



Sacavin Courier



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Chapitre 2005 at Armourers' Hall
Officier Daphne Mackenzie & Grand Commandeur Derek Sheen

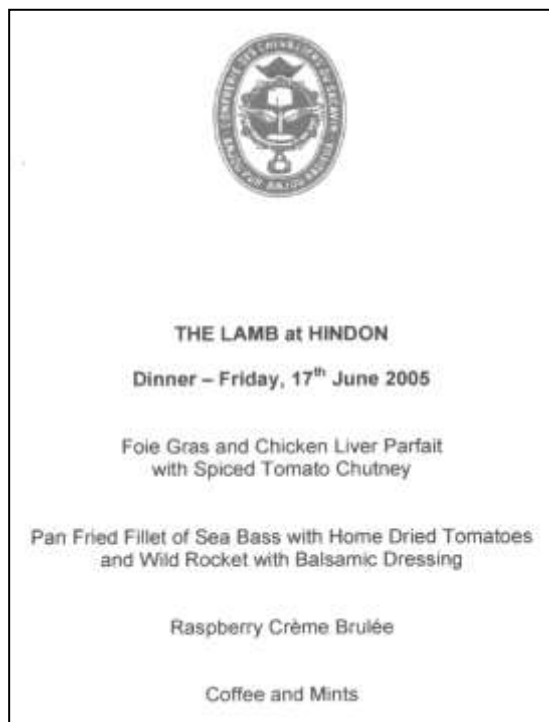
Weekend in Wiltshire



17th – 19th
June
2005

When the idea of the weekend visit to Wiltshire was first proposed by Second Halberdier Alistair Bellingham and his wife Julia, little did we think that the weather would be so perfect. The Friday dawned with clear skies and with a prospect of more and better to come. So where on earth is Hindon? Close studies of increasingly larger scaled maps revealed its location off the heavily trafficked A303 to the west of Salisbury in a beautiful area of Wiltshire bypassed by those in a hurry travelling to and from the south west of England. Upon arrival we were all struck by the simplicity of the village and wonder that it should have two very attractive and substantial coaching inns, the Angel Inn and the Lamb diagonally opposite at the cross roads. Clearly Hindon and the road must have been very important in times past and a great deal busier than they are today.

At the appointed time on Friday evening the bar at the Lamb gradually began to fill, old and new friendships were renewed and we sat down to our dinner, filling the two dining rooms of the Inn.



The menu was ideal for such a warm evening and soon the conversation was at fever pitch, raising the temperature. The windows were wide open looking out to a balmy June

evening. After the coffee and mints, there was a reluctance to end the evening and various groups wandered around the village, admiring the architecture and style of the old houses on either side of the main street, until dusk fell. Even then groups stood on street corners talking, running the risk of being served with an ASBO.



Good job we were not all 40 years younger.

The new day dawned with much promise and with the coach scheduled for 11.30 this left time to explore Hindon in the daylight. Wandering down the main street one was aware that Great Birnam Wood was coming towards us and that various Dignitaries and Chevaliers du Sacavin were clutching bricks

firmly in their hands. Closer examination revealed that the woods were huge plants and that the brick was in fact a Lemon Drizzle or a Date Loaf being sold at, oh joy, a village market. Having emptied the stalls - the stall holders must have thought that it was their lucky day - advantage was taken of the lawn outside the Lamb, complete with benches and tables, to enjoy the sunshine and to await the coach.

The coach arrived and we were taken through the beautiful, empty, countryside to Teffont Magna to be warmly greeted by Alastair and

Julia. Not only had they erected a large gazebo on their lawn which was now very welcome in the rising temperature, providing some much needed shade, but they had also arranged various sports and pastimes in their magnificent garden.

Alastair introduced us to wines with which he and Julia are familiar from South West France to accompany the wonderful buffet lunch that they had arranged for our pleasure. He was kind enough to provide the following resumé:

COUNTRY WINES OF SOUTHWEST FRANCE

The Coteaux du Quercy wines are local to Alistair and Julia's cottage just south of Cahors. There are a myriad of local producers as well as a large wine cooperative. They produce almost exclusively red and rosé wines. These wines have been steadily improving over the years and 3-4 years ago were granted VDQS status. The wines are of the modern Cahors style and based on the same Auxerrois grape (also called the Cot or Malbec). On the whole any white wine is probably not worth investing in from this area, although other parts of the south west region are different as is evident with today's Gaillac white wine from just some 30 miles from the cottage close to Albi.

