



Food & Wine

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

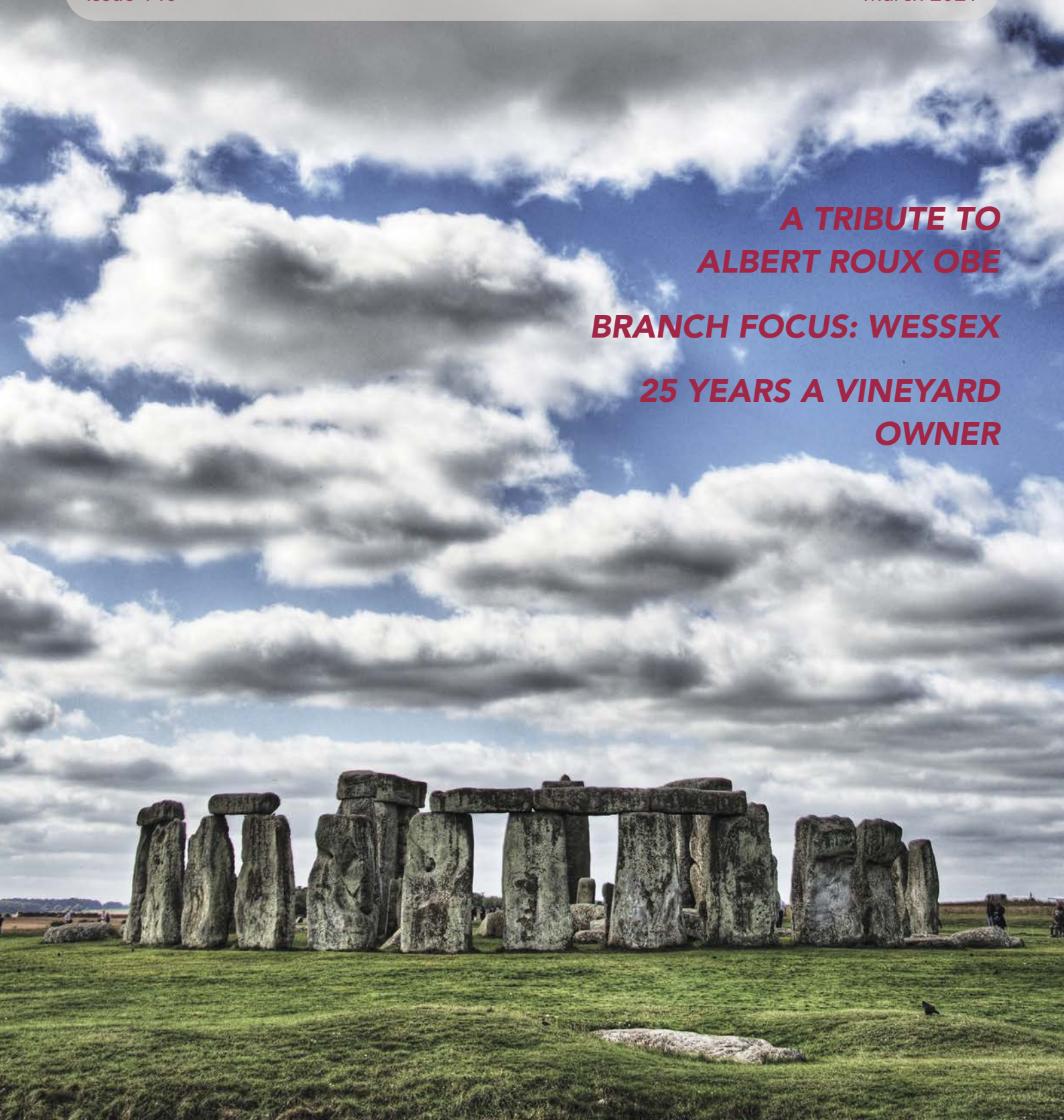
Issue 140

March 2021

**A TRIBUTE TO
ALBERT ROUX OBE**

BRANCH FOCUS: WESSEX

**25 YEARS A VINEYARD
OWNER**



Chairman's message



In preparing to write this message, I considered how I could make it a Covid-free zone.... and failed miserably!

Nothing that I can think of in my lifetime has affected the entire population of the world to such an extent and for so long. When I wrote this originally, there were 'glimmers of hope' that the virus will be brought under control in some parts of the world in the foreseeable future. Since then there has been encouraging news with the rollout of vaccination programmes in many countries having accelerated and many countries are planning how to reduce restrictions on 'normal life'. The emphasis has changed from destroy the virus to learning to live with it. In the UK, the currently envisaged exit plan should enable face-to-face events to take place in the second half of this year. I hope that this will also happen for our branches outside the UK.

I am aware that some of our members have been afflicted by this pernicious virus and that sadly a few members are no longer with us. Our condolences go out to their families and friends of all those who have suffered. Other members are, I am sure, suffering from the lack of contact with family and others, while others have had to address business difficulties, home-schooling, or worse the lack of any schooling, working from home and fears of what the pandemic will have done to the economic welfare of the world.

Enough of the problems which are constantly paraded before us through social media, television, radio and the press. The crisis has generated innovative ways of coping with the problems – some businesses have grown substantially, many of us have found ways of keeping in touch with friends using various communication apps and we can continue to dream of where we will travel when it is safe to do so. New skills have been learned, long-outstanding domestic jobs have been done and many gardens have been tended with more TLC than ever before.

In IWFS, many branches have developed imaginative on-line events using Zoom and its rooms feature to facilitate social conversation rather than waiting to grasp an opportunity to 'jump in' when there are lots of people attending the 'event'. Thank you to all those who have made the technology work for these events. A big thank you is also due to those who have devised the events and arranged for food and wine deliveries to be enjoyed by members. Early in the pandemic I promised a 'prize' for the branch which organised a great and imaginative event and wrote the event up for F&W or F&W Online. We would like to congratulate the Moscow branch whom the Executive Committee decided was most deserving of the 'prize'.

Numerous Zoom meetings have taken place led by Leonie Allday and Tim Hodges to further develop marketing strategy as well as to develop practical ideas, primarily aimed at reversing the trend of reducing membership.

We are hoping that our festivals in Piedmont, Cambridge and Madeira can take place this year in July, September and at the end of November as international travel restrictions are lifted.

I also commend to you the two on-line IWFS publications EAZ's F&W Online and the Society's Grapevine. The format of Grapevine has been changed to enable easy click through from headlines in the email to the full article, which can also be accessed on the website. If you have not yet watched them, you may want to watch the two videos released on the website in 2020 and to listen to the re-recording of Oz Clarke's André Simon lecture from 2018.

Finally, I hope that you and your families and friends keep well and remain safe and hope that as many of you as possible are able to take part in future on-line events until we can all meet again later this year.

John Nicholas

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

2021 is well underway and although social gatherings are still restricted a number of branches have presented virtual meetings – using Zoom – to maintain their programmes. Reports suggest these meetings have been well received and we would welcome hearing from all branches with ideas to expand these programmes and maybe share them with other branches. When the tier restrictions are eased in the coming months and we can meet again to enjoy our wines and foods in the company of friends, there will remain opportunities for virtual meetings which can be enjoyed by all members to expand our network and make new friends. This theme is reflected by several of our contributors.

In this edition we recall the life of Albert Roux OBE (page 7), a long time member of the St James's branch who died in January. You will find a prospectus for The Roux Scholarship – awarded to aspiring young chefs. We have picked a small selection from the archives of the Society to recall the early days and to realise and appreciate how IWFS has developed over 80 or so years; admire the extensive range of wines served at André Simon's Diamond Wedding dinner (page 21). Opportunities for travel, visiting friends and exploring new destinations have been seriously curtailed in the last year. Fine dining – especially on cruise ships – is but a cherished memory for most – so we invite you to contemplate a dinner menu offered on the P&O Strathmore in August 1939 cruising off Norway (page 19).

Wessex branch is the first to be featured in 2021 (page 9). The ancient history and more recent tranquillity of this region is recalled and reflected in the cover picture of Stonehenge. Wessex is one of four branches in the southwest UK which as a region is liaising closely with the northern team of branches in a regional strategy to promote the Society and engage more members in events; in particular virtual events which we believe are destined to become a major feature of our calendar. We include an outline of the pilot project which has been initiated by our northern team branches (page 29): a gastronomic feast with recommended paired wines – delivered to your door for minimal 'finishing and presentation' to enjoy in your own home with the company of friends on Zoom. Similar projects are being developed in the South West region. The future is upon us !

We welcome hearing from members – stories , requests , even complaints – you know where to find us.

Peter McGahey

PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 16**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st March; publication mid April.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 141**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th May; publication to members in July (to include AGM notification).
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 17**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st July; publication mid August.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 142**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th September; publication to members in November.

Please send photographs separately from text.

Advance notice of your events at which members of other branches would be welcome can be included, along with booking details. As always, we invite your event reports, articles and pictures.

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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One copy, per address,
is available for members.
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Contributors

Branch Focus: Wessex

Isabel Sinclair and her husband Price joined the IWFS in January 2014, looking to mix with like minded food and wine gourmets and also to utilise the international connections when they travelled. Isabel took over the Chairmanship of the Wessex branch in 2017 with a view to focus on the André Simon objectives and also to promote the branch to new members.



Marketing Matters

Leonie Allday is a former senior lecturer in Geography who in her retirement has indulged her passion for wine (and gin!) and now teaches for the Wine and Spirits Education Trust (WSET) as well as running a small business giving tutored wine, gin and port tastings. She has been a member of IWFS for 10 years and chairs the Bath and Bristol Branch. For the last three years she has served on the EAZ Executive Committee, on which she is the Marketing and PR lead. Her other interests are her family, gardening, good food, reading, music and travelling.



Contents

Chairman's Message	2
Editorial	3
International Secretariat News	5
A Tribute to Albert Roux OBE	7
Branch Focus: Wessex	9
Marketing Matters	11
My Travels with the Northern Branches	13
EAZ Awards Report	15
25 Years a Vineyard Owner	17
La Cave des Ours – A Wine... of Apples	18
A Selection From the Archives	19
Wines to go with Game	22
Branch reports	23
Cambridge Great Weekend	30
Dates for Your Diary	32

25 Years a Vineyard Owner

John Boyd and his late wife Ikka have been members of the London, Berkshire and Herefordshire branches. Ikka was awarded the André Simon bronze medal for her contribution to the Herefordshire branch, of which she was founder Chairman. John, who had two spells as Chairman, worked as an in-house lawyer, later becoming a QC and a Judge.



La Cave des Ours – A Wine... of Apples

Fabrice Aquila is an independent member of the IWFS and is in the process of forming a new branch for the IWFS called 'IWFS Vignoble de Champagne'. He has kindly translated this article from French which was published by Fabrice in Le Pampre Bleu <https://www.lepamprebleu.com>. Elia El Beainou has also become a member through Fabrice.

PROTECT YOUR BRANCH DATA

To avoid the email lists held by branches being misused by unauthorised people and companies always use the Blind Copy facility (BCC) when contacting your members.

News from the International Secretariat

Dear members

Hello to you all in a year when we hope the Society will be able to resume some of its activities as they 'used to be'. It is beginning to seem like a long time ago when branch events and festivals were one of life's pleasures we all took for granted. Many branches are being innovative and it is encouraging to see that virtual events are now being adopted more and more as they are seen as an effective way to keep in touch. I believe they will continue, in some form, and will be part of our normal in the future. As mentioned by John Nicholas, EAZ Chair, in the December issue of The Grapevine, although "they will never replace face-to-face events..." but "virtual events have allowed those who may not usually be able to take part in events to join in".

International Council of Management

As I type the next Council meeting is due to be held on 17th February when one of the main topics will be looking at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the three Zones and to see how they can work collectively to the benefit of the members globally. I will bring you news on this in the coming months.

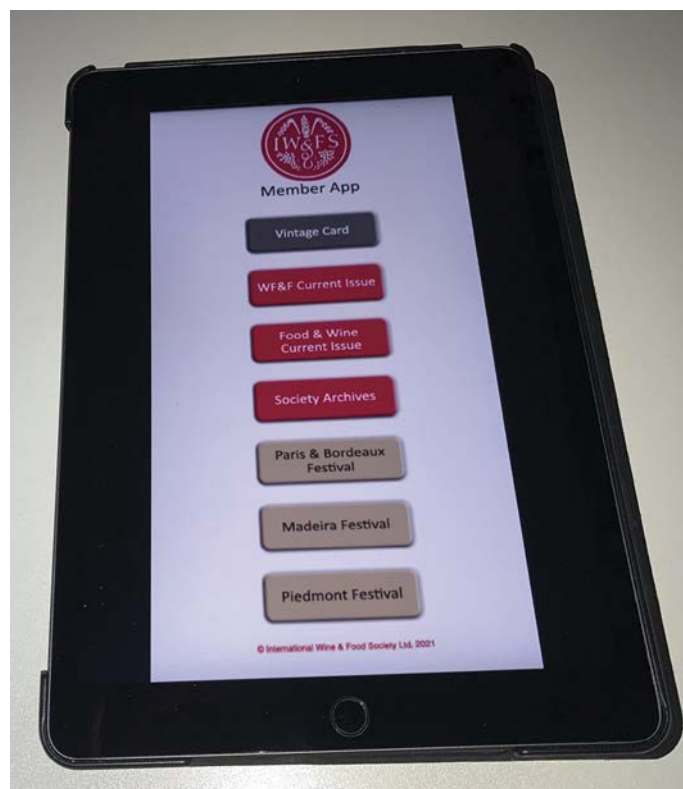
New Grapevine format

As you are aware, one way of keeping you informed about Society news is we publish The Grapevine e-newsletter and I trust that you enjoyed reading the latest round-up of international news in its new design. This upgraded design was sent out before Christmas and again in the new year as we were aware a number of you could not open the links (unless signed into the website) which would have limited its accessibility. The new format allows you to run through the articles in the email and you can then click on the piece of news if you would like to 'read more'. Do remember that we always welcome any news of events that you have run and you think might be an inspiration for other branches further afield and overseas. Please email me on sec@iwfs.org if you have any news to share.



