

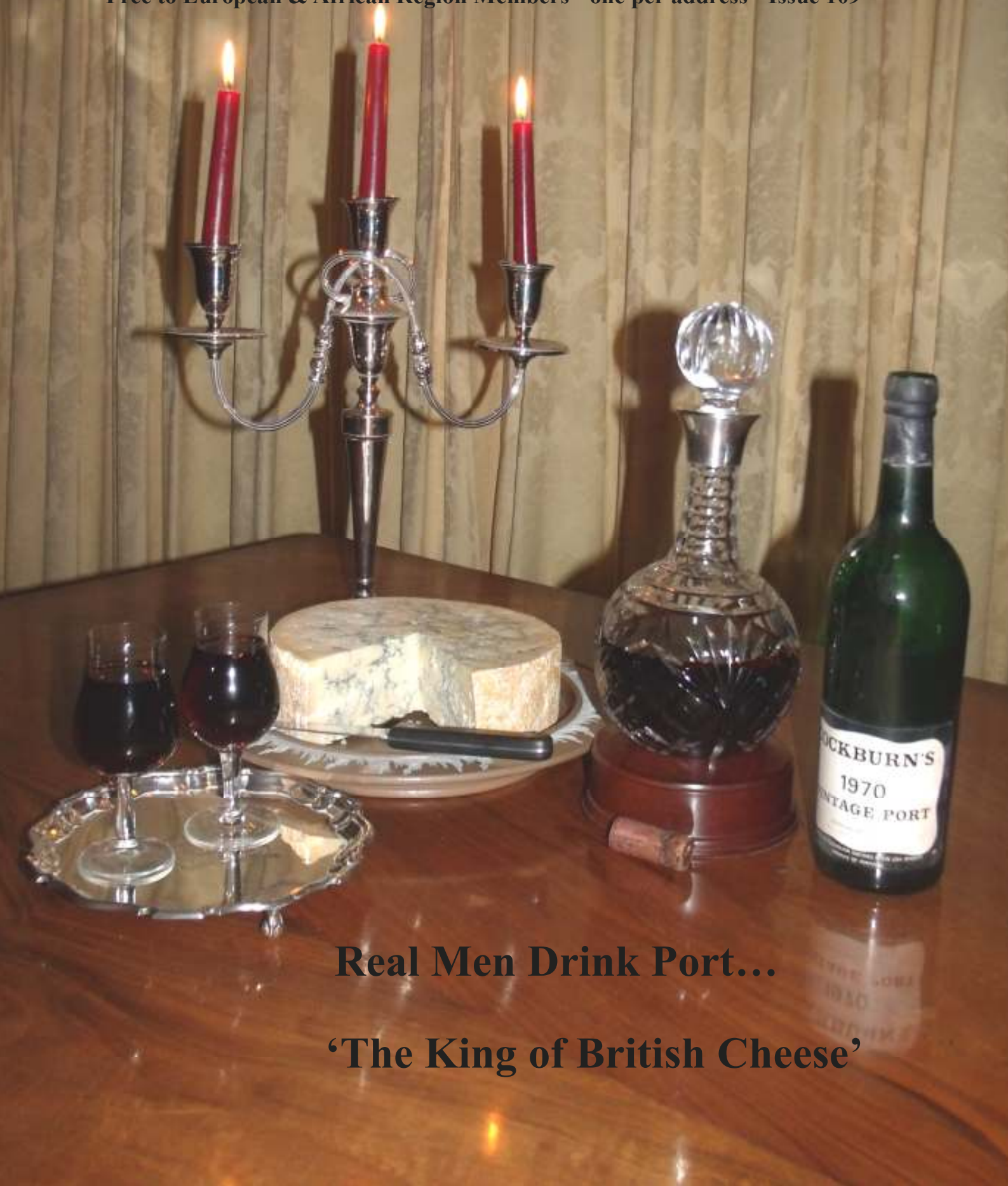
Food & Wine



December 2011

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

Free to European & African Region Members - one per address - Issue 109



Real Men Drink Port...

‘The King of British Cheese’



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

Firstly let me acknowledge my gratitude and complete surprise at the award of an André Simon silver medal, made to me in London in November. These three months are becoming the busiest of my period as your Chairman. I went to Portugal to join the dinner arranged by Lisbon branch for a group of UK members who were travelling on to Oporto to cruise up the river Douro. After a family holiday in Turkey, I attended the Council meeting and Society AGM in London. I then flew to Dubai to present the Branch Charter to our newest branch. They have maintained a membership of over 40 including many 'younger members' by offering fun 'hands on' participative events as well as fine dining. Their 'organising genius' is Lyn Born who has been co-opted onto a Council sub-committee dealing with recruiting young members to share her expertise. The Charter event was held at her home, on the beach overlooking the Arabian sea, and incorporated the very best in good food, good wine and fellowship. *(This message was written in the transit lounge in Muscat on a Smartphone keyboard! Ed)*. After which I move onto the English Lake District to celebrate Manchester Branch's 60th Anniversary. Finally I go to Zurich to discuss plans for next June's Great Weekend with the organising committee. I need to find time to meet with my dietician!

I mentioned the Council meeting where the major item on the agenda was the American suggestion to move the Society HQ to California. Just before the meeting the Board of Governors of the Americas came up with a new option that kept the International Secretariat located in London but which proposed changes to the way we manage and pay for the Society. This alternative will be discussed by the EAC when they meet in Manchester later in November and a response formulated, full details will be provided to members as soon as possible. On a more positive note Council did hear that membership was growing in the Asian Pacific region and agreed to provide some funds to help Zones (including the EAC) with the new website. I know that I am in danger of repeating myself but the Society's future depends on recruiting new members and one of our best tools is the website but only if branches populate their part of the site with interesting details. At the Society AGM questions were raised about the growing amount of money in the Society coffers. It is important to remember that only a few years ago we were in danger of going insolvent. The Society strategic plan, written mainly in the EAC but adopted by the world wide membership, cut central operating costs and the Cape Town International Festival, organised by members of our zone provided an unexpectedly large surplus which went into Central funds. We must not squander members money and we need a large enough balance to cover any unexpected costs but it is time to consider what proportion of member's subscription should go to the International Secretariat and how much is retained in zones and branches.

Members also spoke out in favour of using funds to buy professional marketing assistance to recruit new younger members, both passively through the website but also actively in the media.

Not all benefits cost money; the EAC are having preliminary discussions with companies that provide guided wine and food tours either for individual members or for groups.

At the special dinner in Waterman's Hall, following the Society AGM I was able to present Andre Simon Bronze Medals to two members of the EAC. Katie Wilkins has been a member for 20 years, spent 4 years as Secretary of our largest branch, London and in 2006 became the EAC Membership Registrar - one of the most difficult jobs on the EAC - particularly at a time when we are updating our membership systems - a position she holds to this day. Jim Muir, the EAC Treasurer joined ten years ago and served as Chairman of his branch in Hereford for 4 years. He joined the EAC in 2006 to serve as Continental Branches Manager - but took over as Treasurer when I was elected as Chairman and has kept me on the straight and narrow ever since. I am grateful to both these individuals and every other member of the EAC for the voluntary work they do for the Society. My own period of office finishes in 12 months time and (in the words of many politicians) I need to spend more time with my family.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS



Ben Howkins was meant to become a brewer, but there were no 'management trainee' vacancies. He was offered a similar position in 'our strange new department called wines and spirits. You can stay there for a few months if you wish...'



Niki Segnit had not so much as peeled a potato until her early twenties when, almost by accident, she discovered that she loved cooking. Her background is in marketing, specialising in food and drink. She writes a weekly column for The Times and is working on her second book.



Chris Graham received a birthday gift of a row of vines which sparked his latent interest in wine. Since retiring from the IT industry he has developed contacts in vineyards across France, Germany and recently Italy. He writes articles for the Berkshire Branch of the IWFS and has recently published his first book.



Food & Wine

Designed In House by
The International Wine
& Food Society
European & African Region

Editor Pam Brunning
Brunsdon Farm
Heath Ride
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 3QJ
Tel +44 (0)118 9733287
E mail
editor@sidpam.waitrose.com

Printed by
All Things Print
Judds Farmhouse
97, London Road
Stanway, Colchester

The Society welcomes
application for Membership

For information please contact
Katie Wilkins
EAC Membership Registrar
14 Highbury, Jesmond,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 3DX, UK
+44 (0) 191 239 9630
E mail
eacmembership@talktalk.net

Food & Wine Magazine is
published by the European &
African Committee of the
International Wine & Food
Society. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or part is
strictly forbidden without prior
written consent.

The views expressed by
contributors are not necessarily
those of the IW&FS

For extra copies please contact
the Editor



Contents

Society News	4
Letters	5
Real Men Drink Port...	6 - 7
'The King of British Cheese'	8 - 9
Real Men go to Portugal...	10 - 11
The Business of Wine in Chile	12 - 13
Society Website – One Year Old!	14 - 15
Wandering in Wales	16 - 18
Ministers on the Menu	19
Swinton Park - a Special Place	20 - 21
The Flavour Thesaurus	22 - 23
A Tribute to Elizabeth David	24
And Now for Something Different	25
Restaurant Award	26
Around the Branches	27 - 34
A City of London Experience	35 - 36

Editorial

Yahoo, Google, Groupon, Tripadvisor, all words that have entered our vocabulary over the past few years. Words that, try as we might, we cannot and must not ignore, in this modern age. The Luddites brought a new word to our dictionaries' but they didn't win their cause and neither will the cyber sceptics. As you will read we have a birthday to celebrate, the new Society website is now one year old and still growing and developing to service the needs of our members in this technological age. You can read of the latest updates on pages 14 and 15.

I am also celebrating the fact that I have achieved a whole page of 'Letters to The Editor', without cajoling friends to write in. The President of our Estonia branch has sent a very thought provoking letter regarding our way forward. Social networking has its sceptics, me included, but once again it is something we cannot ignore and, as my daughter has pointed out, the Society now has two branches, Ipoh, Malaysia and Vancouver with their own Facebook page, this must be the way for young people to learn of our Society. One blog site I do make a lot of use of is 'e gullet'. Thousands of members, many of whom are food and wine professionals, log on every day to discuss culinary subjects. You can enquire about a restaurant anywhere in the world, you can find out about foods, recipes, information on all manner of subjects, there is always someone, somewhere who will tell you of their experiences. One correspondent has just moved from Canada to 10,000 feet up in Ecuador and tells of the produce in her local market, another tells of her journey, every fall, from the frozen wastes to warmer climes, detailing the food and drink she finds on the way. A chef at a LA casino describes his day catering for over a 1,000 covers. It is the type of online communication we need with our members worldwide.

I have one (only one!) excellent reply to my September challenge, 'Do you think top restaurant food in the 1970s was better than today?' This obviously stimulated thoughts somewhere, the November issue of Waitrose magazine 'Waitrose Kitchen' has a two page spread on the debate. Where we lead, others follow!

In this issue Ben Howkins reviews his new book 'Real Men Drink Port... and Ladies do too'. Ben is no stranger to the Society, he wrote Rich, Rare & Red, the IWFS Guide to Port in 1982 and is one of our Wine Committee consultants. We also have a report of Val Brookfield's trip to Portugal with a party of members and their visit to the Lisbon branch. With Christmas in mind, what is more natural than to partner our port with Stilton so we have a look at that industry and where it is going today. I have to admit to a little 'poetic licence' with the cover photo. The port in the decanter is a 1963 Dow but the label, when photographed, was very faint so we substituted the bottle from a Cockburn's 1970 that we drank the week before.

We have a report of the EAC 'Awayday' at Swinton Park and their visit to a Wensleydale Creamery and details of another EAC organised event, A City of London Experience.

Did anyone go to the French Laundry 'popup' restaurant? It was staged in the Georgian Room at Harrods by Thomas Keller and his team from California. Evidently places sold out in minutes and they could have taken over 500 more bookings at £250 a head, for a nine course meal. An acquaintance, who took his wife, ordered the wines to match the menu and came out £1,150 poorer. Maybe those protesters outside St Pauls have got it right, I hear one of their placards reads 'ABOLISH WEALTH'!

When I have sent this edition off into the ether, for printing in Poland, I will be off to the Lake District to enjoy some northern hospitality. Unfortunately the journey will take a little longer than that of the magazine but, one day, maybe, if we ignore the Luddites.

Seasons greeting to you all,

Pam Brunning

Dear Members

The first week of November was particularly busy at the IS as this was the week of the Autumn meeting of the International Council of Management, plus the Society's AGM, held in London.

This is the second meeting of Council this year, but the first face-to-face meeting. Many issues were discussed with the priority being how to increase the value of your membership of the IWFS and how to move the Society forward. These were also points on the minds of those members who were at the AGM with questions from the floor covering how Council plans to use the funds to the benefit of the members; how we can actively attract younger people to become members of the Society and how the website, in part, can be used to assist in this. Council members were keen to reassure members that these were all areas that had been discussed at the recent meeting.

The 2011 version of the **IWFS Vintage Card** is now available. After a number of improvements to the Card being made over recent years the Wines Committee worked on the current format but have made one small addition which they trust you will find of use. A new key - "not yet released" was introduced. This aim of this is to give members the opportunity to see how the latest, but not yet released vintages, of Champagne and Port are shaping up so that you may make a decision to buy up some of the better past vintages or to hang on until the newer wines are available. You will be pleased to learn that prices remain unchanged from last year.

If you would like to order some Cards for Christmas please contact me at the IS. They do make an ideal gift to include in with your seasonal messages to friends, family and colleagues. Please see below the special prices for members (full details and an order form are also available on the members only pages of the website).

2011 Vintage Cards

Quantity	Cost per Card	Regular Price	Members' Price (inc p&p)
12	£2.15	£25.80	£23.22
25	£2.05	£51.25	£46.12
50	£1.95	£97.50	£87.75
100	£1.85	£185.00	£166.50

Seasons greetings to one and all,

Andrea Warren



Council Convening

The Society Investing in the Future

The 2009 Cape Town International Festival made a generous donation to facilitate a learning experience for the new generation of South African wine and food professionals. Festival LOC Chairman Graham Blackshaw and Director of Wine David Swingler, with support from Chris Bonsall and John Valentine, worked closely with the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild (CWG) Development Trust to effect the donation.

Festival-goers will recall the South African Red Wine Tasting hosted by the CWG in the Nedbank Towers overlooking the Waterfront, and the auction that followed in benefit of the Trust. In addition to supporting deserving scholars and offering bursaries to promising viticulture and oenology students, the Trust runs a successful Protégé Programme. This paid, three-year, post-graduate internship in the cellars of Guild winemakers is to inspire young winemakers to strive for excellence through involvement with the Guild, to learn by working alongside established industry luminaries, in a range of wineries with varying wine types and cellar roles; all to prepare young winemakers of colour for a successful career in winemaking.

The donation took the form of a two-bottle tasting of seven flights of two mature wines per flight, being the best available or most interesting South African up against 'equivalents' from the rest of the world, drawn from our Branch cellar. The Trust elected to hold two separate one-bottle tastings; the first hosted by Protégés, the other as a tutorial for Elsenburg Agricultural College and Stellenbosch University students.

In mid-July, we gathered at Ernie Els Wines in Stellenbosch on quite the most magnificent Cape winter's day (balmier than high summer in the UK, I suspect). The three current Protégés had researched and were to present the wines in the Trophy Room at Ernie Els (entirely appropriate given that the Open Championship was in play - I sat across from the Claret Jug replica given to each winner) to a group consisting of their peers, CWG member mentors being Jan 'Boland' Coetzee (Vriesenhof), Jeff Grier (Villiera) and Riani Strydom (Haskell), the winemaking student bursary-holders, the first graduate of the programme (Howard Booysen) who is now an established winemaker with his own label, host Louis Strydom as CWG Chairman, Trustees, the Protégé Programme management and CWG staff.

