

New Bailli for Chevaliers in Wales

Anthony Pugh, a Solicitor and Tribunal Judge in South Wales and past Chairman of the Cowbridge/Clisson Twining Association, and for many years a strong supporter of the Ordre des Chevaliers Bretons, has now become the head of the Order's Bailliage of Wales.

During a very busy weekend in Nantes in January, over the Feast of St Vincent the patron saint of winegrowers, gatherings took place in the totally refurbished Nantes Cathedral, in the historic City Hall, and in a number of restaurants and vineyards. Chevaliers from various European countries attended for the occasion.

At a crowded ceremony in the packed City Hall of Nantes in January 2011, with all the due formalities, Anthony was recognised by the Grand Master and Council of the Order as the new Bailli,



the Order's new chief representative in Wales. The appropriate new robes, which for his rank are lavishly trimmed with ermine, were symbolically put about his shoulders.

To become Bailli is to accept the appointment for as long as the incumbent can stand the pace. Anthony enters on his years of office with glowing youth and ample vigour for the task, and we look forward to many successful years under his leadership.

Anthony was the universal choice of the Chevaliers in Wales, and was formally proposed for the appointment by his predecessor, Peter Andrews, who had been Bailli since the creation of the Bailliage in 1993. Under his guidance the Bailliage has grown to a membership of nearly 60 Chevaliers – a reflection of what he has achieved.



Photo: France-Ouest

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Our Christmas Dinner for 2010 was held at The St Davids Hotel, Cardiff on 2nd December. The usual fine fare and copious supply of muscadet was complemented by cabaret from the hotel's excellent resident singer and entertainer.

In keeping with the seasonal atmosphere of luxury and excess, not one but two Chevaliers were named Chevalier of the Year. The picture shows Bailli Peter Andrews making the presentations to Peter Flower and Colin Ryland.



Photo: Richard Bosworth



LA FEUILLE DE VIGNE

Some clippings from the Nantes newsletter *La Feuille de Vigne - The Vine Leaf:*

AMBASSADORS: In 2010 the Grand Conseil, the Great Council, was occupied with reorganising the appointments of Ambassadors. Christian Roger was appointed for London, Alcester and Dublin. Jean-Pierre Dubard for Luxembourg, Belgium, Berlin, Linz and Saarbrücken; Gérard Richard for Jersey, Guernsey, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Jacksonville; and Jean-Luc Lambion for Savona.

The relevant Ambassador represents the Grand Maître in the absence of the Grand Maître, Connetable or Chancelier. The Ambassadors are charged with surveying the application of the rules of the Order throughout the Bailliages, especially at Chapter meetings. They are concerned with the conduct of the affairs of the Ordre in the Bailliages.

Gérard Richard and Dominique Gicquel have become members of the Grand Conseil.

ECHANSONS: This is not a word used much in modern French. Having absolutely nothing at all to do with the better known word chanson, échançon is defined in current dictionaries primarily as “a pourer of drinks” but also as “an officer charged with serving drink for the King or other grand personage”. Here we move to a meaning more relevant to Chevaliers Bretvins, for our échançons have the

honour of formally presenting the fruits of the labour of the winegrowers, the Muscadet, during our ceremonies.

INNOVATION: Last autumn’s Golden Bottle was awarded to the commune of Bouaye for the third time. At the same event, for the first time, the trophy of the Silver Ermine was awarded to the commune of Landreau in recognition of the number of second and third place awards gained by that commune in the judging.

Another innovation has been the first three evenings of introduction to wine tasting for Bretvins and their partners, the first having been held in the tower of the Chateau de Goulaine, seat of the Order. These tasting evenings allow a much better understanding of the work put in by the muscadet vigneron, and they have been a great success.

MUSSEL MEN: A entirely new organisation, the Confrerie Des Bouchoteurs (yes, it does mean mussel men !) has been set up in the town of Penestin which is famous for its mussels. Representatives of fifteen other organisations, including the Chevaliers Bretvins, were invited to the launch, at which eight new mussel men were intronised. The celebratory parade and Mass was enlivened by a team of hunting horn blowers. A very fine meal followed - guess the menu ?

ROOKIE WINS MAC THOMAS TROPHY

The weather was set fair on the morning of the 30th September last when the golfing Chevaliers made their way to Radyr Golf Club for the annual battle for the Mac Thomas Trophy. We were missing some members but ten hopefuls registered their entry with the organiser, John Phillips.

