

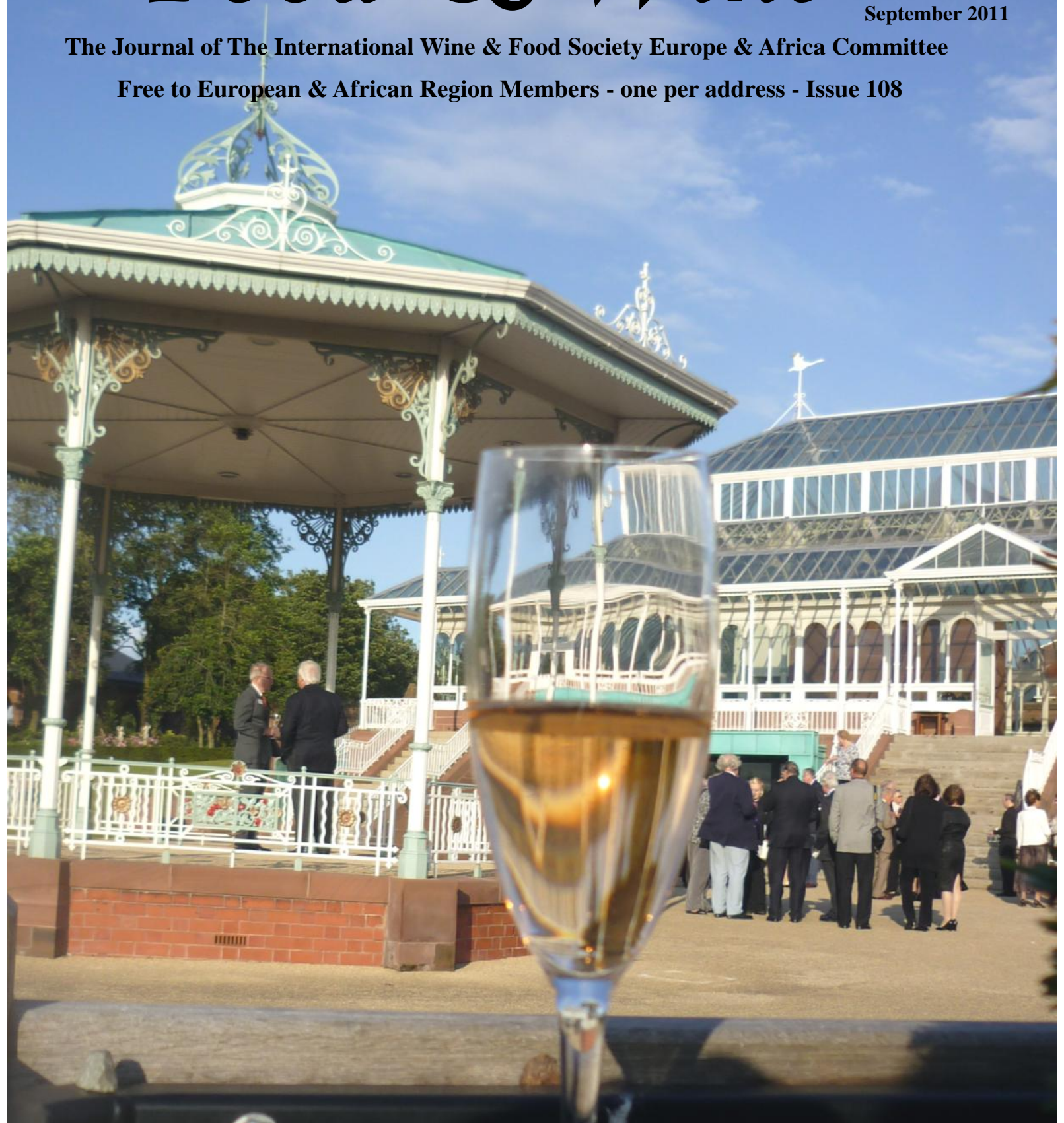
Food & Wine



September 2011

The Journal of The International Wine & Food Society Europe & Africa Committee

Free to European & African Region Members - one per address - Issue 108



A Liverpool Experience

Inside Burgundy

The Story of Summerdown Mint

© Sarah Avery



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

I would like to thank those branches and those branch representatives who attended the ABRM (Annual Branch Representatives Meeting) in June. Ours is a democratic organisation, in order to work properly we need to use these opportunities to discuss the way the Society is managed. The overall governing body is Council whose members are in fact directors of IW&FS Ltd. I am elected to that position by the EAC. The EAC are elected at the ABRM and those members who attend the ABRM carry with them the wishes of the branch membership. If your Branch Representative is unable to attend please make sure that someone else substitutes for them.

Council is made up of 6 members; two from the EAC, one from Asia/Pacific and three elected by the Americas. This is because two thirds of our worldwide membership live in North America. A few years ago the Society faced a financial problem because annual expenditure exceeded income and there was a general reluctance to increase membership dues. Under the excellent stewardship of Chris Bonsall and John Valentine (both EAC representatives) Council reduced expenditure by dispensing with the post of full time Executive Director, some staff, and a fairly impressive office and replaced them with a part time administrator and a small office in the In & Out Club. This did mean that the unpaid Council Officers had to do more of the management of the Society themselves. At the same time the EAC surrendered the Cape Town festival from being a regional festival (with any surplus going into EAC funds), to become an International Festival with the surplus enhancing the Society coffers. The Societies finances now look very healthy.

Some of our American colleagues have suggested that we move the Society's administration from our historic home in London to America and that we fund an office in the Californian Napa Valley to help members visit the wineries located there. The EAC has spent some time considering this proposal but has come to the conclusion that Society funds are there to provide benefits to all members and that this idea is not within the Society's strategic plan. We would prefer to spend more money on the website to provide information for members and encourages new members. It is disappointing that, so far, only 6% of EAC members have used the facility but we are convinced that the way forward involves a greater use of technology. Even without the website our existing membership software would have needed renewing. To encourage branch officers to use the website to provide membership returns to the EAC we have agreed to provide a financial incentive in the form of an increased 2012 rebate for speedy completion of the annual returns. From 2013 we will rely entirely on the membership information held on the website.

This magazine contains a long report of the Merseyside Festival and I have received many messages of congratulation from attendees'. The credit goes to the organising committee, particularly Val Brookfield-Bishop, the Committee Chair who received the Societies Diploma for Distinguished Contribution (the last recipient was chef Albert Roux) and David James the Festival Treasurer, who was awarded the Societies Andre Simons Bronze medal. Although the main objective of a Festival is to promote fellowship between members I can also report that we achieved a healthy surplus that will ensure that the EAC can continue to provide members benefits over the next three years.

Benefits to members comprise the increased information and assistance provided through both the website and this magazine. We are organising events for members to enhance individual branch programmes, and to provide an opportunity for members of different branches to meet. In the next 12 months we have an Awayday in Yorkshire (October), a Grand dinner in the City of London's historic Waterman's Hall (November) to encourage members to attend the Society AGM preceding the dinner. There is a Great Weekend in Zurich (June) and in September 2012 we have an International festival in Vancouver which, despite its cost, has already sold all of the 200 tickets.

In the EAC, and particularly in the UK, many national events seem to be less popular. This may be due to our membership getting older or to the economic situation. Your committee needs to know what sort of event would be popular with the wider membership. Should we do more events that do not require overnight accommodation or should we look at longer 'wine & food' tours? Please let us know either by email, letter or by talking to your branch representative or directly to the EAC member with responsibility for your branch. We need your input.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS

Sir Michael Colman is the third holder of a baronetcy created in 1907 in honour of his grandfather. At Stoke Holy Cross water mill near Norwich, the first Jeremiah Colman started milling mustard and flour in 1814, to produce the familiar hot English mustard flavour so beloved of the roast beef-eating public in the UK. Today Sir Michael has a new passion, growing and distilling the true Black Mitcham Mint of old England



Jasper Morris MW graduated in 1979.



He was expected to become a lawyer as had previous Morris generations but found a job in a wine shop and developed a real interest in the juice of the

grape and in Burgundy in particular. Over the years he became known as 'one of the people who knows about Burgundy' and a Burgundy buyer for Berry Bros & Rudd. The book 'Inside Burgundy' is the distillation of his career as a professional wine-buyer and Burgundy addict.

Helen Mills, who celebrated her 87th



birthday this year, joined the Society in the late 60's. She served for a long time on the EAC as Membership Secretary and Benefits Manager. As Chairman of the Surrey Hill branch she organises numerous

events. She is a stalwart of her local community, recording Talking Newspapers for the blind and by giving help to the aged of Weybridge in many ways.

Geoff James grew up in relatively modest



circumstances but he always had an instinctive love of the good things of life. He began to indulge in fine wines and food and has been fortunate to visit some of the best vineyards in the world and also some great

restaurants. He and his wife Clare joined the IWFS approx 10 years ago and have enjoyed the whole experience, including organising a number of events.



Food & Wine

Designed In House by
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& Food Society
European & African Region

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Printed by
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African Committee of the
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Editorial

We have reached the time in the year that the press calls the 'silly season!'. I don't know if it is the economic situation or the weather but this summer it has been exceedingly difficult to get anything organised. Even our daughter came home from work the other day completely frustrated. She had been trying to organise her suppliers and announced that there are five people in one office she deals with 'but the brain cell seems to have gone on holiday'!

Well, the Best Restaurant in the World has closed. I must say when I read of the 50 course, five hour, last dinner at El Bulli I didn't shed any tears over its demise. There were 'delights' such as a frozen gorgonzola balloon, a clam meringue, an edible book of pressed flowers and a soup of prawn brains, amongst many other weird and wonderful combinations. Aficionados say it is the end of an era and there are over a million people still on the waiting list for tables. On reading the biography of the chef, *'Ferran Adrià: The Man Who Changed the Way We Eat'*, one hack was quoted as saying, "Who is the 'we' referred to in the title? Certainly not the guy behind me in the queue at Aldi."

Much as it pains me to say it, I think in a way, I agree with the comments aired by Delia Smith and Michael Winner, recently in the press. They maintain that restaurant food in the 70's was much better than some of the food produced by top chefs today. As Winner says no one knew or cared who the chef was. "Now every twit who thinks he can fry an egg is giving interviews all over the place, and appearing endlessly on TV and food has suffered because of it." Mind you doubtless many can remember going into country hotels in the 70's where the dining room smelt of over boiled cabbage and 'roast and two veg' looked and tasted as though it had been reheated for months. Conversely you could drop into a small country pub and the landlady would rustle up a fresh hot meal, no freezer, no microwave just good honest pub grub, not an expensive Gastropub in sight.

What a good motion for debate - 'Do you think top restaurant food in the 1970's was better than the little bits and pieces with dribs and drabs of sauce Michelin starred chefs produce today?' What do you think, letters please?

With apologies to the foodies, I am afraid this issue has turned out to be a 'Wet' edition. We have the second half of Jeffery Benson's interesting article on sweet wines, a piece by Jasper Morris MW of Berry Bros & Rudd on his life in the wine trade and his André Simon award winning book 'Inside Burgundy'. There is an interesting article by one of our members of a VIP distillery tour in Scotland and our President, John Avery, has written an in-depth report on the wines enjoyed at the Liverpool Festival. Members from all three regions have contributed to bring to you a wonderful pastiche of this colourful event. To follow that Helen Mills has sent me a lovely piece on the first European Festival in 1980 which also highlighted an English wine.

We recently enjoyed a beautiful July afternoon on the Hampshire downs in the company of Sir Michael Colman - he of mustard fame - discovering the mysteries of distilling mint oil. We were entertained in style by Sir Michael with mint tea and a delicious mint cake developed by one of his staff. Sandra kindly sent me the recipe and you will find it on page 10, it is a cake for a very special occasion.

We only have seven pages of branch reports this time as opposed to eleven last September. Once again maybe it is something to do with the malaise that seems to be gripping the country. There are several interesting events to book for in the coming months and I trust branches will wake up and I will be inundated with material for the December issue including plenty of letters on what you look for in a good restaurant.

Pam Brunning

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Dear Members

I do hope you all had an enjoyable summer. As I write, in London we are trying to dry out after a rather wet July while our friends in the US are enduring soaring temperatures. We wait to see if unusual weather patterns will be having an effect on the 2011 vintage in the northern hemisphere wine regions.

Free Monographs for Members

By the time you read this a number of you will have hopefully located, downloaded and read one or two of the monographs from the IWFS library. The IWFS has published some 13 titles over the past 15 years. As an added benefit for members we are now putting the monographs on the website. This will be as soon as they are in the correct format and thus not necessarily in chronological order. In time they will all be available to members to download, for free, from the website.

There was a gap of some six years between publishing our most recent title – *Biodynamics in Wine* in October 2010. The previous “hot” topic at the time was *Icewine* written by John Schreiner and published in 2004 – which is available to download.

The list of topics covered is as follows:

13. **Biodynamics in Wine**, Beverley Blanning MW (2010)
12. **Icewine**, John Schreiner (2004)
11. **The Science of Taste**, Ruth Binney (2003)
10. **Truffles**, Michael Raffael (2002)
9. **Chianti Classico**, Tom Maresca (2002)
8. **Barolo**, Stephen Hobley (2001)
7. **Traditional French Cheeses**, Judy Ridgway (2001)
6. **Chablis**, Michael Edwards (2001)
5. **Growers' Champagne**, Philippe Boucheron (2000)
4. **Tokaji**, Ben Howkins (1999)
3. **Wine and Health**, Paul Scholten, MD (1997)
2. **A Dissertation on Wine Waiters**, Christopher Fielden (1996)
1. **Visiting Vineyards**, David Wolfe (1996)



We do hope that you will take advantage of this wealth of knowledge prepared by some of the leading writers in their field. Please bear in mind when reading these that some of the information in them may not be accurate now, given the passage of time.

The list of monographs and access to them in their downloadable format is in the members only section of the website under Secretariat/For Members/Monograph for Members. For those of you who would rather read them in their printed booklet format please note that these can be ordered free from the IS (subject to availability). A small fee to cover postage and packing may be charged.

André Simon Lecture

Please note also that this year's André Simon lecture, “German Viticulture, The Last 20 Years”, has also been posted on the website for members to read – under the About IWFS/Publications tabs. The lecture was presented by Professor Tom Scott at the beginning of the EAC Merseyside Festival on Tuesday 14 June 2011 at the Liverpool Medical Institution

Professor Tom Scott is honorary professor at the Institute for Reformation Studies at the University of St Andrews. His specialty is the social and economic history of medieval and early modern Germany. He contributed the article on the history of German wine to the *Oxford Companion to Wine*, edited by Jancis Robinson MW, as well as a survey of medieval viticulture in the German-speaking lands, which appeared in the journal *German History*, 20 (2002). In 1976 he founded the Liverpool Wine Consortium, specializing in German Riesling, and subsequently the top wines of Australia (on which he has also written for the Melbourne review *Meanjin*) and New Zealand.



Do let me know if I can be of assistance with supplying you any monographs or other IWFS merchandise.

Best wishes Andrea Warren

The Annual General Meeting of the International Wine & Food Society

will be held on

Friday 4th November 2011 at 2.30pm

At the 'In & Out Club' 4, St. James' Square, London SW1Y 4JU

In order to persuade members to travel to London to attend this most important event in the Society's calendar the EAC has arranged a very special dinner in the Waterman's Hall, overnight accommodation at the Grange City Hotel, a Saturday morning visit to Borough Market and lunch at 'Fish!' Booking details can be found on the back page and on the website. www.iwfs.org

Beware of your Blogs

A Taiwanese lady was jailed for 30 days and ordered to pay £4,300 compensation to a restaurant because she wrote on her blog site that the noodles they served were too salty. The owner of the Sichuan Flavour Beef Noodle Restaurant in Taichung took Mrs Liu to court on the basis that she should not have passed judgment on the salt content of the menu as she had only tried one course. She was found guilty of defamation.

Golden Oil for Golden Oldies

Olive oil is now the great elixir of life. Researchers in France monitored 7,625 volunteers aged over 65, in Dijon, Bordeaux, and Montpellier for five years reports *The Independent*. During that time 148 people suffered strokes but it was found that the stroke risk was 41% lower in those who used a lot of olive oil in cooking and as dressings than it was in those that used other forms of fats, even after factors such as weight and exercise routines were taken into account. More trials are needed but lead researcher Dr Cécilia Samieri claims her findings are good enough to warrant a new set of guidelines for older people. "Strokes are so common in this age group," she says, "and olive oil would be an inexpensive way to help prevent it."



