

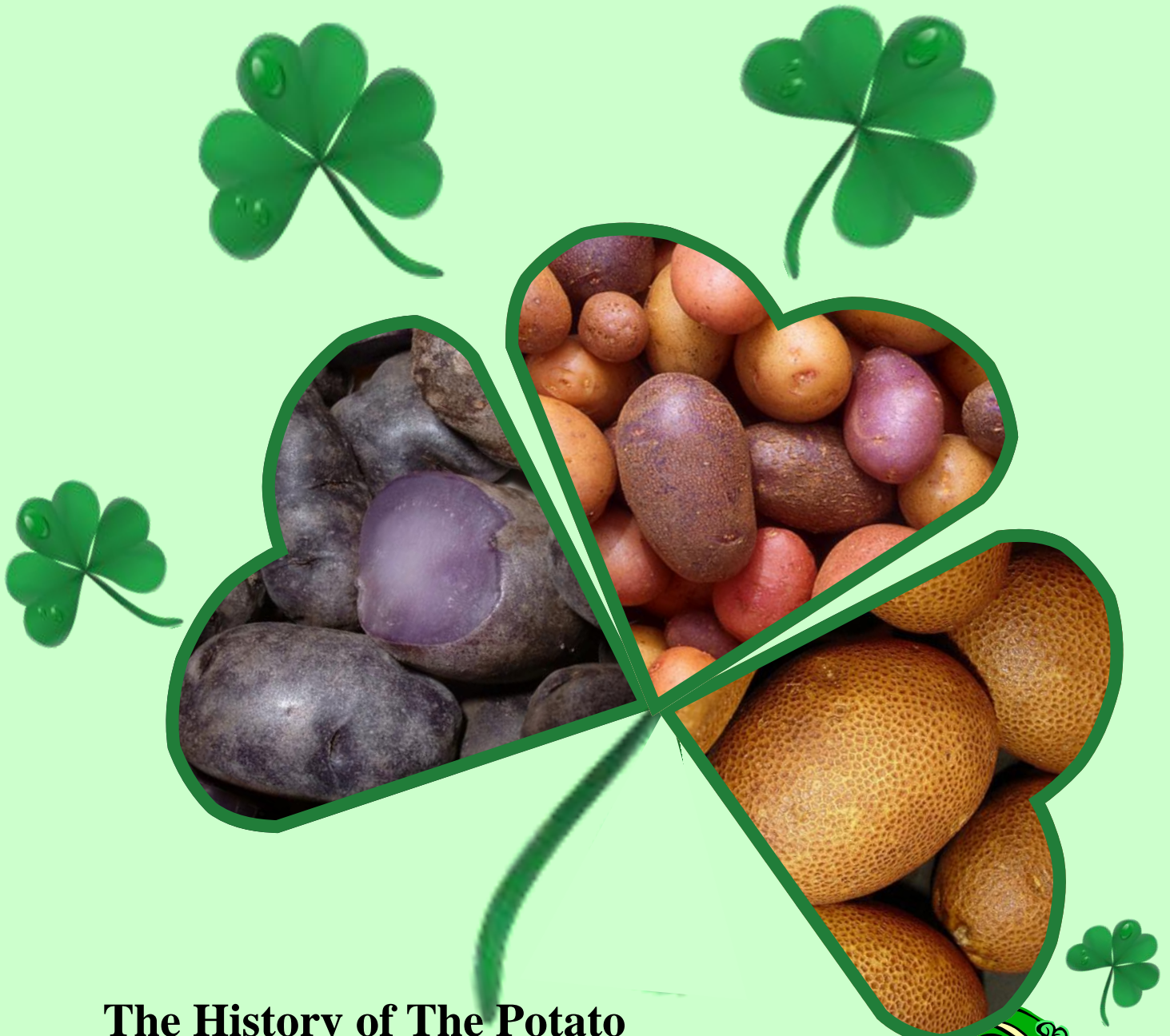
Food & Wine



March 2012

The Journal of The International Wine & Food Society Europe & Africa Committee

Free to European & African Region Members - one per address - Issue 110



The History of The Potato

A Tribute to The Emerald Isle

The Cellar of Charles Dickens



CHAIRMAN'S

MESSAGE



Dear Members

I am now entering my final year as your Chairman and as a member of the International Council of management that runs the Society. It is with regret that I report that we have not moved as far or as fast as I would have liked in implementing the Strategic plan that was circulated to members in 2009. Instead our friends in America have proposed a number of different changes to our way of managing the Society that have had to be evaluated, considered and eventually opposed. What is agreed is that a higher proportion of member's subscriptions should be retained at Zone level to finance those things that members hold dear; like this magazine. Our greatest challenge is our ageing and reducing membership and we need to find ways to attract and recruit new and younger members.

To me, one of the most important factors is the International element of the Society. I have just celebrated the Chinese New Year in Liverpool but I am encouraged to learn that we are recruiting new members and opening branches in China. That may be a bit far to go to share in a branch event but most branches do welcome visitors whether they are in the same country, the same continent or further afield. I have been able to visit a number of branches during my period in office but still have time to visit ones that are new to me. It is not too late to sign up to join the Great Weekend planned in Zurich in June. There are members attending from around the world and it promises to be a very friendly and enjoyable event. If you would like more details please get in touch with me Chairman.EAC@IWFS.org phone: 44(0)151-929-2991 or Zurich Branch: Kurt.at.name@gmail.com.

Part of the Strategic plan was to educate as well as entertain and amuse. In the UK the WSET (Wine & Spirit Educational Trust) has for some time run Foundation, Certificate and Diploma Courses for members of the trade and interested consumers. I understand that it is no longer necessary to attend a college or night-school. They have empowered some of their accredited lecturers to run courses at wine clubs, tasting groups and Society branches. There is still a syllabus, a programme of lectures, a fee and an examination but if a branch or a group of members is interested it adds a new dimension to wine appreciation.

We are always looking for new talent on the EAC. I have invited three members to be co-opted onto the EAC so that they can find out what we do, and hopefully put themselves forward for election at the next Annual Branch Representatives meeting which will be held in October in the New Forest in Southern England. They are David Chapman from Manchester Branch, Ian Nicol from Blackpool & Fylde Coast and Stephanie Shepherd from London. David has served twice as Branch Chairman and organised the successful branch trip to Oporto and the Douro valley; Stephanie is the Branch Secretary of our largest Branch and Ian, the most recent recruit of the three, served on the Merseyside Festival Organising Committee. They should all bring new and different skills to the job of running this Area.

Together with the Society's administrator, Andrea Warren, I have been involved in discussions with the owners of Arblaster and Clark; one of the leading wine tour specialists in the UK if not the world. They are offering our members a discount on some of their tours. We are also setting up a link between the two websites so that our members can view the tours available and their customers (who by definition must be interested in wine and food) can learn more about our Society, and if they like what they see, apply to join us.

On a more personal and local note, I learned this month that my local farm shop is closing. It has over the past five and more years won prizes for the quality of their produce. The meat (beef and pigs from their own farm and lamb from next door) was always the highest quality and hung long enough for the flavour to develop. They also sold vegetables, bakery products and other specialist foods from local suppliers. The prices may have been a little higher than the supermarkets and high street butchers and it may have been a little further to drive but we were prepared to pay for quality and it seemed that we were not alone. But the owners have decided that, in the current financial climate, there is insufficient profit in farming and instead they are developing the children's farm and playbarn concept that apparently brings in all the profit. My grandchildren are delighted but it is a further blow to quality food being produced and supplied locally. Some of the rare breeds will stay for customers to look at but we will be unable to taste the difference.

Best wishes to you all

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS

Patrick Trodden is a senior lecturer within



Salford Business School at the University of Salford.

As a leading authority on food and wine he has achieved international

recognition for his enthusiastic and inspirational approach to food and drink. His current career is founded on his experiences at the kitchens of Her Majesty the Queen, the Savoy & Dorchester Hotels, London and the Palace Hotel Bern. His live wire personality has earned him a respected position in the world of academia, food, drink and media.

John Danza has been drinking and collecting wine



for over 20 years, with his favorites being Bordeaux (both red and sweet white), Port, and Madeira. He started to collect wine books after a book given to

him by his sister-in-law led him to George Saintsbury and ultimately Andre Simon, whose books John now specializes in. He is a member of the Chicago branch and a member of the Board of Governors of the Americas. Professionally, he works for a large health insurance software vendor.

Sarah Frankland is a 23 year old

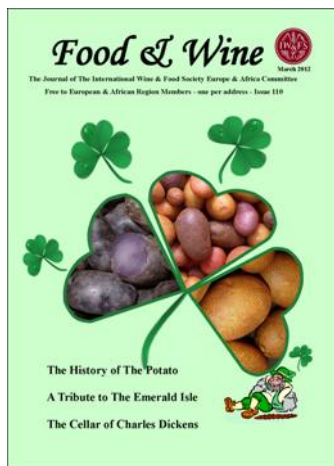


pastry chef who has worked in the industry for 7½ years.

She did her apprenticeship at Westminster College and with Angela Hartnett at the Connaught.

Her passion in pastry and chocolate is

discovering new techniques and styles. Winning the William Heptinstall award gave her a great opportunity to explore her chosen field.



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Food & Wine

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For extra copies please contact
the Editor

Dear Members

Doomed, according to the latest research, I am doomed. The EAC will be seeking a new editor shortly. Evidently eating just one sausage a day can be fatal. According to researchers consuming a daily serving of 50g of processed meat such as ham, bacon or sausage is associated with a 19% increase in the risk of pancreatic cancer. As, for at least four mornings a week for the past twenty years, my breakfast has consisted of either bacon or sausage, with fried egg, tomato and mushrooms I don't think I have much hope. The fact that it is our home cured bacon and own recipe sausages probably won't carry much weight with the experts. I am reminded of the definition of an expert, "An ex is a has-been and a spurt is a drip under pressure."

Once again we have a good mix of features. I must admit when I send round my plea to branch reps. a month before copy date it is very much a cry for help. At the beginning of January I only had four pages commissioned - that is the makings of sleepless nights! In the end, contributors have come forward from around the world to make this edition yet another interesting read.

With St Patrick's day in the offing Patrick Trodden of Manchester branch has sent us some tales and recipes from his Irish mother. While trying out the dishes for the photos I made a large bowl of the Dublin Coddle. There was some left over in the fridge, so when we came home from a very cold shopping trip in early February I heated it through, it was delicious, the flavours had blended and it made a lovely, hearty, warming lunch. To continue our Irish theme we have an article on potatoes and the story of Ireland's 'Gorta Mór'.

We are celebrating the bicentenary of Charles Dickens with an article by John Danza, one of our American cousins, cataloguing the contents of the Dickens cellar. He has given us a fascinating insight into the drinking habits of the great man.

We have another report from a Heptinstall scholarship winner. Reading it makes you realise just what wonderful opportunities there are in the catering industry today for those youngsters that are willing to work hard.

Alan Harrison has once again been delving into the origin of dishes. The next issue sees the final article in the series on the history of garnishes, he will then move on to pastures new.

Members have been on their travels. London branch vice chairman, Alan Shepherd and his wife Stephanie received wonderful hospitality from the Auckland branch while 'doing' New Zealand. The Leicester branch went west in search of gourmet dining and Berkshire branch went 'Crossing the Eifel' in their hunt for Mosel wines.

The EAC have organised a gourmet event next October so come and relax in the New Forest and enjoy the wonderful autumn colours. You will find information on the back page. We also have details of a Christmas shopping expedition being organised by Val Bishop and travel company Arblaster and Clark are offering members a discount on their tours.

