories, too, of the funeral services which the Bishop had conducted for Hector Mackenzie and Capt. James Mackenzie, the son of Hector and Daphne and Lucilla's eldest brother, who had died so tragically young.

Lucilla was radiantly beautiful in a dress of ivory silk, a tiara of diamonds, a family heirloom, on her head. The bridesmaids had Mackenzie tartan sashes round their ivory silk dresses and Mackenzie ribbons tied their bouquets. The bridegroom, Sir Iain Noble was resplendent in Highland dress.

After the nuptials, a reception for several hundred guests was held in the Palace of Scone with the happy couple then leaving for their honeymoon in India - carrying with them heartfelt wishes for a long and happy life together from their families and many friends, not least of whom must be counted all the members of the Commanderie.

Recently, Lucilla wrote to the Grand Commandeur, Chris Wilkinson, to say how happy she was and enjoying a life that now requires her commuting between Edinburgh and Skye.

Our last event in 1990 was held on Monday 5th November, another date with overtones of history, remembered as the assassination attempt upon James I of England who was also, of course, James VI of Scotland. James, England's first Stuart king, was a great patron of the arts. Shakespeare was the playwright for his theatrical company, Inigo Jones the architect and designer commissioned to build the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall for him - so it was not unfitting that the Induction Ceremony and Dinner was the:

CHAPITRE DES ARTS, held at the Arts Club in Dover Street, London W1. The venue proved to be one of the most elegant for an Induction Ceremony and Dinner in our whole history. An old town house with objets d'art, furniture and pictures in beautifully proportioned rooms, giving truth to the name 'The Arts Club'.

The Commanderie's Officers carried out the duties involved in the Induction Ceremony with their usual aplomb and efficiency and our four new Chevaliers must be assured that they are truly Chevaliers du Sacavin. Our new names in the Golden Book are:-

Audrey Thompson - unique in that her hobby is maintaining a herd of limousin and charolais cattle

Panos Nathanail - a doctor in dental surgery

Terry Hatton - using his retirement to broaden his appreciation of Loire wines, and

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Vincent Porter - Professor of Communications at the Polytechnic of Central London.

A splendid quartet added to our list of Chevaliers.

The dinner following the ceremony was served in a fine, spacious, pillared dining room. Each course was accompanied by a magnificent Loire wine chosen by our Chancellor, Frank Coe. Frank, in the course of the meal, in his own inimitable way, entertained the guests with short descriptions of the wines served, which were Saumur Brut Prestige for the Vin d'Honneur, then Saumur Champigny Vieilles Vignes 1987, Pouilly Fume Les Loges 1989, Chaume Chatea de la Roulerie Cuvee Maregaux 1989 and concluding with Cointreau with the coffee.

Our Grand Commandeur, Chris Wilkinson, extended a welcome to all, especially to our new Inductees. We were all very pleased that Daphne Mackenzie was able to attend, especially as she was escorted by her two sons, Roderick and Christopher, both proudly resplendent in their Mackenzie tartan trews. We are very pleased that our connection with our late, beloved Hector is going to be continued and strengthened.

For the guests, Professor Vincent Porter replied to the Grand Commandeur's welcome in a speech with humour and philosophy. A reply worthy of a professor of communications.

By general acclaim, - officers, chevaliers and guests, the evening was declared one of the most successful we have had for a long time. Our thanks are due to the staff of the Arts Club, to the officers of the Order, especially our Chef de Cuisine, Malcolm Harris and our Chancellor, Frank Coe.

1991 began sombrely, clouded with the prospect of war, but, as the poet said "If winter comes, can spring be far behind" and the AGM, held two days before the Spring Solstice, justified the optimism of better weather leading to happy days. Almost 70 had booked to come to the Savile Club Brook Street, London W1 on Tuesday 19th March and it was encouraging that so many attended the Annual General Meeting which began the evening's proceedings. The Minutes, giving full details, are enclosed with this 'Courier'. The business part of the evening concluded, members and their guests then enjoyed the Vin d'Honneur of Saumur Brut, Prestige, followed by a truly splendid dinner in the beautiful restaurant of the Savile Club, delicately decorated in pale blue and silver. The Guest of Honour at the dinner was one of the three Founding Members - John Braun, OBE - and all present joined the Grand Commandeur to drink a toast to him and his wife, Pat, who is also a chevalier, in recognition of his great service to the Commanderie. It was not only the meal that was superb. Chancellor Frank Coe again entertained and instructed with his comments upon the Muscadet de Sevre et Maine sur Lie 1989, Chateau de la Janniere and Chinon 1987 Couly-Dutheil, Les Gravieres d'Amador Abbe de Turpenny he had chosen to accompany the courses.