As an example of the Society's commitment to education, it can be well pleased. The wines were brilliant: they were in stunning condition, showing the nuances hoped for – and the foreign wines represented 'firsts' for most of the young contingent present – the CWG winemakers took the mentoring opportunity presented, and the Protégés learnt more about international wine and honed their presentation skills. As Branch Chairman, I was moved – this is what IWFS is all about.

David Swingler, Chairman



Readers' Letters



Dear Editor

Fellow members may remember our chairman commented in the last issue about the underutilisation of the Society's web site. I fear this has been caused by a misguided approach to the use of the internet, and while it is understandable that the intrusion and technology of the internet is outside the skill and experience of many of our members, the result is that we have created only a rather half baked cake.

I myself have also resisted aspects of the internet, such as Facebook, but we cannot ignore the power of social networking, where groups of people or communities can combine through common interest to share news or ask advice from others in the community. If we take the world wide community of Wine and Food members our combined knowledge on everything from South African wines, London restaurants, to suggested hotels or tours of California or Vermont vineyards is immense. The internet technology of online forums should be used to pull together communities. Under categories of interest, members could list questions and any Society member should be free to post a response or offer advice. A couple of volunteer editors are needed to ensure that any inappropriate entries are removed and the Society's web master should be able to implement this in a couple of hours.

To make matters more complicated, the Internet has now gone through two magnificent developments. Firstly Google, that within a few key strokes, can deliver you any information including the Society web site and secondly Facebook. Most of us have managed to move from posting letters, to using fax machines, most have now finally conquered email. I hate to say that I have also fought against its intrusion, but Facebook has now arrived as the worlds choice for community communication, and when one of our younger branch members offered to build a facebook community page for our Society, I realised that we either change or we will eventually die. When booking online travel I would be happy to also access an IWFS forum and not only 'Tripadvisor'.

So, while a call to the Society's web master to add a web forum should happen immediately, we also need to offer a Facebook link, so that as each branch eventually adds its own Facebook page, these all finally connect to a central Society page. If the Society does not have the internal expertise then it should retain an experienced PR company to develop, promote and edit the forum, the cost could be covered with some discreet web site advertising. It will need to be promoted in the beginning to get the Society members to use it.

I fear if we do not begin to share the knowledge of our community through an IW&FS web forum, then firstly, our knowledge will die with our older members and our younger members will join different society's where they are more comfortable with the style and speed of communication.

Martin Dungay, Estonian Branch President

MOTION FOR DEBATE - re Editorial June issue.

"Do we think top restaurant food in the 1970s was better than the little bits and pieces with dribs and drabs of sauce Michelin starred chefs produce today?"

Dear Editor

This is a question to whet one's appetite for nostalgia. We – that is those of use born in the late 1930s or early 1940s – will recall with delight the restaurant food of the 1970s. We learned that there was more to food than the mere satisfaction of hunger. Suddenly our taste buds were awakened: a gammon steak arrived with its pineapple ring; ice cream came shrouded in warm meringue with the endearing title Baked Alaska; and who can forget their first prawn cocktail?

I sense a hint of derision from younger readers. You may laugh, but please bear in mind that in our youth we had never tasted curry, never encountered real Italian cooking. (Spaghetti for us meant something from a tin consisting of slimy pasta worms in insipid tomato sauce.)

Top restaurant food of the 1970s tickled our adventurous nature with such dishes as escargots de Bourgogne, with the arresting taste of coriander and tarragon, not to mention the use of wine as a cooking ingredient.

Now in 2011 we have buried the eccentricities of recent decades, most notably the tiny portions.

In time we will dismiss the tiny splodges of sauce which adorn today's plates. These things are merely transient superficialities of the moment.

Today we have the benefit of cuisine from the whole world, something quite unbelievable in the 1970s. Let's toss nostalgia aside and agree IT'S BETTER NOW!

Josephine Jackson, Manchester Branch

Dear Editor

Brian and I did enjoy the Capital Branch lunch at Verveine recently. Stacey and David were so delighted with the Society Restaurant Award. Their recent successes are well deserved. (see page 24 Ed.)

I seem to recall that in a fairly recent issue of IWFS Magazine you asked for more input from members. With that in mind and with the 'Merry' Season' almost upon us I wondered if the attached might be appropriate? It may well be unacceptable to some of our more dedicated wine enthusiasts and you will be the best judge of that. If you consider it too flippant, dripping with adjectives, not in keeping with the tone etc. please scrap it. I shall not be upset

A few years ago, I entered a, now defunct, Wine Magazine competition. The brief: If you were marooned on a desert island with four bottles of wine which wines would you choose and why?

This was my '**Desert Island Fantasy**'

"To appreciate a good, maybe not so good wine, it is best shared with like-minded devotees. Thus, if I were marooned on a desert island with only four bottles of wine (plus corkscrew), with whom would I like to share them?"

1998 Valmur Chablis Grand Cru: A 'never say never' wine. Powerful elegance, brimming with subtle undertones of passion. Served on a moonlit balcony overlooking the Med. with who else but '007' Daniel Craig.

2001 Prince Probus: Blue/black full bodied, succulent chocolate tones bringing to mind hot lazy days, sun bouncing from white rocks with a cicada recital for background. Only Gerard Depardieu could complete this rustic setting.

1995 Clos Rene: Pomerol at its best. 100% plump black Merlot grapes, hand picked by enchanting young French students. A sophisticated juicy sweetness enhancing strong eddies of dark red fruits and ripe sun. My partner for this must be smooth, mischievous George Clooney.

1999 Elysium Black Muscat-Quady: An apt partner to a dark, sinful dessert. Imagine flickering candles, seductive music. Me in slim fitting black frock. Now which delectable male would I choose to match this earthy, erotic alcoholic enlightenment? It can only be Alan Titchmarsh!"

No one was more surprised than me to win first prize, which was a case of (not bad) Beaujolais.

Diana Gray Wessex Branch

Real Men Drink Port...

and Ladies do too

By Ben Howkins



It is now thirty years since the IWFS kindly co published, with Heinemann, my first book 'Rich Rare and Red'. I had enjoyed ten years as export director of Croft. I was fascinated by the history of 'the Englishman's wine' and the fact that it was so interwoven with our own history. The same British families still control leading port companies as their ancestors have done for centuries. The story needed to be told.

This is now in its third edition, and may move to a fourth edition, but not immediately.

One day, whilst discussing this updating prospect with your past President, Hugh Johnson, who is a master of this craft, he smiled 'It is much more fun writing a new book. You know all the port people...'. Thus the working title, Port People, was born.

For some time, I have had this concept of a wine book +. Over the years, whether at Waddesdon Manor, talking and tasting the Rothschild family wines, or in the USA or China talking and tasting the Royal Tokaji portfolio or on the 'Spirit of Adventure' cruise ship talking and tasting other wines, the one aspect that the audience all seem to enjoy is 'going behind the scenes' or the label, and hearing stories. Historical stories, family stories, real life stories.

No parting comment gives me more pleasure than hearing 'Well, that was certainly different from other wine tastings'.

As Hugh Johnson teasingly mentions in his foreword, my day job is now with Tokaji. The IWFS kindly asked me to write the 4th booklet in their monograph series 'Tokaji – A classic – Lost and Found' published in 1999. Since then, we have had great fun at the forefront of the renaissance of Tokaji, the last of the great European wines to become world class again.

It has been wonderful to see both the international wine trade and consumers welcoming these iconic wines back into their wine lists and cellars. It is fascinating for me to see how much these two great wine regions have in common, yet are so different. The wine and food lover, would I believe, be equally content with a chilled glass of 10 year aged tawny or 5 puttonyos aszu wine just before his or her afternoon siesta or retiring to bed in the evening.

France's wonderful, unequalled, wines from Bordeaux, burgundy and champagne are all...very French. Even though they too have some great Dutch and German ancestry, they are still French; Germany's equally wonderful wines are...German; ditto Italy and Spain; sherry is an erotic blend of Shakespeare and Andalucía; Tokaji conjures up shimmering Transylvanian richness and the New World is the new world.

There is no finer wine to illustrate the sheer English or British character of wit and understatement, than port. Historically it is rich in anecdotes. Port was the natural drink of the English sportsman and the toast of royalty. Port became the catalyst for my wine book +.

The names on the label are quintessentially English. Both a Warre and a Croft were given baronetcies by the Duke of Wellington. Today, leading port producers carry on English dining traditions, quite naturally, in another EU country.

Wednesday luncheon at the Factory House is still a much sought after wine trade invitation; tea is still served at quintas romantically placed along the Douro; dinner jackets at the Factory in the evening are not out of place. It is 'brand England' at its best.

Quality port is at a cross roads. There are many cellars in many country houses in the UK piled high with 1963s, 1977s and 1994s apart from later vintages. Hosts try in vain to entice their guests with a port decanter after dinner. Decanter magazine 'downgraded' vintage port from being an investment wine a few years back. Prices of these wonderful old ports have not risen in tune with wines from other regions. American wine merchants have seen a falling off in demand recently. The smoking ban has hit port sales in livery companies, Oxbridge colleges and gentleman's clubs.

All this against a background of political blandness and correctness.

Port is designed to be enjoyed lustily and incorrectly. We must not give in. We must enjoy. Hence 'Real Men drink Port...and Ladies do too' (RMDP). I was very fortunate to come across Oliver Preston, the great contemporary sporting cartoonist. He agreed to pen some very appropriate cartoons for the book. This completed my vision.

This year sees me completing 50 years – not out ! - in the wine trade. When I first visited Oporto in 1963, the outlook was very different to today. Very few port shippers bottled their own wines. They relied on sending samples to far flung wine merchants who then chose which blend they would like for their customers. The selected blend was then shipped in pipes to be bottled by their customers. Very little branding; very little quality control; even less promotional activity. Very good lunches...

I became a port shipper with Croft in the 1970s. We started to bottle all our wines in Vila Nova de Gaia, which established greater quality control and gave more home employment. Shippers started to realise the importance of owning their own vineyards in the Douro. Brands were promoted internationally. The French still consumed the vast majority of young port, but Americans had just discovered the joys of vintage port. The British continued to swoosh down vintage port. Still very good lunches....

Since then various port shippers have been bought and sold, but old established Brit families have remained pretty much in control of quality port. The Symington clan, the Robertson/Bridge duo, Robin Reid, the late Bruce Guimaraens, Johnny Graham, Christian Seeley and others, have kept standards up and the port flowing. And still very good lunches...

During a recent visit last year, two clear messages were given to me and I want to pass them on. Actually, one was my message that I gave them.

The first is 'how to bring port into the meal more'. It is the glasses, stupid. Mature vintage port and aged tawny ports are fine wines. They should be treated as such. Turned and swirled. Large port or white wine glasses should be used to get the most out of these wonderful wines. Never ask your guests, just serve the port, and refuse to give them any more immature 15 % + red wine.

The second is 'treat your guests to a glass of port before dinner'. Few wine and food aficionados will have enjoyed a glass of quality port when they have been stone cold sober. It is a wonderful experience. By offering your guests a glass to sniff and sip whilst they are enjoying their champagne and before they have moved through your generous offerings of claret or burgundy, watch how their eyes open with excitement and anticipation.

'Real Men Drink Port...and ladies do too', I hope, complements 'Rich Rare and Red'. The same families, though different generations in some cases, are still producing better and better ports. Time and time again, it is proven that the people behind wine labels create the image, communicate with the trade and help the consumer decide which bottle to buy. It really is a people business and I am most grateful to them all for their trust and hospitality over the years.

RMDP is meant to educate, yes. It is also meant to entertain. To make readers smile whilst they sip or gulp and turn the page.

No book just happens. Elliott Mackey of the Wine Appreciation Guild, who kindly published the third edition of Rich Rare and Red, made many encouraging noises at the beginning and is distributing RMDP in the USA;

Andrew Johnston of Quiller, and his 'glass half full' publishing team, have been so supportive and created a very attractive image for the book; and Oliver Preston has identified and wonderfully 'cartooned' some fun parts of my text.

Some of you may have noticed that it has been 30 years between these two books. Enough said. No more from me, unless...

Imagine you are sitting down enjoying your favourite wine. It need not be port. It could be Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1982 or a delicious Chassagne Montrachet. As you sip, a broad smile lights up your face.

You are drinking history.

How and why can a glass of fermented grape juice give such pleasure ?

As Poirot might say, 'Aha, mon ami' it is the ingredients' bien sur', selected and enhanced by the winemakers art.

In Bordeaux, the ingredients, the three genres, the three grape varieties; cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc, are blended together.

It is then up to the winemaker to produce an outstanding result, which we can enjoy.

In RMDP, the ingredients, the three genres, the three strands are the documentary on port (the cabernet sauvignon, giving the backbone and structure to the book), the autobiography (the merlot, giving the softness and fruit) and the cartoons (the cabernet franc, giving the edge and the wit).

'Et voila', these are then blended, or edited together, by the publisher to produce maybe a Graham's 1963 or a Fonseca 1994.

This is how a book of 176 pages of printed paper can give such pleasure. The publisher is the wine maker. You are still drinking history.

The book reflects the wine. Turn the pages and sip. And smile.

Ben Howkins



Oliver Preston

'REAL MEN DRINK PORT & Ladies do Too'

Available from Quiller Publishing at £16.95

Email: admin@quillerbooks.com

www.countrybooksdirect.com

Ben Howkins Tel: 020 7495 3010

Email: benhowkins@royal-tokaji.com

'The King of British Cheese'

by Pam Brunning

"Drink a pot of ale, eat a scoop of Stilton every day, you will make 'old bones'."
Nineteenth-century saying.

The cheese that was once known as 'Our English Parmesan'.

There are just six dairies licensed to make Blue Stilton cheese and by law it can only be made in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire although the village of Stilton is in Cambridgeshire. Originally it was there that a pressed, cooked, cream cheese called 'Stilton' was first made and sold. It is still unclear just how it evolved into the semi hard unpressed blue vein cheese that it is today but the story of Cooper Thornhill sheds some light on its evolution.

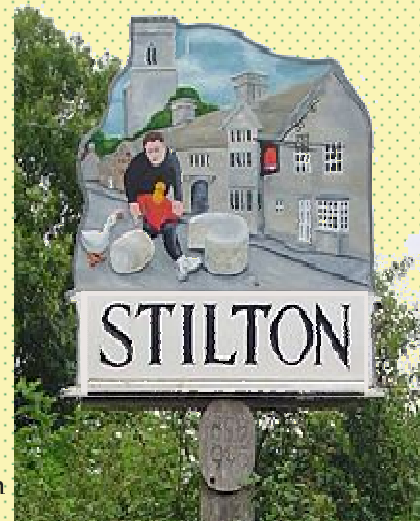
It was in the early 1700's, legend has it, that Cooper Thornhill, owner of the Bell Inn on the Great North Road, in the village of Stilton, discovered a distinctive blue veined cheese while visiting a small farm near Melton Mowbray in rural Leicestershire. He thought the cheese delicious and made arrangements whereby the Bell Inn was granted exclusive marketing rights to blue Stilton. Soon wagon loads of the cheese were being delivered to the Bell Inn which was on the main stage coach route from London to the North of England. Thornhill promoted the cheese by serving it at the Inn, sales grew and its fame rapidly spread. The first known written reference to Stilton cheese was in William Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum*, Letter V, dated October 1722 and then in Daniel Defoe's 1724 work 'A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain'. To quote Defoe, "We pass'd Stilton, a town famous for cheese, which is call'd our English Parmesan, and is brought to table with the mites, or maggots round it, so thick, that they bring a spoon with them for you to eat the mites with, as you do the cheese."

