



Sacavin Courier



NO. 46 DECEMBER 2004

Dates for your diaries, (below)

Summer lunch at Creek Cottage, (page 2)

The British Commanderie, (page 4)

The Sacavin Centenary, (page 5)

A note on forthcoming events, (page 9)

Obituaries, (page 10)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 19 January 2005** at
The Kings Arms Buckingham Palace Road at 11 am



AGM and supper at The Queens Club **Saturday 12 March 2005**
Calling letters will be posted late January



Summer weekend in Wiltshire **Weekend of 18/19 June 2005**



With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year from the Management Committee.



Summer Lunch at Creek Cottage

It seems hardly possible that the Sacavin visit to Wivenhoe was as long as 4 years ago. Time flies, as they say, when you're having fun. Chevaliers have pleasant memories of a happy weekend there and so it was not surprising that another opportunity to visit rural Essex was grasped with enthusiasm. We are grateful once again to Chevalier Shirley Zangwill for acting as the Courier's reporter. This is her account.

It was a fine, if chilly, July day when we set off to enjoy the delights of the Sacavin's Summer Luncheon Party, at Creek Cottage. Thorington, the home of Chevalier Des Holland and his delightful wife Sue. It was an easy drive, through the pleasant East Anglian countryside to All Saints Church, Brightlingsea, where we were entertained to coffee and biscuits, in the friendly way we have come to expect of the Sacavin hosts.

The Chevaliers were invited to climb the bell tower, and lo! a few intrepid souls rose to the challenge of this steep and narrow ascent to view the surrounding countryside. I hereby nominate Déléguée-Generale Fay Landau as Sacavin Tower Climber of the Year!

We were very, very pleased to see our retired Chef d'Historiographie, Chancelier and Chef de Protocole, George Wilks, arrive looking very cheerful if a little frail. I am sure he much enjoyed talking to all his old friends. I was much impressed with his spirited rendering of "Optimé, optimé" and we were all disappointed that George was unable to join us for lunch.

Mr. Colin Campbell also known as "Badger" because he played the part so well in a local production of *Wind in the Willows*, gave a splendid talk on the history of All Saints Church first built around 1250. In particular, the "Tiles of Tragedy" a unique frieze of memorial tiles. In 1884 the Reverend Arthur Pertwee proposed the memorial to "local people lost at sea and hence having no name inscribed on no tombstone nor recorded in any Burial Register".

The tiles tell stories of people, of all ages, lost at sea under all circumstances. It was indeed a very solemn and touching moment and well worth the visit for that experience alone. Badger then went on to describe a little of the history of Brightlingsea, which has a strong connexion with the Cinque Ports and is a non corporate member of Sandwich. Each year there is an election in Brightlingsea for the Deputy to the Mayor of Sandwich, known as "The Deputy". The election is known as "Choosing Day". This traditional ceremony can be traced back to 1559. At this ceremony, in addition to the election of The Deputy, six citizens are chosen to be Deputy's Assistants who attend with him at city functions. It is possible to be elected a freeman of

Brightlingsea if you fulfil certain conditions. You must be Brightlingsea born, or marry a Brightlingsea woman or reside in the parish of Brightlingsea for at least a year and a day. Then on paying 11 pennies (the first two conditions are free) and repeating certain quaint and historic oaths of allegiance, one is duly admitted to be a Freeman.

After this fascinating history we repaired to Creek Cottage for pre-luncheon drinks. The weather was not kind to us but it did nothing to dampen the usual Sacavin conviviality. We all enjoyed aperitifs of Codorniu rosé Brut, (pinot noir), and Codorniu Cuvée Raventos, (predominantly Chardonnay), in the garden, around the pool and in the Summer House. The garden, house and views were much admired by one and all. After a while we repaired to the gazebo for lunch. The first course was a platter of local fish, and very good it was too, a selection of cockles, prawns, shrimps, salmon, mackerel and many more, with which we enjoyed a selection of Musadet 2001 (melon de Bourgogne), Quincy 2002 Gerard Bigonneau (Sauvignon Blanc) and Quincy 2003 Domaine Martin (Sauvignon Blanc). The next course was the pièce de résistance - the Hog Roast. What can one say, except that it was perfection? Three cheers for Owen's son-in-law Robert and his colleague Russell. They must have spent many hours slaving over a hot hog to produce such perfection. The local new potatoes and the assorted salads made superb accompaniments. With this fine food we drank an excellent Bourgueil 2002 (Cabernet Franc) This most wonderful course was followed by a selection of super cheeses, with which we enjoyed a

