



Bailli to retire

Like Halley's Comet, they do not come around very often, and some of us never live to see one; but in the next few months we shall see that rare event, the retirement of a Bailli of the Ordre des Chevaliers Bretons.

Peter Andrews has been seventeen years in the post of Bailli du Pays de Galles - the Chevaliers' Bailiff of Wales, and the head of the Order in this country - but he will soon be wearing the Order's ermine robes as our Bailli for the last time.

Peter has led an enviably interesting professional and business life, shared in so many ways with his very supportive wife and business partner Diana.

Following family tradition by graduating in Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Peter has spent some fifty happy and successful years with Diana. They met at the School of Pharmacy of the University of London in the late fifties, and married soon after graduating. Their three daughters have long been popular figures at our gatherings.

After graduation Peter began his career in the pharmaceuticals industry, which included spells in research, general management and international sales management. After deciding on a change of direction in 1966, there followed ten hard years of building up a chain of chemists shops, again following a family tradition. This chain began in Cardiff, Diana's home town.

From 1977 they had lived in a farmhouse with south-facing land at Llanerch, near Cardiff, and when the time came in 1987 to sell their chemist's shops, their previous hobby of cultivating vines at Llanerch became a serious business, and formed their next source of income. They started a new life as professional viticulteurs. They proved to be very successful at it, as we all know, and the wine business also led Peter into senior advisory roles in the tourist and food & drink industries of Wales.



Retiring Bailli Peter Andrews

In 1993, through the good offices of Cardiff City Hall, the Chevaliers HQ in Nantes identified this prominent Welsh wine grower with tourism interests as the man they needed to establish in Wales a new branch of their organisation. Peter accepted the role of Bailli, and remained both viticulteur and Bailli for the rest of his working life, not selling the vineyard until 2007, and remaining our Bailli until now.

Peter will lay aside the burdens of office next January at a ceremony in Nantes Cathedral, but we are delighted that he intends to stay very much with us as a senior member of this Bailliage. He will also continue with his interests in local community and youth work, which have been important to him all his life.

MARCH

Yvonne Fox

Yvonne Fox

WE sadly noted the passing in March of Yvonne Fox, whom many of us will remember, but especially those who were Chevaliers and took part in the bicentenary celebrations in 1997.

As part of those festivities, marking the 200th anniversary of the last French landing of troops in Great Britain, Yvonne famously played the role of Jemima Nicholas, the Welsh heroine who arrested the French force that came ashore in West Wales.

Yvonne continued to play the part of Jemima for many years after 1997, at dozens of charity and civic events in West Wales. She was much loved by the community, and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



Yvonne as Jemima Nicholas

Alcester Chapter

Nine of our number - Mike Salter, Andrew Parker, Peter Flower and Clive Johnson, all accompanied by their spouses, plus Mario Greening - were able to make the trip to Alcester again this year for the annual Chapter in the ancient and atmospheric Alcester Town Hall.

This event, always most enjoyable, followed the usual format - drinks (Old Monk's Mead on this occasion) at

the house of Bailli Jeremy Howell, then a short uniformed procession through the historic town to the Hall where the Chapter is held. The Chapter began with a welcome in what may have been Welsh, and the Grace at lunch was given in Saxon, by a monk.

Once again this event was most enjoyable, and our thanks go Bailli Jeremy Howell and his team for their great hospitality.

Visit to Namur for the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the Belgian Bailliage – Thursday 13th May – Sunday 16th May.

Many photographs of the visit to Namur can be printed by individuals from the following website link, but we do not have permission to use them here. The link, which must be used complete with its original spelling mistake, is:

http://albums.photonweb.com/sonocturne/40__me_Anniversaires_de_1_ordre_des_Charvaliers_Betvins_de_Belgique/

Report by Chevalier Michael Lawley.

As John Weber said, while he and Mike Salter were distributing the glasses and opening the champagne shortly after dawn on our luxury coach (not bus) gliding down the M4, "This is hedonism!" And 18 bottles of champagne later, at 8.30 in the morning at Reading Services, the twenty nine passengers definitely all agreed (although most would have agreed with anything by then).