Cooper Thornhill's sister-in-law was Frances Pawlett, a resident of the village Wymondham which is on the route from Melton Mowbray to the A1, the Great North Road. A skilled cheese maker Pawlett is credited as the person who gave Stilton its first quality and shape standards. Her skill at cheese making and her husband's business acumen led to the first marketing cooperative in the area for Stilton. She set the standards other cheese makers would need to meet for "blued cream cheese" good enough to be marketed as Stilton. Along with Thornhill the Pawletts helped build the trade in Stilton cheese to record levels. Frances Pawlett did much to establish Stilton as "the King of English cheeses". She died a wealthy woman on Christmas Eve, 1808 at the age of 88. The inscription on her headstone reads: "Remember to Die" as she had outlived her son and most of her other close relatives who could have expected an inheritance. Stilton cheese production continued in Wymondham until early 1940 when the problems of wartime restrictions caused the business to cease.

In 1936 the Stilton Cheesemakers' Association (SCMA) was formed to lobby for regulation to protect the quality and origin of the cheese, and in 1966 Stilton was granted legal protection via a certification trade-mark, the only British cheese to have received this status.

Stilton acquires its blue veins from *Penicillium roqueforti* a common *saprotrophic fungus* which has been a constituent of blue cheeses eaten by humans since about 50 AD. Blue cheese is mentioned in literature as far back as AD 79, when Pliny the Elder remarked upon its rich flavour. Like Roquefort, up until a few years ago Stilton was made in the time honored way with raw milk but with the march of the food police in recent

years this practice has been abandoned. Until 1989 the Colston Bassett dairy still made one Stilton with unpasteurised milk. However, following a *Listeria* health scare, they decided to end production, and in 1996, the decision was permanently enshrined when Stilton was awarded Protected Designation of Origin status by the EU, with one of the conditions being the use of only pasteurised milk.



It takes 136 pints milk (78 litres) to make one 17 lb (8kg) Stilton cheese. Each morning the fresh pasteurised milk is pumped into open vats into which is stirred an acid forming bacteria as a starter, a milk clotting agent such as rennet and the *penicillium roqueforti*. When the curds have formed the whey is removed and the curds allowed to drain overnight. The following morning the curd is cut into blocks to allow further drainage. When the whey has completely drained the



curd is salted and milled, a process similar to mincing. This breaks the curd up into walnut size chunks ready for pouring into hoops. About 24 lb (11 kgs) of salted curd is placed into each cylindrical mould. The moulds are then placed on boards and turned daily to allow natural drainage for 5 or 6 days. This ensures an even distribution of moisture throughout the cheese so that, as the cheese is never pressed, it creates the flaky, open texture required for the important bluing stage. The cylinders are then removed and the coat of each cheese is sealed by smoothing or rubbing to fill any holes to prevent air entering the middle of the cheese and accelerating bluing. The cheese is then transferred to the store where temperature and humidity are carefully controlled and each cheese is turned regularly during this ripening period. At about 5 weeks, the cheese is forming the traditional Stilton crust and it is then ready for piercing with stainless steel needles to allow air to enter the body of the cheese to create the blue veins associated with Stilton.

By about 9 weeks of age each cheese will weigh about 17 lbs (8kgs) and is ready to be sold. Before each cheese leaves the dairy a cheese iron is used to remove a plug for inspection. By look and smell the grader can determine whether the cheese is up to the mark and able to be sold as Stilton. Cheese that is rejected will be sold as just "blue cheese."

A young Stilton is still quite crumbly and has a slightly acidic taste, after a few more weeks it will start to develop a smoother, almost buttery texture, with a more rounded mellow flavor.

Each year there are over one million Stilton cheeses made of which more than 10% are exported to over 40 countries world-wide.

Fortunately, with the trend for a more natural product unpasteurised cheeses are coming back into their own. In 2004 cheesemakers Joe Schneider and Randolph Hodgson of *Neal's Yard Dairy* decided to join forces to make a classic blue cheese from unpasteurised milk at a new dairy built on the Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire. Because of legislation they are unable to describe their cheese as Stilton so have named it Stichelton, which they say is based on the original name of the village of Stilton as it appears in William the Conqueror's 1086 *Domesday Book*. The spelling *Stichelton* also appears in the 13th century Lincoln Rolls. The first Stichelton cheese was produced in October 2006. As the cheesemakers explain on their website, "We make **Stichelton** with a very small quantity of rennet and an incredibly small amount of starter. As a result, acidification is very slow and the curd is very delicate and must be ladled by hand into a trolley where it is milled and salted the morning after the milk is set."

Hodgson maintains that the slow acidification drives out the moisture in the curd leaving a soft silky texture. "We aim to make a cheese with a gentle full flavour and a succulent buttery texture. It is early days and we are still getting used to the milk and the new dairy but the flavours coming through are already promising."

"We believe that cheese made on farm from organic, raw milk offers a complexity and length of flavour of a different sort to that of pasteurised cheese, so we have stuck to our principles, and painstakingly poured all the traditional knowledge and passion for authentic cheesemaking we could muster into Stichelton. Our goal in this project was to bring back a long forgotten cheese to British consumers, so that they could enjoy one of Britain's best known and best loved cheeses in its original form. In this sense our entire focus is on traditional, British cheesemaking where quality (flavour) is the priority. We're not finished. Every day we look to learn from the past to make a better cheese."

Unfortunately the SCMA, which owns the 'Stilton' trade mark, is still adamant that its cheeses must be made with only pasteurised milk. Let us hope one day sense will prevail and Stichelton can join the lineage that has earned the name 'King of British Cheeses'.

"Then there are the English cheeses. There are not many of them but I fancy that Stilton is the best cheese of its type in the world, with Wensleydale not far behind." George Orwell, published in the *Evening Standard* on 15 December 1945

“Real Men go to Portugal and Ladies do too”

Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire Enjoy

Sunshine, Port and Excellent Company in Portugal

On 28th September fifteen members of the Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire Branch left John Lennon Airport in Liverpool on a Val Bishop Tour to Portugal. We were joined by four members from Manchester, four from Blackpool and Fylde Coast, two from Bristol and Bath, two from Capital, four from St. James and an honorary Canadian.

Our first destination was a three night stay in Lisbon at the Hotel Plaza Lisboa, a heritage hotel in the centre of the city. The weather exceeded our expectations with sunshine, blue skies and temperatures around 30°C.

Some members who were involved in the Liverpool International Festival were invited by Malcolm Howe to visit two historic Portuguese clubs, one literary and one political in appreciation of his very enjoyable experience at the Festival.

In Lisbon we were joined by Ron and Val Barker, Jim and Margaret Muir and Eve and John Legg, for a dinner, hosted by the Lisbon Branch. The venue for this dinner was The Casa da Dizima, situated near the mouth of the River Tagus. We enjoyed aperitifs and canapés on the roof of the restaurant, in the company of four members of the local branch. We were served Neeuport, a pale pink port on its own and as a refreshing summer evening drink, with ice and tonic.



President of Lisbon Branch Rui Mendonça

The Menu.

Bread, olives, cheese and Pata Negra Ham

*

Cannelloni stuffed with sausage of black pork, sweet potatoes and spinach.

Sparkling wine, Quinta do Valdoeiro Baga/Chardonnay Bruto 2009 (Bairrada)

*

Cod fish slices, mashed potatoes and sautéed spinach with corn bread crumb

White wine, Conde da Ervideira reserve 2010 (Alentejo)

*

Wild pork cheeks with gratin potatoes and sautéed spinach

Red wine, Quinta do Couquinho 2008 (Douro)

*

Curd Cheese from Seia, with pumpkin jam and roasted almonds

Moscatel, Domingo Soares Franco Coleccao Privada 1999.

Everyone was delighted to have this opportunity to taste a typical Portuguese meal, in the company of Portuguese friends, and, although not to everyone's taste, the food was very good and all agreed on the excellence of the wines.

On Saturday 1st October we flew north to the beautiful city of Oporto, to begin a seven night cruise on the Douro River, aboard the Douro Prince. Our boat was moored at Villa Nova de Gaia, close to the historic port houses and opposite the World Heritage City.

We sailed up the Douro River as far as the Spanish border, to Barca D'Alva and then back to Oporto. The scenery was breath-taking as we sailed past vine clad hillsides, through dramatic gorges, climbing higher and higher through a series of locks and dams, which were magnificent feats of engineering.

The Douro Prince has 32 cabins, of which our party occupied 24. In addition to the cabins there was a dining room, bar lounge and sundeck.

The staff spoke excellent English and were very friendly and helpful. The food was varied and plentiful and of excellent quality. Julio and his staff provided superb service in the dining room and were very attentive to the needs of the two “Gluten free” passengers. Alfredo, the barman, kept us entertained with his jokes and the numerous cocktail and canapé parties he hosted in the bar lounge. We had a special Captain's Dinner, a Portuguese barbecue, on the sundeck, and an evening of Portuguese Folk Music, which included Fado. We also had a series of lectures, given by Martin Symington, of Ace Cultural Tours, on Portuguese history, the Douro and the port industry.



We enjoyed daily visits ashore to such places as the Mateus Palace; the Spanish university city of Salamanca; the picturesque hillside fortress of Castelo Rodrigo; and the ancient city of Lamego.

One of our visits was to Quinta do Seixo, which is owned by the House of Sandeman. Here we were met by our guide, Katya, wearing the familiar Sandeman trademark costume of a Portuguese student cape and a Spanish sombrero. After a tour of the vinification process we tasted a white and a ruby port before returning to our boat.

We enjoyed two special evening meals ashore and the first was at the Vintage House Hotel in Pinhao.



The second meal ashore was at the Convent of Alpendurada, a 16th century former convent, which has been converted into an hotel, with guests staying in the converted cells. We ate in the old kitchen and enjoyed a meal of vegetable soup, pork and crème brulee, washed down with excellent Douro wines.

On our return to Oporto we went on a sightseeing tour, which included the Palacio da Bolsa (Stock Exchange), the cathedral and the English Factory House. This very special 18th century building is not normally open to the general public but a fascinating visit had been arranged for us by Martin Symington. Here we learnt about the close connection between Britain, Oporto and the port industry and were delighted by its sumptuous and interesting rooms. The day ended with a visit to Graham's Port House, where we tasted a white port, a LBV ruby and 20 year old tawny. Leaving the Douro Prince we drove to the lovely Pestana Porto Hotel situated on the historic Ribeira, overlooking the Douro. Still basking in glorious sunshine and unseasonal high temperatures, we were able to relax for our final day in this lovely old city.

The following day we flew back to a cold, damp England, filled with the warmth and friendliness of Portugal,

good food, good wine, good company and good port, at the end of another excellent and enjoyable IWFS tour.

The Menu
Vegetable puff pastry with green sauce
Solar da Rede Douro Branco 2010
*
Portuguese Carrot Cream Soup
*
Chicken spiral with potato cake and sausage sauce
Solar da Rede Douro Tinto 2009
Fruits of the forest with Vanilla Ice cream
Solar da Rede Tawny Port



The Business of Wine in Chile

A Profile of Estampa

By Chris Graham



The Colchagua Valley has long been the ancestral home of winemaking in Chile, but the business of making and selling wine has changed dramatically in the past 20 years. From making wine for consumption in the home market, major investment from the wealthier families in Chile has created a new, and very effective, weapon in Chile's economic armoury.

Driving west along the main road through Colchagua with the steam railway running alongside, a major visitor attraction until the earthquake in 2010, you cross a bridge and vineyards stretch out before you when the distinctive roofline of Estampa winery appears on your right. The owner, Miguel Gonzalez ancestors came to Chile at the turn of the 19th Century and Estampa was the name of the main flour mill that the family used to manage in the valley.

By 2000 there were lots of new vineyards in Chile so Estampa determined to do something different. They decided to focus on producing assemblages (blends), and to market outside of Chile. Today they produce 100,000 cases of which 95% are exported to all four major continents.

The winery was built in 1999-2001 with a capacity of 1.8m litres and a modern design incorporating excellent facilities for visitors. The curved roofline is replicated in profile on the bottle labels – instantly recognisable and good marketing! The winery also uses this open space to host art & cultural exhibitions. Tourism is managed by Soledad Gonzalez, our generous hostess, her brother Miguel is the owner.

The soil is deep here, but with old organic material. A former rice growing area, it was then all fruit trees which were replanted with vines. Day temperatures in the 160Ha in Colchagua are 34 – 36C and at night 16C, perfect for Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot, Carmenere and Syrah. A second vineyard in Colchagua, Estacion, of 110Ha supports Cabernet-Franc, Petit-Verdot, Malbec and Viognier. A third vineyard lies in the prime terrior of Marchigue, 60km from sea, it has poor rocky-granitic soils and is planted with Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Viognier. It is a particularly excellent site for the very best Carmenere, Cabernet-Suavignon and Syrah. Investment in land continues as they develop their assemblages and have recently planted Pinot-Noir, Syrah, Sauvignon-Blanc and Riesling on a new site at Paredones, even further west and only 8km from the Pacific Ocean but still in the Colchagua valley. The climate here is similar to the famous Casablanca Valley, the only place from which Estampa purchase some Sauvignon Blanc grapes. With the help of a world-acclaimed Italian winemaking consultant (Attilio Pagli), Estampa are also experimenting with Italian grape varieties such as Sangiovese, but strict rules demand that the young vines are kept in quarantine for 3 years after importation before planting.

Estampa currently buy in a bottling service and we saw the 2010 Viognier and Chardonnay being bottled by one of only 2 bottling trucks in Chile. Projected investment will see them set up their own bottling line giving them more flexibility in future.



Mobile bottling truck

Their experienced, knowledgeable and very enthusiastic winemaker is Jose Antonio Bravo who worked for 3 years in California, where the climate is similar to Colchagua Valley due to its relative location to the Pacific ocean. He also spent 3 years working in Argentina. He was previously wine-maker at

Emiliana making Coyam and developing their Bio-Dynamic project. Antonio reminded us that Chilean appellations are more flexible than the French AOC, allowing up to 15% of other cepages in a wine labelled as a single varietal. Because of the climate in Colchagua, it is relatively easy for wineries to be organic like Estampa.

Antonio led the excellent tasting which covered their Viognier/Chardonnay 2010 which had a lovely fruity nose and dryish palate. The colour was light and clear and fresh in the mouth, very round, long, very much enjoyed by one of our party! A very good easy drinking wine. The Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2010 had a bright light colour with a floral nose. There were high levels of acidity but lots of fruit. These were late harvested grapes which delivered some green pepper with clean mineral flavours – this was also much enjoyed!

Moving on to the reds we tasted the Carmenere/Malbec 2009 with a obscure red colour with a fuzzy edge. It nosed dry and was smooth in the mouth: the Malbec modifies the Carmenere. Next up was a Cabernet Sauvignon/Petit Verdot. Here the colour was deep red with clear edges and the nose a light earth with some wet wool. Dry in the mouth but with some fruit balance. The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes are soft and have less structure.

In the Reserve range, their Carmenere, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc was made using oak barrels. This nose was real earth & spice. The deep crimson colour led to soft tannins and a very rounded wine. At the top level their Gold Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec & Merlot 2008 showed a deep velvet red colour with much spice on the nose. The wine was intense in the mouth with soft tannins, a really good wine.