Santa Rita Rosa 2003 Maipo Valley Chile (Cabernet Sauvignon) and then local Strawberries with Cream and Lemon Soufflé. Then coffee and mints. Our Grand Commandeur, Derek Sheen, gave a warm and enthusiastic vote of thanks to all those concerned with making the day so enjoyable. A special vote of thanks was given to Chevalier Des Holland for choosing such delectable wines and to Chef de Protocole Owen Collins for arranging the visit to the church and providing all the young helpers. We were entertained by "The Motley Crew", a wonderful group, which included Chevalier Owen Collins, Chevalier Colin Grant, Chevalier Ray Lindley, David Bridle, Michael Hare, Steve Merrell, and Jon Wood who sang Sea Shanties, which were very amusing and jolly. In the midst of the performance the heavens opened, but thanks to the Gazebo we were saved from a wetting. Many of our members had worked very hard to provide this wonderful occasion and deserve another mention, Chevalier Des Holland and his charming wife, Sue, for inviting us to their beautiful house and the hard work it entailed for them. Chef de Protocole Owen Collins and his delightful band of helpers, granddaughter Emilie, her brother Oliver, her boyfriend Matthew and Jemma another granddaughter. All such splendid people, to them all, three cheers and many, many thanks.

It is very sad to report that our dear friend George Wilks died peacefully in his sleep on Thursday 2nd September 2004 at the age of 98.

SZ



The British



Commanderie

During the summer, we published a booklet entitled “A short history of the Commanderie de Grande-Bretagne, 1969 to 2004”. As is inevitable in a publication with the word “short” in the title, some events can only be touched upon. While others are described in more detail, it is difficult to convey, second hand, the spirit and enthusiasm that obviously existed in the early days. For that one has to turn to somebody present at the time and we are very grateful to Commandeur John Braun for providing us here with the full story of the formation of the British Commanderie.

At a Dinner at the Waldorf Hotel, London, on 28 March 1969, the Grand Maître of the Confrérie, the Marquis de Contades, deputed Robert Cointreau to form a British Commanderie. Robert then asked John Addey, who was handling the Cointreau PR account, to put together a team to do the necessary work. John also handled the Whitbreads account and in its subsidiary, Stowells of Chelsea, found Charles Whitfield (whose former Headmaster had been George Wilks). Another of John Addey’s accounts was the Advertising Standards Authority, whose Secretary, John Braun, was enlisted to help.

The two Johns, Addey and Braun, were both inducted into the Confrérie in Angers at the Chapitre of the Baptême du Petit Sacavin on 20 September 1969. The following day, while waiting for the train to Paris on Angers Station, they discussed the framework and procedures for a British Commanderie. Among the decisions taken was the need to improve on the musical accompaniment – out of tune French trumpeters had done scant justice to the procession with their rendering of the War March of the Priests from Verdi’s Aida.

On 25 November 1969 a meeting was held at Whitbreads Chiswell Street City Cellars when Robert Cointreau, having himself been appointed as Grand Commandeur, in turn

appointed Colonel Hector Mackenzie as Sénéchal, John Addey Chef de Protocole, Charles Whitfield Trésorier, John Braun Chancelier, John Howell Ecuyer, Anthony Chaplin Chef des Beaux Arts, Gerald Asher Chef de Cuisine and Bill King Historiographe.

Much had to be done before the first Induction Chapitre could be held and that early foundation ensured that the Commanderie flourishes today. Addey rounded up some of his wine-wise and moneyed contacts, Whitfield ensured the practical help of his employers, who supplied the barrel and opened up trade channels for wine supplies, while Braun drafted the Constitution (approved in France), visited the Angers office to scour the files for existing British Chevaliers and persuaded his sister to make a set of gowns and Rabelais quadricorn caps. He also got the composer, Leonard Salzedo, a fellow member of the Savage Club, to compose the fanfares and march for the exclusive use of the Commanderie and enlisted the support of some fellow members of the Solicitors’ Wine Society. The connection with these bodies has been maintained to this day.

The inaugural Induction Dinner was held at Vintners’ Hall on 24 February 1970 when fourteen Chevaliers were inducted, including

Leonard Salzedo who took over as Chef des Beaux Arts and William Lacy who became Chef de Cuisine. The evening was much enhanced by the trumpeters, led by John Wilbraham, another Savage and then the finest trumpeter in the country.

