

Words from our Bailli

Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni. Another year slips by. The weather seems to have dominated 2012 but fortunately most of our events were not affected. Even when they were, the resourcefulness of our Chevaliers (and their partners) ensured their success.

On the other side of the Channel the weather was much the same and the vineyards of the Pays Nantais have had another difficult year. The good news for wine drinkers is that the 2012 Muscadet will be of high quality; the bad news for the growers is that the quantity is (as in much of France and the wine growing world generally) greatly reduced.

2013 will be an exciting year for the Bailliage as we celebrate our 20th anniversary in September. Thanks are due to our Bailli Emeritus Peter Andrews and his team for all the work they have put in to organise a programme that will be worthy of the occasion.

I wish you all a festive Christmas and a felicitous New Year.

Cyfarchion y tymor i chi gyd.

Bois le vin sois bon comme lui

From Bailli Anthony Pugh, Bailliage du Pays de Galles

BERLIN-BRANDENBURG BAILLIAGE Tenth Anniversary

In life one should always expect the unexpected. This was so during the Berlin-Brandenburg Bailliage 10th anniversary celebrations in May. Whilst these trips deliver good food, good wine and good company where old friendships are renewed, this weekend also gave us a much deeper appreciation of the traumas and renaissance that the cities of Potsdam and Berlin have undergone.

The trip, however, started off in traditional fashion. The forty or so Welsh made up the total of participants to about 150. Bailli Gerhard Franzen met us at Schoenefeld Airport in the former East, and in his genial warm way talked us through the arrangements for the weekend as we travelled to Potsdam



and our hotel. As we passed through Potsdam the impression was of a very clean, fresh looking city. But there were occasional blocks which were virtually derelict, heavily graffitied and with obvious bullet marks. The contrast of post war Germany, pre and post-unification became even more pronounced as the days went on.

The unexpected even came in the form of our hotel. Only after settling in did we learn that this

new conference hotel's design recalled the Zeppelins which had been built and launched in the early part of the 20th century on that very site. Some of the original buildings were even retained as part of the hotel, and the Zeppelin theme noticeably permeated the building even to the light shades in the restaurant.

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Next day we saw the Cecilienhof Palace in the north of Potsdam, adjacent to the waterways which surround Potsdam and give it its beautiful waterfront setting. Our guide was Jürgen Linde, a good friend of the Welsh Bretvins. Having previously been told by Gerhard that it was exactly 330 metres from the hotel to the tram, and that the tram went at 9.31 a.m., we all made sure that we were more than punctual! The tramline through the city was a further chance to experience more of Potsdam, and we then had a pleasant walk through the park to get to the Palace, which really deserves an article all to itself. Built during the First World War for the German Crown Prince on the unexpected theme of an English Edwardian Country House, this was the venue for the 1945 Potsdam conference between Stalin, Truman and Churchill. Here was settled the fate of post war Europe for almost 50 years. Our visit to the actual rooms where the conference took place, with all the original furniture in place, gave a real sense of history to everybody.

After lunch and a little liquid refreshment we walked through the park and then through a pleasant luxury housing area back to our tram stop. A few days later on a guided bus tour of Potsdam we saw these same beautiful houses, and were told – unexpectedly – that the whole area had been



Don't ask!

Photo: SKR

commandeered by the KGB in 1945 to make a high security Russian enclave, known locally as KGB City.

On Thursday formal celebrations started with a Muscadet reception at the hotel and then, suitably fired up, all wearing our 10th anniversary “fan” scarves, we all went by bus to sample a great German delicacy – white asparagus! Tourists are made to harvest some for themselves, which is no mean feat. The asparagus lurks under a large ridge of soil and has to be located by hand and then skilfully cut off at the base with a dangerous looking knife. We were of course dressed for an evening out, and not for burrowing around in the sandy soils of eastern Germany. Asparagus when it comes out of the ground is a very interestingly shaped object, and there was great delight in comparing the quality of the harvested asparagus stems. Having delivered a minor harvest we were then taken back to the factory to see how it is processed and then to a restaurant at the farm for our evening meal. The three courses were naturally heavily themed around asparagus. It even managed to creep its way into the dessert menu.

Friday involved travel by bus to Berlin, for a tour guided by “Tom from Minnesota”, who has been resident in Berlin for over 20 years. Tom shared with us a little of his deep insight into the history of Berlin. We walked around the Brandenburg

Gate, then visited remaining sections of the Berlin Wall, and the silent and deeply moving Holocaust Memorial. As Tom said, “Berlin does not hide its past”.