I was to play with Andrew Parker and John Skalitzky. The golf course was in lovely condition and the greens were true and fast. There was the usual good banter and encouragement amongst the players, but there was a steely look in John S’s eyes as we tackled the back 9 holes. A quick glance at the points as we played the 17th showed that John and I were neck and neck. After a great drive by John his second shot found the greenside bunker. I chipped onto the green for 3 with a chance of holing the putt and felt reasonably confident until a ball came flying out of the bunker and disappeared down the hole for a birdie. John appeared chuckling waiting for my reaction. This was the end of my attempt to defend the title. The rookie had sneaked home with a very creditable 34 points to beat Tony Fuge and myself into joint second place with our 32 points each. All agreed that they had enjoyed

the day as the weary contestants made their way to the Club House. The evening was full of bonhomie with an excellent dinner and copious amounts of wine. We were thirty for dinner, including non playing Chevaliers and the ladies. The winner was announced and Bev Thomas in her usual gracious way presented the Cup.

John held onto the Cup all night and made sure that he took it home with him without further damage (unlike last year’s winner!). Substantial alterations are taking place at the Skalitzky residence, and there is no doubt that new lighting will be installed to show off the Cup on the sideboard, or perhaps above his bed! So many stories are filled with some sadness. Unfortunately John’s victory came too late for his selection for the Ryder Cup, but I understand he was there in the winner’s enclosure holding the Mac Thomas trophy aloft as he cheered the European team to victory. Many thanks to Radyr Golf Club, and to Le Vice-Maître de Cérémonie John Phillips for his organisation.

From Le Hallebardier Jeffrey MacWilkinson

THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR BAILLIAGE

Taken from an address given by Chancellor Andrew Parker following the Council meeting of January 2011, during a special Council supper given to mark the retirement from office of Bailli Peter Andrews.

In summer of 1993 Peter and Diana had been running Llanerch vineyard for five years, and in their fifth year they won a silver medal in an international wine competition in Bordeaux. Cardiff recognised this success by using images of the vineyard to promote Cardiff on the London Underground.

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff at that time, Victor Reilly (known to the French as Lord Reilly), was invited to make an official visit to Nantes, a twin city of Cardiff. In the draft programme the Lord Mayor was to be made a Chevalier Bretvin. The Lord Mayor being abstemious as far as wine was concerned, this gave his officials cause for concern. They knew of Llanerch Vineyard, and after consulting Geoff Stickler and Gaye Williams at Cardiff Marketing the Lord Mayor's Office approached Peter and Diana to see if they would join the official visit to Nantes.

So it was that in September 1993 Peter and Diana travelled to Nantes as part of that delegation, ready to step in whenever anything "winey" came up, but on arrival they found that the French had moved the goalposts. Not only was the Lord Mayor to become a Chevalier Bretvin, but the protocol had also been set up to create a Bailliage - a subsidiary group, an integral part of The Order - in Wales, with the Lord Mayor at its head as Bailli.

The Lord Mayor was none too keen. Peter Andrews was moved forward in his place, and Peter returned home wearing the hat of Le Bailli, Bailliage du Pays de Galles de L'Ordre des Chevaliers Bretvins. Swift promotion indeed, but as Peter has said many times, it turned out to be one of the nicest things that ever happened to him.

During the visit, the French discovered that Diana Andrews was the winemaker of the Cariad wines that had been given to them. They were so impressed with the wines, particularly the rosé, that they presented Diana with the Duchesse Anne Medal of the Ordre des Chevaliers Bretvins, which conferred on her the title of Dame de la Duchesse Anne.



On his return to Wales, Peter was charged with finding a few like minded individuals to form a committee or Council for the Bailliage. With the help of the Lord Mayor's Office seven people were persuaded to come forward for intronisation, not knowing what this would lead to. Interestingly six of these are still with us as active or honorary members -

alphabetically Derek Bryer, Andrew Parker, Eddie Rabaiotti, Mike Salter, John Foster Thomas and Islwyn Wigley. The French came to Cardiff in October 1993, formally created the Bailliage in Cardiff City Hall, and intronised the new committee.

Our first Chapter was held in Cardiff City Hall in February 1994, when Geraint Evans, David Hudson, new Lord Mayor Ricky Ormond, and current Council Members Geoff Stickler and John Phillips were taken on board. It can be clearly seen on the photographs taken that day that those who drink muscadet do not look any older than they did on the day they were intronised.