It may also be noted that the Sacavin Courier, started by John Braun in 1980, is still going strong.
JCB



SACAVIN CENTENARY



Centenaries don't come round very often, especially one marking the re-establishment of the Sacavin d'Anjou in 1904. This fact was well appreciated by the British Confrérie, with 44 of us accepting an invitation from our French colleagues to attend their celebration. Some made the journey by car but many took the train, arriving on a wet Friday afternoon at Angers St. Laud to be greeted by the warm smile and enthusiastic welcome of Elizabeth Peroz of the French Confrérie.

Not for the first time we made our base the Hôtel IBIS. The "Citibus" that brought us there later conveyed us to Restaurant Ma Campagne, overlooking the river Maine, where a familiar face, Michel Fleur, joined us for dinner. We completely filled the terrace section which made for a congenial and intimate evening with a menu that proved perfect for the occasion.



Chevaliers Chris Bouch, Michael & Madeleine Forster, Owen & Brenda Collins and Peter Bouch at Ma Campagne



John Whitcutt, Laila Ghali, Trevor & Margaret Harris and Michael Hatton

Restaurant Ma Campagne

Petits amuses bouche en guise d'accueil

Biscuit de poissons et St Jacques sauce safranée froide

Ballotin de Pintadeaux au fumet de champignons sauce au foie gras

Assortiment de deux fromages sur salade mêlée

Feuilleté de poire au chocolat
et crème Anglaise au caramel d'orange

Les Boissons

Anjou rouge - Château d'Avrillé 2002

Sauvignon blanc - Château d'Avrillé

Crémant de Loire - Domaine de Gagnebert

Café et un verre de Cointreau



Colin & Barbara Robinson, John & Valerie Ingram

This was, however, merely a warm-up for what was to follow.

Friday's rain continued into Saturday but was over by the time taxis called at the IBIS to collect us for the short trip across the river to the medieval splendour of the Greniers St-

Jean. To set the scene, what better than to quote from the message of welcome we found there, in French, from our hosts:

France's oldest wine confrérie: La Confrérie des Chevaliers du Sacavin

Saturday 9 October 2004 – at the Greniers St-Jean d'Angers.

The Grand Maître and members of the Grand Council will be especially proud and happy to have the pleasure of your company in order to celebrate fittingly and joyfully the centenary of our Confrérie.

The reception at the Hôpital St-Jean, decorated with the flamboyant tapestries of Jean Lurcat, the intronisations and the meal in the imposing surroundings of the Greniers St-Jean, the customary excellent quality and variety of the culinary dishes and of our Anjou and Saumur wines, the professional liveliness and consideration of the Gérard Langevin Orchestra and Dancers, the amusing speeches by various members of the Confrérie along with several other surprises, will thus demonstrate, quite simply, the joy that wine brings.

Art will not be forgotten with the presentation of the prizes for the painting competition. The hand of friendship is also extended through our involvement with those less fortunate than ourselves.

The Sacavin is a little barrel that Aladdin valued: inside it is full of good things, nothing mysterious, nor surprising, but quite normal for a Chevalier de la Confrérie. Come and share this great moment of pleasure with us.

What a wonderful evening. With over 400 attending, we British were outnumbered 10 to 1. Yet, dispersed as we were amongst the many tables surrounding the dance floor, we didn't feel lost. If anything overwhelmed us, it was the grandeur of the moment as the procession of dignitaries and officials, in their long robes and quadricorn hats, filed into the darkened hall to the accompaniment of the Grand March from Aida. On this occasion the trumpeters excelled themselves! The pageant included other guests besides

ourselves, amongst whom were the Ordre des Chevaliers Bretvins from Nantes, whose colourful attire complemented the darker hues of the Sacavin, the Chevaliers des Fins Gousiers d'Anjou, the Confrérie de la Canette and the Commanderie du Tastevins de Saumur.

Of intronisations there were many, a mixture of solemnity and humour as a range of individuals, from the guest of honour, the French ambassador to Denmark, to hard-working viticulturists, to Claudie, the wife of French Chef de Protocole Michel Fleur, received their collarettes. Introducing the latter, Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas delivered a minute-long rapid-fire tongue-twister of the

"Tu t'entêtes à tout tenter..." variety to the amusement of all.

The "meal" our hosts had referred to would be better described a banquet, as a glance at the menu will verify, with wines that well illustrated what the Loire can offer. Where else to drink good wine than with the producers themselves! The stage at the end of the hall, previously the setting for the intronisation ceremony, was now occupied by musicians, singers and dancers. The dance floor too was soon full of Chevaliers and their partners demonstrating a variety of dance styles, in fact anything from a gentle sway to a lively swing.