Quotes

"A woman drove me to drink and I never had the decency to thank her." *W. C. Fields, quoted in the Daily Mail*

"My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four unless there were three other people ." *Orson Welles, quoted in The Age.*

Ever Falling Standards

The table napkin is the latest casualty in our dumbed down society. Today only 15% of households still lay a place setting with napkins and the numbers are expected to drop further with the move away from eating at a dining table. In a poll carried out by Carte D'Or, the ice cream firm, it was revealed that fewer than half the families surveyed ate as a family preferring to 'chill out' with their food on their laps in front of the TV. Nearly half, when entertaining, favoured a casual meal such as a barbecue and a quarter admitted spending only fifteen minutes in the kitchen when hosting friends and over half owned up to passing off shop bought desserts as their own.



From *Private Eye* issue 1288. Reproduced by permission of Tony Husband

Chinese Desertification

Twenty seven percent of China's land mass is now desert, the equivalent to eight Germanies. The rapid increase in desertification is due mainly to sandstorms. The 'Yellow Dragon', the season of sandstorms used to occur every ten years, now it is an annual event in Beijing. Eighty percent of the countries grasslands are now degrading and the government has had to resettle thousands of people.



The word 'desertification' was first coined in 1949 by a French forester after poor farming methods and lack of irrigation gave rise to the America's Dust Bowl.

China's problem is acute. A recent report from Greenpeace concluded that China's food supply would be inadequate by 2030. In the 1970's the State Forestry Administration ordered the creation of the 'Great Green Wall' a barrier of millions of trees to stop sand spreading from the north of the country. The 'Desertification Control Office' has now stepped up a grazing ban on 71 million hectares of grassland - an area the size of two Germanies - giving the farmers a tax break if they invest in control methods such as laying straw over new grasses to protect the roots until they can hold the soil. Having spent £6bn in the last ten years a government survey has shown that, for the first time, the desert has been halted. An average 1,717km² degraded land is being restored each year, at that rate it will take 300 years to restore China's manmade deserts to fertile plains, but the success has inspired other governments around the world. African leaders are considering planting a belt of trees nine miles wide and 5,000 miles in length along the Sahara's southern edge.

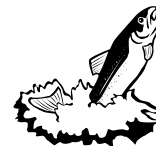
Where there's Muck there's Maize

It is an unknown fact that it was muck that made the Inca's a powerful civilisation. Archaeologists have discovered that around 2,700 years ago the Incas found that droppings were good as fertiliser. Up until this time their main crop had been quinoa but with plenty of fertiliser they were able to the switch to large scale maize growing which facilitated easier storage and provided a much more nourishing diet. Maize improved the health of the population and allowed more people off the land to work in construction. "Maize and muck were the essential ingredients to drive the expansion of the Inca empire," said Alex Chepstow-Lusty of the French Institute of Andean Studies in Lima.



The Salmon are Leaping

After many years of decline salmon numbers in British rivers are again rising. In the 1980's 30% of young salmon made it back to their native rivers after migration. By the end of the 20th century that figure had decreased to about 0.3%. the good news is that numbers rose remarkably last year and it is hoped that the numbers will continue to rise with the careful monitoring of pollution levels.



A Big Holiday

A study has revealed that tourists are likely to come home 8lbs. heavier after a two week break in the US. Putting on more weight there than when travelling anywhere else in the world.



The Annual Branch Representatives Meeting of the European & African Region

It seems to be a failing of human nature that when a member hears the letters ABRM he/she either does not understand the acronym or thinks - red alert - keep away - I might get asked to do something!

We have thirty one branches in our area of which only 12 were represented at the ABRM at Grim's Dyke on June 30th. Your committee quite understands that to travel from the ends of the earth for a one hour meeting is not a cheerful prospect and that is why for the last two years we have organised an event at the same time as the ABRM. Unfortunately, even if we endeavour to keep the price down to a minimum, this ploy does not seem to have the required effect.

These meetings are important to the branches as they give members a chance to air their views on the way the Society is run. Often, in the close of the 20thC, at least 70% of the branches would be represented and many policy decisions were made as a consequence. We the committee cannot do our best for you the members unless you come along once a year and tell us what you require from your Society.

Like the Curate's Egg - Grim in Parts?



They say "it's grim up North" so it was with a feeling of familiarity for anything "grim" that brought Jane and I, together with Tricia and Derek Fletcher to join a very friendly band of members of various other branches for dinner. This followed the 2011 Branch Representatives' Meeting which was held in the music room of Sir William Gilbert's former country residence. The dinner, arranged by Pam Brunning, was held in Sir William's Drawing Room.

Only perhaps thirst (or it might have been the intense conversation between all present which took our minds off the taste) led us to drink the

sparkling apéritif. It was Pascali Brut N.V. Sauvignon Blanc from Ashton Kelder (cellars) - i.e. the local wine co-op - situated in the ultra-hot (temperature wise) Robertson Valley of the Western Cape. It was said to have had a little Viognier added to give some fragrance but I, for one, could not detect its presence. I am sad to report that no-one to whom I spoke had a good word for it. The conversation was, however, so stimulating that we all went in to dinner in a cheerful mood of anticipation.



I ought to have said at the outset that dinner included a generous supply of wines with each course. These had been supplied by Anthony Byrne Fine Wines Ltd of Huntingdon and Pam had arranged for Alan Gowans, the Sales Manager, to speak to us about the wines which he did in fine style before the first course arrived. He proved to be correct in speaking of the challenges presented to him in selecting wines to accompany some very innovative dishes with a wide range of flavours (some quite strong) in each course. The budget (and there always has to be one) had been reflected in the quality level of wines we were served.

First off was a Sweetcorn Velouté topped with a Chorizo Foam served in a shot glass. The latter ingredient was, of course, on the top and it entered the mouth first. It was unmistakably chorizo. One or two of the party thought it was rather strong but its pungent spiciness was soon quelled by the sweet flavours of the rest of the dish and the majority view was that it was an interesting and successful combination. Its wine partner was a Bush Vine Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2011 from Darling Cellars. Darling is a town up the west coast of the Atlantic seaboard of South Africa not far inland. The vineyards there are successful because of the cooling effects of the cold Antarctic current which passes by. I found the wine to be light and very crisp with a restrained nose and not much body on the mid palate or in the finish. Having said that, its lack of intensity meant it was not competing with the flavours in the dish. Others expressed similar views.

The second course was roasted pigeon breast on a bed of thinly sliced pickled fennel with a pureed apple sauce coloured red and accompanied by pine nuts. The pigeon had universal praise but there was less certainty expressed about the sauce and the fennel although the pine nuts went well. We were invited to either continue with the first wine or move on to Gran Verano Carmenère Rosado 2010 from the Chilean estate of Apaltagua located in the Curico Valley and made from that grape variety. Apparently 11 years ago, a successful American businessman who is "the king of Boston taxis" bought an existing estate and turned into a very thriving bodega winning many awards. Most of us thought this wine went well with the dish

but, as always, there were a few rosé-haters. As the wine warmed a little in the glass there were aromas of cherries and spice. Quite a dark pink hue was noted and it had a good degree of intensity on the mid palate and in the finish.

This wine was continued with the next course which was "blackened" mackerel fillet with small cubes of celeriac and beetroot and garnished with what seemed to be a soured cream mixed with horseradish. This last addition was thought by many to be just too much and too strong but, even allowing for that, the Rosado continued to be enjoyed.

The main course was Slow Braised Pork Belly which met with almost unanimous approval but the accompanying Faggot was widely thought to be too big, too fatty and/or too strongly flavoured. The chosen wine with this dish was Terra Hutton Cabernet Sauvignon 2009, again from Darling Cellars. Whilst the wine was enjoyed for its own typical cabernet qualities, many people thought a lighter red, Pinot Noir perhaps, or an oaked Chardonnay might have been more suitable. Next there was a "Bubblegum Brûléé" about which the least said the better. (Some enjoyed it, *Ed.*)

Dessert was a Citrus Soufflé with a Hot (sic) Chocolate Ice Cream. Most people enjoyed the soufflé which came well risen but it was felt that its strong citrusy flavours were in conflict with the wine. Further the ice cream was thought to be a less good partner than would have been vanilla ice cream. On to the wine - this was a Coteaux du Layon A.C. 2009 from the Loire Valley made by Dom. des Hautes Brosses. A very good vintage had produced a well-balanced sweet (but not sugary) wine with excellent acidity which was widely enjoyed away from the dessert.

This very enjoyable evening ended with tea or coffee and petit fours before we (or certainly I) staggered off to bed.

David Chapman, Manchester Branch Chairman

David did not supply a title for this report so your Editor took the liberty of doing so .

Summerdown Pure Mint

The Story of Summerdown Mint

Your Editor goes down on the farm in the Hampshire countryside to discover the true Mint of Old England



Greek mythology tells us that mint has the reputation of being the herb of hospitality. The story goes that one day two strangers were walking through a village and the villagers ignored them, offering them neither food nor drink. Eventually one old couple, Philemon and Baucis, offered them a meal and, before the four sat down for their meal Baucis rubbed the table with mint leaves to clean and freshen it. The strangers turned out to be the gods Zeus and Hermes in disguise. As a reward for the hospitality Philemon and Baucis had shown them, the gods turned the humble home into a temple. In consequence ever after mint became the symbol of hospitality.

England was once renowned for producing the best mint in the world; the French still call their most common variety Menthe Anglaise. Black Mitcham mint (*Mentha piperita*) which was developed at the Mitcham nursery in Surrey dates back to the 1750's. However, with the need to produce essential food crops during the twentieth century, production in the UK died out until Sir Michael Colman - he of mustard fame - decided to reintroduce this high quality crop to the Hampshire downs.

Mint has been an important herb since the start of civilization and the Romans were responsible for spreading it throughout Europe. Mint was an essential aromatic herb in medieval times when people scented their baths and strewed their homes with mint because of its fresh scent. It has a long and distinguished history in the herb and physic gardens of Europe. The Apothecary has for centuries used mint for stomach aches, chest pains, headaches and nervous complaints. The fresh herb is an antipruritic, an agent for alleviating the symptoms of itching and can be effective against insect bites and allergies. Over the years mint has been recommended as a remedy for everything from colic, to digestive odours, to mad dog bites.

When the colonists went to the New World they took their mints, for teas for headaches, heartburn, indigestion, gas and insomnia. They also drank mint tea for pleasure, not only because it tasted good, but also because it wasn't taxed. After the second world war, when the production of Mitcham mint in the UK had ceased the Americans recognised the superior quality of the strain and went into industrial scale production on the west coast in Oregon and Montana. Today the US produces 3,500 tonnes of *Mentha piperita* per annum, India 300 tonnes, China 100 tonnes and Europe 70 tonnes.

The mint being harvested with a forage harvester and being blown into a trailer/cooker tub



The two trailer/cooker tubs are sealed then connected to the stills ready for steam to be pumped through the mint



More Mint Mythology

In Roman mythology Minthe was a lovely young nymph who caught the eye of Pluto, the ruler of the underworld. When his wife Persephone found out about his love for the beautiful nymph, she was enraged and changed Minthe into a lowly plant, to be trodden underfoot. Pluto couldn't reverse Persephone's curse, but he did soften the spell somewhat by making the smell that Minthe gave off all the sweeter when she was trodden upon. The name Minthe has changed to Mentha and become the name of the herb, mint. In ancient Greece, mint was used in funerary rites, together with rosemary and myrtle, not simply to offset the smell of decay but mint was an element in the fermented barley drink called the kykeon that was an essential brew for participants in the Eleusinian mysteries, which offered hope in the afterlife for initiates.

There are reputed to be over 600 varieties of *mentha* in the world however only two are commercially produced today for processing, Mentha piperita (Black Mitcham) and the ubiquitous Mentha arvensis (field mint). It is arvensis oil that flavours the majority of mint products from toothpastes to toiletries' to your after dinner mints. It has the basic cooling mint character but is a much harsher and more bitter oil and lacks the soft creamy notes found in piperita oil. India is the main producer at 30,000 tonnes a year compared with 2,500 tonnes in China. Arvensis is a high yielding strain so despite its lower grade oil which has to go through a variety of processes to refine out the negative flavours it is the oil of choice worldwide.

When Sir Michael Colman decided to revive the production of Black Mitcham mint in 1996 it was to America that he sent his farm manager Ian Margetts to find advice and equipment. The university of Oregon research department has spent many years developing a strain of Black Mitcham that is more prolific and drought resistant. They have also developed harvesting machinery to make the job a lot less labour intensive than it was when last produced in the UK before the war.

With great pride he will tell you he now grows 100 acres on his 2,000 acre Hampshire farm. As Ian says it has been a steep learning curve, "We've had to learn how to grow the crop and how to distill the oil to end up with a quality oil." He admits the first years harvest went down the drain when he tried distilling the mint oil at far too high a temperature. The mint is ready to harvest immediately after blooming as it is the leaves that contain the oil. It is cut with a specially adapted forage harvester and

blown straight into trailers which double as 'cooker tubs'. When the trailers arrive back at the distillery the leaves are left to wilt for 48hours. Then the trailers/cooker tubs are sealed and steam is pumped through the mint. The cookers take an hour to reach the optimum temperature, the leaves are then cooked for three hours. The steam is pushed through the leaves extracting the oil which is 99% pure oil. The years production is then stored in vats to mature and any remaining residue sinks to the bottom.

Sir Michael explains that the process of creating peppermint oil is similar to making fine wine – about two parts science to one part art. Like wine, the balance of flavours must be finely-judged. Like wine, the oil must be left to settle and mature for more than a year before it is ready to be used.

Sir Michael told me that having been in the food industry all his life he has always had the consumers' interests at heart and he decided, when producing peppermint, he wanted to produce the best quality product available. "Take for example apples," he explained, "when you go to the supermarket you can see where the apples come from, you have a choice, Brayburn or Gala from New Zealand or South Africa or the US. With mint, you the consumer, have no idea what you are getting." His ambition is to offer the public a fine quality pure peppermint oil with a provenance. ➡➡

The steam from the cooker tubs condenses in the vertical condensers, the oil and water mix drains down into the pyramid cans, the oil floats on the water and flows out the top.



Ian blending the finished oil ready for maturing





Having produced the oil Sir Michael then had to devise ways of marketing his product. Today Summerdown's portfolio encompasses three types of chocolates; mint creams, mint crisps and mint thins, a mint tea and a new venture - aromatherapy oils. Summerdown mint tea has a unique flavour as, after drying, the leaves are infused with mint oil to give a much more intense flavour and aroma to the tea. For the fragrances mint oil is blended with lavender and camomile oil, which is also produced at Summerdown, and sold in diffusers to give a room the genuine scent of an English country garden. Lavender and camomile are also produced at Summerdown and any surplus lavender oil is sold to France for perfumery.

With a peppermint and lavender diffuser in your home you can recreate the wonderful scent experienced when standing in one of Sir Michaels fields on a warm summer afternoon with a heat haze shimmering over a sea of purple bloom, listening to the drone of the honey bees.

After our tour we returned to the Estate Office to enjoy a thirst quenching cup of pure English mint tea and a delicious mint cake developed by Sandra Higgins one of the staff. The beautiful bur oak table we gathered round did not need 'rubbing with mint leaves to clean and freshen it' but mint certainly lived up to its reputation as being the herb of hospitality.

Sandra has kindly shared her Peppermint cream cake recipe with us. This is a cake for a special occasion.

Sandra Higgins Summerdown Peppermint Cream Cake

4 large eggs - separated
150g caster sugar
100g S.R. Flour

Filling

200ml double cream
25g sifted icing sugar
12 drops of Summerdown peppermint oil
6 Summerdown mint creams

Method

Grease two 20cm round, loose bottomed sponge tins and line with parchment paper (non stick greaseproof paper).

Whisk the egg yolks with the caster sugar until very thick & creamy and the whisk leaves a trail behind when lifted. Whisk the whites stiffly and fold very carefully into the yolk mixture, then gently fold the flour in, taking extreme care not to disperse the air too much. Divide the mixture between the two cake tins, tap each one down gently on a hard surface to disperse top bubbles. Bake in the centre of an oven for 15mins at 180C (the cake is done when it has stopped "singing" when held to the ear). Cool for two minutes in the tins and then carefully remove and allow cakes to cool completely.

Whisk the cream, icing sugar & oil until stiff and cover one of the sponges and then take six Summerdown Peppermint creams and place on the top of the second sponge. Place this chocolate covered sponge under a very hot pre-heated grill for around 2 minutes until the chocolates are melted. Quickly and lightly swirl a skewer through the chocolates to create a marbled effect, spreading the mixture all over the top. Allow to cool and place on the top of the minted cream.

Delicious served with a cup of Summerdown Peppermint tea.