THE WINES

CHATEAU LA GARRENNE PERLÉ 2004 - GAILLAC AOC

The conventional Gaillac wines are either red or a sweet white wine but neither have been particularly successful outside the region. In contrast today's dry white wine, while still utilising the conventional local grapes (the Len de l'el and a little Mauzac), has some petillant in the glass and makes an excellent summer white wine. The style is gaining in popularity although I have yet to see it in the UK lists.

BESSY DE BOISSY 2003 ROSÉ - COTEAUX DU QUERCY VDQS

The Quercy rosé from the local cave cooperative is always reliable and is a very pleasant summer drink with almost any food or as an aperitif.

DOMAINE D'ARIÈS 2003 ROSÉ - COTEAUX DU QUERCY VDQS

From our nearest and most reputable of the local single producers gives a good comparator to the other rosé. It is just as fruity but slightly sharper. This wine has more variability from year to year than that from the cooperative.

DOMAINE D'ARIÈS 1996 RED - COTEAUX DU QUERCY VIN DE PAYS

From this producer's best and oldest vines and aged in oak for six months. This is one of the best local reds and in my books rivals and beats many of the Cahor wines. Note because of its age it predates the award of VDQS status.



June 18th was also an important day because there was an additional celebration - the birthday of our Grand Commandeur Derek Sheen who was presented with a Birthday card and a Birthday cake.

After lunch the sportsmen played a very mean game of croquet on the lawn whilst the more intellectual of the company played "Guess the Name of all of the Trees". When the answers were read out it was amazing how many of us knew them but had not written it down! Perhaps the wines that we had all enjoyed may have had something to do with it?

Following these activities we embarked on the coach for the short journey to Mers to visit the cellars of the renowned Yapp Brothers for a tasting of Loire wines, both red and white. We entered a courtyard and walked into a barn set out for the tasting in a manner such that the whole ambience was so reminiscent of actually being in France. (A small recompense for those of us who have not actually been there this year).

We were entertained by a very engaging Michael Yapp who took us through the following wines:

WHITE

Chateauneuf du Pape : Père Caboché 2003

Jean-Pierre Boisson

Collines Rhodaniennes : Pied de Samson 2004

Georges Vernay

RED

Sancerre : Maulin Bêle 2003

André Vatan

Chinon : Château de Ligré 2002

Pierre & Fabienne Ferrand

Saumur Champigny: Vieilles Vignes 2003

Paul & Frederik Filliatreau

Anjou: Jeunes Vignes Gelinettes 2003

Marc Angeli

As is usual there were various differing opinions about the wines we tasted but it was all nonetheless very informative and most enjoyable. The catalogue produced by Yapp was also worth having for its unpretentious text and glorious water colours, the latter of which they have had so many enquires they are considering producing prints for sale. So it was then time to return to Hindon for a snooze to prepare for the evening dinner at The Ship at Burcombe.

Arriving a little early at The Ship, having travelled through lanes that were almost too narrow for the coach, gave us the opportunity to enjoy the garden of the Inn overlooking a stream sheltered by huge Weeping Willows.

The interior of The Ship can best be described as "cosy" and so, as was the case of the previous evening, the animated conversation assisted in the rapid rise in the temperature and very quickly the dress code resorted to the removal of coat jackets.



This again was an excellent venue with an interesting and appetizing menu enjoyed by everyone. We were all sorry when the evening was over.



Now Sunday morning, on a hot dry day in June when one is being pampered at a hotel set in the countryside, is a time to relax and read the papers. Just one problem, Hindon does not have a newsagent! Deprived chevaliers could be seen wandering around the village in various states of withdrawal symptoms and dejection. A business opportunity here perhaps?

The more energetic of the party set off around mid morning to meet Alistair and Julia at the National Trust Property at Stourhead, about six miles from Hindon. We all enjoyed the stroll around the lake and as we walked there was no sign that we had run out of topics for conversation, even after two evenings. Finally a trip to the plant sales shop and then to the restaurant and it was, reluctantly, time to go home after a splendid and varied weekend.

