



Food & Wine

MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WINE & FOOD SOCIETY EUROPE AFRICA

Issue 133

October 2018

*Celebrating
85 Years*

*1933
2018*



LONDON FESTIVAL REPORTS

EXPLORING THE WINES OF VIRGINIA

FORTNUM AND MASON'S WINE COLLECTION

MUSCADET REVISITED

Chairman's message



October has been a significant month for many events and formalities, not only did we hold our first Members' Forum but also our Europe Africa AGM in Bristol and the Society AGM in Québec.

The turnout for the Bristol Great Weekend, Members' Forum and EAZ AGM was very pleasing with many members participating and it gave plenty of time for socialising, discussion of important zone matters and at the end the AGM took 10 mins to go through the formal business. Details of what went on are covered in several articles in this issue but all agreed the format was much improved over the ABRM (Annual Branch Representatives Meeting). A member from APZ visiting the UK joined us for the weekend and enjoyed both the events and the discussion as some issues are society wide. Eduardo Aquilla, Chair of Valencia Branch also joined us to announce the plans for the 2019 Great Weekend, Members' Forum and AGM in Valencia next October. Watch Dates for your Diary for further information and later next year, booking instructions. Congratulations to Bath & Bristol and Herefordshire & Monmouthshire branches for organising the weekend, and nice to see Sarah, Richard and Mimi Avery together and supporting the event.

Next to Québec Great Weekend, Americas AGM and Society AGM. This corresponded with the anniversary of David Felton becoming Honorary President of the Society two years ago, and I am delighted to announce, on the invitation of Council, Dave

agreed to continue for a further two year term until the Society AGM in 2020. Dave is a great Ambassador for the Society and keen oenologist. After his retirement he has bought a vineyard in Mendoza, Argentina, and is keen for us to try his first vintages. Those attending the next Triennial Festival in 2021 in Argentina I am sure are in for a treat.

After Chairing the Council Meeting in Québec my two-year term as Chair of the International Council of Management came to an end. It is nice to report that the Society remains in a sound financial position due to good all round management, and it has been a privilege to further the aims of the Society and seek consensus of the other Council Members whose views occasionally pull us in different directions. At the end of the meeting I was pleased to hand over the Chairman's Chain of Office to Andrew Jones of the Americas, who will be Chair for the next two years.

During the Québec celebrations I was honoured to be presented with an André Simon Gold Medal but I thank my wife Chris for supporting the commitments we have undertaken, and all the members who have contributed to making the last few years successful for the Society.

Ian Nicol
EAZ Chair

STOP PRESS

EAZ Trip to Bordeaux
4th to 8th June 2019

Due to popular demand this wine and food tour of the iconic Bordeaux region has sold out. If you would like to be added to the waiting list please contact Stephanie Shepherd (email s.shepherd@ntlworld.com) or for full details, please visit <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/events//bordeaux-festival>.

Front cover: Borough Market, photograph © Miles Willis 2018, www.mileswillis.co.uk

The Society was formed on 20th October 1933 in London by wine writer André L Simon and bibliophile A J Symons. Within a month there were 230 members. Today there are over 6,000 in 139 branches worldwide.

The Society, which is an independent non-profit making organisation run by volunteers, is divided into three areas – the Europe Africa Zone, the Asia Pacific Zone, and the Americas.

In André's words,
"The purpose of the Society is to bring together and serve all who believe that a right understanding of good food and wine is an essential part of personal contentment and health and that an intelligent

approach to the pleasures and problems of the table offers far greater rewards than mere satisfaction of appetites."



In the over indulgent society of the 21st century we endeavour to examine some of the excesses of the western diet and to persuade consumers of the need for quality rather than quantity in the food and drink they consume. To this end we support suppliers of quality produce worldwide.

New members are always welcome, please see page 3 for details. Please also visit our website www.iwfs.org or for information about the Society in brief visit our Wikipedia page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Wine_and_Food_Society



Editorial

As we have been unable to find a new Editor to replace Nathalie Rosin, this issue of Food & Wine has been put together mainly by members of your Committee and considerable time by Andrea Warren, the Society's International Secretary. Andrea usually edits Food & Wine Online for us, and deals with the outside typesetters and printers that the Society use, in getting all publications out to you.

Therefore we are still seeking an Editor and would encourage someone to step forward to take on this role for the Zone. I have emphasised that the Editor's job has been simplified in that it now involves the collection of articles sent in as Word documents and JPEG pictures and allocating these to appropriate pages in the magazine – general articles in the front, and branch news in the later pages. These are then sent to the typesetter and eventually, after proof checking, to the printer, who also posts the magazines. No specific technical publishing skills are needed and Andrea can advise on the communications with the typesetter and printer, so please if anyone would like to volunteer their time, we will give all the support needed. The Editor no longer needs to be a member of the Executive Committee. There is a small Editorial Board comprising Editor of Food & Wine, Editor of Food & Wine Online and Events Co-ordinator to ensure timely announcements of Events and booking details. It is not practical for the Committee to edit future magazines amongst all the other work they do for the Society so if the printed magazine is to continue we need to find an Editor. (We still also need to find a Webmaster and back-up Treasurer, so offers would be very welcome please.)

This edition celebrates, amongst other articles, the highly successful London Festival and although many could not attend, for whatever reason, I hope you will find the stories of interest. Many of the visits such as Forman's Fish Island, walks such as hidden gardens and food walks such as Borough Market are open to the public, so you may like to do one yourselves individually or as a branch. If you can't get to London have a read of Oz Clarke's André Simon lecture now on the website via this link: <https://www.iwfs.org/about/publications/andre-l-simon-lectures>.

The Members' Forum at the AGM generated lots of discussion about membership and our purpose. It is only right that members feel things will happen. The ExCo on the day after the Forum started the ball rolling and confirmed the following would happen.

- We would examine our USP (Unique Selling Proposition), which makes our Society different and better than the competition.
- EAZ would fund initiatives put forward by branches to invest in recruiting and retaining members – put your costed case forward and expected benefit to our Treasurer, and if agreed we will put up the cash.
- An analysis of recruitment numbers and retention by branches would be carried out and shared with you. This has already started.
- A Recruitment and New branches Committee would be welcomed to initiate ideas and would be supported with funds should we get volunteers to form one. As above, volunteering seems not to be popular at the moment.
- The latest news on the 'Responsive Design Project' (new look website) is that we will see it in November. Alan Shepherd in the absence of a Webmaster has been EAZ representative, and Alan recognises EAZ will need to customise certain pages for our use. We thank Alan for the time he has put in.

Branches should continue to send articles to editor.eaz@iwfs.org where Andrea will continue to monitor the mailbox along with any letters to the Editor, until time when we have a new Editor.

Ian Nicol

Food & Wine

Food & Wine magazine
is designed and published by
IWFS Europe Africa Ltd

Editorial email:
editor.eaz@iwfs.org

Printed by
All Things Print (UK) Ltd
Upp Hall Farm
Salmons Lane
2 Lower Yard
Coggeshall
Essex
CO6 1RY
www.allthingsprint.co.uk

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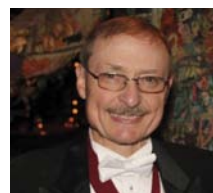


Contributors

2018 London Triennial International Festival

Stephanie Shepherd maintains that her first mistake after joining the Society was winning London Branch's fun blind tasting known as Liars and Cheats. She claims not to be a wine expert but is a food person who enjoys wine in the context of a meal. She is, however, seriously committed to good food in all its aspects of its journey from pot to plate. She is an experienced events organiser, and was soon recruited to the EAZ to lead the London International Festival, taking in the Savoie and the Baltic, amongst others, along the way.

The contributors, and IWFS members, who have kindly given us their personal responses to the Festival are: Lidia Rozlapa, Lynn and Carl Cooper, Kay Botko, Ron Barker, Kurt Haering, John Nicholas, John Hall and Robert Allerdice.



On Co-founding the Wine and Food Society

Tom Murnan is a member of the Omaha (2008) and Council Bluffs (2012) branches. His interest in food and wine began when, as an undergraduate, he stayed with his

uncle who received a PhD. from the Sorbonne. He attended his uncle's multi course French dinners, each paired with the correct wine, and soon found himself bitten by the wine and food bug. He was Council Bluffs branch president from 2016 to 2017 and is currently president of the Omaha branch. He is the editor of both branches monthly gazettes and as a strong advocate of gastronomic education aims to reflect this in them.

Visit to Explore the Wines of Virginia

Colin Mair's interest in wine started at Nottingham University when he attended tastings organised by his hall warden, Bob Waterhouse, Chairman of the University Philoenic Society. He has had many wonderful experiences tasting and buying wines in his role as Chairman of the Mess Wine-Buying Committee for the Royal Naval College, Greenwich and other wine societies. He joined the Berkshire Branch, having met, by chance, Alex Corrin of the Northampton branch, at an event organised by Yapp Bros at Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons. He has organised tastings and overseas visits for the Branch, and is now Chairman.



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Fortnum & Masons Wine Collection



Jamie Waugh – against the better advice of his father, Harry Waugh (honorary MW), he followed in his footsteps and began a career in the wine trade nearly 20 years ago. He started in Oddbins having studied Art History at Manchester University. From there he moved on and joined Percy Fox selling their wines to the on trade and then to Corney & Barrow and OW Loeb. He joined Fortnum's 11 years ago and is their head Wine and Spirit Buyer.

Muscadet Revisited

Richard Jackson became a member of the IWFS London Branch committee and attained Level 3 WSET after retiring from full time work in 2012. The trip to Muscadet was one of several foreign wine trips he organises annually for friends and family to share his love of wine.



AGM Weekend in Bristol

Chair of the Bath & Bristol Branch and member of the EAZ Executive Committee, **Leonie Allday** is a former university lecturer in Human Geography who, in retirement, has finally had time to pursue her long-held interest in wine. She teaches for the Wine & Spirits Education Trust and also has her own business (@winetimeallday) running tutored wine, gin and port tastings. She is committed to raising the profile of IWFS amongst both food and wine professionals and in the wider community.



News from the International Secretariat

Dear members

After a very busy first half of the year, when I was very fortunate to be part of IWFS festivals in Australia and London, time since then has been a period of consolidation of the work in the international office, but still pretty busy. I did not make the festival in Québec in September, which saw the Chairmanship of the International Council of Management transfer from your own Chair, Ian Nicol, to Andrew Jones of the Americas. In Québec, Ian was recognised, deservedly so, for his work for the Society on an international level and was awarded the André Simon, Gold Medal – presented to him by Dave Felton,



Ian Nicol and Dave Felton

Honorary President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ian for all his support during his time as International Chairman and also to his wife, Chris, for letting me join them on sightseeing tours when overseas.

I digress – much of the work of the international side of the Society is to add value to your membership on top of the wonderful dinners, tastings and events put on by your branch and zone. I have been working on a number of these over the summer and here are some snippets of information that I thought might be of interest.

The **monographs** are one way in which we aim to bring you informed views about a specialist topic by an expert on a particular topic. Once copies of the latest monograph, *The Essential Guide to English Wine*, had been sent out to members, it was great to receive positive feedback. One message was from Hugh Johnson, Past-President of the Society (and also considered the world's best selling wine-writer) said that he thought it was "terrific" – hats off to our authors Susie Barrie MW and Peter Richards MW and our excellent editor Susanna Forbes for a job well done. (See details overleaf on Susanna's latest project, *The Cider Insider*, which has been recently published.) It was also encouraging when some of the wineries featured, purchased copies to sell via their cellar-door – they can obviously see the value for their customers too. Let's hope the monographs also help to spread the word about our wonderful Society.



Susie and Peter

The latest **André Simon lecture** has also been added to the website. As mentioned in my last column, in June 2018 Oz Clarke, well-known wine writer, TV presenter and broadcaster, made a powerful presentation during the London Festival



Oz Clarke

focusing on the impact of climate change on the world of wine – "Hot, Cold but mostly Cold. What the Present and Future holds". Oz highlighted key opportunities for emerging wine regions (Norway now has the

most northerly vineyard in the world) and how the classic wine regions are adapting (most producers in St Emilion are not replanting Merlot but replacing it with Cabernet Franc). Looking back to last year when "The Indian Wine Trade" was presented by Sanjay Menon during the APZ Festival in India. Here Sanjay gave an insight into how the Indian wine trade was still very



Sanjay Menon

much in its infancy and although it faces difficulties, both logistically and culturally, he outlined the huge potential that the selling of wine has in this market and is definitely one to watch. Both these

speeches, are now available to download from the IWFS website, and earlier lectures too, via About / Publications / André Simon lectures.

The 2018 **Vintage Card** (your 2019 Membership Card) is now available to purchase as a seasonal gift for friends, family and colleagues. The latest online Vintage App will be available for you to download onto your mobile devices during November (details will be emailed to you). Vintage reports from wine regions around the world provide interesting reading. One of the last to come through was from South America via our wine consultant for Chile, Duncan Killiner. He reports Chile is a top 7! In his words "It was quite a late harvest with a lot of white grapes delaying the early harvest and, in so, delaying the overall harvest dates... but not quantities in whites, which are up over 25%. Contrastingly in reds there were relatively small bunches due to hydric restrictions so earlier ripening dates, with less quantities. This led to a lot of red grapes being harvested riper than normal due to the wineries still processing white grapes. Hence in Chile you have a very good harvest of Cabernet Sauvignon and very ripe Carmeneres. With Alto Maipo and Colchagua having one of the best quality harvests in memory."

Again a reminder of the 85th Anniversary competition being run – where your branch has the opportunity to win £500 worth of wine – details are also on the website – under the Secretariat / For Members tab (but you must be signed in as a member to gain access). We know a number of branches have events organised, some have already been held, and we look forward to hearing all about them. Please note you can source the logos from the website to assist in the promotion of your events.



During the summer I had the chance to learn and experience first hand about wine from two regions I had never visited. South West France was the first, where I enjoyed the delicious dark red wines of Cahors made from the Malbec grape (the predominant variety of the region with Tannat and Merlot the only other two grape varieties allowed). Touring around on

e-bikes (what a revelation) we visited a small family owned winery, Domain de Marcilhac – madame kindly opened their cellars for us on our arrival and gave us a tasting of their wines. Then a visit to Château du Cèdre, recognised as the leading winery in Cahors, run today by Pascal and Jean-Marc Verhaeghe and which is now certified as both organic and biodynamic. Both wineries showed a delicious range of wines with their top wines generally being 100% Malbec giving strength and power to allow for ageing for a number of years. The next visit was to Crete and it was very exciting to taste wines from many local grapes I had not heard of – Thrapsathiri, Romeiko and Vidiano. The latter, Vidiano, was my favourite. It is a white grape with qualities I would liken to Verdelho. It provides a rich buttery wine, with hints of apricot too with some clean and fresh acidity. I experienced wines in both regions I would definitely buy again – in the meantime a bottle of Le Cèdre 2015 from Château du Cèdre beckons...

Until next time

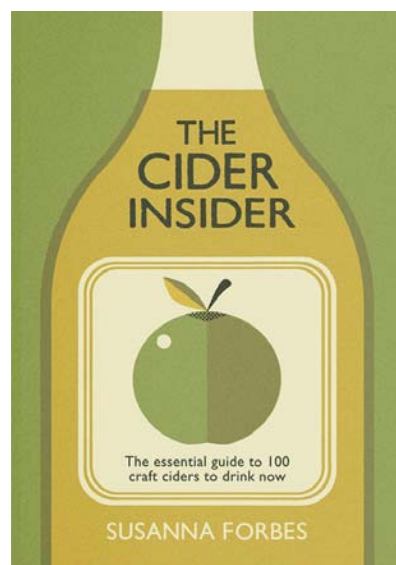
Andrea Warren

The Cider Insider

Some of you might have seen cider bottles gaining space on go-ahead wine shop shelves next to the natural wines. And on enterprising drinks lists in bistros and white table clothed establishments. There's a renaissance in crafted ciders, where the apple leads the way rather than the marketeers. In the seventeenth century, cider was the drink that graced tables of nobility. Back then, while it was certainly the drink in the country for thirsty farmworkers, it was also a fermented beverage over which much time, care and attention was taken. Today, elegant ciders throughout Europe, North America and the UK are re-shaping perceptions. And winemakers on all continents are

turning their hand to what is, after all, apple wine.

The Cider Insider profiles 100 of the world's best craft ciders, telling the stories of their creators and setting them in context. Written by Susanna Forbes, editor of the IWFS Monograph series for the last five years, ciders – and perries – from 35 regions are covered, with 46 different apple varieties and a dozen pear varieties included. With cellar door information and details of dozens of events and festivals included, this also serves as a handy cider tourism handbook.



Published by Quadrille on 18th October, right before international Apple Day on 21st October, the book is available via your local bookshop, Amazon (smarturl.it/CiderInsider), or The Book Depository.

So, to find out about the Michelin-starred sommelier who turned his back on Paris for his falling down Normandy château, the Canadian cidemakers who make ice ciders by letting the apples freeze on the trees, as well as the west country stalwarts of textured, complexity, look out for Cider Insider.

Follow Susanna's journey with Little Pomona, the boutique cidery she founded with her husband, James Forbes.
@LittlePomona



2018 LONDON TRIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

by Stephanie Shepherd, Chairman, Festival Organising Committee

You think it will never come, and then, suddenly, it's all over! After five years' of plotting and planning, the committee said farewell to the last of our Festival guests on 9th June.

The Triennial International Festival is the Society's flagship event. Each year the three IWFS zones run Regional Festivals open to all members of the Society. Every third year one of these is replaced by the Triennial Festival which rotates round the zones. In 2018 it was Europe Africa's turn to host and London was chosen as the host city.