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A Day at the Raymond Blanc Cookery School

Bath & Bristol Members Janet Bagot & Val Smith Enjoy a Cooking Experience



Janet Bagot & Val Smith

Having reported early to sample a cookery course entitled "Seasonal Dinner Party" we were slightly apprehensive, wondering if our culinary skills were up to it. Mark Peregrine the Head of the Cookery School welcomed the ten participants (7 ladies and 3 men), and provided us with cooks' aprons and chefs' jackets which caused some hilarity as Mark tried to guess the right size. The ladies were unimpressed by his over-estimate of their sizing!

We were shown round and introduced to the team, the most valued member, for us, being the assistant who attended to the washing up all day! The school is alongside the main restaurant kitchens so we were able to see the 'real' chefs working. Raymond Blanc was on site as he was practising for the next BBC "Kitchen Secrets" series, and Mark mentioned that he might, 'pop in later', which induced the odd frisson.

Mark discussed the programme which was to be a mixture of him demonstrating some recipes and us preparing some. The atmosphere was very relaxed and everyone got on and performed well together. He started by showing us how to prepare various egg dishes including 'oeufs sur le plat'. A good tip for preparing poached eggs in bulk was to cook them and immediately drop them in iced water – they can then be kept until required and just re-heated for a few seconds and will be perfect. As the initial, more simple, task we prepared poached eggs with asparagus and spinach, which we were pleased to note turned out superior to those of the demonstrator. Apparently it is all to do with the age of the eggs – neither too fresh nor too old.

We sampled this "snack" with some homemade bread (at 9.45am), then moved on to preparation of one of the "base recipes", the Sabayon. Mastering this technique, we were told, extends one's repertoire of desserts, to create mousses, iced parfaits and fruit gratins. The secret to success is in the whisking over a bain-marie of simmering water, then over a larger bowl of crushed ice, before folding cream into the now cold mixture.

Next Mark prepared a wonderful Cauliflower soup with coriander, which I shall certainly be adding to my repertoire, as follows:

Take 1 finely chopped onion and sweat in a large saucepan with 1 teaspoon of curry powder and 2 tablespoons of grapeseed oil for two minutes. Then add florets from one cauliflower and cook for three minutes. Cover with 200 ml milk and 200 ml water and simmer for 10-12 minutes. Liquidize and season. Serve with a few crushed coriander seeds and a spoonful of coriander puree (pureed fresh coriander, grapeseed oil and lemon juice).

Preparation of two salads followed, the first of sautéed squid with chick peas and pak choi. Then a Thai- influenced one based on green papaya and pomegranate seeds, with a chilli and lime dressing. I'm not sure if it is easy to find green papaya but Mark said it would work equally well with bean sprouts.

Leading up to the lunch break Mark demonstrated, and we sampled, steak 'Maman Blanc' and 'La poulet au pot'. Then to ease the hunger pangs, we prepared our lunch of Shetland salmon with spring vegetables and chervil juice.

After lunch we had a tour of the very extensive kitchen gardens. These were most impressive and include a large greenhouse dedicated to micro vegetables. These tiny vegetables have a strong flavour and are used at Le Manoir to garnish several of their dishes.

The afternoon consisted of the preparation of soufflés, the classical English dessert, rhubarb crumble, and finally how the sabayon base can be transformed into a mousse by adding a puree of fresh fruit and some gelatine.

Of course the highlight of the day was a visit by the man himself at the end of the course. We had a lively debate about the merits of programmes like Master Chef and The Apprentice. He has very strong views that current TV food shows are 'sensationalising food' and that he prefers the approach of training young chefs for several years before encouraging them to start their own restaurant.

Certificates awarded, (no one is allowed to fail), we left determined to try out some of the recipes at home, wearing our chefs jackets, the next time we have guests. It was an excellent day and I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone interested in cooking, although if you decided to attend the Food and Wine tasting course, Raymond advised against driving, so I think you should factor in the cost of overnight accommodation!

Janet Bagot.



AN HISTORICAL APPRECIATION OF SWEET WHITE WINES

*Jeffrey Benson attempts to unravel and explain
the mysteries of this complex subject - Part 2*



The village of Sauternes

With the return of the French Kings, trade in sweet white wines slumped due to the establishment of customs barriers, and many vineyards fell into the hands of merchants or small vine growers, who put an end to the practise of picking the grapes in stages. This meant that the Graves type of wine spread and the sweet wine vineyards of the area lost their eminence except for Sauternes. The revolution had abolished the obligation of giving parish classifications to wine, and the merchant-owners of the vineyards neighbouring Sauternes began to give that name to their best wines.

The major sweet wines from Central Europe were fashionable in the numerous princely houses of the day, but it was difficult to persuade this clientele to buy from revolutionary France. Despite the efforts taken by several Sauternes producers after 1830 to promote quality, prices remained low until the enormous success of the 1847 Yquem at the Russian Court, after which the fashion for Sauternes was launched throughout Europe.

During this period the mildew disease known as Oidium swept through the vineyards least disposed to the production of sweet wines. At the same time Bordeaux trade was entering a period of great expansion under Napoleon III. The demand for sweet Sauternes very soon increased and prices showed a considerable rise (2,000-2,4000 gold Francs per barrel). The production of dry wine in the Sauternes region virtually ceased except in those years when conditions were not favourable enough for the production of sweet wine.

The fame of the Sauternes was recognised with the Imperial Classification of 1855 which selected, for the first Universal Exhibition, only Sauternes, Bommes, Barsac, Preignac and Fargues from the entire Gironde area.

The 1855 classification preserved the 'Grand Vins Blancs' appellation and the district appellations, but the merchants spread the use of Sauternes appellation. Towards 1860, the Sauternes, Bommes, and Barsac appellations were still being used; towards 1870 they had been reduced to Sauternes and Barsac, and after 1880 all sweet Bordeaux wine were referred to as Sauternes, and this eventually extended to wines from Russia, South Africa, Canada, and California.

By the end of the 19th century, phylloxera, an aphid that destroys the root of the vine and then mildew had run down the production of Sauternes wines, helped by the general social crises which were putting a brake on the wine trade. As a result some of the vineyards ceased to exist, for example the Pinaud growth at Sauternes.

At first prices remained stable, but the return to normal production, due to improved techniques for disease control, led to a general slump after 1900. Legislation was then introduced to protect wine appellations.

With the divergent points of view of wine merchants who treated Sauternes like any other sweet white Graves wine, and consumers seeking a return to the old classifications, producers in 1908 started up a wine producers' association for the Sauternes and Barsac areas, which required that the Sauternes appellation should be reserved for wine producers from the five following communes: Sauternes, Bommes, Barsac, Preignac and Fargues. However Barsac kept its own appellation, which was interchangeable with that of Sauternes.



Various lawsuits, then laws enacted between 1909 and 1936 defined the scope of Sauternes appellation and eliminated Sauternes products in neighbouring communes not accepted by the association. Numerous laws and regulations prevented the Sauternes appellation being used, even in Sauternes itself, for wines from badly sited vineyards, wines which were not sweet enough, wines which did not come up to standard when they were tasted, and for wines which were over-produced, etc. From 1935 onwards wines meeting all the necessary requirements carried on their label "Appellation Sauternes Controlee". These wines still require a considerable amount of manual labour and therefore are not produced in large quantities.

In the present day the development of the sedentary way of life, the increased consumption of sugar, and the spread of central heating, has reduced the special euphoria, which used to be linked to drinking the sweet wines of Western Europe. However the less sophisticated way of life prevailing in Eastern Europe means that there is a much more developed market there. The regulations and limitations, which still affect the many appellations, which are more or less in competition with each other, are the results of a laborious compromise between politicians and vinegrowers.

In spite of all the legislation and divergence in our social habits, it is the high reputation of a few great vintages that has given Sauternes its worldwide fame. The Sauternes vineyards are one of the wonders of the world, a wonder upheld by just a small number of dedicated vinegrowers and wine-makers working under precarious and difficult conditions, due to the fact they require the right climatic conditions to produce the "pourriture noble", and in addition the appellation for the area only allows the production of 25 hectolitres per hectare, as compared to the Medoc which is allowed 40 hectolitres per hectare. The variety and antiquity of some Sauternes properties somewhat hinders the adaptation to modern economic conditions, but they add charm to an area which is already picturesque and well merits a visit, indeed the connoisseur of wine should take the opportunity to sample its products.

A return to the economisation of energy sources, and to a more traditional approach to gastronomy, will mean that the great sweet white wines will be appreciated once again, but there is no need to wait for these stoical times for a fondness of the great wines of Sauternes can be considered a true sign of cultural refinement. ✦



Château La Tour Blanche

Jeffrey Benson has been in the wine trade for 35 years.

He meets producers worldwide as a buyer and wine maker, conveying his knowledge through his lectures and consultancy work.

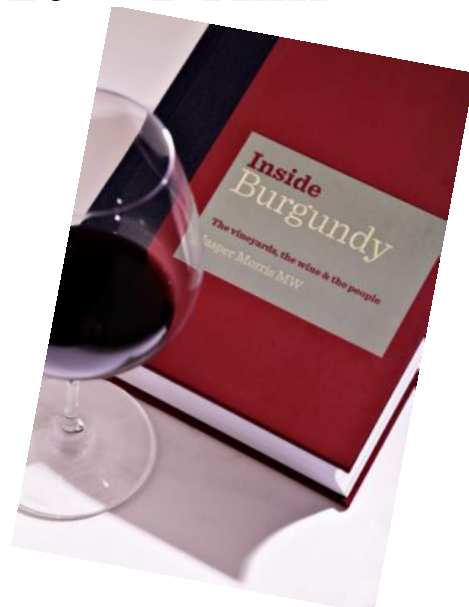
He was involved in the formation of 'Wines of Canada' and was the only non-North American judge to join their tasting panel at a three day event evaluating over 200 wines to determine medal winners.

While advising the wine makers of Zimbabwe on the correct blends required for export, in 1993/4 Jeffrey was instrumental in forming the Zimbabwe Vintners Alliance. After his four years of negotiating with the E.U. Zimbabwe was registered as a wine producing country, enabling the three vineyards to export to the UK. .

For twelve years, Jeffrey ran the annual evening wine school for the Society. He continues to lecture and adjudicate the Wine and Spirit Education Trust examinations and has written and contributed to seven books and many articles on food, wine and travel.

Andre Simon Book Awards 2010 - 'Drink'

Inside Burgundy By Jasper Morris MW



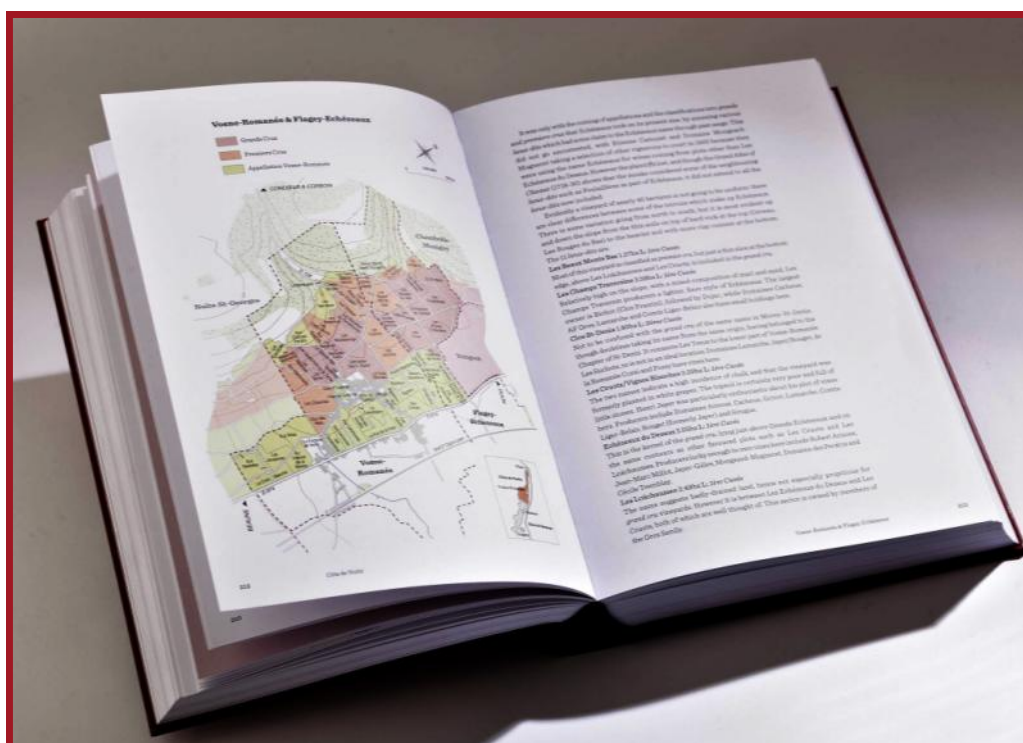
Jasper Morris - The Man

When I left university in 1979 it was a great deal easier to get a job than it is today, though you did have to have an idea about what you wanted to do with your life. At that point all I really knew was what I did not want to do – become a lawyer like previous Morris generations. However, in between the occasional tutorial on medieval history, I had started to develop a real interest in wine. There wasn't much overlap I suppose, though I do remember coming across an ordinance of Henry V's threatening any of his soldiers in France with the death penalty if they drank wine without diluting it at least 50:50 with water.

Fortunately I found a job early on in a retail wine shop in London (Birley & Goedhuis), after which I founded Morris & Verdin Ltd with Oxford-based entrepreneur and restaurateur (and future brother-in-law), Tony Verdin. When we first set up as an independent wine merchant I had no predisposition in favour of one part of France over another, though I doubted that with our limited means our young company could make much headway in Bordeaux. In fact, I came to Burgundy almost last in my anti-clockwise tour of France at various moments in 1981, having begun in February in the Loire valley. Yet even from the first trip I found something special in Burgundy which I had not found elsewhere.

One person was the key. My first guide in Burgundy was Becky Wasserman, who had recently withdrawn from her first business as a barrel broker, selling François Frères barrels in California, and was now concentrating on distributing growers' burgundy in export markets. It was the start of the great movement towards domaine-bottling and I was fortunate enough to be in at the beginning and to be introduced to some of the most passionate exponents.

There may be other, more fanciful, reasons which help to explain my love of Burgundy. I cannot help but feel that there is a link between the chalk and clay soils of my native Hampshire, and the famous clay-limestone *argilo-calcaire* of Burgundy. Perhaps there is scope for a short monograph on the terroir of Basingstoke, drawing parallels between my two passions for wine and cricket and that of another more famous Basingstoke Boy, John Arlott, who shared them?




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Inside Burgundy - The Book

Over the years I began to develop a reputation for being one of the people who knows about Burgundy, supported by various articles in the press and occasional appearances on panels in pinot loving parts of the world. But you can only go so far without having something concrete under your belt, to mix metaphors, and in any case I really wanted to develop knowledge further for my own sake. I have a thirst for learning alongside that for drinking, and writing this book has given me a great opportunity to delve into the appellations with which I was less familiar, and indeed to visit some of the great producers with whom we did not work

There's a glib answer to the question, "so how long did it take you to write the book?" which is 'either two years or thirty years'. I took a percentage of time away from my day job, as Burgundy buyer for Berry Bros & Rudd, over the best part of two years to get the words written, but *Inside Burgundy* is of course the distillation of my whole career as a professional wine-buyer and Burgundy addict.

The publishing process has been particularly fascinating. I knew that I wanted to write 'my' Burgundy book, not one dictated by parameters determined by publishers who might perhaps have preconceived ideas of a standard format. And in any case the wine book publishing industry in the UK was clearly in decline, possibly terminal. I had an idea what I wanted to write and was confident that the book would take shape as I developed ideas. Conversations with others helped me define the parameters more lucidly. And then I settled down to write, give or take the inevitable displacement activities and an increasingly unimpressed wife who was finding it ever harder to get any sense out of me.

At some point along the line I mentioned to my boss, Simon Berry, what I was up to and he wanted to know who was publishing the work. "I haven't asked anybody yet". "Well why don't we do it then" was his immediate response and thus the imprint of Berry Bros & Rudd Press was born. So we engaged an editor, Margaret Rand, and then two seasoned wine publishing professionals, Chris Foulkes and Carrie Segrave, along with a brilliant yet admirably common-sensical designer, Lizzie Ballantyne. (With a book of this size, over 650 pages, not only does it need to look good, but it must be easy to navigate as well – we certainly put considerable effort into this aspect, and I hope succeeded).

In a sense this is self-publishing, but it is more accurate to talk of establishing a new imprint, since there are plans afoot for further titles from other specialist authors – not publishing books for the sake of publishing though. We came up with the concept of 'necessary' books: those in which an expert can speak with authority and in great depth about their area of specialist expertise. There are also plans afoot to develop electronic versions of both *Inside Burgundy* and other forthcoming publications.