Member App

Further to its release at the end of last year a reminder that this new Member App is now available and is an ideal short cut to member benefits, namely the Vintage App, Zone publications and also upcoming festivals. It is very easy to download onto



your desktop, tablet or mobile phone and provides you one click access. To add the icon go to this link: <https://www.iwfs.org/membersapp>

Oz Clarke Climate change podcast – re-recorded

Whether you believe it or not, you should tune into Oz Clarke's podcast on climate change. It has now been re-recorded professionally giving an undisturbed version of this fascinating lecture where Oz travels around the world looking at how wine producers are having to review what grapes they plant and where and how they need to adapt for the future. Wines from Norway and Nova Scotia could be regulars in your tasting line-ups! To listen now just go to the Presentations – Audio & Video page of the website via your zone pages or the Secretariat pages.

Champagne Stoppers

We are pleased to report that a number of branches across the zone have taken up this offer of a free supply of the new stoppers to use to gift to their members or part of a promotion. We do still have a few left as it was decided to limit these to the number of households in a branch to ensure that we get a wider distribution across the zone and more people benefit. Please email me on sec@iwfs.org if you would like to receive them (subject to availability).



Accommodation in London

In & Out Club – please remember that if you need to come into London and need an overnight stay (or even a longer break when this is again possible), that the Club offers IWFS members accommodation in an enviable, central London location. IWFS members are offered the special 'Reciprocal Members/Guests' rates. A number of the 2021 rates remain unchanged or have been reduced since last year. Plus please note that 'Members' rates are available for all bookings before the end of March – so it might be useful for that last minute booking you need to make. Please see the details under For Members / Benefits on the website. Please email me (sec@iwfs.org) with your booking details so I can put you in touch with the Club.

In the meantime I am hopeful that it won't be long before we can meet up and share all that is good in food and wine once again.

Until next time.

Best wishes

Andrea Warren

International Secretariat



MERCHANDISE FOR MEMBERS

Below is the range of IWFS merchandise available to branches and members which can assist in a number of ways from adding that extra touch of professionalism to your event (see DropSavers and Blind Tasting Bottle Kits), to carrying your bottles in style (see Neoprene bottle bags) or showing you are a member of the IWFS (see Lapel Pins). The most recent additions to the range of merchandise available are immediately below followed by the more traditional items.



Drop Savers (3 per pack) £3

These are very useful as they certainly do save drops from spilling onto the table. An added benefit is these Drop Savers have a unique design to stop the pourer slipping inside the bottle.



Blind Tasting Bottle Sleeve Kit £28

This IWFS branded kit comprises 10 individually numbered woven cloth bottle covers (suitable for wine, not champagne) and presented in a handy carry bag. Give that professional touch to your own wine tasting events or private parties.

Neoprene Bottle Bags

High quality, IWFS branded, neoprene bottle bags that will help you to transport your bottles in style to friends or to IWFS events.

2 Bottle Bag, £13

1 Bottle Bag, £11



Medallions £21

Cufflinks £9.50

Lapel Pin (in presentation box) £4



Orders can now be placed online via the EAZ pages on the website. Please go to Resources / Merchandise for members. Prices include p&p in the UK. Please add an overseas postage £2 per order if you are outside the UK.

A TRIBUTE TO ALBERT ROUX OBE

by Ari Sofianos

A leading light in the culinary world, Albert Roux is rightly credited with launching Britain's culinary revolution by opening Le Gavroche in 1967, with the financial help of Sir Peter and Lady Zara Cazalet. Once established, he brought his younger brother Michel from France, who was determined to follow in his older brother's footsteps. Fifteen years later Le Gavroche became the first restaurant in the country to earn three Michelin stars. Over the following decades, the Roux brothers opened many more restaurants, raised culinary standards across the board through their TV series and books and trained many of today's top chefs including Gordon Ramsay, Pierre Koffmann, Marco Pierre White, and Marcus Wareing. In 1983 they founded the Roux Scholarship, a top culinary competition for ambitious young chefs which offered the winner a three-month apprenticeship at a Michelin three-star restaurant anywhere in the world, as well as mentoring and inspiration by the Roux family, of which they became a treasured part. In 1988 Albert's son Michel Roux Jr joined his father at Le Gavroche and became Executive Chef in 1991. This enabled Albert to step aside and launch HARL – House of Albert Roux – and later Chez Roux, a consultancy where he used his experience to help other establishments in their aim to reach similar high standards.

My own Roux experience started in the early seventies, when I visited Le Gavroche for the first time, together with a close friend. I still have a record of that dinner, rich but delicious, in classic French style: mousseline de brochet Chloë, caneton Gavroche, tarte des Demoiselles Tatin, washed down by a bottle of the legendary Château Margaux 1953 we indulged in, which cost us the princely sum of £14.50! Those were the days...

Although I visited the Roux restaurants a few times over the following years, I first met Albert personally in the late eighties, at an event of the British Academy of Gastronomes. Thanks to good chemistry and our mutual enthusiasm for food and wine, we clicked almost immediately, agreed to meet again and soon became friends. From that time onwards we met fairly regularly, both in the UK and abroad, enjoying wine, food and good company, whether at special events or privately with friends.

When I took over the running of the St James's Branch in the late nineties, I naturally invited Albert to join the IWFS and our Branch. He cordially accepted and, as well as regularly attending our events, over the years he organised a number of superb dinners for our members at some of his affiliated restaurants, notably Le Gavroche, Sofitel St James, The Walbrook Club and, more recently, Roux at The Landau. Albert



Photograph Richard Vines (BLOOMBERG/NEWSROOM). CC BY 4.0
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loved making people happy through his food and took a lot of care in planning these events, which were immensely popular with our members; to ensure perfect execution, he imposed strict limits on numbers and, on some occasions, he called on Bruno Valette, his brilliant personal chef, to do the cooking. Furthermore, he often donated top wines from his private cellars for these dinners.

Socially Albert was a very generous and affable man, with a dry sense of humour. He thoroughly enjoyed mixing with our members and his presence always added a sparkle to our events. He had a soft spot for attractive ladies and it was at one of our branch dinners, at The Mandarin Oriental, that he met Cheryl Smith, businesswoman, chocolatier and member of our branch, who was to become his second wife for 12 years until their divorce in 2016. In 2018 Albert married Maria Rodrigues, a director at accountancy firm KPMG, who survives him along with his two children, four grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Among his many accolades, Albert was awarded an OBE in 2002 and was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 2005. In 2007, during a branch lunch at The Waterside Inn, we presented him with a Diploma in recognition of his singular services to our Society. We have lost a loyal member who will always stay in our memory.

THE ROUX SCHOLARSHIP: Not Just a Competition

Celebrity chefs have become part of our culinary landscape. Annually we wait to discover which of our favourites has won, or kept a Michelin star or three. They appear on our television screens and in the media. We follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Their glossy cookbooks solve our gifting dilemmas year after year. Some of us may even cook their recipes from time to time.

But is it all about lining their own pockets or are they also making a contribution to developing their industry in a wider sense. The Roux brothers may have chosen to open their first restaurant in London because the food was so atrocious (how could they lose), but they have worked hard to change that ever since. Their business interests have been and are many and various, but one enterprise stands out, the Roux Scholarship.

Established in 1983, this annual competition for young chefs has become one of the premier competitions in the world. Winning it can make a career. Winning it brings a young chef into a supportive network of fellow professionals which provides education and inspiration throughout his (only one female chef has ever won) professional life.

The competition starts each autumn when the ingredients for the first round recipe are announced. Each applicant has to submit a recipe of his (or her) own devising, with instructions for preparation and presentation and detailed costings, using the ingredients specified. The ingredients are chosen to give the candidates scope to put their own mark on the finished dish. Although candidates also submit CV's at this stage, during the first round the judges see only the recipe, ensuring that they are not influenced by knowledge of the candidates' previous experience. Eighteen regional finalists are chosen who gather in Birmingham or London.

At the Regional Finals the candidates cook two dishes: the recipe they submitted and a dessert from a mystery box of ingredients supplied on the day, in two and a half hours. Both dishes are scored and critiqued by the judges, and eight finalists are chosen.

The national finals are held in London. Here candidates are required to cook a specific dish, showcasing a broad range of classical techniques, and its accompaniments. Depending on the complexity of the dish they are given up to three hours to complete the task. During this period they are assessed by the judges who are looking not only at their skills, but also their ability to organise, plan and execute the task. Finally a winner is chosen.

And then the 'fun' begins. In the public mind, the prize for winning is the three month all expenses paid stage at a 3-star Michelin restaurant chosen by the winner, anywhere in the world. While that is extraordinarily valuable, the winner is also plunged into a whirl of prize trips to far flung destinations, media interviews and appearances which, is, no doubt, more congenial to some than to others. In addition they are given £6,000 to spend on career development.

Supporting and nurturing a scholarship winner brings a buzz to any kitchen, but taking a talented young chef out of a brigade leaves his employer with something of a staffing problem. Add unrivalled opportunities for overseas travel to the mix and an employer might wonder if he will ever come back. The Roux solution; a further £6,000 to the Scholar provided that he spends fifteen months with his employer after he has completed his stage. If he chooses not to return and mentor their team, the employer gets the £6,000 for further staff development.

Winners also join the Roux Scholars, an informal support network providing advice, contacts and expertise as and when needed, and of course they are also invited to take part in the educational tours organised by the Roux Family every couple of years providing all-areas access behind the scenes at vineyards, restaurants and suppliers not normally open to the public. One can see why the Scholarship has been described as the gift that keeps on giving.

Mark Birchall, who won the competition in 2011 and now runs the 2-star Moor Hall at Aughton in Lancashire spoke about his experience:

Where did you do your stage?

El Celler de Can Roca, Girona, a three Michelin Star Restaurant owned by Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca. I chose this as it was a relatively new three star and, between the three brothers, there was always a presence in the kitchen, which was important to me. Their ethos, culture and food interested me, and I was given lots of opportunities to dine at other great Spanish restaurants – travelling frequently to Barcelona or further afield.

What is it like to be a Roux Scholar?

For me, it's the best cooking competition out there, so to win it is just amazing. It's also been great to have what feels like a family of chefs – a good support network – along the way. I've been able to get in touch with the Roux family over the years for bits of advice.

What did you cook in the final?

Veal Orloff, a boned and stuffed rack of veal, served with kidney on skewers, stuffed vegetables and truffle jus. I'd heard of this dish before, Simon Hulstone had done a version in the past, and I felt it showcased a range of techniques and flavours. I remember feeling like I'd done well with the dish in the final, despite making a small mistake initially when butchering the veal. I recall Gary Rhodes, who was judging at the time, telling me to just carry on. Good advice!

How many times did you enter?

A total of four times – I made it to the regionals twice and the final twice. At 29, I knew the fourth was my final attempt and I worked tirelessly in the run up to it. I don't think I had a day off in the six weeks prior, I just spend time honing my skills and preparing.

What do you remember most about the competition the year you won?

Of course I felt under pressure given this was my last chance to enter, but I also remember a feeling of confidence – it was in no way arrogance, but I felt I'd learnt a lot along the way from previous attempts and, as I mentioned, I'd really persevered and practised.

What advice would you give applicants?

You have to really want to do it, to commit. Any spare time you have, you have to prepare. You also want to make sure it's an original dish for the online entry, and spend time perfecting the taste, seasoning, techniques – be it moussing, poaching, whatever.

In the final, there's no point in trying to cook lots of different dishes, it won't give you the practice you need – stick to techniques.

Who are your culinary heroes?

Nigel Haworth has had a huge influence on me, I really learnt from him about regional cooking and sourcing local produce – what it does for the food you cook as well as the local community. I really enjoyed working for Nigel. He was the best sauce cook and taught me great butchery skills. I suppose I

have been fortunate, everywhere I've worked I've taken something on board and have been lucky to spend time surrounded by exceptional chefs. I spent nine years at L'Enclume and it was a massive part of my life and career, almost a third of my life when I left.

Winning the Roux Scholarship was a big turning point, having the support of the Roux family and giving me the opportunity to spend time at El Celler de Can Roca. Alain Roux tended to do the Northern part of the regionals, so was always a welcome and familiar face, and it was nice to see Albert and Michel in the finals each time too. I recall Albert giving me a pat on the back the first time I made it into the final, and now he's eaten here at Moor Hall a few times which is brilliant; he's always been really supportive of what we do here. The Roca brothers are also amazing people, extremely warm and welcoming and I'm still in touch with them today.

Tell us about your career highlights

We've had such an incredible journey so far, and Moor Hall retaining two Michelin stars and five AA Rosettes, being crowned 'National Restaurant of the Year' at Restaurant Magazine's Estrella Damm National Restaurant Awards and receiving a #5 ranking and 9/10 cooking score in the Waitrose Good Food Guide are all notable highlights. Our goal remains the same as when we set out. Working to improve the guest experience at Moor Hall is our biggest priority, and I don't

believe you can ever stop making something better. Being at Moor Hall is not just about a plate of food, it's about how we make you feel when you are here, how you feel when you leave, the feeling that you are getting something unique.