At midday we had muscadet and lunch at the Saarland State House, followed by a boat trip making a grand circle through the Berlin waterways. As the afternoon wore on and the beers flowed the main focus was on trying to make sure we kept our heads down when going under the numerous low bridges of the waterways.

On Friday evening at an elegant restaurant in Potsdam, Le Manège, we enjoyed a good Bretvin banquet with lots of Muscadet.

Saturday was the culmination of the weekend celebrations and started with a guided bus tour around Potsdam. This widened our perspective of the city by taking us through the Royal Park on the west of the City within which there were numerous palaces, follies and other structures built at the whim of 18th Century Prussian Kings. We also explored the Dutch Quarter of Potsdam and even the small enclave set aside for Russian prisoners of war who had settled in Potsdam in the 19th Century. Because they sang so well for the King, they were allowed to build a range of Siberian style

wooden houses on a plot which they were given. This is now a World Heritage Site.

The return trip to the hotel after a good lunch and a tour of the Sans Souci Summer Palace was marred by an incident when the driver of one of the buses – a double decker – misjudged the canopy at the hotel and took out two windows on the top deck showering several rows of Chevaliers with glass – but thankfully nothing worse.

The formal part of the weekend involved our procession in robes from the centre of Potsdam, led by The Black Kilt Pipe Band. The procession ended at the Church of Peace where the Chapter and Intronisation of **nine** new members took place including several members of the Band. The role of Bailli was also handed over from Gerhard Franken to Manfred Bauer, with Gerhard then taking on the much deserved title of Bailli Emeritus.

The day's celebrations rounded off with a grand banquet back at the hotel where over 200 people were present. The usual Bretvin banquet speeches were rather more protracted than usual because they needed to be delivered in German, French and English. The end of the banquet, around midnight, coincided with news of the penalty shootout in the Champions League Final. The news was conveyed from Wade Emmerson's

iPhone to the podium, where Bailli Anthony Pugh started his oration by announcing the score, to cheers from everybody in the UK contingents, and a short-lived stoic silence from our German friends.

Sunday morning was a breezy warm day and many of us took the opportunity to enjoy a walk from the hotel, along the lake's edge, to blow the cobwebs away before starting on

the journey back to Wales. It was a great weekend and our German hosts were as always warm, friendly, attentive and well organised hosts. We expected all of that, but what we did not expect was the impression that Potsdam and Berlin would leave with us.

From Chevalier Michael Lawley

SUMMER DINNER

at New House Country Hotel, 14th June 2012

About 50 Chevaliers and guests attended the Summer Banquet, to do justice to a fine meal of grilled goat's cheese; lemon sole Véronique; cannon of Welsh lamb suitably garnished; and an interesting trio of citrus desserts. This was nicely irrigated with the 2010 Muscadet from Bernard Chéreau and a Syrah 2010 Des Collines Rhodaniennes from Jeanne Gaillard.

A remarkable torrent of rain fell while dinner was being served, and yet we were fortunate to have clear views across Cardiff and the Bristol Channel before and after the meal.

We are indebted to Peter Dewey for his help in facilitating this event.



SIX OF THE BEST AT NEW HOUSE

Photo: Wade Emerson

J T JONES SCOOPS MAC THOMAS TROPHY YET AGAIN



Photo: SRK

Few would argue that the Mac Thomas Cup and the Ryder Cup should not be included in the pantheon of great golfing accolades. It was, therefore, fitting that

during the period of just a few days at the end of September the destination of both these iconic trophies should be decided.

Radyr Golf Club was once again the venue for the Chevaliers competition, and a small but perfectly formed group of golfers vied for the honour of being the next recipient of this most cherished golfing prize.

The weather was thankfully fine in such an inclement year, and the golf - whilst not always pretty - never lacked commitment. Whilst, arguably, not enjoying parity in physical fitness it was John Jones rather than Tony Fuge who remained marginally less off piste and managed to retain his grip on the cup for another year.

A most convivial evening followed at Alfred's in Pontypridd, and for this hospitality and the overall organisation of the event we are very much indebted to Chevalier John Phillips, whose efforts made it such a successful occasion.

From Echanson John T Jones

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY at RADYR, 19th. August 2012

The first to arrive saw the gardens of David and Pam Williams looking really lovely in the sunshine, with not a blade of grass out of place, and all laid out for our garden party.