The book begins with around 100 pages talking about the background to Burgundy: not just the historical, geographical, geological, viticultural and vinification aspects which all books need to cover. I have tried to do this in a fresh way and have possibly allowed myself a certain licence for self indulgence, especially in the historical part. I was delighted to come across a letter in poetical form by Sidonius Apollinaris, written in around 450AD, complaining about greasy, garlicky Burgundians (brilliantly translated into English for us by Emily Shaw).

Added to this, and for me an absolutely core part of understanding Burgundy, is a discussion of who the Burgundians are. Professor Jean-Robert Pitte recently wrote a book detailing the differences between Burgundy and Bordeaux, but I felt that he did not highlight the crucial point which underscores everything: Bordeaux is based around a great maritime and mercantile city, where anything is for sale if the price is right; Burgundy reflects a traditional farming community, where proprietors consider themselves tenants for life of their family holdings, and they may well marry the girl next door (if her vineyards are right!) It is fascinating to track the weaving web of such Burgundian families as the Bachelets. Moreys, Pillots, Lamys, Gagnards, Bouzereaus, Chavys, Jobards, Grivots, Jayers, Noëllats....

The heart of the book goes through the various Burgundian regions from Chablis and the Auxerrois down to the Mâconnais (though excluding Beaujolais, which I consider to be a separate entity) – but in contrast to previous major works on the region, I decided to concentrate on the vineyards ahead of the producers. After all, the vineyards in the classic villages of the Côte d'Or are relatively immutable, many of them delimited and frequently walled off hundreds of years ago. There is currently more development within the lesser villages and especially at the moment in the Mâconnais where there is a program under way to consider classifying various sites as premiers crus.

I might have left it just as a study of the Burgundian vineyards, but a conversation with Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti convinced me that I could not ignore the producers: Terroir is nothing, he suggested, without man – both *l'homme* and *l'Homme*. An individual man puts his imprint on the wine, interprets the terroir; and Mankind has shaped the vineyards across the centuries, making decisions which have resulted in the various terroirs being as they are today.

Of course, as a still practising wine merchant, I have to be careful about a potential conflict of interests, and I certainly could not attempt any ranking of specific producers. Mind you, one or two critics/commentators have reproached the book for not offering such a ranking, while on the other hand one in particular has criticised me for not identifying those producers with whom I have a commercial relationship. Though it seems to me that to have done so would have been to draw attention to those we work with, which would have earned a great deal more flak!

The producer side of the book will inevitably need updating, and I hope to continue to learn more about the vineyards so that they too may need revision in the years ahead. Obviously the commentary on the vintages, which are detailed at the end of the book, will need renewal as well. New vintages will come on stream and old ones change their character – so clearly I shall still have my work cut out for a while yet!



An Outstanding Festival

Liverpool 2011

by Michael Messent

The Festival was a triumph. No doubt about that. There was a capacity attendance and a broad programme, including a good range of venues, lectures, great food and fine wines, in fact everything that any attendee could hope for in a festival.

The Festival Committee, headed by Val Brookfield-Bishop together with a strong team of local Members, had been working for a couple of years on the project and after a lot of hard work had arranged a programme taking in the whole of the area covered by the former Merseyside, mid-Cheshire and North Wales branches, which are now amalgamated. Special mention must be made of David James, who was given the Andre Simon Bronze Medal during the Festival, substantially due to his sterling efforts in presiding over the finances.

The Festival base was the Hope Street Hotel, a quirky, modern hotel in a building converted from an old carriage works and extended sideways and upwards. It was a short walk from there to the opening reception, held in the historic Liverpool Medical Institute, in the early evening of our first day, Tuesday 14 June. After setting everything rolling nicely with a glass of Riesling from Mosel (Schloss Lieser Kabinett 2007), we were treated to the Andre Simon lecture, delivered by Professor Tom Scott of the University of St Andrews, on German Viticulture during the last 20 years. Professor Scott acknowledged the difficulties which the German wine industry had been undergoing in recent times, not least the fact that their love of classification had led to more confusion than clarity. His main concern is that in their desire to adapt to their perception of changed tastes among wine consumers, they will sacrifice the very features which make German Riesling so distinctive.

On returning to the Hotel we enjoyed a sparkling wine reception featuring a leading English sparkling wine, Nyetimber 2001 Blanc de Blanc Chardonnay. It was followed by arguably the finest meal of the whole Festival, taken "in the round". We ate in a private room on the top floor with lovely views over the City centre. Among the highlights of the fine menu was the opening course of asparagus with soft poached Cheshire duck egg, which was followed by a fish course of wild sea trout with cucumber tagiatelle, mussel beurre blanc and caviar, which was accompanied by a delicious Corton-Charlemagne GC 2000 Bonneau du Martray.

The following morning saw the group divided in two with each group then despatched on a DUKW for a land and water based tour of the City Centre, ending in the Albert Dock (literally). After driving back on to dry land our guides took the two groups round the splendid newly refurbished dock area. It was interesting and informative and served to highlight the tremendous strides taken by Liverpool in the last 20 years to beautify and generally upgrade the City Centre. At the end of the morning, there was a dim-sum lunch in a leading Chinese restaurant in China Town accompanied by 5 well matched wines, and a discussion on them led by our President, John Avery.

After a break in the afternoon, we all assembled again in the early evening to be driven by coach to Knowsley Hall, the home of the Earls of Derby. The building boasts a superb Georgian façade and some very fine Jacobean, Baroque and Victorian interiors. On the terrace at the back of the Hall we were able to listen to music played by an excellent string trio of young musicians. A pleasant evening enjoying music, conversation and the views from the terrace along with a Rosé Champagne Brut produced by Charles de Cazenove. The meal which followed was outstanding and it is difficult to single out any particular dish, but on the wine front we were able to enjoy a fine Ch Cos D'Estournal 1996 along with other treats.



The next day we set out on a coach to Chester, where we embarked upon the cruiser which was to take us on a 2 hour trip on the River Dee. As well as the lovely scenery, we were able to enjoy a tasting of sherry and tapas. The consumption of a huge range of sherries from the House of Lustau was daunting, but most of the party rose to the challenge and enjoyed the fascinating range. The tasting was hosted by Jon Atkinson. As memorable as the tasting, was the presence of the Chester Town Cryer, who delivered a personal welcome in an impressively loud voice.

Upon disembarking, we were given a tour of Chester and returned in time to attend an evening meal at the Isla Gladstone Conservatory. This glass house was erected in 1870 in Stanley Park and has recently been painstakingly restored. Happily, the evening was just warm enough to enable us to gather outside and enjoy a Pinot Noir Rosé Brut from the Camel Valley in Cornwall. The meal was an interesting twist on "Liverpool ethnic dining" featuring fish cakes with home-made tomato sauce, Liverpool Scouse (the traditional stew) and Knotty Ash "jam butties" with ice cream.

Friday morning saw us on coaches again, this time heading off to Llandrillo Catering College, where our President, John Avery, delivered an excellent talk on English wines which we enjoyed, in the company of food cooked by students and served by first year students. We also heard a talk from Dr Shyam Pattiar on Welsh food and produce. A true IWFS combination of food, wine and education. Notwithstanding the morning's consumption of food and wine, the attendees' appetites were reinvigorated upon arrival at the lovely Bodysgallen Hall, a lovely country house hotel now in the ownership of the National Trust.

The lunch, produced by Gareth Jones and his kitchen team, was very fine. Gareth is used to receiving visits from local branch members and from our experience it is understandable why. The fine food was accompanied by some excellent Italian wines. Perhaps the dish that stood out was, pork belly with seared scallop, summer peas and local black pudding.

On Saturday morning, there was a walking tour of the Hope Street area, including the Roman Catholic Liverpool Cathedral at one end and the Anglican Cathedral at the other end of the street. This part of Liverpool has a fascinating history and we learned that there are more Georgian buildings to be found in Liverpool than there are in Bath.

In the crypt of the Anglican Cathedral, Rebecca Lemont, an IWFS member, led a tasting of interesting wines, from Austria, France and Italy, and in keeping with the theme of the whole festival, we were able to enjoy a range of great varieties. Over 60 varieties were tasted during the 5 days, including some very unusual ones. We partook of a buffet lunch and then had a few hours to recover before it was time to travel to the Chester Grosvenor for the final dinner. This Michelin starred establishment, presided over by Chef Simon Radley, did not disappoint and it was a fitting dinner to end to an outstanding festival.





BGA Impressions

A Liverpool

*In my Liverpool home; in my Liverpool home!
We speak with an accent exceedingly rare;
Meet under a statue exceedingly bare.
If you want a Cathedral, we've got one to spare!
In my Liverpool home!*

This is just the first verse of a little luncheon serenade that was shared with my tablemates during a wine tasting in the Crypt of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral during the Festival. The singer was committee member, Mike Saville who once sang in that Cathedral's Choir – the very one that John Lennon was rejected from! The Committee couldn't have provided a more personal, yet all-encompassing and certainly most memorable, "Liverpool Experience" - well - unless Ringo himself had made an appearance!!

As with our gatherings in the Americas, the Society is all about 'Wine, Food, and Friends' so the sixty participants were treated to a wide spectrum of events in Liverpool, Chester and Llandudno. Meals showcased local produce and specialties of Liverpool and neighboring Wales, capitalizing on the regions unique venues, all accompanied by marvelous old world wines.

Suffice it to say, the wines were impressive, the selection made possible by John Avery's counsel and the generous donations from the cellars of Rushton, Avery, Valentine and Bonsall. They ranged from the expected French, Spanish, German and Italian, to some lesser-known producers in Croatia, Hungary and Luxembourg. A week of only 'old world wines' was a bit unusual for the American and Aussie oenophiles but it was certainly appreciated. The biggest surprise was the delightful English sparkling wines – not often seen in the "colonies".

It was surely the foods of the festival that were the star attractions. The "melting-pot-of-ethnicity-American-food-scene" has not necessarily looked glowingly at our English heritage contributions. To put it more succinctly, English food does not have a wonderful reputation in the States (and here is where I won't speak for my Canadian colleagues). What an awakening!

The menus read like a novel by a Michelin food critic. 'Hot planked salmon with palm sugar crust, citrus butter sauce and wasabi caviar- incredible flavor combinations. Knotty Ash Jam butties with coronation ice cream was a real treat. Oakwood Park Pork belly, seared scallop, summer peas and local black pudding- that's ethnic dining! Rump of Welsh lamb, British asparagus, broad bean hash and confit potato – English fare at its finest. Add to that the Welsh "Brityyl! Mor a Ham Caerfyrddin gyda Chennin a Bara Lawr, a Saws Grawn Mwstard!!"

Creative chefs (ranging from students to Michelin starred), prepared the finest locally grown, fished, foraged, or fed, Welsh and English ingredients. The attention to detail was remarkable, with close consideration given to flavor pairings with the wines while avoiding repetitive ingredients and staying true to the ethnic origins of the area.

It was, however, the overall "Liverpool Persona" that left the greatest impact on western visitors. Having had a 'geography class' memory of Liverpool as an industrial center, with its shipbuilding, the smokestacks of heavy industry, and, yes, images of housing perhaps not updated since the films of the years of the Beatles, one hardly expected the Liverpool area to be a tourist mecca. The variety of venue choices was a constant amazement:

It was a remarkable experience regardless of whose eyes you were seeing it through, and those of us on "this side of the Atlantic" were truly impressed. Our hosts outdid themselves on every aspect of the festival – beautiful 'accompaniments' - programs, floral arrangements and mementos, efficient and timely transport, lovely accommodations, and out-of-their-way hospitality. The organization of this festival was so seemingly flawless as to make one forget, (as we in this organization often do), that this was all done by *volunteers*. We are extremely grateful to Val Bishop and her host committee for their overwhelming hospitality.

It's been said that we are two peoples "divided" by a common language. Perhaps, but on this we would all agree with the oft-used British critique: **"Brilliant!"** Thanks for sharing that "Liverpool Home."





Eighteen people from the Asia Pacific Zone travelled to Liverpool for the Festival. Branches represented were Auckland, New Zealand; Kuala Lumpur; Philippines; New South Wales and 8 from the Victoria Branch, Australia.

From beginning to end, we enjoyed our warm welcome to Liverpool, appreciated the tours of its historic and cultural sites, and loved the spectacular settings in which we were treated to an amazing array of dishes complimented with wines from the classic regions of Europe, and also some surprising wines that many of us had not tasted before.

There were so many highlights, but perhaps the most outstanding events were those that combined beautiful settings with the splendid food and wine experience so that all the senses were satisfied.

On the first night we were treated to a Burgundy night in the London Carriage Works Restaurant at the Hope Street Hotel. We were on the fifth floor and had spectacular views over the Liverpool docks which, as the sun set, made for a dramatic backdrop to the meal. The organisers had kindly placed us on tables according to our origin so the eight of us from Victoria sat together. The Burgundies which accompanied the meal were, as usual, delicious and very much to our group's palate but we also very much enjoyed the English sparkling wine which was served as an aperitif. The cured salmon, perhaps as we should have expected in the United Kingdom, was exceptional and the highlight for many of the meals. With a very late sunset, we were able to admire the superb view from the balcony. It was a dramatic and very enjoyable opening to the festival.

The black tie dinner at Knowsley Hall was very memorable. We thoroughly enjoyed the Charles de Cazanove Brut Rose Champagne as we explored parts of the Hall. In the fine dining room we enjoyed an impressive six course dinner accompanied by a special Pessac-Leogran white wine with the hot smoked salmon and then five mature wines from Bordeaux, delicious.

On a cool but sunny day we were treated to a Tapas and Sherry Tasting on the River Dee aboard Lady Diana. We were welcomed by a traditional Chester Town Crier whose vocal assets were certainly admirable. Nine Lustau Sherries were accompanied by tapas that complimented the flavours and richness of the Sherries. We enjoyed the picturesque sights of the river – fishermen on the first day of the fishing season, charming houses, green woods and pastures.

That evening, we went to the beautiful Isla Gladstone conservatory. As dusk fell and subdued blue lighting played over the interior of the building we had an otherworldly experience. We were treated to a comparison of Spanish and Portuguese wines with each course, which was an eye opening experience. Many of us did not know these wines and we could feel boundaries expanding as we tasted them, an excellent experience for such a Festival.

On our trip to North Wales John Avery presented a comprehensive range of English wines. For many it was a revelation as to the quality and diversity of the wines that are now being produced in England. Prepared by the students, we enjoyed tapas style food that displayed the remarkable flavours of Welsh produce and complimented the wines very well.

At the very impressive Bodysgallen Hall a six course lunch was matched with Italian wines. We experienced some great dishes and appreciated the Barbaresco DOCG Renato Fenocchio that accompanied the delicious Rump of Welsh lamb, British asparagus, broad bean hash and confit potato

On our last day we were treated to a very interesting and informative wine tasting in the Anglican cathedral, an amazing venue for such an experience. Later on to Chester, where at a one Michelin starred restaurant we had our final dinner. This was elaborate and highly worked food and enabled a fitting farewell for what had been a wonderful Festival. We sadly said goodbye to friends, some newly found and some old acquaintances from other Festivals.

We greatly appreciated the outstanding dedicated hard work of the Festival Committee: their attention to detail; efficient transport with informative speakers; individual and personalised menus that reflected the spirit of the venue; conveniently sized wine list with space to write our comments. Our gratitude goes to our hosts for answering all our individual questions both before, during and after the event – this was wonderful and certainly helped to make our trip so special.



Our President's Liverpool Experience

John Avery Reviews the Wines

The Festival gave a great opportunity to show as many different European wines as possible and the organisers correctly used every opportunity to include U.K. produced wines and to show how good they are now - especially the sparkling wines. One of the clever ideas of the organising committee was to give every delegate a small note book with a list of all the wines being served.

Tuesday June 14th

We were put in the mood for the Andre Simon Lecture with a glass of Schloss Lieser Kabinett 2007 from Thomas Haag. This confirmed what an ideal wine Mosel Riesling is to serve in the early evening, the low alcohol ensured that people did not go to

sleep during the most interesting lecture.

At the Hope Street Hotel we were greeted by Nyetimber Blanc de Blanc 2001 which is the best known English sparkling wine. Produced in Sussex we were not disappointed with its lively fresh taste and good complexity from the yeast autolysis and a certain creaminess from the sole use of Chardonnay .