Eighteen years later, as at 1st. January 2011, our Bailliage has 59 active and honorary members, with three more imminent.



The supper was indeed special. Thanks to the kindness of Consul Sir Brooke Boothby, the Council meeting was held in Fonmon Castle where in another room a most excellent supper was being prepared by Beppe Villa. Fine wines flowed by courtesy of Le Gouverneur aux Finances John Foster Thomas, and the port was the gift of Sir Brooke, in a decanter which held (to begin with) nearly four bottles of port. The Council Members presented the outgoing Bailli with an appropriately engraved silver tastevin.



DONALD ROSE

Don Rose was intronised into the Bailliage of Wales in March 2010, after attending several of our social functions with his dear wife Gillian. As a guest he had swiftly come to the conclusion that Chevaliers know how to enjoy themselves properly, whilst achieving their basic aims at the same time. As he said, not many organisations can get that balance right. It is a balance which in his own life he always achieved very well, and he would have blended in with us very quickly.

Some of us met Don and Gillian at the functions they did attend, but most never had the time to get to know them well. The annual Chapter and lunch at Fonmon Castle last year was sadly the first and last function that Don was able to attend as an intronised Chevalier. To his surprise, and that of those around him, a cancer in his knee was discovered only weeks afterwards, and that led him to suffer many months of disabling pain before he died in December 2010.

Having been his friend for over twenty years, I have often seen how he was able to contribute greatly to any social situation. The community and the Bailliage are much the poorer for his loss. We send our condolences to Gillian, and hope that in due course we may see her again at our gatherings.

Colin Ryland



Photo: Richard Bosworth

THE FEAST OF ST VINCENT, JANUARY 2011

Our visit to Nantes had clearly been keenly awaited by Welsh Bailliage members, as indicated by the total of 53 Chevaliers and partners who made the trip. Of these 16 travelled independently whilst 37 turned out with copious luggage and great expectations at the Edwards



En route, somewhere in France

Photo: SRR

coach yard at Llantwit Fadde for an 8.30am start on the Friday morning. At that point the journey by coach looked like a formidable test of fortitude, but fears were quickly dispelled by David Vokes' assertion that the journey counted towards Chevaliers pensions. Much later in the journey, however fears began to materialise that Nantes did not really exist and that it was a figment of Peter Andrews' imagination! As soon as we reached the slip road up to the M4 motorway the blessed champagne was broken out by Mike Salter and Islwyn Wigley who both seemed tireless in the task of keeping us cheerful and, with a break during the Chunnel crossing, they continued to ply us with the sacred beverage throughout

the afternoon. So much so that we became convinced that the coach was towing a bowser full of champagne behind it.

On a more serious note Hugh Williams thoughtfully proposed a toast to Rolph James, saying "He would have wished us all to enjoy ourselves; I can just see him now, sitting on a golden jereboam of champagne"

Our overnight stay en route was at the Hotel Mercure at Pont L'Eveque where the bar did a brisk trade before dinner. This was enlivened by two events. Peter Andrews confided that during a convenience stop during the journey that afternoon he had been approached in the gents' toilets by a Frenchman who had kissed him on both cheeks. But an explanation had quickly been forthcoming – the man was a French Chevalier en route for Nantes who had recognised Peter. One of the perks of being Bailli?

Then we had an announcement by Sir Brooke Boothby that he wished to settle his account with Peter, and that he would be doing this with a mixture of shekels, roubles and Zimbabwean dollars. This he promptly did.



The Tie Collection

Photo: M Salter

A more serious and poignant moment than when Anthony Pugh, on behalf of the Chancellerie presented Peter with an embroidered jacket to mark his period as Bailli from 1993 to 2011.

Nantes finally came into view for the intrepid coach travellers at lunchtime on Saturday and, after lunch, where we were joined by the independent travellers. We enrobed and transferred by bus to the Place du Commerce where we met up with the French and Grand Bretagne contingents. In a grand procession, preceded by pipers and led by halberdiers and banners we made our way proudly through the impressive old centre of Nantes to the Hotel de Ville, attracting the curiosity of large numbers of local people, including a group of young men sporting Mohican hair cuts who seemed to find our attire amusing!