One of the highlights of our visit was time spent with Soledad in the vineyard immediately in front of the visitor centre. Soledad's background as a teacher is clearly demonstrated by the rows of vines of each different grape type she has had planted there. Here you can easily see the difference in leaf shape and construction and understand how the bunches of grapes differ between varieties and therefore why they need different treatment. For example: Merlot has a 5 part leaf with open tail, whereas the Cabernet-Sauvignon leaf curls when old and has an overlapping tail. Malbec bunches are open but will tighten if it rains and then there is a risk of botrytis. Sangiovese has a 3 part leaf, large berries in bunches low down on the vine, the pips are large and there is more than one: fascinating!

Later in the year, we met up with the Export Manager, Ben Gordon, at the London International Wine Fair and he gave us a "horizontal" tasting of their four Carmenere-based assemblages. Their ranges are based on 2-grape - Estate, 3-grape - Reserve, and 4-grape - Gold, blends. The first two were clearly Carmenere but smooth and drinkable, the third was a much more complex and interesting wine and the fourth - a new introduction called LaCruz 2008, was of a very high quality and has successfully integrated the strength of the Carmenere into a wine which can compete at the top level.

Our introduction was through Mike Walker of Walker & Wodehouse Wines and selected Estampa wines can be purchased through them at <http://www.walkerwodehousewines.com/>

Society Website – One Year Old!

The Society's new website at www.iwfs.org is now more than one year old.

Many Branches are using the website to promote their events to Members, as well as to attract new members. This Events feature allows Branches to promote an Event in advance – and then use the same pages to keep a record of the Event afterwards, including menus, wine lists and photographs. Depending on how the Event is set up, its details are available to just the Branch, to the Society as a whole, or to the public. If you're planning a trip it's easy to see if the local Branch, anywhere in the world, will be having an Event during the time that you'll be visiting.

If you haven't yet registered on the website then please take the opportunity to do so. Besides keeping informed about Events you'll also be able to keep your own contact details up to date. Details on how to register were published in 'Food & Wine' last December, and those details are also available on the public pages of the website. If you need any more information, your Branch Contact/Secretary has details of your Username and initial Password – which you should change when you register.

Use your internet browser and go to: www.iwfs.org



Member sign in unlocks much more content, including access to the Secretariat tab. The site recognizes members upon sign in and opens their session on their Region's "News" page. In addition you can click on "My Account" to update your personal details.



For the last year the Membership records for the EAC have been held both on our current PC based system as well as on the website. Before the end of 2011 we expect to have a range of tools that will enable all Branches and Regions to manage their Member data on and between the website and appropriate PCs.

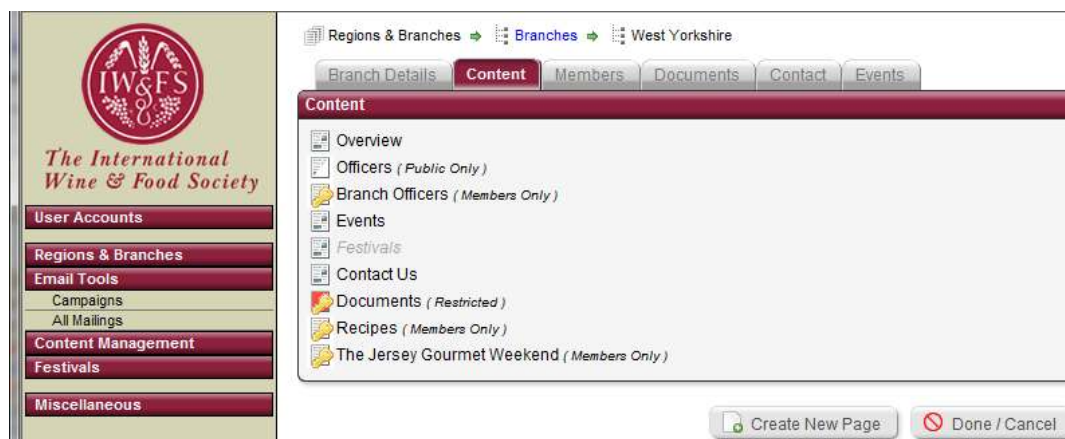
By this time next year the EAC will use Member contact information from the website only, downloading up to date details whenever required.

As an incentive to encourage Branches to use the website for their own benefit, as well as for that of the EAC, the Prompt Payment Rebate to Branches will be increased from £2 to £3 for 2012 only, for those relevant Memberships where Member records are fully up to date on the website and payment has been received by the EAC by 28 February 2012. For those records returned by spreadsheet or by completing the forms, and where payment has been received by the EAC by 28 February 2012, the normal rebate of £2 will apply in the normal way. 2012 will be the last year for which paper-based Annual Returns will be issued to Branches for completion.

For the Annual Returns in 2013 the standard Prompt Payment Rebate of £2 will be payable in the normal way but only to Branches making their Annual Returns through the website with up to date Member records and with payment received by the EAC by 28 February 2013. 2013 will be the last year for which spreadsheet based Annual Returns will be issued to Branches for completion.

Whilst this means changes in the way some things are done, we expect the range of tools provided to eliminate a duplication of effort and help make communication simpler and less expensive. Clearly the more Members who keep their contact information (addresses, e-mails, telephone, etc) up to date, the more this will be appreciated by hard working Branch officers. Don't worry about updating your Awards, Festivals/Events, or past Roles – we shall update these automatically from EAC records next year before shutting down the PC database.

The development of the range of tools for Branches and the Regions to use their on-line Member data to the best advantage is already in hand. These will include Member & Membership listings, mailing labels, Subscription schedules (Branch and Society), e-mailings and campaigns, including mail-merge capability.



What's next?

This site gives you access to the International Wine & Food Society's worldwide resources. Now, your Branch can add its own web presence, at no cost, for displaying its heritage and informing its members. Images and content can be changed easily, kept fresh and up to date.

This is an IWFS Membership Benefit, and only the beginning. New features and content are being added regularly – so please excuse us if some of these images have been updated recently.



WANDERING IN WALES

Wonderful, Wales in the sun, I think it was a first. The warmest September week ever and we were booked for a few days in Wales, courtesy of Groupon. If you are online and don't know of Groupon just Google it. They have some amazing deals all over the world but, be warned, make sure you check out the hotel or restaurant on 'Tripadvisor'.

For our first night we booked the Falcondale Hotel, Lampeter in Ceredigion, which is part of the older county of Dyfed. The original house on this site was called Pant-y-Curyll meaning valley of the sparrow hawk. The name was anglicised into Falcondale for simplicity's sake by Alice Harford, who with her husband built the present house, with its Italianate influences, in the early 1800's.

Feeling a little peckish on the way we broke our journey at the famous 'Walnut Tree' near Abergavenny where Shaun Hill now plys his trade. Not wanting to spoil our seven course dinner that evening we decided on a starter and dessert. Tasty nibbles were followed by a crevice of venison with sloe jelly which tasted as good as it looked. Monkfish with a mustard grain sauce with cucumber was also good if a little under seasoned as was the otherwise excellent bread. We did wonder if it would be like swearing in church asking for salt in this Michelin star establishment but they didn't mind. Puds were an 'alright' trifle with chocolate and apricot sauce and an unusual Lancashire Bomb cheese with Eccles cake and a glass of Valpolicella Ripasso. An interesting combination, the cheese was creamy and the cake crisp and full of fruit but the wine was not sweet enough to stand up to the dish.

It was a beautiful evening so we went first to The Hive on the Key at Aberaeron for a cup of tea and to try their famous honey ice cream but alas it was closed as there was a TV crew filming in the restaurant, nothing is sacred to the media.

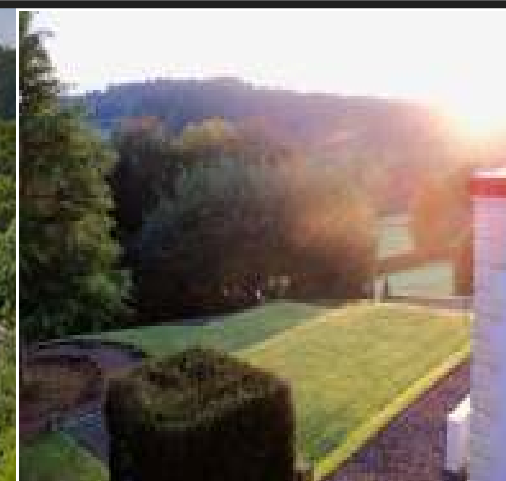
Falcondale is just 30 minutes from the coast and the house, which is just outside Lampeter, lays at the head of a wooded valley at the top of a mile long drive. We had taken a Groupon offer of £129, for two, for a one night stay which included a welcoming glass of Prosecco, a seven course tasting menu and bed & breakfast. Our tastefully decorated room had a balcony which looked out over the stunning grounds. We decided to have our welcoming drink as an aperitif and sitting in the conservatory we were presented with canapés. Our hearts dropped, the Prosecco was a very poor wine and the canapés were rough – soggy popcorn, a fish cake that was mostly potato and a cocktail stick with a piece of tough chicken and dried apricot. To be honest if we had just walked into the restaurant without booking and been presented with those we would have paid for the drink and canapés and left, even though it was a wonderful setting on a beautiful evening. Fortunately, it was the only low point in our stay, but we went into dinner in trepidation.

Our first course, a salad of baby beets with goats cheese mousse was very good, creamy cheese with no taste of the Billy goat as is so often the case. A pressing of confit of duck was also good followed by a superb risotto with tender, succulent smoked salmon. The main course of Cambrian roast loin of lamb was cooked perfectly, juicy, tender and the accompanying shiitake mushrooms and black olive purée complimented it well. Dessert of pistachio pannacotta with raspberries was of a similar high standard. Wine prices were very reasonable but with no half bottles choice was difficult, eventually we ordered a Gewurztraminer Truckheim 2008 at £24.50 and a Dinastia Vivanco Rioja Reserva 2004 for £31 both good wines from an excellent list.

We went to bed very contented after the traumatic start to the evening. Mike Green's cooking is very good but I would recommend he gets hold of a copy of 'Canapés' by Victoria Blashford-Snell!

Breakfast was also very good, we wished we had booked for longer. ➡







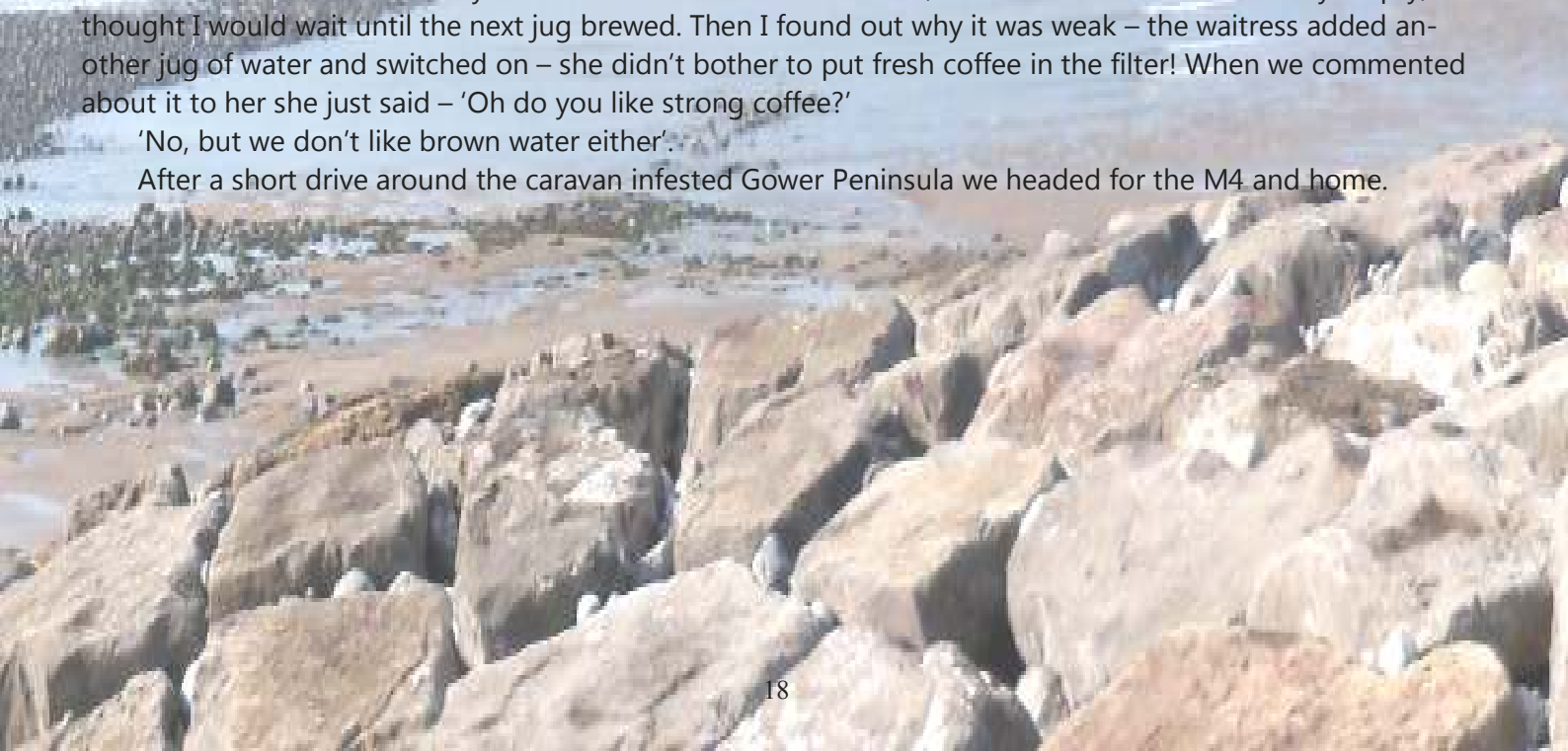
Next day in the quest for a good seafood lunch we visited St Davids in St Brides Bay. St Davids is the smallest city in Britain with a population of just over 1,600. City status was awarded in 1995 although the roots of St Davids go back to the 4th century when St David was alive. A city without a seafood restaurant as we were informed by a lady whose sons were out in the bay emptying their lobster pots, but we could have one to take home! She did send us about 5 miles up the coast to The Shed at Porthgain but despite lobster being the main dish on their website, the day we were there lobster was 'off', so we had to settle for a crab sandwich. The crab and salad were good and plentiful but the bread had seen better days. Freshly made scones with jam and cream rounded off our al fresco lunch. The sun was warm and all was right with the world until the sea breeze whipping up the bay demolished our two glasses of Prosecco when still half full. Our waitress was unfazed and two more arrived rapidly, obviously an every day occurrence.

The weather held and for our last night we had booked a Best Western, The Diplomat at Llanelli. Each Best Western hotel is an independently owned and operated franchise and the last time we stayed in one in Ironbridge, Shropshire it was very good. This time, booked through Groupon, the offer was £64 for a 2 course dinner B&B, for two. On consulting the menu we decided on a main course and dessert but no, we were told we could only have a starter and main course. The starters were vegetable soup or prawn cocktail really inspired. We went for the prawns which had little flavour.