I am very indebted to all those who have contributed. With the exception of Sarah Frankland's Heptinstall trip, this issue has been completely written by members. Without you members throughout the area would not have a Food & Wine magazine dropping on their mat at the beginning of March.

Thank you all.

Pam Brunning

Dear Members

I am pleased to report that all 13 IWFS monograph titles are now available to read on the website. You simply have to go to the members only pages and follow the Secretariat / For members / Monographs for members tabs. Whether your interest lay in food or wine matters hopefully you will find a topic of interest.

If you also like to travel then look no further than the following page. You will hopefully welcome a new benefit that has been arranged in association with the prestigious, leading wine tour operator Arblaster & Clarke. EAC members* can obtain a discount on a range of wine and gourmet tours around the globe organised by Arblaster & Clarke. Whether Europe is your target destination or somewhere further afield we are confident there is something there that fits the bill. If there isn't, then the experienced team at Arblaster & Clarke are happy to tailor a trip to your needs but this does incur an extra fee. In addition if you wish to arrange a tour for your IWFS branch then they have the team available ready to discuss your ideas, take away the stresses linked with being a trip organiser, and formulate a successful trip with the necessary travel bonds.

Other benefits - please note that past benefits for members have also been renewed again this year. The Ritz, Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park and The In & Out Club all continue to offer special accommodation rates for members planning a visit to London in 2012. Plus Decanter magazine have also agreed to continue discounted subscription rates to IWFS members.

For full details of all benefits available to IWFS members please go to the members only pages: www.iwfs.org/secretariat/iwfs-merchandise/benefits-for-members.

Best wishes to you all for 2012 and I hope, if you have travel plans, that you can enhance your trip with this new benefit on offer.

Andrea Warren, London

Photo by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

Prague Panorama



Val Bishop Visits Dresden & Prague

Hopefully I will be taking a party of members to Dresden and Prague to visit the culture and Christmas Markets in both Cities. I plan to depart from Manchester in late November 2012 and return to Manchester in early December 2012

I hope to use the 'Ace Cultural Tours' agency as they proved their worth on our recent visit to Portugal and cruise on the Douro.

Cost of tour which will be 3 nights in Dresden and 3 nights in Prague, including all transfers, all breakfasts and all dinners, and City Orientation tours in each City will be £995.00 per person. Single supp. of £210 will apply.

Optional tours to Semper Opera House will be arranged and also optional tours to Meissen (£35.00)

The Dresden Hotel will be - The Westin Bellevue

The Prague Hotel will be Hotel Palace Praha - I have stayed at this delightful hotel on previous occasions.

Dresden at night



If you are interested in joining the party please contact:

Val Bishop

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karnak.fvb@btinternet.com

Winter time in Dresden





Wine Tours Worldwide

The types of tours on offer to IWFS members

- **European tours** – you can add a wine or gourmet tour to your itinerary when holidaying or visiting London. You will receive discount on specific trips to regions such as Bordeaux, Champagne, Burgundy, the Rhone, Piemonte, Tuscany and Rioja.
- **Rest of the world tours** – Arblaster & Clarke run wine tours further afield to destinations such as California, South Africa and Australia. You can join these trips from wherever you are based, so you do not necessarily have to be travelling abroad to take advantage of the benefit.
- **Other interests** – Arblaster & Clarke also offer a whole range of

interesting trips to suit the varied interests of members i.e. luxury wine cruises plus wine and opera tours to name just two.

Many of you will know of Arblaster & Clarke and may have even been on one of their tours. However if this is a first introduction you should be reassured that they are a reliable company to travel with having been in the business for 25 years plus, they also offer full financial protection and insurances when you join one of their trips ** – something few other wine tour companies are able to do. Plus they work with an impressive team of experts in the wine world one of whom could be leading the trip you join. They include Steven Spurrier, Andrew Jefford, Angela Muir MW and Stephen Brook.

Members can benefit from -

Arblaster & Clarke Wine Cruise – Western Mediterranean – 8-15 July 2012 Vineyard touring with a difference – a journey from Rome to Nice, sailing from wine estate to wine estate aboard the stunning 'Sea Cloud' - a luxurious authentic square-rigger, with four masts that support twenty nine sails when fully unfurled.

A very limited offer of an upgraded cabin (for cabins at £4999 per person) if booked before Friday 30th March 2012 (subject to availability).



Bordeaux Wine & City weekends

Stay in the centre of this elegant and cosmopolitan city, visit leading chateaux for exclusive tastings and private lunches with the estate owners. Dates are 13 –15 April, 2–4 June & 16–18 November. *£475 per person #*

Verona Opera & Wine – 18-22 July 2012

Staying in the centre of Verona, journey through the wine villages of Valpolicella and on the shores of Lake Garda by day, and experience the glamour of world-class Opera performed in a magical setting by night. *£1,450 per person #*

Gourmet Wine Tours in Piemonte, Emilia-Romagna and Istanbul Truffle Hunting and Salone Slow Food Festival – 24-28 October 2012

Time to head to the woods to meet up with the local truffle hunter for the rare chance of joining him out hunting and finish with a culinary day at the 'Salone del Gusto' in Turin. *£1595 per person #*

Gourmet Emilia Romagna – 27-31 October 2012

Parma Ham, vintage Balsamic vinegar and Parmigiano Reggiano are just a few of the culinary delights to discover and learn more about on this fabulous Gourmet tour. *£1699 per person #*

Turkey – Gourmet Istanbul – 19-23 November 2012

With the recent rapid interest in the cuisine of Turkey, the huge improvement in the wines and the many lures of Istanbul, this is another A&C wine and gourmet first. *£1499 per person #*

denotes IWFS members receive 5% off the standard per person tour price

To find out more about these fascinating tours please visit the Arblaster & Clarke website and click on the IWFS window on: www.winetours.co.uk/themes. This link can also be accessed from the members only pages of the IWFS website.

* denotes valid to EAC members as at 31 December 2011. New EAC members in 2012 must be members of a branch; independent members must be a member for a minimum of 6 months.

** denotes members do still have to take out their own travel insurance as is the case with IWFS Festivals.

The Humble Potato

By Pam Brunning

"What I say is that, if a fellow really likes potatoes, he must be a pretty decent sort of fellow."

A. A. Milne (1882-1956),

The story of the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) begins about 8,000 years ago near lake Titicaca 3,800m (12,500ft) above sea level in the Andes on the border between Bolivia and Peru. It was there that communities of hunter gatherers began domesticating the wild potato plants that grew around the lake in abundance. The Incas cultivated them for food, stored them in case of war and famine and even worshiped them. Ethnographer Denise Arnold, in her recently published, 'Book on Potatoes and their Lore' tells the story, *"In ancient times, they say, the land and provinces of Peru were dark and neither light nor daylight existed. During this time of total night, the god Viracocha created the sky and earth but left everything in darkness."* Arnold writes, *"Stories say the moon made the first potato by blowing across the face of the earth, and from that single potato come all the other, myriad, varieties of potatoes found"*.

The following is the Inca prayer that historians say they used to worship the potato.

"O Creator! Thou who givest life to all things and hast made men that they may live, and multiply. Multiply also the fruits of the earth, the potatoes and other food that thou hast made, that men may not suffer from hunger and misery."

When going on a long journey the people would soak them in broth and carry them for sustenance on the way. Ancient Inca potatoes had dark purplish skins and yellow flesh and even today they are called 'papas'. The potato was so much a part of their lives that they even developed a technique for preserving them for storage by freeze-drying the tubers and removing the trapped moisture. The remaining white flour called chuno was lightweight and would keep for up to four years. It is mixed with water and used even today to make bread.

During his expedition to Patagonia aboard HMS Beagle, Charles Darwin became fascinated by this surprisingly adaptable South American plant. In his log, Darwin wrote, *"It is remarkable that the same plant should be found on the sterile mountains of Central Chile, where a drop of rain does not fall for more than six months, and within the damp forests of the southern islands."*

Sailors found it invaluable aboard ship as a protection against scurvy. It is a tuber remarkable for its adaptability and its nutritional value. As well as providing us with starch the skins are rich in vitamin C, it is also high in potassium and an excellent source of fibre. Potatoes can supply most vital nutrients except calcium, vitamins A and D. An easily grown plant it can provide more nutritious food faster, on less land, than any other food crop in almost any habitat.

Peruvian purple potatoes



Andean black potato



Symptom of blight on the potato leaf



A potato infected with late blight



***Solanum tuberosum* flower, a member of the nightshade family**



In 1589 Sir Walter Raleigh brought the potato to Ireland and planted them at his Irish estate at Myrtle Grove, Youghal, near Cork. Legend has it that he made a gift of the potato plant to Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603). The local gentry were invited to a royal banquet featuring the potato in every course. Unfortunately, the cooks who were uneducated in the matter of potatoes, tossed out the lumpy-looking tubers and brought to the royal table a dish of boiled stems and leaves which are poisonous, these promptly made everyone deathly ill. Potatoes were then banned from court. This did not stop the people of Ireland cultivating the tuber on a wide scale to the detriment of other crops. A disease known as 'late blight', which is caused by *Phytophthora infestans*, a fungus-like microorganism called an oomycete, spread rapidly through the country decimating the crops. This led to 'an Gorta Mór', "the Great Hunger" or 'an Drochshaol', "the bad times" between 1845 and 1852. Approximately 1 million people died and a million more emigrated causing the island's population to fall by between 20% and 25%.

Cecil Woodham-Smith in his book, 'The Great Hunger' written in 1962, blamed the potato for the downfall of Ireland's culinary heritage.

"That cooking any food other than a potato had become a lost art. Women hardly boiled anything but potatoes. The oven had become unknown after the introduction of the potato prior to the Great Starvation."

Records show Irish lands exported food even during the worst years of the Famine. Woodham-Smith wrote that no issue has provoked so much anger and embittered relations between England and Ireland as, *"the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation."* Ireland remained a net exporter of food throughout most of the five-year famine.

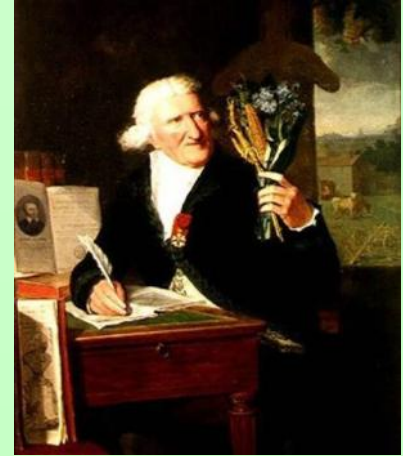
This poem, written by Miss Jane Francesca Elgee a well known and popular author, was printed in *The Nation*:

Weary men, what reap ye? Golden corn for the stranger.
 What sow ye? Human corpses that wait for the avenger.
 Fainting forms, Hunger—stricken, what see you in the offing
 Stately ships to bear our food away, amid the stranger's scoffing.
 There's a proud array of soldiers—what do they round your door?
 They guard our master's granaries from the thin hands of the poor.
 Pale mothers, wherefore weeping? 'Would to God that we were dead—
 Our children swoon before us, and we cannot give them bread



Famine Memorial in Dublin

Antoine August Parmentier 1737-1813
 holding New World plants



The French chemist Antoine August Parmentier served as a soldier in the Seven Years War, and was fed only potatoes while in captivity. When he returned to France in 1773 he published a thesis, "Inquiry into nourishing vegetables that at times of necessity could be substituted for ordinary food". He brought a bouquet of potato flowers to the birthday party of King Louis XVI, the King promptly placed the flower in his lapel and Queen Marie Antoinette wore them in her hair and potato flowers quickly became a fashion among the aristocracy. Parmentier began throwing parties for the French upper-class, at which he served as many as twenty dishes at a time, all containing potatoes. He planted an acre of potatoes and had the plot fastidiously guarded by day, but at night left the land unsupervised. Acting exactly according to his predictions, the peasants assumed that anything watched so closely must be valuable so they stole the plants. Soon, potatoes were being planted all over France. It became a staple food as well as a status symbol, and by 1813, almost one hundred and fifty years since its introduction, the potato finally gained acceptance in Europe. Thanks to the French, potatoes were finally deemed chic enough to eat.