Mark's experience is not unique. All of the winners speak of the on-going support they received from fellow Scholars and from the Roux family. Dan Cox, winner in 2008, talks of the Scholarship giving "a confidence and a belief in yourself that you don't get anywhere else. Seeing someone like Sat Bains, who took that restaurant on and completely made it his own, is a big inspiration. You can see what the Roux Scholarship did for his situation." Asked who his culinary heroes were he had no hesitation in naming "Albert Roux: when I went to work for Roger Naylor, who could really cook, he always talked about Albert, he was always his vision, and was always the one you focused on and was head of the family, he's the ultimate legend in the UK, and he has this totally charming charisma".

Clearly Albert and Michel will be a hard act to follow. We wish their sons and grand-daughters well and look forward to seeing the next generations of the Roux family in action post-pandemic.

(Note: this article would not have been possible without the support of Mark Birchall of Moor Hall, Carolyn Boyd of Roux Scholarship and our own Ron Barker and John Valentine.)

BRANCH FOCUS: WESSEX

by Isabel Sinclair

Whenever we meet up with other members of the IWFS and are wearing name badges, inevitably we are asked the question "Where is Wessex?"

Historically, Wessex was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the south of Great Britain from 519 until the unification of England in 927. Its most famous king was Alfred the Great who died in 899. He is our first connection with the IWFS as children are taught the story of Alfred hiding from invading Vikings in the house of a woman. After being asked to watch some cakes (bread) in the oven he becomes distracted and they burn. This established the reputation of English cuisine for many centuries!

More recently the author Thomas Hardy set all of his major novels (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, etc.) in the south and southwest of England. He named the area 'Wessex' after the medieval kingdom. Today, the Queen's youngest son, Prince Edward, is Earl of Wessex.

The original Wessex approximates to the present-day counties of Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Somerset and this is the catchment area of the Wessex branch of the IWFS. Dorset is famous for its Jurassic coastline and includes the major conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. Its coastal waters are a source of many edible fish species including Portland crab.

The county town of Hampshire is Winchester, England's former capital city. The New Forest here is a rich supplier of edible fungi. Wiltshire is landlocked and its most well-known landmarks are Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral. Somerset is the home of Cheddar Gorge and more importantly – Cheddar cheese.



Wessex can supply food for every course at dinner and is also the home of several notable vineyards. The Wessex branch of IWFS is very proud of its local heritage and indeed, our annual black tie dinner at the Captains Club in Christchurch in 2019 was termed 'A very English Affair' and focused on local produce and all English wines – an interesting challenge to put together.

The branch was started in Bournemouth by a group of people who had lived and worked in Belgium and been part of IWFS Belgium branch and when they retired to Bournemouth they found no branch to move to so decided to set one up. The inaugural dinner was held at the Carlton Hotel in October 1984 and although none of the founder members from Belgium are with us today, two of the earliest members, Michael and Marilyn Messent are still members.

A year after its inauguration, after a committee had been formed, it was decided that the name of Bournemouth might be limiting and the name was changed to Wessex in order to encompass a larger area.

Rex Thorne was the first Chairman with his wife Sophie as Secretary. Michael Messent was Chairman of the branch between 2004 and 2006 and then David Packer took over from him from 2007 until he retired in 2017 when the current Chairman, Isabel Sinclair, took over.

Many of the members have achieved their 25-year medallion, one of which we were proud to present last year, despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

Being a small branch, we have often tried to amalgamate events with other branches and many of our members have attended meetings at the Bath & Bristol branch, as have they with us. We also have a close link to the Zürich branch and have attended some of their events. A few years ago (and thanks to the organisational talents of two of our then members) we were able to host a long weekend for the Zürich branch in Poole at which we were able to visit one of the South coast wineries.

Over the years, one or two local restaurants have become favourites – due to their high standards of wines, cuisine and attention to detail. To name a few: The Priory at Wareham, the Guildhall Tavern in Poole and Little Barwick House near Yeovil. These have all been nominated for and received the Society's Restaurant Award.

One of the last visits to The Priory was a lunch held on the terrace. This boutique hotel and restaurant was a former sixteenth century Priory, now fully restored and with beautiful



cottage gardens sloping down to the river Frome in the centre of Wareham. More than 20 members and guests of our local branch were present for an excellent summer lunch and wines, the weather was perfect and everyone enjoyed themselves.

More recently we have been trying some variations on the theme of a good meal out with wines.

In 2019, we spent the evening at 'Olives et Al, The Potting Shed' in Poundbury, Dorchester, where the owner Giles Henschel, an expert on the subject, took us through his journey with olives and we then did an olive oil tasting and finished the evening with tapas accompanied by organic wines that he sells in his shop. This was voted a huge success by all members attending.

We had also planned a visit to Chococo, a chocolate factory in Swanage where, with the assistance of one of our members who has an excellent cellar, we were intending to experiment chocolates with wines. This had to be put on hold but we will be trying to organise that visit as soon as we are able.

One of our members is a judge for the Great Taste Awards and organised a superb event at The White Post in Rimpton, Somerset where we were provided with a five-course meal with interesting drink accompaniments; everything on it having won the prestigious award. The main course was the most delicious Roast Beef Rib (from Ireland) and we were left to carve it at the table ourselves!

Like all branches, we would love to encourage more members – we have two people waiting for us to get started again. Our plans for the future include taking a stand at a local food fair to try to increase local interest in the Society.



MARKETING MATTERS

by *Leonie Allday*

Well, here we are in 2021 and let's hope that it is a much better and happier year than 2020. It hasn't started too well – January has seemed like the thirteenth month of 2020 – but whilst Covid is still very much with us and is mutating as all viruses do to produce challenging new variants, a knight on a white charger is now clearly visible. A number of vaccines are riding to our rescue and it is to be hoped that these will be a shot in the arm in more ways than one.

The business of the Society has continued at Zone and International level, and we have welcomed the strenuous efforts made to continue to provide information and entertainment through the Society's publications and podcasts. At branch level, however, most of us have 'lost' a whole year of activity and your Executive Committee (Exco) is well aware that there is a good deal of ground to be made up. Whilst some branches have held successful virtual dinners and tastings, others have not engaged with Zoom or similar, and in many cases members have not met up face-to-face for a whole year. Most of us have hugely missed sharing good food and good wine in the company of our IWFS friends, and can't wait to meet up again, but there may be some who will be reluctant to resume their former degree of social interaction for many months to come. It is all too easy for loss of momentum to result in loss of enthusiasm, so our first task this year is to re-build, re-imagine and re-invigorate. Looking beyond that, we then need to grow our membership and find ways of extending the relevance and influence of our Society for the decades ahead. We are therefore developing a five-year Marketing Strategy. What follows is not set in stone but will give you an idea of how Exco is thinking.

Targets for 2021-5

It is not enough to have aspirations; any worthwhile Marketing Strategy stands or falls on achieving measurable outcomes. So we are setting ourselves some targets which, whilst challenging, we consider to be realistic:

- Retain existing members (short-term, years 1,2).
- Increase awareness and 'visibility' of the Society (short to long term, years 1-5).
- Grow for the future (medium to long term – years 3-5) – the target is to increase the overall membership of IWFS EAZ by 5% by 2025. This may not sound very ambitious but it follows decreases in the membership in 11 of the last 15 years. We're aiming to turn around the tanker!
- 'Plant' several new branches. Although so far as we know none of our current branches has a waiting list, there are several that feel they have reached the optimum size and have no wish to grow. We would like to encourage such branches to spawn new branches nearby. After all there are quite large areas of the UK without a branch within a reasonable distance. Opportunities to 'found' branches outside the UK will be taken as they arise.

Key principles

There are two key principles which have guided our thinking thus far.

The first of these is the need for flexibility. We recognise that whilst these aims represent aspirations across EAZ as a whole, all our branches are very individual in character – something we need to celebrate rather than viewing it as a problem! Also, branches tend to be at very different stages, with some experiencing a sudden steep decline in membership in recent years, others a more gradual decline and a few experiencing significant growth. Any Strategy therefore needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate these variations.

Secondly, we need to build a better partnership between the EAZ Executive and the branches. If the Society is to grow and flourish, both Exco and branches (in practice branch committees) need to play their part. Exco cannot solve all the problems and meet all the challenges for the branches, but neither can branches be expected to grow the membership without the help and support of Exco.

The Strategy

1. 'Top down' – Central Resourcing and Leadership

What Exco needs to do, in consultation with branches

1.1. Working with branches

- Events and Festivals – Exco will continue to organise Great Weekends and Festivals. These showpiece events tend to be expensive as they are designed to be showpieces for the Society, enabling members to participate in the very best of food and wine. Moreover they generate surpluses which enable EAZ to invest in the future and to keep membership fees at levels that currently don't cover ongoing costs. However, Exco recognises the need for a greater number and variety of more affordable events and will encourage and assist branches and groups of branches in the planning of these.
- Branch Development Grants – for promotion / publicity / media training / setting up new branches. This scheme, which had a 'soft launch' in 2019, was rudely interrupted by Covid. It is being re-worked and will be re-launched in the summer edition of Food & Wine.
- Mentoring – All branches already have an allocated Exco member. (Do you know who yours is?) Links will be improved, with a commitment by Exco members to regular communications and occasional visits when it becomes possible again.
- Social media – Most branch pages on the IWFS website are not populated and few branches have an active Facebook or other social media account. We need to grasp the opportunities presented by Covid during which many

members have been forced to engage with Zoom / Facetime / Skype, and may in future be more willing to embrace new technologies. Exco may need to facilitate training via Branch Development Grants, or alternatively individual mentoring may be all that is necessary.

1.2. All-member initiatives

- Publications – A higher priority will be given to publicising innovative events (separately from the current Branch reports) and once a year a collection of 'events ideas' will be made available to branches.
- E-communications – We plan to develop communication by social media to meet branch and member needs – a pilot is under way.
- Travel benefits – Many members are unaware of the potential for visiting other UK / overseas branches as part of a holiday – members' experiences will be highlighted in a future issue of Food & Wine. There is also scope for similar initiatives on the part of groups of members or indeed whole branches.
- Merchandise / Member discounts – We aim to extend the range of merchandise available – ideas please!

1.3. Profile-raising

- Excellence Award – This new award, which can be made by local branches against certain criteria without reference to Exco, will be launched in the summer. It will consist of a window sticker which can be displayed by any venue deemed by the Branch Committee to have delivered a high standard of food, wine and service. The aspiration is for this to become as well-recognised (and coveted) as other merit awards in the hospitality sector.
- Develop links with wine and food professionals – In the early days of the Society, it was well-known, and patronised, by eminent food and wine professionals. Some links still exist but we shall be looking to strengthen them, both in person and via relevant trade journals.

- Promotion – We shall investigate the potential for promoting events run by appropriate food and wine organisations in exchange for reciprocal benefits.

2. "Bottom up" – Branch Events and initiatives

What branches need to do, with support from Exco as necessary.

- Seek to retain existing members
 - encourage online events (there is ample evidence that these are increasing)
 - encourage members from other branches to attend your events, plan and host events jointly
 - plan for face-face events later in the year with due regard for continued social distancing requirements.
- Build on past and present successes – including online events.
- Share ideas and experiences with neighbouring branches.
- Develop local recruitment strategies.
- Use social media effectively.
- Develop links with other organisations and host joint events, then share experiences to encourage similar initiatives in other areas.
- Inter-branch events – when it becomes possible, plan inter-branch events / mini-festivals?

None of this will be easy, but we have to start somewhere, and it's encouraging to know that there are members out there who are really excited about the challenges ahead. We shall review progress in Autumn 2021, with an interim report to the Cambridge Members' Forum in September, and then again each subsequent year.

Finally, a call for helpers! (Isn't there always?). If amongst our membership there are people who care about the future of our Society and who have current, recent or even not-so-recent experience in marketing or PR, we would love you to join us!

'ADVERT' FOR AN INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mike Slator, a member of the Bath & Bristol branch, has undertaken the role of Independent Examiner for the Accounts of IWFS Europe Africa Limited for the last four years, but now seeks to pass on the role for the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2021 with the examination to take place in April/May 2022. Steve Graham has taken over the role of Treasurer from John Nicholas commencing 1st January 2021.

The accounts and the required report can be accessed by logging in to www.iwfs.org as a member, tab Europe Africa, then open Resources where a PDF of the Annual Report can be found.

The Company is exempt from audit, but the Directors have decided that it is appropriate for an independent examination of the books and the accounts to take place each year.

The Independent Examiner does not have to be a qualified accountant, but he or she needs to be knowledgeable of how bookkeeping works, how accounts are prepared from those books and be willing to sign the report included in the Annual Report.

If you are interested in taking on this role, please contact Steve Graham by email: brackenridge.spg@btinternet.com

MY TRAVELS WITH THE NORTHERN BRANCHES

by Val Brookfield-Bishop



A very special tour with members of three branches – superb South Africa

As an inveterate traveller from 12 years of age, my enthusiasm eventually spread over many friends who have accompanied me on tours when an idea formed, "Why not take some of our members to meet other branch members across the globe". I discussed the thought and coincidentally an ideal opportunity arose for me to organise a party to the Hong Kong Pacific Rim Festival.

We are pictured with the actor Sam Neil, who is a wine enthusiast, owning large vineyards in New Zealand.

The Festival and our visit, breaking the homeward flight for a short sojourn in Dubai, facilitated our members a chance of sharing travel, together, with like minded friends. It became

obvious that ideally a good reliable professional agency was necessary. Using my envisaged ideas, I bonded with the renowned Ace Cultural Tours, of Cambridge.

The Company introduced me to an experienced member of staff who I have worked with ever since and who has taken my suggestions, together with overseas contacts and we have successfully co-ordinated many visits to our overseas branches, resulting in long standing friendships.