During the AGM, Chef de Cuisine Malcolm Harris had confirmed that, after this year, he would be seeking London Clubs rather than hotels as venues for Sacavin social occasions. It was agreed their ambience was much more sympathetic to Sacavin ideals with the additional benefit of enabling members and their guests to visit beautiful or unusual premises they might not otherwise have the opportunity of seeing.

FURTHER EVENTS FOR 1990

JUNE - This year's Summer Wine Tasting and Luncheon is a repeat of last year's very enjoyable event at Highfield, Little Cambridge, Dunmow, Essex, the home of Chancellor Frank Coe and his wife Pat. Whilst everything may not be exactly the same - the weather for example may not be able to repeat last year's gloriously hot day but a marquee has been ordered as a precaution - but with Frank arranging the tasting and choosing the wines and food preparation supervised by last year's wonderful team - Pat Coe, Gaynor Hatton and Brenda Collins - a very good day can be assured. The Booking Form for this event on 15th June is enclosed.

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LATE SUMMER - Senechal Derek Sheen is looking into the possibility of arranging a Wine Tasting at the vineyard on Ranmore Common, nr Dorking with lunch afterwards at Burford Bridge. If this proves possible it will take place towards the end of the summer. A Booking Form will be sent to members.

BIENNIAL VISIT TO FRANCE - an 'odd' year is also the traditional time for the Commanderie Visit to France. This year we are going further afield with a tour of the Alsace region. Provisional plans are for the Sacavin Party to leave from London Heathrow for Strasbourg on Thursday, 26th September, returning on Tuesday 1st October. Hotel accommodation for five nights is being arranged with exactly where still to be decided. Chef de Voyage Nick Kyriakides is looking after hotel/travel arrangements with Senechal Derek Sheen helping to organise the visits. Booking Forms are being prepared and will be circulated as soon as ready.

AUTUMN INDUCTION CEREMONY AND DINNER - this will be on Monday 4th November at the Hotel InterContinental, Park Lane, London W1. Because of the excellent dinner provided by the Hotel InterContinental for the 1990 AGM, it was decided they be given the opportunity to be the host venue for this year's Chapitre.

OBITUARY

It is with sadness we report the death of Mr F 'Ferdie' Gutkind who died suddenly on 19th January 1991.

Mr Gutkind was a long standing member of the Commanderie, having been inducted at one of the Rallye Aerienne held in conjunction with the Confrerie Chapitre in France. He was a frequent attendee of Sacavin events, the last occasion being the 1989 AGM when he joined in the discussions with members of the Wine Tasting Panel held then.

We extend our sincerest condolences to his widow, Honor, and her family upon their sad bereavement. Mrs Gutkind is also a chevalier and she assures us she will be remaining in active membership.

WEDDING BELLS

A Sacavin romance was not confined to last year. Another Sacavin wedding took place on 3rd April 1991 with the marriage of one of our newest Chevaliers - Terry Hatton - to Gaynor, the widow of our late Chevalier, John Ford.

Those of us who attended the 1985 Summer Wine Tasting and Lunch held at Park Farm, St Osyth, will recall the superb event organised for us by John and Gaynor Ford.

This is a very special wedding for Sacavin for Terry and Gaynor met through the Commanderie's social events, being introduced by their mutual friends, Frank and Pat Coe.

All those attending the AGM signed a celebratory Wedding Congratulations card, specially designed and produced by George Wilks, and with the signatures went the Commanderie's very good wishes to Terry and Gaynor for a very happy married life.

1991 SUBSCRIPTION

After all the interesting and joyful news, we are, as is often the case, brought down to earth with the mundane. The subscriptions of Active Members for 1991 became due on 1st January. Although almost 80 members have renewed, there are just one or two who may have inadvertently overlooked doing so. Should you be among these perhaps you would very kindly send a remittance (cheques payable to 'Sacavin') - £7.50 for a member £10 'spouse' rate to the Treasurer, David Burroughs, Old Bucks Head, Hammerpond Road, Plummers Plain, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6PF. Many thanks in advance.

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