Pommés Parmentier refers to a dish consisting of small cubes of potato, usually fried in butter, with parsley and other herbs. Bacon, onions and whatever else you have to hand, may be added. A squeeze of lemon juice gives the dish a lemony zing.

The disease is still with us, decimating as much as 20% of the 320million tonne global potato crop. Today a copper sulphate solution is used to combat potato blight. It is the same chemical that is mixed with lime, called 'Bordeaux Mixture' and used on vines to control phylloxera. Each year the UK potato crop has to be sprayed six to eight times during its growing season. Even copper fungicides used by organic farmers are not safe, copper sulphates are poisonous to people and animals. Also using them means copper resistant bacteria thrive and these are often antibiotic resistant. Much research has been carried out over the years crossing the wild, resistant potatoes with our vulnerable strains to breed resistant varieties but with little success. A major step forward is now being made in both the UK and Germany with genetic modification. Years of study has resulted in the development of potato plants that have been modified with resistant genes that can ward off this devastating plant destroyer. If approved, the modified Fortuna variety could be available across Europe by 2015. A recent EU report quotes 25 years of biosafety research on genetically modified organisms (GMO's) with the conclusion that they are no more likely to cause problems than traditionally reared crops. So will we soon be eating healthy potatoes untouched by fungicides. Potatoes that are better for us, better for the land and better for the other creatures that share our planet or will the fanatical minority such as Greenpeace and the Soil Association condemn us forever to continue consuming poisonous fungicides.

There are now over a thousand different varieties of potatoes and despite 'an Gorta Mór', today the potato is one of the most important crops in the world, coming fourth after maize, wheat and rice. Over 358 million tonnes are grown annually worldwide, almost half of which are used as livestock feed. China is the largest producer at 79 million tonnes followed by Russia with 37 million tonnes, a large proportion of which are used in the production of vodka. The UK ranks eleventh in the world recording in 2007 a harvest of 5.6 million tonnes with average yields exceeding 40 tonnes per hectare. With annual per capita potato consumption of 102 kg, demand for potato exceeds our domestic supply. In 2005, the UK imported more than 1.2 million tonnes (raw equivalent) of processed potato products.

Even today more potatoes are eaten in Ireland than in most other countries of the world. In 2007, Ireland's 830 potato farmers produced an estimated 455,000 tonnes of potatoes, 85% being ware potatoes for consumption, and the rest seed potato for replanting.

Most of us are aware of the criteria for choosing our cooking varieties. Floury, high in starch, low in water, such as Maris Piper and King Edward for mash, chips and roasting, waxy creamy ones such as Charlotte and Nicola for boiling and salads. The best way of determining a good roasting potato is by testing its dry matter content in a bucket of brine (nine and a half cups of water to one cup of salt). If the potato sinks in the brine it is high in starch and will cook up mealy. If it floats it belongs to the waxy varieties. There is a lovely story about Heston Blumenthal when he opened The Fat Duck, he used to send his wife Susanne to sneak around the local supermarket with a bucket of brine to test the dry matter content of the potatoes on offer before he would buy them for his thrice cooked chips.

Heston maintains he has conquered the secret of the perfect chip but what about the perfect mash? Joël Robuchon in 'Ma cuisine pour vous', published in 1986 recommends for every pound of potatoes half a pound of butter is required for the perfect mash. If you don't think your cholesterol levels need boosting there are many other secrets to fluffy mashed potatoes. The ideal internal temperature of potatoes for mashing is 180 degrees. At this temperature the cells will have absorbed water and the cement between the cells, which is a pectic material similar to pectin that thickens jam, begins to degrade and the cells begin to separate from one another. Overcooking now, releases the gelled starch from the cells and your mash, although easy to mash, will become sticky and gluey. If more that 15 - 20% of the cells in your mash are ruptured the potatoes will be spoilt.

For a light fluffy mash, when draining, leave to stand for the steam to escape but don't let them cool too much or the pectic cement will harden again. Never use an electric beater to mash, it will break down the cells and give you a gluey mess. A potato ricer is ideal but an old fashion masher will do as long as you use a light hand and don't over mash. Remember to always add warm milk and butter never cold, cold ingredients will make the mixture seize up.

There are many variations of potato recipes throughout Ireland, for a quick, cheap, tasty, wholesome supper try the warming Dublin Coddle on page 10.



A Tribute to Irish Mothers

by Patrick Trodden

The Irish Mother

by Francis William Topham - 1808-1877

Ireland is an island of conflicting images and remains a noble country, a land of milk and honey, of fortitude and courage, where most people continue life as normal, retaining their characteristic humour and tenacity of spirit, and remain caring and dignified in spite of their difficulties.

The home and family are an integral part of Irish life and society. Indeed, within the home, whether it be a town house or a humble country cottage, it is as strong today as in the days when the hearth was the heart of it and the hub around which all life revolved. Although today the hearth is physically absent from many modern Irish houses, the kitchen is still the focus of family life, the centre of activity, and the place where body and soul have been sustained and nourished for generations.

As a boy I remember on my long summer trips to Ireland; my grandmother Brigid Flanagan cooking over her three-legged pot oven surrounded with glowing turf. The fragrance of the food she prepared was only beaten by the taste, unique flavours of wholesome uncomplicated home grown and reared food.

My mother was the youngest of ten children and a wonderful cook, my grandmother had passed down the skills and the gift of offering generous hospitality to all who visited her home.

There is a new Irish food culture and one only needs to look at cookery books and guides to see how the talented young chefs of Ireland have made their mark on gastronomy.

The goods of Ireland acquire their flavour from the country's lush pastures and lend themselves to exotic dishes as well as simple ones.

I hope you will enjoy these dishes as much as I do.

Whiskey Punch - a drink suitable for any occasion

Into a large jar put:

- 1 bottle Irish whiskey
- 4oz (100g) Caster sugar
- 1 Lemon - sliced
- 2 Oranges - sliced
- 3 measures Rum

Leave in the jar for three days and shake every day.

Drink as a:

As a cocktail before dinner - serve 2oz 'on the rocks' with a teaspoon of fresh lemon juice.

As a highball - put 2oz into a tumbler; add ice and a slice of lemon, fill with ginger ale.

As a liqueur - serve 1oz in a liqueur glass after dinner.

As a nightcap - put 2oz into a tumbler, add a slice of lemon and fill with hot water.

A hot buttered toddy - 2oz into a tumbler, 2tablespoons orange juice. Fill with hot water and float a small piece of butter on top.

Cheers!



Dublin Bay Prawns in Cream and Mustard Sauce

An ideal starter that is easy to prepare, with the gourmet touch. You can serve as a soup or with a portion of rice or pasta as the base.

Serves 4

6oz (150g) Cooked Dublin Bay or Tiger prawns

Teaspoon Olive oil

1oz (25g) Butter

1oz (25g) Red onion - chopped

2oz (50g) Peppers - diced

1oz (25g) Mushrooms - sliced

1oz (25g) Courgette - sliced

Glove Garlic - crushed

Teaspoon dry English mustard

Dash Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce

Dash Tabasco

Salt & freshly ground pepper

¼ pint (125ml) double cream

Chopped parsley or snipped chives.

Pour olive oil into a pan and add butter, allow to melt then add onions.

Cook for 1 minute, add peppers then mushrooms and courgettes.

Cook for 2 minutes.

Add the prawns, garlic and mustard, a dash of Lea & Perrins and Tabasco.

Pour in the cream, bring to the boil and stir until the sauce coats the back of the spoon.

Sprinkle over parsley or chives.



Dublin Coddle

Like many Irish rustic meals, Dublin Coddle is designed to make a little go a long way, whilst providing maximum nourishment. This recipe was brought over from Ireland in the 1940s by Nancy Berney, who fed it to her four sons who she raised in Manchester. All strapping young men, her third son Liam went on to open one of the Lake District's leading restaurants, 'The Cottage in the Wood', where the dish still features for staff meals and family and friends who visit.

Serves 4

8oz (200g) Sausages, chipolata size

8oz (200g) Streaky bacon (use back bacon if you are put off by fat)

1lb (400g) Mixed onion, white leek and celery (finely diced)

1oz (25g) Butter

2lb (1kg) Floury potatoes, washed and peeled

2pints (1ltr) Chicken stock

Chopped parsley.

Cut the bacon into lengths that correspond with the chipolata sausages.

In a pan, melt the butter and 'sweat' the finely diced white vegetables over a gentle heat. Take care not to colour the vegetables. Covering the pan with a lid will retain the juices and help to prevent browning.

Cut the potatoes into even sizes and add to the pan.

Add the chicken stock, ensuring the potatoes are covered. Add additional stock, or water if necessary.

Bring to the boil and allow to simmer gently.

Cook until potatoes begin to 'fall' and thicken the stock. Add the sausage and bacon at this stage and continue to simmer.

Allow the stock to thicken to a soup consistency. This should take ten or fifteen minutes, ensure some of the potatoes remain whole.

Serve piping hot into bowls and sprinkle with chopped parsley.

This dish can be served with carrots and cabbage, and a glass of Guinness is a good accompaniment.



Champ

The Irish have a natural genius for cooking potatoes and this traditional dish is luscious enough to eat on its own, as well as being a superb companion for meat or fish.

Serves 6

2lb (1kg) medium size floury potatoes.

The potatoes can be boiled in their skins in a roomy pan, covered with cold water, bring to the boil and cook for approximately 20 minutes, drain, return to the heat to 'dry out' for a few minutes.

Allow to cool a little, peel and mash (if liked the potatoes can be peeled before cooking).

Then prepare the onions.

10 Spring onions

¼pt (125ml) full-cream milk

4oz (100g) butter

Wash and trim onions, slice finely including the green parts.

Put the milk into a saucepan, add the onions and bring to a simmer cook for 2 minutes, add half the butter.

Stir into the potato, mix well and add the remaining butter.

Season to taste with salt & pepper (and I like a little freshly grated nutmeg)

Place in a warm dish and serve.



Irish Tea Bread - Barmbrack

My Mother's recipe

¾pt (375ml) Tea (made with 3 breakfast teabags)

3oz (75g) Muscovado sugar

12oz (300g) mixed dried fruit (I use luxury supermarket mix)

Make tea, place fruits and sugar in a large bowl, pour over the tea and leave overnight.

Next day

1 large beaten egg

12oz (300g) SR flour

2oz (50g) Butter

In a bowl place flour, add butter and rub through to resemble fine breadcrumbs.

Add the beaten egg to the fruit, then fold in the flour mixture and mix well.

Place the mixture into a two-pound loaf tin.

Place into a preheated oven 350°F, 175°C, Gas Mk 4 on a baking tray and bake in the centre of the oven for approximately 1 hour.

If liked before placing in oven place 12 walnut halves on top (an addition to the original recipe) or chop the walnuts and add to the tea mixture with the fruits.



