

Full House at Fonmon



Our annual Chapter and Dinner was held at the headquarters of the Bailliage, Fonmon Castle, on Sunday 20th March 2011. Once again we enjoyed the remarkable sunny weather that recent years have led us to expect.

25 Welsh Chevaliers attended, plus eight from Alcester, two from Grande Bretagne and one from Guernsey. 39 guests were also present, making 75 attenders in all, which is a full complement for the beautiful atmospheric library when set out with dining tables.

Anthony Pugh, conducting his first Chapter ceremony in his new office of Bailli, elevated Eddie Rabaiotti to the rank of Consul, and after due scrutiny and reflection three new Chevaliers, Alastair McQuaid, Dudley Newbery and Michael Nugent were intronised. The speeches of their sponsoring Chevaliers each had a welcome note of whimsy, whilst nevertheless giving the necessary information about each candidate.

There was ample opportunity to enjoy the gardens in the sunshine before the excellent meal which followed. The catering was good, as ever, in the very reliable hands of Beppe Villa. We owe many thanks once again to Sir Brooke Boothby for the use of the Castle for this our main function of the year.



Photos:
Richard Bosworth



ALCESTER CHAPTER

In April the Bailli and a party of six other Chevaliers and partners travelled from a new pickup point outside Clive and Sally Johnson's house in Radyr to Alcester for the annual chapter of the Confrérie. The journey was passed in customary style and, after a parking place had been found, we joined our confrères from Alcester and Nantes at the Guide and Scout Centre for the traditional mulled wine, while the founder of the movement spun silently in his grave.

When all were suitably refreshed Bailli Jeremy Howell lead the procession through the streets to the Town Hall where

he conducted the Chapter with his customary aplomb. The post-Chapter Muscadet was provided by a young vigneron, Laurent Bouchaud of Domaine du Bois Joly in Le Pallet, who spoke with enthusiasm of his wines.

Then back to the transport to travel the short distance to the Salford Hall Hotel and an excellent and convivial meal before the return to Wales.

As always true Bretvin hospitality from our friends in Alcester and a very enjoyable day.

From Bailli Anthony Pugh

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

On the first day of August many of us had the good fortune to be in the lovely garden of Clive and Sally Johnson's house in Radyr. These pictures tell it better than words. The sun was so hot, the shade was so pleasant, the garden was in beautiful order, and the food and wines were excellent and abundant. Clive and Sally made catering for the multitude look so easy, but we appreciate how much work must have gone

on behind the scenes before and after, and during the event itself there was little rest for them and their small team of helpers. We send again our many thanks to these most generous hosts.



*Photos:
Clive Johnson*

GUERNSEY 10th OR 11th ANNIVERSARY



Some Chevaliers now believe that Edwards Yard at Llantwit Fardre deserves some form of consecration, since once again it was the starting point for a Baillage expedition in September, this time to Guernsey. There was certainly an air of excitement and expectation which probably accounted for the spontaneous decision to crack open the champagne whilst still in the confines of the yard, thus breaking the golden rule that none should be imbibed before reaching the M4.

The brief but pleasant flight from Bristol to Guernsey on September 23rd. was followed by a coach tour of the island, one of the highlights of which was the discovery of Bob Powell's ancestral home, although we were disappointed that we were not invited in by the present incumbents for a glass of muscadet.

Cobo Bay Hotel proved a good choice, located as it was across the road from the sea and next door to a rather good pub. A special feature was the continuous balconies which extended across the front of the hotel on two floors thus facilitating ambulatory carousing.

The Friday evening dinner, attended by Le Grand Maître, was hosted by Guernsey Bailli Graham Edwards, a refugee from Mid Wales. It provided an opportunity for us to renew acquaintance with confrères from Nantes, Grand Bretagne, Scotland and Alcester. We enjoyed a splendid dinner which was accompanied by four specially chosen muscadets.

On Saturday we travelled by coach to St Peter Port to catch the ferry to Herm Island. On alighting from the coach at the quayside we gazed at a ferry boat some thirty feet below the quay with no visible means of access and then proceeded to march up and down the quayside like the Grand Old Duke

of York's men looking for a way to board. Finally we realised that our ferry was located some distance away, which we boarded with ease. At this point we were joined by Sir Brooke Boothby, hotfoot from Gatwick, whose directional sense was clearly better than ours.

Herm Island was beautiful and, together with the glorious weather it provided a perfect location for a thoroughly enjoyable day's activities during which we processed, attended a Chapter and the intronisation of two Chevaliers and a Dame de Duchesse Anne, and enjoyed a splendid fish and seafood lunch. We particularly appreciated the lunch, and the further excellent selection of Muscadets.