A dozen members of London and St James's Branches came together with members from Blackpool & Fylde Coast and Zürich to make the Festival a reality. Organising a Triennial Festival is quite an undertaking. The core festival itself generally consists of a five-day events programme, providing non-stop entertainment for all participants, with a supporting optional programme of two pre-festival and two post-festival tours. The number of guests each Triennial Festival accommodates depends on local circumstances. Although we were encouraged to aim for 200 participants, the team agreed that about 150 would be more manageable in London. In the end two of our venues were able to take 180 guests so we settled on that as the maximum number of whole-time tickets expanding to take 205 at the Goldsmiths for the final Gala Dinner.

We set out to eschew the standard tourist attractions and show fellow members some of the delights only Londoners know. Some had wondered if we were on the right track. Why, they said were we not using the House of Commons, the Inns of

Court? In the first instance it was an easy decision; our legislature may be great at many things but food isn't one of them. In the second, one simply cannot visit everywhere in five days.

We thought the venues we had chosen worked remarkably well. The Corinthia Hotel proved a particularly happy choice as the Festival Hotel and its kitchen staff produced a wonderful opening dinner capturing the whole ethos of the Festival. The Goldsmiths' Livery Hall furnished a fitting coda to the main event. Candle-lit chandeliers sparkled, wood paneling glowed and the Gold Plate glinted, The Pikemen of the Honourable Artillery Company provided a suitably martial 'Carpet Guard' and students of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama provided expert entertainment. It seems almost redundant to say that the food, wine and service were also first class. In between the two, The Merchant Taylors' Livery Hall handled the logistics of a wine tasting for 200 followed immediately by lunch with exemplary professionalism. The restaurants of the Dine Around, Hurlingham Club and Formans exceeded our expectations by a considerable margin. The marvellous Eltham Palace attracted a few negative comments about the food and serving of the wine, but even that was tempered with understanding of the difficulties of feeding 170 demanding guests in a venue where everything from ovens to coffee spoons has to be brought in for the day.

After some hair-raising moments – would we be able to get the boats under the bridges on the way back from the Hurlingham Club at Putney with the river particularly full - even the weather played ball. Boats and coaches delivered guests to the required



The organising committee, from left to right: John Nicholas, Graham Lovelock, Ian Nicol, Stephanie Shepherd, Roger Ellis, Rachel Burnett and Bernard Lamb.

destinations largely on-time. This was no mean feat as some of the routes we were using dated back to the era of the horse and cart and haven't been widened since.

As the feedback came in it was clear that our efforts had been noticed and appreciated. Kay Botko wrote 'Another carefully orchestrated aspect of the Festival was to truly "showcase" the "Loveliest of London" or the "Best of Britain" - whether it be the wines, the seasonal produce, the trending food venues – from Pub to Penthouse-Michelin, the hospitality venues, the music and the arts embellishing the events and some of the varying industries' finest spokesmen. They were all topnotch. It was very evident that in the menu planning, all items were cross-referenced to avoid repetitious preparation even when using the best in season. The most repeated ingredient was: English PEAS – and they were wonderful.'

Many members commented favourably on the choice of wines and their pairing with the food.

One thing which surprised the Committee was the stamina of our guests. We thought we had created a packed programme and one or two people did indeed decide to miss an event or two. For many though, it seemed that the gaps cried out to be filled and fill them they did. Kay again: 'The committee's careful selection of venues, but more importantly, the premeditated planning of free time throughout, enabled participants to have time to pursue those 'special delights' around the city on their own time without having to give up the festival's selections. Many participants sought out such favorites as Harrods Food Hall, an evening at the theater with 'Hamilton' and 'Tina' being big choices, a new Monet exhibit at the National Gallery, the

newly opened Kew Gardens Temperate House, the Eye, and others.'

Here in the UK we are used to being told that young people won't join IWFS because they don't want to socialise with their parents and grandparents. On the evidence of the Festival they'd be lucky to keep up!

Before the Festival got underway I asked some of the participants to write up their impressions of the events they attended. These reports together with their photographs are gathered together here. The report of the Ireland pre-tour was published in the last edition. Thank you to all who took the time and trouble to write for us. Thank you also to those who provided the photographs: IWFS Members Nic Galante, Robert Allerdice, John Nicholas and Alan Shepherd, and to professional photographers Peter Holland, Miles Willis and Kevin Williams.

It is wonderful when all the planning comes together; when fellow members clearly enjoy themselves reigniting old friendships and making new ones. It makes the sleepless nights worthwhile when one receives comments such as these; 'Having attended many many international festivals over the years, I don't know that I've seen a more perfectly coordinated gathering, run so very seamlessly. (Or so well handled as not to notice the flaws.) Well done, Brits!!'

Thank you Kay, and everyone who took the trouble to write to the Committee after the Festival. It was very much a team effort and we truly appreciate your support. We hope to see you all at many more festivals to come.

CHAMPAGNE EXPERIENCE PRE-FESTIVAL TOUR

by Lidia Rozlapa, Western Australia Branch

Napoleon Bonaparte said: "I drink champagne when I win, to celebrate, and I drink champagne when I lose, to console myself."

Coco Chanel said: "I only drink Champagne on two occasions, when I am in love and when I am not"

And I say: "who am I to challenge the wisdom of such greats - Vive la France, Vive le Champagne – any time, any place, anywhere"

Day 1: Monday 21st May

Twenty-eight intrepid souls ventured forth from London into the wilderness of France seeking the Nectar of the Gods in the Champagne Region. Within half an hour of entering our Tardis, the tinkle of the glass and a soft "pop" invaded our senses. For the next five days, these sounds were to condition us to prepare for the libations that were to follow, in and during our travels. Like Pavlov's dogs, we became conditioned to these salubrious sounds and sat upright in anticipation of being tantalised by the pleasures that were to follow. Even those who chose to repose in the warmth of the afternoon sun, in our soft leather armchairs, immediately became alert and "salivatus" to the

presentation of the abundance of Champagne that was to follow throughout the whole trip. Today was the beginning of our experience about Champagne, from the "vintage to the bottle". We listened, visited, tasted, enjoyed, ventured into unknown territories to become a little more knowledgeable than when we came.

With the assistance of our Ship Captains from Golden Sabre Tours, Julian White (Head Sherang & Knight Commander – sporting an obligatory "monocle"), Gerard O'Shea (The



Julian White, Head Sherang & Knight Commander



The 'Group'; Lidia is front row first on the left.

Ambassador & Knight Commander); Justin Rhodes (The Commander); and Julia we were treated to our first (according to Julian) "quaff", a Heidsieck Monopole Blue Top NV, 2012. Which was almost immediately followed by the Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Reserve, 40% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, 25% Pinot Meunier, mainly 2010. 20% reserve wine including 2008 & 9. Fitness and elegance comes from the Chardonnay, the Body from the Pinot and from the Pinot Meunier its aggressiveness. Tastings continued with: Chanoine (Reserve), Jacquard Mosaïque (Brut), Moët & Chandon (Brut Imperial), and Taittinger (Brut Reserve).

After six champagnes we were instructed with great alacrity, and I am sure great knowledge and previous experience of such, that we now needed to drink a glass of Red Burgundy to settle our stomachs. We did this immediately and behold a miracle - we were ready to start again. We arrived at our hotel in the afternoon, checked in and then prepared for our evening meal at Le Grand Café an elegant bistro that served a bountiful selection of foods for every taste. The tastings continued with 3 more champagnes, Lanson Black Label NV Brut, Laurent Perrier Brut NV, and Louis Roederer Brut Premier.

Dinner Wines were: Champagne Brugnion Brut & Rose, Pommard 1^{er} Cru Clos des Boucherottes (Monopole), 2009 en magnum; Nuits Saint Georges 1^{er} Cru Les Murgers 2009; Château Bellevue de Tayac, Margaux 2010.

These first tastings gave us a general background to the wide variety of compositions using the three grapes – Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier in different proportions and showed us the different flavours and nuances that are found as a result. We were each given a daily running sheet which outlined the Varietals in Cuvée and the composition of harvests

and reserve wines. We were free to make our own notes regarding the tastings (which were very substantial) and I noticed on the first day that my writing became rather scratchy towards the end of the day.

We all fell into bed, to prepare ourselves for Day 2.

Day 2: Tuesday 22nd May

After a hearty breakfast, still bubbling with excitement (pardon the pun); our journey took us to Taittinger where our host John Pierre introduced us to Taittinger and the catacombs and explained the history and traditions of this fine establishment. A new House in Champagne history, Pierre Taittinger, a young cavalry officer on General Joffre's staff during WW1, started the business in 1933. He had been so enchanted by the Châteaux de la Marquetterie where the cavalry GHQ was billeted, he returned to buy it later. Taittinger acquired the splendid residence of the former Counts of Champagne – originally built for Thibault IV (1201-1253), Count of Champagne and King of Navarre. It is said that Chardonnay vines are from Cyprus, brought back to France by Thibault when he returned from the Crusades.

We enjoyed a superb lunch, served in old world surroundings at the Taittinger Chateau which included 5 superb courses, and 5 superb Wines; Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blanc 2006, Taittinger Brut Millésimé 2012, followed by Taittinger's Les Folies de la Marquetterie, Avant- Garde Pinot Noir Domaine Carneros 2014, completed with Taittinger Nocturne Rosé. Our Chef Benjamin Gilles à Reims is to be congratulated for some very innovative and exquisite dishes.

Back on the Tardis and after such a sumptuous lunch, the faint sound of pleasant snoring wafted through the air, although



Julian did suggest that it was probably appropriate now to have a small digestive of Burgundy before we start again at 4.45pm. A refreshing walk to the Comparative Tasting of some very special Champagnes, this was enjoyed at Le Grand Café with some very colourful and delightful Amuse Bouche. (How I miss this little treat before dinner since we left Reims.)

Comparative wines were: Moët & Chandon, Cuvée Dom Perignon 2006, Moët & Chandon Cuvée Dom Perignon 2002, Bollinger, La Grande Année 2004, and a special surprise and "blind tasting" of Phillippe Brugnion's 2009 Vintage Pink Champagne in Jeraboam.

It did not end there; we concluded our day with another six course meal at La Vigneraie in a private dining room accompanied by some excellent wines; Phillippe Brugnion Champagne Brut an Rose, Meursault 1 er Cru les Bouchères 2008, Latricieres Chambertin Grand Cru 2008, Chateau Lamothe-Cissac 2008, Haut-Médoc.

This was a very special and absorbing day of learnings and I believe we are all starting to understand the finer points and risks of the champagne process. Our Tardis Crew Julian, Justin, Gerard and Lady Julia, with Phillippe Brugnion adding vital information to our store of knowledge about champagne.

An awe inspiring day: I have definitely died and gone to heaven at this stage, only three days to go.

Day 3: Wednesday 23rd May

After two glorious days of sunny weather the clouds opened up and we had a few storms. This did not dampen our spirits in the Tardis, despite some harrowing one way streets in the afternoon. In Épernay we visited Joseph Perrier in the morning and were given an in depth education in the underground limestone tunnels where the bottles lay in wait (like a maiden) to be

disgorged, bottled and to start their new life in the salons around the world. A labelling nightmare for the five million bottles stored here, as each country wants its own label. The challenge is "turned by hand or machine" a six million dollar question?

Lunch was taken at Le Cheval Blanc. Today we begin our training in the Art of Sabrage – all the intrepid souls on the Tardis would eventually be trained in this skill. What an experience: quite stunning.

The afternoon saw us expertly driven through even narrower streets, to the Côte de Blancs, to Oger where we visited the Grand Cru Champagne of Charles Mignon.

Evening dinner was served at the Hotel Excelsior, Reims, a delightfully restored hotel, still keeping its "old world" charm with modern accouchements. Wines served: Champagne Vintage 2009 and Rose, Mercurey, Santenay 1 er Cru Clos des Mouches, Chablis Grand Cru "Vaudésir".

Those travelling to Reims in the future should definitely experience this elegance. A delightful young man has bought and redeveloped this property. You will not be disappointed in your visit.



Lidia successfully completing her sabrage training

Day 4: Thursday 24th May

Day 4 saw a very early start for Artisan champagne in Oger, located in the heart of the famous Côtes des Blancs. This village belongs to the 17 Grand Crus of the Champagne region, and is purported to be one of the best vineyards for Chardonnay growing. The Milan family has 150 years of experience perpetuated from father to son since 1864.

Jean Charles takes care of the precious vineyard in Oger. Grapes are picked by hand, as machines are forbidden in the Champagne region, to get the best juice from the fruit. Together with his family and team, they produce the wines and create the blends together, they know how to perpetuate the authentic family style and like to bring a fresh and elegant touch to their champagnes. He manages all the production with a lot of passion and professionalism, as their parents and grand-parents taught them. Very enthusiastic tasting by all participants, especially our special lady from Austin who adores Blanc de Blancs.

Lunch at a delightful picturesque restaurant the Clos St George, menu again to die for. In these beautiful surrounds I could have consumed the "Rosy" by Phillippe in the sunshine drinking in the magnificent gardens all afternoon, in my opinion equal to or better than the Monet Gardens. Wines for lunch Champagne, Santenay 2014 Domaine Roger Belland; Gigondas Chapoutier 2014.

A call to Tardis and off to Champagne Delavenne in Bouzy, on the Montagne de Reims. (Bouzy is a region not a state of mind for all you philistines who think I can't spell). Excellent Pinots and Blanc de Blancs. The day ended in Rilly de Montagne in the home of Phillippe Brugnion. This dinner inspired with degustation of Philippe's cuvées. A wonderful team of chefs, waiters and winemakers enchanted us with their presentation of authentic French cuisine all enjoyed with Phillippe's wonderful wines.

Wine for the dinner; Champagne Brut, Élégance, Vintage 2013 & Rose: Gevrey-Chambertin 2006; Corton Pougets, Grand Cru 1999, Chateaufort de Pape le Foile Anselum Reserve with compliments of Julian White (Merci Mon Ami my favourite red).

I quote from the notes:

"Gentlemen, in the little moment that remains to us between the crisis and the catastrophe, we may as well drink a glass of Champagne" Paul Claudel

I believe this will now be the motto that greets me in the morning when I turn on my computer.

Day 5: Friday 25th May – final day

Morning check out and a Krug Experience at Le Brasserie du Boulingrin. We were tantalised by the Krug 1990, 1995, 2003 and The Grand Cuvée, on French Oak which is left outside to weather, reserves of 250 wines, between 6-20 years, then they go back and blend what they want. Exceptional taste of "aged champagne".

An interesting lunch with wines Maranges 1er Cru la Fuizzier 2014, selected wines from sommelier and the Pink Champagne to complete the meal presented by Phillippe Brugnion. Then back on the Tardis, a little weary from so much tippling, not sure but I think we all had a "Nanna Nap" for the first hour at least.

Then surprise surprise; we were awoken by the familiar 'clink' and "pop" of the Champagne cork. This was followed by more Burgundy in preparation for our gourmet lunchbox served so well by our team of leaders.

Through customs back on British soil the Tardis landed at the Corinthia where the travellers "disgorged" (play on meanings) to soft beds and wonderful surroundings our home for the next seven days.

We had exceptional experiences, I am sure it was more than the promised 28 Champagnes and certainly copious amounts of Red and White regional specialties.

Our sincere thanks to Stephanie and her team for providing us with this experience.

To the Dons of Wine and Sabrage Julian, Gerard, Justin, and Julia a special thank you. We not only experienced champagne at its very best but learned so much about the picking, process and final bottling to create this Nectar of the Gods - Champagne. We all carry our little red velvet pouche with the champagne cork and neck of the bottle which we all in turn dismembered with an elegant thrust. What an experience, all our families are so impressed with our efforts. I thought of Napoléon when I was called upon to sabre the bottle.

Thanks also to our very helpful and attentive bus drivers, we were very impressed with the driving in some of those narrow streets.

Thank you all so much for this excellent experience, we bonded as a group of like minded peoples of the IWFS world, and it was your personalities that brought this eclectic group together.

Saluté



THE PURCELL CLUB WESTMINSTER ABBEY TOUR

by Lynn and Carl Cooper, Pasadena Branch

Ask most travellers to London what their most memorable experience was and they would answer 'the tour of Westminster Abbey'. So when the London Festival Programme included a private musical after-hours tour of the iconic Abbey, we booked it immediately.

Donning our walking shoes we started out for the Abbey, which was a short distance from our accommodations at the elegant Corinthia Hotel.

The evening began at 5pm on Saturday, 26th May with a delicious English Tea at the Cellarium Café. The Café is situated within the Abbey precincts, in the former cellars, but is open to the general public seven days a week. It is sometimes closed for private events so check opening times if you're thinking of visiting. Our group filled the room, seated at long tables decorated with tiered trays of sandwiches, scones and cakes and teacups. Of course, there was an obligatory taste of English bubbly, of which the British are justifiably proud. We soon found ourselves reminiscing with several old friends and met some new fellow travellers, enjoying this tasty pre-tour event.

At 7pm a member of The Purcell Club was introduced to us and thus began our tour. Named after the renowned Baroque composer and chorister Henry Purcell, The Purcell Club offers private tours of the Abbey with musical stops along the way. The tours are available ten times a year by kind permission of

the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. We heard a bit of history and introductions of the choristers before starting the tour. Most of the Purcell Club members had been choristers at the Abbey, but their working professions were various. They volunteer their time and talent to raise thousands of pounds for charity each year.

After viewing the long lines at the Abbey entrance all day, it was glorious to walk through and enjoy the Abbey, having it all to ourselves. Guided by the choristers, we were led around the Abbey stopping every now and then for a brief commentary on the historical significance of a particular location or for a musical interlude. Our Blue Badge Guide for the evening, Vanessa Silcock, did a wonderful job of giving us just the right amount of information. We saw the Coronation Chair in St Georges Chapel, where the choristers sang; we viewed King Henry VII's Chapel with musical accompaniment. There were many moving musical respites along the way culminating in a brief organ recital. The throngs and hectic streets of London disappeared for two hours as we immersed ourselves in the ancient beauty of the Abbey.