As I have personally organised the visits, I have been able to 'introduce' the groups to branch representation, prior to arrival and thereby ensured, where possible, a local event. Such experiences have been truly memorable for all concerned.





Branch meetings have included South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, Istanbul, Russia, Portugal – hosted by Martin Symington on our Douro river cruise and Banff.

We have of course visited many countries, not as yet enjoying the pleasure of an IWFS branch, some of which Paul and I continue to encourage.

Having personally visited Egypt on thirteen occasions, three visits for members, have been hugely successful as I managed to engage a private Dahabiya to sail us along the West Bank.

Among our numerous visits we have travelled the Norwegian coast, Venice, Rocky Mountaineer Railway, Italian Dolomites,* Apulia, The Danube, Swiss Mountain Railway, Christmas markets in Prague, Rhine and Moselle rivers, Madeira, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden and full tour of China.

An important consideration from a personal experience in organising tours, is to pitch the costing at a sensible level. Many arrangements do not facilitate for the older tourist for as pre-paid excursions are included, then the value is diminished for those mobility compromised. Some Festivals are rather expensive if some attendees cannot fully participate.

Speaking from my own branch and observing from others, we tend, in the main, to attract an older age group in the UK.

* I stress the Italian Dolomites as Paul and I have visited the Granvara in Selva Val Gardena for almost 18 years and have organised three visits by branch members. The whole experience is one to be repeated and I am considering a tour again when 'allowed'. The whole area is, as some may have already visited, known to be a beautiful place but the hotel is of the highest gastronomic standard with an exceptional wine list; we hope, one day, to recruit someone to initiate a branch of the society; Italian Branch at last?

EAZ AWARDS REPORT

by *Tricia Fletcher*

Restaurant Awards

No Restaurant Awards have been made. But as there have been no restaurant meals or events due to Covid-19 this is only to be expected.

The only Restaurant Award presented in 2020 was to TAST Cuina Catalana Restaurant in Manchester for an outstanding Lunch on 20th October 2019 arranged for members of the Manchester Branch by Chef de Cuisine Julià Costelló and the Restaurant Manager Fernando Marques at the Manchester AGM on 14th February 2020 prior to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Members' Awards

The following awards have been applied for, approved and presented:

André Simon Bronze Medal to Alan Shepherd of the London Branch on 19th November 2020 at the London Branch's Zoom AGM. EAZ Chairman John Nicholas commended Alan for all his service to the IWFS as a member of the international working party upgrading the website and acting as a resource for the EAZ; his work and support in the organisation of many EAZ Events as well as his loyal support for the London Branch as Deputy Chairman and Bookings Officer. Stephanie Shepherd then presented him with his AS Bronze Medal.

The Society Diploma to Paul Bishop of the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire Branch on 7th December 2020. The Award was presented by Ex EAZ Chairman and Member of the Awards Committee Ron Barker to Paul to recognise his distinguished service to the IWFS since he first joined in 1968. During this time he has been a member of his Branch Committee and since 2000 its Chairman. He has been instrumental in developing the Branch and promoting inter-branch and international relationships, visits and friendships.



Alan Shepherd, London Branch

The following Awards have been applied for, approved by the Awards Committee and presented:

EAZ Pin Badge Loyal and Meritorious Service

Merseyside & Mid Cheshire

Paul Bishop on 7th December 2020 by Ron Barker

Val Brookfield Bishop on 7th December 2020 by Ron Barker

EAZ Exceptional Service Medallion and Diploma for Exceptional Service

London

Claire Benson on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

Christopher Davenport Jones on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

Bernard Lamb on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

West Yorkshire

Sue Timme on 28th November 2020 by Zoom

EAZ Exceptional Service Medallion and Diploma for 10 years Exceptional Service

London

Keith Ellis on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

West Yorkshire

Jonathan Naylor on 28th November 2020 by Zoom

EAZ Exceptional Service Medallion and Diploma for 25 years Exceptional Service

London

Brenda Lamb on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

Graham Lyons on 19th November 2020 by Zoom

Wessex

Betty Swain on 30th September 2020 on a home visit by the Wessex Chairman Isabel Sinclair in Covid-19 PPE as allowed.

Many Congratulations to all of them for their very well-deserved Awards.

It was a challenge arranging the presentations of these Awards thanks to Covid-19 and the necessary Health Regulations. Only four could be presented formally and personally within the rules applying at the time. The rest were presented by Zoom meetings, at an AGM, a Christmas Evening Event and a private Christmas Lunch. Fortunately the Chairman, John Nicholas and myself were able to join these Zoom events and John was able to address the Branch and give the appellation to the recipients, and in many cases we had been able to arrange for their partners to make the presentations, having sworn them to secrecy and having organised for the delivery to them of the medallions and certificates. But it worked.

Thank you to all that helped me with this. And if any Branches do have members that are eligible and deserve an Award please do let me know. The EAZ is always pleased to acknowledge and reward its loyal, hardworking and supportive members.

MERSEYSIDE AND MID-CHESHIRE AWARDS

Dr Paul Bishop, chairman of the Merseyside and Mid Cheshire Branch, was presented with the prestigious IWFS Diploma and pin award by Ron Barker, Exco chairman John Nicolas and awards officer Tricia Fletcher joined the ceremony by Zoom.

A pin award was also made to Val Bishop (pictured) for her important contribution in organising events Internationally.

The awards were a closely kept secret from Val and Paul and all went well until Ron and his wife Val appeared magically in the restaurant to present the awards and immediately one of the serving staff said that they were not allowed near the table under Covid Tier 2 restrictions and they were abruptly hustled off.



AWARDS FOR WEST YORKSHIRE MEMBERS

West Yorkshire held its pre-Christmas Quiz on Zoom in December and had cunningly invited EAZ Chairman John Nicholas and Awards Officer Tricia Fletcher to address the members with their reflections on 'The view from HQ' (or so the membership thought). John gave us a very interesting summary of the current state of affairs in the Society before, in true pantomime style, the true purpose of their visit was revealed! The highlight of the evening was the presentation of Exceptional Service Awards to two popular and hard-working

members of the WY Branch Committee – Jonathan Naylor and Sue Timme.

Jonathan has been an active committee member since 2008, leading the Branch's 'food production' subcommittee, which takes responsibility for delivering quality sustenance at our numerous self-catered events, and has organised several high-quality bespoke overseas tours on behalf of members to areas such as the Rhone Valley, Bordeaux and the Douro Valley.

In addition to her role as Branch Secretary, Sue has led the launch and production of the Branch's highly successful programme of interactive virtual events. Thanks to her tireless efforts setting up events, organising participants into 'dining table' rooms, and acting as Mission Control for each event, our Lockdown events have become a vital and hugely enjoyable part of our enforced 'new normal'.

Both Awards were richly merited and well-received and the Branch is grateful to both John and Tricia for taking the time to join us and make the evening so special.



LONG SERVICE AWARD FOR WESSEX MEMBER

Wessex Branch's long serving member Betty Swain was presented with a 25 year Diploma and Medallion by the branch Chairman Isabel Sinclair on 25th October 2020.

It had been the long term plan for this award to be presented by John Nichols at a lunch meeting but this had to be cancelled and it was looking as though it would be very difficult to make the presentation this year, which is the 25th year of her membership. However, plans were made for a home visit and the presentation was made.

Betty has been a very regular attendee at meetings held in the Wessex area until she moved away to Richmond eight years ago. However, she has remained a member of the branch despite being unable to attend meetings and often sent in pertinent comments on the venues chosen for later events. She has well earned her award and the branch are delighted for her. Thank you to the EAZ Awards Committee.



25 YEARS A VINEYARD OWNER

by John Boyd

How did we come to have a vineyard in the depths of Herefordshire? It was all my wife's fault really. Let me explain.

For several years she and I had a wonderful time travelling, and sipping, our way through the wine producing regions of Europe. As we were camping, we could afford to sample and buy some of the more expensive wines and try out fancy restaurants. We told ourselves that this indulgence was purely educational. In a way it was and it certainly gave us a taste for wine.

In the early 1990s my wife, a strong-minded woman, told me out of the blue one day that she had decided that we should have a vineyard on a patch of ground which was doing nothing. In my feeble way I asked a few basic questions such as what would it cost, and then agreed it was a brilliant idea. We had by then come across John Edwards who ran a small vineyard outside Newent Gloucestershire which included a large selection of vines. He agreed to prepare the ground, advise on the vines and do the planting. So the vineyard came to be.

About three years later we noticed to our surprise that some of the grapes looked rather full and we thought they might be worth picking. They filled a few shopping bags. We took them to Three Choirs Vineyards and, though we'd made no prior arrangement, we asked the winemaker Martin Fowkes to process them for us. He looked at these shopping bags doubtfully, realised that we were eccentric amateurs (which we were) and after some hesitation said he would do his best. A few months later we collected the wine – a rosé made from a mixture of red and white grapes, 43 bottles in all. It was drinkable. We were thrilled. It was the beginning of a love affair.

As time went on, we expanded the vineyard and added more grape varieties. We employed someone to look after the vines, and we recruited friends and neighbours to help with the picking. These harvests turned out to be great fun. We rewarded the pickers with a slap-up lunch and as much wine as they could drink and carry away. Needless to say, they came back year after year.

As we gained confidence we put our wines in for competitions run for vineyards in the south-west and all UK. We usually won something, mainly with the white wine, and occasionally a trophy such as the Best Red from a Small Vineyard. Our sales often went to local pubs and shops. Now and then a really big order came in for a wedding venue or for something posh like

A happy customer for my wines



the International Wine & Food Society. There were compliments. A Frenchman attending a dinner was invited by his hostess to try an English wine (ours). He pooh-poohed the offer saying that "the English can't make decent wine". He was prevailed upon and took a taste. "But this is good", he said. "Are you sure it isn't French?" He finished the bottle.

The vineyard never made a profit, though it broke even once or twice. We put this down to our small scale and to the care we took in keeping the vineyard really tidy. The wine standards inspector who paid us annual visits said he always enjoyed coming and that ours was the best kept vineyard he'd seen. We weren't in it for the money. For us it was a pleasurable hobby.

Eventually, after my wife had gone to a better world and I realised that the house was far too big, the time came to sell. I was fortunate to find a buyer whose ambition it had always been to own a vineyard. He is enthusiastic and eager to learn. Such modest know-how as I possessed I happily passed on to him. With luck the name of the vineyard will live on. My wife would be very pleased.

LA CAVE DES OURS – A WINE... OF APPLES

by *Fabrice Aquila*

It is said that mountain bears subsist somewhere in the snows of Mount Lebanon. It is also said that Adonis, Aphrodite's sulphurous lover, liked to hunt big game there.

Cave des Ours in Kfardebian, Lebanon

Histories? Not really...

Forty-five minutes north-west of Beirut lies Kfardebian, a famous ski resort and a small village nestled at the foot of the mountains of Lebanon. Admittedly, this town is used to visits from the great and the good from Beirut, the capital of Lebanon... but this nickname for the inhabitants of Kfardebian is the 'bears' (Ours).



This nickname relates first of all to the silent character of these sturdy mountain people, but also to their former proximity to the bear of Lebanon, which has now disappeared.

As for Adonis the Phénicien (Phoenician), legend has it that he died in a hunting accident thirty kilometers from Kfardebian. The heights of this village have long preserved the memory of Aphrodite's lover, proof of this is the inscription dedicated to him in the ruins of the Roman temple overlooking the village. Is this one of the major sites where the licentious festivals of the Garden of Adonis were held?

Land of love...

Under Adonis's eye, these mountain people replaced the rocks and laboured with tenacity... creating thus a Commanderie de Jales in the orchards in honour of the ancient myths.

Kfardebian's apples are among the most popular in Lebanon. The mountain geology and climate certainly have a lot to do with it. But the fundamental element that defines a terroir is human and in this village we keep from generation to generation the time to do things, with patience and delicacy...

Far from any ski runs between the mechanical ski lifts, in the orchard we take care to manually remove the apple from its tree and place it delicately in the basket.

Imagine juicy, chubby apples with fresh, bold colours, one sweet, the other just slightly sour. Kfardebian apples are an irrational, instinctive, vital body call.

There, hidden between the rocks, under an apple tree, I'm sure Eve and Adam would have been as content as kids digging up a box of candy.

... and economic crisis

Our 'bears', however badly injured, are aware of the value of their ancestral heritage. Behind this Garden of Eden landscape lies the daily life of an economic and social crisis that had persisted for several years. Even if our silent mountain people can turn into incisive salespeople, the reality is that the apples were rotting on the trees.

Five years ago, Elia El Beainou was devastated seeing these crates of apples which were hardly selling any more. The son and grandson of an arak distiller and orchard owners, he could not bring himself to accept the inevitable bankruptcy of the family farm.

To continue, the problem of storing and transporting a perishable agricultural product had to be overcome.

Bear wine

Bringing together what he knew how to do best: growing apples and producing traditional arak from grape must, he embarked on a crazy gamble... that of creating a wine and an arak from apples, with their own identity and totally original.



And for both arak and wine ageing is, unlike fresh apples, a great asset.

It worked well for him. In 2016, after several hundred trials, tests, validations and oenological expertise brought in from Normandy, the first bottle of wine... of apples... of wine from the Cave des Ours was born.

Even if the consultant oenologist is from Caen, do not think that we are here in front of a variation of a Normandy cider. In the bottle rests a still wine, crystalline, without bubbles and with an alcohol level between 12° and 14°.