Irish Coffee

The Irish have made quite a contribution to the world's drinking habits including the popular Irish coffee. Drinking hot, sweet black coffee, laced with Irish whiskey, through a layer of cold perfectly floated cream is quite an experience.

There is a real art, however, to keeping the cream afloat and maintaining the vital contrast between hot and cold, black and white. Once the cream sinks into the coffee, making a muddy brown liquid, all is lost so it is as well to practice, or leave it to the experts.

You will need for each person

A measure of whiskey

A cup of strong black coffee

A heaped teaspoon of brown sugar

About 1 fluid ounce of lightly whipped whipping cream.

First warm a stemmed whiskey glass and put into it the sugar and enough hot coffee to dissolve this. Leave a teaspoon in the glass as you pour in the hot coffee to lessen the risk of cracking. Stir well and add the whiskey.

Fill to within ¾inch of the top of the glass with more coffee. Now for the tricky bit, hold a teaspoon curved side up, over the surface of the coffee and pour the cream slowly and steadily onto the coffee over the spoon.

Do not attempt to stir the cream into the coffee. It should float on top so that the hot whiskey-laced coffee can be sipped through the cream.

An Irish Toast

Here's to beefsteak when you're hungry,
Whiskey when you're dry,
All the women you'll ever want,
And heaven when you die.



Charles Dickens circa 1860s

The 1870 Cellar of Charles Dickens

By John Danza



“Champagne is one of the elegant extras in life.” ~ Charles Dickens

When Charles Dickens died prematurely in 1870 at the age of 58, he was an icon of English literature. From humble beginnings and somewhat questionable financial management in his early career, Dickens was quite financially comfortable at the time of his death. In keeping with his social station, Dickens kept a cellar. I can't properly call it a “wine cellar”, as much more than wine was stored in it as was typical for the times. Several months after his death the contents of that cellar were inventoried and sold with many other items from Dickens's Gads Hill Place home. Using the inventory for the auction sale, we'll take a look at the contents of Dickens's cellar and I'll provide what context I can on the vintages and beverages. We'll see that Dickens must have been a consummate host for his time, his fame, and his station in life.

Charles Dickens did almost all of his wine, liquor, and cordials purchases from a single purveyor, or more accurately through a few related purveyors over the years. By 1843, he was making purchases from Joseph Ellis & Son, Wine Merchants, of Hill Street, Richmond. This firm was originally founded in 1831 by Joseph Ellis, who was also the proprietor of the Star & Garter Hotel in Richmond. Dickens also used the hotel for entertaining guests throughout the years. Ultimately, Joseph Ellis would turn his attentions to the hotel and the wine merchant firm would fall to his sons Charles and George. At first the firm would become Charles Ellis & Co. of Brickhill Lane, London, and eventually would be Charles & George Ellis, Wine Merchants to the Queen at 21 College Hill, London and Hill Street & Friar's Style Road, Richmond. There are letters documenting orders to all three firm names, with some of them overlapping.

As we go through the inventory, you'll see in many places where the grower or winery name is not noted and only the wine type or area is listed. As an example, some burgundies are listed only as “Volnay” and some Sauternes wines are only listed as “Sauternes”. This practice dates back to the time when wines were typically shipped in bulk to the wine merchant and the merchant bottled the wines upon receiving an order. It was not at all unusual to have wines referred to by their location of origin and ordered that way, because it was felt the quality was in the general area and the wines from that area would be on the same footing. The wines were generally less expensive this way as well, since the merchant could fill the order with any wine from that area (i.e. Sauternes) instead of with a specific winery (i.e. Chateau d'Yquem).

Clarets: Dickens had excellent taste in Bordeaux, or he was advised well by Charles Ellis. The cellar inventory shows a good quantity of wines from the superb 1858 vintage, including:

- 1 dozen Chateau d'Issan
- 6 dozen Brane (sic) Mouton
- 4 magnums unnamed claret

Of special note is the Brane-Mouton of 1858. Baron Nathaniel Rothschild had purchased the chateau in 1853 and the wines were not yet being known as Mouton Rothschild. The 1858 Mouton was known to be an extremely fine wine that continued to drink nicely well into the 20th century.

Andre Simon's experience with the 1858 vintage includes two bottles of Lafite, consumed a year apart in 1929 and 1930 from the cellar of his good friend, Ian Campbell. The first, “*all that a fine Claret ought to be, but, of course, in an attenuated form: sound but feeble of body; its bouquet charming but so faint; its fruit still sweet but so little of it.*” The second noted to be a better bottle, “*It was fresher; its colour is fading out, but it has kept its sugar wonderfully, and there is still in its bouquet and flavour that 'breed' of the ancien régime aristocrats which is admirable.*”

Like many cellar notes of the 19th century, the remaining stock of claret in Dickens's cellar was either listed generically or with a producer's name but no vintage. The remainder of the clarets were:

- 16 dozen Medoc
- 2 dozen La Rose
- 3 dozen Chateau Margaux Bourjois (sic)
- 5 dozen Leoville

It is unfortunate that the vintages of the Margaux and Leoville are not recorded. In addition, it was not unusual at the time for the three separate Leoville chateaux (Las Cases, Barton, Poyferre) to be referred to collectively as “Leoville” as if they were still together as they had once been.

Port, Madeira, Sherry: Listed in the inventory as “Iberian wines”, the Dickens cellar was well stocked with excellent ports, sherrys, and Madeiras. These wines were favorites of Britons at the time, so a good host would be sure to have a fine supply. The stock of ports contained only three entries, but they were well chosen. These ports represent three of the best vintages of the century.

- Over 5 dozen 22-year-old Port, v. dry & delicate (Cockburn).
- 18 magnums 1851 Port, v. dry.
- 5 dozen 1834 Port.

The “22-year-old Cockburn” is almost certainly the tremendous 1847 vintage, arguably the greatest vintage of the century. Professor George Saintsbury felt that it was at perfection in 1870, coincidentally the year of Dickens's death, yet thought it was “little but a memory” at age sixty. However, Andre Simon tells us that the 1847 Cockburn was still drinking very well, “dark, sweet and lively”, when he opened four different magnums between 1922 and 1924.

The 1834 vintage was the best known vintage until 1847, and remains one of the top five vintages of the century. It is unfortunate that the producer of Dickens's 1834s went unrecorded. They certainly would have been just entering their drinking window at the time of his death. What a shame for him, to have left all that fine port in the cellar. Drink up I say!

The 1851 vintage was also an excellent vintage, yet not quite up to the quality of 1847 or 1834. The 18 magnums would not have been close to being ready to drink at the time of Dickens's death in 1870. While we don't know the producer for sure, it is likely that these were Cockburn as well since they're noted to be very dry (“v. dry”), the same as the 1847 Cockburn. Professor Saintsbury was a fine fan of the 1851 vintage in all its forms, noting that “the Almighty might no doubt have caused a better wine to exist, but that He never did”. Andre Simon notes that the 1851 Cockburn had a somewhat dry finish and was a fine drink when being enjoyed in the 1930s – “it retained to the very end a rare degree of distinction; it was ever a real aristocrat”. The magnums Dickens owned would most certainly have lasted that long.

There was comparatively little Madeira in the Dickens cellar, but this was not unusual for an English gentleman. Madeira was much more of an American wine, while the British were more fond of Sherry. Dickens had two types of Madeiras in his cellar, almost four dozen “rare old Madeira” bottled by Ellis and five bottles of 1818 Madeira. While it’s impossible to know the vintage of the “rare old Madeira”, it’s likely that the wine was at least 50 years old based on the nomenclature of the day.

As noted previously, the British palate was well tuned to sherries and their use while entertaining was a must. It’s not surprising for there to be a number of sherries in the Dickens cellar. The list of wines is:

- 12 dozen brown sherry, dry, golden (C&G Ellis, shippers)
- 2 dozen Solera Sherry (Ellis)
- 1 dozen Amontillado
- 13 magnums Golden sherry, v. old, full flavoured, dry (Ellis)

It’s not unusual to see sherry listed in this manner in the 19th century. There were few named shippers and the wines were typically blended and bottled by the merchant, hence the listings noting the Ellis name on three of the four entries. It’s likely that the Amontillado was an Ellis wine as well. The most unusual thing about this inventory is the magnums of sherry, which is an infrequently seen format for any kind of fortified wine.

There are several letters from Dickens to Ellis ordering a “quarter cask” of sherry. The bulk wine would not have been delivered to Dickens or any other customer by Ellis. Ellis would have bottled the wines prior to delivery.

Red and White Burgundy: It’s probably not a big assumption to think that Charles Dickens did not like Burgundy when looking at his cellar inventory. Out of approximately 2200 bottles of wine and various other spirits, there was a grand total of 46 bottles of Burgundy, made up as follows:

- 16 bottles Clos de Vougeot
- 17 bottles Volnay
- 7 bottles Chambertin
- 6 bottles Chablis

Clos de Vougeot is arguably the most famous grand cru in Burgundy, so it’s not surprising to see this wine listed separately and specifically. The same holds true for the Chambertin, which is very high quality and was Emperor Napoleon’s favorite wine. The other wines are generic, village-level classifications with no specific grower noted.

Champagne: The Dickens cellar was heavily stocked with Champagne. The inventory lists two simple entries: 17 dozen Bouzy and 8 dozen dry champagne. With these two entries however we can tell much. The wine from Bouzy would have been a red wine, as the dominant grapes in the Bouzy area are Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Of greater importance is that this wine would have most certainly been a still wine, with no effervescence at all. For centuries, the majority of wines made in the Champagne region were still wines. These wines were still much in demand, especially in England, in the 19th century. The red wines of Bouzy were known to be of excellent quality, sometimes rivaling those of Burgundy, yet for a lesser price. The fact that Dickens had 17 dozen bottles of Bouzy in his cellar is probably an explanation for why he owned so few bottles of red Burgundy. Andre Simon’s notes of the 1914 Bouzy support this assessment. “The Bouzy rouge I found delightful, but it was not understood by the majority of our guests, who found it difficult to judge it except as a Burgundy, which it resembles in colour, but a Burgundy with a peculiar flavour, which, being new to them, made them suspicious.”

The 8 dozen dry champagne is another story. There are several letters from Dickens to Ellis for the ordering of “dry sparkling champagne”. No additional information exists in the letters to indicate any specific vintage or producer, so this wine would be an average quality sparkling wine carried by Ellis in bulk to satisfy such orders as these.

Hocks and Moselles: Letters from Charles Dickens to C&G Ellis show that Dickens ordered German wines fairly regularly. Those that remained in the cellar at the time of his death were:

- 2 dozen Moselle “Kuperberg”
- 2-1/2 dozen Stein
- 3-1/2 dozen Hock Johannisberg “Metternich”
- 16 bottles 1861 Moselle “Zullinger Schlossberg”

A letter from Dickens to Ellis dated December 16, 1853 has Dickens ordering 2 dozen Metternich Hock “cheapest seal”. A follow-up letter on December 23, 1853 accompanied a payment of 7 pounds 10 shillings for the hock. The Metternich Hock Dickens is referring to is actually the wines of Schloss Johannisberg, whose vineyards have been owned by Prince Metternich since 1820. Schloss Johannisberg has historically used different colour seals or capsules to distinguish the various wine qualities, which then also dictated price. Taken from the Schloss Johannisberg website, here’s the key to the colours they’ve used and continue to use:

- Yellow seal: QbA
- Red seal: Kabinett
- Green seal: Spätlese
- Silver seal: 1.Gewächs (first growth)
- Pink seal: Auslese
- Pink-gold seal: Beerenauslese
- Gold seal: Trockenbeerenauslese
- Blue seal: Eiswein

Based on Dickens’s letter, he is looking for the least expensive wine, regardless of the style of the wine. It should also be noted that Charles Ellis was the exclusive agent of Schloss Johannisberg wines for the British Isles.