Esciteau des Mets

*Cocktail apéritif
Canapés et toasts chauds
Crémant de Loire rosé "Domaine de Nerleux"
Régis NEAU*

*Foie gras de canard et son éventail de poires au caramel
Coteaux du Layon St Aubin cuvée Claire 2002
Pierre AGUILAS*

*Eventail de filets de rouget rôti au beurre d'oranges sanguines
et son aumônière de julienne de légumes
Anjou blanc 1999 cuvée R "Domaine Robin-Diot"
Jean-Louis ROBIN*

*Noisettes de Mignon de veau au vinaigre de miel
et son feuilleté d'épinards et tomates confites
Saumur-Chamigny 2002 "Les Terres Rouges"
Domaine de St-Just Yves LAMBERT*

*Chiffonnade de salade et ses fromages
Anjou Villages Brissac 1997 Château de Brissac
Christophe DAVIAU
Savennières La belle ouvrage 2002 "Clos de Frémur"
Damien LAUREAU*

*DUO du PALAIS
Royal feuilletine chocolat et sa tulipe de sorbets
Coteaux du Layon 2001 sélection de grain nobles
Cuvée folie "Château des Rochettes"
Jean DOUET*

Café et sa mignardise

*Pour finir la soirée
Crémant de Loire "Les celliers du Prieuré" Michel FLEUR
Crémant de Loire Jean-Pierre et Eric CHARRUAU*

The mood became so relaxed it was small wonder speeches were delayed until well after midnight. Indeed, it was not until 12.45 on Sunday morning that our own Grand Commandeur, Derek Sheen, found himself at the microphone. Our French Confrères had put on a magnificent event, so it is not surprising that there was a general reluctance to leave. The band appeared to be in no hurry to go home either and were still playing as we made for taxis an hour or so later. Not all returned to our hotel that way, choosing instead to prolong the magic of the evening with a walk back in the balmy night air along the banks of the river Maine.

After all that, Sunday had to be a day to take it easy. A leisurely coach ride in the sunshine through countryside south-west of Angers brought us to Béhuard, an island on the Loire where, in the 15th century, Louis XI, in danger of drowning, had invoked the Blessed Virgin, a statue of whom had been erected there 1,000 years earlier. In remembrance of this the king had ordered a chapel, dedicated to Notre-Dame de Béhuard, to be cut out of the living rock. While we admired the building, this was all explained to us by our good friend Michel Leterme, who had so kindly put himself at our disposal for the rest of our stay, becoming everything from first-rate tour guide to patient custodian of our lost property.

Further west, through countryside familiar to many Courier readers, we came first to Rochefort-sur-Loire, followed by the monument to aviator René Gasnier, crossing the Layon at Chandefonds where, as the name suggests, could be found warm water springs. Here too we discovered Domaine Gaudard, the vineyard of Pierre Aguilas. The Grand Maître had done us the honour of entertaining us to lunch himself, giving us the opportunity both to taste and to buy his wines. As a matter of congratulation, subsequently, on 18 November M. Bernard Boucant, Préfet de la Région des Pays de la Loire, presented Pierre with the Médaille d'Officier du Mérite Agricole for his services to viniculture.



Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas offers some of his excellent wine to Chevaliers Brenda & Owen Collins

The menu follows, but of interest was the starter, a hollowed out loaf of bread filled with bite-sized sausages and small cubes of bacon sautéed in wine, accompanied by Coteaux du Layon. While that might to us sound an unusual combination, it gained general approval, the sweetness of the wine nicely cutting through the fatty taste of the meat.

DOMAINE GAUDARD

Minis-rillauds et saucisses au vin

Assiette aux fruits de mer

Veau à l'Angevine, Champignons sautés, Haricots verts

Plateau de fromages

Tarte à l'Angevine

Pain

Les vins

Coteaux du Layon St Aubin de Luigné – Domaine Gaudard

Anjou rouge – Les Paragères 2003 – Domaine Gaudard

Cabernet d'Anjou 2001 – Domaine Gaudard



Trevor Harris, Janet Macfarlane, Derek & Hazel Sheen, Margaret Harris, Graham Macfarlane and Elizabeth Peroz



Veronica & Frank Halliwell, Geoffrey & Brenda Wheal, José Mabit, Michel Leterme and Daphne Mackenzie



Peter Bouch, Terry Hatton, Chris Bouch, Diana & Ray Lindley, Sue & Des Holland

We left suitably fortified for our next engagement, a demonstration of boule de fort,

a version of bowls particular to this region of France. Played indoors on a concrete slab the length of a cricket pitch, and curving upwards at either side, the skill is to judge just how slowly, indeed how incredibly slowly, to roll one's boule towards the cochonnet at the other end of the pitch. An impossible task, given the almost complete absence of friction on the highly polished surface. As was demonstrated, anyone with experience of curling had a distinct advantage. According to Michel, the requirements of this sport were totally in tune with the region: slow and steady, measured and calculated, never flustered, just like the character of the wine-growing people!