Back at the Cobo Bay Hotel that evening we were entertained to dinner by Bailli Graham when a number of presentations were made, notably the award of the Medaille d'Honneur to Jacques Maingard (ambassadeur) by the Grand Maître. After Bailli Graham had spoken of the ten or eleven successful years of the Guernsey Baillage our own Bailli Anthony expressed the appreciation of the Welsh members for the excellence of the arrangements made by our Guernsey colleagues. He announced that all the Baillages would be welcome at our 20th anniversary in Wales in 2013, preparations for which were now well in hand. The evening concluded with renditions of the Bretvin Hymn and of Calon Lân, the latter by our impromptu choir.

Sunday in St Peter Port also proved to be a memorable day. In the morning we processed through streets where once German soldiers had marched. The route followed a testing gradient but, cheered on by the ladies, we all tackled it manfully and arrived at the Old Government House Hotel for a Muscadet reception and a traditional Sunday lunch. The hotel was both grand and delightful and provided a fitting formal but congenial end to our official programme. Our weekend in Guernsey then concluded with an informal buffet in the evening back in Cobo Bay.

This was a very special occasion in the Chevaliers calendar of events for 2011. Guernsey, blessed by glorious weather for our visit, provided a perfect backdrop for an unforgettable programme. Our sincere gratitude goes to our Guernsey colleagues for their warm welcome, and for the excellence of the arrangements which they made.

From Chevalier Ian Kelsall

MIDSUMMER DINNER

New House, Thornhill, Cardiff on Thursday 9th June was the pleasing venue for this year's midsummer dinner. From the terrace there is a magnificent view over Cardiff and the Bristol Channel, but on this sunny evening an unexpectedly chill breeze drove indoors all but the hardiest of us. We would normally have loved to linger on that terrace sipping our muscadet in the evening sun, and gazing at England across the sea in the mist, with the islands in between.

Once inside and in the warmth, we soon found that what the stalwart attenders lacked in quantity they made up in quality, and an excellent evening was had by all.

We thank Chevalier Peter Dewey for his generous part in facilitating the success of this evening.



THE MAC THOMAS GOLF CUP DAY

A strong field of golfers contested the Holy Grail (or should it be the Holey Grail ?) of Chevalier golf, namely the Mac Thomas Cup at Radyr Golf Club on the 13th October.

The day was bright and almost balmy for the time of year. The field of combat was, as ever, characterised by the usual cut and thrust, nip and tuck and slings and arrows of outrageous fortune for which the competition has become memorable.

Even after all golfing deeds were done the outcome remained in doubt but when all the micro accounting was over John Jones emerged as the winner, nudging two time former champion Jeff MacWilkinson into second place by a nanohead.

The après-golf was enjoyed by all in suitably bibulous fashion accompanied by an excellent meal at Alfreds in Pontypridd. This restaurant did us proud, and many of us will be going there again. Particular thanks are due to John Phillips, who once again organised the event with his customary flair and panache.

From Echanson and Golfeur Extraordinaire John T Jones



Photos: SRR



SAUNDERSFOOT CHAPTER

Chevaliers came from all directions to find a warm and very efficient welcome at St Bride's Hotel, Saundersfoot on Saturday and Sunday 29th and 30th October. Some of them came earlier and stayed later, for this is a fine place to stay awhile, even in the soft rain which fell incessantly all day Saturday. Our Chapter and Intronisation Ceremony were held in the hotel on the Saturday evening, where the unusual building enforced several novelties. Outside, because of the weather, there was no parade, while inside we found that the cliff-top geography has led to the development of a hotel with various interesting and unexpected changes of floor level.

After the initial reception with some excellent Muscadet, the Bailli and Council found their seats on a raised area some four feet above those seated watching from below; and the échansons were located perforce on another part of the raised level with their Muscadet barrel, pipette and tastevins. The Chancellor also made use of this pulpit-like position when addressing the postulants. The enforced two-level layout gave a useful opportunity for our West Walian Halberdiers to look very impressive as they faced the room from the head of a staircase that joined the two levels. So impressed with themselves were they that they took to interrogating those who would pass - a mediaeval Checkpoint Charlie sort of thing. Meanwhile the Acting Maître de Cérémonie, who had always wanted a go of a real French gavel, gavelled with such gusto that the gavel block -

on its first day in service - split in half; but nobody was injured.