The 1861 vintage of Moselle was known as an outstanding vintage. However, “Zullinger Schlossberg” has been lost to posterity.

Sauternes: Charles Dickens had a good supply of the sweet white wines from Sauternes. These wines were very much in style in the 19th century, much more so than today. The Dickens cellar contained the following in 1870:

- 18 bottles Sauternes
- 2-1/2 dozen Haut Sauternes
- 5 dozen Chateau “y Quen” (sic) Bourgeois

The wine listed as Chateau “y Quen” is undoubtedly the great Sauternes Chateau d’Yquem. While this winery has been considered the best in Sauternes for centuries, in the mid-1800s it was considered the best wine in Bordeaux, red or white. Charles Dickens shows good taste in wine, or appropriate trust in his wine merchant to follow their advice. The other Sauternes were clearly of a lower quality to the extent that the growers and vintages were not recorded. ➡



Random other wines: The cellar contained 30 bottles of “Australian red and white wines” and 2 dozen sparkling muscatel. It’s impossible to know what Australian grower was in the cellar.. It is known that Penfold’s, was making wine back at this time. However, in 1870 it was still not being distributed beyond Dr. Penfold’s town in Magill, South Australia.

Spirits, Whiskeys, Cordials, etc.: Dickens outfitted his cellar in a well-rounded manner. The cellar also contained a good supply of spirits, cordials, and other drinks that were popular in the 19th century. These include:

- Over 10 dozen Dark Hennessy Brandy, 10 years old
- 18 dozen Pale Brandy (F. Courvoisier)
- 11 dozen Highland Whisky (Cockburn, Leith)
- 16 bottles Old Hollandche Genever Hoboken (deBie & Tarlay)
- 12 dozen Milk Punch
- 5 dozen Pine Apple Rum
- 3 dozen Cordial Gin
- 17 bottles Curacao
- 2 dozen 1854 Black Forest Kirschwasser
- 1 bottle each Maraschino, Eau de Vie Dantzig, Chartreuse, Elixia de Spa, and Parfait Amour
- 2 dozen cyder

Brandy was extremely popular as a digestif. It’s interesting to see that Dickens had both “Brown” and “Pale” brandies in the cellar. The pale brandy is the same style of brandy we know today, but it was only coming into vogue in England at the time of Dickens’s death. It was the “Brown” brandy that was more widely known in England.

Brown brandy was a thicker, treacly liquid that is practically non-existent today. George Saintsbury noted that the brown brandy was a better basis to make the drink beloved by Mr. Pickwick, hot brandy and water. This mixture could be a revitalizing tonic for Pickwick, was this a favorite drink of Dickens also?

I’m quite surprised to see over 130 bottles of Scotch Whisky. Scotch had not really caught on in Britain by the time Dickens died. Also, he barely ever referenced Scotch in his writing. Rum and gin were staples in the 19th century British cellar. The fact that the gin is listed as “cordial gin” is indicative of how both of these spirits were typically used, as primary ingredients in mixes. Rum’s most popular use was mixed with water, sometimes hot. Gin on the other hand was (and still is) the basis for a myriad of mixes and cordials, not the least of which was the venerable gin and tonic.

The “cyder” in the Dickens cellar is not recorded as being any particular designation. This is unfortunate, as we learn from Professor Saintsbury that the ciders from different areas of England and France have very different profiles. Saintsbury tells us that the ciders of Normandy and the west are weak, yet the ciders from Herefordshire and Worcestershire can be very strong. No letters survive from Dickens referencing the type of cider ordered. The cider could also have been used for mixing with either the brandy or rum in the cellar. Both were, and continue to be, popular drinks.

There is a significant amount of Milk Punch (12 dozen) and Pine Apple Rum (5 dozen) in the Dickens cellar. Both were very popular in Victorian England, and clearly in the Dickens household as well. Each had its season however. The Milk Punch was served iced during the summer, while the Pine Apple Rum was a winter drink, served slightly warmed. Dickens died during the summer (June 1870), so we can speculate that the volume of Milk Punch in the cellar was due to the house making ready for the summer months, while the Pine Apple Rum supply was depleted to a “mere” 5 dozen as it had not yet been replenished for the next winter.

The remainder of the bottles contain a variety of liqueurs, punches, and mixing liquors. There are a large number of mixed cordials and punches in the culinary history of England, most made with either brandy or rum. Some, such as the milk punch, used both brandy *and* rum. The properly outfitted cellar would not have been without these items. It was important to have the ability to mix these cordials, as some were recognized as being appropriate for service before lunch, others for service before dinner, and others yet for service after dinner. The consummate 19th century host would have been prepared for all occasions.

The Sale: Charles Dickens’s cellar was auctioned as part of an auction of his artwork, furniture, and other household items from his Gad’s Hill Place residence. The auction spanned from August 10 through 13, 1870, two months after his death. The cellar was sold on the last day of the sale. The sale realized over 521 pounds, quite a tidy sum for its day. This was driven not only by his fame, but also due to the quality of the cellar.

While Dickens had good taste in wines, it’s clear from surviving letters written to Charles Ellis that Ellis was making suggestions on purchases. Dickens had the good taste to take Ellis’s advice, because Dickens ended up with some very fine vintages, especially of Port. But letters clearly show that Dickens knew what he liked and would request specific wines and wine tastes. This is certainly a far cry from his simple beginnings that were the basis for his incredible writings.

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Manchester Branch 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner

At Lindeth Howe

Country House Hotel

Smoked salmon is a fish I particularly like and the hot smoked salmon was a modern dish with good flavours and textures.

To enrich this delicious dish a subtle Dill dressing was well executed, giving the dish a real lift through the richness.

The raspberry and brandy sorbet did the job of palate cleansing perfectly.

This wine was a jewel of Burgundy!

2007 Clos du Château do Puligny-Montrachet, Bourgogne Blanc A.C.

This is made of 100% Chardonnay.

Since Etienne de Montille took over as a director in 2001 this sleeping giant has been re-awoken. He has carried out extensive changes including the conversion to organic and gradually to biodynamic viticulture. Yields have been lowered to improve fruit quality. There is less batonnage, less new oak, better quality oak and finer barrel toast all of which have helped to add greater finesse to the wines. A good wine with a real 'goût de terroir'

The main course displayed a kitchen brigade with a classical training, great skills and knowledge in evidence that incorporated different textures, flavours, techniques and artistry.

Beef Wellington is a classic marriage; a dish created with the finest ingredients, pastry just right, inside melted into a hermetic seal to keep the flavours in.

Beef cooked medium with well turned potatoes and bright green a' la dente green beans. Served with a classic Bordelaise sauce.

This dish was unique and showed the skill of the chef and his brigade.

2003 Château Larcis-Ducasse, Grand Cru Classe, St. Emilion

75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

"The 2003 is a remarkably evolved, complex offering that is undeniably the finest this estate has produced in the last 40+ years.

Already drinkable, it possesses a dark plum/garnet colour as well as aromas of Japanese spices, cedar wood, tobacco smoke, Provençal herbs, and sweet, jammy currents. The complex aromatics are followed by a medium-bodied, savoury, fleshy red possessing ripe tannin as well as low acidity.



Anticipated maturity: 2007-2020. The resurrection of Larcis Ducasse begins!" Robert Parker - 91-93/100 (April 2005)

A great wine to drink on such a special occasion.

The dessert was exceptionally rich and refreshing as well as visually impressive and demonstrated how to use a variety of flavours and textures to good effect.

White chocolate and passion fruit mousse, mango lasagne and Pina Colado did not disappoint.

2005 Château les Miaudoux, Saussignac A.C.

From an enclave of the Bergerac wine area and adjoining Montbazillac.

The wine is made from Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle.

Harvesting is by hand with successive sorting in order to pick the best botrytis; fermentation and ageing is in barrels for 16 to 18 months. It is a rich, full wine whose aroma of acacia, peach and honeysuckle develops over time into a generous, complex bouquet. The Wine Society.

A most impressive dessert wine.

Artisan Cheeses - the perfect savoury end to a fine dinner, as was the coffee and petit-fours.

The Wine Society's Exhibition Tawny Port, 10 years old.

Tawny Port is a delicate red brown in colour - the tawny in the name - and has lovely sweet nutty flavours on the palate.

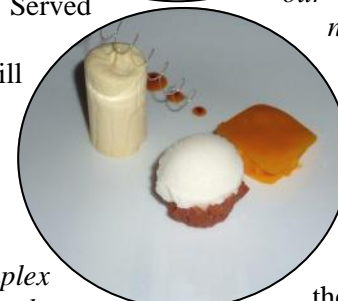
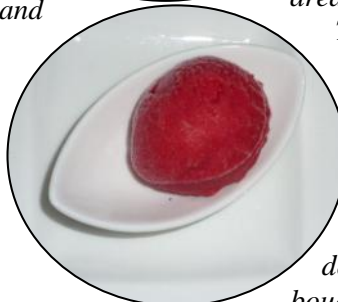
It is matured in cask here an average of 10 years before bottling in 2007. Produced for us by chief winemaker David Guimaraens of the owners of the fine Fonseca and Taylors Houses amongst others. The Port drank well.

This dinner quite frankly was the "best of the best".

The food was of an exceptional high standard matched with fine wines from members private cellars.

The cooking and service was exemplary. Staff conducted themselves in a wholly professional manner; as a cohesive team.

A most memorable "meal experience".



Patrick Trodden

What the experts are telling us -

Fried food is not always harmful!

Experts in Spain monitored 40,000 people from the mid-1990s to 2004. The people were divided into four groups, depending on how often they ate fried food. During the trial there were 606 incidents of heart disease and these were split evenly between all four groups. The authors conclude that, "In a Mediterranean country where olive and sunflower oils are the most commonly used fats for frying no association was observed between fried-food consumption and the risk of coronary heart disease or death." However, British nutritionists have pointed out that the findings referred to a Mediterranean diet - not one replete with fish and chips.



BUT no bacon and bangers in your fry up!

Experts have found that eating a daily 50g serving of processed meat, such as ham, bacon or sausages is associated with a 19% increase in the risk of pancreatic cancer. Eating just one sausage a day appears to raise the risk of one of the most deadly forms of cancer, say scientists from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, who analysed 11 studies involving more than 6,000 people with the disease.

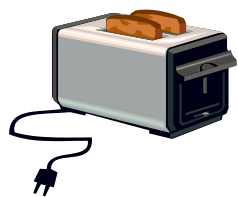


BUT pudding is OK for Breakfast!

Experts now tell us that eating pudding with your breakfast aids weight loss. Researchers from Tel Aviv University establish that eating a pudding as part of a balanced, 600-calorie breakfast, could help dieters to lose more weight, and keep it off.



In the morning, when the body's metabolism is at its most active, we are more able to work off the extra calories, said Prof Daniela Jakubowicz. Over the course of the 32-week study, participants who ate a dessert of biscuits, cake, or chocolate with their breakfast lost an average of 40lbs more than those who avoided such foods. They also kept off the pounds for longer. A big meal in the morning provided energy for the day's tasks, aided brain functioning and kick-started the body's metabolism, aiding weight loss, the scientists reported.



I wonder if toast with lashings of butter and marmalade constitutes a pud?

BUT watch out the 'side salad illusion' doesn't get you!