Sitting down to dinner we were quickly served a glass of Chablis V.V. Dampf 2008 whose fresh acidity matched the asparagus and Béarnaise sauce. With the sea trout we were served possibly the best wine of the Festival - a Corton Charlemagne Bonneau du Martray 2000 which had excellent complex oatmeal flavour with completely integrated oak and mercifully no sign of the premature oxidation which has affected great White Burgundy in recent years. We then had two well matched red Burgundies and here we did run into some severe bottle variation. Several bottles of the Gevrey Chambertin Cazetiers showed signs of cork taint, a pity as the good bottles were very good indeed and I felt that they were better than the Clos Vougeot 1995 which followed. They were however both good wines and it was a pleasure to drink some really enjoyable Burgundy. Unusually we had a sweet Loire wine with the 'Summer berries' and I was delighted to drink a lovely Demi-Sec Vouvray from my old friend Gaston Huet who my father and I first discovered in the early 1970s.

Wednesday June 15th

At lunch in Liverpool's Chinatown we were served a range of wines. Triade Bianco 2009 from Campania, was a powerful wine made from regional grapes including the highly regarded Greco which gave the wine sufficient acidity for balance. The Alsace Gewurztraminer - Les Princes Abbes from Schlumberger 2006. well suited the food. In the same aromatic style Eitelsbacher Karthausenhofberg Auslese had a delightful maturity being from the 2002 vintage. The low alcohol (8.5 %) and stylish sweetness with excellent acidity made it one of the most enjoyable wines of the festival. Two red wines - Morgon Cote du Puy - a Beaujolais from the great 2009 vintage and the 'piece de la Resistance' 2006 San Giorgio Amarone . Many of the delegates had not had Amarone before and found the sweetness strange but again this great wine from the Valpolicella region of Italy matched the food it was served with magnificently.

Dinner in the very grand surroundings of Knowsley Hall captured most of the attention and the Charles Cazenove Rose Champagne was rather over looked! We had classic Bordeaux wines with the meal which matched up to the elegant surroundings. To have two classic white Graves from that most excellent of Chateau - Domaine de Chevalier was a great treat. The Chateau's 'second wine' - Esprit de Chevalier 2007 was served first and showed what a good vintage 2007 is for White Bordeaux - the 2000 Domaine de Chevalier matched the Hot Smoked plank salmon perfectly the only fault being that I could have consumed a little more! However there was no shortage of wines served and the Cos D'Estournel 1996 was a real treat as it is just at its best and certainly has improved since I last tasted it about two years ago. It was followed by Ch Vieux Mallet 1998 which, although two years younger, being a Pomerol was even more forward and showed the quality of the 1998 vintage (better in St.Emilion and Pomerol than Medoc) very well. To finish this demonstration of why Bordeaux is still the premier wine producing area of the world we had a Ch Coutet 1998 which showed the quality and typical freshness of the Barsac region. Many slept contentedly on the bus back to Liverpool!

Thursday 16th June

On the river Dee in Chester we had a really educational tasting of Sherry which sadly has become so out of fashion. We went through the whole range from Fino and Manzanilla to the rarity of an Almacenista Palo Cortado and tasting Dry Oloroso together with a Moscatel and Pedro Ximenez and the 'finished product' of a sweet Oloroso like the famous Bristol Milk from my home city! I thought it was the most educational part of the festival and congratulations to Lustau and to Jon Atkinson for taking us through the tasting.

Back to Liverpool for dinner in the remarkable Isla Gladstone conservatory. After the aperitif of Camel Vally ' Cornwall ' Pinot Noir 2008 which confirmed the quality of sparkling wines now being produced in the U.K, we had a demonstration of Iberian wines. We compared a Spanish with a Portuguese wine at each course. I generally preferred the Spanish until the end; two of the famous sweet fortified wines of Portugal - Moscatel de Setubal from the region just across the Tagus (Tejo) from Lisbon and inevitably Warre's Vintage Port from the now fully mature vintage of 1983.

Friday 17th June

I organised a tasting of U.K. wines in a Welsh college! The College under the tutorship of Shyam Patiar showed great enthusiasm and prepared a full menu of small amounts of food to set off the relationship of food with wine. I chose the wines, those which had won trophies at the English Vineyards annual competition and those which had been selected by the British Government to serve to visiting dignitaries. We had two Sparkling wines, a Nyetimber 2001 Chardonnay representing the best known of the English Sparkling wines and Ridgeview Blanc de Blanc 2000 which was awarded the trophy for the best wine in the English wines competition last year and it is of interest that the 2006 vintage of this wine was served at Buckingham Palace during the recent State Visit by President Obama. The Ridgeview showed the better of the two but either would have been on the same level as a good Champagne. The 2009 Willow Brook from Three Choirs (Schonburger/Siegerrebe) - was fruity and just 'off dry' but had well balanced acidity . The Madelene Angevine from Sharpham estate in Devon had a more aromatic bouquet almost reminiscent of Sauvignon Blanc and with good complex length. The Bacchus/Reichensteiner although confusingly called 'Fume' as there is no Sauvignon Blanc but had some time in wood and it tasted more French than German despite the grape varieties. The Regner from a Roman vineyard called Wroxeter - I found to be very dry and a bit lacking in flavour. The only red in the tasting was a 2010 Pinot Noir from Plumpton College in Sussex the only school of Viticulture and wine making in England. The 2009 Pinot Noir won the red wine trophy at the EVA competition last year and considerably impressed me. It does show that red from Pinot Noir can be produced in the U.K.

We had lunch at the beautiful Bodysgallen Hall where we had an Italian spumante- a Moscato d'Asti 2008 which was very refreshing after the mornings tasting and this was followed by three other Italian wines to complete the 'Tour of Europe'. The first was made from Greco (remember the first wine at the Chinese lunch?) and had good acidity for a wine from a warm country with complex middle palate. The first of the two red wines was made from Nebbiolo; a 2005 Barberesco from Renato Fenocchio was showing some maturity but as usual with Nebbiolo needs to be kept a few more years before approaching its best . To finish we had another Recioto a white - a Soave made from Garganega which matched up well with the panna cotta and rhubarb flavoured ice cream providing balancing acidity.

Sadly I had to return to Bristol following the lunch which restricted my enjoyment of the good Italian wines and resulted in my missing the Saturday activities including a final tour of European vineyards from Greece to Madeira but I am told that everything went well.



The First European Festival

24th-26th October 1980

By Helen Mills



The first European Festival was held in Devon under the auspices of the Exeter and Torbay Branch. The venue was the Imperial Hotel, Torquay, owned at the time by Michael Chapman who was a member of the Branch. I was well acquainted with the Imperial as Michael was an old school friend of my brother-in-law's and godfather to my niece who would often stay there in their private suite.

There were 40 attendees including the Chairman at that time, Nils Sternby. I believe the Chairman of the Branch was Hugh Kidman. John and Sarah Avery were there with their children. Most of the members were from the UK, but there were four doctors from LA, one member from Florida, two from Miami and two from Wellington NZ, not forgetting Nils from Malmo.

The first Dinner was held at Castle Drogo. Built in 1910 and known as 'the last castle to be built in Britain' it was designed by Edwin Lutyens for Julius Drewe, who retired a very wealthy man after running the Home and Colonial Stores.

As a working teacher I could not get away until four o'clock so I drove like Jehu to arrive at the Castle just in time for Dinner. Surrey to Devon in the dark and no satnavs in those days! On Saturday morning we visited Yearlstone vineyard at Bickleigh just outside Tiverton. The owner was Gillian Pearkes one of the pioneers of English wine production. After a slight disagreement with a member, who wanted to bring her dogs in and was told definitely 'no', we toured the vines and then enjoyed a light lunch.

In the evening we all proceeded to The Carved Angel at Dartmouth for dinner. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the chef/proprietor was Joyce Molyneux who was at the forefront of the growth of modern British cooking. She was one of the first chefs to promote local produce and her restaurant became one of the most noted in Britain. She was a pioneer of the open kitchen where diners could see the chef preparing their food. Joyce retired in 2000 and sold the restaurant. In 2005 it was brought by John Burton Race who renamed it The New Angel. In 2010 Alan Murchison's of L'ortolan fame purchased the premises and reopened in January 2011 as the Restaurant Angélique

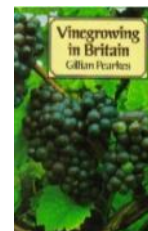
Sunday was a free day to allow us to catch our breath! That night there was a Gala Dinner at the Imperial and we drank a Clyston 1978 from Yearlstone at the reception. One of the many excellent wines at this meal was a Chateau Talbot 1961.

Since then we've had many Festivals all over the EAC region but this was rather a 'toe in the water' event and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it set the pattern for the future.

Gillian Pearkes started her first vineyard at the age of 18. She planted many different varieties collected on her worldwide travels and experimented with wine growing techniques for the English climate. Her first commercial vineyard, Yearlstone in Devon, was planted in 1966, which was a memorable drought year. Gillian became a founder member of the English Vineyards Association in 1967 and for countless years she maintained a debate with Bernard Theobald on the merits of the Guyot training method against the GDC (Geneva Double Curtain) method. Bernard, a contemporary of Gillian's planted Westbury vineyard near Reading in 1968. Both Gillian and Bernard are now sadly dead but the GDC/Guyot debate still rages on.

After Gillian died in 1993, Roger and Juliet White bought the vineyard in '94. They have since built a house, a complete winery and shop, Gillian's original house having been sold off separately. They fully replanted the western half of the original Old Vineyard with grafted Reichensteiner in 2008.

Gillian is best remembered for her book 'Vine-growing in Britain' published in 1982. It is considered by many as the bible of English wine growing and is still available on Amazon at £47.35



Professor Nils Sternby inspects the vines.



Not 'A Pub With No Beer'

'A Hotel With No Food!'

Two of the best meals we enjoyed in 2010 were in the elegant dining room at the recently refurbished Old Mill at Shipston on Stour so, returning from 'black pudding country' this summer, we decided on an overnight stay. We found a room on Laterooms.com at almost half the rack rates. Should I book dinner? I was told not to be silly, the dining room will be empty on a Monday night. There were only four in the restaurant the last time we were there on a Sunday night. The day before I did ring to order my usual sheet and blanket instead of a duvet - we are somewhat incompatible in bed, I get cold shoulders and hot feet and the other half cold feet and hot head so we gave up on duvets years ago!

I said we would be dining, as Ashley James's food was the reason we had booked. 'Oh,' I was told, 'the restaurant is closed, we are changing things and only doing weddings at the moment.' Of course if I had rung the day before, as I suggested, the room could have been cancelled.

Panic stations, out with Hardens. We have given up on the GFG and Michelin, they rarely change and we seem to have 'been there done it' and at least most of Hardens reviews are from unbiased punters. The only promising place in the area was 'The Art Kitchen', a Thai in the middle of Warwick. So much for my vision of sitting alongside the river Stour on a balmy summers evening enjoying a glass of bubbly!

The Art Kitchen rated 1,2,2. Hardens rate from 1 to 5, one being the best, for 'food', 'service' and 'ambiance'. The satnav found it eventually through one way streets and road closures. At 6.30pm it was empty but by the time we left at 8.30pm they were rapidly turning tables. The restaurants website tells us it was 'Founded in 2004 by Barrie and Hilary Cload, the 72 cover restaurant offers a modern take on Thai cuisine within the stimulating environment of an ever changing art gallery.' The only sign of art were two small frames, with prices on them, full of wooden blocks. The place could have done with a few bright paintings to cheer it up.

With the promise of large main course portions we went for starters of 'One Byte's' - traditional sesame prawn toasts and a trio of chicken, prawn and crab cakes. Both were tough and chewy with little flavour served with an uninspired sweet chilli sauce. For main course I chose Ped Ron - 'A speciality of our chef - a half a duck is slow cooked with cinnamon, star anis and Thai herbs then deep fried until crispy and served on vermicelli noodles with cooking liquor'. A large half duck cooked to perfection and beautifully presented. The leg had been boned and the breast sliced and served with plenty of fragrant juice on a bed of noodles. The skin was beautifully crisp and the flesh was moist and juicy. It was, without a doubt, the best duck I have ever tasted and so

large I had to ask for a doggy bag.

Nua Lao Daeng - the menu description was 'Sirloin of Aberdeen Angus beef roasted pink with white onion and Lao Daeng sauce - no direct translation so best to try it you won't regret it'. Suffice to say he did! We rated them 3,3,3, on Hardens standards. We finished with a good cup of coffee before heading down the road to our tastefully decorated Red Room, all the rooms at The Old Mill have been beautifully renovated and named after their colours.

While we enjoyed an excellent breakfast cooked by Ashley and served by his mother we discussed the enterprise. They are now just doing weddings with part time staff. And talking of scaling down the restaurant. They had a team of six in the kitchen making the overheads much too high for the size of the restaurant especially as they only filled up on Friday and Saturday nights. Maybe they should take a leaf out of David Everitt-Matthias book at Le Champignon Sauvage. For eighteen years that restaurant produced some fantastic food with just David and a second chef working round the clock doing everything in what David used to describe as his 'small galley'. Unfortunately there are few youngsters today that have that sort of commitment to their craft. Maybe Aneurin Bevan said it all, "The bu♦♦♦rs won't work."

So we mourn the passing of another fine dining restaurant, when they reopen The Old Mill will doubtlessly have reverted to a pub with scrubbed tables and little finesse, just another sign of declining standards.

Liverpool Festival Award to Val Brookfield-Bishop

I introduced Val to the Mid-Cheshire Branch 23 years ago and she accompanied me to most events, enjoying the individual personalities who formed the membership of the Mid Cheshire branch.

One evening, Jim Charnock, the late husband of Joyce, asked her if she would take on the role of Secretary of the Merseyside Branch. She often says that she did not realise just what a commitment that was to be.

The dwindling membership of Mid-Cheshire, Merseyside and Hireathog Branches, deemed it necessary to unite the three, hence the current title - as the North Wales members decided to join the newly formed Branch.

Val was awarded a bronze medal some time ago and has since worked steadfastly organising successful overseas tours, facilitating the meeting up of members from Branches such as Russia, Turkey, Canada, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Her tours have also included visits to Egypt, China, Dubai and she is taking 32 members to visit the Lisbon Branch in late September, prior to a cruise along the Douro

River. She is currently hoping, with the assistance of Ron, to encourage a 'new Branch' in Tenerife.

She 'chaired' the Festival Committee and received a Diploma from the Society for her major contribution to the success of the event. The Merseyside Branch has now in excess of 60 members, when she began her role as Secretary, the Branch membership was down to nine.

Paul Bishop

ARE YOU READY FOR

SYNTHETIC MEAT



BY PAM BRUNNING



In 1932 Winston Churchill wrote, “Fifty years hence, we shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing, by growing these parts separately under a stable medium.” Over ten years ago, in *Food & Wine*, Solina reported that attempts were being made to grow turkey meat in a test tube. The ‘Foresight Programme’, which was set up by the Conservative government in 1994 and expanded by Labour in 1999, advised ministers on possible developments which are likely to happen by 2020.

It pointed out that with tissue engineering advancing rapidly they considered that public reaction to ‘chicken in a bottle’, a system that would allow people to grow their own meat at home using tissue culture, was feasible. The document produced at the time stated, “It looks like chicken, tastes like chicken but has never been near a real bird.”

Scientists today may be thirty years behind Churchill’s predictions but research is moving forward rapidly to produce synthetic meat. Growing cells to produce meat is just a progression from work being carried out for medical purposes. Skin cells are regularly grown in culture and grafted onto patients’ bodies. In the US a graft was grown from a patient’s trachea cells and transplanted to replace part of her airway that had degraded due to disease and cartilage has been grown and transplanted into a patient’s knee.

The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation maintains that, to provide the world with meat at the present level, annual global production will need to double to 463 million tonnes by 2050. At present livestock systems occupy 30% of the world’s surface excluding the ice covered regions. Rearing livestock accounts for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions which is even more than transport. This is due mainly to the methane released through digestion and indirectly due to land clearance for grazing and livestock haulage. With the increasing demand for higher quality meat based products from developing countries’ synthetic meat is a necessity for the 21st century.

There have been numerous attempts at meat ‘lookalikes’ in the last 50 years, the most notable one being ‘Quorn’ which is produced by growing the filamentous fungus *Fusarium venenatum* in fermentation tanks. First developed in 1964, it wasn’t until Sainsbury’s started marketing it in 1994 as ‘mushroom protein’ that they were told to stop by the Advertising Standards Agency. It is now described as ‘a member of the fungi family’.

The difference with today’s meat substitutes is that it is cultured by isolating stem cells from a living animal. At the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, Vladimir Mironov, M.D., Ph.D., has been working on growing meat for a decade. Stem cells from a living animal are isolated and encouraged to divide and develop into living muscle. Mironov calls his meat ‘Charlem’ - short for Charleston-engineered meat. Mironov says that many dismiss the idea, “It’s the Monsanto syndrome,” he says. “When we use the word ‘engineered’ people immediately think of genetic engineering, which is not the case, this is organic technology,” he declared “we already eat plenty of synthetic food such as bread and yoghurt [sic].”