The steak and ale pie had a crust that had not slept with the pie – it was a lump of dry pastry dumped on top of some chunks of beef in a bland gravy. My dry fillet of sea bass with crushed potatoes and Hollandaise sauce came with just a few drops of sauce. I asked for more sauce and was given a jug which made the dish more palatable. The food tasted typical 'cling & ping' – freezer to microwave, of the lowest quality as produced by the food service companies. The food was so awful even some of the conference delegates that were staying had taxis bringing them in takeaways. We stuck to cereals and toast for breakfast. The orange juice was dire and the segmented grapefruits on the buffet table were so dried up they looked as though they had been around for weeks. My coffee was weak and lukewarm so, as the coffee maker was nearly empty, I thought I would wait until the next jug brewed. Then I found out why it was weak – the waitress added another jug of water and switched on – she didn't bother to put fresh coffee in the filter! When we commented about it to her she just said – 'Oh do you like strong coffee?'

'No, but we don't like brown water either'.

After a short drive around the caravan infested Gower Peninsula we headed for the M4 and home.





by Prof Alan F Harrison

Although Cardinal Richelieu was a Prime Minister of France, we look this time at ministers of the reverend gentlemen variety and the way religion is reflected on the menu via the *Répertoire de la Cuisine*. That book has been described as *the chef's Bible*. The **Cardinal** garnish in savoury applications generally uses lobster. The chef pâtissier's produce is distinguished by the colour red.

At the front end of the menu there could be **Velouté Cardinal** based on a fish velouté garnished with diced lobster and crosses cut from a savoury egg-custard. Then we have **Oeuf mollet Cardinal** - soft-boiled egg in a tartlet with diced lobster-flesh cohered with Sauce Cardinal. That is Béchamel sauce (p 23, June 2011) plus diced lobster and truffle. The same page describes Sauce Mornay and it is now used in **Homard Cardinal**. After being boiled with herbs and vegetables, the lobster is halved lengthwise. The sliced flesh is heated in butter, bound in Sauce Mornay, returned to the shell, covered with the sauce and then grated cheese. It is gratinated under a hot grill. You might have ordered **Sole Cardinal**. Diced lobster in fish stuffing is spread on the fillets which are rolled (*en paupiette*) and poached in fish stock. These are dressed with a slices of lobster and truffle and coated with the sauce - fortified with the reduced cooking liquor.

Moving to the closing stages of the menu, why not try **Poire Cardinal**? (You can choose peaches.) The fruit is poached in vanilla stock-syrup and dressed on vanilla icecream. It is covered with raspberry purée and finished with toasted sliced almonds. Almost a variation, the raspberry purée could line a *bombe* mould (p 26, Sept 2011), A vanilla bombe mixture or special icecream recipe with crystalised rose petals is added before freezing to realise **Bombe Cardinal**.

The **religieuse** can be found on the sweet trolley as well as the afternoon tea trolley. The pompom-like pastry at the top of the page started its life as a representation of that found on early versions of the cardinal's hat. Made of *choux*- or *éclair*-paste, it is filled with pastry-cream and finished with coloured fondant. The *religieuse* in France is more often a chocolate-flavoured attraction these days, .

Our lead-man this time is Cardinal Richelieu (1585—1642) and the *Répertoire* would be thinner without him. He was often known as King Louis XIII's *First Minister*. As a result, he is considered to be the world's first Prime Minister in the modern sense of the term. He transformed France into a strong centralised state by defeating factions opposed to it.

Sampling his menu-monuments, we go back through the menu. There is **Bombe Richelieu**. The mould is liberally laced with rum and frozen. Then a coffee-bombe-mix is added before refreezing. Whitebait (**blanchailles**) and **sole** are fried in breadcrumbs and served with parsley butter and sliced truffle. **Large joints** are garnished with stuffed tomatoes and stuffed mushrooms, braised lettuce and barrel-shaped potatoes. That French white-sausage, the **boudin** in its chicken-version has chopped truffle and mushroom in it. It is fried and served with Périgueux (truffle) sauce. **Cailles Richelieu** are roast snipe and served with strips of carrot, celery and truffle.

Our *end-man* is St Benedict who inspired many a chef to create in his honour. Eggs Benedict are not in the *Répertoire*. In it, however, is **Omelette Benedictine** filled with salt-cod purée (*brandade*) and chopped truffle. The brandade finds it way into **Sole Benedictine** which is served with white wine sauce.

Finally, when sea-urchins crawl into tomatoes and are covered with chopped hard-boiled egg, for some odd reason, **Tomates Carmelite** result. Monks of that order are commemorated on the menu.



Swinton Park

– a Special Place

Manchester Branch Host

an EAC 'Awayday'

Organised by John Legg & Chris Redman



Having been told that this is the home of the Cunliffe-Lister family and at the same time a highly rated hotel one wonders how it works for the guests. The sign at the entrance simply says Swinton Park and that sets the tone in that, while it is a very comfortable hotel, it seemed more like a grand home whose family were away but the staff remained to ensure one's comfort. For example, the Boot Room still exists to kit you out with wellies and wet weather gear should you choose to explore the very large estate. Other more hotel-like facilities such as a Spa were available and indeed used and praised by some of our party.

Dinner was preceded by aperitifs in a private sitting room which gave us the chance to meet those who were new to us. The candlelit Library was a delightful setting for an excellent meal with attentive service. Chef Simon Crannage prefers to use produce from the Estate and he cooks to bring out its flavours. We had accepted his menu and were not disappointed with a Pressing of Swinton Game Birds, followed by Duo of Swinton Venison, Braised Haunch and Pan Seared Loin with Winter garden Vegetables, Game Sauce and Fondant Potato. Any concern that these dishes might be too gamey for some were swiftly dispelled, just plenty of flavours and attractive presentation.

The cheese dish was unusual - Oven Baked Vacherin Mont D'Or, served nicely gooey in warm ramekins with wholemeal toast. Earlier in the day, Chef had shown us the magnificent whole round of the cheese and told us that it would be good - it was. Dessert was Sharp Lemon Mousse presented as a slice from a tart, with garden Thyme Syrup and Vanilla Tuiles all as described and just right to finish.

That was the menu we had agreed but chef sprung some interesting surprises. Early on it was a tiny cup of soup with Sage Foam, the intensity of the sage flavour was amazing. Later in the meal a mini bread and butter pudding decorated with gooseberry was a great combination. We lingered over coffee, reflecting happily on the food and wines we had so enjoyed.



The following morning we woke up to heavy rain, but were in good spirits ready for the coach journey to the Wensleydale Creamery. This turned out to be somewhat eventful as the driver diverted to take us over a narrow bridge crossing the rather full and surging Aysgarth Falls.

We were greeted warmly at the Creamery and waited patiently and with a certain amount of merriment while Richard, the cheesemaker, prepared his milk and pail for the cheese making demonstration. This he carried out with much skill and aplomb to the delight of the onlookers. Needless to say he was faced with an array of erudite question-



ing from the knowledgeable audience. Then on to the small but very informative museum aptly entitled 'The Cheesy Experience'. Unfortunately when we reached the viewing windows where we might have seen the cheese making, the vats were empty, production had come to a halt. The reason, they had run out of milk!

Lunch followed in the airy café and included Roast Beef, Yorkshire Ham and Wensleydale Cheese accompanied by salads and pickles. This we washed down with a Camel Valley Pinot Noir brut kindly supplied by the our Chair-

man Ron Barker. Those of a less delicate nature went for the pint of Theakston's bitter.

We were then tempted with a tasting of Wensleydale cheese ranging from the Special Reserve which is matured from six to nine months, through to the blended cheeses such as Abbot's Gold and then the small truckle named after Kit Calvert who saved the Creamery from its first threat of closure in 1935. These cheeses all used locally sourced milk made to traditional recipes and handcrafted on site.

After making several purchases we made our way back to Swinton Park and thence home, having had a most enjoyable and informative visit to North Yorkshire

THE WINES AT SWINTON PARK by David Chapman

Aperitif Schloss Lieser Riesling Kabinett 2007 Thomas Haag

This was both an interesting and delicious choice, made in a traditional style it exemplified the qualities of a Kabinett wine showing decent levels of acidity in what was a good vintage for that style.

Starter *Wickham Vineyard 2009 Special Release Fume*

Made from a blend of Bacchus and Reichensteiner grapes it went well with the game terrine when it warmed to a more appropriate temperature. Good fruit on the palate with some richness enhanced by oak.

Main *Beaune 1er Cru Les Epenottes 2000 - Pierre Bourée Fils*

A family-owned estate based in Gevrey-Chambertin . Not an easy vintage but the wine provided soft fruit flavours on the palate which were balanced by the acidity so as to give great pleasure and to match the delicate flavours of the venison and its accompanying sauce.

Cheese *Domaines Schlumberger Gewurztraminer 2006 Les Princes Abbés*

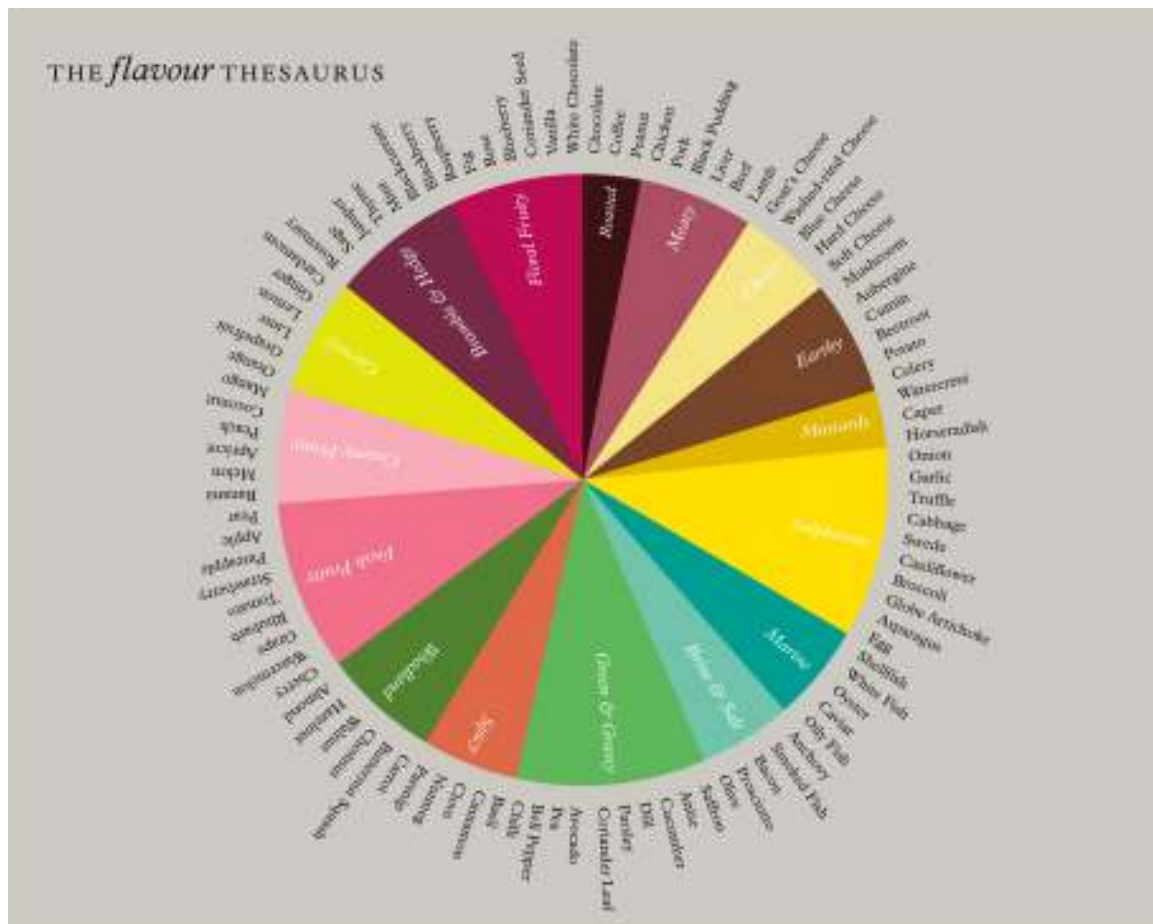
The oven-baked Vacherin de Mont d'Or was a challenge for any wine. The choice of this wine proved to be marvellous. The nose was aromatic and typical, in the mouth it was moderately full, but remained very fresh It had lots of finesse without heaviness and went really well with this cheese.

Dessert *Lustau Moscatel Emilín Sherry*

The Sharp Lemon Mousse would have been an enemy for so many dessert wines but this rich muscatel stood up to it beautifully. The finish left the mouth with suggestions of dried figs and molasses and it carried its 17% of alcohol with aplomb.

by Niki Segnit

My first task was to draw up the list of flavours. Stopping at 99 was to some extent arbitrary. Nonetheless, a flavour thesaurus that accounted for every single flavour would be as impractical as it would uncomfortable on the lap. Then I sorted the flavours into categories. Floral, citrus, herbaceous: the sort of descriptors you might encounter on the back of a wine bottle, to help conjure an idea of how something might taste. The flavours in each family have certain qualities in common; in turn, each family is linked in some way to the one adjacent to it, so that, in sum, they comprise a sort of 360° spectrum, represented here as a 'flavour wheel':



Take the 'Citrusy' family. This covers zesty flavours like orange, lemon and cardamom. Cardamom, in turn, has flavour compounds in common with rosemary, which is the first flavour in the next flavour family, 'Bramble & Hedge'. At the other end of 'Bramble & Hedge', blackberry leads to the first flavour in the 'Floral Fruity' family: raspberry. And so on round the wheel, flavour leading to flavour, family to family, in a developing sequence of relations you might enter at lemon and leave at blue cheese.

Next came the pairings. Clearly, dishes often have more than two primary ingredients. But a couple of considerations led me to make *pairs* of flavours the organising principle of my *Flavour Thesaurus*. First, sanity (mine). Even restricting myself to 99 flavours, setting out to write about flavour *trios* I would have been faced with 156,849 possible combinations; the 4,851 possible pairings seemed more to scale with the sort of book it would be both possible to write and pleasurable to read. Second, clarity. To assess, in the mind's palate, the compatibility of two flavours is exponentially easier than imagining the interplay of three flavours or more.

The entries elaborate on each of these pairings, drawing on flavour science, history, culture, chefs' wisdom and personal prejudice – anything that might shed light on why certain flavours work together, what they bring out in each other, how the same flavour pairings are expressed in different cuisines

Characterising the flavours themselves proved as elusive a task as describing any other sort of feeling. We might with some degree of objectivity observe that two ingredients that share a chemical compound have similar flavours. Thai basil and clove, for instance, both contain a compound called eugenol – and Thai basil has a clove-like flavour. But what do we mean by a clove-like flavour? To me, it's a bit like sucking on a sweet, rusty nail. But no person's tastebuds, or olfactory systems, are quite the same, and neither are their faculties for converting sensory inputs into words.

Where you come from, and what you're accustomed to eating, are also important determinants of how you sense and describe flavour, and of what flavours you tend to pair with others. Writing *The Flavour Thesaurus*, I used the opinions of experts to lend to my own judgements as robust an edge of objectivity as possible. But there's no escaping the fact everyone's flavour thesaurus would to some extent be different. Flavour is, among other things, a repository of feeling and memory; just as smell is said to be the most redolent sense, so the flavour of a certain dish can transport us back instantaneously to the time and place we first experienced it, or experienced it most memorably. *The Flavour Thesaurus* may look like, and even sometimes read like, a reference book, but for all its factual content, it's an inescapably subjective one.