Alexander Chernev, of Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Illinois states that, "*People categorise food into virtues and vices -and dieting promotes this kind of binary thinking. If we take a burger and add a side salad, the meal becomes healthier to us. And if it's healthier, it must have fewer calories.*"



Chernev calls it the "*side-salad illusion*". If a dish is accompanied by a side salad people think it is healthier. In his study of 900 people, when an unhealthy meal came with a side salad, dieters decreased its estimated calorie content by 13.5%, on average, whereas for non-dieters, it was less than 4%.

Food Mountain?

At last, scientists have discovered something useful, how to fit as much as possible on your plate at an all-you-can-eat buffet. Chinese engineer Shen Hongrui looked into the problem when Pizza Hut introduced a one-bowl one-visit rule at its salad bars. Evidently the key is to build a strong base out of potatoes, then you create a scaffold, from carrots, to support walls made from cucumber or fruit. The aim is to create a three-foot-tall tower, to contain your favourite foods.

Report *THE WEEK* 14 January 2012

What comes next?

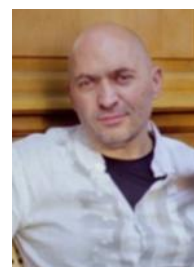
A new five million pound morgue being built in Gloucestershire has been designed to accommodate bodies weighing up to 50 stone. The new state of the art complex features larger fridges, wider doors and heavy duty trolleys.



We lead where others follow?

Leading French chef Xavier Denamur has announced that 70% of his country's restaurant food is now "industrial fodder".

Republique de Malbouffe (Republic of Junk Food), his new documentary claims to investigate the "smokes and mirrors behind ... a state with lobbyists but no parliament, with restaurants but no chefs, with farmers but no fresh food. A noxious regime whose motto could be opacity, precarity, obesity."



He maintains Michelin starred restaurants are a fig leaf, hiding an army of eating establishments selling poor-quality, often factory-produced food more often than not touted as "fait maison" - home-made and more and more of them are chains. Sounds as though they have caught the rot from the UK.

Presidential Pudding

During his 26 years as head pastry chef at the White House, Roland Mesnier has made treats for five presidents, from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush, he told Carol Ross Joynt in Washingtonian magazine. Talking of Bill Clinton he said, "He had a big appetite, scary, he could eat five or six pork chops." Clinton loved his puddings and one evening Mesnier made a strawberry cake for the president, who ate half of it at a single sitting. The next morning, Clinton woke up craving another slice but to his fury, the cake could not be found. Roland Mesnier told Joynt, "Clinton was pounding on the table, shouting: 'I want my goddamned cake!'" When it couldn't be found they reached the only possible conclusion, "Vice-President Al Gore must have eaten it."



Statistics

The Japanese sushi chain Kiyomura paid £470,672 for a Bluefin tuna in the first auction of the year at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market, making it the most expensive fish ever sold. The fish set a record for price per weight at £1,755 per kilogram. Reported in *Money Week*

At least 30 hospital trusts spend less than £5 per day on food and drink for each of the patients in their care. The lowest spender was the Western Sussex Hospitals trust, which forks out £2.57 per patient per day. Reported in *The Daily Telegraph*

It is estimated that the average Britton walks 900 miles a year (someone does a lot of walking for me!) and the average Britton drinks 22 gallons of alcohol a year - that works out at 40.90 miles per gallon. Not bad fuel consumption!



Moscovites on the Menu

by Prof Alan F Harrison



We look this time at Russian notables and ways of presenting food associated with them. Moscow is our anchor within the alliterative titles within this series. In the course of its history, the city has served as the capital of a progression of states, from the medieval Grand Duchy of Moscow and the subsequent Tsardom of Russia to the Soviet Union. Thus it serves us well in looking at the way Russian celebs are celebrated on the menu. Most of them at least, will have had a Moscow connection. You could revisit Catherine on page 23 of *Food & Wine*, December 2010.

Service à la russe is the historically-determined name (probably via Catherine's influence) for modern dining that involves courses being brought to the table sequentially. It contrasts with *service à la française* in which all the food was brought out at once in an impressive, but often impractical display. (The term *entrée* comes from the time when diners started almost with anything including the main course.) The Russian Ambassador Alexander Kurakin is credited with bringing *service à la russe* to France in the early 19th century, and it soon caught on in England.

We have all enjoyed Russian salad and, perhaps, **Charlotte Russe**. Sponge fingers and bavaoises (similar to mousse) are set in the mould and, on tipping out, it is served with cream. To celebrate international democracy, it can be made with Swiss roll. **Crêpes Russe** are when the pancake mixture includes crushed sponge fingers and Kummel.

Perhaps you once enjoyed **Fraises Romanov** on your menu travels, even within Europe. The *Répertoire de la Cuisine* this time simply states that strawberries are soaked in Curaçao and served with Crème Chantilly (whipped double cream and sugar flavoured from the vanilla pod in the sugar-tub). The House of Romanov was the second and last imperial dynasty to rule Russia, reigning from 1613 until the February Revolution abolished the crown in 1917. Nicholas II (above) is not to be found in the *Répertoire*. Large joints of meat such as **Selle d'agneau** (Saddle of lamb) **Romanov** are served with stuffed cucumber on a bed of potato purée accompanied by diced mushroom and celeriac bound in horseradish sauce. **Noisettes de chevreuil** (venison cutlets) **Romanov** are sauté and dressed in crown formation with pastry barquettes filled with cucumber/mushroom purée. **Filet de veau** (veal fillet) **Romanov** is when the fillet is taken off the ribs, cut lengthwise, coated with Béchamel sauce combined with sliced cèpes, flavoured with paprika, and placed back on the ribs. More Béchamel is poured over, now combined with prawn *coulis*. It is cooked under the grill. If the foregoing is insufficient, add braised fennel. The title Tsar or Czar (as with Kaiser) stems from *Caesar* and on the menu, *Tsarine* or *Tzarine* well represent the Tsar's wife. In the case of Nicholas II, it was Alexandra who inspired snipe, cold egg, and fruit salad *Alexandre* dishes. **Consomme Tsarine** is made from chicken stock and served with diced vesiga (sturgeon spinal cord). **Filet de sole Tsarine** is poached with cucumber pieces, olives and served with a paprika-flavoured Mornay (cheese) sauce. If you hope to make **Timbale Tsarine**, the copper mould is lined with pastry then lardons. Add foie gras, truffles and snipe pieces and cover with pastry before baking. When cooked, top up with savoury jelly flavoured with Madeira. Cool, refrigerate, turn upside down on a dish and garnish with sliced truffle.



The *Wladimir* garnish takes us into political water when we consider Lenin. His aim was to rid Moscovites and others of the Romanov family. It cannot be verified that he is the inspiration for **Poularde pochée Wladimir**. The boiling fowl would chuckle as well as cluck at her double-sauce enrichment. After poaching, the stock is converted to Sauce Suprême via the roux process. Hollandaise Sauce is finished with chopped tarragon and chervil and the sauces are combined fifty-fifty. The chicken is covered with the new sauce and decorated with tarragon leaves plus strips of celery, carrot and truffle. **Huîtres Wladimir** are poached oysters covered with Sauce Suprême. Fried breadcrumb and grated cheese enhance and they are finished under-the-grill. Even if it could be proved that Lenin enjoyed fine food, today's chefs would probably prefer Prince Vladimir as the inspiration for these delights.

As for Vladimir's, even Lenin's Moscovites, they are remembered on the menu. **Sauce Moscovite** is a savoury brown sauce finished with Madeira. **Soufflé Moscovite** - "parfum Curaçao et fraise". That was easy. The *Répertoire* can be a challenge if an English version is not to hand. **Gelée Moscovite** - "sanglée légèrement" which literally means "lightly strapped". Go easy on the gelatine? You wouldn't tie a ribbon round it as with the Charlotte Russe. **Gelée Russe**, however, may help. The jelly is whisked when almost set and moulded as desired. More interesting than offering your visitors, finally, *iced* jelly. Gelée Marbrée (or Rubanée), while not Russian, is Gelée Russe made with varying flavours and colours and set in layers.

The last "layer" in this series is to be "Musicians on the Menu" and Tchaikovsky is the link.

If you prefer to read this with links and more information go to <http://www.gastronomyafharrison.co.uk.page478.php>

The William Heptinstall Award

William Heptinstall, who died in 1971, was a well-known British Chef. He was owner of Fortingall Hotel in Glen Lyon, Perthshire, Scotland, a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Bakers. He was the author of two books, still considered classics of their kind: *Hors d'Oeuvre and Cold Table*, which won the Silver medal at the 1960 International Art of Cookery Exhibition at Frankfurt, and *Gourmet Recipes from a Highland Hotel*.

The Memorial Fund is a Charitable Trust set up in his memory in 1972 by his niece the late Mollie Lowrance. It is administered by the Society and awarded each year to enable a young chef to widen his or her culinary experience whilst travelling outside the UK. It is currently worth £3,500 to the winner.

The Award is primarily designed to allow the recipient fully to experience the cuisine of the area chosen, by sampling local food and wine whilst undertaking the overseas *stages*. The young chef is encouraged to plan time abroad to experience the best kitchens and work with the best chefs throughout the world.

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE 2010 AWARD WINNER

Sarah Frankland - Training as a Patisier in Strasbourg, Paris and Tokyo

Firstly and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the judges of the William Heptinstall Scholarship for bestowing upon me an amazing opportunity. It has lasted the best part of the year and has been fantastic in every way. I spent nearly 3 months on stages in three cities all vastly different in culture and their approach to pastry.

My reason for this trip was to experience pastry in France and then see how this had developed and been adapted in Japan. This stems from my bosses William and Suzue Curley - William is classically trained in France with French chefs and Suzue is from Japan with a Japanese approach to cooking with new ingredients I haven't worked with before. Over the last decade, many Japanese chefs have travelled and worked in Europe, often in France. Taking this knowledge and experience back to Japan they have then brought their own style, flavours and creativity to classics and classic elements of patisserie. This report barely touches the surface of the experiences that I gained. I think I could possibly write a whole book but this report focuses on my three stages.

The points below highlight my overall impression of each city that I visited.

Strasbourg being on the border of Germany had a distinct German feel to the patisserie with the classic Kugelhopft, being hugely popular, sold in all the bakeries and patisseries

Paris was more refined and chic in its approach to the patisserie with most shops having a Pierre Herme style which is very fashionable currently in Paris

Tokyo patisserie was very different to classic patisserie. They have no history of patisserie so the culture is that of a modern one. The cakes were much lighter than their French counterparts with heavier emphasis on entremets (Mousse cakes). One downside being that some of the patisserie lacked the texture found in French patisserie. In Tokyo there is far more Patisserie than chocolate. There are no local chocolate suppliers so the cost to the consumer is very high – the result is shop and display cases with a bias towards Patisserie. This is in contrast to European shops where the displays are more evenly spread.

Overall I have visited, eaten and experienced over 25 patisserie shops within France and Japan. This experience of tasting, along with the stages has helped me to develop and expand my knowledge of the technical aspect of patisserie. I have learnt and used a number of classical methods that I had not come across in my career so far. I also discovered a number of different flavours I would not have previously considered placing together.