It was a most memorable visit that was only diminished by the fact that no photography was allowed. We were told that reservations for the tour are booked four years in advance and after experiencing this wonderful visit, we understand why. Sincere thanks go to our tour organisers.



The Quire looking west

© Dean & Chapter of Westminster DCJ

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

by Kay Botko, Naples Branch

"When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life, for there is in London, all that life can afford"

Surely, Samuel Johnson's exchange with Boswell in 1777 rings truer and louder today than ever before. As the International Wine & Food Society gathered its three member-zones for the traditional Triennial Festival in London, as well as the celebration of the Society's 85th Anniversary, it seemed as though the 'celebrations of the city' were in full swing, and we were perhaps, just a little late to the table.

One week prior, twenty miles west of the city, the world focused on the London environs as they watched the royal marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at Windsor. Earlier in the week of our arrival, thousands converged on the world's most prestigious flower show at Chelsea – and throughout the early summer months, the world looked to London to watch how the UK would face the impending Brexit from the European Union. Since it was also just days before the celebratory "Trooping of the Colour", the city was seemingly still dressed in its formal attire and the arriving members of The IWFS just moved to the pace of a party already in progress.

Some of the Festival participants had already "picked up the pace" of the impending festival by participating in one of the two pre-tour experiences. The visit to Dublin and Cork and their surrounding green countryside included everything from pubs and Michelin dining, to wine, whiskey and Irish beer, to the history, culture and "Craic" of the country. Others chose the luxury 'chunnel' coach to Reims and the surrounding champagne country where they were hosted – wined and dined – by the likes of Moët, Krug, Taittinger, Joseph Perrier, Mumm and colleagues as well as acquiring the skills in sabrage (saber a' champagne)!

It was therefore, befitting the tone of the city and the newly arrived festival-goers, that the host committee welcomed participants on the opening evening with a champagne reception followed by a black tie gala in the ballroom of the Corinthia Hotel. Chairman of Council, Ian Nicol welcomed one hundred seventy IWFS members, from Bombay and Singapore to Alaska and Florida – with Isle of Man and Cape Town and

more than a dozen Aussies in between, as they celebrated friendships old and new and the promising program of the week to come!

The Festival's first full day was a full one indeed, with an early departure to one of the city's foremost venues – Merchant Taylors Livery Hall. With the import of the setting itself a challenge, very few could rise to the credentials required of the André Simon lecturer. Oz Clarke (wine writer, broadcaster, actor) was up to the challenge. His captivating message on the future of wine given the horrendous impact of climate changes resulting in the development of new varietals, new pruning techniques and clones, was the perfect preparation for the tasting of eight English sparkling wines.

English vineyard areas reflect the continuation of the chalk ridges of Reims that cross the channel to the White Cliffs of Dover and the growing areas of Sussex and Hampshire. We enjoyed Pimm's Cup and canapés in the courtyard as the room was turned for lunch. The lunch menu was perhaps a quintessential spring 'bouquet' of the finest of the region: North Sea halibut with spring peas, carrots, baby leeks and asparagus followed by a dessert of elderflower sorbet and Kentish strawberries. Ron Barker, Chairman of the IWFS Wine Committee, shared his observations of the accompanying wines.

Showing remarkable stamina and/or incredible recuperative powers, participants did what would only be appropriate after such a grand welcome. They were divided into three groups to dine at one of three Michelin-starred London restaurants: Chez Bruce, La Trompette, or The Glasshouse. All under the same ownership but with vastly different culinary styles and their own team of chefs, each restaurant's diners critiques were quite the same: regardless of which one they dined at – "it was the best of the three!"

An early morning coach trip up the Thames brought us to the Hurlingham Club for our second day of tasting and lunch. The Club, a 42 acre private club dates from the 1780's and its members continue to maintain the aged traditions and heritage. Dr Bernard Lamb, President of the National Guild of

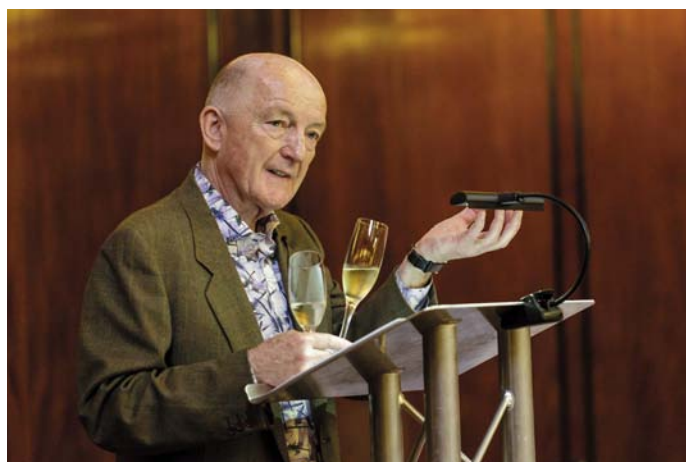


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Photo © Miles Willis www.mileswillis.co.uk

Wine and Beer Judges set the tasting, in a conservatory setting of the Palm Court, of what he billed as “The largest tasting of English still wines in the world.” A delightful speaker, with remarkable credentials (including lifetime membership of the IWFS) punctuated the tasting of chardonnays, roses, and finally pinots with interesting anecdotes, noting that in England its “not the terroir, it’s the drainage!” During the intermission prior to lunch, guests were able to stroll the magnificent grounds, watching members in their croquet whites enjoying a game or strolling through and photographing acres of beautifully tended gardens in full bloom. Lunch in the Broomhouse Suite was a profile in English perfection: Cornish crab and crayfish starter was followed by Guinea fowl and pearl barley, then by Cheeses and chutney of the region and topped with a beautiful Blueberry pannacotta, pistachio crumble and frozen yogurt dessert. London Branch Chair, Jeffrey Benson concluded his commentary of luncheon wines by stating, “Alcohol is an internal embalming fluid that keeps you young forever.” Perhaps, with that in mind, guests were in no rush to leave the bucolic scene, but after a short stroll to a dock on the Thames, they definitely enjoyed the leisurely boat trip back into the heart of London, passing some of its famous landmarks including the Houses of Parliament, the famed bridges and red busses and The Eye, to return to Westminster Pier.

It should be noted that as we began the rigors of our third day of ‘taking on the town’, the London weatherman couldn’t have been more cooperative throughout the week!! We had no chance to use our “brollies” and “wellies” as sunshine and moderate temperatures prevailed – perfect for the activities planned for Thursday’s “Walks Program” or the option of a free day to pursue your personal interests.

Participants had had the opportunity months earlier, to select a choice from one of seven “Walks” that was specifically focused on one of London’s finest features that embraced the Society’s tenets: ‘The Art of the Table’, in its broadest sense. Guides accompanying each group were of the highest ‘caliber’, namely, members of the International Council, the Festival Committee, and IWFS London members, some accompanied by additional local guides. Four tours focused on food: **The East End Food Tour** with its great ethnic diversity; **London Bridge Food Tour** focused on Borough Market and city sights; **Portobello Gastrotour**, the most famous international-flavoured street market; **Fortnum & Mason**, with its famed food hall and wine cellar and neighbouring restaurants. The other choices



Gilly and Donald Fraser dressed for 1930s

presented opportunities unique to the city of London: The **Dickens and Shakespeare Tour** focused on the south side of the Thames near the Globe and focused on Elizabethan and Victorian times; **The Wallace Collection** – a tour of the renowned collection in the historic eighteenth century home; **Hidden Gardens of the City** – unique locations and unusual plantings that have survived the history/growth of the city surrounding them. As was to be expected, participants all claimed to have selected “the best one” of the tours, with lunches, tastings or nibbles that ranged from sophisticated street food, unusual foreign fare, to a light lunch of haute cuisine. These are the things that keep calling us back to London, for sure.

Only the simple departure of the MBNA Thames Clipper at Westminster for the elegant Eltham Palace down-river could have answered the demands of calm at the end of the busy day. Eltham is a remarkably restored medieval royal palace with one thousand acres of pastoral grounds that was reinvented in the ‘30s as a showplace of Art Deco Design. This incredible period piece was therefore the perfect site of the Society’s black tie celebration of its 85th Anniversary – the Society having been ‘prime product of the era’ as well. The 1930s themed dinner was a gala affair befitting the Society’s founders and their roots in the City of London. Pianist Jeremy Limb played a selection of 1930s music as guests explored the house and grounds enjoying the aperitif and canapés. IWFS President David Felton’s delightful commentary on the era, its memorable moments and personalities, and the wines paired to the evening’s menu, completed the evening.



Lance Forman introduces the product

Photo © Miles Willis www.mileswillis.co.uk

When one thinks of the many highly specialised, incredibly customised, distinctively British, industries that lie within the London environs, the choice of Friday's festival morning offering was brilliant! It was uniquely organised, extremely successful and most memorable! **Forman's Fish Island:** a tour, tasting and lunch. A one hour drive to London's East End brought us to Forman's, a fourth generation family business. The wholesale company produces 'top-of-the-line' cured London Salmon, considered to be England's first gourmet food. Managing Director, Lance Forman, enthusiastically shared the family success story of smoking Scottish Salmon as a way of preserving the 'taste of fine salmon' and not the taste of 'smoke'. 'Nattily dressed' guests moved through the facility, enjoying a demonstration and anecdotes by employee Darren Matson as he showed how the hand-filleted salmon reaches the 'state of the art' form. A "Great British Picnic", also state of the art for its typically British dishes, followed. Chef Mathew Smith's preparation and presentation was worthy of a Royal Order: Flamiches and Tartlets (lobster, avocado, salmon, caviar), British Charcuterie Platter, Jersey Potatoes, Spring asparagus, peas, beans and a selection of Quail Scotch eggs! Incredible!! Rhubarb and elderflower East End Mess, Scones, Cornish Clotted Cream, homemade preserves, and British Artisan Cheeses topped off the meal. Hush Heath Winery provided the tasting wines and Bolney Estate the wines that accompanied the picnic. As a Brit might say, "A Bespoke Buffet"!

The Gala Finale Dinner was held at the Goldsmiths' Hall, widely recognised as one of the most spectacular venues in the City of London. A cadre of 'Pikemen and Musketeers', a ceremonial unit of the Honorable Artillery Company, the oldest regiment of

the British Army, acted as colorful 'carpet guard' for the event and music was provided by students of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The magnificent venue, set with a head table of IWFS dignitaries and special guests, and three long tables, included 205 participants – festival-goers plus guests from the Blackpool & Fylde Coast Branch, Wessex Branch, Hereford & Monmouthshire Branch, London and St James Branches, as well as a number of independent members, represented seventeen countries.

Elegance at every turn, the hall dates from 1478, fell to the Great Fire, but survived destruction in 1941, to be rebuilt and refurbished in 1990. The Company hallmarked the testing and use of precious metals with gold-leaf on the ceiling, and its magnificent four matching crystal chandeliers with a total of 192 candles that fill the room with incredible light. The Chef and catering staff, accustomed to preparing highly prestigious City events, rose to the occasion with perhaps the finest meal of the week perfectly paired with old world wines.

Chairman Ian Nicol toasted the Queen, and the Goldsmiths' Company, with Sir David Reddaway, Clerk of the Company giving the response. Recognising the dignitaries, special guests, the excellent service staff of the Hall and the contributions of the Festival Committee and hosts. Chairman Ian Nicol presented the Society's Silver Medal to Stephanie Shepherd for her remarkable work as Chairman of the Festival's Organising Committee. In closing the evening and the Triennial Festival, the Chairman turned the reins of the next-called Festival to the hands of the Chairman of the Americas, Michael Donohoe, for the 2021 gathering in Argentina.



DINE AROUND AT CHEZ BRUCE

by Ron Barker, Blackpool & Fylde Coast Branch



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Photo © Miles Willis www.mileswillis.co.uk

Fifty members travelled by coach and minibus from the Festival Hotel to a small Michelin Starred restaurant in South West London on Tuesday 29th May. We all commented on the amount of green space we passed so close to centre of London; we passed Battersea Park and Clapham Common and eventually reached the restaurant next to Wandsworth Common.

We were greeted with the House Champagne (Henriot, Brut, Souverain) and five superb canapes. They started with Foie gras and chicken liver parfait served on very thin crostini, followed by Freshly baked Gruyère gougères. We then enjoyed Gordal olives from Seville, stuffed with orange, which was followed by trays with two types of mini roll; some very fine bresaola from Cannon and Cannon in Borough market wrapped around some truffled celeriac rémoulade and some Sea trout rilletes rolled in thinly sliced daikon radish with pickled cucumber, crème fraîche and chives. All the canapes prepared in house under the direction of Head Chef Matt Christmas were excellent and kept coming whilst champagne flutes were topped up. My only

concern that they were so good that I may not have left sufficient room for the main three course meal!!

We sat at round tables of six to eight members. The first course was Norfolk asparagus with soft polenta, poached egg, iberico chorizo and black olive tapenade. I am always amazed when chefs manage to produce 50 soft yoked eggs at almost the same time but they all reached guests in perfect condition. I may consider that the polenta was superfluous (possibly the result of the canapes!) but the whole thing was a triumph. The wine chosen to accompany it, Mullineux Old Vines 2016, is a blend of Chenin Blanc, Viognier, Grenache Blanc and Semillon, worked well and reminded us of the visit to Mullineux last year when we celebrated John Avery's contribution to the Society.

The main course was Barbary duck breast with crisp pastille, spring cabbage paysanne, young carrots and meat juices. The duck was sliced thinly which is probably essential to maintain the star rating, but I would have preferred a whole breast, less elegant but more satisfying! We were served 2 red wines to compare and contrast; a 2015 Maranges (pinot noir from the south of the Cotes de Beaune) and a 2013 Barbaresco. It was a good choice because there was no universal favourite.

The dessert was a Yogurt parfait with poached apricots, honey, lemon and pistachio served with that unique sweet wine made from grapes grown on the island of Pellegrino between Sicily and Tunisia (2016 Passito Liquoroso di Pantelleria). The hints of oranges and apricots from the wine expertly matched the fruit and honey on the dessert.

Congratulations to the chef and his brigade, and to all the friendly and professional waiting staff. We enjoyed coffee and were transported back to the Corinthia in excellent moods with a complimentary Hazelnut Financier from Chez Bruce.



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IMPRESSIONS FROM A EUROPEAN PARTICIPANT

by Kurt Haering, Zürich Branch

To my surprise, participants of the London Festival coming from Continental Europe were a true minority among all the people from the United Kingdom, the Americas, Africa and the Pacific Area. There were just nine Europeans out of 170 attendees. I wondered what the reasons could be. Is London still considered the centre of the British Empire, are the Continentals still thinking that British life style and cuisine are too far from the rest of Europe, what else could it be. But it is a real pity for those who missed it. The Festival was outstanding for its organisation and featured the best London can offer.

Beside the traditions, fine food and wines in general, we learned a lot about an upcoming British wine industry. And this wine comes from grapes, which are grown in England! Southern Europe is considered the birth place of wine culture. Not so long ago, wine growing spread over the whole world, California, Chile and Australia are among the best known new areas. But England?

During the Festival, we enjoyed two extensive tastings of English wines, one of sparkling ones and one of still wines. The tasting of the fizzies was led by Oz Clarke, an expert and also a gifted speaker. Oz explained that the English wine industry profits from global warming and climate change, which have generated conditions like Northern France. He led us through the following sparkling wines:

- Hattingley Valley Classic Reserve, abv12%. 50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 19% Pinot Meunier, 1% Pinot Gris.
- Furleigh Estate Classic Cuvee 2013, abv12%. 46% Pinot Noir, 40% Chardonnay, 14% Pinot Meunier
- Ridgeview Blanc de Blancs, 2013. abv12%. 100% Chardonnay
- Exton Park Blanc de Noirs NV, abv11.5%. 100% Pinot Noir
- Camel Valley White Pinot Brut, 2014, abv12.5%. 100% Pinot Noir, using only the free-run juice

- Furleigh Estate Blanc de Noirs Brut 2014, abv12%. 88% Pinot Noir, 12% Pinot Meunier.
- Camel Valley Pinot Noir Rosé Brut 2014, abv12%. 100% Pinot Noir
- Nyetimber Demi-Sec NV, abv12%. 100% Chardonnay

A day later, Bernard Lamb, also a renowned expert in oenology, gave us an insight into English still wines, white, red and rosé. The wines we tasted were:

White

- Stopham Estate Pinot Blanc 2014
- Bolney Pinot Gris 2014, abv11.5%. 100% Pinot Gris
- Chapel Down Kit's Coty Chardonnay (oaked) 2013
- Furleigh Estate Bacchus Fume 2014, abv12%. 86% Bacchus, 14% Chardonnay

Rosé

- Brightwell Oxford Rose, 2016, abv12%. 100% Dornfelder

Red

- Bolney Estate Pinot Noir 2013, abv11.5%. 100% Pinot Noir
- Sharpham Pinot Noir 2016, abv12%. 100% Pinot Noir, picked late October

Sweet White

- Hattingley Valley Entice 2016, abv 8.5%. Bacchus Grapes, frozen to minus 10°C

From my perspective, most of the samples pleased my palate, because I like a certain acidity. This acidity may tend to disappear, as global warming proceeds and the climate in England gets more similar to the Bordeaux region. Then, other grapes may flourish and new, interesting wines will result. In short, English wines seem to have a future.



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A MORNING OF EXPLORATION

by John Nicholas, Zürich Branch

On the Thursday morning of the festival, participants were given seven options to explore an aspect of London, or “to do their own thing”.