Writing *The Flavour Thesaurus* has taught me many things, not least to take a more open-minded approach to combinations that other cooks, in other cultures, take for granted. Forming an understanding of how flavours work together has, moreover, helped me overcome my slavish adherence to recipes, much as learning a language removes the need to parrot pre-formed sentences from a phrasebook. It has allowed me to express myself freely, to improvise, to find appropriate substitutions for ingredients, to cook a dish the way I fancy cooking it.

But as a naturally untidy person, I'm always looking for patterns, some means of imposing order on unruly reality. And in part I expected the book to add up to something along these lines, a Grand Unifying Flavour Theory that would reconcile the science with the poetry and my mother's thoughts on jam.

It didn't. I did learn some broadly applicable principles, like how to use one flavour to disguise, bolster, temper or enliven another. And I'm now far more alert to the importance of balancing tastes – salt, sweet, bitter, sour and umami – and making the most of contrasting textures and temperatures. But what *The Flavour Thesaurus* does add up to is a patchwork of facts, connections, impressions and recollections, designed less to tell you exactly what to do than to provide the spark for your own recipe or adaptation. It's there, in short, to get the juices flowing.

Niki Segnit had not so much as peeled a potato until her early twenties when, almost by accident, she discovered that she loved cooking. Her background is in marketing, specialising in food and drink. She writes a weekly column for The Times and is working on her second book. Read more about Niki and her book at www.flavourthesaurus.com
Published by Bloomsbury Publishing plc at RRP £18.99



A Tribute to Elizabeth David

by Margaret Muir

“Good food is always a trouble and its preparation a labour of love”



It is fifty years since an epicurean uncle of Jim's, newly retired from the colonial service, handed me his hardback copy of "French Country Cooking" (FCC), published in 1951. I became an instant fan, so when I was asked to host a lunch for Herefordshire Branch it seemed the perfect opportunity to celebrate both Elizabeth David's life and the 60th anniversary of her book. I would base my menu on her recipes; dishes such as pissaladière, spanokapitta, and navarin printanier, followed by cheese, and so on to St Émilion au chocolat, mousse au chocolat, orange & almond cake, and strong coffee!

Tucked away inside my now rather battered copy of FCC I found some yellowing newspaper cuttings written when Elizabeth received her CBE in 1986, on her death in 1992, and later when the contents of her kitchen were auctioned. There was also an interview with Lisa Chaney, the American author of an unauthorised biography published in 1998. My appetite whetted, I obtained a copy. It made for fascinating reading not least because of references to the IWFS and especially Ross-on-Wye where some of our members live.

Elizabeth David began her career in journalism with a cookery column in Harper's Bazaar. André Simon was impressed by her knowledge and style and 1951 he invited her to write an article for our house magazine, then entitled "Wine & Food". She went on to contribute more and 1960 André hosted a lunch in honour of the book many consider her best, "French Provincial Cooking". When André stepped down as Editor in 1963, Hugh Johnson took over and he cultivated their friendship, visiting her at home and taking her out to try new restaurants. In 1973 the Society recognised her work with the André Simon Memorial Award.

My other Elizabeth David book is a Penguin edition of "A Book of Mediterranean Food" first published in 1950 and this details the Ross-on-Wye connection. Its seeds were sown in the seven years she spent in France, Italy, Greece and Egypt during the Second World War. Food rationed, bomb ravaged London came as a shock after the comforts of Cairo and abundant food supplies there and the snow and bitter cold of the 1947 winter added to the bleakness of the scene. When a man friend suggested that they escape to the country for a few days she eagerly accepted (her army officer husband was still in India). He chose Ross as their destination, a town of which he had happy memories. At this point the weather played a decisive role; as the snows melted Ross was cut off by floods. Their short stay extended, Elizabeth had time on her hands. Yearning for warmth and the colourful, flavoursome food she had for so long enjoyed she began to write down from memory the recipes of the dishes she loved.

From these notes a manuscript was created, the recipes embellished with quotations from distinguished authors recalling memorable meals in foreign settings. The manuscript was rejected several times but was eventually accepted by a small but farsighted publisher, John Lehmann; Elizabeth describes how this came about in her introduction to the 1988 edition. Suffice it to say that, although many of the ingredients were unavailable, the book was greeted as a ray of sunshine in those grey early post-war years.

After this success Elizabeth went on to inspire generations of homecooks and continues to influence many a renowned chef through her articles and books. In 1950 she started a revolution in the attitude of the British towards cooking. She sought out the authentic, the simple, and the seasonal, guiding principles which have guaranteed her a following to the present day.

collectanea solina



Just Fancy That!

‘Cooking is not only a response to the basic human need of feeding ourselves, and is also more than the search for happiness. Cooking is a powerful, transformative tool that, through the joint effort of co-producers whether we be chefs, producers or eaters can change the way the world nourishes itself. We dream of a future in which the chef is socially engaged, conscious of and responsible for his or her contribution to a just and sustainable society.’

Statement issued by a 'G9 summit meeting' of the world's chefs, meeting in Lima, Peru, quoted in the Guardian

'And Now for Something Completely Different'

Your Editor took a party of members 'Inside' to sample the 'Porridge'



The notice on the wall outside said 'Alert Status Heightened' presumably because IWFS members had arrived! That was just the start, after handing over photo card ID, surrendering all potentially lethal weapons, (luckily I had decided not to wear my stiletto heels!) cameras and phones we were led through successive locked doors across the prison yard and eventually into The Clink Restaurant. I can assure the good people of Sutton that if it is as difficult to get out of HMP High Down as it is to get in, they can sleep easy in their beds.

The Clink, a high class restaurant with a difference, opened on 11th May 2009 at HMP High Down Prison, Sutton, Surrey. It is the first and only commercial restaurant to be built inside a working British prison

to date. The inmates can be seen preparing the dishes in a state of the art open plan kitchen and all the front of house staff are fellow prisoners. Each trainee, while working in the restaurant studies for accredited City and Guilds qualifications in food preparation, food service and cleaning science.

Our waiter for the day was Mark, a very competent young man who will be out in the New Year and has an interview soon for a front of house position with a 5 star hotel in the south of England.

The Clink is run as a charity and a grant to build the restaurant came from the McGrath Charitable Trust. All the furniture in the restaurant has been made by the inmates of Frankland Prison, Durham.

Our three course lunch was excellent value at £16.95. Both the soup and the deep fried crispy stilton quenelles with apple, pear and walnut salad were a good contrast of flavours and well executed. English pork cooked three different ways was, roasted shoulder, home made sausage and ham hock terrine served with pea and mint puree, perfectly cooked and an interesting combination of flavours. The alternative was roast haunch of venison with red wine sauce and celeriac puree served with watercress, chestnut and mushroom salad. The venison was pink and juicy and very tender, once again good flavour combinations. Desserts included a freshly made rhubarb ice-cream which was smooth, creamy and delicious. Mark informed us that the rhubarb was from the prison garden, which is tended by inmates and supplies over 70% of the produce used in the restaurant. I would recommend any branches in the area to organise a visit.

In the first two years of operating The Clink training programme, of the 25 graduates that were released, three were deported as planned and are working abroad and the other 22 were found jobs in the hospitality industry. Today 19 are still in their jobs and very proud of what they have achieved. Unfortunately three have reoffended and are back inside. The national average of reoffending in the first year of release is 49% and if they have no home or job to go to this increases to 74% so Clink is justifiably proud of its record in reducing the reoffending average.

We started with a non alcoholic Bucks Fizz as there is no alcohol allowed in the prison so the training of sommeliers is not an option but the whole enterprise is an extremely worth while venture and one the authorities are hoping to emulate in the prison service across the country. The branch gave a donation to the Clink Charity and feels very proud to be able to support such a worthwhile cause. One problem they don't have, like some restaurants, is customers walking out without paying!

The Clink Restaurant HMP High Down, High Down Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5PJ Tel: 020 7147 6524 www.theclinkcharity.com

collectanea solina

Jaffa Cakes all Round

The good news is that official recommendations of how many calories we need to consume per day have been increased since the last study in 1991. For women the figure now is 2,097, up from 1,940 and for men the need is 2,605, up from 2,550. Experts say the difference, for women, equates to about three extra Jaffa cakes a day and for men one. The bad news is that most of us now exceed these recommended levels and as a nation we are eating five billion too many calories a day, equivalent 16.9 million cheeseburgers so you can put the Jaffa cakes away now!

Salt of the Earth

According to experts there is no health advantage in using sea salt in our cooking. Any trace minerals it might contain are often removed during the refinement of sea salt and it shows no benefits over pure sodium chloride. More than 6g a day of either is bad for you.

With that in mind it might be advisable to consider which bread you buy. According to the latest research, one in four loaves sold on the high street contain as much salt as a packet of crisps in every slice. Often the worst offenders were brown and seeded loaves with as much as 2.83g of salt per 100g.



Underage Drinking!!

It has been reported that a shop in Harlow refused to sell a 92 year old a bottle of whisky because she didn't have any ID. Great grandmother Diana Taylor showed staff her bus pass and OAP card but a salesgirl at the One Stop Shop turned her away because she didn't have a driving licence or passport!

And if the Salt doesn't get you the wine will

'An influential group of doctors,' has now recommended that we should have at least three alcohol-free days a week. They say that the Government guidelines on drinking are 'extremely dangerous' because by saying it is alright for men to drink up to four units a day and women no more than three implies that it is alright to drink everyday and the College of Physicians believes it certainly is not.

Light in Name Only

The Sunday Times reports that 'light' foods are not always the healthy option. It states that often, 'light' foods contain more fat and calories than standard products. Walkers Light crisps are marketed as having 115 calories per 24g bag, and 33% less fat than ordinary crisps but a standard packet of Tyrrell's salt and vinegar crisps contains fewer calories - 107 per 24g. and only 0.2g more fat than Walkers Light. Under EU law products labelled 'light' must have 30% reduction in calories or fat but as manufacturers use their own products as a benchmark the whole system is a farce.

around the branches - Restaurant Award

Capital Present the Society's Restaurant Award to Verveine Fishmarket Restaurant , Milford on Sea



Lymington crab, celeriac remoulade, air dried local ham & Granny Smith



Home-smoked duck, wild blackberries, rosehips and sloes



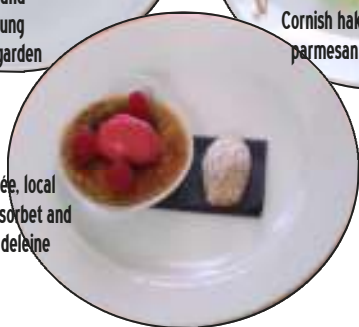
John Dory, forest ceps and mascarpone risotto, young vegetables, olive oil and garden tomatoes



Cornish hake "Provençal" with parmesan and sage gnocchi



Pistachio crème brûlée, local raspberries, raspberry sorbet and warm cinnamon madeleine



Valrhona chocolate, white chocolate, milk chocolate and burnt chocolate sorbet



A spectacular lunch awaited members who returned to Verveine to award Stacey Crouch & David Wykes their well deserved Society Restaurant Award. The New Milton Advertiser and Lymington Times reporter joined us to record the event and hopefully give the Society some much needed publicity. Stacy & David are seen here also displaying their recent award for Hampshire Best Restaurant of the Year & Best Chef Award. The menu we enjoyed, from the Peach Bellini and Canapés, which included warm soft boiled quails eggs with smoked salmon, through to some ingenious petit fours which included Marmite chocolate truffles and Fishermans Friend meringues was outstanding.

Capital Hold Recruiting Drive.

At the Wokingham Food & Drink Festival Capital branch took over the Sampling Area to put on a Food & Wine Matching demonstration. Sixteen members of the public booked for each session and were talked through a tasting of six different foods with six wines. Members produced the foods and for one session Morrisons donated the wines and for the afternoon session David Haworth of

Hampshire Wine Shippers donated the wines. David talked the tasters through the various wines and discussed their suitability to each food. Participants seemed to enjoy the concept and we collected sixteen e mail addresses from interested parties, as yet none have joined but we live in hope!

Pam Brunning, Chairman



around the branches - London

London Branch in the Dorchester 'Krug Room'



The Krug Room at the Dorchester is the original 'chef's table' – one of the first to offer diners the opportunity to watch their meal being prepared at first hand. It was first opened in the 1940s, but completely remodelled in 2003, and is now a sleek, stylish and contemporary space with a wall of glass overlooking the kitchen, which can be opaque or transparent at the flick of a switch.

London Branch was recently privileged to attend a special dinner there, featuring a menu created by renowned Executive Chef Henry Brosi specifically to match a selection of fine wines from Chairman Jeffrey Benson's private cellar, generously supplied at historic cost.

Each course was presented in detail by Chef Brosi, and prepared right outside our room, while Jeffrey presented the wines. Brosi himself prepared many of the courses, and visibly supervised every detail. Anything that was not absolutely



perfect was immediately discarded, and replaced.

We started with Moutard Prestige Rosé champagne, accompanied by truffle brioches and canapés of smoked salmon, liver pâté and tomato and mozzarella cheese. Then we sat down for the amuse bouche: a substantial serving of poached langoustine in a cider nage, with caviar and prawn shortbread. It would have served as a full course in its own right at most Michelin-starred establishments. Everybody agreed that the nage was absolutely superb, providing a slightly tart counterpoint to the richness of the langoustines, while the shortbread provided a further textural contrast to the crab. Then we moved on to a sole bonne-femme with lobster and meunière butter; accompanied by an Alsace Riesling Schoenbourg Grand Cru 2008. Although only 3 years old, the Riesling was beautifully full-flavoured, and a perfect match for the lobster and accompanying sauces.

For the main course we were treated to a saddle of Casterbridge Cotswold lamb, with its own lasagne and autumn truffles. The saddle was perfectly cooked, and contrasted in its sweetness with the bite of the tomato in its lasagne. It was accompanied by two wines from Jeffrey's cellar: both 1976 clarets, but completely different. The first, from Chateau Gruaud-Larose in St Julien, was perhaps showing its age a little, but was delicious for all that, and went well with the intense flavour of the Cotswold lamb, which was itself quite extraordinary. The Chateau Latour was just perfect.

For dessert, chef Brosi presented a Valrhona chocolate mousse, with chocolate sorbet and espuma, and quinoa crumb. He explained that each component used a different type of chocolate, each specially chosen for its unique flavour. This dish was accompanied by an unusual red dessert wine from Domaine de la Coume du Roy in Roussillon. This was a Maury AOC 1996, which is a blend of three different types of Grenache. Finding a wine to go really well with chocolate is always a challenge, but all agreed that it was a pretty good match. This was a unique experience, because Maury and nearby Banyuls have between them virtually cornered the market in this type of wine.

The cheese course was a creamed Colston Bassett stilton on poached pear, with a fig confit and nut bread. These ingredients complemented one another perfectly, and were accompanied by a Delaforce 20 year old Tawny port, bottled in 2003.

Finally, tea and coffee were accompanied by a selection of specially made chocolates, served on a blue plank which itself turned out to be made of chocolate! Throughout the meal, the elements of each dish complemented and contrasted each other perfectly, forming a truly harmonious whole. Henry Brosi himself prepared many of the dishes, and visibly supervised every detail. The wines also were really special, and in a class that few of us experience very often. A similar event is to be held in November – a real treat in store for those lucky enough to have places. It was a wonderful evening.

Alan Shepherd, Deputy Chairman.

around the branches - Malmö



In our search for alternatives to the restaurants in Malmö our choice for the opening season was the inn Skanörs Gästgäfvaregård nicely situated 20 minutes south of our city, on the very southern coast of Sweden. The reason for choosing this place was the fact that their chef Jacob Lells had in 2010 been number two in the competition Chef of the Year and was obviously a rising star as he was number 4 and 3 the years before.