Our thanks must go to Second Halberdier Alistair Bellingham and his wife Julia for offering their home at Teffont Magna to host the Saturday lunch and for all of their hard work and planning giving us all such a happy and successful weekend.



We are grateful to Chevalier Richard Ridler for providing this report.



We are indebted to Chevaliers Fouad Ghali and Richard Ridler for providing the photos in this Courier.

THE SACAVIN IN COLOUR.....Our Weekend in Wiltshire



Hosts Julia & Alastair Bellingham with John Ingram



The gathering at Tefont Magna



Gillian Ridler, Tessa & David Hollingsworth
with, behind, Chris & Peter Bouch



Terry & Michael Hatton, Horward & Veronica Davis

And the Chapitre de St-André



Elizabeth Holland, Margaret Reid, Sherlie Vidler
& Malcolm Reid



Armourers' Hall



Barbara & John Moon



Felicity Sidders & Bill Bellamy



Michel Leterme



Le Chapitre de St-André

It was Armourers' Hall alright, but securely locked and bolted. Coming from that generation that allows for umpteen delays and cancellations in their travel plans, a clear run posed something of a problem, we were too early. So it was that a small cross-section of attendees at this year's Chapitre adjourned to a nearby pub, the Olde Dr. Butler's Head off Coleman Street, a group that included our resident story-teller, the unofficial Chef de Photographie, one inductee, a first-time guest and the Chancellor. A round of drinks appeared and the first of Leslie's stories: *A couple were in bed one night when the husband had to go downstairs to answer the front door. "Sorry to trouble you but I need a push," said a man on the doorstep. "Can't help you," replied the husband and went back to bed. But his wife berated him, "It's cold and wet, and he needs to get home," she said, "the least you could do is give him a push." So down he went again and opened the door. "Where are you?" he called out into the darkness. "On your swing," came the drunken reply.* No doubt about it, another Sacavin event was underway!

On arriving for the second time, the Hall could not have been more welcoming. Light flooded out into the street accompanied by the skirl of bagpipes, while inside we were greeted by old friends standing at the foot of a grand staircase lit by a magnificent chandelier and flanked by two stunning suits of armour. We were there for the Chapitre de St-André and upstairs the piper was leaving no doubt as to whose day it was nor whose patron saint St Andrew might be. More of concern, he stood between us and the Vin d'honneur. Nevertheless, with our hearts uplifted (and our ears ringing!) we made it to the drawing room on the first floor. More chandeliers. And beneath, a huge, virtually wall-to-wall, Persian carpet. A truly elegant room, dominated by numerous magnificent paintings.

It was into this room, after a short interlude and with its arrival announced by trumpet fanfare, that the procession of robed officials entered, marking the start of yet another Chapitre. This time, however, we were honoured and delighted by the presence of four representatives from Angers, including Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas himself.

With Rabelaisian greetings, and a warm welcome to our French colleagues, Grand

Commandeur Derek Sheen opened the proceedings. First item was promotions, both to the rank of Officier: Second Halberdier Alastair Bellingham and Chef de Cuisine Des Holland. Two relatively new but hard working members of the Committee who had achieved eminence by virtue of the two summer events that they and their good ladies had hosted.

Then came the Induction ceremony. First up was Elizabeth Holland from Sevenoaks. Recently retired and already well known to many members, her love of travel and a desire to improve her knowledge of wine attracted her to the Sacavin. Margaret Reid from St Helens followed, a teacher in Further Education and also a great traveller, and one whose love of pink Champagne had driven her to purchase a row of vines in the Domain du Comte de Lantage! Third, Sherlie Vidler, yet another traveller, at least as made possible by her one-time employer, B.O.A.C. Having subsequently run a Cordon Bleu catering company, she has now retired with her husband to a house in the country near Bedford, to be surrounded by numerous cats, chickens, ducks, pheasants and deer for whom she provides a refuge! Finally, came the only gentleman in the group, Malcolm Reid, husband of the aforementioned Margaret. Also with a career spent in education, he now

works as a consultant in the field of the educational application of computers, significantly involved in the training and testing of teachers, trainers and examiners. The usual formalities were attended to and with the Inductees now in possession of collarettes and certificates it was time for dinner.

Elizabeth Holland voiced what were probably the feelings of all the inductees: "I thought it would be a testing experience, but it turned out light-hearted and relaxed. And that was a nice touch, being escorted into dinner. But that barrel on the collarette makes one feel a bit like a St. Bernard!"