There were three opportunities to explore aspects of the London food scene – an East End Food Tour, a London Bridge Food Tour and a tour of the Portobello market, all three of which quickly “sold out”. Each group had very different food experiences and the food tastings more than adequately substituted for lunch!

Two other tours, which also “sold out”, involved learning about aspects of London. The first was a tour of “Hidden Gardens” in the City of London followed by lunch at Club Gascon. The second was a walk along the South Bank of the Thames exploring its connections with both Shakespeare and Dickens concluding with lunch at the Swan Inn, next to Shakespeare’s recreated Globe Theatre.

The final pair of “walks” involved less walking, but nevertheless focussed on less known aspects of London. The first was a visit to Fortnum & Mason for a tour and wine tasting followed by lunch at the Keeper’s House: the second, a visit to the Wallace Collection followed by lunch in the Hertford House Atrium.

Virtually all festival participants were able to enjoy either their first or second choice and, anecdotally, spending a morning during a large festival in a smaller group informally learning about aspects of London was an interesting and enjoyable experience for all. Without exception the various guides, many of whom were official London blue badge guides, were excellent and I personally would like to thank those IWFS participants who were “volunteered” to ensure that the group stayed together and, as necessary, liaise with the guides and venues.

The following are contributions from the IWFS volunteers about the various “walks”. I requested 100 words from each, but the length of the contributions seems to reflect the general enthusiasm for the walks.

Food Treasures in the East End

This group of 22 was divided into two smaller groups each led by IWFS members, Kurt Haering, Chairman of the Zürich branch



At the English Restaurant



Enjoying fish and chips at Poppies

and Dave Felton, the IWFS President. The words below were written by Kurt. Dave had nothing to add! The guide for Dave’s group was Zahra.

London’s East End has a rich history and seems to have been, not so long ago, a rather poor area. As with so many similar areas worldwide, the East End is now a hip spot for the young and beautiful. Interestingly quite a few food shops and restaurants with a long history are still around.

And such food heritage was the guiding light for our tour. We were lead by a lively young lady named Flic. She gave an outstanding lecture in a quite theatrical way. We learned that she had an education in performing arts. The benefit we had was that we could not only hear, but understand what she said.

The tour started at the old Spitalfields Market and featured some of the famous eateries of the area and their signature dishes. These were:

- The legendary bacon sandwich at ‘St. John Bread And Wine’
- The British classic bread and butter pudding at ‘The English Restaurant’
- English cheese tasting at ‘The House of Androuet’
- Fish and chips that are still wrapped in newspaper at ‘Poppies Fish And Chips’
- English beer and cider in the little local pub ‘Pride of Spitalfields’
- A selection of spicy curries at ‘Aladin’, among the top 10 Indian restaurants
- Salt beef, with hot English mustard and a sweet gherkin, in a soft bagel at ‘Beigel Bake’
- The salted caramel tart at ‘Pizza East’ in the Shoreditch Eatery

Each and every piece of food was outstanding in its way. As the tour took about four hours, and the portions were on a tasting quantity level, we enjoyed every bite and every sip. The comprehensive comments and insights given by Flic made this tour unforgettable.

London Bridge Food Tour

This tour was led for IWFS by Ian Nicol, Chair of Council and IWFS Europe Africa and his wife, Chris.



Photo © Miles Willis www.mileswillis.co.uk



At the Spanish Deli R. Garcia & Son

Seventeen of us met our guides, Geraldine and William (a flamboyant actor), in the vicinity of Borough Market for a much-anticipated tour of the flourishing market area and food scene, with some historical information thrown in for good measure.

Our first stop was Whiskey Ginger for a very welcome breakfast; dry cured smoky streaky bacon and egg roll. Some of us chose an accompaniment of Pimms or Meantime Pale Ale to quench our thirst! Free time to explore the left-hand side of the market was followed by an individual large portion of beer battered fish and triple cooked chips from the Fish Kitchen. More exploration, the right-hand side of the market, and we were met with amazing premium sausage rolls from Ginger Pig, a renowned butcher there.

Onward through the narrow streets, leaving Borough Market behind, we were served Black Cherry Mead, from Cartwright Brothers, alongside the Golden Hind II, a replica of Sir Francis Drake's ship. Making our way back towards London Bridge we stopped at a hostelry, the Mug House, where we enjoyed a selection of ciders and cheeses. Running short of time, we speedily made it to the Chop House for Sticky Toffee Pudding with English Breakfast Tea before being met at the return coach with enormous custard filled donuts from Bread Ahead, also based in Borough Market.

A wonderful experience was had by all!

Portobello Gastrotour

John Nicholas, Treasurer of IWFS Europe Africa and member of Council, led this Group of 20 for IWFS which was organised by Celia Brooks, an American food writer and London food tour guide, with help from a friend and fellow food writer.

The tour was centred on the Portobello Road, the location of the largest antiques market in the UK. As an area of London, it has had a chequered history, being a favoured area in the 1960s, declining in the 1970s and 1980s, only to revive in the 21st Century so that today it is a centre for "hip" food culture encompassing many different cultures and styles, as well as the antiques market.

Our tour began in the Portobello Garden Arcade, an Italian café, where for those in particular who had not had breakfast,

we were served with delicious coffee, frittata and a wonderful tomato bruschetta. Across the road, we moved to Spain, where many provisions usually seen in Spanish grocery stores could be bought; clearly the shop served Spanish expats in the same way that "British" shops in Spain serve UK expats. As well as sampling Spanish cheeses, meats and olives, we tasted a couple of Spanish wines (I forgot to make a note!). Numerous purchases were made, particularly of tinned sardines.

From there, we moved to Fabrique, a Swedish Bakery, for a tasting of wonderful cardamom pastries. Across the road we visited Books for Cooks, which is well known for its enormous range of cookery books and where Celia had worked earlier in her career giving cookery demonstrations. Sadly, there were only a few copies of her new book on vegetables so a few of our group were disappointed not to be able to get a signed copy. It was somewhat surprising to see one of our Indian members stocking up in the spice shop which we passed on the way to the Distillery.

This trendy gin bar and shop distils various flavoured gin-based products on the premises. We were greeted with a refreshing cocktail and an introduction to the history of gin and its revival as a very modern drink. We then sampled a number of other gin-based products with some small eats to match.



Portobello Garden Arcade



Sue Jackson with the group in St Paul's garden

From here we went to Melt Chocolate, where we sampled some fabulous chocolate and truffles accompanied by matched wines which worked well with the chocolate (sadly I again forgot to make a note of the wines!). Again various purchases of the chocolate were then made.

Hidden gardens walk with lunch at Club Gascon

This group was led for IWFS by Stephanie Shepherd, who was Chair of the Festival organising Committee and is Events co-ordinator for IWFS Europe Africa and by Alan, her husband.

Thirty-two members met our guide, Sue Jackson, outside St Paul's Tube Station for an exploration of some of the hidden gardens in the City of London. Standing in St Paul's garden by an impressive Abies Grandis – the only one in the City – Sue talked of the 150 gardens hidden within the Square Mile; the awful soil and high footfall with which plants contend and the higher temperatures they experience compared with their cousins in the surrounding area.

St Paul's garden itself is actually three churchyards whose graves were cleared in the nineteenth century to create the garden we see today. Sue introduced us to some of the trees and shrubs, commenting particularly on the Ginkgo Biloba which copes well with urban pollution, a possible replacement for the London Plane as the 'street-tree' par excellence.

A short walk brought us to the Festival Garden established on the bomb site of the Cordwainers Hall as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations. The garden consists of a sunken lawn and fountain provided by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, surrounded by pleached lime trees.



St Paul's from 25 Cannon Street

Crossing Cannon Street and Queen Victoria Street we came to the Cleary Garden. Archaeologists are encouraged to explore sites within the City which are scheduled for redevelopment. In this case a Roman Bath complex had been discovered, however it could not be displayed for the public. Therefore, the bath complex was re-buried and a terraced garden created alongside the new building reflecting the archaeological layers of the site from Roman to Victorian times. Planting includes a grapevine, a nod not only to the Roman introduction of wine into Britain but also to the proximity of the Vintners' Hall on Upper Thames Street.

Returning towards St Paul's, Sue brought us to 25 Cannon Street; a roof garden – at street level – designed to look like a typical London Square with shade planting. White Foxgloves seemed to shine from the green shrubbery. Half an acre of much used space, its central lawn has had to be re-turfed many times. Greyfriars Priory was our next stop. Closed by Henry VIII, the priory suffered bomb damage during World War II reflected in the pinkish tinge of its remaining stonework caused by the heat of the exploding ordinance. Parallel borders of mixed shrubs and perennials echo the nave of the priory church.

Postman's Park tucked in behind the former main sorting office offered a small verdant oasis to generations of hard-working postmen and women. As well as drawing our attention to a fine Acer Palmatum, Sue also introduced us to a Davidia Involucrata or Handkerchief Tree. This tree became known in the west thanks to the work of Père Davide, a French missionary working in China, who also lent his name to a species of deer, and Ernest Wilson, a famous plant hunter who was responsible for the introduction of many exotic plant species to British gardens.

Our walk ended with the Barber Surgeons Physic Garden and Bastion Garden. The Physic Garden is planted with species which would have been used by barber surgeons in the past to facilitate healing. An informal path, muddy in wet weather, brought us around a small mound to The Bastion Garden. The mound is said to contain the skeletons used by generations of barber surgeons for anatomical studies. The Bastion Garden is an informal space with views across a lake taking in both the last remaining Bastion of the old City wall and the much newer Barbican complex. Sue described it as the most romantic view in the City.

By this time we were all ready for lunch and led by Alan Shepherd we walked briskly to the Michelin-starred Club Gascon, where we enjoyed a delicious lunch and a much needed rest.

Dickens and Shakespeare walk with lunch at the Swan Restaurant

This group was led for IWFS by Joan Nicholas, member of Zürich branch and wife of John Nicholas.

On the Dickens and Shakespeare walk, we were transported back to nineteenth century London with the help of our exceptional guide, Richard. We started at St George the Martyr Church beside Marshalsea, the Debtors prison where Dickens' father had been sent when Charles Dickens was just 12 years old. We learnt that Little Dorrit, one of Dickens' characters, was a real person whom he had met on visits to his father in prison.



The group outside the George Inn

We then saw The George Inn, the only surviving galleried inn (where theatrical productions were held) in London which was reputedly visited by both Dickens and Shakespeare. We then visited the Red Cross Garden designed by Octavia Hill, a founder of the National Trust and acquaintance of Charles Dickens, and passed by Borough Market, on the way to the site of the original Shakespeare Globe Theatre, we enjoyed stories about The Winchester Palace originally built in the 12th Century and next door to the Clink prison, the source of the slang term for a prison, possibly the name reflects the sound of keys. Finally, we arrived at the Swan Inn, next to the replica Globe Theatre inspired by Sam Wanamaker and finally completed in 1996, three years after his death. In the Inn, we had a fantastic lunch in a top floor private room overlooking the Thames with panoramic views of London, in particular St Paul's Cathedral.



Lunch at the Swan Inn

Fortnum & Mason Tour and wine-tasting with lunch at The Keeper's House

This walk was organised and led for IWFS by Beverley St John Aubin, a long-time member of the London branch and frequent attendee at IWFS international events. The festival participants were joined by three members of the London branch.

This event began with a "behind-the-scenes" tour led by the Company's archivist, Dr Andrea Tanner, of Fortnum & Mason, the iconic food emporium in London's Piccadilly. Dr Tanner led us throughout the store explaining its fascinating history; from the fifth floor complete with its Green Man carvings, to the Wine Crypt with its Hanoverian fireplace, and then to the Tea Salon and an explanation of its former life as a haven for Interior Design. On the third floor we heard history of the Expeditions and Sports Departments and then about Winston Churchill's connection on the second floor and the crucial role of candles to the store's identity.

This fascinating insight into this world-renowned store and brand was followed by a wine tasting focussed on Fortnum & Mason's own label wines, including Fortnum's English sparkling, its Rosé Champagne, Fortnums Pommard J Drouhin and Fortnums Pinot Noir J Drouhin. The wines were accompanied by plates of cheese and cold meats as well as scotch eggs which were created by Fortnums for the troops during the First World War. Crossing Piccadilly, we entered Burlington House, the home of the Royal Academy and of The Keeper's House, where the Group had a very pleasant and engaging lunch.

Wallace Collection guided tour and lunch in Hertford House

This group was led for IWFS by Mike Donohoe, Chair of the Americas.

This group of 16 met their guide, Art Historian Denise Stone, for what turned out to be a highly insightful and entertaining tour of the Wallace Collection in Hertford House, punctuated by Denise's anecdotes that were most amusing and colourful. Hertford House was the London home of the first four Marquesses of Hertford and houses the art collections aggregated by them and Sir Richard Wallace, who was thought to be the illegitimate son of the 4th Marquess. The collection favours eighteenth and nineteenth Century works and was bequeathed to the nation in 1897 by Lady Wallace, Sir Richard's widow. We were hugely impressed by the quality and breadth of art treasures; including paintings by Rembrandt, Boucher, Gainsborough, van Dyck, Canaletto, and Rubens, to name a few. In addition to the paintings were countless other treasures: objets d'art of Marie Antionette; commissioned porcelains of Catherine the Great; an enormous collection of snuff boxes. There was a seemingly endless series of delightful surprises around every corner. Following the excellent tour, the group enjoyed a pleasant lunch in the wonderfully light and airy atrium that is the Courtyard of Hertford House: a fitting end to a wonderful experience.



The group at The Wallace Collection

SUSSEX AND HAMPSHIRE WINERIES

by John Hall, New South Wales Branch

After two days rest at the conclusion of the very successful IWFS London Festival, fourteen reinvigorated members embarked on a bespoke tour of the wineries and vineyards of Sussex and Hampshire on Monday 4th June.

After arriving at our very comfortable accommodation for the next four nights, the charming Ockendon Manor, we had a brief rest before an introductory tasting of English wines hosted by our Guide Lecturer, Ms Julia Trustram-Eve. During this tasting we explored the characteristics of English Sparkling wines, including the most popular varieties of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, but also Seyval Blanc. We noted that over seventy percent of the grapes grown in the region are used in their sparkling wines. At our gourmet dinner that followed the tasting, a demi-sec sparkling and a Pinot Gris were introduced to the group. In all 14 wines were sampled in this introduction to the wines of the region.

The next day, Tuesday, we were treated to a day at the very stately and beautifully restored Parham House and its very lovely gardens. A very simple lunch was prefaced by a tasting led by Stopham Vineyards proprietor and head winemaker, Simon Woodhead and Dr Bernard Lamb with whom we were familiar from the London Festival still wine tasting at the Hurlingham Club. After lunch we toured the gardens and the classic church in the grounds of the property. A creative six-course tasting menu dinner was served at Jeremy's Restaurant accompanied by three English wines, including a sparkling rosé served mid-meal a concept that we were introduced to at the London Festival. The other wines were a Rosata from Italy, a delightful Syrah from Chile, a French Sauternes and a six Puttonyos Hungarian Tokaj. The restaurant was set in delightful gardens and we had an excellent wine and food experience.

Wednesday morning's visit to the boutique Albourne Winery overlooking the picturesque South Downs provided the opportunity to walk amongst the vines for the first time, which was very enjoyable on a nice sunny West Sussex morning. Our walk and visit to the winery was followed by a tasting of their White Pinot Noir, Blanc de Noir and a Blanc de Blanc. Finally, we tasted their newly released 40 Vermouth, which combines 40

herbs and other ingredients to make a very pleasant fortified wine. We then travelled to Bolney Estate, one of the oldest names in English wine, established in 1972. After another very pleasant vineyard walk we had a tasting session and a light but very enjoyable buffet luncheon, which included tastings of three sparkling wines and three still wines. It was interesting to note that Bolney had also recently released their first vermouth. They are also producing a Gin to further enhance their offerings. Our first afternoon visit was to the Court Gardens Farm, where we enjoyed four of their beautifully made sparkling wines.

It was a great pleasure for the group to be joined by members from the IWFS Sussex Branch for dinner at the wonderful Gravetye Manor Hotel. Prior to an excellent dinner we had the opportunity to explore the beautiful gardens of the manor including the two acres of vegetable and cut flower planting's. The dinner at the Manor's 1-star Michelin restaurant was accompanied by four English white wines (two sparkling and two still) and red wines from France and Oregon, USA.

A sample of the vineyards of Hampshire was our objective for Thursday, and we started with a visit to the first commercial vineyard in the UK, Hambledon Vineyard, which planted vines in 1952. Originally planted to produce German style still white wine, the 60 acres of vineyards were converted to produce sparkling wines in 1999. The buffet style lunch with many English favourites was accompanied with the wines we had enjoyed at the tasting.

After lunch we travelled to the smallest winery on our tour, East Meon, which has one acre of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, planted in 2006. The tasting room was a medieval court house dating from 1395, in which we tried their very pleasant Berrygarden sparkling wines. Our final vineyard tour was to Exton Park where we gained a closer understanding of the challenges of establishing a new 55 acre vineyard and the innovations that they are undertaking to develop a successful winemaking enterprise.

Our final evening was spent at the Rose & Crown at Cuckfield where we celebrated the great experiences that the IWFS tour of the vineyards of Sussex and Hampshire had provided.



GOURMET LONDON RESTAURANTS

by Robert Allerdice, New South Wales Branch



Chef Tanaka at The Ninth

Reprising their memorable role as organisers of the very successful IWFS festival in Santorini in 2014, the team of Ari Sofianos and Chris Bonsall has once again risen to the occasion and organised an equally successful event, being one of the two post-festival tours that followed the IWFS London 2018 International Festival.