Unfortunately the weather was seriously threatening to take a turn for the worse, and prudence made it necessary to move the function, lock stock and barrel, into the nearby community hall.

With their stalwart team of helpers, David and Pam worked miracles to ensure that we still had a really good afternoon, despite the upheaval and relocation.

A very large bottle of Muscadet had been presented to our Bailli, representing the Bailliage, by Connétable

Jean Richard at our Chapter at Fonmon in March. Jean is one of the two Connétables who stand in for the Grand Maître when he cannot be present.

This year's weather emergency highlighted the fact that it is quite a feat for one Chevalier even with his wife, family and friends to host such a function. David and Pam succeeded magnificently, helped by Bob, Jeff and Clive.

However, it has clearly become unreasonable for us to put such a burden on so few, now that attendances have risen so much in recent years. There were almost 60 guests this year. Something must be done.



Photos: Richard Bosworth

WINDSOR CASTLE AND THE SAVILL GARDEN

At 8am ON 6th. September the coach left Edwards Yard with thirtysix of us aboard, to join the first of several traffic jams. Some of the jams worked in our favour – have you ever tried pouring champagne on a rocking coach? Cake and Champagne are a tradition on our outings and it is incumbent upon us to consume at least one glass (no upper limit set by the way) of Champagne before reaching the Severn Bridge. Needless to say, the first bottles

gardens before once more boarding our coach for the next destination: Windsor and its castle.

Once through the security cordon, only marginally more rigorous than visiting the Sennedd, we entered the castle grounds, where we each made our individual tour.

The magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art from the Royal Collection, including paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Canaletto and Gainsborough.

The 1992 fire destroyed or damaged more than 100 rooms at the Castle. By good fortune the rooms worst affected were empty at the time, and as a result few of the Castle's artistic treasures were destroyed. The St

George's Chapel was as magnificent as expected and Queen Mary's Dolls' House was utterly fascinating.

All too quickly we once more boarded the coach for our final destination, the Pheasant Inn near Hungerford, for dinner accompanied with generous helpings of wine. We must have behaved as well as we did at the gardens, because Peter had yet another email, from Johnny Ferrand of the Inn thanking us for the visit and saying how much his staff enjoyed us being there. Sadly there was to be no third email complimenting us for our enthusiasm and impeccable behaviour at the Castle; perhaps Her Majesty was just a little too busy to send it.

From Chevalier Mario Greening



Photo: MG

With audio guides plugged in, we make a start for the Castle tour

were popped and poured well before the bridge. The fruit cake brought around with the Champagne was made by Hilary Weber. She is a star and makes a cake for every trip she is on. It was delicious, as were the other treats on offer.

Our first destination was The Savill Garden, which was created in the 1930s by Sir Eric Savill and developed under the patronage of Kings and Queens. We split into two groups for guided tours by 'Friends of The Savill Garden' who were both knowledgeable and entertaining. The Savill Garden is a place of constant discovery, and of hidden, interlocking gardens, containing distinctive planting groups, including areas such as Spring Wood, The Summer Wood and Hidden Gardens. We must have been well behaved, as Peter received an email the next day from one of our guides, Anthony Earl, indicating the great pleasure it was to take around such an enthusiastic group; and what's more he asked us to come back again for a longer tour! We took lunch at the

OBITUARY



Photo: Richard Bosworth

As we go to press the sad news of the death of Hubert Edwards has come in.

Hubert was intronised at Picton Castle in 2005. Instantly and thoroughly liked by everyone who met him, Hubert was always good fun and excellent company.

He was a regular supporter of our Bailliage functions, except latterly when his attendances began to be hampered by the illness of his wife Pat, who died earlier this year.

Hubert's funeral was at St Davids Cathedral on 31st. October. He will long be missed by all who knew the joy of his friendship.

VENDANGE DINNER

St. Bride's Spa Hotel, Saundersfoot

The annual Vendange Dinner was celebrated at the St. Bride's Hotel & Spa, Saundersfoot on Saturday 6th October. This was the second consecutive annual event at this venue, a testimony to this excellent hotel and location.

Many of the Cardiff Chevaliers travelled down on the Friday in torrential rain and driving south westerly winds, but were rewarded the following day with a clear blue sky and a gentle coastal breeze.