If the drawing room had been "truly elegant", the Livery Hall was simply splendid. 16th and 17th century arms and armour decorated the walls and from the beautiful stained glass roof lantern above were suspended three glorious chandeliers, all candle-lit. The tables themselves were candle-lit too, with charming and exquisite silver candelabra, each in the form of a Man-at-Arms clutching a pikestaff upon which three candlesticks were held aloft. Quite magical, but words cannot convey the warmth and enchantment that this engendered. For that a glance at the colour photographs is more than necessary. In fact, faced with this, our photographer was poleaxed. (Metaphorically speaking of course, although poleaxes were amongst the arms lining the walls.) "What a contrast, between the pub and this!" Fouad exclaimed, "the Committee deserves congratulations, giving us a taste of such magnificence."

In honour of St. Andrew, Officier Daphne Mackenzie, having travelled down from Scotland with her son Christopher, said grace, that of the celebrated Robbie Burns:

"Some hae meat, and canna eat
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thankit."

THE MENU

*Vin d'honneur: Saumur Prestige,
Les Celliers du Prieuré*

Scotch Smoked Salmon
served with Crayfish Tails
Pots of Soured Cream & Lumpfish Roes
Touraine Sauvignon AOC 2004
Domaine du Bouc, Oisly

Filet of English Lamb
wrapped in Spinach & Prosciutto
Roast Potatoes & Fresh Vegetables
Saumur-Champigny Vieilles Vignes 2003
Domaine Filliatreau

Selection of British Farmhouse Cheeses
with traditional accompaniments of
a variety of Biscuits, Grapes & Quince Jelly

Lemon and Ginger Roulade
with Lavender Honey & Cream
Coteaux du Layon – La Cuvée Ancienne
de Jean Baumard

Coffee – Petit Fours
Cointreau, or
Dalmore 12 year-old single malt whisky

The Chef de Cuisine had done his work well. The service was faultless and the food excellent, well matched by the selection of Loire wines. With coffee came the speeches.



The Grand Commandeur followed a Franco/Scottish theme in expressing our delight at the presence of colleagues from both those countries. Of the three who had accompanied the Grand Maître from France, Michel Leterme was indeed an old friend, while Elizabeth Peroz and Marc Morgat were

well remembered from the time we were so warmly received in Angers a year ago. However, did we detect a pang of conscience in Derek's voice as he announced a Sacavin visit to Burgundy in 2006 ?! If so, it was merely fleeting because he quickly went on to reassure his audience that already plans were afoot for a return to the Loire in February 2007 for the Salon des Vins and, of course, in 2008 for the Chapitre des Vendanges. He finished with an expression of appreciation to all who had made the evening possible.

Then it was the turn of the Grand Maître. He had enjoyed the spinach! Quite unlike that he had had to endure while on military service. He recognised many friends, those who had come to France, to the Loire, on a number of occasions including the Vendange Chapitre of 2005, the Centenary. But, he confessed, he had a problem, the barrier of language. As far as English was concerned, in school he had been a poor pupil. Our saviour, he said, was Michel Leterme. It was Michel who acted as translator. Key to understanding each other, Pierre suggested, was a bottle of Anjou wine. As it is opened, complete silence prevails but then we taste and, a miracle happens, everyone becomes friendly! Here the laughter came before Michel gave the translation. On a more serious note, he spoke in defence of French wines. If they are criticised, one should remember there is great strength in diversity. They are processed according to traditional techniques and made with loving care by the genuine wine grower. That his words fell on

sympathetic ears was evident from the subsequent applause.



It remained only for the Grand Commandeur to propose a toast to the new Inductees and for Elizabeth Holland to reply on their behalf. The dinner was over but the hall was very slow to empty, testimony to the success of the evening for which Des Holland deserves much credit. Thanks, too, are due to Chef de Protocole Owen Collins for keeping us all in order and to Audrey and Julian Thompson for taking care of our wines.

Of the group from the pub, it is left to our first-time guest, Peter Dickinson, to have the final word here. So, how did he like it? "It was obvious that all the members were having a jolly good time," he volunteered, "but what was nice was that they went out of their way to ensure their guests enjoyed themselves too."