Thirteen members of the IWFS were privileged to join Ari and Chris as they guided us around London (and Bray) for four days, during which time we were able to explore the many different cuisines that are on offer at some of the finest restaurants in and around London. At various restaurants, we were also joined by some of the members of the IWFS St James branch, of which Ari and Chris are members.

Monday 4th June 2018

Our tour commenced with lunch at The Ninth, a one Michelin starred restaurant located in the Fitzrovia district of London, where chef owner Jun Tanaka weaves his magic. The name of the restaurant derives from the fact that this is the ninth restaurant where Tanaka has worked.

The Ninth offers fine French-Mediterranean dishes all made for sharing, tapas style. An added bonus for us was that on Mondays diners can BYO, and Ari and Chris generously provided some marvellous wines from their own cellars, including a Gevrey Chambertin 1er Cru Clos St Jacques Domaine Bartet 1998 (Chris) and a Chateau Rieussec Sauternes 2001 (Ari).

After snacks and an English sparkling wine, we tasted seven separate dishes, with accompanying wines. Included amongst the seven were two superb meat dishes, the first being Crispy rabbit, with veal sweetbreads, broad beans and girolles, and the second being Roast duck, with Cime di Rapa and black radish. The Gevrey Chambertin was a perfect match for both dishes.

We concluded with a dessert of Tarte Tatin and rosemary ice cream, for which the Chateau Rieussec was an awesome match. We left the restaurant wondering whether the week could get any better (it did!).

In the evening, we dined at Lima, a one Michelin starred restaurant, also located in London's Fitzrovia. The head chef is



Roast Duck at The Ninth



At Lima

Robert Ortiz and his restaurant serves contemporary, and very imaginative, Peruvian food. Once again, we had a tasting menu, this time comprising some eight dishes, each with an astonishing array of unusual ingredients, and various accompaniments.

After starting with a Pisco sour, the food was matched with two Peruvian wines from the Ica Valley, the first an Intipalka Sauvignon Blanc (2017) and an Intipalka Syrah (2016). Some of the dishes were very spicy, so the sauvignon blanc was a good match. Our desert was a chirimoya parfait with Amazonian chocolate. It was made from the chirimoya fruit, the seeds of which we were told are highly poisonous! Fortunately, we all survived the evening.

Tuesday 5th June 2018

At 11am, we arrived at the St James premises of leading wine and spirit merchants Berry Bros & Rudd where, after a tour of their two acres of cellars (now used as entertaining areas), we participated in a tutored blind wine tasting led by Barbara Drew, their Wine and Spirits Education Specialist. Barbara is in the final stages of becoming a Master of Wine and she impressed us all with her incredible knowledge of wine and her ability to communicate that knowledge in a readily understandable way.

We tasted two champagnes, three "unusual" whites (including a Clairette Blanche from Stellenbosch), three ages of Bordeaux (2015, 2004 and 1990) and a 2015 Berry Bros & Rudd Sauternes by Chateau Climens. We enjoyed a buffet lunch as part of the wine tasting.

In the evening, we dined at Gauthier Soho, serving classical French dishes in a contemporary style. The chef patron is Alexis Gauthier and the executive chef is Gérard Virolle.

After champagne and canapés, we enjoyed Blue Lobster Tortellini in a Lobster Bisque, Provence Green Asparagus, Wild Scottish Sea Trout, Wagyu Beef, Alfonso Mango Délice and Guariguette Strawberry, each of which was accompanied by a matching wine selected and introduced by the restaurant's sommelier, Aurelie Taheri. The chef's use of sauces enhanced but did not overwhelm the main ingredients of each dish, creating a truly memorable marriage of flavours. It is a mystery why this restaurant has not yet been recognised by the Michelin reviewers.

Wednesday 6th June 2018

Chris organised what he described as a "light lunch" of dim sum at Hakkasan Mayfair, a one Michelin starred restaurant serving modern Cantonese cuisine. The tasting menu comprised eight "small eat" dishes and one main dish, all carefully selected by Chris. Hardly "light" in terms of quantity of food, it was nevertheless a wonderful contrast to the western style meals of the previous two days.

After lunch we went on a two hour tour of Mayfair, led by London blue badge tourist guide Simon Whitehouse. Simon told us many interesting stories about the lives of people who had lived or worked in the area, including the fact that Her Majesty the Queen had been born in a building (since demolished) on the site where Hakkasan is now located.

In the evening we dined at Bonhams, a one Michelin starred restaurant located at the Mayfair premises of the auction house of the same name. After Pol Roger and canapés, we enjoyed Isle of Mull Scallop, Slow-cooked Turbot, Daphne's Roast Lamb Saddle and Breast, and Mara des Bois Strawberry Tart, all expertly prepared by head chef Tom Kemble. We had some sensational wines selected by sommelier Charlotte Logan-Jones, including a 2005 Chateau Côte de Baleau, Grand Cru Saint-Emillion, which was a perfect match for the lamb (with yet another beautiful sauce). We finished with a 1991 Dow's Vintage Port.

Thursday 7th June 2018

Thursday dawned cloudy but fine, which was important because at 10.30am we departed London by coach for our final meal at The Waterside Inn, located on the banks of the Thames in the village of Bray. It is a three Michelin starred restaurant whose chef patron is Alain Roux. Our numbers for this event had, not surprisingly, swollen to 24.

After Champagne Laurent-Perrier and canapés on the lawn overlooking the river, we dined on Flaked Devon Crab, Pan Fried Red Mullet and Challonnais Duck. With the seafood we drank a Sancerre "La Chatellenie" Joseph Mellot 2016, and with the duck we drank an absolutely superb Côte Rôtie René Rostaing 2006, sourced from Chris' cellar. The latter was a match made in heaven. We finished with a selection of desserts, accompanied by a Chateau de Malle, Sainte-Helene, Sauternes 2011. It was the culmination of a memorable meal and a memorable week.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Ari and Chris for an unforgettable gastronomic journey. We sincerely hope that they can be persuaded to again join together in the not too distant future to provide yet another unique experience for IWFS members.



Ari with chefs Gauthier and Virolle at Gauthier

CO-FOUNDING THE WINE AND FOOD SOCIETY

by Tom Murnan, Council Bluffs and Omaha Branches, Americas

Julian Symons recounts his brother A.J.A. Symons co-founding the Wine and Food Society

If you are like most members, you do not know a lot about the early years of our Society. Along with André Simon, the Wine and Food Society was co-founded with A.J.A. Symons in London in October, 1933. AJ, as he preferred to be called, died young of a brain hemorrhage at the age of 41 on 26th August 1941. Fortunately for us, his brother Julian published a book in 1950 entitled *A.J.A. Symons: His Life and Speculations*. In it, Chapter 10 covers the establishment of the Wine and Food Society. AJ had founded a book club named The First Edition Club (FEC), for which he was Secretary and primary promoter. AJ met André in the late 1920s. Details of the meeting are lost in history, but AJ was impressed with André's astonishing knowledge of wine and gastronomy, and his encyclopedic knowledge of chefs and culinary dishes. Probably André "was impressed by AJ's youth, wit and assurance. In a later meeting, AJ showed André's book *The Art of Good Living* to his book loving members. For his part, André helped educate AJ in wine and the culinary arts. In 1931 he and André came up with an idea for a culinary society named after Professor George Saintsbury, who wrote *Notes on a Cellar Book*. This club was exclusive (only 50 members) and successful. By 1933 the two established the Wine and Food Society (WFS). To save money, AJ offered to house the fledgling society at his offices for the FEC. Neither partner wanted to risk much money, but AJ was hoping to make his fortune with WFS. André was the President and would establish a magazine for the members called *Wine and Food*. AJ was the Secretary, who would manage the club business, recruit new members, submit the magazine in for printing, attend events and write occasional articles. The aim of



André and Edith Simon arriving in New York on 20th November 1934

the new venture was to promote the good life and present the art of the table.

Membership increased rapidly the first year, from an initial 230 to 500 in three months. The first event was an Alsatian lunch at the Café Royal and featured all Alsatian wines and courses. The second event was a Madeira tasting where, for a very reasonable half a crown fee, one could taste ten different Madeiras including a 1808 Malmsey and a 1790 Reserve. The third event was a luncheon with a Rabelais theme and wines from his birthplace, Savoy. The Society was getting some criticism that all the wines were coming outside the British Empire, so the fourth event switched from Continental wines and food to Empire wines and English cooking. Many members had a prejudice against Empire wines, and this event seems not to have been as successful. By the end of the year, membership had grown to 1,000.

1934 was the centenary of Marie-Antoine Carême working for the Prince Regent (the future George IV). He had also been chef to Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I of Russia. The most sumptuous dinner in England for a hundred years was planned. The setting would be the Prince Regent's Royal Pavilion in Brighton, an exotic Indo-Saracenic style palace. AJ delivered the glowing news on the Society's first year and speeches were made by others. The 200 members, who had each paid two guineas, were then allowed to visit the kitchen and see meat being roasted on spits. The banquet was held in the large Chinese dining room where the guests were greeted by eighty large candelabras lit with thousands of tallow candles. The table was set with twelve knives, twelve forks, and twelve glasses. Forty-two courses and sixteen wines and liqueurs were served in



A.J.A. Symons

two services. Dishes were carefully modeled after dishes served to the Prince Regent. As was Carême's wont, some of the courses were not meant for consumption, like a boar's head and two pièces montées made of spun sugar. Like cruise ship dining today, members could try multiple courses, say, of the four kinds of soup or six hors d'oeuvres. After dinner there was a concert in the Music room featuring chamber music of Handel, Vivaldi, Byrd and others. It was quite late by that time and many members had already left.

When André and AJ conceived the Society, various schemes were proposed. One was modeled after a book club where you would receive a bottle of wine each month, but this was too cumbersome and so was abandoned. Instead, it was decided that for the annual dues of one guinea, each member would receive the club magazine *Wine and Food*. This publication was an important part of membership where the advertising was, at times, as interesting as the articles. André was the creative force and educated his members on the pleasures of the table, while AJ did most of the behind the scenes work.

It took a little while for the partners to take their stride in the tone of the magazine. At first, there was some tension between raising the level of the mundane cooking that England was well known for, one of the original aims of the Society. This clashed with the high standards that André held, and André was the teacher of AJ. Editorials and articles would set forth their gospel of good living. The press would comment on Society events like the first Alsace luncheon. On the one hand, they marveled at the exotic fare where all the wines and the dishes were from Alsace. But on the other hand, they had to obliquely criticise the expense when there were so many middle and lower class people who had very poor means, and could easily feed a large family for the price of one Society event fee, and not have to go all the way to Alsace to do it.

After Prohibition was repealed in 1933, it was decided to send André to the United States since there was a great thirst for knowledge about fine wine. So in November of 1934, André and his wife Edith boarded the SS Paris to promote the Society to the Americans. It was André's first trip to the United States. They arrived in New York on 20th November. André visited a number of major cities and established new branches, which helped to increase the revenue of the Society. AJ was left in command back in London. There, he found himself increasingly busy, managing luncheons and dinners, managing the day-to-day business, organising the rising tide of new members and getting the magazine to the printers. Rather than overcrowd events, he would schedule them on two different nights,

attending both. There AJ would preside, sending forth his pronouncements and final judgments on wine and food, from which there was no appeal. He was, after all, a Society founder, taught by the best teacher around. His wife and family hardly saw him.

However, as time neared the fourth anniversary of the Society, the partners could see that the branch membership had stabilised at around 1,000. AJ had hoped that membership would grow to 10,000 and he could have made his fortune to be free to write for his FEC, which he had been neglecting.

Some of the issues that may have reduced membership had to do with the Society's stance regarding hotels. In 1933 Britain, the best restaurants were typically found in hotels. But during the Society's first general meeting a member excoriated English catering, which annoyed the Hotel and Restaurant Association. The hotel world viewed the Society as attacking their whole foundation with its requests for better prepared food, improved service and better and more reasonably priced wines. At one point, the Society considered rating restaurants for quality, but that never materialized. AJ viewed the inability to secure hotel support as his biggest failure. Another reason for the lack of a large membership was the attitude of the founders themselves, who would not concede to popular culture and its vulgarities. A *Wine and Food* editorial about 1938 addressed the critics, half of which felt the Society was becoming a mob and were no longer part of the elite, while the other half of the critics accused them of abandoning the poor by being too highbrow and ignoring their nutrition issues. The editorial went on to say that while nutrition was important, and that plain food with good ingredients is best, that Society members appreciate foods from other countries which arouses interest and appreciation. In time, the philosophy of the founders prevailed. Only quality would do, not settling for second best. Perhaps appealing to an ever smaller group of true gourmets frightened away the less enthusiastic, making them feel like they could not fit in. And don't discount that Britain was still in the grips of a worldwide depression. Events became fewer and more costly, but better, as a result.

It was only after World War II that membership increased, as AJ predicted in a note to André in 1940. The English, tired of war time privations, were ready to embrace well prepared food. But only one founder lived to see this late blooming.

Note from Editor – Chapter 10 of Julian Symons' book can be read on the Society's Archives (under Publications) via the IWFS website link: <https://www.iwfs.org/secretariat/iwfs-merchandise/society-archives>



VISIT TO EXPLORE THE WINES OF VIRGINIA

by Colin Mair, Chairman, Berkshire Branch



At the King Family Vineyard

My wife Dayle and I had a holiday in the USA in 2010, including the historic triangle in Virginia. Before going I went to the London Wine Fair, and found a stand showing wines from Virginia. I met several wine makers, including Luca Paschina of Barboursville, and was impressed by the quality of the wines. We visited Barboursville and other wineries, and in the following years have been back several times, many including visits to Luca's excellent Palladio restaurant. This all prompted me to plan a visit for members of the Berkshire Branch, which took place from 30th April to 4th May 2018.

Richard Leahy is a wine writer who lives in Charlottesville and has written a book, *Beyond Jefferson's Vines*, following the development of quality wines in Virginia, and covering the wineries and wine makers in great detail. I contacted him, and Richard was a great help in the organisation of the Branch visit. At a lunch at Palladio last year with Richard and Luca, Luca made us a very good offer for accommodation at the 1804 Inn at Barboursville; this allowed everything else to fall into place.

Our Secretary Julie Graham, and her husband Chris, visited Horst Bertram of Dagernova in the Ahr valley, and he put them in contact with Chris Pearmund of Effingham Manor Winery in Virginia. As a result we started our Virginia visit with a tasting and light lunch at Effingham on Monday 30th April. We were given a very warm welcome, and enjoyed our first quality Virginian wine. We also began to appreciate the beauty of the countryside and buildings in this very historical part of the USA.

Sixteen members of Berkshire Branch arrived later that Monday afternoon at the 1804 Inn, and we realised that we were staying at a particularly historical site. The Inn was built by James Barbour, later Governor of Virginia. It has been maintained and furnished in its original elegant Georgian style. That evening we were welcomed by Luca at a reception with sparkling wine and canapés; then Richard Leahy gave us an introductory talk about the history of winemaking in Virginia, and this was followed by dinner in the Palladio restaurant. All the wines served at Palladio are from the Barboursville winery.



Tasting with Luca Paschina

Monday Dinner

- Seared Ahi tuna with Radishes, Cucumber, Blood Orange and Citrus Vinaigrette
Viognier Reserve 2013
- Tagliatelle, with Morels, Peas and House-cured, Farm-raised, Berkshire Pancetta
Cabernet Franc 1998
- Grilled Black Angus Shoulder Tender Steak with Roasted Fingerling Potatoes,
Swiss Chard Flan and Cipollini Onion Demi-glace
Cabernet Franc Reserve 2009
- Strawberry and Rhubarb Tart with Brown Sugar Gelato
Philéo NV (sweet Moscato-Vidal blend)

We hired a 24-seater coach to take us to other wineries, and on Tuesday morning we visited King Family. This is a beautiful site with a polo field set in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We were given a good tasting and tour of the vineyards and winery. A tasty picnic lunch was provided by HotCakes Gourmet of Charlottesville, served in the Library at King Family. In the afternoon we visited Michael Shaps and Keswick, where the tastings showed us further which wines have been most successfully developed in the Virginia climate and terroirs.

On Wednesday we stayed at Barboursville, where Luca gave us a tasting of some of his most successful wines. Of the grape varieties proving very successful in Virginia, two are Viognier and Cabernet Franc. Luca, being himself from Torino, has grown Nebbiolo for many years, and is proud of his achievement. His flagship wine is called Octagon, after the shape of the principal room designed by Thomas Jefferson for his Monticello and a mansion built by James Barbour in 1814, sadly destroyed by fire in 1884; the ruin stands at Barboursville, next to the 1804 Inn. Octagon is a Merlot-dominant Bordeaux blend, made only in the best years, and has won many prizes.

Our tasting was of eight wines: Viognier 1997 and 2016; Cabernet Franc 2001 and 2014; Nebbiolo 2010 and 2014 and Octagon 2004 and 2015. All were excellent, but our favourites

were the Viognier 1997 and the Octagon 2015. We followed this with lunch in the Palladio restaurant.

Wednesday Lunch

- Barboursville-grown Salanova Salad, Spring Vegetables, Feta and Creamy Dressing
Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2014
- Milk Risotto, Poached Maine Lobster, Tarragon and Asparagus Ribbons
Brut Rosé NV
- Seared Fish, Sautéed Asparagus, Celery and Thyme Buerre Blanc
Vermentino Reserve 2016
- Lemon Panna Cotta, Fresh Raspberries and White Chocolate
Philéo NV

Later in the afternoon we visited Horton Vineyards, noted for the original introduction of Viognier into Virginia and for growing the autochthonous Norton grape. The Viognier was very good, a fuller sweeter style than the elegant Barboursville version. The Norton seemed of largely historical interest.