The ceremony in the grand salon of the Hotel de Ville which followed was particularly poignant for the Welsh contingent, marking as it did Peter's retirement as Bailli and the recognition of Anthony as his successor. Moving moments as Le Grand Maitre gave fulsome praise for Peter's leadership and dedication during his long term of office. After responding, with fluent translation by our Herald, Peter went on to propose Anthony as his successor and, to applause, Anthony was duly installed as the new Welsh Bailli. Surely a significant event in the history of our Bailliage.



*new Bailli, Anthony Pugh, at Hotel de Ville, Nantes
Photo: SRR*

An intronisation ceremony for new French members followed, after which we were treated to a reception at which the Muscadet flowed; then transferred by bus to dinner voted by the Welsh contingent as simply superb.

Sunday brought an early start as we went again to the Hotel de Ville for a Bretvin breakfast, with more Muscadet, and then processed, preceded again by pipers to the beautiful Nantes Cathedral for the St Vincent Mass. We were all impressed both by the magnificence of our surroundings and by the service, although the very cold temperature was distracting – we had been warned of this by our hosts but had not expected it to be quite so cold.

A complete contrast then as we were taken to the Nantes football stadium for lunch in the restaurant 'Les etoiles du Stade' – a lovely and relaxed occasion during which several presentations were made. Le Grand Maitre presented Peter with a picture of the Passage Pommeraye in Nantes, and during his speech expressed admiration for Peter's leadership and dedication, describing the Welsh as " One of the most dynamic Bailliages". It must be said that there was no little amusement when Peter was, at one point, described as being "juicy". Ah, the perils of translation!

The occasion was also marked by Anthony's first speech as Bailli, delivered in fluent French, in which he thanked Le



Photo: France-Ouest



Photo: SRR

Grand Maitre for the excellence of all the arrangements and for his good wishes for his success in office.

There were mixed feelings among us about our performance when acceding to a request from our hosts for us to sing. Our rendition of Calon Lan was perhaps adequate given the lack of notice and preparation but we did certainly redeem ourselves with a spirited rendering of Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau.

Sunday concluded with a visit to the vineyards of Domaine Bruno Cormerais near Clisson, where tastings were followed by purchases, as a result of which some Welsh cellars will be well stocked for some time with Muscadet.

On Monday we all departed Nantes by plane, car or coach, the latter decanting weary but unsubdued Chevaliers and partners at Llantwit Fadre at 1.00 am on Tuesday morning after what can only be described as a noisy and convivial ferry crossing from Caen to Portsmouth.

All in all this was a memorable trip, a thoroughly enjoyable one; memorable since it marked a new chapter in the history of the Welsh Bailliage with the installation of our new Bailli and thoroughly enjoyable simply because of the Chevaliers spirit which pervades every Chevalier function.

A few abiding memories of the visit:

The photograph in France Ouest on Monday of two of our Welsh Chevaliers proudly carrying their banners in the procession to the Hotel de Ville – juxtaposed with a photograph of demonstrating gays and lesbians.



Photo: France-Ouest



Cathedral parade Photo: M Salter



Processing to Nantes Cathedral Photo: M Salter



Paraded outside Nantes Cathedral Photo: SRR



A reception in Nantes Hotel de Ville Photo: SRR

The dedication of wives and partners in preparing and distributing a veritable feast of food for consumption en route, including a very special Texan Christmas cake.

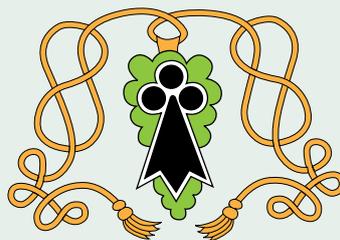
The clear envy of our French colleagues when examining our halberds and comparing them with their own.

And, more significantly the tremendous admiration and respect which our French friends clearly have for Peter, sentiments with which we find it all too easy to concur

From Chevalier Ian Kelsall

DATES FOR DIARIES

March 20	Annual Chapter and lunch, Fonmon Castle
April 17	Alcester Chapter and lunch
June 9	Midsummer Dinner, New House, Thornhill
21 August	Summer garden party - hosts Clive & Sally Johnson
September 23/25	Guernsey 10th. Anniversary Chapter
September	Champagne/Battlefields trip <i>postponed</i> to 2012
October	Mac Thomas Golf Day
October 29	Vendange Dinner and Chapter St Brides Spa Hotel, St, Brides, West Wales
November	Bouteille d'Or, France
December 1	Christmas Dinner



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