The Muscadet reception was most enjoyable with Fishguard and Cardiff based Chevaliers mingling with their guests who included Wade Emmerson, Seneschal of Guernsey, with his wife Greta, and John and Michelle Irvine who were guests of Melanie Andrews and Michael Nugent. During the excellent dinner Consul Hugh Williams raised a toast to



the recently appointed Prime Minister of France, past Mayor of Nantes and fellow Chevalier, M. Jean-Marc Ayrault.

The following morning the tide was out, the sun was out, and all the guests were soon out enjoying the sunshine and beautiful vista of the South Pembrokeshire coast and Carmarthen Bay. The majority of the guests returned home during the afternoon although Melanie, Michael and their guests were treated to an afternoon's sail around the Milford Haven with Chevalier Martin Sykes.

Thanks are due to Le Délégué de Abergwaun, Geoff Stickler, with support from Echanson Tony Davies, for the organisation of the event, and also to Gaye Williams for her expert culinary advice in choosing the delicious menu.

From Echanson Tony Davies



Photos: Richard Bostworth

BOUTEILLE D'OR, VALLET, 28th OCTOBER 2012



Eight intrepid travellers headed down to Portsmouth, to catch the overnight ferry to St.Malo, and then on to Nantes for the Golden Bottle. This prestigious prize is awarded to the commune which has won the most medals for its Muscadet during the year.

This year Vallet was the winner and Chevaliers met there to enjoy the Muscadet, process and witness the presentation of the bottle on Sunday 29th October.

The event started at 07:45 with a Chevaliers Breakfast, consisting of Muscadet, some Pinot Franc, pate, rillettes and cheese in the village hall. This was followed by a Chapter where 4 new Chevaliers and 2 Dames de Duchess Anne were intronised.

There was a short procession to the steps of the church where the bottle was presented in due form to the Mayor, who reciprocated by inviting the assembled company to a tasting behind the hotel de Ville.

Lunch was up to Chevalier standards, and was followed by a tour of the vineyards and yes ... more Muscadet tasting! Finally hotdogs cooked over hot vines, and reasonably early to bed.

And the answer is definitely no, it tastes really good but do not swallow 5 day old fermenting wine, unless you are a vigneron, have a lead lined stomach have been doing it since granddad was a boy!

From Echanson Clive Johnson



Photos: CJ



OUR PROPOSED 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, CARDIFF.

An exciting programme has been arranged to celebrate the 20th. anniversary of the founding of the Bailliage du Pays De Galles.

Between 20th and 22nd. September 2013 there will be a welcome dinner at The National Museum of Wales, a visit to the seat of our Bailliage, Fonmon Castle, a dinner at St David's Hotel, Cardiff, a Muscadet reception in Cardiff Castle and a parade with pipe band from Cardiff Castle to The City Hall. There will be a Special Chapter in the Council Chamber, followed by the Chapter Banquet in the Marble Hall of the City Hall.

There will be many guests from France and from overseas Baillages, and we also expect a good turnout from Chevaliers based in England, Scotland and Ireland.

The accommodation chosen for the celebration weekend is The Holiday Inn, Cardiff Castle. This hotel stands between the historic Cardiff Castle and the Millennium Stadium, which is still often known by the old name Cardiff Arms Park. The hotel is on the banks of the River Taff, and on the edge of Cardiff central shopping area, which has been much enlarged in recent years and is one of the leading shopping areas in the UK.

Transport for the celebrations is based on this hotel, and special room rates have been negotiated for those who wish to stay there.



The undercroft of Cardiff Castle



DATES FOR DIARIES

2012

December 6th Christmas Dinner, St David's Hotel, Cardiff

2013

January 27th Feast of St Vincent, Vertou

February 16th Assemblée Générale at Haute Goulaine

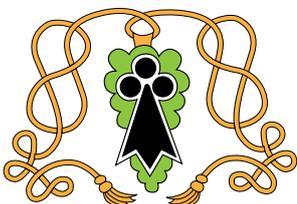
March 16th/17th Expovall at Vallet

March 24th Spring Banquet at Fonmon Castle.

April 6th Seafood Fest at Berlin

June Fête de la Feu en Vigne at La Remaudière

September 20th/22nd Bailliage du Pays de Galles: 20th Anniversary Celebrations, Cardiff



Any text or photos you wish to contribute for future issues of this newsletter should be sent to the Hérault, Colin Ryland, by email please, because it saves a lot of retyping: rylandnash@talktalk.net