Another grape grown much in Virginia (and very successfully in North Carolina) is Tannat. This had showed very well at Michael Shaps, but was less appealing here. A Nebbiolo was well-liked, but perhaps their best wine was a Petit Verdot; this is another grape that is doing very well indeed as a single variety in Virginia. Sadly we did not, on this trip, get to taste Barboursville's Petit Verdot; Colin has tasted it on several previous visits, with enormous pleasure.

On Thursday morning we travelled to Veritas, a winery run by Andrew and Patricia Hodson, an English couple. We were met by Bill Tonkins, the vineyard manager, and taken on a fascinating tour of the vineyards, situated on hilly terrain in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Then Andrew gave us a splendid tasting, starting in his cellar, where we tasted some cask samples. It soon became evident that Veritas has a similar philosophy to Barboursville, a dedication to excellence and the wish to give visitors the best possible experience of wine, food and ambience. The Sauvignon Blanc 2016 was excellent, the Viognier 2016 softly fruity and very appealing, the Cabernet Franc competing with Barboursville for critical superlatives. Three vintages of Petit Manseng, 2005, 2008 and 2014, were

excellent – fresh, fruity and well balanced. The star was Petit Verdot. We tasted four vintages, 2002, 2007, 2010 and 2015. The 2002 was outstanding, with great depth and perfect balance. The next two vintages showed still-ripening tannin and excellent potential. The 2015 was tremendous, with wonderful fruit; it's drinking very well now, but will reward keeping for many years. We were then given a good picnic lunch, which we enjoyed on the porch of the delightful winery, set in beautiful country.

In the afternoon we visited two more wineries, White Hall and Grace. White Hall is very attractively set, and gave us a well-presented tasting. Their wines, particularly the whites, were all well made and very appealing to drink. Sadly Grace were not expecting us, and the tasting did not show their wines to best advantage. They showed some wines we had found to be successful in Virginia, Viognier, Cabernet Franc and Tannat. The Viognier did not appeal, the Cabernet Franc was quite good, but the Tannat might have been an off bottle, and was rather sour.

After a wealth of experiences of Virginian wines, most showing wonderfully well, we ended our visit with a farewell dinner at Palladio.

Thursday Dinner

- Charcuteries from Barboursville Farm Raised Berkshire Hogs
Brut 200th Anniversary Cuvée 1994
- Taleggio and Polenta Ravioli, Butter Sauce with Thyme and Petit Verdot Reduction
Nebbiolo Reserve 1998
- Grilled Licorice-glazed Retreat Farm Lamb Chops, Crispy Buckwheat Grits and Escarole
Octagon IV Edition Magnum 1999
Octagon Reserve 2012
- Chocolate Soufflé, Bourbon Creme Anglaise
Malvaxia Paxxito 2006

Footnote

You may have seen from previous editions of *Food & Wine* that a visit to Virginia had been planned for EAZ. I became involved in this because of my experiences in Virginia, and I had intended this year's Berkshire Branch visit to be a pilot, showing how best to arrange a visit by a larger group of people. Barboursville is generally regarded as being in the van of quality for Virginian wines; it also provides very fine dining at Palladio, and the Inn gives very comfortable and historic accommodation. Thus I am now convinced that the best possible introduction to the wines of Virginia for IWFS members is a stay at Barboursville. The accommodation there is nine rooms, limiting numbers to 18. Also most wineries state a maximum number for a tasting and tour of around 15. With this limit on numbers I think it is more appropriate for any subsequent IWFS visit to be arranged at Branch level. Luca would be very happy to hear from us. I am very willing to give advice and contacts.

You may be interested in the cost of our trip. Our members all flew to IAD or BWI and hired cars, and spent time before and/or after our stay at Barboursville to explore the many cultural and natural attractions in Virginia and beyond. The cost of our stay at Barboursville, for a couple, including accommodation, meals, all tastings and transport, was c. £1,800. A similar future trip would be subject to cost fluctuations. The exchange rate for us was around 1.37; it is lower even one month later. Luca gave us a good deal on accommodation cost because we were able to give him nearly full occupancy mid-week, and I'm sure he would be open to a similar deal.



FORTNUM & MASON'S WINE COLLECTION

by *Jamie Waugh*



Fortnum & Mason was founded in 1707, and our range of wines, spirits and fortified wines reflects our longevity, with over 1700 in the cellars, of which 164 wines are bottled under the Fortnum's label. The Fortnum's collection represents over 60% of our sales, which is a rare thing in retail, (where proprietary labels tend to dominate heavily), and has found favour with our customers. We have doubled our business over the past ten years and producers like to work with us as we now have seven restaurants, four retail spaces, (including the about-to-open Royal Exchange), and a very efficient website, hence there is much for the wine maker, and the wine drinker, to love about Fortnum's.

I believe that our loyal discerning customers seek an overriding sense of pleasure, and are confident that we offer something that is elevated at all price points. With the launch this autumn of our deliciously mineral Grillo and juicy Perricone from Sicily, we now offer eight wines under £10 a bottle. We do of course buy wines from the more traditional regions, for example, our Haut Medoc from Château Charmail in Bordeaux, but also from the relatively undiscovered, such as Anselmo Mendes' wonderfully zingy white Avesso from the Vinho Verde. And from the new world we are very excited by the forthcoming arrival of a bone-dry Clare Valley Riesling from the hugely talented winemaker Mac Forbes. It will go marvellously well with Asian flavours of lemongrass and ginger.

Champagne remains our most important wine category from a sales perspective, demonstrating the fact that people associate Fortnum's with moments of celebration. We are very proud to work with producers who don't provide "own label" for anyone else, eg Louis Roederer, and we were delighted to serve our Champagnes at the Chelsea Flower show in May. We are also particularly proud of buying some wonderful small parcels. For example, we buy the entire UK allocation of Paul Dethune's wonderfully decadent Blanc de Noirs Grand Cru Champagne to offer exclusively to our customers.

Sweet wines are eternally popular, and we have just selected a delicious Austrian Eiswein from Fritz Lang; we also stock superlative ports from the esteemed Niepoort, and outstanding sherry from the greatest bodega in Jerez: Bodegas Tradicion. Their rare Brandy de Jerez is a must for chocolate and walnuts.

The surge in spirits sales over recent years has been remarkable, and we have been pleased to combine our range of traditional gin, whisky and brandy with contemporary, innovative spirits created exclusively by some of the UK's leading craft distilleries. These include our unique Sir Nigel's Marmalade Vodka (which uses our eponymous marmalade), English Cassis from Herefordshire's Whittern Farms; English Single Malt Whisky from the award-winning Cotswolds Distillery and our new Ling Heather Honey Gin, distilled by The London Distillery Company, which is based less than three miles from our Piccadilly home.

I am one of a long line of Fortnum's head wine buyers that stretches back to 1707. There is a tradition at Fortnum's that the wine buyers – like good wines – mature with age in the cellars, and, thus, I hope I have in my role for the past ten years, and look forward to many more happy years of tradition and innovation in Piccadilly.



MUSCADET REVISITED

by *Richard Jackson, London Branch*

Along with another IWFS member, and an excellent introduction from Jeffrey Benson, we arranged a trip to the Loire in early June with eight like-minded friends to reacquaint ourselves with Muscadet and the Melon de Bourgogne grape and the granite stone of the region so integral to the terroir.

Being of a certain age we all remembered the heyday of Muscadet a couple of decades ago, when it was a well known and very popular aperitif wine, often the favoured choice to accompany oysters and other seafood dishes.

But the well known issues Muscadet faced in the 1990s including over-production that affected quality, some difficult harvests and most importantly competition from the New World had caused, at least among many in this group, the wine to somewhat disappear from the radar screen.

Would our visit restore the wine to its former place in our collective thinking?

In the last decade there have been significant changes in the region. At the vineyards we visited yield is now kept to about 45 hl/ha to maintain quality (with a maximum now for the appellation of 55 hl/ha) there is a significant rise in sustainable and organic methods, an obvious level of investment and most interestingly the establishment of a number of Muscadet Crus.

All are probably familiar with the three regional appellations of which the best known is Muscadet-Sèvre et Maine, but in 2011 the region had approved the first three Crus and four others have since been added with several more under approval.

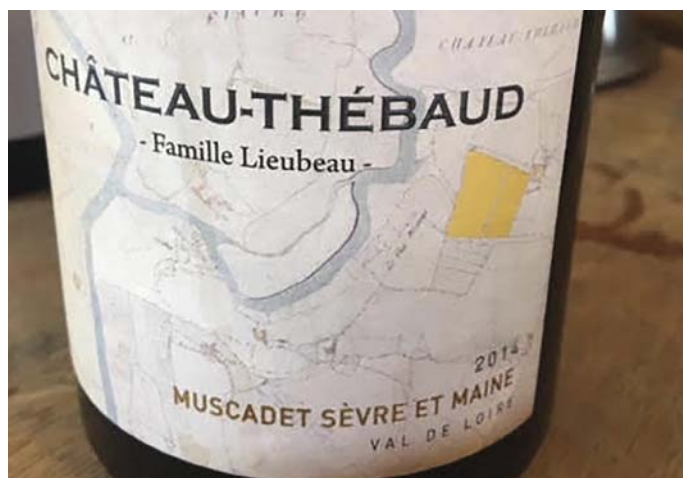
These Crus are still a very small part of total production but are an important part of the work being done to re-establish the standing of regions wine. The Cru criteria are being defined by terroir, a riper harvest and a longer period 'sur lie' (continued contact with the dead yeast or lees after fermentation and until bottling).

A bureaucratic oddity is that the longer period of time that these Crus are required to spend 'sur lie' to qualify exceeds the standard time permitted by the basic appellation requirements and so the term cannot be used on the labelling.

The vineyards visited included Chateau de Chasseloir and Famille Lieubeau who are among the top producers in the region. All the wines tasted had the core elements that Muscadet is known for – pale lemon colour, a light fruity nose and citrus acidity – and which we all remembered.

But what also showed through was a level of character and complexity in some of the wines we tasted, which came as a very pleasant surprise to many of our party.

Chateau de Chasseloir, a beautiful family vineyard run by the very experienced and very welcoming Bernard Chereau, is one of the very best producers in the region.



Among the wines tasted was a delicious 2014 Comte Leloup, which came from a parcel of 60 year old vines and had rich lemon colour, soft well balanced fresh fruit with a hint of butter on the palate and a very long finish.

Another 2014 we tasted, Le Clos, had spent three years on the lees and clearly had the complexity to develop further but was already very drinkable.

Francois, Vincent and Marie having taken over from their parents Chantal and Pierre now run the Famille Lieubeau Estate, although Chantal was there when we visited and prepared for us a wonderful lunch!

The wines produced by the family include two of the Crus within the appellation. The younger generation has established an interesting blend of tradition, innovation and sustainability that is producing some very good wines.

Among those we tasted was their 2014 Cru Chateau-Thebaud, which had a smoky minerality underlying fresh lemon on the palate, and the 2015 Cru Clisson which introduced dried fruit notes along with citrus and a very fine finish.

After a number of visits to these and other producers, many wines tasted and a number purchased we were all convinced that, for our group at least, Muscadet is positively back on our radar screen.

After Muscadet we travelled on to Saumur and one producer that is really worth a visit if you are in the region is Domaine de Rocheville. Established by Phillipe Porche in 2011 with significant investment in modern buildings and technology, but which are designed to emphasise traditional methods and organic production.

The grapes in this region are Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc and we tasted some wonderful examples of both during our visit and including a spectacular 2016 Cremant de Loire 'La Favorite' and an equally good 2011 Cabernet Franc 'Le Roi'. This is a very exciting, passionate and welcoming producer, in a beautiful location that won't disappoint.

EAZ AGM 'GREAT WEEKEND' IN BRISTOL

by Leonie Allday, Chairman, Bath & Bristol Branch

After a glorious summer that continued into a balmy, sunny September it was disappointing that our guests arrived in Bristol to leaden skies and pouring rain. For most of the weekend Bristol did not look at its best, but blue skies returned on Sunday at lunchtime in time for everyone to appreciate the dramatic view of the Avon Gorge and Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge in all its sunlit glory. The Avon Gorge hotel has a spectacular setting and if the refurbishment is still a work in progress it nevertheless provided a very convenient focus for our Great Weekend. We were delighted that so many of you came to join us in Bristol – it was very encouraging and a great privilege for our branch, together with our sister branch Herefordshire & Monmouthshire, to host this event.

We began with an informal dinner at The Ivy, where forty of us convened in the Orangery for a welcome glass of Coates and Seeley's excellent Brut Reserve and a splendid array of appetisers. We then chose between slow cooked lamb shoulder and crab linguine for the main course and cappuccino cake with milk mousse and coffee sauce and crème brûlée with seasonal berries for dessert, accompanied by wines chosen by each table. It was a lively and convivial evening with much renewing of old acquaintances and the opportunity as well to meet members from other parts of the UK – and beyond. We emerged into the darkness to find that the rain had stopped, making the short walk back to the hotel a pleasure in the cool night air.

Sunday dawned wet again and members who had opted for the visit to Tyntesfield House were not relishing the prospect of the 15 minute walk between the coach park and the house! However we assured them it would be worth it and in fact the staff took pity on them as one of our number needed transport

assistance anyway! Fortunately the visit to the new Aerospace Museum didn't involve getting wet for more than a nanosecond. By all accounts both visits were very successful and the "bus monitors" managed not to lose anyone in the process!

Back to the hotel and down into the new event space, Aquam Bibe. Opinion as to the Hotel du Vin brand's long-established moody décor may be divided – not everyone likes navy blue bedroom walls and they really do need to improve the lighting! – but the event space was fabulous, a really interesting and innovative use of the basement space (the former spa) which has exposed some fascinating original architectural and engineering features. We made good use of the flexible space for our champagne reception and buffet lunch and we were also able to display information about local wines and a selection of IWFS merchandise.

The afternoon was given over to the AGM and Members' Forum, attended by over fifty members, representing ten of the UK's sixteen branches and two European branches (Zürich and Valencia). Seven members of the EAZ Executive Committee were present.

The Members' Forum – a new initiative – lasted for about two hours. The formal business, with Ian in the chair, was quickly concluded, after which Janet Bagot, a member of Bath & Bristol Branch, took the chair. After a brief introduction explaining the purpose and format of the Open Forum, members were randomised into six round-table break-out groups and asked to spend 20 minutes discussing one of six questions designed to provide a "health check" of the Society – what it does well, what could be improved, how it sees its future and what needs to change to ensure that it continues to serve both existing and





future members. All the groups reported lively discussion – there was certainly a good “buzz” – and fed back a wide range of opinions and ideas.

Each group was allowed five minutes for its spokesperson to give its feedback, with an on-screen countdown! Impressively, all except one managed it! EAZ Executive Committee Members (who did not participate in the group discussions) were given the opportunity to react to the views expressed. At the end of the session, there was a brief summary and members were encouraged to continue to engage with the process over tea, adding any further comments to the feedback sheets if they wished.

The Society is clearly valued by its members for facilitating access to good food, good wine and good company. To that extent André Simon’s original vision is still very much at the heart of the IWFS. However, in our zone IWFS has an ageing and declining membership and fresh ideas are needed to attract new members.

Four key priorities emerged from our discussions:

1. We need to attract more and younger members: Although at least one branch has had some success in attracting younger members, most thought it was unrealistic to target those whose

time and resources are largely and understandably focused on their careers and/or on bringing up their children. They agreed that the natural market for the Society is 50-60 year olds who may be working towards retirement, in a position to develop their interests and perhaps wishing to widen their social circle. Most people join IWFS as a result of personal invitation and whilst advertising campaigns should not necessarily be ruled out, most members thought that word of mouth is still likely to be the most successful way of attracting new members.

2. Support the branches: Branches need to be supported in developing initiatives aimed at fostering good relations with local food and wine festivals, vineyards and food producers as well as recruiting and retaining members. It was suggested that a structure should be put in place whereby such initiatives can be properly planned, executed and evaluated, supported by skills and grants available from or by arrangement with EAZ. This would address the disconnect many perceive between branches and the national/international organisation; it would make them feel more part of the whole and that there is some point in paying their subscription.

3. Update the website. Members are highly critical of the existing website, which is very dated and difficult to navigate. Every group identified the need to update it as a key requirement. Although recruitment by word of mouth will still be vital, this needs to be supported by effective e-communications. The target age group inhabits an online world and will naturally expect any organisation in which it is interested to have an attractive, contemporary and multi-functional website and to promote its events and activities via social media. We understand that the website is being revamped but as this is being driven by the Americas and has been ongoing for at least two years, we remain sceptical as to the eventual outcome.

4. Raise the public profile: Very few people outside the membership have heard of IWFS. Thought needs to be given as a matter of urgency to raising the profile of the IWFS amongst food and wine professionals and educators.

On this last point, a few weeks ago I was lent an enormous book running to almost 700 pages. It was left to a friend – an IWFS member – by a relative of his who was a chef and was by IWFS founder André Simon. Before Hugh Johnson’s *World Atlas of Wine* (first published in 1971) or Jancis Robinson’s *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (1994), there was André Simon’s *Wines of the World* (1962). He both edited it and wrote almost half its chapters – those on France, North Africa, South Africa, Australia



and New Zealand. So our Society was founded by someone who was internationally known and respected for his knowledge, appreciation and promotion of fine food and wine. It's not surprising, therefore, that in its early days IWFS was well-known amongst top restaurateurs and wine merchants. We need to find ways of re-establishing the Society as the go-to organisation for those who wish to pursue and promote the enjoyment of fine food and wine.