In the Netherlands, Mark Post professor of physiology at Eindhoven University, has persuaded cells taken from a living pig to grow in a petri dish in the laboratory but as he told a BBC reporter, “We are not quite there yet. We have made big improvements, but it still looks like wasted muscle because we don’t know how to beef it up yet.”

Post is working on ways of improving it by training it and stretching it so that it feels and tastes like meat. He believes, “This product will be good for the environment and will reduce animal suffering. If it feels and tastes like meat, people will buy it.”

Meanwhile, at the University of Bristol Emeritus Professor Jeff Wood is conducting texture and taste experiments with a consumer panel to determine just what people expect meat to taste like. Jeff Wood maintains the process is every bit as complex as tasting wine and considers artificially flavoured meat can never be as good as the real thing. Mark Post refuses to be daunted by this and believes the technology is at the same stage as computer technology several decades ago. He agrees it is an unromantic way to produce meat but thinks it might be a question of “needs must” in the future. A spokesman for the Vegetarian Society says they support the product. Dr Matthew Cole a cofounder of Vegatopia, an organisation that promotes ethical veganism explains, “Vegetarians and vegans would welcome in vitro meat to the extent that they believe that it would reduce the amount of animal suffering and exploitation.”

Even if the product can get past the ‘frankenfood’ image are hot blooded carnivores ever going to take to an engineered steak?

So far the only person that has tried the synthetic meat is a Russian journalist who, before Post could stop him, took a piece out of a Petri dish while on a visit to Post’s lab. The journalist’s reaction - chewy and tasteless. Ah well, I have had a few steaks like that in my time.

Exploring the Mysteries of Single Malt Whisky

Geoff & Clare James of Wessex Branch
Enjoy a 'Wet' Holiday.

When my Wife, Clare, and I decided to have a short break in Scotland this summer, we had no intention of making it an exploration into the mysteries of Single Malt Whisky.

During a conversation with a business acquaintance, I happened to mention our forthcoming trip and within three days she had arranged for us two VIP Distillery Tours. This, of course, put a slightly different slant on our original plans and our itinerary.

Over a lifetime of self-indulgence, I had often tasted and sometimes over-indulged in the Scottish nectar! However, the subtle differences and range of flavours, production methods etc were something, which had never been at the forefront of my inquisitiveness.

After breaking our journey north with a night in the Lake District, we arrived in Glasgow in preparation for our first distillery tour the following afternoon.

We drove with a degree of excited anticipation to AUCHENTOSHAN (pronounced Ock-un-tosh-an, which loosely translated means "Corner of the Field"), one of the few remaining Lowland distilleries. On arriving we discovered a very well designed and interesting Visitor Centre displaying a fine array of malt whiskies from Auchentoshan and other whiskies from the same group of companies, Bowmore and Glen Garioch.

We were introduced to Chris who was to be our personal guide. Chris explained that one of the main ingredients in the making of a Single Malt Whisky was the malted barley and like most modern distilleries, they no longer carried out the malting process at Auchentoshan. We started our tour with a handful of grist – this is ground malted barley. The grist is placed into the mash tun, which is a large copper vessel with a lid. There is a rotating paddle inside to stop the volatile liquid from overflowing. Here hot water is added and after mixing, the resulting liquid is drained off. The solids are sold for cattle food. The liquid now containing the starches etc from the malted barley is fed into a washback where water and yeast is added. The washback is a large barrel made of Oregon pine. This mixture starts to ferment and produces a wort or wash of approx 7% – 8 % alcohol. We were presented with a sample of this cloudy greyish looking liquid which was obtained with the use of a "diver" (a small canister on the end of a rope). Clare refused her offering I, however, quite enjoyed the sweet beer-like flavour.

The next stage of the process is the distilling. Auchentoshan is apparently the only distillery in Scotland that triple distils its' wash. This, they believe, gives it the fine sweet, pure flavour, which is their signature style. Each distilling gives an end product of a higher alcohol content than the previous one, the final one being somewhere in the region of 68%.

Once the distillation process is finished, the volume of spirit produced is recorded for Custom & Excise purposes and then placed in the cask for maturation.

Up to this point, we were reasonably aware of the production methods. What we had little knowledge of was the effect that the finishing in the cask had on producing a huge array of different flavours. Used Bourbon, wine and sherry casks all impart different flavours and colours to the freshly distilled spirit. The time in the cask also has a major effect on the final product that goes into the bottle.

At the end of our tour, we were invited to fill our own bottle with a cask sample of a 15-year-old whisky. This we did. It was duly labelled and presented to us as a wonderful memento of a superb experience.

After a night spent on the shores of Loch Lomond (in a hotel). We progressed to Kennacraig from where we took the ferry to Port Askaig on The Isle of Islay (I-LA is the proper pronunciation as informed by a number of locals). We booked into our hotel in Bowmore and then had a short drive to the South of the Island where we tasted some fine spirits at Ardbeg Distillery.



The highlight of our stay on Islay was the second of our VIP tours at Bowmore Distillery.

The very modern and interesting Visitor Centre was just 3 minutes walk from our hotel. We were eventually met by Eddie Mac Affer the Distillery Manager. Eddie turned out to be an amazing person who started working at Bowmore in 1966 and had been actively employed in practically every process of Single Malt Production. One got the impression that what Eddie didn't know about making Malt Whisky was probably not worth knowing. If you are ever lucky enough to be invited to have a tour with Eddie, you should fly there immediately.

Bowmore is one of the few distilleries that still malts some of its own barley on site, in their case, approximately a third of its own usage. We, as most do, associate Islay Malts with a rich smoky characteristic and, although, we knew this came from Peat, did not know how the peat imparted its flavour to the spirit. This we now understand happens when the malted barley is dried using peat fires. The smoke from the peat fire is absorbed by the malted barley and subsequently that flavour comes through in the final product.

We commenced our tour in the malting rooms, which were set over three floors where approximately 70 tonnes of barley is spread to a depth of 150mm – 200mm. Here the barley starts to change its character by throwing out small root-like shoots – this, evidently releases the starches which will, when combined with water and yeast, turn into alcohol. During the time the barley is on the floor it has to be regularly turned to maintain a consistent temperature - this used to be done manually with fairly large wooden shovels. Eddie took great delight in showing us how he started his career with a demonstration of turning the barley. We were both invited to have a go!

We then followed the process through to where the wash was quietly fermenting in its Pine washbacks. Once again, we were invited to try a sample of the fermented wash. Clare again refused her offering but I took a fairly large gulp – it was after this that Eddie informed us that the wash is an incredible diuretic. I did, of course, thank him very much for his timing!

Next the stillroom where the wash undergoes a double distillation before being placed into the finishing barrels.

After an interesting wander through the No.1 Vaults, Eddie invited us to taste a couple of totally different cask samples – one a classic smoky golden colour which perhaps most people would associate with an Islay Malt, the other was almost the colour of red wine and smelt of Christmas Puds – an absolutely amazing drink – most of its flavour and colour coming from the sherry cask where it had been languishing for the past 15 years.

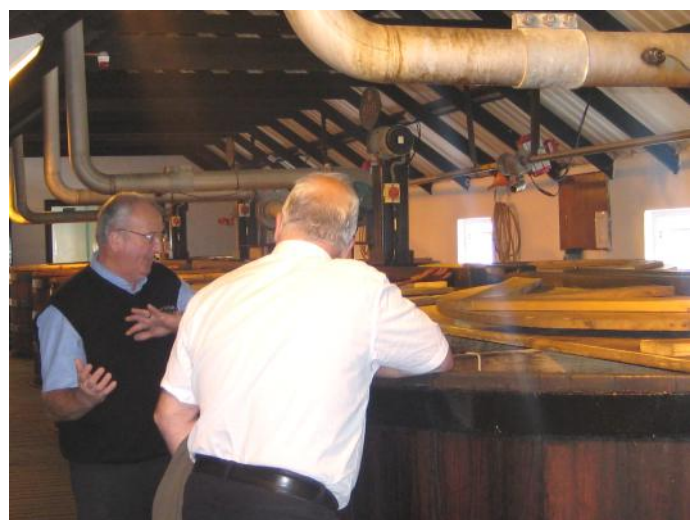
At the end of what I can only describe as one of the best experiences of its type that we have had for many years, Eddie kindly presented us a signed bottle of their 17 year old 'Original' as a memento of our visit.

We continued the rest of our tour visiting various sights around Scotland and drinking the odd sample of Single Malt as and when the opportunity presented itself. All in all, a superb experience which we would fully recommend. ✨

Geoff 'having a go'. Hard work these holidays!



Eddie explains the mysteries of Bowmore's brew



At last - the fruits of his labours!



Middlemen on the Menu

by

Prof Alan F Harrison

Regular readers of this series have covered some fifty garnish names under various headings. This month extends the *mandarin* concept (see *Food & Wine*, June 2010, p 23) one rank lower, as it were, to the middlemen within French society in earlier times.

Antoine-Augustin **Parmentier** (1737 - 1813) is remembered for being a vocal promoter of the potato as a food source in France and throughout Europe. However, this was not his only contribution to nutrition and health. He was responsible for the first mandatory smallpox vaccination campaign in 1805, and was a pioneer in the extraction of sugar from sugar-beet. He founded a school of bread-making, and he studied methods of conserving food, including refrigeration. Probably his most widely-known menu memorial is *Pommes Parmentier* - cubes of potato lightly sautéed and finished in the oven. The soup *Purée Parmentier* is as well known.



If word-association results in *see Parmentier, think potato*, then *see Condé, think rice*. The context is the sweet-trolley, now overtaken by stricter hygiene practice. When pâtissiers found rice and fruit to be used, *Poire* or *Peche Condé* perhaps resulted by adding creamed rice. *The Most Serene House of Condé* is a noble lineage of descent from a single ancestor - Louis de Bourbon. The thinner the blood became the more middlemen it produced.

Another pudding you could try is *Croûte Joinville*. The *savarin*, a ring of egg-enriched yeast sponge was popular within haute cuisine and slices of it form the *croûte*. The slices are flavoured with kirsh and presented as a circle, each piece covered with kirsched pineapple and topped with chocolate pastilles. Jean de Joinville belonged to a noble family from Champagne, lived from 1224 to 1317 and chronicled aspects of mediaeval France.



See *Chateaubriand*, think steak. However, before looking at that aspect, let's finish the sweet course. The era of haute cuisine employed the *bombe-mould* - a copper container for a special icecream product. *Bombe Chateaubriand* meant that the mould was lined with poached halved apricots and filled with the *bombe* mixture. The dish is not served in diplomatic circles these days.

Rognons Chateaubriand are grilled kidneys served with watercress and *turned* or shaped potatoes cooked in the oven. Sauce *Chateaubriand* is sent to the table and comprises shallots, thyme, bay leaf, mushroom, white wine, and *meat glaze* (concentrated stock). It is finished with chopped parsley and tarragon and plenty of butter. The sauce would accompany the *Chateaubriand* steak. François-René de Chateaubriand (1768—1848) was a French diplomat, politician, historian and writer who served Louis XVIII as Secretary of State for two years and Napoleon as an ambassador. The steak was created by Chateaubriand's chef Montmireil.



We will end this short piece with Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Furst von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein 1773—1859. The *Repertoire de la Cuisine* from which our garnish constituents are taken is only small and it's as well this man's garnish title is just **Metternich**. He is remembered on the menu in the form of a *consommée*, two egg dishes, and there are main course menu items featuring salmon, snipe and ham. Often, the dishes include foie gras and truffle.

Metternich took a prominent part in the Congress of Vienna and was involved in European politics from 1814 to 1848. He was influential in the reconstruction of Europe after the Napoleonic wars. After the fall of the imperial government in 1848, he fled to England which helps explain his prominence in the *Repertoire de la Cuisine*. To safeguard the balance of power, Metternich formed a 'Holy Alliance' between the monarchies of Austria, Russia, Prussia and France. There were no better middlemen and he was best of all those on the menu..



Readers may like to explore, glass in hand, our regular contributor Alan Harrison's newest section of his Gastronomy website. www.enjoydrink.co.uk



"The Serendipity of Travel!"

Bread And Wine In South Africa

By Anne Valentine

A chance meeting outside a barber's shop in the Waterfront Complex in Cape Town by two members of the Manchester branch and a member from St James's, led to six members meeting at the Bread & Wine restaurant in Franschhoek. The restaurant is part of a winery called Moreson.

The chef, Neil Jewell, was born in Manchester. He began cooking when both parents started working and Neil took on the role as 'head chef', no one had any idea he'd be so good at it. After school he studied at the South East Essex College of Art and Technology and honed his skills in the kitchens of Stephen Bull, Richard Corrigan and Ray Neve. Neil Jewell, the Charcuterie Guru, started at the Bread & Wine Vineyard Restaurant in 1999. His hard work and zest is the inspiration behind the perfectly balanced, seasonally influenced and surroundings inspired, menu. His passion lies in the homemade Charcuterie that he prepares with mountains of patience and bucket loads of love, and which has ensured that his scrumptious Charcuterie is used by restaurants far and wide. His wife, Tina is the "baker" and provides the freshly made bread for the restaurant.



The winery is owned by the Friedman Family who purchased it in 1986. It was originally part of La Motte, one of the original farms granted to the French Huguenots in 1695. The wine maker Clayton Reabow is a South African, who graduated from the University of Stellenbosch in 2004 and travelled widely, working in Bordeaux and Mosel, Germany before returning to be appointed winemaker at Moreson. A beautiful silver coated, green eyed Weimaraner dog called Miss Molly is very much part of the estate and some wonderfully named wines are called after her.

Miss Molly, Kitchen Thief (Sauvignon Blanc) "Miss Molly loves to share and she's as free with her love as she is with our groceries. An easygoing loveable rascal with heart-melting mannerisms that ensure she gets away with just about everything."

Miss Molly in my Bed (Cabinet Sauvignon, Merlot blend) "Miss Molly doesn't do mornings. Her late night social schedule ensures that, by sunup, she's ready for bed. After Miss Molly's breakfast is served, and devoured, she loves to climb (uninvited) into whichever bed is available."

Miss Molly, Hoity Toity (Chenin Blanc, Viognier blend) "During the afternoon Miss Molly is most often found sunning herself in our finest leather wingback chair. Here she devotes her time to relaxing – receiving visitors, love and adoration at her leisure."

Besides these wines, Moreson produces four Méthodes Cap Classique, three Premium White wines and five Premium Red Wines, several of which have won medals.

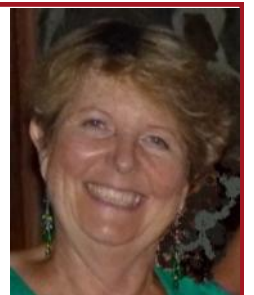
Back to the beginning, it was David Chapman and Derek Fletcher who met John Valentine in The Waterfront. John was so astonished at seeing them he didn't even think of asking where they were staying! Luckily he had David's mobile number so a meeting was arranged.

On a beautiful, hot cloudless day at the beginning of March the three couples met up under the vine canopy of the restaurant. After enjoying a glass of sparkling wine, the Moreson Solitaire (a Blanc de Blanc) we moved on to a wonderful board of charcuterie with some fresh baked bread served with smoked rooibos butter. With this we drank a 2009 Chenin Blanc - the light acidity being able to "cut" the charcuterie. A 2009 Chardonnay accompanied our next course, with four people having a Risotto of truffle, cap classique, pea and auriccho cheese, one a Ravioli Cabonara and one a Beech smoked hake, saffron puree, asparagus and potato wafer.

By this time, we were all feeling more or less replete, but two of us managed a dessert. One was a chocolate soup with fresh berries, and the other a baked yoghurt cheesecake served with ice cream and crystallized fruits. To round off the luncheon we followed with coffee, which was served with a plate of "home-made" sweets, and reflected slowly on the Serendipity of Travel!