There were some 74 attenders in all, including from Nantes the Connétable Jean Richard and Ambassadeur Gérard Richard, and Wade Emmerson, Seneschal of Guernsey, with his wife Greta. Three new Chevaliers were intronised - Philip Evans, Jonathan Jones and Martin Sykes - and we look forward to getting to know them better as time goes by. The Halberdiers who were pressed into service for the day were Rick Mabey and Jim Dale, and without any time at all for weapons training they performed as if to the manner born.

A first class dinner followed, and next day after a good sleep and an excellent breakfast the sun shone as most of us wended our way home - a fine ending to an excellent weekend. We all owe our many thanks for the conception and detailed organisation of this excellent meeting to Geoff Stickler, Tony Davies and Richard Bosworth. Our complete back page montage for this newsletter also comes from Richard Bosworth, as does the following picture.



LONDON CHAPTER

In November the Bailli with Richard and Jane Anning and Michael Lawley attended the annual chapter of the Bailliage of Great Britain held for the first time in the august surroundings of the Oriental Club. Despite the traffic and road works the Bailli discharged his task of ensuring the delivery of Le Grand Maître, Ambassadeur Gerard Richard and Maître du Logis Jean Oger from their hotel to the venue in time for the pre-Chapter reception.

After the Chapter the dinner combined good food, the as always well chosen wines and good company. Unfortunately the Bailli had left behind his intended gift of Teach Yourself Rugby and had to fall back on a bottle of Welsh whisky.

Thanks to John Cuninghayme, Gerald Alfile and their confrères for a warm welcome and an excellent evening.

from Bailli Anthony Pugh

JULIUS HERMER

With great sadness we report the loss of Chevalier Julius Hermer in September. Born in Cardiff, he was very well known in the region, both as a solicitor in Cardiff and as a Councillor. He was Lord Mayor of Cardiff in 1987 and Deputy Lord Mayor on two other occasions, as well as Deputy Chairman of South Glamorgan County Council. Julius was intronised at Cardiff Castle in 2000 and he and his partner Vanda were welcome faces at many of our gatherings until quite recently. His very pleasant company will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Change of Duties in Nantes

Since the previous edition of The Welsh Grapevine there have been a number of changes of personnel at the centre of the Order in Nantes.

Jean Richard, after many years as Chancelier, has moved to the post of Connétable.

Paul Dalon has become Chancelier of the Order.

Jean-Louis Brosseau joins the Conseil, and **Dominique Gicquel** takes the post of Officier de Bouche, and is to deal with relations with other confréries. Five appointments were made to the rank of Cols Jaunes - the yellow collars: **Jean-Marc Ayrault, Jacques Auxiette, Patrick Mareschal, Patrick Baleyrier** and **Jean-Yves Templier**.

C'EST UN EXCELLENT MUSCADET

With the above words the Echansons accept the wine used for our ceremonies. We have news of another excellent Muscadet which arrived from Nantes in the car boot of the Ambassadeur at the end of October. Winner of the Gold Medal at the Concours des Grands Vins de France at Mâcon in 2011, this is a Muscadet from La Domaine de la Fruitière, where it was produced by Pierre and Chantal Lieubeau. The bailliage now has a large stock of this Muscadet for our use in future, and - who knows? - it may even last for more than one function.

M. and Mme. Lieubeau also produce, among other wines, a white mousseux méthode traditionnelle, of which the brut may please you more than some Champagnes.

La Domaine de la Fruitière is at 44690 Chateau Thébaud, France, where the Golden Bottle was awarded this year.



THE MINNESINGERS NEED YOUR BODY

Many of us were lucky enough to be travelling up and down the west coast of France in an Edwards luxury coach in the year of those most enjoyable 60th. anniversary celebrations centred on Nantes. With us on that coach were some members of the Minnesingers choral group, led and directed by Meryn Williams. They later joined us at some of our purely social functions in Cardiff, and contributed greatly to our enjoyment.

To the friends she made among us on those occasions, Meryn would like to say that she is looking to increase the number of tenors and basses in her choir membership. They rehearse on Sundays at 7.30 in Pontyclun. If you have been looking for a really good and well-directed choir to join, please telephone 07792 672287 for details.

CEFN-Y-DRE COUNTRY HOUSE B&B

Congratulations to Chevalier Geoff Stickler and Gaye Williams, who have done so well this year with their business at Cefn-y-Dre Country House.

Cefn-y-Dre is listed as one of the historic homes of Pembrokeshire, where it has been giving quality food and shelter to travellers for four hundred and ninety-nine years.

In the Pembrokeshire Tourism Awards they were winners of the award for Best Use of Local Produce in a Catering Outlet, which they won because of their excellent local sourcing and a very innovative approach to both their Breakfast and Dinner menus.