After that blast of alcohol, the trip subsided into a somewhat quieter phase until the Channel Tunnel where standing next to their coach on board the shuttle train, the Chevaliers Bretvins, somewhat to the bewilderment of fellow passengers who may have mistaken us for a Saga trip, consumed champagne, Peroni, cocktail sausages and Waitrose cheesy things, as they travelled "sous la Manche" to join their fellow Chevaliers in Belgium.

The journey onwards was incident free, over straight roads and a flat landscape, until we reached Namur, an historic town on the banks of the Meuse. We arrived to walk straight into a Chevalier drinks reception at the hotel where all the Chevaliers and their guests were staying.



Who's got a new halberd, then?

Our hosts were clearly setting down a serious pace that we would have to keep up with.

The reception was just the prelude to the informal dinner that had been organised that evening at the Leonardo Hotel, which is situated on the banks of the Meuse. The journey to the hotel was in a fleet of Namur corporation buses, whose drivers seemed to have

graduated from the Ben Hur School of Driving. We arrived shaken – but not stirred. The British contingent, most of whom like all lazy Brits had very little French, were very grateful for their hosts offering some of the addresses in English and it helped to get us to clap in the right place. Needless to say much wine was imbibed.

Next morning after breakfast chaos at the hotel, and a little disoriented by the change of time zone (or more probably the wine), the Welsh Chevaliers pulled themselves together, robed up and turned out with all the other Chevaliers to process through the centre of Namur. Roads were closed off; and accompanied by two police outriders (more than David Cameron gets nowadays) we felt very important. It was perhaps a little early in the day for many of the residents to be out and about, but those who were

lucky enough, saw a very orderly colour coded parade led by stern looking men with halberds and banners. As always the greens (including the writer and his unique hat) and the faithful camp followers came last.

After Chevaliers, flourishing their halberds, had scared off a small group of inquisitive and camera laden Japanese tourists, who must have thought that the robed Chevaliers had been laid on for their photographs, there was a brief photo shoot on the steps of the Cathedral. Then after a quick



Chantal Cherhal's trial of robes

coffee in the local coffee shop, we went to the Governor's Palace courtyard for a display of a unique Namurian delicacy - stilt fighting. It is very hard to explain other than that two teams of stilt walkers try to knock the stilts from under each other, until literally the last man standing (which often seemed to be the underdog i.e. the youngest or smallest) wins. After several rounds of what

was clearly a very physical and potentially bone breaking affair, we retreated to the inner salons of the Palace where the Governor spoke to us all and then showed us around the Council Chamber. The Governor, who was intronised on the Friday evening, spoke very good English and spent some time talking to the Welsh Bailli and some of the other Welsh Chevaliers about the beautiful building which was originally a Bishops Palace.

There was then a further process to the old Arsenal - no not Highbury, but a well restored historic building overlooked by the town's lofty citadel. In the Arsenal we had a very civilised lunch which like all good lunches went on longer than planned and led to the abandonment of the afternoon museum visits, as Chevaliers beat a hasty retreat to rebuild their stamina for the night ahead. That was a wise move!



There was a leg over in Namur.

The highlight of the celebrations was to be the Chapter meeting and intronisations followed by a banquet. The venue was the imposing Chateau de Namur built high on the hill next to the Citadel overlooking the confluence of the rivers Meuse and Sambre and the old town area of Namur. The only downside for the robed Chevaliers and their entourage was the Ben Hur rerun in the buses to get there, where roundabouts were seen as challenges rather



Shins of steel

than obstacles. But ... the Muscaget was good, and so was the banquet, when so many old friends were reunited and new friendships made.

At the end of the evening some gracious and multi lingual speeches were made to round off the 40th anniversary celebrations and gifts were given to the Belgian Baillage. The Welsh gift was a splendidly ferocious looking wrought iron dragon that was probably musing "I love le Muscaget - but we can still beat you all at rugby !" The evening ended with an enforced wait for our charioteers to return in their buses, but it did at least enable those of us that toughed it out in the evening air to admire the beautiful floodlit garden setting of the magnificent chateau.