And so to the closing event of the weekend – a Black Tie dinner at the Mansion House, long-time official residence of the Mayor of Bristol and a suitably gracious setting for our meal, superbly catered by Parsnip Mash. Champagne and canapés were served in the drawing room, followed by a seasonal menu of apple-smoked salmon, roast breast of Compton Basset Guinea fowl and a baked sunken chocolate soufflé with damson compote. Wines from the Bath & Bristol Branch cellar accompanied the meal. After the meal EAZ chairman Ian Nicol spoke briefly, proposing the health of IWFS and in celebration of its 85th anniversary. The reply on behalf of the guests was given by Richard Avery, actor, oenophile and a fifth generation Avery! He informed and entertained in equal measure on the history of the Bristol wine trade. In a nice bit of serendipity, both his mother Sarah and his sister Mimi (both members of our branch) were also there to bear witness to the tremendous influence

exerted by the Avery family on the wine trade in Bristol and of course on the wider stage.

So we packed a lot into 36 hours! It has been gratifying to receive quite a lot of positive feedback about the weekend and good to know that everyone enjoyed their brief visit to Bristol.

In closing, I should mention that we were delighted to include amongst our guests Eduardo Aguilar and Sofia Lluch from Valencia Branch, the venue for next year's AGM weekend. Eduardo gave us a brief outline of their plans for the weekend – it sounds fantastic and I am certainly keen to go! Put 4th to 6th October 2019 in your diaries and look out for more details.

Europe Africa 2018 AGM

I am pleased to report that the Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Limited, as had previously been notified to members, took place on 23rd September 2018 at The Avon Gorge Hotel, Sion Hill, Clifton, Bristol. The meeting received and approved the Report of the Directors and the Financial Statements for 2017, appointed Michael Slator as the Independent Examiner of the accounts for 2018 and confirmed my appointment as Company Secretary in place of Tricia Fletcher who is now the Awards Officer.

David Chapman

EAZ 2019 AGM WEEKEND: VALENCIA

Friday 4th to Sunday 6th October 2019

Following the very successful weekend in Bristol combining visits to Tyntesfield House and the Aerospace Museum with the EAZ AGM and Members Forum hosted by Bath & Bristol and Hereford and Monmouth Branches, I wanted to give you some advance notice of the AGM Weekend in 2019 which will be hosted by the Valencia Branch.

Valencia is one of our newer Branches. They are very enthusiastic and highly successful and are very much looking forward to hosting this weekend. Members who attended their inaugural meeting, just two years ago, thoroughly enjoyed the event and are looking forward to a return visit.

Plans are still coming together but include:

- Dinners at Restaurante La Sucursal (1 Michelin star) at Edificio Veles y Vents and at Colon Market where the meal will be provided by Ricard Camarena who also holds a Michelin star. Both of these buildings are architecturally distinguished and worth a visit in their own right.
- Visits to the Central Market where Valencia's best restaurants buy their produce; to one of the best wineries in the region, and to Albufera rice fields where we will take a boat tour before our final lunch at Arroceria Duna.

The event will start in the afternoon of Friday, 4th October and finish with lunch on Sunday, 6th October. It is probably worth noting that members of the EAZ Committee with personal experience of Spanish Sunday lunches say that we will probably not be finished until early Sunday evening! You may wish to take a flight on Sunday evening, but it will need to be late evening if

you are to enjoy the full Sunday lunch experience. Alternatively, for those staying on in Valencia, the Branch will recommend and make reservations at a restaurant for dinner. We will, of course, organise a Members' Forum and encourage you to attend and share your thoughts about how to develop the Society and, in particular, Europe Africa. We will also conduct the formalities of the Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Limited. More details will be available in the next edition of *Food & Wine*. But make a note in next year's diary now, because this is one IWFS event which you should not miss. The cost, without hotel accommodation and flights, will be 400 euros for members and 440 euros for non-members.

Stephanie Shepherd

Events Co-ordinator, EAZ



Edificio Veles y Vents

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Berkshire Branch

PUTTING THE WINE SOCIETY TO THE TEST



The idea has been mooted by members several times over the years but an opportunity arose recently to put it into practice. The plan was to take entry level wines from The Wine Society's list and compare them with wines from their Exhibition range to see what members think. Steve Adams and Chris Graham collaborated in setting up the event and chose matched pairs of wines: Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Chilean Chardonnay, Australian Shiraz and Argentinian Malbec. Branch tastings usually start with a sparkling aperitif and for this the Society's Saumur Rosé Brut was selected together with a Supper wine of Exhibition Single Vineyard Central Otago Pinot Noir.

The surprise was that only about 50% of the 37 members present were also members of The Wine Society. I suspect some may now consider becoming members! Those present were asked at the end of each pair to vote for their favourite in addition to conducting the normal scoring at the end of the

tasting. It was interesting to note that only one pair of wines were from the same producer (the Chardonnays from Concha y Toro). In all other cases they were different and many were from well regarded names: for example Prophets Rock made the Pinot Noir.

So what conclusions can we draw from this exercise? Firstly, in general, the entry level wines were good, honest, daily drinking wines. Members were almost evenly split in their white wine preferences, whilst the Exhibition Reds dominated over the entry level wines. Entry level prices were around £7 or £8. The Exhibition wines were definitely a step, or maybe two, up in quality and repaid, in our opinion, the additional £2 - £3. The Pinot Noir and the Shiraz were a bit more expensive, but nevertheless competitively priced, at £16. The Saumur Brut was a snip at £10.95 and made by Gratién and Meyer who also make The Society's champagne. Oak is still something that generates different responses but that is about personal preference not the quality of the wine.

The dining arrangements were changed for this meeting so that the delicious starter of Ham Hock and Parsley Terrine, prepared by our chef Mark, was served between the whites and the reds. The main course, served at the end, was Poached Salmon, Watercress Cream, Asparagus & Prosciutto, Broad Bean, Pea and Mint Couscous. Congratulations to Mark for delivering an excellent supper.

The good thing about this style of tasting is that it can be repeated from time to time as producers, wines and vintages change. Members also have an opportunity to debate, discuss and sometime agree, on their views about the wines, making the occasion very sociable.

Chris Graham

Devonshire Branch

THE WADDLING DUCK

For our June meeting we tried a local bistro, The Waddling Duck. Our chef this evening was Russel Goodman, from a farming background, who learnt his butchery skills from his dad. He is ably assisted by Lydia who provides the charm and efficiency for front of house. Since opening in Wellswood they have become extremely successful – so much so that getting a table needs advance booking.

MENU

- Canapes
- Pan-fried Scallops, warm pea puree, Black Pudding, Crispy Pancetta; or
Chicken and Apricot Terrine, piccalilli, toasted bread; or
Smoked Duck, sweet baby pears, watersress, and red wine vinaigrette.
- Duck breast cooked pink, gingered rhubarb and pineapple



sauce, purple potato puree, tenderstem broccoli; or
Cannon of Lamb with pistachio crumb, buttered greens,
dauphinoise potatoes, red wine jus; or

continued on page 35 ➡

Harare Branch

PRESENTATIONS IN HARARE

The Harare Branch held an event on Sunday 16th September at the occasion of honouring the Battle of Britain, which is organised every year by the Royal Society of St George, and took this opportunity to award Long Service Diplomas to Victoria New and Ailsa Smith.

Many of the IWFS Harare branch are also members of The Royal Society of St George or their Scottish, Welsh and Irish affiliated associations.

The venue was held in the grounds and gardens of members Mr and Mrs Bill Moore's splendid house which was part of land given and owned by Courtney Selous – an early day pioneer, explorer and hunter.

Following a splendid lunch the programme proceeded to the toasting of THE FEW given by the British Ambassador who gave a farewell speech prior to her departure to her next posting as Ambassador to Nigeria. The response was given by a committee member of the RSSG.

We took the opportunity to use the occasion for the Ambassador to do the presentations which she gratefully did after I had given a brief outline of the reasons of the awards and the IWFS aims and objectives spelled out originally by André Simon all those years ago.

Ailsa and Vicky were extremely pleased that their efforts over many years had been recognised. Society members and the whole of the people attending gave them a rousing appreciation for their service to the IWFS and for maintaining traditions that mean so much to people living "overseas".

All involved should like to place on record our thanks to Tricia Fletcher and Andrea Warren, in the UK, for the speedy



processing of our application and for going the extra mile in getting the documents to us in order that we could use this unique opportunity to present the awards here in Harare.

Ray Woolley

➡ *continued from page 34*

- Fillet of Brill, caramelised fennel, crushed new potatoes, broad beans, beurre blanc
- Trio of sorbets, cherry, mango and gin and lemon; or Lemon Posset, fresh berries; or
- Selection of cheeses, homemade chutney, biscuits.



Tea or Coffee.

WINES

To welcome you

- *Prosecco, Borgo Sanleo*
Italy, Intense floral, fruity bouquet. A wonderful fresh and wellbalanced, appley palate with just a hint of delicate almond. 11% vol.
- *Fiano Lunate, Botter, 2015/16*
Sicily, Italy, One for the senses; deep golden colour, tropical aromatics and a palate that bursts with flavours of mango and pineapple, Crisp, dry and harmonious. 13%.5 vol.
- *Shiraz-Cabernet, Stringy Bark Creek, 2015/16*
South East Australia. Cool intensity is the style here, showing dark fresh flavours. 14% vol.

Michael Swales

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire Branch

ENJOYING THE DELIGHTS OF SCOTCH EGGS



On a tropical summer's day our Branch paid a visit to the headquarters of The Handmade Scotch Egg Company. This business was set up fifteen years ago by Penny and Neil Chambers, launched through farmers' markets and extended further afield through shows, festivals, game fairs and independent foodie shops.

The first scotch egg shop in the world 'Egg'cetera' opened in Worcester in 2010 and The Nest Café /Deli/Farm shop and plant centre followed in 2014 on the outskirts of Ledbury.

The Nest is a quirky but welcoming eaterie, where we were finally settled in the shade amongst rustic furniture and lush greenery. Although the menu gave plenty of choices, nearly

everyone chose to sample the house speciality – the ubiquitous Scotch Egg. With over 40 different recipes, this was an experience to remember!

Classics such as the Scrumpy – made with pork, apple, onion and fresh sage vied with the Blackfire – made with black pudding, pork, fresh scotch bonnet, chilli and garlic, plus eight vegetarian options and several gluten free choices. How about the 'Tickled Pink' – an eggless impostor made with a ball of cream cheese rolled in cracked peppercorns wrapped in smoked salmon surrounded in lemon and dill potato mash? Or even the Whisky Mac – made with pork, oatmeal, ginger and whisky?

We were able to quench our thirst with beer, local English wines or anything from a full bar service.

The event was quite an adventure for us all and we shall definitely be returning to support some of their special occasions, such as their monthly tapas evenings, or generous cream teas. Gardeners amongst us were able to stock up on fresh herbs and plants from the adjoining abundant garden centre.

This branch takes its enjoyment not just from fine dining (which we embrace with enthusiasm!) but also more casual occasions where we can explore food and wine in a different atmosphere and learn more about what the world has to offer.

Judith Stares



Leicestershire Branch

TAKING AFTERNOON TEA

It has been a joy to wake to sun kissed skies and warmth. Such has been the summer of 2018. Jack Buchanan (Scottish singer and actor) sang in 1932 that 'everything stops for tea' and indeed it did in August as guests joined Sally and Steven Gasztowicz, at their home, for a traditional afternoon tea.

Such a quintessentially English custom was introduced into England by Anna, the seventh Duchess of Bedford. Supper was often served around 8pm and the duchess would become hungry at around four o'clock. She asked for a tray of tea, bread, butter and cake to be brought to her. This became a habit and she began inviting guests to join her. During the 1880's upper class women wore long gowns, gloves and hats to take their tea. Dainty sandwiches, scones, cakes and pastries are usually served. Presentation is everything and Claridges, Fortnum and Mason, the Dorchester as well as other London hotels offer fine examples of the experience with tea grown in India or Ceylon poured into delicate bone china cups.

The china was brought out, the tables laid, flowers arranged and most importantly, champagne chilled. We enjoyed a delicious tea prepared by Sarah Nicholson and many thanks are extended to her and to Sally and Steven for their hospitality. As Henry James said 'There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea'

Earlier in the Summer we explored a new venue, The White Swan at Shalwell, Lutterworth, for supper. The chef, Rory McClean, comes from training under Angela Hartnett at the Connaught, and Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley. He presented



an interesting menu and members spent an enjoyable evening. Many thanks to Sue and Simon Faire for arranging the event.

Leicestershire Branch

ITALIAN HOSPITALITY AT CINI

The Romans love of feasts and banquets provided an opportunity to try new dishes and flavours. These were often complex requiring sophisticated preparation. Ostrich meat, fish sauces and roast game were commonly served at the tables of the most wealthy in society. For most though vegetables, legumes, cheeses, with good bread and olive oil were a more staple fare.

In Italian culture hospitality comes first. It is unthinkable to rush a customer through their food. We were certainly extended a very warm welcome from Andrea Paduano's team at Cini restaurant and no part of the evening felt hurried. Indeed, such was the languid pace that some guests did not have time to finish delicious, liqueur coffee before their taxi arrived. It was a meal to be savoured however.

Andrea was born in Naples and has been head chef at several restaurants before setting up Cini more than a decade ago. Locally sourced food is important to his cooking and the menu had a traditional, Italian feel with modern additions. Burrata

Pugliese, or milky mozzarella, served on sautéed turnip tops with chilli and garlic Sicilian tomatoes felt very authentic as did the asparagus and spinach risotto with parmesan and mascarpone cheese. Shoulder of British lamb was much enjoyed by most but others felt it was made of pulled meat and not the authentic shoulder. Seasoning was perfect and we were generously offered very delicious bread and plentiful, crisp vegetables and salads. Wines balanced well with the food. Moscato di Noto, Sicilia and Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Don Luigi 1949. A traditional Sicilian dessert of cannolo was the highlight of the sweets. A sweet pastry filled with cream it is thought to originate from medieval times when the tubular shape was formed by wrapping the dough around a sugar cane stalk. They became a springtime item associated with 'Fat Tuesday' or Carnevale, when sheep produce more milk to make the ricotta cheese, a key ingredient of the pastry.

The excellent and friendly service made our evening very enjoyable and very sincere thanks to the team at Cini for making us so welcome.

Malmö Branch

DINNER AT MJ'S



Weisser Burgunder Spätlese 2015 and Spätburgunder Schlatter Maltesergarten 2012
(both from Weingut Martin Wassmer)

- Three French cheeses
Gigondas 2014, Domaine Bouissière
- Sorbet of apples with roasted almond, salty meringue
Sweet Emotion Muscat de Rivesa, Celier de la Dona

The "green" delicate Grüner Veltliner matched the zucchini nicely and the chardonnay in tight Burgundy style went very well with the cod and the mineral tones from the mussels. The two high quality Austrian white and red Burgundies were tough to match with the rather salty chicken dish and unfortunately they lost. The rich and powerful Gigondas however was successfully paired with the cheeses. The Muscat had a fresh sweetness and made a good companion to the dessert.



Shortly after our visit Frida Nilsson was appointed the best chef in Malmö and the best female chef in Sweden in a competition where only chefs can vote amongst themselves. They should know, and there is no reason to disagree, as in all we had a nice experience in a cosy atmosphere with very attentive staff.

Rolf Fransson

Photos by Barbro Edholm



Last time we had the pleasure of enjoying Frida Nilsson's cooking was at Kitchen & Table on the 25th floor of the new concert hall Malmö Live. Now she is head chef of MJ's, a restaurant and bar located in the hotel. We were lucky to have a "chamber séparée" as the place was very busy on a Friday night. Our event was fully booked with 21 members and guests. After a glass of fresh and delicious Champagne J Perrier Cuvée Royale brut with a tasty baked Jerusalem artichoke filled with whitefish roe we enjoyed.

- Carpaccio of zucchini with salty lemon, yoghurt, basilica, green grapes
Grüner Veltliner Kies 2017, Kurt Angerer
- Lightly cured back of cod with fennel, leek, mussel broth, salvia
Kumeu River Estate Chardonnay 2016, Kumeu River Winery, New Zealand
- Breast of chicken with chanterelle, cabbage, chicken broth, salvia

Manchester Branch

ADAM REID AT THE FRENCH

There has always been an aura of opulence at Manchester's Midland Hotel. Here, famously, Rolls met Royce in 1904. Here is where generations of Mancunians have come to celebrate special occasions. Many who have never crossed the threshold feel a sense of respect just because it's there, solid and reassuring in the centre of our city. In the heart of this hotel is Adam Reid's French restaurant.

Manchester Branch's dinner there in May 2018 proved to be the memorable occasion we expected it to be. Thirty eight of us gathered in the recently refurbished surroundings, which set the scene for the evening. The elegance, the comfort, the imaginative lighting all combine to offer an enticing setting. The table arrangement – round tables for four or five – is conducive to conversation with one's fellow diners, and of course, there is plenty to talk about. The restraint of colour means that the significant colours are those on one's plate.

Adam Reid became chef-patron of the restaurant in 2016. He is known to have sought a relaxed atmosphere, and this he has achieved, whilst at the same time acknowledging the Edwardian grandeur of the hotel.

We had a six course menu, with wines to accompany each course. A glass of English fizz from the Nyetimber vineyard got the evening off to a refreshing start, and set the standard of what was to follow. Adam himself welcomed us with an outline of his menu, and his sommelier did the same for the wines, which came from five different countries.

When we pick up a menu, our preconceptions are based on what we have experienced in the past. At a subconscious level, we invariably react in this way, so when you read the menu below, please try to put these thoughts aside. No words can adequately express the delights, the surprises, the awakening of the drowsiest taste bud. (Words in brackets are mine.)