Geoff and Gaye strive to provide visitors with the very best home and locally-produced foods when preparing their menus. Eggs come from their own organically-reared and fed flock, and all yoghurt and bread is home made.

Most vegetables come from their kitchen garden, with meat sourced from the Preseli hills and seafood from Milford Haven. Sewin and Salmon are provided by the coracle fisherman of Cilgerran. Gaye now makes vegetarian Glamorgan sausages using home-grown leeks and local cheese, which have been very well received by visitors.

Also in 2011 Geoff and Gaye were winners of the gold award in the category of Finest Pembrokeshire Breakfast, sponsored by Pembrokeshire County Council. This prize was

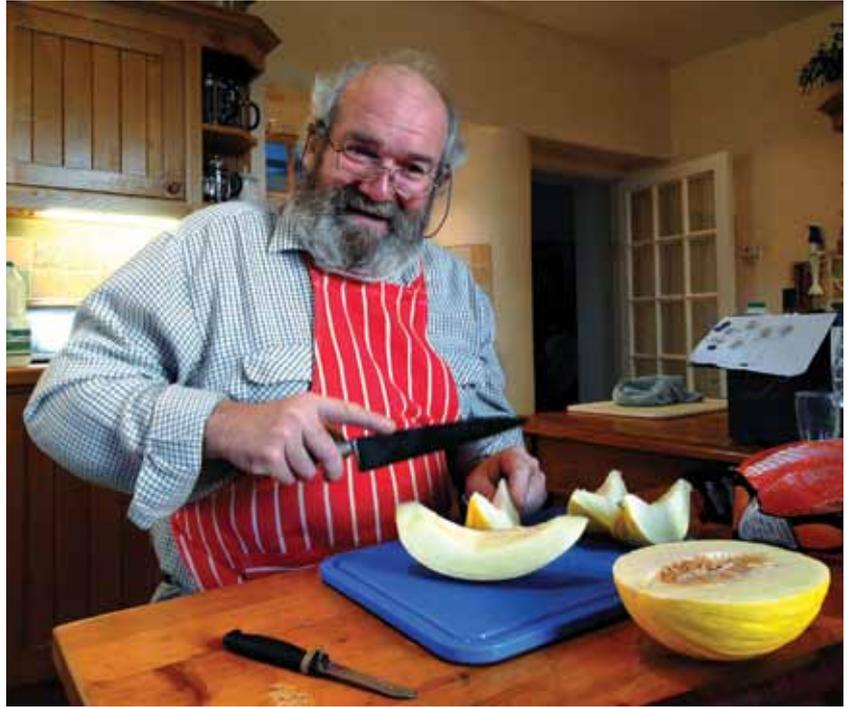


Photo: Richard Bosworth

awarded for quality of food, innovation and the wide variety of dishes offered in addition to the standard breakfast items including Welsh Pancakes, Scrambled Egg with Smoked Teifi Salmon, Kedgeree and Plums poached in Lemon Geranium Syrup.

More information is available on the website
www.cefnydre.co.uk

FINE DINING

Show me another pleasure like dinner, which comes every day and lasts an hour.

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand

There are two things you should never approach from the rear - restaurants and horses.

Evelyn Waugh

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2011

Dec 1st. *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Christmas Banquet, St. David's Hotel.*

2012

Jan. 21/22nd. *Feast of St Vincent at Aigrefeuille sur Maine*

February *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Last Invasion Buffet, Cefn-y-Dre, Fishguard*

March 17/18th. *64th. Expo'Vall at Vallet*

March 25th. *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Chapter & Lunch at Fonmon Castle*

April *Confrérie d'Alcester Annual Chapter & Lunch*

May 17/19th. *Bailliage of Berlin-Brandenburg Tenth Anniversary*

June *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Summer Banquet*

August *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Summer Garden Party, Radyr*

September *Baillage de Berlin - Grande Fête de l'Europe*

September *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Mac Thomas Golf Cup & Supper*

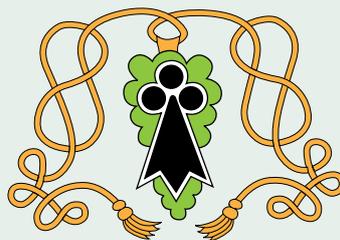
October *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Vendange Dinner*

November *The Golden Bottle Awards, Nantes*

December *Bailliage du Pays de Galles Christmas Banquet*

2013

Bailliage du Pays de Galles 20th. Anniversary celebrations



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: larkhill@live.co.uk

Pembrokeshire Chapter 2011

Photography & Montage
by Richard Bosworth



St BRIDES
spa hotel