So where, you ask, do the boats come into this ? Well the final part of the celebrations was to be a relaxing Saturday morning boat ride on the Meuse. We had all been given a rendezvous time of 9.30am in the hotel reception, but when the Welsh chevaliers mustered there, they were all alone. The others had made an early start without us.

Wayne Smith our trusty driver (who came from the Mr Sulu School of Driving - gracefully flying his starcruiser) came to the rescue. Wayne had already saved our bacon by pointing out on Friday lunchtime to the Bailli by mobile, that he had discovered that we were only booked in for two nights rather than three. He had then fixed the extra night's booking while the Bailli carried on his discourse and got stuck into the second course and more fine wines at the Arsenal. Once again Wayne rose to the challenge and with his impeccable sense of direction, led us to the quayside on the river, where we found all the rest of the Chevaliers entourage ready to cast off. The boat trip was all too short. The river had dramatic sights of great houses and stunning landscape along its banks (and we

also went past the Leonardo Restaurant). Most of us were set fair to go all the way to Dinant and some, notably the Maître de Bouche, were well into their second bottle when we had to return, but he did at least do us honour of giving everybody a chivalrous helping hand to disembark.

The final throw of the dice was lunch, and once again a top venue had been found. "Les Tanneries" was a tastily refurbished set of buildings in the old town. Because of the layout we were in several rooms, which meant that the

Grand Maitre had to do his closing speech twice and then each room had a rousing rendition of the Le Chevalier Bretvin song which went down very well.

And that was it; Namur and the Belgian Baillage had done us proud. We had the rest of the day for sightseeing, and a relaxing evening with just a little more food and wine. The journey back took eight hours door to door which was a tremendous feat, and all due to the hero of the hour - Mr Wayne Smith - Honorary Maître du Charabanc.

JUNE 13th

Brigadier Rolph James

Not very long after being diagnosed as having cancer, Rolph James passed away on June 13th. 2010. He would have liked nothing better than to be in Portsmouth with the rest of us on that day. The following words are from our Sénéchal, Mike Salter:

ROLPH JAMES CBE

Those of us who got to know Rolph during his seven years as a Chevalier knew him to be a kind gentleman, full of enthusiasm and always willing to put himself out to help others.

The Chevaliers enjoyed two highly successful trips to Rheims arranged by Rolph and, on a number of occasions, the Bailli was grateful for his help in obtaining tickets for Rugby Internationals. Nothing seemed to be too much trouble.

Rolph will also be remembered as a supplier of De Horsey champagne (of which he was a part owner). "They drink this in Quaglinos so it should be up to Chevaliers' standards", he was heard to say.



Brigadier Rolph James



Brigadier Rolph James

Photo: Richard Boscworth

Those Chevaliers who attended his funeral service at Malvern Priory (incidentally a wonderful celebration of his life) were astonished at the range of his activities and achievements, particularly his military career and his long association with the London Welsh. How did he find time for us? And yet he clearly enjoyed the camaraderie of the Chevaliers – a picture of him in his robes was in pride of place at the reception.

A number of Chevaliers visited him in hospital and his outlook was surprisingly realistic and cheerful. "I have had a good life and would not have changed anything", he said to

me. He knew that he only had weeks to live. "When I get out of here and am back home we must have a party. There is loads of champagne" (De Horsey of course) "and Hendricks gin in the garage and I can't take it with me!" Sadly that party never took place but it is pleasing to note that one of our members did manage to visit Rolph at home and reduce the stock during the course of an afternoon. It was fitting that it was Hugh who introduced Rolph to the Order back in 2003.

The last Chevaliers event that Rolph attended was at Fonmon Castle in March despite the fact that he was in considerable pain.

A number of Chevaliers had reason to question Rolph's navigational competence on one of the trips to Rheims. Well, there is no question which route he has now taken, and I expect they are all having a very good party up there.

We will all miss you, Rolph -- "Bois le vin, sois bon comme lui!"

Mike Salter

Report by Chevalier Clive Johnson

The very thought of travelling by coach filled me with the same sense of fear and trepidation as getting into a small lift with three sumo wrestlers just out of the dohyo.