Part 1 - Organising my trip

As both a patissier and chocolatier, I needed to plan my trip around the chocolate seasons. I originally planned to head to Tokyo straight after Easter. Unfortunately, due to the earthquake in Japan, arranging stages at this time proved very difficult. As a result of this I decided to postpone my Tokyo trip until October. That done I concentrated on my Stages in France. I targeted places that had Patisseries in the Relais Dessert guide and with the MOF accolade. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meilleur_Ouvrier_de_France. Although arranging stages in Paris was far easier, nothing was set in stone for my France trip until 2 weeks before my departure, when I confirmed placements for 4 weeks in Strasbourg with Thierry Mulhaupt - <http://www.mulhaupt.fr/en/mulhaupt-patisserie-3.html> and Paris for 3 weeks with Arnaud Larher - <http://www.arnaud-larher.com/flash/>

Part 2 - Strasbourg

At Thierry Mulhaupt my working day began at 5am, I got up at 4am to wait on the corner of Place de Hagenau for a lift up to the Laboratoire (Kitchen) - there is no public transport at that time. During my 4 weeks here I worked on the Patisserie and Petit four section – There are an additional two areas that I did not work in - Tourier and Chocolate.

Tourier

This consists of the venoiserie, the term for delicious morning goods like croissants, pain au chocolat and beautiful brioche. Also on this section they make the famous Kugelhopf which is a classic brioche like bread from Alsace with raisins in a beautiful round mould with a hole in the middle. The tourier section also makes all the different pastes used in the kitchen, sweet pastry for the tarts, puff pastry for the millefeuille and savoury pastry for things like leek and goats cheese quiche and a delicious pate en croute.

Chocolate

The Chocolate section makes all the chocolates, infused ganaches much like I have made at work. Also they create lovely decorated chocolate bars studded with roasted nuts, confit and dried fruits, pate du fruit, confitures and gimauve (marshmallow).

Patisserie & Petit Four Section

The patisserie section is where they create the entremets, eclairs and petit fours etc. Every morning the chefs prepare the patisserie for the day. The Van delivers the cakes and chocolates at around 7 am in the morning to the shops and then brings back any leftover croissants from the day before that the chefs enjoy for breakfast; usually with some of the handmade jam. I had mine with cherry jam and was delighted to discover that the two hours of pitting cherries had been well worth it.

One of the best things I learnt about was confiture. They make around 20 different varieties, classics like strawberry and raspberry, as well as more elaborate styles like spiced apple and rosehip. There was also a Christmas jam packed with fruits and spices that was made in June so that the spices could develop ready for Christmas.

Part 3 - Paris

At Arnaud Larher I worked in the "Four" section ("four" is oven in French so this translates to the bakery section). It was great that I worked on this section as it was the opposite section to that which I worked in Strasbourg.

The day started at 6.30am. In the morning I would help with the finishing of the patisserie from the four section - this included macaroon entremets, millefeuille, St Honare and also baked products like molleux au chocolat, canelle and the Parisian classic, Koug aman.

Here the kitchen was split into 4 sections. The four section where they made all the baked products, macarons, choux pastry, puff pastry etc. The tart section where all the tarts and petit fours were made. The entremets section where they made the patisserie and lastly the chocolate section, where chocolate bon bons, bars and nibbles were made.

The most interesting method I discovered at Arnaud's was that they made the puff pastry in a reverse method. Traditional puff pastry is made making the detrumpt (dough), enveloping butter inside and then folding it to create layers, the detrumpt always being on the outside. The reverse method places the butter on the outside and the detrumpt on the inside - the reverse of the traditional method. This reverse method is said to provide a more even rise from the puff and has less shrinkage than traditional puff pastry.

The millefeuille from Arnaud Larher uses this lovely puff pastry. On the menu there are two of these available for purchase - the classic, puff pastry with vanilla crème patissier and a seasonal summer raspberry millfeuille with a mascarpone cream and raspberry confiture.

When I returned from France I started looking at Tokyo again. The language barrier was something of an issue as most chefs needed me to speak and understand simple Japanese. Fortunately, William Curley put me in touch with a friend, Frederic Madelaine whom he had worked with at Marc Meanau. Frederic has worked in Tokyo for 12 years and 6 Years ago opened his own shop, Le Pommier. <http://www.lepommier-patisserie.com/>



Part 4 – Tokyo Japan Cake Show

Two days before I left for Tokyo, my stage Head Chef, Frederic e-mailed me to let me know about the Japan Cake show that was happening on the day I landed.

So with a plan and the motivation to get through my jetlag, I jumped off the plane at Narita airport in Tokyo and headed straight to the cake show to track Frederic down and explore the show.

The show consisted of two floors of entries of chocolate centrepieces, petit fours, patisserie, sugar pieces, cake decoration, themed display pieces and much more. The third floor was equipment for patisserie making, wrapping, ingredients etc. Also there was a live competition of sugar going on called Top Patisserie, which was the competition from which the members of the Japanese team for the coupe du monde would be chosen. It all happened in front of a live audience with the chefs having 5 hours to make a sugar centre piece.

Le Pommier is where my stage took place. Frederic has been working in Tokyo for 12 years. His team are all Japanese so after I met him at the cake show he wished me good luck with my first morning in the kitchen as he was not coming in until later and none of the chefs spoke English.

I was slightly apprehensive when I arrived at his kitchen the next morning! I needn't have been worried - I ended up working with a chef called Hiromi who had worked in France for one year so we were able to communicate in French. The ingredients for the recipes are all written in French so it was not as big a problem communicating and understanding as I thought it would be - my time in France definitely helped.

After work on the Friday I went with Frederic to visit his second shop which is in Azabu-Juban. Here I had tea and tried the new pumpkin crème brulee, which is a special for Halloween. Most patisserie shops were making desserts with pumpkin during the weeks leading up to Halloween - it was really nice to see a very seasonal ingredient being used to its full potential.

It was lovely to do my stage here with Frederic. As a French chef all the products were classically based but the Japanese element was reflected in the patisserie i.e. Japanese Roll cakes, Mont blanc with Matcha tea. Frederic maintains many classic French elements as would be expected... with classic croissant, chausson au pomme, pain au chocolat and also cannelle bordelaise featuring on his menus.

In Japan and in France I learnt more than just doing stages – being able to visit numerous other shops run by many different chefs from different backgrounds exposed me to a variety of Patisserie and Chocolate, styles, skills and ingredients I could never find in England. An additional bonus was seeing a variety of shop packaging methods that I hope will help shape my own style for when I decide to open my own shop.

The opportunity given to me by the William Heptinstall scholarship has been invaluable to me as a pastry chef, to my current career and also my future as a Patisserie.

Thank you to all.



Le Pommier , Sarah centre with Frederic and team



**Sarah Frankland at
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A Visit to New Zealand

by

Alan Shepherd

Rippon wine estate above Lake Wanaka

Stephanie and I have been IWFS members for some years but one aspect that we had never explored was the possibility of contacting local branches when travelling abroad. Several fellow members had done this in the past, and suggested that it was often a good way of getting some inside information on restaurants and local produce, and maybe even of joining in a local event, if the schedule happens to fit.

So when we were planning a four week tour of New Zealand at the end of last year, we decided to contact the Auckland branch, to see if they were able to help us. This was really easy via the new web site, and we soon received a reply from Branch Secretary Ross Lee, giving some useful links to Cuisine Magazine's restaurant awards, and suggesting that he would be happy to arrange for us to have dinner with a few branch members one evening, if we had the time.

We were delighted to follow up this suggestion, and it proved to be an evening to remember. We started in the penthouse flat of President Marlene Tuohey and her husband Warren, with a fantastic view out over the bay. Warren had laid on a tasting of the grapes most commonly used in New Zealand wines, which proved to be a great foundation for our visit, and we then moved on to the **TriBeCa** restaurant in nearby Parnell. We chose the 5 course tasting menu, and chef Hayden McMillan, widely regarded as one of Auckland's rising stars, certainly came up with the goods.

The Branch also presented us with Cuisine's guide to 150 of the best restaurants in New Zealand, and this proved to be our bible for the remainder of our stay. We were really grateful for the fantastic reception that they gave us, and very much hope that some of them will be visiting us in the UK before too long.

We were delighted to find that the restaurant in our own hotel – **Kitchen at Hotel DeBrett** had just been given a Cuisine award, and it proved to be well-deserved. The new owner has done a fantastic job of bringing this old hotel up-to-date, and Kitchen is just about as far from the usual soul-less hotel dining room as can be. Head Chef Mark Sycamore is working hard to build upon his reputation, and the short daily menu showed exemplary technique, full flavours, and beautiful presentation. The young servers were friendly and knowledgeable, and certainly scored with us in recommending appropriate wines to accompany each dish. →



Alan & Stephanie far left with members of the Auckland Branch at the home of Marlene & Warren Tuohey. Kitchen at Hotel DeBrett, right.





Mojo Coffee Roaster



The Moore Wilson Food Market



On leaving Auckland, we enjoyed some superb home-cooked meals at Poets Corner Lodge, on the Coromandel Peninsular, and sampled some of the local restaurants in Taupo. Then in Wellington, we joined a Zest Food Walking Tour, where we were escorted around the waterside area to visit a number of memorable local establishments, including a coffee roaster (Mojo), a chocolatier (Bohemian), and the specialist Moore Wilson food market, sampling the wares along the way, of course. The tour culminated with a delightful lunch at **Logan Brown's**, one of the benchmark restaurants in Wellington, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. After a starter of paua ravioli, served with a Sauvignon Blanc from the Rippon winery at Wanaka, which we visited later in the trip, we moved on to a choice of crispy skin gurnard with lime spinach and almond aioli, or braised lamb shoulder, with cous cous, green olives and feta. The fish was served with a Palliser Chardonnay, and the lamb with Cabernet/Merlot/Malbec blend from the Johner estate at Wairarapa. The dessert was an orange blossom delicious pudding, with poached rhubarb and pistachio crumble, served with a noble Riesling from Pegasus Bay. Altogether a tour de force from chef Shaun Clouston.

We also visited **Arbitrageur**, a less formal establishment, and winner of Cuisine's 2011 award for the best metropolitan casual dining, but possibly the highlight of our trip was **Martin Bosley's** restaurant in the Royal Nicholson Yacht Club on Oriental Bay. We did not see the superb views at

their best, as it was pouring with rain, but the food and service were superb, and well up to the standard of most Michelin Star establishments in the UK.

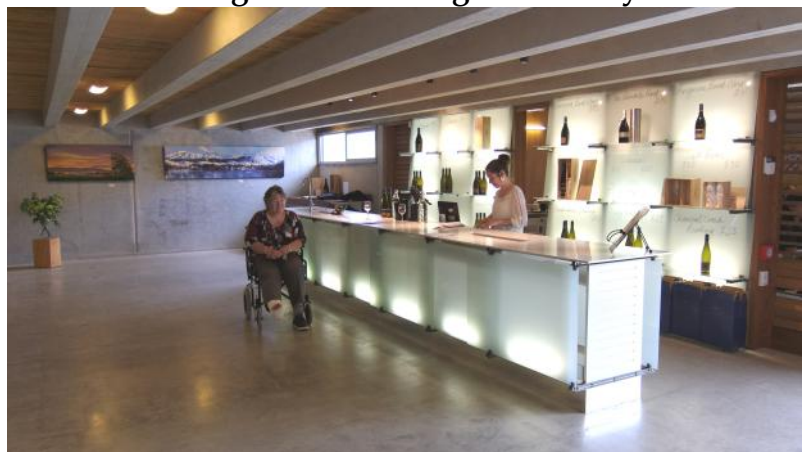
We left Wellington on the ferry, and transferred to a water taxi which took us to the Bay of Many Coves on Marlborough Sound. The setting was remote, and absolutely stunning. Next day, we went for a walk on the Queen Charlotte Track, and disaster struck as Stephanie slipped on a patch of sticky mud, and ended up with a badly broken ankle. She had to be rescued by the coastguard, and spent three nights in Blenheim hospital. I, somewhat guiltily, took the opportunity to tour some of the local vineyards, and found it quite an eye-opening experience. I had an excellent lunch at the well-known **Wither Hills** winery, and also visited **Cloudy Bay**, but most of the others that I visited were small, boutique establishments, whose produce is rarely exported. **Gibson Bridge, Mahi, Seresin, Framingham, Te Whare Ra** and **Hunters** come particularly to mind. I was amazed how different their wines were from the mass-market New Zealand exports that we often find in the UK: much more subtle and delicately flavoured. Several of the winemakers said that they were aiming at a more European style of wine, and particularly to differentiate themselves from the Australians. →

Because of the stay in hospital, our visit to Christchurch was much curtailed, and we had to cancel our planned dinner at the renowned Pescatore restaurant in the George Hotel, which, by the way, is well outside the central earthquake zone at the centre, which is still largely closed off. We would also have liked to visit the restaurant at the Pegasus Bay winery, an hour's drive to the north. Instead, we boarded the TranzAlpine Express to take us across the mountains to the west coast. This is one of the great railway journeys of the world, and well worth doing. We were impressed by the quality of food in the better lodges, and both the Te-Waonui at Franz Josef Glacier and the Fjordland were outstanding.