1. Dripping toast, grated tongue
Lancashire tasty [cheese] and onion pie
Whipped cod's roe, squid ink cracker



2. Tater 'ash [potato hash for those of you who don't come from round here] with mushroom catsup [ketchup], bread and butter
3. Cornish crab, fried asparagus, chives
4. Baked Cornish brill, mussels in cider, watercress
5. Organic Rhug [Welsh] chicken, artichoke and green olive
6. Rhubarb jelly, malt ice cream, ginger biscuit

The accompanying wines were:

1. Conciso, Nieport, 2015, Dão, Portugal
2. Ch. Chantalouette, 2012, Pomerol, France
3. Picarana, Botega Maraños, 2016, Madrid, Spain
4. Roussette de Savoie, Domaine Giachino, 2016, France
5. Wunderwerk, Dreissigacker, 2013, Rheinhessen, Germany
6. Icewine, Riesling, Peller Estates, 2013, Niagara Peninsula, Canada

Any descriptions I could attempt to make can do nothing to guide you into this gastronomic fairyland, so I am not going to try. A brief survey round the tables at the end of the meal highlighted the brill and the rhubarb. This was rhubarb jelly as you have never met it before, raised to a delicacy you could never have imagined. One small criticism – the only one – was some disappointment with the chicken.

There was general praise for the choice of wines, and praise for the imaginative sourcing of the unfamiliar.

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Manchester Branch

A MEDLEY OF FLAVOUR AND COLOUR AT GONBAY



Ming and his team at Chinese restaurant, Gonbay, in Altrincham, extended a warm welcome to us on 25th April. We were greeted with a glass of champagne which was kept topped up until it was time to be seated.

We started with a juicy, fragrant, and garlicky steamed scallop served in the shell. This was served with Abbots and Delauney

Viognier 2016, a robust wine that offered the body and depth of flavour to complement the strong flavours of the first few courses. It was perfumed with apricots, peaches and honey.

Our next course was a plump breaded crab claw with an accompanying lemon mayonnaise. Delicious!

We then moved away from seafood dishes to an exciting selection of meat dishes. There was a pork dumpling redolent with garlic and ginger juices, a crispy spring roll, tender char sui ribs and lettuce with a mixture of diced chicken, carrot, bamboo shoots, nuts and spring onion. We enjoyed the variety of flavours and textures and the Viognier continued to hold up well to these dishes.

By this stage we were far from hungry but the main courses continued to tempt us. We were presented with steamed sea bass with spring onion and ginger, sizzling steak and skewered chicken in Cantonese sauce, salt and pepper pork with chilli and garlic, vegetables and tofu in a clay pot and Yeung Chow fried rice. A member on my table was keen to stress how well the combination of flavours flowed. This was a fantastic selection and those who couldn't finish these dishes were offered 'doggy bags' to take home! We enjoyed a Louis Latour Pinot Noir with our main courses – Domaine de Valmoissine 2014, which was elegant and fragrant with ripe cherry flavour.

The desserts were a medley of flavour and colour, with a lemon and pineapple jelly and mixed melon, grapes and orange.

It is worth adding that those diners with dietary requirements were served a stunning array of different dishes of their choice. Chinese tea was also served throughout the meal. The delightful Ming and his team provided a swift, efficient and unobtrusive service which is to be commended.

We all thoroughly enjoyed our evening and another member told me that the evening was the epitome of what the IWFS stands for – good food, good wine and good company. I could not agree more!

Nicola McLoughlin

➡ continued from page 39

The serving staff offered us descriptions of the food and the wine with friendliness and enthusiasm, all done without any sense of the aloofness that can be so off-putting in some restaurants. Here was service of a very high standard.

How André Simon would have loved this dinner! It represents all the things he wanted the world to enjoy.

Adam Reid and his team did us proud, with an evening that we will remember with pleasure. His place in the history of Manchester's Midland Hotel is assured.

Josephine Jackson



Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire Branch

OLIVERS, WOODFORD

The July event of the branch was at Olivers in Woodford near Wilmslow, a small restaurant which we have visited many times and a favourite of the group. We have been coming here for the past four years and this time thirty members enjoyed the wonderful flavours the owner/exec. chef James O'Neil achieves. It was a very 'simple' meal but so well balanced and beautifully served. The wines were well chosen by our chairman Dr Paul



Bishop and they complemented the lovely food. The Cape Heights Viognier was a refreshing accompaniment for the wild mushroom, lemon and thyme soufflé.

The main course of salmon was complemented with a Zinfandel red with a good depth of flavour.

The dessert of elderflower panacotta provided a gentle finale of subtle flavours.

MENU

- Aperitif – Pinot Grigio Rose
 - Wild Mushroom & Lemon & Thyme Soufflé, Cheshire Cheese and Chive Sauce
Cape Heights Viognier
 - Grilled Fillet of Salmon, Champ Potatoes, Asparagus, Chive Beurre Blanc
770miles Zinfandel
 - Elderflower Panacotta with Watermelon Honeycomb and Baby Mint
- Coffee/Tea and Petit Fours

We look forward to the next time.

Frank and Jean Whiteman

Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire Branch

SPANISH EVENING

We had a very happy informal evening at the Blue Bell Inn Tapas Restaurant Chester. We received a very warm welcome to this medieval hostelry which was first licensed in 1494. The Chef David is the son of Dr Paul Bishop our branch chairman.

All wines were from the Iberian Peninsula. The aperitif was the Wine Society's Cava. This is notable for its fruity, moderate acidity with a very long aftertaste.

We enjoyed a selection of Tapas to start which included Aubergine Gratin, Ham and Manchego Croquettes with Spiced Pork and Cabbage Meatballs.

These were accompanied with Carinena 2014. This wine is from a small area using many local sources. The 2014 was very intense and full flavoured. It was the favourite wine of the evening.

The main course was a choice of meat, fish or vegetable kebab with salad and chips. This was served with Paza de Villarei. Albarino Rias Baixas 2016 which was a perfect match for the fish; very aromatic and smooth with a long finish.

To complete the meal the dessert was Churros with Chocolate Dip or Cheshire Farm Ice Cream served with Adaga de Pegoes Moscatel de Setubal from Portugal. This is not particularly sweet but assertive and balanced well with the chocolate dip and ice

cream. It is also assertive enough to cope with cheese, especially blue cheese.

Chester was looking particularly sparkling and pristine but we found out that it had not been especially prepared for us. Her Majesty the Queen was due to visit the city the following day.

Overall we had a very pleasant evening with good food, good wine, good company and lots of atmosphere.

Frank and Jean Whiteman



Surrey Hills Branch

'FIRST HALF OF 2018' ROUND UP

Since our foray into Medieval lunching in October 2017 at the residence of Stephanie and Alan Shepherd, Surrey Hills members and their guests and associates have sampled three very different establishments for yet more lunches. Lunches remain more popular than evening events (maybe this says something about our average ages!).

The Clock House, Ripley

First of all we returned in February to what formerly was Drakes, in Ripley, now renamed The Clock House, and under slightly new management. Drakes deservedly received a Restaurant Award from us in 2012. Serena Drake and her head chef Fred Clapperton have regained the Michelin star previously held, and under the direction of Maitre D' Joseph Pocceschi, we enjoyed a fabulous meal, faultless and innovative.

After a glass of Prosecco, our appetiser was cured venison and pickled beetroot with nasturtium, hay custard and powder, and dry mushroom straw. Following this we were offered a choice of starters – veal liver, with onions and horseradish, or haddock with parsley root, shrimp and lemon; mains options were beef with kohlrabi, trumpet chanterelles and mustard, or skrei cod with a fish sauce, celeriac and chicory.

In between these dishes we received firstly rice crackers and cured mackerel with soy gel, dashi jelly, fresh chillies, toasted sesame and coriander cress, and later mushroom croquettes with tarragon, mushroom emulsion and bacon crumb, all beautifully presented.

An artisan cheese board and a dessert of pineapple, white chocolate and chamomile completed a splendid and unhurried lunch.

Accompanying wines were a 2016 Villa Montes Sauvignon Blanc from Chile, and a 2015 Costers del Sio, "Petit Sios" from Spain. It is worth noting that The Clock House has a very extensive wine list to suit all tastes and wallets.



This was a thoroughly enjoyable lunch, the presentation and imagination being first rate, and we hope to return as a group or individually before too long.

The Inn at West End, Bisley

This year's AGM – as usual thankfully a very short formal event followed by a much longer informal one – was held at The Inn at West End on a Saturday in late March, located unsurprisingly at West End near Bisley, not far from Woking. The Inn has in the recent past been awarded various certificates of excellence and "Dining Pub of the Year" accolades, and we enjoyed excellent service in a very pleasant setting but perhaps not the quality of food we might have expected. We try to keep the cost to members down for our AGMs to encourage attendance, but there clearly seems to be a minimum price at which excellent food can be obtained, and of course this price creeps up every year. Maybe some kitchens find it difficult to accommodate 18 covers at the same time (on this subject, The Clock House in February absolutely limited our party to 10 covers in order to maintain their standard of food and service). Next year we will try harder to find an acceptable compromise!

Hansa's, Weybridge

Quite a different experience awaited us at Hansa's Thai Kitchen in Weybridge in May. Food in this small family run establishment is honest, home cooked, flavoursome in the extreme, but never overpoweringly spicy. Most of the dishes offered are on the face of it familiar to those of us who have travelled anywhere in the Far East, but when cooked Thai-fashion by this chef clearly take on a special flavour. We started with a "Kitchen Platter" which included chicken satay and tasty spare ribs, followed by a fragrant Thai green chicken curry, sweet and sour pork, stir fried chicken with chilli, garlic and holly basil, plus of course noodles and rice. Sounds simple, but perfectly cooked and oh so delicious! Accompanying all this we chose two very drinkable Chilean wines; a Los Caminos Sauvignon Blanc and a La Playa Viognier. Both went well with the food.

The rest of 2018 will see us at a varied selection of venues and events, so watch this space, as they say!

Kip Punch

Surrey Hills Branch

'STARTERS AND PUDS No. 27'

They say a change is as good as a rest, and for this year's long-running annual event held in mid August we were invited a little further afield to the wonderful garden of Nic and Ros Birtles in Hurley, Berkshire on the banks of the Thames where 23 of us enjoyed an al fresco lunch. It was very relaxing for those of us who were not the chefs!

For the benefit of new readers, this lunchtime event entails members offering to provide a starter or a pud which they bring to the venue, do any final preparation, plate up and serve. This is often a logistical challenge, but no chef has ever failed! We have three starters and three puds (in the early days we had four of each but waistlines objected). Crockery, cutlery, glassware and furniture are assembled by the committee, and matching wines are selected by a member, once again kindly by Alan Shepherd.

After a glass of Arestal Cava and some tasty canapes, we enjoyed Susie Punch's Gazpacho (using home-grown tomatoes), then Wendy de Paula's Snaffles Mousse (tastes like a smoked fish mousse – Google it – you may be surprised at the ingredients), and Diana Mineck's delicious Quails Eggs, Baby Leeks and Tarragon Salad. To accompany these delights we were served with Bourgogne Chardonnay La Jumalie, Henri Darnat, Meursault, 2014, or Robert Mondavi Woodbridge Shiraz, 2004.

For the puds, first it was Mathias Kayser's Vegan Mousse au Chocolat (here, egg white is replaced by a chick-pea extract), then Diana's Orange-soaked Bundt Cake with Crème Fraîche (the term Bundt refers to the toroidal shape of the cake), and finally Stephanie Shepherd's refreshing Strawberry and Ginger



Diana's salad

Beer Jelly. The dessert wine was Chateau Suduiraut, Preignac, Sauternes, 2010.

And then, to offset some of the calories, Nic organised a short (optional) walk via the nearby Peter Freebody's boatyard – famous worldwide for its beautiful wooden boats – the busy Hurley Lock, and the church of St Mary The Virgin, originally part of the Benedictine Priory in 1086, but started in the 700s.

Thanks are due to all the chefs, to Alan for organising the wines, but particularly to Nic and Ros for their hospitality on a lovely summer afternoon.

Kip Punch

Zürich Branch

INSANE FOR SPAIN – SPANISH WINES AND FOOD

For the second time, members of the Zürich Branch gathered with Robert Hergenrader, an American wine expert living in Switzerland. Among others he offers a 'wine pairing' event with selected wines and compatible food. The wines come from the areas of origin, but his wife Stefanie cooks the delicious food fresh and on the spot.

Robert led through the evening in a friendly atmosphere generating lively discussions about the wines and the food.



However, there was more to talk about the different wines tastes and wines in general. The tastings included the following items:

- Verdejo Rueda DO 2016, Bodegas Aura (Note: pleasant) with Grissini
- Cava Brut Reserva NV, Segura Viudas (Note: just Cava) with Egg & Mushroom Tapa
- Rosado 2015, Montsant DO, Coca i Fitó (Note: fruity) with Andalusian Gazpacho
- Concejo, Calatayud DO 2015 Bodegas Langa (Note: pleasant) with Chorizo & Prawns with smoky vinaigrette
- Rioja Riserva DOCa 2011 'Viña Alberdi', La Rioja Alta S.A. (Note: classic)
- Priorat DOQ 2012, Gran Crossos (Note: full body) with Albondigas Caseras (home made meatballs)

We were pleased that we did not only have a pleasant event with many members, but could also welcome some young people as guests, who might join our branch.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ZAMBIA Lusaka

November

AGM Brunch at the Ridgeway Hotel.
Contact Andy Anderson.

UK Manchester

9th November 2018

Lunch at Aspire, Trafford College.
Contact Chris Redman.

UK Surrey Hills

11 November 2018

English Cheese Tasting, at lunchtime, at Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. Contact Susie Punch.

North and South Celebrate the Society's 85th Anniversary

Open to all members, these 85th Anniversary events are being held on consecutive evenings. The menus and matched wines will honour the theme of the Society's inaugural meal, but with a 21st century twist. Alsace wines will feature and our guest on both evenings will be David Ling, former Grand Master of the Confrérie de St. Etienne d'Alsace.

South: UK London & St James's

13th November 2018

At Livery Hall of the Worshipful Company of Innholders in the City, black tie. Contact Stephanie Shepherd.

North: UK Blackpool & Fylde

14th November 2018

At the elegant Relais & Chateaux Northcote on the edge of the Ribble Valley, black tie. 7pm for 7:30 pm. Details from Ian Nicol

UK Devonshire

14th November 2018

Indian Dinner at East Meets West, Paignton. Contact Geeta & Gordon Lloyd.

UK Berkshire

16th November 2018

Neville Hall, Waltham St Lawrence nr Maidenhead at 7.15 pm. Gordon Ritchie from the Italian Continental Stores in Maidenhead with "Wines from Veneto".

UK Manchester

2nd December 2018

Christmas Lunch with Aiden Byrne at 20 Stories. Contact Chris Redman.

UK Blackpool & Fylde Coast

3rd December 2018

Four-course Christmas meal at Birley Arms Hotel, Warton. 7pm for 7:30pm. Members are encouraged to bring their own wines to enjoy and share with others. Details from David James.

UK Sussex

13th December 2018

Christmas dinner at Horsted Place Hotel, Little Horsted. Beginning at 7.30 pm. Contact Lesley Berry.

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

18th December 2018

Christmas dinner at Nunsmere Hall, Northwich. Black tie. Contact Tim Hodges.

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

23rd January 2019

Dinner at La Bohème, Lymm. Contact Tim Hodges.

Blackpool & Fylde Coast

7th January 2019

A tasting of Southern Rhone Wines presented by David James at Aysgarth Court, Blackpool, 7:30pm. Details from David James.

UK Sussex

25th January 2019

Indian dinner at Indian Summer, Brighton. Beginning at 7.30 pm. Contact Lesley Berry.

UK Manchester

31st January 2019

Branch AGM at Stanneylands Hotel, Wilmslow. Contact Chris Redman.

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

27th February 2019

AGM and dinner at the Chester Golf Club. Contact Tim Hodges.

UK Manchester

7th March 2019

Wine Tasting and Supper at St. James's Club, Manchester. Contact Chris Redman.

NEW ZEALAND Auckland

8th to 10th March 2019

2019 APZ AGM Weekend will be held in Auckland, with a pre-tour in the North Island and a post-tour to the fabulous Central Otago wine region in the South Island. Last few places available. Full details on the IWFS website APZ pages.

FRANCE Bordeaux

4th to 8th June 2019

Visits to chateaux in Pessac-Léognan, Pauillac, Margaux and St-Emilion are amongst those on the itinerary to this classic region. This event is now sold out. Details and email eaz@iwfs.org to be placed on the wait list.

PORTUGAL Douro River Cruise

9th to 16th June 2019

A wonderful cruise is planned by the Americas along the Douro and a pre-tour in Lisbon from 6th to 8th June. Sold out. Email Stephanie Schmitz on sschmitz@aaane.com to be added to the wait list.

SPAIN Valencia

4th to 7th October 2019

Venture to Valencia for the EAZ Great Weekend, AGM and Members' Forum. All members are invited to experience the cultural and culinary delights of this coastal city port. More details to follow shortly.

AMERICA Charleston

16th to 19th October 2019

Join the Americas for a tour of this wonderful South Carolina city. The best Southern cuisine will be perfectly paired with world-class wines.

Looking to further ahead....

FRANCE Bordeaux

April 2020

The Americas are also planning a trip to Bordeaux in April 2020.

PORTUGAL Madeira

2nd to 8th November 2020

Visit this historic winemaking island and you will have the chance to taste Sercial, Verdelho, Bual and Malmsey on home ground. More details as they become available.

HONG KONG

10th to 13th November 2020

The Asia Pacific Zone is planning a wonderful festival in Hong Kong open to all members. There will be a Macau pre-tour from 8th to 9th November and a Gourmet Hong Kong post-tour from 15th to 16th November. Stay tuned for further details.

ARGENTINA Triennial International Festival

November 2021

Although still in the planning stage, mark this month in your calendar for a true South American experience enjoying the culture and energy of Buenos Aires for a pre-tour and then visiting the wonderful wine region of Mendoza for the main festival.

If you are interested in joining an event that is full, or reservations closed, then please contact the organiser in case space is available.