When Anne Valentine went to work for Dr Louis Hughes in Harley Street in January 1987 he was Chairman of the Society and it was through him that she became a member. She was part of the committee for the London 1993 International Festival and an event organiser. Since then she has been lucky enough to attend many of the IWFS festivals around the world and make many new friends.



around the branches - Berkshire

A Trip Down Memory Lane - To Bothy Vineyard



Sian, Richard & Dorothy



In July members of the Berkshire Branch spent a delightful summer's day in the company of Richard and Sian Liwicki, current owners of Bothy Vineyard at Frilford Heath near Abingdon, Oxon. For many members this was an opportunity to re-visit a well-loved place for they had personally helped the original owners plant vines and harvest fruit in the late 1970s and 1980s. Amongst the visitors was a specially invited guest in the person of Dorothy Fisher, who, with her husband Roger, originally selected the site and began developing the vineyard. In 1978 Dorothy and Roger had just stepped down from the role of Secretary of the Berkshire Branch of the IWFS and at the time they were unusual in that they took great care selecting their site. Here the soil comprises 3 feet of sandy loam on top of coralline brash ensuring that the soil drains freely: vines like dry feet! Being dry the soil heats up quickly and is reputedly the warmest soil in Oxfordshire. The low nutrient levels in the soil are good for fruit as too rich a soil promotes only vegetal growth. The site is in the rain shadow of the Cotswolds and the Chilterns, botrytis from damp conditions being the bane of the English vinyeron, and is screened from wind by tall stands of trees.

On the site are grown several white grape varieties mainly used in blending including Albalonga, Huxelrebe, Perle, Optima, Ortega, Findling, Kerner and more recently Baccus and Solaris. Recent planting of red varieties include Regent, Dornfelder, Dunkelfelder, Rondo and latterly Acolon, a crossing between Blaufränkisch and Dornfelder also encountered in the Ahr Valley. Richard gave us a very interesting, if somewhat bleak, resume of the problems encountered by English wine growers which include; botrytis, late frosts, wasps, foxes, badgers and deer, against whom Poppy, the vineyard dog, seems to be the most effective deterrent. Birds are also a problem and Richard has tried kites on poles, helium balloons, gas guns, bird wailers and netting: some of these methods do not endear him to his neighbours!

In the winery, Richard is very keen to keep out oxygen, even to the extent of pre-filling the bottles with CO₂, which he believes can shorten the life of the final product. He inoculates with yeast rather than using the naturally occurring varieties as he feels wild yeast can accentuate characteristics which are not always the most desirable. He also filters with bentonite to take out the protein. He describes their bottling facility as "a 5 person line with 2000 bottles per day capacity". Bothy production

has been increasing year on year and although it reached 10,000 bottles in 2010, this is still "boutique" territory. Our tasting began with their current silver medal winning wines including The Doctors Bacchus 2010: pale but with a good citrus nose, very refreshing and long in the mouth; Oxford Fumee 2010: this wine was barrel fermented from young Ortega grapes and was again pale, with a light floral nose, high levels of acid but with good fruit; Oxford Dry 2010: a blend of Perle, Solaris, Huxelrebe and Findling this year, it gives a pale wine with really rich round flavours, especially in the middle of the mouth, and good overall balance; Renaissance 2010: made from old Ortega fruit it has a full and fruity nose, more sophisticated flavours, a dry edge but with a very small amount of residual sugar; Halcyon Days, a sparkling wine with a floral nose and slight sweetness and finally the Oxford Pink Rose 2011, made from 50/50 Acolon/Regent,

delivering a fine strawberry nosed summer wine.

All these wines were excellent drinking but we had another surprise in store. Dorothy Fisher and Brian Slark had raided their (obviously deep!) cellars and brought along wines from 1983 - a Perle/Huxelrebe; from 1992 - a Huxelrebe/Findling sur lie; from 1994 - an Oxford Dry; from 1983 - the first vintage of Ortega/Optima; from 1992 - an Ortega; and from 1994 - a Noble Selection which exhibited TBA type aromas! What a fantastic opportunity to taste and compare English wines?

We rounded off the day with a super picnic spread, supplied by Added Ingredients of Abingdon, eaten in the grounds of the vineyard and washed down withBothy wines! Many thanks to Brian and Dorothy for the additional wines and to Richard and Sian for their hospitality. Bothy Vineyard operates with as much voluntary assistance as they can muster and can be found at www.bothyvineyard.co.uk

Chris Graham

around the branches - St James's

Dorchester Restaurant Award

On 6th June the St James's Branch held a black-tie dinner in the magical setting of The Penthouse and Pavilion Suite of The Dorchester. We have been going there each year for the last ten years. This year, however, it was to be even more special as, at the end of the dinner, we were to present them with our Society's Restaurant Award for the exceptional dinner they had served us last year. This Award was well overdue as we have, in fact, been enjoying superb food and service here for many years.

Things did not start too well as, three days before the event, we received a very apologetic message from Chef Henry Brosi saying that, much to his regret, he would be unable to cook for us on the night and receive the Award as he had to attend a special 'Global Food & Beverage Strategy Meeting' out of London on that day. The kitchen would therefore be under the direction of Prashant Kulkarni, his Senior Sous-Chef,

who would also receive the Award on his behalf.

We could hardly believe our eyes (and, more to the point, our taste buds) when we found that this year's performance was even better than last year's, prompting many members to say that this was the finest event our Branch had ever had!

The wines, all coming from members' private cellars, were as magnificent as the food. A sample bottle of each had been sent several weeks earlier to Henry Brosi, who succeeded in creating the perfect dish for every wine. It would be unfair to single any dish out as they were all delightful, but I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning the roast fillet of Wagyu beef with its own pie as this was the most tender, juicy and flavoursome beef I had ever had in my life. Service was impeccable, with attention to every detail.

At the end of the evening Chris Bonsall, Council member and ex IWFS Chairman, presented the Award for Excellence to Prashant Kulkarni and to the Assistant F & B Manager, who attended on behalf of Renaud Gregoire, the F & B Manager.

I cannot imagine that anybody anywhere ate and drank better than us that evening. A memorable occasion and a triumph for The Dorchester. One wonders, what can they do for an encore?

Ari Sofianos

Wines

*Pol Roger Brut NV (in magnums)
Donated by Françoise Peretti*

*Domaine Gauby Vieilles Vignes 2008, Roussillon
Donated by Richard Duncan*

*Puligny Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Pucelles Domaine
Leflaive 1999
Donated by Chris Bonsall*

*Volnay 1^{er} Cru Champans Marquis d'Angerville 2001
Donated by John Valentine*

*Château d'Angludet 2000
Donated by Robin Forrest*

*Schloss Bockelheimer Hermannshöhle Riesling Auslese
1989
Donated by Andrew Brodie*

Menu

Canapés

~oOo~

Truffled linguine with Cromer crab and langoustine

~oOo~

*Sole Bonne Femme with spiny lobster, potato mousseline
and meunière butter*

~oOo~

Bone marrow with shallots and gherkins

~oOo~

Roast fillet of Wagyu beef with its own pie

~oOo~

Acacia honey brûlée with honeycress and apple blossom

~oOo~

Coffee and petits fours

around the branches - Manchester



An "Escape From The Rain Dinner" at The Edge

When planning our May event, the committee hoped for continued sunshine. A bad mistake. It rained - in spades. Gone was the opportunity to have our Marqués de Cáceres Rioja Rosado 2009 in the hotel garden. Rosé wines are, it seems, undergoing a renaissance and this was generally regarded as an excellent example of the genre.

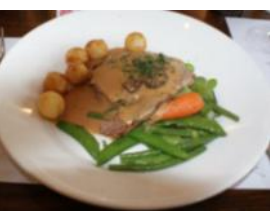
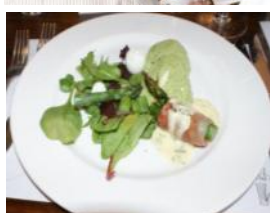
The rain apart we were very well looked after by the eponymous Alderley Edge Hotel. A goodly gathering of

members was very impressed by the first course which was individual warm tartlets of asparagus and Cheshire cheese with spinach and nutmeg pesto and some aged balsamic vinegar. Asparagus is not the easiest dish to match for wine but most people felt that the Vergelegen Sauvignon Blanc 2010 from Stellenbosch, South Africa was a good accompaniment.

It being Spring, the choice for our main course was roasted rack of new season's Welsh lamb, basted with redcurrants, garden rosemary and orange. The racks had not been trimmed and a small minority of members were not too happy with the fat but, of course, there was no need to eat it. Most, however, thought the fat had helped in the cooking which had produced a nicely pink centre in the meat. The plan had been to serve a Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon with this dish. This was frustrated by its last minute removal from the hotel's wine list because it was no longer available from the wine merchant. The substitute (Rioja Azabache Crianza 2006) was very well received and, indeed, Rioja is well-recognised as a great companion for lamb.

The dessert, individual roasted pineapple tarte tatin with a cardamon anglaise and a coconut sorbet, was a real "tour de force" with lots of differing yet complementary flavours. This met with universal approval. Throughout we had efficient and impeccable service at table and the staff were publicly thanked for this as was chef for his efforts in the kitchen.

David Chapman, Chairman



Summer Lunch At Cabbage Hall

The last time we had Summer Lunch at this restaurant was in September 2010 and owing to its popularity, the Committee decided to try it again.

Acclaimed North West Chef, Robert Kisby took over Cabbage Hall in March 2009. Before that he worked at Bridge-water Hall and Le Mont in Manchester and Cock O'Barton in rural Cheshire. He takes pride in sourcing the finest ingredients, many of which are locally grown. Therefore his menu changes seasonally.

On our arrival we were served a glass of Wither Hills, Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. Pale white and vibrant with gooseberry and grassiness on the nose with peach overtones on the palate and good length, the wine made an excellent and refreshing aperitif.

For the starter we had Asparagus Hors D'Oeuvre, which consisted of asparagus and quail egg salad, asparagus mousse and baby leaves and Woodalls Cumbria air dried ham, béarnaise sauce. The Wither Hills Sauvignon Blanc complemented the dish well.

For the main Course, we were treated to Escalope of Veal, Morel Mushroom Cream Sauce, Parisienne Potatoes and Summer Vegetables.

There were a few contrasting views about the veal – some members seemed to find it a little chewy and difficult to cut. Personally I found that once I changed my knife for a sharper one, I did not have a problem. The mushroom sauce was excellent and went well with the locally grown vegetables. To complement the course we had a 2009 Fleurie, 'flower label' from Duboeuf with its cherry fruit, well balanced with sweet tannins to finish.

For the dessert there was a choice of Chocolate Marquise or Eton Mess, both of which were very well received.

Tasty coffee and (for some) tea brought the meal to a conclusion.

Robert had produced a tempting menu for us and Chairman, David Chapman thanked him for his welcome speech and for the fine meal that we had all enjoyed.

Bob Lloyd

around the branches - Manchester

An "Escape From The Rain Lunch" at Valerie Hall's!

Our Annual Summer Garden Party was blessed with rain this year – but we were well protected from the torrential downpour by a marquee in the beautiful riverside garden of our Secretary Valerie Hall.

Forty two members and guests arrived in waterproofs and happily accepted the sparkling Aperitif – a choice of White or Rosé Undurraga Brut NV – Chile. At this popular event the Committee, aided by their partners, prepare and serve the food. We chose a picnic luncheon based on recipes from our Branch Recipe booklet. We hopefully had chosen a menu for a sunny summer's day and ordered the Marquee just in case it wasn't – a wise decision.

An artistically presented wild Salmon Pâté with Thai lemon and coconut grass seasoning accompanied by a Noilly Prat mayonnaise sauce and garnished with Prawns and Cherries and served with Irish Soda bread was received enthusiastically. It was delicious and the Domaine Begude "Le Belle Ange" Chardonnay 2010 PGI Pays d'Oc matched this starter well.

The main course of Oriental Nectarine and poached Chicken Salad with a Honey, Soy and Sesame dressing together with a perfect Potato Salad and Mixed Leafs delighted the taste buds – and our members. The Saumur Chamigny "Les Tuffeaux" 2009 Château de Targé A.C. was a well rounded and enjoyable wine that drank well with this course and with the Quartet of locally sourced á point Cheeses that followed.

The star cheese was Burt's Blue, a semi-soft Altrincham made Gold medal winner in 2010 which contrasted well with a traditional farmhouse Bleu d'Auvergne and an unpasteurized Brie de Meaux. The Caerphilly like Hereford Hop was from an ancient recipe revived in 1988 and made from Hereford Hops and cow's milk with it's rind of lightly toasted hops completed the cheese platter.

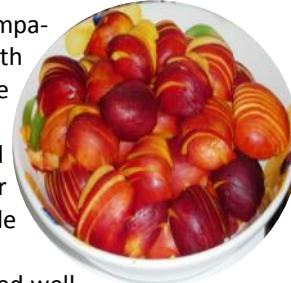
Home grown rhubarb was used to make a Rhubarb Fool Dessert that was served with rhubarb syrup, ginger biscuits and a mint leaf. It had a beautiful balance of sweetness and acidity and rounded off the meal delightfully.

The atmosphere in the marquee was sunny. Our members enjoyed the meal and appreciated the enthusiasm and work of the Committee and the Committee appreciated the satisfaction of the members and the comments received. Outside the rain continued to fall and after the coffee was served, waterproofs were donned again for the journey home.

As the Committee and their partners tidied up, plans were being made for next year's meal hopefully with sunshine both outside and inside the Marquee.

We thank Valerie for opening her lovely home and garden to us and look forward to sharing and enjoying food, wine and friendship again.

Tricia Fletcher



Manchester Branch Diamond Jubilee Weekend 11th To 13th November 2011 Lindeth Howe Country House Hotel, Bowness, Cumbria

This year is the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Manchester Branch and to celebrate the Committee has arranged a gourmet weekend in the Lake District. We have secured accommodation at the privately-owned Lindeth Howe Country House Hotel in Bowness-on-Windermere - <http://www.lindeth-howe.co.uk/>. The hotel has a first-rate restaurant and has won many awards for its cuisine. The bedrooms are all en-suite, there are excellent public rooms and the hotel has an indoor heated swimming pool and exercise room.

The celebrations start on Friday afternoon with a welcoming Afternoon Tea with Scones, Jam and Cream. In the evening a sparkling apéritif accompanied by canapés in the lounge will be followed by a four course dinner with a different wine for each of the first three courses selected from the hotel's wine list. Dinner will finish with a choice of tea or coffee with petit fours.

On Saturday, after a leisurely breakfast with extensive choices of both hot and cold dishes you will be free to explore the many attractions in the area.

In the latter part of the afternoon there will be a tutored wine-tasting followed by a Gala Dinner with which we will enjoy our own fine wines. The evening will open with Vilmart N.V. champagne and canapés. Dinner will be five courses with fine wines with each course. Some special wines include 2007 Clos du Château de Puligny-Montrachet, Bourgogne Blanc A.C. with the fish course and 2003 Ch. Larcis-Ducasse St. Emilion Grand Cru Classé with the Beef Wellington main course.

Check out will be after breakfast on Sunday. The hotel also offers special terms for dinner, bed and breakfast on both the night of Thursday the 10th and/or Sunday night itself for anyone wanting to extend their stay. Please ask me for details if interested.

The cost of the weekend including dinner, bed and breakfast, afternoon tea on arrival, the wine-tasting and all the wines with both the dinners is £320 per person. There are no single room supplements. The number of rooms are limited and, in case of excess demand, it will be on a "first come first served" basis.

For full details and booking form please contact David Chapman, 15 Ashborne Drive, Summerseat, Bury BL9 5PD
E mail db.chapman@btinternet.com Please note £100 per person deposit is required when booking.



around the branches - Zürich



A Weekend in The Ticino,



On the first weekend in June ten members gathered in Locarno for a gastronomic discovery of the Locarno region of the Ticino, a region of southern Switzerland. The event opened with an orientation program from our host members and organisers, Edy and Ruth Hug at a wonderful little café on the waterfront 'Al Porto'. Our first event was a visit to the Falconeria Locarno (www.falconeria.ch). Here, some 18 birds of prey are on display including bald eagles, vultures, falcons, hawks and owls. Two falconers put them through their paces and the audience had a chance to be at one with these birds, as can be seen in the photos. The program lasts for over an hour and the audience, can, after the show, spend time with birds on the handler's arms. It was without doubt an exciting afternoon to begin the weekend. That evening we bundled into a minivan and drove out to our host's house in Brione, a short drive straight up

the side of the local mountain. Here cocktails in the form of Champagne and hors d'oeuvres were served accompanied by a spectacular view over the Lago Maggiore. Then on to the evening repast. In the Ticino, one does not eat at restaurants if one is in the know. One eats at a Grotto.

The reputation of a Grotto is by word of mouth and they are all in the mountains. The Hug's had selected for the weekend two types, the first one was a Rustico Grotto in the Val Resa, the Grotto Ritrova. We sat down to a first course of a Ticinese meat platter with local cheese; this was followed by a duo of ravioli, one vegetarian and one with meat and then a main course of Brasato with ticinese polenta. A Merlot del Ticino produced by a local winery accompanied the meal. It was actually very good and suited the meal excellently. However we were never able to find out from whom or from exactly where the wine came from. It was served from litre bottles, which were without labels. Dessert was a Sorbetto d'Uva with a healthy dollop of Grappa. Needless to say we were all feeling well lubricated by the end or what we thought was the end. However the Grotto brought a selection of fine Grappas to the table and many of us took advantage of a last digestive with an espresso before we wandered out to our vehicle for the trip home down the mountain.