A little secret

With a lot of humour and tenderness, I like to compare Elia El Beainou for apple wine to Dom Pérignon for Champagne. In Champagne, the latter created his wines by tasting the bunches of grapes plot after plot and then skilfully assembling the juices. In Lebanon, Elia El Beainou does the same, tasting each type of apple and blending the different juices to give his apple wine its special structure.

Green Granny for the verticality of the wine, a red apple for fullness, a blond apple for roundness...

As for the proportions, they depend in part on the harvests, but don't expect that Elia El Beainou will tell us his secrets! Oh yes, maybe a little... At 1500 metres, these real high altitude orchards feed on snow in winter and the harsh sun in summer. They are not organised in landscaped terraces with retaining gullies for rainwater. To compensate for this lack of water and the extreme range in the climate, the fruits produce a little more sugar than in an orchard on a plain or on hillsides... Shhh!

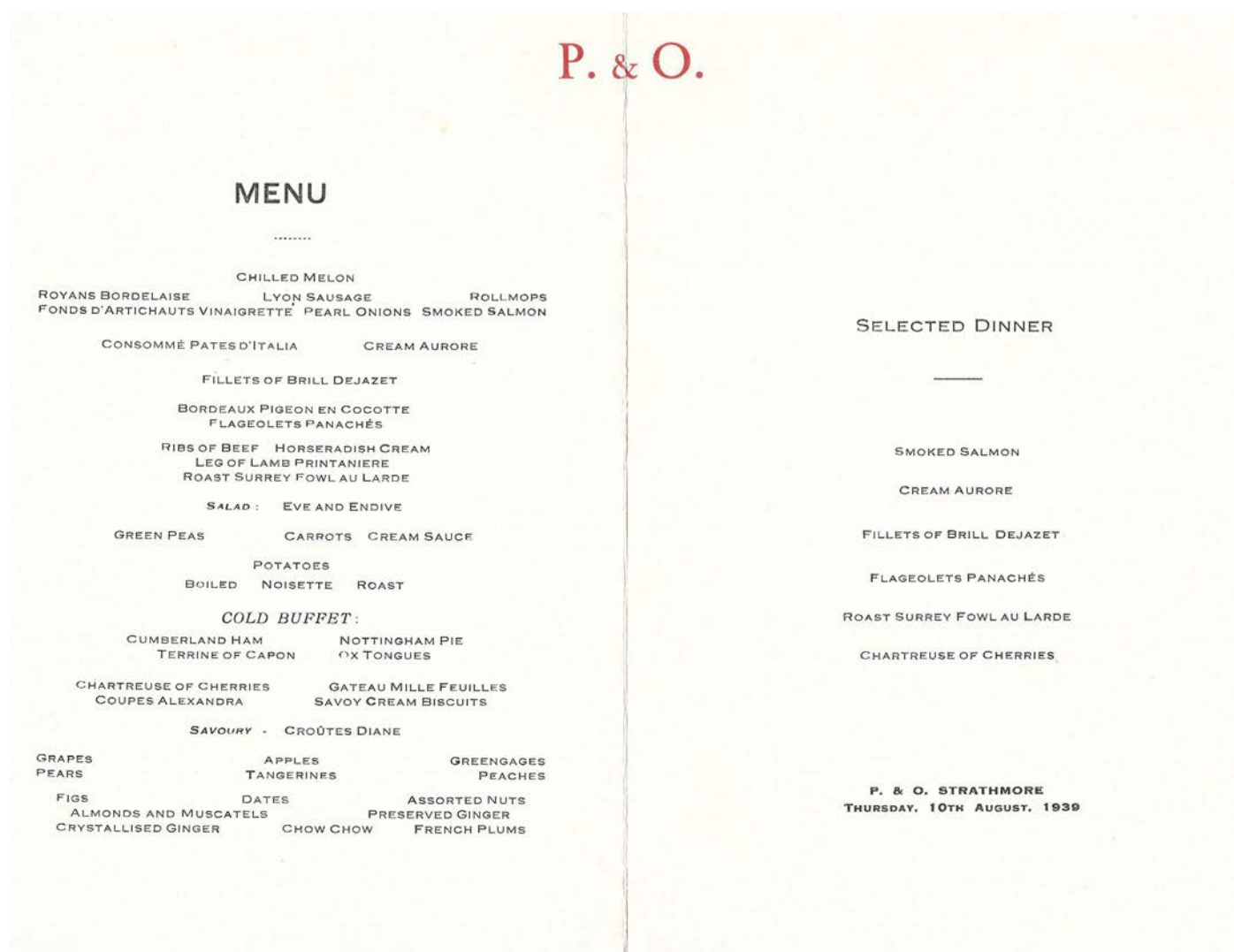
20,000 bottles

Today, in 2020, the family business is producing 20,000 bottles each year for the Lebanese market and for export. Currently, the Cave des Ours does not have overseas distributors. If you want to discover these exceptional wines a little more, you should contact the Cave des Ours directly.

Further information can be found at <https://cavedesours.com/>

A SELECTION FROM THE ARCHIVES

some of our menus recalling the early days of the Society



THE 56TH MEETING OF
THE WINE AND FOOD SOCIETY



AN ALSATIAN DINNER

held at the Café Royal, Regent Street, W
on April 5th and 6th, 1938



MONSIEUR YVES MÉRIC DE BELLEFOND
French Attaché Commercial
in the Chair

ALSACE FARE AND WINES

ALSACE may be roughly described as a narrow, long and very rich alluvial plain, between the Vosges mountains to the West, the great Rhine to the East, Switzerland to the South, and Lorraine to the North. Not only is the soil of the Alsatian plain naturally rich and ready to respond generously to the sweat of man's brow, but its subsoil is even richer in mineral treasures. As to the Vosges mountains, whilst their thickly wooded heights provide the finest natural game reserve imaginable, their foothills sloping gently towards the Rhine are covered with well-tended vineyards which produce an abundance of white wines of real distinction. The fair land of Alsace is the gourmet's paradise, and nowhere else in France is Gastronomy held in greater honour.

The soup served to-night as a beginning to the feast is the typically Alsatian soup which is served more than any other soup in all Alsatian homes, from the poorest and humblest to the richest; it is a cabbage soup, an all-the-year-round favourite. The salmon is also a great favourite in Alsace, but, of course, during a limited season only, and by the time salmon has reached the icy cold waters of the Upper Rhine it is in finer condition and considered by many good judges as better than any salmon caught nearer the sea. The somewhat sharp, new Alsatian wine in which our salmon to-day has been cooked, is also most suitable and better than any other sauce. In Alsace there would be an ample helping of *Pflutters*, or Potatoes, served with the fish, but it has been considered fairer to the rest of our meal to leave them out.

[continued on back page]

THE FARE

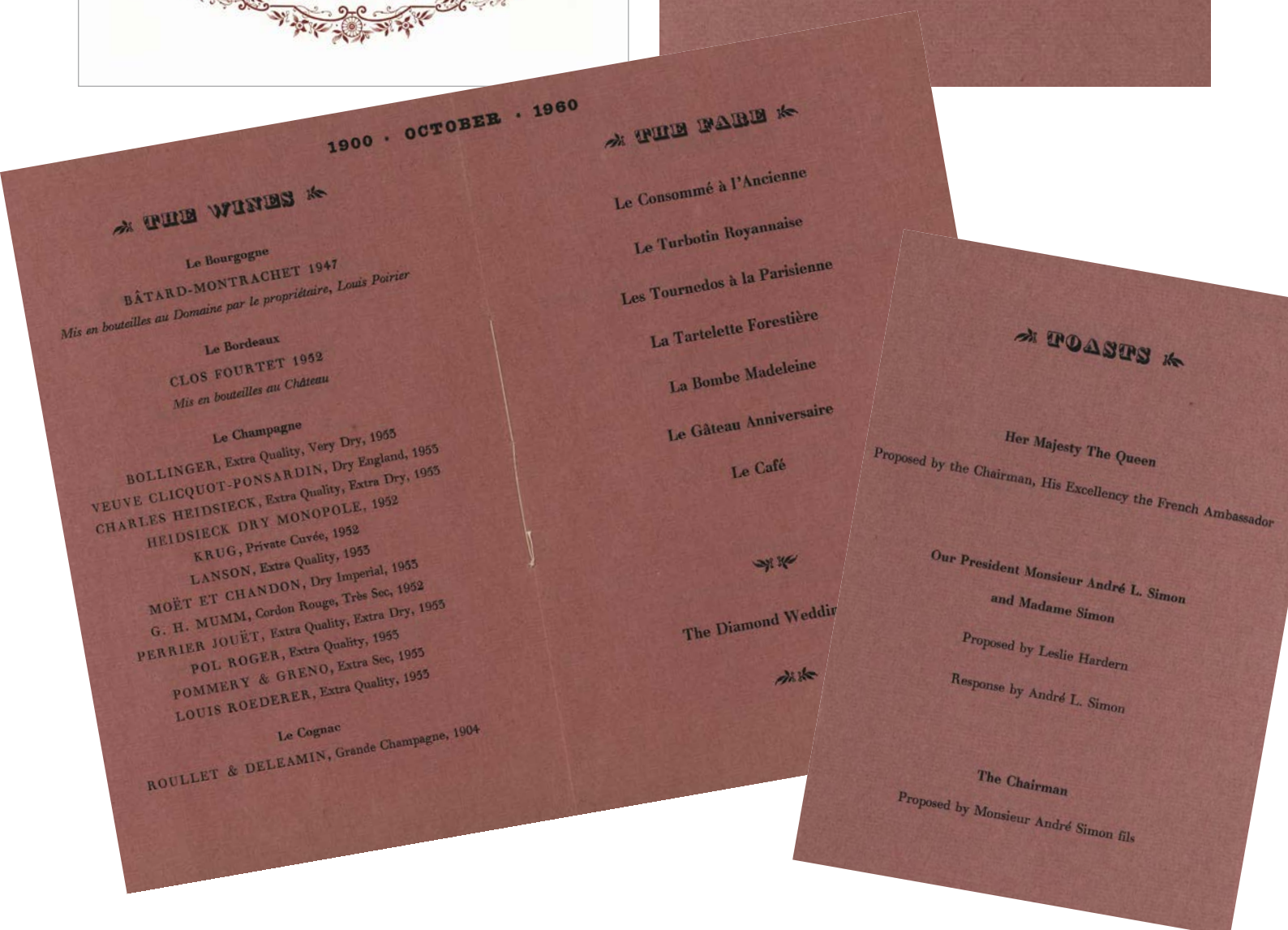
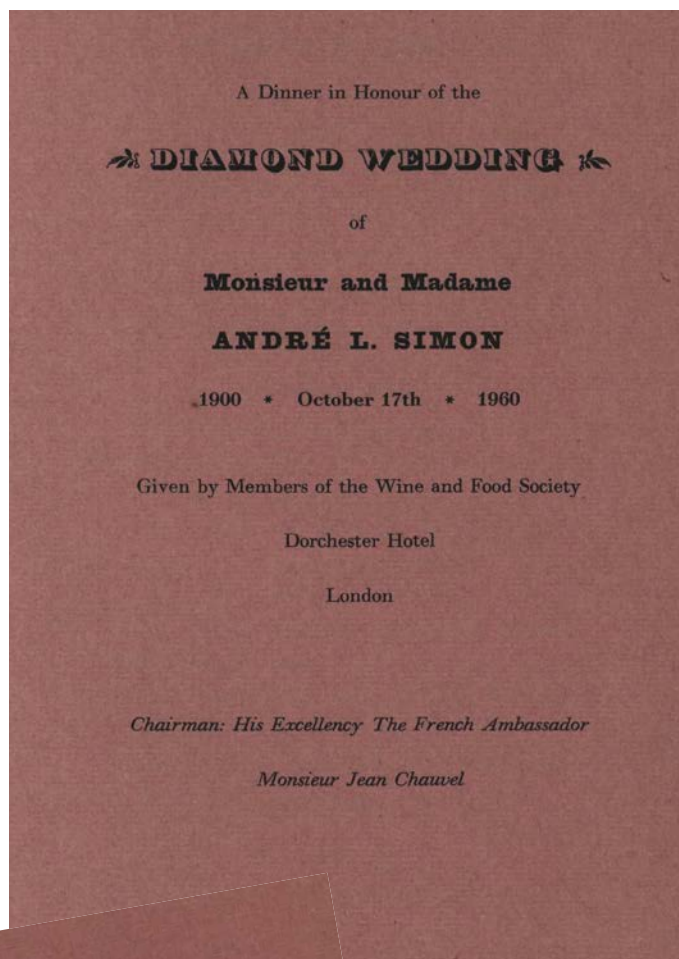
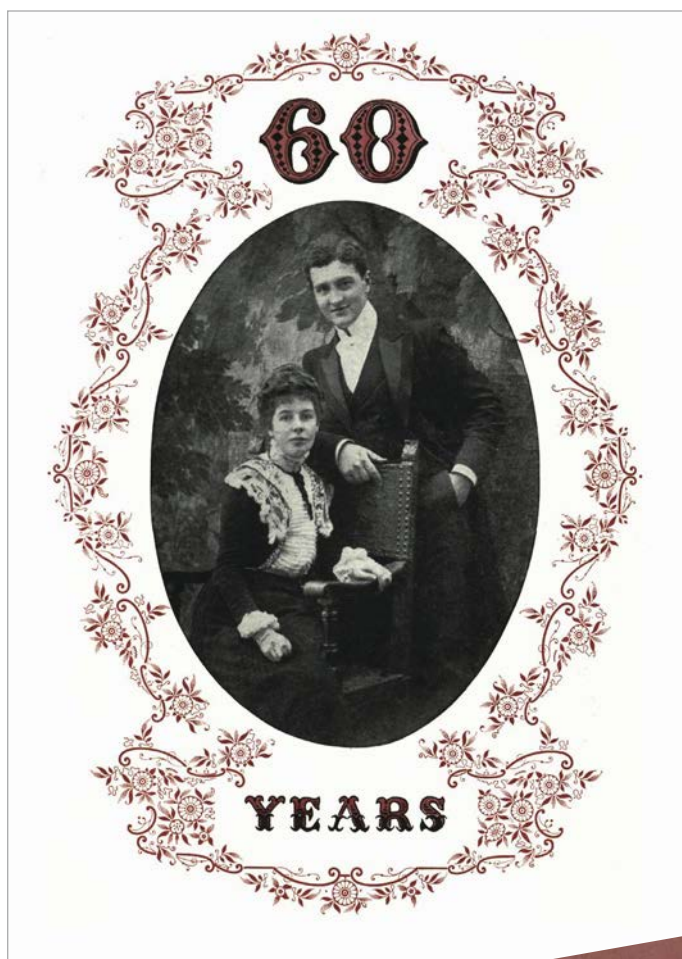
LA SOUPE ALSACIENNE
LE SAUMON DU RHIN AU VIN D'ALSACE
LE POULET SAUTÉ À LA STRASBOURGEOISE
LE PURÉE DE SCAROLE À LA CRÈME
LE PÂTE DE SANGLIER DES VOSGES
LA SALADE DE RADIS NOIR ET FENOUIL
LA MOUSSE GLACÉE AU CORIANDRE
LA COMPÔTE DE MIRABELLES
LE GOUGELHOF DE COLMAR