A suitable point on which to end this report. We returned home on Monday morning feeling greatly privileged to have experienced such an agreeable weekend, in some ways an opportunity of a lifetime. Our thanks to all who made it possible, notably Pierre Aguilas and, in particular, the ever-attentive Michel Leterme.



Elizabeth Holland, Chevaliers Fouad Ghali, Daphne Mackenzie and Leslie Garner take their turn at bowls.



A brief mention of our plans for forthcoming events. Following the AGM in March we intend, in June, to spend a couple of nights in Wiltshire. Chevalier Alastair Bellingham and his wife Julia have very kindly offered to lay on a lunch for us at their home in Teffont Magna and the hope is also to enjoy a wine tasting at Yapps and dinner at the Ship Inn at Burcombe. Full details will be available before the AGM. To visit the western Loire three times in as many years was considered overdoing it and so plans for a trip to Burgundy were brought forward one year, to September 2006. This would be very much a one-off excursion, the Loire still being both our traditional territory and our *raison d'être*. However, it follows the precedent set in 1991 when we ventured to Alsace and would give us the chance to get to grips with, amongst other things, some excellent red wines. We are currently looking at various ideas regarding the intervening period.

In this issue we have the unhappy duty of reporting the passing of three old friends, one of whom, George Wilks, was briefly mentioned in our first article. They will be greatly missed.

George Wilks

Those of us fortunate enough to have known George during his active days in 'Sacavin' will recall his lively knowledgeable conversation whether across the dining table, aboard a French coach or walking through a vineyard. During 30 years he progressed from Chevalier to Commandeur, in the offices of Chef d'Historiographie, Chancelier and Chef de Protocole before eventually retiring from office.

He will best be remembered as Chef de Protocole and for his ability to combine dignity with humour during the many Chapitres he controlled. Even after retirement from office his enthusiasm for our confrérie continued and he was able to join us before our 2004 summer luncheon; just after his 98th birthday.

Of course George had a life outside 'Sacavin' and we know from hearing several eulogies from friends at the memorial service that he was a well respected and much loved teacher and headmaster. He was a talented artist whether producing miniatures or stage scenes. He nearly chose music as a profession but opted to sing as an amateur, often accompanied by his dearly remembered wife Florence.

Daughter Brenda will confirm that when she lived at home, wine was not on the menu. George and the rest of the Wilks family attended the nearby Methodist Church at a time when abstinence was taught (even if not always entirely observed). Although he later became an imbibor and connoisseur of wine, his background left him with no patience for any one showing signs of intoxication.

George leaves daughter Brenda, son Peter, seven grandchildren and eighteen great - grandchildren. He is missed by them and us. OC

Mavis Gilhespy

We are sorry also to report the death of Mavis Gilhespy. Hers was very much a family involvement with the Sacavin, being the daughter of the late Frank Moody and wife of Bernard. She was inducted in 1983 at the Chapitre de Chanson held at the Café Royal. Following a career in nursing, she retired from the National Health, only to take up the position of Deputy Matron at the Bromley and Sheppard's Colleges in Bromley, an organisation providing sheltered accommodation for retired Church of England priests. This was a job she adored, claiming it was the happiest time in her life. That became part of the family too, with daughter Karen getting married in the college chapel and grandson Guy baptised there also. We extend to Bernard our deepest sympathy in his sad loss.

Marie Antoinette Leterme

Finally, we record here with sadness that Marie Antoinette, wife of our dear friend Michel Leterme, passed away at the end of May. Those members who were with us on our 2003 visit to France will remember the happy day we spent at Chateauneuf - sur - Sarthe when we enjoyed a very pleasant river trip and lunch. Michel was our host that day and, of course, he was accompanied by Marie Antoinette who charmed us all. We send to Michel, his children and grandchildren our deep sympathy and very sincere condolences.