Saturday morning dawned to a torrential downpour that carried on for most of the day. Our itinerary included a trip to the Isola Brissago (Brissago Island) off the coast of Ascona. Brissago is noted for its microclimate, which allows almost any plant in the world to grow on the island. The lake is very deep at this point and Brissago is actually an underwater mountain whose tip forms the island. Our tour, in the rain, visited plants from every continent including New Zealand ferns and many rare flowers and trees from all over the world. There is a rare Tasmanian tree thought to have been long extinct but now some 100 have been discovered, one of which has been transplanted on Brissago. This horticultural paradise was created by a Russian princess and her husband Richard Fleming St. Leger who bought the island in the late 19th century and imported plants from all over the world.

Lunch was served in the palatial house that was the residence of Max Emden who had taken over the island in the late 1920s. Lunch began with a classic Melon and ham starter followed by a Swiss speciality, Egli (pike) fillet with steamed new potatoes and ending with pears cooked in red wine. The wine accompaniment was a Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc from Angelo Delea.

By mid afternoon the rain had abated somewhat and we were able to have a walk around Ascona's old town full of interesting boutiques and cafes. For some of us, a glass of Merlot del Ticino in a water front café with spitting rain completed the afternoon.

The evening saw us once again piling into our minivan for a trip up the Centovalli to Ponte Brolla and the 'Edel Grotto' Da Enzo. Here we were definitely in the upmarket Grotto with the car park full of Bimmers, a Ferrari and an Aston Martin.

We began outdoors with a glass of Franciacorta Methode Champenoise and a Lardo and Mascarpone on paper thin pastry crust. We then moved indoors and the main event began with a Tomato ginger soup with a Tuna tartar offering from the chef.

The first course was Carpaccio di Vitello Nostrano con Ricotta Fresca di Cimalmotto, then followed a Risotto Carnaroli ai Pomodori Datterini e Funghetti Estivi. The main course was a choice of either Medaglione di Manzo "Black Angus" con Asparagi e Tartufo Nero or Bianco di Rombo, crema al Wasabi e Alghe alla Soya. The latter choice a fish dish. Dessert was a Fantasia di Dessert "Da Enzo". The wines were a white 2009 Temenos made by Werner Stucky and 2008 Quattromano Merlot del Ticino en Magnum, a wine made by four of the most renowned winemakers in the Ticino, Guido Brivio, Aneglo Delea, Feliciano Galdi and Claudio Tamborini. The food was fantastic, the wines sublime and it was a great 'Grand Dinner' to end the weekend.

Sunday morning, the Hug's had planned a half day to see the Mercato in Cannobio in Italy, a one hour boat ride down the Lago Maggiore. Unfortunately Sunday morning started much the same way as Saturday had, torrential rain and the consensus was that soggy clothes and shoes for one day was enough and we departed homeward.

A superb weekend was had by all the participants and one that we hope will be repeated in the coming years in different regions possibly under better weather conditions.

Photos:- Hans-Walter Keller Text:- John Macdonald



around the branches - Leicester



Spring Events

On Thursday March 17th we held our 45th AGM at the Leicestershire Golf Club. On arrival we enjoyed a glass of Lindemans Bin 30 Sparkling Rosé before proceeding to tables in a private room for the meeting. Roger Austin, our chairman, detailed the events in our successful year and we elected our new chairman, Margaret Bowen. Suggestions for the next year's programme were made.

Dinner started with a sweet onion and dolcelatte tart accompanied by a pear and walnut salad. Accompanied by a Viognier, le Beau Chene. The main course of roasted breast of duck with a cherry and berry sauce was disappointing. The duck was tough and many people couldn't eat it. With this we drank Ochoa Tempranillo Crianza. The pudding was enjoyed, crepes with a bitter orange and brandy sauce and coffee rounded off a very pleasant evening.

Sophie Condon and Ron Dow arranged for us to have a return visit to the Baker's Arms at Thorpe Langton on Thursday May 12th. Prosecco on arrival was accompanied by delicious canapés – mini tartlets with smoked salmon mousse, duck and plum sauce roulade and beef with horseradish. The first course, baked asparagus wrapped with goat's cheese and parma ham was excellent with the white wine – Eagle's Cliff Chenin Blanc 2010 from South Africa. Roast breast of guinea fowl with a wild mushroom sauce was beautifully cooked and served with dauphinoise and new potatoes and fresh vegetables. We could chose between a Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 2009 or La Tour de Chollet, Cuvée Classique, 2009. Summer pudding with vanilla ice cream or cream followed or a cheese plate with Shropshire Blue and Colliers Welsh Cheddar. We paid £42.

Mary Jewell

Devonshire Branch Have A Tryst with Tanners

Close by the ruins of Charles Cross Church, a stark reminder of Plymouths recent past, is the equally atmospheric but welcoming "Prysten House" circa 1498 A.D., which houses the restaurant of Chris & James Tanner. There, on June 22nd, we had a "blind date" with food and wines chosen by the Tanners.

At this enjoyable dinner, organised by our treasurer Phil Redhead, our reception was slightly disorganised as mediaeval buildings do not lend themselves to the mass arrival of 25 eager diners. Our aperitif, Summer Berry Bellini, was a glorious hue and had an unexpectedly sweet mix of raspberry puree, creme de mure, creme de cassis, and a Loire sparkler, which was slightly short on fizz, but it quickly put us in a party mood. There were no canapés, perhaps wisely, when faced with a 6 course menu and wines!

We were then invited into the Dining Hall and seated at a long table with an attentive front of house staff - we were back in the 15th century.

Scallop, brown shrimp risotto, & chorizo was the first of our 6 courses. This was accompanied by Albarino Abadia de San Campio, Galicia 2010 which gave little on the nose but was good on the palate with a hint of peaches, long finish and perfect with the food. Unfortunately the delicate flavours of the seafood were somewhat overwhelmed by the chorizo.

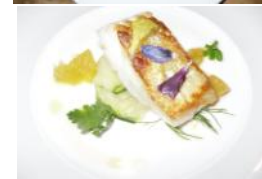
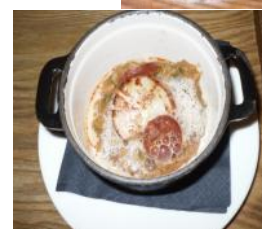
Creamed carrots, Vulscombe goats' cheese, maple cured bacon, and gingerbread crumb, came with Sauvignon Blanc, "Le Haut Perron Thesee" Touraine 2010. It was good on the nose, soft on the palate and another happy marriage.

Gruner Veltliner, Kremstal 2009, was pale, had a good nose, long finish with a hint of white pepper and was slightly flabby at first taste, but was the perfect partner for our line caught local cod with fennel, orange, and herbs. This showed the magic possible when food & wine are well matched.

A 2001 Gevrey-Chambertin, Les Moniales 1er Cru, Domaine des Varoilles, announced its arrival with a wonderful perfume & colour. Superb on the palate, it had a long finish and came with a perfectly cooked rack of Lamb, a truly memorable combination of wine and food. This was, for me, the climax of a memorable gourmet treat.

Lemon pannacotta, a delicious citrus ice, and lemon & ginger Financier cake, were matched with Monbazillac, Domaine de l'Ancienne Cure 2007 which had just the right blend of sweetness, acidity, butterscotch and caramel. It hinted that this treat was coming to an end but the Tanner Brothers produced another surprise. A selection of Cheddar, Pont L'Eveque, and Exmoor Blue cheeses, all a point, which were served with Starboard Batch 88, Madera 1996 from California. A selection of teas, cafetiere coffee and petit fours followed, before a lively journey back to Torquay ended a memorable evening.

Allen Vaughan-Birch



around the branches - Sussex

Spring Events - The Old House, Cophorne

In April we made a return visit to the lovely 16th century Old House restaurant in Cophorne. The event was another wine tasting dinner led by Paul Champness of Ellis Wines, Richmond and two wines were presented with each course. Paul gave brief but informative introductions to each wine throughout the meal and subsequently asked members to indicate their preferences as regards to matching the wines with the food served.

The evening began with a very pleasant sparkling wine, Saurus from one of the less well known wine producing areas, Patagonia. This was followed by confit of rabbit terrine wrapped with Parma ham accompanied by pickled beetroot or a melt-in-the-mouth plum tomato, basil and Parmesan tart with rocket salad. These were complemented by two 2005 Australian wines, an unusual sparkling red, Trillians from the Clare Valley and a Shiraz/Grenache rose, Pimpala Road, Geoff Merrill. Members were very divided in their preferred wine, as they were for the main course wine alternatives, and in neither case did it seem to relate to the choice of food.

The main course comprised braised brisket of beef, celeriac mash and wild mushroom scented jus, which I am told was extremely tender and full of flavour, or a delicious baked field mushroom filled with creamed spinach and pine nuts with a herb crust. The two wines served with this course were Rosso di Montepulciano, Cantina Crociani, Tuscany 2009 and Rio Pajaros, Progreso, Uruguay 2008 (Tannat/Syrah/Viognier). A very refreshing poached pear in Marsala wine, tuille biscuit and nutmeg ice cream together with the two white wines, Vendange Tardive, Domaine du Grand Mayne NV (Semillon) and Moscato di Pantelleria, Cantine Colosi, Sicily, 2006, rounded off the meal very nicely.

We are extremely grateful to Paul for providing these interesting wines and for sharing his knowledge in such a relaxed and easily absorbed manner and to Colin Dormon and his team for producing such an excellent meal and for organising another memorable evening. Sadly this is likely to be the last time for an event to be held here under the present management because, after 32 years, Colin has put the Old House on the market.



The Cat , West Hoathly

The May meeting of the Sussex branch took place at the Cat Inn, West Hoathly, a very old oak-beamed establishment which boasts two inglenook fireplaces. The Cat Inn recently earned a Michelin bib-gourmand, one of only three to be awarded in Sussex, and is managed by Andrew Russell, the former front of house and co-proprietor of the Gravetye Manor Hotel. We had high expectations of a special evening and we weren't disappointed!

We arrived to a glass of locally produced Hindleap Blanc de Blanc from the Bluebell estate, which is situated right next to the Bluebell railway at Sheffield Park.

The first course was a choice of potted crab and shrimps with toast, or Gressingham duck liver parfait with red onion marmalade and toast, both served with Domaine du Tariquet, Sauvignon 2009. The crab and shrimp was beautifully presented in individual preserving pots and was absolutely delicious without the usual over-kill of butter. Fillet of hake with courgette tempura, stuffed flower, Provencal vegetables and tomato butter sauce was a lovely light main course choice with the alternative being a tender, flavoursome rump of Sussex lamb with salsa verde, crushed new potatoes and broad bean ragu. The accompanying wines for these dishes were a French Bourgogne Chardonnay, Domaine Gonan 2008 and an Argentinian Santa Julia Tempranillo-Malbec 2010 Mendoza. Salted caramel valrhona chocolate tart with chantilly cream or coconut panna cotta with exotic fruit salad, both served with Santa Julia, Tardio Mendoza, Argentina, completed this repaste. The presentation and cuisine throughout was impeccable and the service efficient and friendly.

This is no run-of-the-mill gastro-pub and we would thoroughly recommend it to any member visiting the area, probably even worth making a special trip, although you will need to book in advance. Our thanks are due to Andrew, Max (the chef) and their team for an evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by all those present.



Lesley Berry



The Zürich Great Event

8 - 10 June 2012

There's more to Switzerland than cheese and chocolate!

The Zürich Branch of the International Wine & Food Society invites you to a Great Event in Zürich.

Zürich is regularly rated worldwide as the city with the highest quality of living. This is well reflected in its wine and food.

The programme we propose combines many of the enjoyable aspects of the Zürich region.

Friday 8 June 2012

1700 Arrival and greeting at Hotel St Gotthard. Followed by a gala dinner at the prestigious Guild house zur Meisen.

Saturday 9 June 2012

Shopping morning or tour of the town followed by lunch at the Bauschänzli Biergarten. Afternoon cruise on Lake Zürich to Rapperswil with its castle and old town. Tour of Rapperswil before dinner. Swiss cuisine in the historic Rathaus Restaurant.

Sunday 10 June 2012

Wine Tasting at the Wine Museum (of the Applied University of Agriculture, Wädenswil). Lunch at the Restaurant Au with splendid views of the Alps. Speciality local freshwater fish dishes.

1600 Farewell. Visitors free to depart or extend their time in Zürich.

Registration

Preregistration. Please register your interest before 30 August 2011.

Confirmation of registration is required by 30 November 2011.

This firm registration must be accompanied by a payment of CHF 250 per person. In order to assist UK based members, arrangements have been made for the Treasurer, Jim Muir, to receive payments in Sterling and he will consolidate the money received and remit it in a single payment to the Zurich Branch at the appropriate time. This will avoid the necessity of individual members having to make currency transfers. In light of the current conversion rate, UK members should remit the sum of £175 per person, together with initial registration. Conversion rate for final payment will be fixed on or about 1 December 2011, at which time the request will be made for final payment.

The registration form is available on the website and if UK members wish to take advantage of the procedure described above, then please send it to the:

EAC Treasurer, Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT before 30 November 2011

enclosing a cheque payable to "IWFS-EAC".

If you wish to pay by credit card, then the website is being set up so as to deal with this form of payment, but alternatively contact Jim Muir on 01633 420278 or email muir112@btinternet.com (a 3% handling charge will apply).; the final payment must be made by 31 January 2012.

Cancellation of registration will be possible until 29 February 2012 without charge. Thereafter, a fee of CHF 200 per person will be charged.

Cost

Event programme: Cost of participation will be CHF 720 (approximately £550) including wines, food, entertainment and local transport.

Other: The above cost of the event programme does not include transport to Zürich and hotel accommodation in Switzerland. However, we have negotiated a special rate at our recommended Hotel St. Gotthard of CHF 250 per double room per night.

Details from:

Mail: Kurt Haering, Howielstrasse 18, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland
Fax: +41 44 777 64 14
Email: khaering@bluewin.ch
Web: www.iwfs.org (sign-in as member)

A City of London Experience 4 - 5 November 2011

4th November
Black Tie Dinner
at
The City Company
of Watermen Hall
16, St Mary-at-Hill ,
London EC3R 8EF



5th November
Visit to
Borough Market
&
Lunch at 'Fish!'
Borough Market
London SE1 9AL

Arrangements have been made by the EAC Events Co-Ordinator Michael Messent to have a very special black tie dinner in the Hall of the City Company of Watermen at 16, St Mary-at-Hill , London EC3R 8EF on the evening of Friday 4th November. The evening will be conducted along the lines generally enjoyed only by members of the City Livery Companies. There will be a reception in the fascinating wooden panelled rooms on the ground floor which contain many artefacts of historical interest, followed by a meal produced by the leading City caterers, "The Cook and the Butler" accompanied by fine wines.

For those requiring accommodation special arrangements have been made at The Grange City Hotel, 8-10 Coopers Row, EC3N 2BQ, which is within just a few hundred yards from the dinner venue. A high quality room in this 5 star hotel will be available at a very special rate of £120 including continental breakfast, excluding VAT. For bookings please contact the hotel reservation desk direct on **0207 863 3700, ask for Leyla and quote 041111M**.

On the following morning, arrangements have been made to visit Borough Market, south of London Bridge. We will assemble 10:30am in the second floor, art deco, boardroom of the Headquarters of the Market, 8 Southwark Street. While enjoying coffee we will hear a talk from two Market Traders then split into groups for a guided tour. We will then have some free time before meeting at "Fish!" a restaurant on the edge of the market close by Southwark Cathedral. A two course lunch will be served, with a choice available on the day from a set fish menu, together with wine and coffee.

The cost of the Watermans' Hall Dinner will be £95.

The cost of the Borough Market morning comprising the coffee, talk, tour and lunch will be £55.

There is a maximum number for the dinner of 80 and for the market visit of 40, so it is advisable to book quickly to ensure a place. Closing date for bookings is 30th September 2011.

You may book via the website, where a longer version of this piece can be found, or send a cheque made payable to

'IWFS EAC' for the appropriate amount, with your full details, to the:

EAC Treasurer, Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT.

If you wish to pay by credit card, please contact Jim Muir on 01633 420278 or

E mail muir112@btinternet.com - a 3% handling charge will apply.