THE WINES

1935 Boeckel's Riesling de Mittelbergheim
1934 Boeckel's Grande Réserve
Gewürztraminer
1934 Boeckel's Brandluft (Propre Cru)
Mittelbergheim

The chicken, garnished with *morilles*, is particularly rich and tasty, whilst the Batavian Endive boiled and creamed, served at the same time, brings in a refreshing note which should be very welcome. Then a Boar's Head Pie with some Foie Gras, the boar being a denizen of the Vosges, whilst the goose and its liver are one of the glories of the old city of Strasbourg on the Rhine. The salad served with this *Pâté* is something new in salads: a mixture of horse-radish, shaved very finely with small sticks of the sweet fennel, a poor relation of the sturdy *Finocchio*, which we have had at some of our dinners, braised like celery. As a finish, the Gougelhof is *de rigueur* and so are the little golden plums, the *Mirabelles*, the pride of every Alsatian orchard.

The three wines served to-night have been shipped specially for our dinner by Messrs. Boeckel, of Mittelbergheim, in Alsace; and Mr. Boeckel has come all the way from Mittelbergheim to be with us himself to-night. The first wine, a 1935 wine made from the Riesling grape, possesses a direct and engaging simplicity which makes it eminently suitable as the first wine of the meal, whilst the second wine, a *Gewürztraminer* of 1934, is not only older but greater, both in power or strength and breed. It is without any doubt the finest of the three wines to-day, but it has not been kept for the end because the 1934 *Brandluft*, being a sweeter wine, will not be robbed of its charm by the *Mirabelles* and the *Mousse* nearly to the same extent as the more aristocratic *Gewürztraminer* might have been. Besides *Mirabelles*, Alsace produces a large variety of stone fruit as well as bush fruit, and the fruit liqueurs made in Alsace are exceedingly fine.



WINES TO GO WITH GAME

by *Rachel Burnett*

For this on-line tasting, we focused on wines that would go with game. Some of us had prepared small pieces of game, such as roast partridge, venison, or game-flavoured sausages, to try out for ourselves with the three wines selected.

Many wines are suitable for game, depending on both the particular game and its cuisine. Moreover, for every choice there are exceptions, personal preferences and disagreements. The three wines for this tasting can also be enjoyed on their own or with food other than game.

The best overall match generally has been said to be a red Rhône. Other choices are a classic red Burgundy with some age, New Zealand Pinot Noir or North Italian red. Whites should have some weight, like a Macon, Chardonnay or Viognier.

The first of the three wines selected here was white, **Jaboulet Viognier 2019** from the Rhône: 100% Viognier grapes from 20-year old vines. It could be served with pheasant with apples and cream – alternatives would be a dry aromatic Pinot Gris or a spätlese German Riesling; and casseroled partridge with cabbage, flavoured with juniper – an alternative would be an unoaked Chardonnay. Other foods it matches are seafood and Asian dishes. It makes a good apéritif.

This was agreed to be an excellent entry-level Viognier: smooth, medium bodied, fresh, and a dry finish. It showed the grape's typical characteristics: aromas of pear and peach, and a certain minerality; a dry palate, not acidic, with apricot and floral notes.

The second wine was a **Barolo Araldica 2016**, or alternatively a **Majestic Definition Barolo 2016**.

The Nebbiolo grape, grown mainly in North West Italy for Barolo and Barbaresco, produces wines which are light coloured, even whilst tannic and weighty. Its aromas can be reminiscent of autumn, smoke and earth, of violets, liquorice, tar and plums, with complex rich full-bodied flavours, and a long dry finish. It stays high in acidity.

These two wines both showed well.

Foods other than game that the wine matches are foods containing fat, butter and olive oil, strong hard cheese, Chinese and Asian dishes.

2016 was a wonderful growing season in both Barolo and the Rhône. It was one of the longest in recent years, with ideal weather conditions. These wines are concentrated and rich, yet with great acidity. The ripeness of the fruit means that the wines are approachable at a younger age than usual. However, the concentration, levels of acidity and elegant tannins means that the wines will evolve over many years.

The third wine was a **Gigondas 2016**, **E. Guigal**. Gigondas lies at the foot of Mont Ventoux, in the southern Rhône Valley. A maximum proportion of 85% Grenache is permitted, with

Cinsault, Syrah and Mourvèdre. The wines are deep coloured and substantial.

This wine comprised 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre, aged for two years in large oak vats, of which 50% are new.

This wine has been widely praised. We enjoyed it. It was full-bodied and powerful, with intense ripe fruit, and spice and pepper tones. It showed good tannins. At the same time it was elegant and easy to drink. It goes well with red meats and cheese, in addition to game. **E. Guigal's Côtes du Rhône 2016** compares well.

The 2016 vintage in the Rhône Valley is of high quality. The growing season was long and steady. The grapes were fully ripened, producing intense concentrated fruit. Thanks to cool nights later in the season, the grapes were not overripe and not too alcoholic. The resulting wine retained freshness. The wines are already accessible, and because of the tannic structure providing good balance, will develop well.

A selection of further ideas for wines to match with game:

For delicate, light game, such as partridge, pheasant or guinea fowl, the wine must not overwhelm the flavour; therefore a light fruity variety, say a Pinot Noir from North America or New Zealand.

Grouse has rich but subtle flavours, and is stronger than some other game, so it can take wine with more body – Côtes du Rhône or Chianti.

Venison is very lean, so a low tannin red is appropriate; Pinot Noir from Burgundy or the New World, or Côtes du Rhône. For a venison or rabbit casserole, more full-bodied wines like Malbec, Merlot or Zinfandel are worth considering. A rich white wine would go with Rabbit cooked with mustard.

Low tannin reds would also suit Wild Boar, perhaps Beaujolais Crus or Pinot Noir. A white from the Southern Rhône is another possible choice.

Amarone or Côtes du Rhône would match jugged Hare.

Côtes du Rhône, Rioja or Valpolicella work with Duck.

Game accompanied by rich elaborate flavours like fruit sauces, will be enhanced by wines showing fruit, such as those made from Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Tempranillo or Malbec.

Champagne is a classic match with cold game pie.

This wine tasting was an interesting opportunity for us to consider which wines would match which kinds of game and cuisine.

Rachel Burnett

Berkshire

TO ZOOM OR NOT TO ZOOM? MEETING UNDER LOCKDOWN

When the committee of the Berkshire Branch decided in the middle of March 2020 that the scheduled event that month could not go ahead, we were not to know that almost a year later it would still not be possible to resume regular meetings.

As no doubt for most other branches, the intervening period has seen a series of frustrations and disappointments, especially in the period between the first two national lockdowns.

Initially we planned an online meeting via Zoom, but in early May it was clear that the vast majority of our members had not made the adjustment to the new mode of communication or, more likely, could not conceive of how an event involving wine tasting could take place online, and the planned event was cancelled for lack of interest.

As restrictions eased in the summer and as it became clear that it was possible to hold meetings in Village Halls, where the maximum number permitted by the regulations was thirty, we planned to follow suit, and a number of committee members spent an hour or so measuring up and calculating distances in our regular venue at Waltham St Lawrence before we rewarded ourselves for our exhausting work with a glass of old vines St Laurent from Austria.

Regrettably, however, three weeks later and shortly before the meeting was due to go ahead, the government restrictions were tightened as the Covid statistics began to rise, and we were again frustrated.

As a result Zoom again became the only realistic option. For the Berkshire Branch, which places wine tasting at the centre of most of its events, a temporary move to an even greater focus on wine did not seem too revolutionary a step.

Since October we have had three meetings, each of them involving members buying an agreed selection of half-bottles from companies that have introduced or expanded their range of smaller bottles.

We began with wines from mainly Northern Italy, supplied by Tim Syrad Wines of Teddington. For obvious reasons, the wine tour aspect of Tim's business has been on hold during the pandemic and his wine sales have assumed a much greater importance.

Tim himself organised the Zoom link and presented the wines, and the 24 participants were especially impressed with a Lugarara Gavi di Gavi 2019 from the La Guistiniana estate.

With the reds the choice was more difficult, as all were good examples of their kind and met with approval; certainly the Chianti Classico 2017 by Isole e Olena and a Barolo 2016 from the equally renowned Massolino estate were in a different class, but the Valpolicella Torre del Falasco 2018 from the Valpantena cooperative was a pleasant surprise to those who had memories of watery Valpolicella from the 1970s or 80s.

continued on page 24 ➡



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire **VIRTUAL FOOD WITH WINE**

On the evening when the Herefordshire and Monmouthshire branch should have been enjoying their black tie Christmas Dinner at the Orles Barn Restaurant at Ross on Wye, fourteen members (including two from Portugal) were to be found on Zoom instead. Joining them was Leonie Allday from the Bristol and Bath branch.

The event was chaired by the now indispensable Stephen Bennion, against a background of delectable looking canapés and wines, which he confessed to having downloaded from the internet. Stephen has chaired the branch's two other Zoom wine tasting meetings. Stephen had done an impressive amount of research for all the meetings. This time the theme was pairing food with wine. Stephen took us through the three characteristics of wine – sweetness, acidity and bitterness – and of food – saltiness, fattiness and spiciness. Should one choose a wine to complement or contrast with the food?

Then down to business, members were asked to describe their food and chosen wine with some other suggestions thrown in by the other participants. Champagne was the choice for three. Bollinger to accompany smoked salmon, Jolly René for fresh foie gras and another for a cheese, No 1 Badoz Vacherin Du Haut-Doubs.

➡ *continued from page 23*

For the following two meetings we have relied on the technological skills of our former joint-Secretary Chris Graham, who set up and managed the link.

In December we ordered a selection of French wines, plus a vintage port, chosen by the current Secretary from the Wine Society's range. Generally the wines were well received, despite a rather underwhelming champagne and problems with a disintegrating cork in most of the bottles of St. Julien Moulin Riche 2010. The favourite white of the selection was a 2019 Pouilly-Fumé from Domaine Seguin, and a 2014 Crozes Hermitage Domaine de Thalabert from Paul Jaboulet Aîné was the most popular red. At two points of the meeting we also experimented with Breakout Rooms, which allowed for an approximation of the social aspect of our regular meetings. Some members also ordered ready-made meals from Mark Robertson, the chef at our regular Waltham St Lawrence events.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary warmly thanked participants for not wearing the pullovers, hats and other decorations that he felt had detracted from the Christmas events of less sophisticated wine societies, although one member did have a very impressive background to his Zoom screen!

Most recently, for the first event of the new year, we bought wines from the Little Fine Wine Company, set up as recently as 2018 by Victoria Stephens-Clarkson MW and currently very much in demand as a result of the pandemic. We were also delighted to be joined for the evening by Beverley Blanning MW, who is a member of the Wines Committee which compiles the IWFS Vintage Card. She gave us the benefit of her expertise

A Loire Pouilly Fumé 2019 was the perfect partner for a smoked haddock pâté. A Refosco dal Peduncolo by wine maker Alessandro Gallici from the Friuli region of Italy went well with a pheasant casserole. A Vina Cobos Felino Malbec from Mendoza bought without knowing what it was to accompany, was judged to be a success with duck breast in a mandarin sauce.

A chicken parfait paired with a pink Muscato from Barefoot wines at only 9% was found to enhance the flavour of the parfait. The perfect match for a rich chocolate mousse was a Domain Poudoux Maury. One time-strapped member produced a bottle of Minervois, it was suggested that a game casserole would be a good accompaniment.

There followed a light hearted quiz in which Zoomers tried to guess what some countries ate with their favourite dishes.

With a final round of applause for Stephen so ended a fun but thought provoking evening bringing together members now divided by tiers one and four.

Rosemary Trump

in introducing the wines and explaining the history of the Pinot grapes but also proved excellent at engaging members in discussion of not only the wines but also of topics such as the biodynamic calendar, the effect of climate change on the wines of Burgundy, and even the significance of Alois Lageder playing Bach to his maturing wines.