JMI

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Trésorier's Note

- Subscriptions are due on January 1st. The rate stays the same at £15, or £22.50 if your spouse is also a Chevalier.
- Most of you pay by bankers order so there is nothing more for you to do but accept my thanks for making my life simpler.
- If you prefer to pay by cheque, please send this to me, Michael Forster, payable to Sacavin, rates as above at:- The Clearing, Deepdene Wood, Dorking, Surrey. RH5 4BQ

What we pay for wine in a bottle



It is a salutary exercise to analyse the elements of cost (bottling, shipping, retailer's margin, excise duty, etc.) involved in fixing the price of a bottle of wine. Certain elements will not vary greatly, whether the wine concerned is basic "plonk" or a fine Burgundy/Bordeaux, while VAT is levied on a proportional basis. It has been calculated, for instance, that the wine producer will be lucky to make 1p on a bottle of wine that retails at £2.99 in a British supermarket!

The following table illustrates the relative proportions of the on-costs and the value of the contents of bottles of wine in various price brackets:

Retail price* in the UK	On-costs	Liquid in the bottle
£3	£2.65	35p (12%)
£5	£3.65	£1.35 (27%)
£7	£4.45	£2.55 (36%)
£10	£5.70	£4.30 (43%)
£15	£7.85	£7.15 (48%)
£20	£9.75	£10.25 (51%)

* Standard prices, of course, not "special offers".

EVL



BURGUNDY 2006



Our Chef des Expéditions, Ernest Lee, has been working hard on our behalf and plans are now well advanced for our trip to Burgundy next September. The hotel selected as our base is Le Château de Saulon-la-rue, approximately 8 km south of Dijon. The intention is to call at a number of vineyards around Nuits-St-Georges and the Côte de Beaune to taste their wines and also to visit, from a cultural point of view, the Château du Clos de Vougeot, (the home of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin), and the Château de Meursault. There will also be time to explore Beaune itself. This will be slightly earlier than the period with which we are familiar from our Loire trips, as being more convenient to vignerons involved with the vendange at the end of the month. The dates to keep free in your diaries are **Tuesday 12th to Saturday 16th September 2006.**

As a prelude to all of that there is, of course, our tasting of Burgundy wines followed by supper at the Naval & Military Club (otherwise known as The In & Out Club) on **26th January** for which you should already have received the Calling Letter. An opportunity to taste wines that we wouldn't come across in the normal course of events, given that they are priced some two or three times above the top end of Ernest's table in the preceding article!

ELISABETH BURROUGHS

Elisabeth Helena BURROUGHS died on 2nd August this year at Pendean House Midhurst where she had been resident for some time. Lis Burroughs, widow of our former Trésorier, David, was inducted at the Chapitre de la Demi-Lune in 1988. Subsequently, she was made Officier in 1999 after serving on the Management Committee as First Halberdier. Lis was a committed Sacavin and even after David's death in 1992 she was a staunch supporter of events. Some of us will remember with pleasure the Summer event and tasting that Lis and David held at their delightful home, Old Bucks Head at Mannings Heath near Horsham. The property had been an Inn in former times and it was always a source of great amusement to Lis to be asked if she ran a pub!

During the war Lis served in the WAAF and it was during this time that she met David then

an army officer. She was a renowned community worker and politics and the Brownies together with numerous charitable institutions benefited from her support and counsel. She loved sailing, a pleasure shared, of course, with David and we will remember her with affection and admiration, her sense of humour and her jokes, her prowess as a formidable hostess and her ability to make her point forcibly.

In her final years at Pendean House she was always the lady, dressing for lunch and dinner, and engaging in various activities with great enthusiasm. Her funeral service took place in the lovely little parish church of Cocking near Midhurst which was full of family, friends and acquaintances paying a fond tribute to her happy memory.

DCS



DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Monday 23 January 2006** at
The Kings Arms Buckingham Palace Road at 11 am



Wine-tasting & Supper at the In & Out Club **Thursday 26 January 2006**



AGM and Supper at The Queens Club **Saturday 1 April 2006**
Calling letters will be posted in February



Burgundy Trip **Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 September 2006**
Calling letters will be posted in April

With this Courier come warm wishes from the Management Committee to all Commandeurs, Officiers, Chevaliers and their families for this Christmas and the coming New Year. Rabelaisian greetings to you all!