After the amuse bouche Rilette of pork and bleek roe accompanied by a glass of cava, Castillo de Montblanc Brut, we were served the following five course meal:

SALMA salmon, peas, soy and fried butter
2006 Pinot Gris Neusiedlersee-Hügelland, Weinbau Wenzel, Austria

White asparagus, thymus and chest of calf
2009 Pouilly-Fuissé, Dom. du Roure de Paulin

Back, shoulder and sausage of lamb with seasonal accompanies
2006 Savigny-les-Beaune 1er cru Aux Guettes, Dom. Pavelot
2006 Chianti Classico, Fattorie di Isole e Olena

Swedish cheeses
2008 Gigondas, Xavier

Rhubarbs, white chocolate, sorbet of rhubarbs
2010 Moscato d'Asti, Cascina Galletto

I do not know whether the fact that the restaurant was very busy this evening, 100 guests in combination with far too little staff or something else but service was very uneven. We occupied three tables with 7-8 guests each and two of the tables were very pleased with the food and service, although a bit slow at times, while the last table was not happy at all. Ingredients missing on the plates, meat of bad quality etc. All agreed though that two pieces of one centimetre each of the white asparagus plus some slices of the skin was a little less than expected! I was happy enough to be sitting at one of the two first tables and had the following experience of what was served.

The SALMA salmon was of outstanding quality, fresh and clean taste of the fish and accompanied by roe, peas and the fried butter it made a very nice combination. The Austrian Pinot gris was surprisingly rich and its clean, dry, slightly exotic taste made a perfect match to the fish. The diminutive asparagus was "saved" by a perfect thymus (sweetbread) accompanied by the fresh white burgundy. The mature red burgundy with light cherry tones and the fully mature, rich Chianti with dark cherry tones went both very well indeed with the lamb. The Gigondas was a good choice for the cheeses while the Moscato, a last minute choice, lacked a little acidity to match the desert.

Obviously a talented chef and a keen sommelier was not sufficient to make all members happy with the evening. A great pity.

Conversely every member was very pleased with the season's conclusion. A delicate catering buffet with a good number of well-chosen wines was arranged by members. Marianne and S Anders Larsson generously opened up their house and garden for this sunny summer afternoon event and we were all very grateful to them for their lovely hospitality.

Rolf Fransson, Photo: Birgitta Buxrud



around the branches - Leicester



Lunch at Hambleton Hall

On Thursday June 16th John Percival arranged our annual Luncheon at Hambleton Hall. It was a lovely day and we were able to have our aperitif – NV Varichon & Clerc Blanc de Blancs Methode Traditionnelle on the terrace above the garden accompanied by unusual canapés. Our party took over the main dining room where we sat at elegantly appointed round tables. We started with a large mushroom ravioli with an artichoke sauce. This went perfectly with the white wine Cousino Macul Sauvignon Blanc. For the main course we chose between Pan Fried Fillet of Seabream with Chorizo, Tomato and Artichoke Risotto and Blade of Beef with a Duxelle of Field Mushrooms and a Red Wine Sauce. The red wine, 2008 Cousino Macul Cabernet Sauvignon complemented the beef perfectly. We all enjoyed a light delicious Summer Pudding Soufflé for dessert. Coffee and chocolates ended a wonderful occasion.

I have visited Hambleton many times over the years and have always enjoyed excellent and imaginative cooking with efficient and very friendly service. The sitting room and dining room are beautifully furnished in the country house style and the gardens with their view of Rutland Water a great joy. I have written twice to Michelin to say it deserves two stars instead of one but to no avail!

Red Lion Inn at Stathern



Margaret Bowen, our Chairman, was keen for us to visit the Red Lion Inn at Stathern part of the Rutland Inn Company. The group includes the Olive Branch at Clipsham which has one Michelin star. The Red Lion has been awarded a Bib Gourmand in the latest guide. On Wednesday August 24th we had a pleasant drive to Stathern which is in the Vale of Belvoir and enjoyed a superb view as we drove over the wold near Belvoir Castle. The pub is very busy but we had a private room at the back with access to the garden. We planned to have our Pimms there but it started to rain and we had to come inside. Twenty eight of us sat at two long tables.

We were served with a white platter of three starters, smoked salmon with a citrus and fennel salad, a duck spring roll with a sweet chilli dip and a tiny vegetable tartlet with glazed goats cheese. For the main course a seared fillet of sea trout with Lincolnshire potatoes, samphire and a sorrel sauce was excellent **OR** we could have beef with rosti potatoes and a red wine sauce. Another white platter arrived with our desserts, a chocolate and marsh mallow terrine and a mini Pavlova topped with a raspberry sorbet. This for me was the only disappointment of the meal as the terrine was very sweet and the meringue was the white shop bought variety. However all was redeemed by a slice of delicious Welsh Rarebit which we enjoyed before coffee and petit fours. We drank a plentiful supply of St Veran white Burgundy and a crisp Fleurie throughout the meal. The service was excellent.

Mary Jewell

around the branches - Sussex

Sundial Restaurant in Herstmonceux

The annual sortie of the Sussex branch to Vincent and Mary Rongier's Sundial restaurant in Herstmonceux took place in July when 33 members and guests had hoped to enjoy their aperitif of Cremant de Bourgogne with appetizing canapés in the extensive garden. Sadly the hoped-for warm balmy evening didn't materialize so we met in the comfortable bar area. However the foibles of the British weather failed to dampen spirits and the meal got off to a promising start with a choice of three dishes. My preference of red mullet fillet perfumed with orange and served with summer ratatouille, black olive oil and salad bouquet was beautifully cooked and presented. It had been a difficult decision because the shellfish is always excellent at the Sundial and the warm scallop salad with apple in curry cream and avocado served with duck liver foie gras flakes certainly didn't disappoint. The third option was an unusual oxtail terrine with spring vegetables, Gribiche sauce and an aromatic dressed salad bouquet which was reported to be very good by the members who chose it.

A palette cleansing sorbet was offered before the impressive choice of main courses which included a delicious roast turbot fillet, one of my favourite fishes, with mushroom, asparagus tips and white butter truffle sauce. The alternatives were a succulent roast duck breast accompanied by peach coulis with pink peppercorn or a tender roast beef fillet in puff pastry, Wellington style, both served with seasonal vegetables. Each was cooked to perfection and both were very much enjoyed by those who selected them. The very pleasant wines accompanying the first two courses were La Poule Blanche 2009 and Le Coq Rouge 2009, both of which emanated from Chateau Priure-Lichine, Margaux. These are new additions to the list and are to be highly recommended.

Three wonderful desserts followed whilst the few members without a sweet tooth were offered an attractive plate of assorted well-kept cheeses. The lemon cream and Guayquil chocolate mousse was accompanied by macaroon with nougat cream and Bailey's ice cream and certainly assailed the taste buds with its blend of flavours. The crispy red berry mille-feuille was a work of art and the crepe Suzette perfumed with citrus fruit was expertly flamed with Grand Marnier and presented with bourbon vanilla ice cream. These were served with a glass of Muscat de Rivesaltes, although Mary had carefully secreted away a glass of red wine for my cheese!

As usual the cuisine and service were impeccable throughout. Vincent is an excellent chef, who in our experience never lets standards slip; indeed many members felt on this occasion that he had excelled himself. Mary always manages to maintain a wonderfully calm atmosphere which creates a haven of tranquility after a stressful day. This is a restaurant well worth seeking out and our heartfelt thanks are due to Vincent, Mary and their very professional team for another memorable evening.

Lesley Berry

around the branches - Cape Town

BORDEAUX AT THE BARENBLATTS – AND A SPONTANEOUS CHARITY AUCTION

One of the objectives of the Cape Town Branch is to share wine & food experiences we may not be able to access or afford as individuals. With the recent *en primeur* seasons sending Bordeaux prices to a new planet from a SA Rand perspective, we took a look at mature tasting stock in cellar.

Henry and Jane Barenblatt again graciously allowed us to use their beautiful sea-side Bantry Bay home, and member Andi Foulkes of Dish Food & Social conjured up the food accompaniments.

We kicked off the evening with a local aperitif in the white Bordeaux genre, Villiera Down to Earth 2010, served with blue cheese and walnut shortbreads topped with mascarpone crème and date chutney. Then, classic *gougere* awaited on each table as we settled down to celebrate King Cabernet.

The wines were presented in pairs by our own Bordeaux fundi, John Grant:

Chateau Lagrange 1996	&	Chateau Talbot 2002
Chateau Durfort-Vivens 2000	&	Chateau Durfort- Vivens 2002
Carruades de Lafite 2000	&	Chateau Larrivet Haut-Brion 2000
Chateau Lafon-Rochet 2002	&	Chateau Leoville Barton 2002
Chateau Grand Puy-Lacoste 2002	&	Chateau Lynch-Bages 2002

In sum, the 2000s were still on the way up, while the 2002 wines were remarkably satisfying for the vintage.

The Dish girls then got into full swing, presenting

Falling-off-the-bone lamb shanks with a French Bordelaise sauce, served with crisp beans and caramelized garlic mash

followed by

A cheese board filled with a variety of local artisanal cheeses served with figs, seed-less grapes, caramelized onions, water biscuits and fresh ciabatta loaves

both accompanied by Villiera Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

THE SPONTANEOUS CHARITY

In a moment of spontaneity not uncommon in the branch, former Chairman Graham Blackshaw offered 'Bones for Beaune' at the end of the evening, auctioning off the shank bones (to members with dogs) to replenish the Burgundy cellar. 'No way!' said a few ladies who commandeered the sale and upped the ante, turning the bone bidding into an instant fund-raiser for TEARS, a rescue dog charity. Within minutes generous members had committed R3280 to this very worthy cause.

Members Sharon Ball (L) and Simone Crossland (R) hand over the cheque to TEARS' Colleen Curtis.



Rickety Bridge Wine Estate, Franschhoek

The Cape Town Branch paid tribute to the memory of Lannice & Mike Snyman, two of the Society's most prominent, beloved & respected members who both sadly passed away last year, by naming its biennial Family Day in their honour. It was a sight for the All Zone Youth Committee to behold! Eighty people flocked to Rickety Bridge Wine Estate on a beautiful Franschhoek day, including some 30 guests of youthful age (mostly young adult children and relatives of members) and, indeed, a dozen potential future members under 11 years of age!

The venue was most appropriate, as the Snyman family has a long association with Rickety Bridge, including developing its Gourmet Product Range. Adding to the fun, the town was bustling with 'Franschhoek Un-

corked' festival activity, including a live band on the estate & pony rides for the children! We had our own exclusive dining area spilling out onto a lower deck - an oasis overlooking the vines with a private Boules Petanque pitch, and grassed play area with jungle gyms for the young ones.

We lunched on Rickety Bridge's Spring Menu, directed by our very own Tamsin Snyman - a gourmet picnic spread crammed with a selection of Cape-inspired foods, freshly prepared by Rickety Bridge's master chef using local ingredients:

Smoked Snoek Pâté served with Farm Fresh Baguettes
Ostrich Keema Seek Meat Balls & Cucumber Ribbon Kebabs
with Rickety Bridge Garlic & Ginger Peri Peri
Steamed Green Asparagus with Homemade Garlic & Chive Aioli
South African Sweetcorn Fritters
Chicken & Pineapple Kebabs
Marinated in Rickety Bridge Smoked White Balsamic, herbs & fresh ginger
Watermelon, Feta & Mint Salad with Toasted Summer Seeds
Franschhoek Smoked Trout, Cream Cheese & Spinach Roulade
Marinated Cabbage & Celery Salad with a Cumin Seed Dressing
Baby Potato Salad with Egg, Wholegrain Mustard Mayonnaise & Fresh Herbs Local Brie,
Mature Cheddar and Boerenkaas Cheeses served with Sticky Preserved Figs
Decadent Toasted Walnut Brownies **Fresh Fruits of the Season**
A selection of Rickety Bridge wines on the table accompanied the meal

The afternoon reached its climax with the Boules Competition Final, when the teenage duo of Josh Blackshaw (son of 2009 Festival Chairman Graham & Chelle) and James Swingler (son of Branch Chairman David & Lindsay) beat off all-comers (without any undue influence, it must be said). Their prize, a cornucopia of RB Gourmet Products, was quickly 'liquidated' in sales to both sets of parents!

David Swingler, Chairman

around the branches - Surrey Hills



Wot, No Main Course!

Many years ago, well twenty actually, we, on the Surrey Hills Committee, decided to experiment with a lunch consisting of just starters and puddings. Thus 'Starters & Puds' was born. The premise being that often by the time one came to the dessert one was full up. Originally we had five of each, but even that proved too much for our dedicated gourmets, so now we settle for four. There was Veloute Petits Pois et Framboises, Prawns Maison, Asparagus and Cheese Tarts and Spicy Chicken Drum sticks. The Puds were Banana Pavlova, Crème Brulee, Skinny Chocolate Mousse and Summerdown Mint Cake (as depicted in the September Issue of Food & Wine.) Our team of talented chefs were, in alphabetical order, Pam Brunning, Susie Joyson, Bernard Lamb, Helen Mills, Susie Punch and Stephanie Shepherd. The welcoming Champagne was Antoine de Clevecy Brut NV and the wines were Bouquet de nos Vignes Blanc, Languedoc 2010; Chateau Haut Rian, Bordeaux Rose, 2009; Bouquet de nos Vignes Rouge, Languedoc 2009 and finally Tannat-Merlot 2006. These wines had been ably sourced by Keith Ellis, who, along with Sheila were unfortunately unable to attend on the day, but sommeliers Kip Punch and Nigel Butt served the wines. (The latter is also a fantastic 'washer-up!' No, you can't borrow him!)

This event presupposes that we have a venue, a member's home or garden where we can do our own cooking etc. In this instance we are again more than grateful for the use of Kip and Susie Punch's delightful home and garden. Kip had erected two large marquees for the twenty people who attended, which was just as well because the heavens opened, however in true British Spirit and with stiff upper lip we ate outside and in the end the sun came out, although several times we had to negotiate the rain drops between the kitchen and the tents!

Helen Mills, Chairman

around the branches - St James's

Roux at the Landau

A very special evening for the St James's Branch was had on October 13th when fifteen lucky members dined at Roux at the Landau, including Albert and Cheryl Roux, whose presence lent a special touch to the grand setting of the Postillion Room.

Housed at The Langham, The Landau is well known to our Branch, which had held several events there well before it came under the umbrella of Albert and his son Michel Roux Jr at the end of last year. The Langham is the oldest of the London grand hotels; it is at the centre of cultural London, across the road from the BBC, its bars and marbled halls filled with elegant and recognised faces from TV and the arts.

Any doubts about the quality of the evening to come were instantly dispelled with a glass of Albert Roux Grand Cru Blanc de Blanc champagne, together with a range of delicate and tasty canapés. Five wondrous courses were then prepared for us by head chef Chris King, who is only 26 but had trained at Le Gavroche for 5 years and had then worked in Spain, Portugal, Per Se in New York, and finally 'Roux at Parliament Square' as sous-chef before he became head chef here.

Ari Sofianos, who had planned the evening, spoke briefly about the qualities of the wines and their special relevance to the courses they were to support. Among the more unusual ones was Gaba do Xil, Valdeorras from Galicia, made from Godello, an old Spanish grape variety with a fruity nose, just right for the first course of Light Rosemary-scented cauliflower veloute with romanesco and Serrano ham croquettes.

The chef's talent of fusing intense flavours with delicate textures and wines that perfectly matched the food was present in each course and seemed to meet with the approval of the boss!