The theme for the evening was 'Pinots grey and black', and after a 2019 Terra Alpina Pinot Grigio from Lageder (Alto Adige) and a 2017 Princes Abbés Pinot Gris from Schlumberger (Alsace) we turned to a series of Pinot Noirs from the Old and New Worlds, with a generic AOC Bourgogne from Faiveley and a 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune from Domaine Tollot-Beaut contrasted with a 2017 La Crema from Sonoma Coast (and also, for those able to buy one of the last available bottles, an Ata Rangi Crimson or Escarpment Pinot Noir from New Zealand). The Chorey-lès-Beaune, a beautifully rounded and approachable wine of earthy and forest-floor notes, was the clear favourite with an average score of almost 9 out of 10, but all the other wines were appreciated and achieved good average scores, although the La Crema had the widest range of marks.

Just under half of our members took part and enjoyed seeing friends on screen and comparing their impressions of the wines. We very much hope that the success of these meetings will encourage other members to join in; and, needless to say, we all look forward to the return of our regular events at the village hall in Waltham St Lawrence.

Ian Roe

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire VIRTUAL CHEESE WITH WINE TASTING

On the 29th January 2021 we ventured onto Zoom again and held our fourth virtual event. Twenty-one members and guests took part and as usual on these occasions the evening was informal and intended to be light hearted; it was led once again by Stephen Bennion.

The theme was to match wine with cheese and each member was asked to choose two different cheeses, hard or soft, and produce a wine to match both of them. We took it in turns to show and describe our various cheeses and to give details of the one or two bottles chosen to accompany them. The aim at the end of the evening was for everyone to decide which of all the wines introduced was their favourite.

Two members joined in from Portugal and we were very glad to welcome guests from the USA as well as two members of the Zürich branch (albeit living in England) and one from the Bath & Bristol branch.

This contributed to a wider choice of cheeses and wines which included:

- A Somerset brie accompanied by a Canadian Eiswein;
- A Wensleydale and a hard goat's cheese from Norway with a Château Gachon Montagne St Emilion 2016;
- Angiddy Jersey milk camembert style cheese from Brooke's Dairy near Raglan South Wales and a German blue Cambozola with an Hungarian Tokaji;

- A Portugal Ewe's milk cheese Almocreva and a Manchego from Spain with homemade marmelada with which a Roman Bilbao Tempranillo from the Rioja and a tawny port were both tried, the latter being preferred;
- A New York style cheddar and a manchego from Toledo accompanied by a red wine from Sonoma County which was the 2020 Cornell University wine;
- A soft St. Vernier cheese (Jura) and a mild Bavarian blue matched with a Château la Tour de By 2012 Medoc;
- A Montgomery cheddar and a ewe's milk cheese for which a Côtes d'Auvergne (gamay) had been chosen;
- An unpasteurized blue vein cheddar with a medium dry Oloroso sherry from Lustau;
- A manchego and a comté (nearest to the Alpine region) with both a red Rioja and a Swiss pinot noir Obrecht;
- An époisse with a gewürztraminer from Turkheim, Alsace and a soft English 'Rollright' from Chedworth, Gloucestershire accompanied by a 2010 Les Cédres d'Hosten, Listrac-Medoc;
- A single Gloucester farmers' market cheddar and a gruyere with a Chevalier de Auge and a pinot noir, 2019 Bourgogne Louis Latour;
- A mature Montgomery cheddar and a vintage manchego with membrillo for which a white Rioja, Capellania, Marqués de Murrieta 2015 was chosen in preference to a 12 year Palo Cortado, Leonor, Gonzalez Byass.

The evening was interspersed with consideration of two separate subjects relating to cheeses and one to wine. First, we were asked to identify from a montage of various cheeses which appeared in the backdrop behind the Chairman, those that are produced in Italy, which most people succeeded in doing correctly; secondly a short quiz about cheese and wine production from 10 different countries and, finally, we were shown images of all the different sizes of wine bottles from a Piccolo (a quarter bottle) to a Melchior (24 bottles) and invited to say how most of them came to be named after biblical characters including a Balthazar and a Nebuchadnezzar, an exercise at which most of us failed miserably.

To conclude we were asked to choose the wine of the evening. Most of the wines received support, but in a straw poll the accolade went to the Riojas.

Our thanks as always were expressed to Stephen Bennion whose detailed preparation and inspiration ensured an evening enjoyed by everyone.

Nigel Williams



London

EVERYDAY CLARETS – A ZOOM WINE TASTING

The focus of this Zoom tasting was on discussing accessible 'lunchtime clarets' – affordable workaday red Bordeaux rather than the glamorous top growths. The wines were from three excellent vintages – 2016, 2015 and 2010 – and the presentation illustrated how the weather during the growing season affects the wines. We also touched on what Bordeaux winemakers are doing to address climate change. The prices of the wines are at the time of purchase from Majestic.

Vintage is important for Bordeaux wines. The weather can vary from year to year and throughout the growing season and harvest. The vigneron's choices made in the vineyard, at harvest and in the wine production according to the effects of the weather will affect the taste, quality and longevity of the wine. For example, a cold spring can reduce the growth, and therefore quantity. A wet, cold miserable summer can affect flavour, depth and complexity. Rain at harvest time threatens quality.

But the effects are less significant than they used to be, thanks to scientific and technological advances in the vineyard and in wine making. And importantly, good producers can make good wine in a difficult vintage.

2016

2016 was hailed as an outstanding vintage. The style was relatively light, fresh and elegant, but with definition, ripe fruit and ripe tannins, for longevity.

The **Definition Claret 2016 AC Médoc £9.99** had typical flavours of black fruits like blackcurrants, spiced plums, and cedar. The acidity was balanced, and the finish long. There were still some tannins, so it will keep a while.

Château Méaume 2016 Bordeaux Supérieur £10.99, on the Right Bank, is run by an English man and his Canadian wife. They focus on sustainability and biodiversity. Their holding includes forests and pastures where cattle graze, and they use modern technology. The majority of the grapes used are Merlot, with a small proportion of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. The palate was of ripe fruits, plums, blackberries and damsons. This was drinking well.

Château Tour Bayard Montagne 2016 £13.99 was also from the Right Bank, from Montagne Saint-Emilion, and also a majority of Merlot grapes, from old vines. It achieved Bronze in its class at the Decanter competition in 2018. This was enjoyable, smooth, delicious and very approachable. It was medium bodied with big plum, blackcurrant, liquorice and spice flavours, smooth and with good length.

2015

Alcohol levels are high, but the fruit flavours are strong. The wine is easy to taste, perfumed, silky and less obvious tannins.

- Left Bank: the best wines are elegant, fresh and pure. The tannins are ripe. The wines lack some weight and density, but can be outstanding.

- Right Bank: the wines are sumptuous and vibrant, with ripe fruits and silky tannins.

Château Grand Faurie La Rose 2015, St-Émilion Grand Cru £18.99. *Grand Cru* status is a basic appellation status awarded to over half the output of wines located within St Emilion, outside the formal 1955 classification.

The main grape is Merlot. Some of us had the 2016, and found that particular bottle disappointing. But the 2015 had good fruit, fine tannins and was rich, rounded and well balanced.

Château Caronne Ste Gemme 2015, Haut-Médoc £12.99. The estate of Caronne St-Gemme goes back to the 1600s. It is only 500 yards from St Julien, next door to Château Gruaud Larose and Château Lascombes – and itself produces classed-growth quality fruit.

This wine was 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, which gives it the structure and tannins for ageing, 34% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot. We agreed that it was a very good wine, but as it was a little tight and tannic on the palate, it would benefit from more time

2010

2010 was a more powerful and structured vintage, where the wines were not ready to drink young. The wines have concentrated fruit, high alcohol and strong tannins, yet with good acidity for freshness and balance.

Château Le Caillou 2010, Pomerol, £32.97. This estate was only seven hectares. This wine was mostly Merlot with 15% Cabernet Franc, which added structure and an aroma and taste of spice.

We found a lovely bouquet of dark fruit and spices, and softness on the palate, spiced juicy fruit and high levels of tannin, well balanced with some complexity, and a long finish.

Its price was more expensive than the other clarets we were tasting, and it showed, but we thought that the Château Tour La Bayard was better value.

Château Citran 'Moulins de Citran' 2010, Haut-Médoc £16.99. This is the second wine of Château Citran. The property goes back to the thirteenth century. The family proprietors also own Château Gruaud Larose in St. Julien, Château Ferrier in Margaux and Château Chasse Spleen.

The blend was 58% Cabernet Sauvignon and 42% Merlot. It had not developed as much as we had expected. Its aroma was blackcurrant, cherries and cigar box, and its concentrated palate was of dark fruit, with notes of cedar and graphite minerality.

Global warming

The weather in Bordeaux has been consistently warmer than the decades before the turn of the century, with many long hot and dry summers, and a higher average annual temperature. This

causes grapes to be riper with greater natural sugar levels, leading to richer, fuller wines with higher levels of alcohol and lower acidity.

Two ways in which the vigneronns are adapting to the effects of global warming are by considering the grape varieties for blending and in viticultural techniques.

Grapes

Bordeaux is near the northern limit for successful ripening of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, the two main grapes allowed in red Bordeaux blends. (The other three permitted grapes are Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec and Carmenère.)

A dramatic decision was taken in 2019 by the Union of Bordeaux AOC and Bordeaux Supérieur winemakers, who approved a list of new grape varieties 'of interest for adapting' to climate change, although final approval still has to be given by the INAO (Institute of Origin and Quality), France's national appellation authority, so they are not yet permitted in the latest vintages.

This is specifically to help mitigate the effects of climate change and vine disease. The benefits of the new varieties range from a good resistance to specific diseases, such as grey rot and mildew, to an ability to cope with warmer conditions.

For red Bordeaux, four red grapes are to be permitted for adding to Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur blends only (over half of Bordeaux's total production). However, they can constitute only up to 10% of the blend in the finished wine, with the traditional Bordeaux varieties making up the rest. No producer is allowed to have more than 5% of a producer's vineyard area from these new grape varieties, and the names of the varieties cannot appear on the label.

The four red grapes are: Arinarnoa, Castets, Marselan and Touriga Nacional.

Viticulture

In the vineyards, various techniques can be used or curbed, depending on the weather, such as:

- *Effeillage* – removing old leaves from the sides of the vines exposed to the morning sun, to aerate the grapes, for preventing grey rot in damp vintages.
- *Eclaircissage / vendange verte* – thinning out the bunches of grapes, to help with aeration in the autumn to prevent rot. or removing unripe bunches in order to lower yields and raise the quality of the remaining grapes. But if this is done when the weather is too hot, the grapes that are left may over-ripen and produce too much alcohol.
- *Harvest dates* – Different grapes are ready for harvest at different times. Picking too early or too late can affect the balance of the wine. The choice of date will be influenced especially by the weather conditions, and also by monitoring and analysing the components of the grapes, for acidity rates, sweetness and ripeness. Harvests are typically a fortnight earlier than two decades ago.

Bordeaux wine makers have been using advances in science and technology to improve standards, and adapt to climate change. Below the famous top growths, many attractive wines are being made in Bordeaux. It is not hard to find affordable red Bordeaux for enjoyable everyday drinking.

Rachel Burnett



Saint-Émilion

London

ENGLISH CHEESE AND WINE – VIRTUALLY MEETING, ACTUALLY TASTING

Packs of artisan cheeses and crispbread, together with English wine, porter and cider, were delivered to participants' homes for London Branch's delightful December Zoom cheese and wine tasting – and with cider and porter too.

Greg Parsons, the owner of Sharpham's Dairy in Totnes, one of the finest cheese makers in Devon, led us through the following pairings, aided by Tom Wedgery from the Sharpham / Sandridge wine team.

Sharpham Brie with Sharpham Dart Valley Reserve 2018

Sharpham Brie has been hand made at Sharpham since 1981, with milk from their Jersey herd. It was rich and creamy with mushroom notes, imparting a sweetness to the off-dry wine. It won a Gold medal at the 2019 Food & Drink Devon Awards, and a Silver medal at Taste of the West Product Awards 2020.

Sharpham Dart Valley Reserve 2018 was a well balanced wine, with aromas of pear and peach, a ripe palate with a touch of spice, and a mineral finish. Its acidity worked well with the Jersey milk flavours of the cheese. It is made from Bacchus, Madeleine Angevine and Chardonnay grapes. The wine achieved a Gold Medal at the Sommelier Wine Awards 2019.

Sharpham Ticklemore with Sharpham Pinot Noir 2018

Sharpham Ticklemore cheese is made from goats' milk. It had a firm texture. Perceptible hints of lemon and herbs showed through its rounded maturity. It was awarded a Silver medal at Taste of the West Product Awards 2020.

Sharpham Pinot Noir showed red fruit character with soft tannins from French oak. It was a fine example of a light, cool climate Pinot Noir. The goats' cheese lifted the wine's flavours. Although Pinot Noir has become the most widely planted grape in the UK, most is used for producing English sparkling wine. Well done to make this varietal wine!

Sharpham Washbourne with Sharpham Pinot Noir 2018

Sharpham Washbourne unpreserved washed curd cheese is made from sheep's milk. It had a smooth texture and a nutty tang. It brought out the earthy, rustic, savoury qualities of the Pinot Noir.

Quicke's Oak Smoked Cheddar with Salcombe Brewery's Ocean Cider

Quicke's Oak Smoked Cheddar is hand crafted using milk from grass-fed cows, clothbound and naturally matured for several months. The oak chips used are from trees on the Quicke's estate, giving the cheese a smoky, buttery taste.

Ocean Cider is made from West Country cider apples. It is a lightly sparkling, full bodied, medium dry, traditional cider.

Devon Blue with Salcombe Brewery's Island Street Porter

Devon Blue is an unpreserved cows' milk cheese. Its texture was crumbly and it had a mineral sharpness, combined with a creamy, buttery richness.