However, this perception quickly changed with my first Chevalier trip. Not only was there plenty of space, but the whole experience was enhanced by Mike serving the champagne, Hilary's excellent fruit cake and John's first class service as trolley dolly.

The trip to Portsmouth for the GB baillage 40th anniversary was no exception. In line with tradition, everyone had signed the pledge, vowing not to let a drop of alcohol pass their lips until we reached the motorway, at which point the flood gates burst and a very jolly time was had by all.



Photo: Peter Andriens

Have some madeira, m'dear



Photo: SRR

Picnic at Petworth

On Saturday morning we all headed off by coach to Petworth House, a large 17th century mansion set in a 700 acre deer park. We strolled around the house enjoying the fabulous art collection, with works by Van Dyck and Turner very much in evidence. Sunshine and rosé wine made a very informal lunch on the lawn into a real treat.

After a quick change back at the hotel we were off for a champagne reception, and a private tour of HMS Victory .. in our dinner jackets! ... quite different attire to the 850 ratings and powder monkeys who accompanied Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar.

At the GB Chapter the principal guest was Hilary Hope Guise, a distant relative of French nobility, who was intronised as the first UK Dame de la Duchesse Anne.



Photo: Richard Bosworth

The Royal Yacht Squadron lawns



Photo: Richard Bosworth

The Victory Committee



Back on the ferry to Portsmouth to collect our bags, pour ourselves in the Edwards coach for a very contented but quiet trip home.



Photo: Richard Bosworth

Interior of Petworth House

Dinner that evening was to a fine standard, the wines were well chosen, and new friendships were established with Chevaliers from home and abroad.

On Sunday morning we headed off to tour HMS Warrior. Built on instructions of Queen Victoria to ward off potential attackers, it worked perfectly and never fired a shot in anger.

Iron clad teak with sails and steam, not to mention a lifting propeller, it was an amazing example of the excellence of Victorian innovation and engineering. Our guide took great pride in the fact that its crew were able to fire and reload their guns twice as fast as our neighbours.

With the tour of Warrior finished we hopped onto a somewhat less ostentatious, but nonetheless comfortable, boat to cross over to the Isle of Wight for another champagne reception on the lawn of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

Lunch in the Pavilion was more than a bit special. Looking out over a sunny Solent, and enjoying the fabulous surroundings, we were served salmon with RYS mayonnaise, roast beef, lemon mousse and welsh rarebit. The service showed off the catering and serving skills of this prestigious club at their very best.

For reasons too complicated to explain, there was no raiding party of Chevaliers at this event, but its organisers specifically asked for the presence of our Bailli. Since the Bailli was in Iceland, the problem was neatly solved by deputising Echanson John T Jones to go in place of the Bailli, and to pretend that he was very important. A fine multilingual report from the said échanson is set out below, “in his own write” as John Lennon put it, and entirely without responsibility on the part of the Editor or anyone else. There is no accompanying photograph, because J.T.J. bravely refused to pay for the negatives.

Translation notes for English monoglots and other overseas readers:-

It is thought possible that the title of the following report means “a taste of being the Big Cheese”, and that since “being privy to a blog” is not a criminal offence in Wales (yet) they can’t touch us for it.

“*Crachach*” is, as everybody knows, short for *crachfoneddwyr*, which means the soi-disant Welsh upper crust of society; and it is claimed by some that “*blas ar Gymru*” means a taste of Wales.

Messieurs:

With no wish for self advertisement, I nevertheless thought you should be privy to my blog in respect of the above.

A taste of Le Grand Fromage

Friday nights chez moi, l'échanson John T Jones, are usually given over to calm reflection and undemanding musings, soothed by the balm of a mellow glass of red. Such relaxing routine was unexpectedly broken on Friday last when I was parachuted into the role of ‘bailli for the night’ at the Cardiff International Food and Drinks Festival held in Cardiff Bay over the 9th to 11th July.

The enclosure into which I was ushered was clearly earmarked for the local *crachach*, and was sited imperiously above the throng of urban revellers. From this vantage point I felt the same frisson of power that Roman emperors must have enjoyed when giving either the thumbs up or the thumbs down in the Colosseum.