With the seared scallops, which were served with spiced red pepper, fennel and aubergine, we drank another unusual and delicious white wine, this time from Provence and made from Rolle, the same grape variety as Vermentino. Then came a small portion of an exquisite salt brisket *pot au feu* with a bone marrow crust and turnip, beautifully matched by a round red Pernand Vergelesses 2008 from Domaine Rollin et Fis.

The 'piece de resistance' was a succulent Cumbrian roast rack of lamb, expertly carved in front of us by maitre d' Franco and served with cracked wheat, marjoram and Nocellara del Berlice olives. The lamb was tender, juicy and full of flavour, and was matched by Chateau de Gironville 2008, a cru bourgeois from the Haut-Medoc which is already drinking beautifully.

To finish came a dramatic piece of architecture. I would love to have been in the kitchen during construction! It was an intricate, patterned piece of art made of bitter chocolate *millefeuille* with maple ice-cream and salted pecans. A small glass of Chateau de Cerons from the small appellation Cerons, just north of Sauternes, with a hint of resin on the nose, set it off to perfection. Coffee and petits fours rounded the evening off.

Evenings like this do not happen very often and will be remembered for a long time.

Derek Hawes

around the branches - Wessex



Annual Dinner at Les Bouviers

This year the Wessex Branch Annual Dinner was held at Les Bouviers, a “restaurant with rooms” in Canford Magna near Wimborne. Although within a largely urban area the restaurant is based in a country-house style property set in five and a half acres of attractive grounds, which unfortunately we could not take advantage of on a dark October evening!



Chef/patron James Coward

The evening began in the comfortable bar/lounge with an apéritif of Taittinger Champagne Brut Réserve NV accompanied by a selection of nibbles. Pale in colour



with a fine mousse, this Champagne was fresh and light in the mouth and not too dry. Altogether a perfect way to start the evening's proceedings on a festive note.

We then moved on to the elegant dining room to begin the real business of the evening. The chef/proprietor James Coward prides himself on using fresh seasonal and locally-sourced produce to create a fine dining experience and had produced an excellent menu for us. We had chosen an Australasian theme for the wines to accompany the meal, to give the widest possible scope for both food and wine.

The first course was a delicate chicken liver and thyme parfait studded with pistachios, served with home-made apple and apricot chutney and toasted brioche. The parfait was rich and well-flavoured and well balanced by the fruity and tangy chutney. The accompanying wine was an excellent example of New Zealand sauvignon blanc from Te Hua Valley

in Marlborough. This was absolutely delicious with classic gooseberry aromas and intense fruit and with just the right amount of acidity to balance the richness of the parfait.



This was followed by seared fillet of wild tuna served on a bed of oriental vegetables cooked with sesame oil, ginger and dark soy sauce. This was a twist on the Japanese “sashimi” tuna (which is usually served raw) and was a very successful blend of flavours and textures. We had planned to drink a Riesling with this dish but due to a last-minute hitch this was replaced by a Yalumba viognier 2009 from South Australia. Whilst perhaps not such a good match as the Riesling might have been the ripe tropical fruit flavours of this wine stood up very well to the assertiveness of the soy sauce. For the main course we had slowly-braised leg of duck cooked en confit served with thyme potato hash, braised red cabbage, haricots verts and a black bean and rosemary sauce. The duck was delicious and so tender it simply fell off the bone. The wine chosen for this course was Oyster Bay Pinot Noir 2009, again from Marlborough. This was a light clear red in colour with aromas of cherries and plums and, though not as complex as a Burgundy, it had good structure with soft tannins that went well with the duck.



The dessert was a tempting selection of contrasting items comprising poached pear in red wine, a chocolate marquis and a vanilla and mascarpone pannacotta. The diverse flavours complimented each other very well, with the richness of the chocolate and the pannacotta being balanced by the freshness of the poached pear. The wine was a very unusual sparkling Shiraz from Australia, the Wyndham Estate Bin 555, which was a silver medal winner in the 2008 Decanter awards. This combined delicious red berry fruit flavours with the spiciness of a Shiraz and a touch of oak and was deceptively powerful, weighing in at 14.5% alcohol. It was chosen especially for its ability to match with chocolate (which is notoriously difficult) and did its job very well.



The service throughout the evening was attentive and friendly and whilst we lingered over our coffee and home-made petit fours James came out of the kitchen to say a few words to us. His passion for cooking is evident (especially, as he said, for people who properly appreciate it!) and he reiterated his philosophy of support for local and fresh seasonal produce wherever possible.

There was a happy interlude earlier in the evening when our chairman, David Packer, rose to propose a toast to one of our company, Frank Myerscough, who had celebrated his 90th birthday a few days before. We all joined enthusiastically in raising our glasses to Frank and singing “Happy Birthday”, which he obviously appreciated. Frank was one of the founder members of the Wessex Branch back in 1984 and is still a very active member, so it was very nice to be able to mark the occasion in this way.

Joan Cardy, Branch Secretary.

around the branches - Manchester

East is East & West is West

Rarely has an event stimulated such discussion as the Branch Lunch at the Portland Hotel, Manchester.



The service was immaculate, the setting and presentation superb and there can be no criticism of the food which the hotel manager, Ian Corner and his assistant, Suzanne Cloake, had so carefully organised.

The stimulus for the discussion? The Committee had challenged members to relate a variety of Oriental dishes from such areas as India, Malaysia and Java to a selection of wines of our choosing. Were the wines and food complementary and did they enhance one another?

After an aperitif of Crémant De Bourgogne N.V. Grand Cru - Louis Vouillot the first course caused problems. It was generally felt that the Malay spices overwhelmed the flavour of the

Pollack, but the Lentil Shorbha helped to sooth the palate before moving on to the Tandoor Murgh. Some members felt that the 2010 Vouvray A.C. La grille, Chenin Blanc was rather too delicate and sweet and that the 2008 Gewurtztraminer A.C. Trimbach held its own against the spices and flavours of the food.

From then on as the main course dishes were tasted the debate continued and opinions given freely. The 2010 Pinot Noir Vin de Pays des Portes de la Mediterranee, Simon-Febevre was enjoyed on its own, but the Argentinian 2010 Esperanza Merlot was preferred for its body and flavour. As time went on more and more members were persuaded to try the Tiger and Cobra beers which Chef Bigu had been out to buy in the morning as the hotel had run out of supplies. Perhaps, in the end, his wisdom was justified as quite a number had to admit that to cope with such an explosion of flavours, the beer was the most compatible, thus leaving the tasting in total disarray.

We found that the difficulty with Asian cuisine, is that when several different types of dishes are served together, one wine does not necessarily cope with a range of flavours. It is up to individual taste and preference. There was hardly any room left for the generous portions of dessert. What a happy lunchtime experience on a grey, damp Manchester afternoon!

Chris Redman, Committee Member



Starter
Tandoor Murgh,
A traditional tandoor spiced chicken leg slow cooked in charcoal oven with specially selected ingredients
Lentil Shorbha,
A mild lentil soup with coriander, tomato, ginger garlic, onion, curried paste and coconut milk
Ikan Goreng, (ikan means fish in malay and goreng means fried)
Malay spiced pollack fillets with chilli boh, lime juice, cumin powder and crushed dry chilli.
(these three dishes will be served together but in miniature form on a beautifully designed china dish)

Main Course
Butter Chicken Masala
A traditional mughlai rich buttery and creamy tomato based with flavoured sauce with tomato, butter, ginger and garlic, onions, fenugreek, vinegar, sugar, cashew nut paste.
Meen Moolie
Spicy fish and coconut dish with some twist of portuguese and indian origin, floured with fenugreek, curry leaves, lime juice and shallots
Javanese Sweet And Sour Pork
A central javanese cuisine, a dish made with pork tenderloin, kaffir leaves, galangal, coriander, chilli paste, peanut paste, soya sauce, vinegar, curry paste and coconut milk.
Mutton Chettinadu,
A spiced curried mutton dish from the culinary delicacies of chettinadu cuisine.
Ayam Masak Merah (means "too good to eat"),
a thick red chicken curry from malaysia, blended with galangal, chilli boh, pandan leaves and shallot paste served with thengai sadam (means coconut rice), spicy singapore noodles (mee goreng) and lemon rice

Dessert
Vermicelli Kulfi And Glubjamon
tea or coffee
The Wines

2010 Vouvray A.C., La Grille (Chenin Blanc)
2008 Gewurtztraminer A.C., Trimbach
2010 Pinot Noir Vin De Pays Des Portes De La Mediterranee, Simonnet-Febevre
2010 Esperanza Merlot, (Argentina)

around the branches - Leicester



In September we were privileged to visit Fischer's Baslow Hall, Derbyshire, a beautiful sandstone manor house built in 1907. It was a lovely, sunny day and we gathered on the lawn admiring the view of the hills and drinking Graham Beck Brut. Moving inside we sat at one long table in an elegant dining room. After a tiny cup of delicious soup we started with an excellent creamy smoked haddock risotto topped with a soft poached egg and complemented by Trebbiano D'Abruzzo 2010 Caldora. The main course was breast of pheasant rolled in pancetta and with this we drank Mad Fish 2009 Pinot Noir. A beautifully arranged oblong plate of puddings came next with four desserts, banana ice cream, lemon tart, raspberry compote and chockywody do do!

The chef Rupert Rowley who has earned his Michelin star came to talk to us. We returned to the lawn for coffee and chocolates and were very reluctant to leave for home after thanking Jan Leaf for arranging this memorable luncheon.

Mary Jewell

around the branches - Helsinki



Mussels with purée of rocket and pastis
Blue mussels (*Mytilus edulis*), dog cockles (*Glycymeris glycymeris*)



Mussel pie with green salad
Blue mussels



Mussel soup with fennel and celery
Common cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*), dog cockles, blue mussels



Spaghetti alle vongole
Carpet clams (*Tapes desuccatus*), common cockles



Scallops with parsnip & celery purée and pistachio oil
Scallop (*Pecten maximus*)

Cockles and mussels alive, alive oh!

*In Dublin's fair city where girls are so pretty
Twas there that I first met sweet Molly Malone
As she wheeled her wheelbarrow
Through streets broad and narrow
Crying, "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive oh!"*



Molly Malone



Turo Aro pouring Pastis

Inspired by Molly Malone, the IWFS Helsinki Branch decided to try most of the cockles and mussels that are available in Finland. Although Finland is situated by the sea, our waters are brackish (caused by pollution in the Baltic sea, *Ed*) and the few species of mussels that occur in our waters remain very small and are not used as food. The most common species is the blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*), whose shell in our waters stays only about 20 mm long. When cooked, its meat does not even reach the size of a pea, so its culinary uses are non-existent.

In our 10,000+ lakes, non-commercial mussels are plentiful. They are Duck mussels (*Anodonta anatina*) they would be large enough for human consumption, but are extremely tough and taste of mud so they are not eaten. Thus, we have to rely on imported mussels. Usually, the seafood counter at most grocery stores offer blue mussels alive, imported from Denmark or Norway, where they are grown on vertical ropes and therefore do not contain grains of sand, as the Danish Limfjord mussels often did 20 years ago. Blue mussels are also available frozen, uncooked, as are many other kinds of cockles and mussels.

For our event, only five different kinds of molluscs were selected. The five dishes (shown opposite) were followed by Mussel chocolates and coffee.

There were 25 members at the event and as usual, the cooking was done by the kitchen group, consisting of a number of volunteers, one member being responsible for each course. The venue was the training kitchen of the "Martha Society", a Finnish home economics organization, which was founded in 1899 to promote the quality and standard of life in the home. They also carry out cultural and civic education and the cookery events of our branch are usually held at their training kitchen, but, regrettably, the organization has now sold their kitchen, and we will have to find a new venue for our events next year.

Jaakko Rahola, Helsinki



A City of London Experience

A glittering Occasion



Over sixty members from around the world gathered to enjoy civic hospitality at its best, in the magnificent surroundings of the Waterman's Hall, in the City of London. Our EAC Events Organiser Michael Messent planned this glittering evening to welcome members of Council to London for the Society's 48th AGM.

The Company of Watermen was formed in order to put to an end to what a 1566 Act of Parliament calls *'divers and many misfortunes and mischances,'* caused by, *'evil and ignorant persons who robbed and spoiled of their [passengers'] goods, and also drowned them.'* Its original function differs somewhat from the City livery companies in that it existed not only to protect the economic interests of its members but to also bring them and their activities under control. Elizabeth I granted the company its arms in 1585.

In 1700 the lightermen, those who unloaded cargo for ships and carried to it into the port by lighter, joined the watermen, having formally been members of the Woodmongers' Company. In the long run this greatly benefited the Company, if not the watermen themselves. The bridge building programme of the late eighteenth century and the introduction of steamships in the early nineteenth meant a decline in demand for the waterman's skills but with the expansion of the Port of London, on the other hand, the lightermen flourished.

The Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames has no livery. One reason for this may be that the freedom of the City, that the liveried would enjoy, would exempt them from impressment into the Navy, a fate inflicted upon many members of the company from the fourteenth century. The Guildhall Library contains correspondence with the Admiralty relating to impressment. The compilation of a list of those members eligible for service in 1855 records the names of 105 company members killed or invalidated in action in the early nineteenth century.

While members have no livery, the will of Thomas Doggett an Irish, Drury Lane comedian, dated September 1721, provided for a scarlet coat and a silver badge, on which is shown a representation of Liberty. This is awarded annually to the winner of a race



Thomas Doggett

rowed by six watermen within a year of completing their apprenticeships. With the exception of the war years the race, which is 4 miles 5 furlongs, from The Swan, London Bridge, to The Swan, Chelsea, has taken place annually ever since. Originally, the race was run against the tide, but since 1873 it has been run with the incoming tide. At first the boats used were four seater passenger wherries which took nearly two hours to row the distance but today contemporary single racing sculls are used, they take about 30 minutes to race the course.

In this spectacular setting we enjoyed our aperitif in the Court Room before retiring to the magnificent Freemans Room for dinner. Medallion of cod with Black pudding crust and blood orange sauce was accompanied by a Louis Latour Chardonnay Ardeche 2008. A simple wine that matched the fish well. This was followed by Chateaubriand of Scottish Beef with a beetroot and sweet potato rosti, purple sprouting and yellow carrots. With this we drank a Chateau Cadillac 2006 Cuvee JJ Lesgourgues. A fruity wine with just enough age to show some softening at the edges. A Barao de Vilar LBV Port 2003 was served with a stilton infused tart. Dessert was a plate of exotic fruits representing the plethora of produce available in our London markets. This led to a fascinating after dinner talk given by our guest speaker David Smith who is responsible for the effective and efficient operation of three of the City of London's wholesale food markets: Billingsgate, Smithfield, and New Spitalfields.

Ron Barker then had the pleasure of presenting bronze medals to Katie Wilkins and Jim Muir in recognition of their hard work on the EAC. Finally Ron himself was in for a surprise when Society Chairman Alec Murray presented him with the Society's silver medal in recognition of all the work he has put in as EAC Chairman over the last two years. A glittering occasion and truly, 'A City of London Experience'.

A City of London Experience



James Paeas BGA & Alec Murray Society Chairman



The Doggett Coat and Badge Holder



Ron Barker EAC Chairman



Katie Wilkins receiving her Bronze Medal from Alec Murray



Jim Muir receiving his Bronze Medal from Bob Gutenstein



Ron Barker receiving his Silver Medal From Alec Murray



Speaker David Smith, CBE, FHCIMA.
Director of the City of London Markets