Island Street Porter is a rich blend of eight malts. Its coffee-like characteristics neutralised any incipient bitterness and toned down the sharpness of the cheese, bringing out the porter's velvety smooth chocolate flavours. It was awarded Champion Beer by Taste of the West in 2019 and 2020.

To add to the general jollity, there was a quiz. Those of us paying sufficient attention during the tasting sent in our answers by email, and we were advised the following day of the winner - Alan Shepherd - of a prize donated by the winery.

Our thanks to Roger Ellis, who organised the splendid event (and the responses to the quiz!).

Rachel Burnett

LONDON BRANCH DIRECT DEBIT PILOT

In 2019, London Branch obtained EAZ support to pilot the payment of subscription renewals by direct debit. The banks are not prepared to offer direct debit facilities to organisations such as ours, but GoCardless has an on line system that we were able to use. It was easy to set up an account for IWFS London Branch, and once we had done so, we were able to create a Payment Plan for each class of membership. These plans were all set to collect payment each year on 15th January. The way that the system works is that **GoCardless** supply a URL (web address) for each plan which leads to an on line form which a member can fill in to subscribe to that plan. They need to supply details of a UK bank account and an email address to which Go Cardless sends a verification message which they have to reply to. We set up a page on our web site which explained the procedure, and had a list of the different classes of membership which the member had to click in order to be taken to the relevant enrolment form. We

also sent out an email inviting members to renew in this way, and offered them a discount for doing so.

It is worth noting that although London was able to take advantage of having its own website this can equally well be done on the relevant Branch page of the international site (see Direct Debit – The International Wine & Food Society (IW&FS)). Of the total London Branch membership, 60% have renewed for 2021 by direct debit, 25% have renewed by other means and 15% have yet to renew. When the time came to renew for 2021, we had to adjust the amounts to be paid according to the new rates for that year: the process was straightforward and we were delighted that we had no queries or cancellations. All the members who renewed by direct debit in the first year continued their membership in the second.

Alan Shepherd

Northern Branches Team

NORTHERN TEAM ACTIVITY

The team presently comprises the branches Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester, Merseyside and Mid Cheshire, West Yorkshire and Zürich .

There has previously been limited contact between branches and the necessity of now using virtual meetings using Zoom opened up the opportunity for more inter-branch co-operation. To familiarise members with the Zoom platform one hour training sessions were organised for those who wanted to be more confident in both attending and setting up meetings.

More inter branch virtual events are planned by the Northern team with creative chefs offering both food and cookery courses.

Ron Barker our MW will be arranging virtual tastings using Zoom combined with YouTube clips.

Merseyside and Mid Cheshire has been organising great weekends, and trips overseas for many years; the bookings will resume when face to face events are permitted and multi branch invitations will be sent out for: a wine cruise along the Duoro, a trip to Granvara in the Dolomites, a river cruise in Spain, a Croatia cruise.

Manchester branch has a great mix of ethnic restaurants and will be sending out invitations for both virtual and face-to-face multi branch events.

Inter branch co-operation brings a flurry of new ideas and worthwhile activities which we believe can benefit the whole of the IWFS.

West Yorkshire had held a virtual event for their members in June 2020 which was successful and now think that virtual

events will become a permanent way in which branches can get to know each other, even across continents.

Northern pilot project

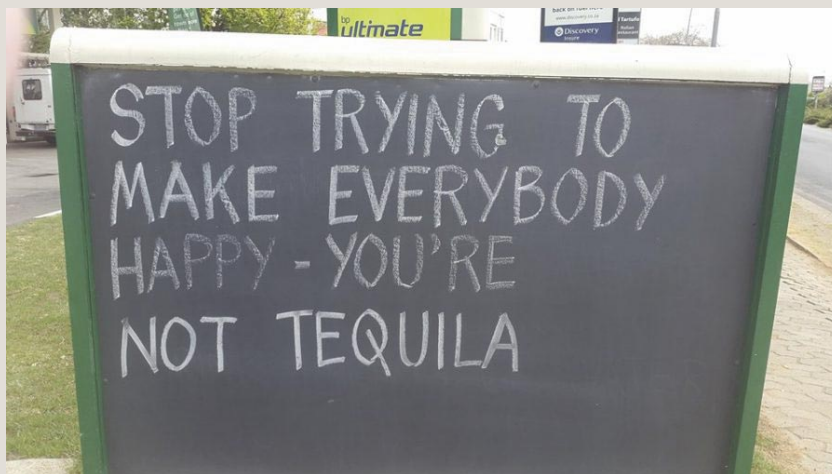
West Yorkshire has taken the lead in setting up a pilot event for the Northern branches in collaboration with professional caterers. Their organising team consists of Stephen Harrison, Tim Gittins and Sue Timme.

- The primary object is to test the organisation of an online inter-branch event with a fixed food and wine menu. It should replicate as closely as possible the experience of good quality food and wine shared with great company, enjoyed simultaneously at home, using Zoom
- The trial meal would take place on a weekday with a maximum 40 guests and a maximum cost to guests of £50. Distribution of the food in refrigerated transport to be based on a 'hub and spoke' model – for each branch to organise distribution to guests the following day. The food reheating and preparation at home will be minimal and a full guide to final preparation, timing and presentation will be provided.
- Each branch would order wines directly from the recommended supplier and distributed with the food.

Organisation on the day Zoom and Rooms

Zoom will be live all the time and the Zoom breakout Rooms facility will be set up to fit in with the final numbers to enable groups of up to eight to meet – perhaps changing Rooms between courses.

GAS PUMP WISDOM



Can you imagine wanting to make sure you drove by a certain gas station every day just to see the message on the chalk board? It's true – a gas station has become quite a landmark in Gauteng, South Africa, because of its daily uplifting quotes written on a chalkboard. Some people say they deliberately travel this route just to read the quote to brighten their day.

GREAT WEEKEND CAMBRIDGE *Incorporating the EAZ AGM and Members' Forum*

Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th September 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to move our Great Weekend in Cambridge to 2021. The result is not only a change of dates but also an expanded programme giving more time in the city of Cambridge itself.

The programme now includes two black-tie dinners at Cambridge colleges and a whole day in Cambridge visiting some of the architectural gems of the University. We will spend a day in Ely, visiting the Cathedral, the Stained Glass Museum and the Almonry Restaurant. Sunday morning will be given over to the EAZ AGM and Members' Forum followed by a buffet lunch. Transport by coach will be provided throughout the weekend.

Our base will be the Holiday Inn Hotel, Impington, Cambridge. The hotel is just outside the city centre with ample parking. (One word of warning however, you will need to register your car with the hotel reception on arrival to escape the possibility of a fine.) We have negotiated a very competitive rate for the weekend and the hotel will also host the AGM and Members' Forum on Sunday morning. If travelling by train it is a relatively short taxi ride from Cambridge Station.

On **Thursday 16th September** the first event will be a black-tie Reception and Dinner at Corpus Christi College; a coach will pick us up from the hotel at 6.30 pm. Corpus Christi College was founded in 1352 and is one of the smallest colleges in Cambridge University. It is unique in that, while other colleges were founded by wealthy benefactors or religious orders, Corpus Christi was founded by the townspeople of Cambridge.

Friday 17th September will be spent in Cambridge. Our coach will pick us up at the hotel and take us into the city. We will enjoy a guided walking tour around some of the other colleges followed by a private tour and light lunch at St John's College and a private tour of Queens' College. The coach will return us to the hotel for a short break before taking us back into the city

for dinner at the University Arms Hotel. Dinner this evening will be a smart casual affair. One of the icons of Cambridge, the University Arms now has a young chef, Tristan Welch who is making something of a name for himself reinventing British classics using locally sourced ingredients.

On **Saturday 18th September**, the coach will pick us up at the hotel for the short drive to Ely. We will spend the morning exploring the splendours of the medieval cathedral and the Stained Glass Museum which is unique in the UK. There will be some free time either to explore the town itself or another museum, Oliver Cromwell's house is nearby, or you may wish to ascend one of the cathedral towers. (The towers, 165 and 288 steps respectively, demand a reasonable level of fitness and a head for heights. There would also be an additional charge for this option.) In the early afternoon we will head for the Almonry Restaurant and a special Afternoon Tea. The Restaurant is situated within the Cathedral precinct.

Magdalene College will host our dinner on Saturday evening. Magdalene was founded in 1428 and re-founded in 1542 by Thomas Audley, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor. Samuel Pepys was a student at the College and subsequently a generous benefactor. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, became Master of the College in 2013. Our Reception and Dinner will start in the Pepys Cloisters (weather permitting) before moving to the College Hall. Dress Code will be black-tie.

The EAZ AGM and Members' Forum will take place at the Holiday Inn on **Sunday morning** after which a buffet lunch will be provided before we all return home.

Booking Information

Early booking is recommended for the Great Weekend as numbers are limited. The cost of the full programme from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon including three dinners



(two black tie) the visit to Ely, the guided walking tour, lunches in Cambridge and coach transfers throughout will be GBP £460 per person for IWFS members, GBP £490 for guests. This price does not include travel to and from Cambridge, or hotel accommodation while you are there. Please contact EAZ Admin (eaz@iwfs.org) to confirm your place before making payment. Once your place has been confirmed, you will be sent details of how to make your payment. An initial deposit of GBP £100 will be required to confirm your booking. Payment of the balance will be required by 1st April 2021.

All EAZ members may choose to attend the AGM, Members' Forum and lunch on Sunday 19th September without participating in the Great Weekend. If you intend to do this please email us by 1st September 2021. There is no charge for this option but the hotel will need to know numbers for lunch. We will be sending out further reminders in the coming months.

Cancellation

You may cancel your reservation up to 31st March 2021 and receive a full refund. For cancellations received between 1st April and 1st June IWFS will make a refund of 50%. After 1st June 2021 no refunds will be given. Cancellations must be made in writing to eaz@iwfs.org.

Cancellation and Medical Insurance: You are strongly advised to take out travel and cancellation insurance – to apply from the date of your initial deposit.



Hotel

The Holiday Inn is offering us a rate of £130.00 per room (£125.00 for single occupancy) per night, including breakfast, for the three nights of the Great Weekend. Members should book their accommodation directly with the hotel by email or telephone quoting 'International Wine & Food Society' or 'IWFS' to obtain this rate.

Telephone: 01223 582414 or 01223 582453 during office hours

Email: Reservations@hicambridge.co.uk

The hotel's cancellation policy (not later than 14 days before date of arrival to avoid any charges) will apply.

The hotel's address is: Holiday Inn Cambridge, Lakeview, Bridge Road, Impington, Cambridge, CB24 9PH. You are not obliged to stay at this hotel, but please be aware that coach transfers will start and end there.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Zones are looking ahead and planning festivals for members to enjoy. It is hoped that these will be able to take place. However, we are sure you will appreciate that they can only proceed subject to advice from governments' travel advice and local restrictions. Details will be updated on the website as received.

The latest calendar for IWFS festivals in 2021 is shown below. We have made changes to the schedule to try to ensure that the events will take place in as safe an environment as possible and as the restrictions allow.

ITALY Piedmont

5th to 10th July 2021

Join the EAZ touring the vineyards around Alba. We will visit Bra, the home of the Slow Food Movement, and dine with some of the most exciting wine producers in the area. If you are interested in Barolo and Barbaresco you won't want to miss this. This festival is now full. Please contact eaz@iwfs.org to be added to the wait list. See more details via: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/piedmont>

FRANCE Paris and Bordeaux

22nd to 30th July 2021

This amazing Americas event is planned for this July – the itinerary will be in essence the same. The itinerary includes visiting some of the most exclusive venues in Paris; then in Bordeaux a stunning itinerary includes private tours

and tastings of top chateaux. Last few places available. For more details go to the website: https://www.iwfs.org/festivals/paris_bordeaux

UK Cambridge

16th to 19th September 2021

All members are invited to join us visiting this historic city. The weekend will include a guided tour of the city and dinners in two of the University's historic Colleges as well as a day in Ely visiting the Cathedral. The EAZ AGM and Members Forum will take place on Sunday morning. See pages 30-31 for details and also our website: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/cambridge>. There are still some places available for this weekend contact eaz@iwfs.org to check on availability or to be added to the wait list.

PORTUGAL Madeira

30th October to 6th November 2021

Join the EAZ to explore this historic island – 'the pearl of the Atlantic' – and learn about its world famous wine, Madeira. You will stay in the capital Funchal and visit the major producers – Barbeito, Blandys, Henriques & Henriques and D'Oliveiras. You will also have the opportunity to discover something of the local cuisine. This is a unique opportunity to discover Madeira wine in its home setting. Now full but let us know if you wish to be added to the wait list. Visit our website for more details: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/madeira>

USA San Antonio

26th to 30th October 2021

The Americas invite you to join them enjoying the best in food and wine of this Texan city with a rich colonial heritage. Details to be confirmed.

SINGAPORE

re-scheduled for 12th to 14th November 2021

The APZ are making plans for a festival on this delightful island country for members to enjoy its culinary delights and explore the many jewels of this island including the Singapore Botanic Gardens – the only tropical garden in the world to be awarded a UNESCO Heritage Site. Details to be released as available.

FRANCE Alsace

April 2022

The EAZ are planning to head to the city of Colmar in 2022. Colmar is the capital of this historic wine region and will aim to give you a taste of some of the best wineries and restaurants in the area. More details in due course.

USA Willamette Valley, Oregon

17th to 22nd May 2022

An Americas festival giving you the chance to visit some of the best wineries of this region renowned for its world class Pinot Noir. More details to follow.

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