Back in the real world of the Roald Dahl Plass, Cardiff Bay, I fell into conversation with a very amiable Scottish gentleman who had made Cardiff his home after travelling the world. I was much impressed with his *joie de vivre*, though his relish to enjoy the party was made the more explicable when he told me that bed for the night was only a short walk away to a yacht moored in the dock.

A generous offering of food and drink was made available by the hosts, and having quaffed some *rosé* with the degree of circumspection that my temporary office required, my eyes alighted on a very fine range of Welsh cheeses which were on display.

Some time later, and having ‘hoovered’ all that ‘*blas ar Gymru*’ could throw at me, I sauntered off into the night, somewhat corpulently, but with the satisfied feeling of being every inch ‘Le Grand Fromage’.

Mange le Caerffili, sois bon comme lui - **J.T.J.**

After a meeting of the Conseil of this Bailliage in August 2010, where nibbles and the odd glass of muscadet were served, the apparently very knowledgeable Hungarian sommelier took Maître du Logis Richard Bosworth aside and somehow convinced him that we all need to be acquainted with the following famous Hungarian wines:

AREA	WINE
Badacsony	Lea'nyka + Slurkebara't + Olarsrizling
Soproni	Ke'kfrankos + Cserslegi Fusleres
Eger	Thummerer + Bika Ve'r + Bulls Blood
Villa'ny	Bock + Gere + Thummerer
Tokaji	Szamorodni + Ha'rslevelu

There are no translation notes and no tasting notes available on this occasion. Richard is recovering well now, but no flowers, please.



Photo: Richard Bosworth

Souvenir of Llanmerch

This being his final summer as Bailli, Peter and Diana felt they would like to have the summer lunch at their new home in Penarth. Despite the wet spell of weather the sun shone brilliantly all afternoon, the venue was simply excellent for such an event, and the catering and of course the hospitality were first class.

This was an altogether excellent function, setting a high standard for others to compete with in following years.



Photo: Richard Bosworth



FUTURE EVENTS

Details to be circulated in due course, but please note these dates:

September 30th - Golf Day

The Mac Thomas Golf Day will take place at Radyr Golf Club, Cardiff at 2.30pm.
Dinner in the evening is open to all comers, whether playing golf or not.

October 7th - Vendange Dinner

This year our dinner is at the award winning Le Gallois Restaurant, Romilly Crescent, Cardiff CF11 9NR at 7.30 for 8.00pm. on Thursday 7th October. Circulated and fully booked now, but Bailli is keeping a waiting list in case of cancellations.

November 21st - The Golden Bottle award

Bouaye, which is the Muscadet Appellation Côtes de GrandLieu, is the winning village this year, its viticulteurs having won the most individual awards in the wine trade this season. The Appellation was created only in 1944, covering a section of the general Muscadet Appellation. It has very strict rules governing wine production, and only grapes from vines over seven years old can be used.

Whilst any Chevaliers and guests are welcome to attend, it is thought probable that most Welsh Chevaliers will reserve their resources for the January function on this occasion - see below.

December 2nd - Christmas Dinner

This will be at The St David's Hotel, Cardiff on Thursday 2nd December.

January 23rd 2011 - Nantes

This is to be a combined Nantes Chapter, Feast of St Vincent (patron saint of wine makers) and intronisation of Anthony Pugh as the new Bailli du Pays de Galles. The French are creating a special programme for this year's St Vincent to recognise Anthony as the new Bailli.

It is expected that at least one coach full of Welsh supporters will be in attendance.

It is hoped to arrange a ferry crossing that will give us dinner together in France, with beds in a French hotel just across the Channel, instead of taking cabins on the ferry.

March 2011 - Fonmon Castle

We hope that our annual Chapter and lunch will be held at Fonmon on one of the Sundays in March.

September 2011 - Battlefields and Champagne trip

This trip is envisaged for a weekend in early September, staying at Ypres and Rheims.

October 2011 - Vendange Dinner

This will probably be held in West Wales, possibly in Saundersfoot.

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