With so much to see and do in New Zealand, we had not intended to spend much time visiting wineries, but with hiking off the agenda, we succumbed to the temptation to drop in for a few tastings around Central Otago. The **Rippon** family estate, with fantastic views across Lake Wanaka was particularly outstanding. Another notable visit was to the **Peregrine** winery in the Gibston Valley, located in an incredible eco-building cut into the hillside, and roofed entirely with solar panels. The



Peregrine's stunning eco-winery



Stephanie, hors de combat

wines were interesting too, with offerings from **Kareara**, **Mohua** and **Saddleback** labels, as well as Peregrine itself. But some of our favourites were to be found at the High Plains Wine Company's **Winehouse and Kitchen**, established by A J Hackett of bungee jumping fame, and located right next to his bungee centre, high above the Kawarau River, which is still operational. It handles the **Hawkshead** and **Rock Ferry** labels, amongst others, and we were particularly impressed by Rock Ferry's take on Viognier, from the Trig Hill winery: fresher, crisper and drier than the European version, but with the same delicate perfume. We also found some excellent restaurants on the Steamer Wharf in nearby Queenstown: notably chef Martin James' **Wai**, another Cuisine award winner, and the up and coming **Pier 19**, a few doors away.

Of course the scenery was stunning, as we expected, but the whole trip was a most interesting experience from other perspectives as well, and one which completely changed our perception of New Zealand food and wine. We certainly recommend contacting local IWFS branches when visiting unfamiliar locations as I am sure that the vast majority would have some very useful recommendations. ♦

Alan Shepherd is Deputy Chairman of London Branch and on the committees of Capital Branch and Surrey Hills. Stephanie is secretary of London Branch and a co-opted member of the EAC.

Steamer Warf with Wai Restaurant on the right





Leicester Branch Go West - to Gidleigh and beyond

By Mary Jewell

On October 9th Our coach left Leicester at 6.30 am. As we travelled early on a Sunday morning there was little traffic and we made good time to our coffee break at Slimbridge Wetland centre where several of us enjoyed bacon sandwiches in the excellent café overlooking a pool with at least fifty flamingoes. We then travelled on to Chagford, North Devon. Here all sixteen of us climb into a mini bus to take us to Gidleigh Park, the famous, Relais and Châteaux hotel for lunch, as the road through woods and across narrow bridges was impassable by coach.

We were warmly welcomed in the hotel, an Arts and Crafts house built as a grand private residence in 1928. After a brief time to explore the lovely garden with streams and bridges we were taken on a conducted tour of their most impressive wine cellar with a special cool section for the white wines. We drank Prosecco on the terrace, with canapés of tuna and quail's eggs, before going into a private dining room to sit at a long table. An appetizer of wild mushroom soup was beautifully presented. The first course, a superb Cornish shellfish salad featuring mussels, crab and brown shrimps with lemon purée and a chorizo foam was complemented by a Sauvignon Blanc from Chile - Santiago 2010. The main course of Dartmoor rosé veal with watercress purée, celeriac fondant and sherry cream sauce was perfect. The sous chef, Ian Currie, said that the loin of veal had been cooked by the sous vide method for one and a half hours. A Cabernet Sauvignon from Santiago in Chile was a perfect accompaniment. Pudding was a raspberry parfait. We scarcely had room for the petit fours with the coffee, tiny lemon tartlets and plum doughnuts. The service was amazing. We thought the restaurant richly deserved its two Michelin stars earned by the head chef Michael Caines.

We journeyed on into Cornwall to our hotel Budock Veian set in 65 acres with grounds going down to the Helford River. After a reception in the Helford room we were given an illustrated lecture by Charles Fox who was to be our guide for the next three days. Charles is a surviving member of a famous large Cornish Quaker family who built houses and made wonderful gardens in the 18th and 19th centuries after making money in tin mining and other business. We stayed three nights in the very comfortable and friendly hotel and enjoyed wonderful breakfasts but we had such good lunches every day that it was difficult to do justice to their very substantial dinners.

On Monday we travelled to Penzance and visited the Penlee House Art Gallery with, I think, superb Victorian paintings of the Newlyn school. There was an interesting exhibition of paintings by three modern artists in the downstairs rooms. We crossed the peninsula to St Ives and caught a train from St Erth to Porthminster beach. Traveling along the cliff side we had wonderful views of the different bays with golden sands before alighting at Porthminster and walking down to Porthminster Beach café. The minimalist interior with stunning views of the beach was very pleasing and the fresh fish dishes were excellent. Afterwards we walked round a headland into St Ives town. Some of us visited the Barbara Hepworth Museum and some The Tate Gallery before local transport took us up the cliff side to our awaiting coach.

The evening started with a tasting of wines from the Camel Valley vineyard in North Cornwall planted in the late 1980's. We enjoyed the first wine a sparkling NV Brut made from Pinot Noir with a pale pink colour and an apple nose. Next Bacchus 2010, white, was dry with a green tinge. The rosé was very sweet made from Dornfelder and Pinot Noir and the red made from Triumph, Dornfelder and Rondo in 2009 was unremarkable. The wines were expensive and only the sparkling seemed worth the money.

That evening the hotel provided a special IWFS dinner. We started with a tian of crab with avocado, apple, tomato and watercress accompanied by Domaine Pique Roque Provence Rose 2010 made from 70% grenache. Next we could choose between French onion soup or pineapple sorbet. The main course was roast fillet of lamb with a red wine and thyme jus and we drank Ribero del Duero Semi Crianza, Abadia la Arroyada 2007 aged in Hungarian oak. We had a choice of three puddings or a trio of Menallack farm cheeses. The pudding wine was Chateau Exindre Muscat de Mireval 2009. Coffee, Cornish fudge and mints were served in the comfort of the lounges afterwards.



On Tuesday our coach took us to Falmouth to visit the excellent, very modern maritime museum. There was a central atrium with many famous dinghies hanging from the ceiling and a special exhibition gallery about Scott's Antarctic expedition. A viewing tower gave us wonderful views of Falmouth harbour. Walking through the town Charles showed us several very large houses once owned by members of his family. We descended steep and slippery steps to be helped onto a ferry which took us across the harbour to St Mawes, a lovely journey taking 25 minutes.

After a walk up the hill to the beautiful Hotel Tresanton we were delighted by Cornish native oysters, eaten on the terrace with Prosecco Rosé di Pinot Ruggeri NV from Valdobbiadene, Italy. In the elegant, light dining room we enjoyed a starter of scallops, steamed mussels and prawns. The

main course was Cornish venison with girolles, cabbage and arancini [rissoles made from rice and minced venison] perfectly complemented by Malbec, Don David 2009 from Mendoza, Argentina. Our pudding - plum tart, vanilla cream and plum sorbet was enhanced by Muscatel Dulce, Finca Antigua 2009 from Spain. Cheese was Cornish Little Wheel with quince jelly. Unfortunately we didn't have time to linger over the coffee as Charles had arranged an appointment for us to have a private viewing of the Copeland family's china collection at Trelissick.

A mini bus collected us from the hotel and we sped North along the Roseland peninsula to the King Harry car ferry and crossed to Trelissick garden now owned by the National Trust. A surviving member of the Copeland family gave us a history of the Copeland and Spode china manufacture and we admired the museum in the house before exploring the garden with an impressive ha ha and wonderful views of the River Fal. Here our coach was waiting to take us back to Budock Vean.

Wednesday morning was spent in Glendurgan garden also owned by the National Trust but Charles' family home since boyhood. He and his wife and three daughters live in the house and it is accessed by a private drive away from the tourist facilities. We admired the lovely garden that follows a glen down to the Helford River and village of Durgan. Mrs Fox provided coffee and homemade biscuits in their home. We went on to the Treloworran estate to have lunch in the New Yard Bistro converted from a building in the stable yard. Journeying on to the Trevarno estate at Crowtown near Helston we spent time in the National Museum of Gardening which was very interesting before Charles took us on a conducted tour of parts of the garden. There is a lovely lake with a Victorian boat house and a conservatory with tropical plants attached to the house.

We travelled north to Rock on the Camel estuary and the St Enodoc Hotel. The hotel has simple, modern décor with stunning colours, fabulous fabrics, Cornish slate and granite floors with super rugs and original paintings on the walls. Our bedroom and bathroom were delightful and I wished we could spend more than one night there. Chef Nathan Outlaw runs two restaurants in the hotel - the Seafood and Grill and the Restaurant Nathan Outlaw. This provides a set tasting menu with accompanying wines and has earned two Michelin stars. We assembled in the drawing room and enjoyed a Camel valley sparkling Chardonnay. We dined in the Seafood and Grill where we could choose between beetroot salmon, hand dived scallops or crab on toast with a Loire wine 2010, Domaine de Haut Bourg Grollean Gris. Main courses were chicken, whole grilled mackerel or sea bass fillet with Valpolicello 2010. Puddings were apple crumble or passionfruit cheesecake or we could select a Cornish cheese board.

Next morning, after watching the struggles of our coach driver turning our large coach round in the narrow car park, we travelled to Buckfast Abbey where we enjoyed a coffee break viewing the stained glass in the Abbey church. It seemed a fair distance to Wells but we received a warm welcome in The Old Spot restaurant where we enjoyed our final meal together. It was excellent, for starters we chose between mushroom soup, sweet cured mackerel spinach and ricotta fritters and trio of terrines with celeriac. The mains were haddock and mussel chowder, roasted pork belly, onion goat's cheese and black olive tart or roast chicken - puddings: treacle tart, vanilla cheese cake, rice pudding with quince or cheese. Margaret Bowen chose the wines - Sancerre les Boncauds Claude Riffault 2010 and Chateau Rousseau de Sipian Medoc 2003.

Afterwards we had a conducted tour of Wells cathedral with an admirable guide. Leaving for home at 4.30pm and arrived at 8.45pm. We felt very grateful to Margaret Bowen, our Chairman, who had organized the whole trip down to the last detail and also done a great deal of research. We had enjoyed four superb lunches, two good dinners and stayed in two excellent hotels. The museum and garden visits were excellent and the entrance fees were all included in the total price of £890 per person. It was a trip to remember and an incentive to visit Cornwall again.

Lunch at Hotel Tresanton at St Mawes.



Hake at the Porthminster beach cafe



Mosel from Juffer

Berkshire Branch Crossing the Eifel by Chris Graham

What better way to spend a few days in late September than to explore white wines of the Mosel and red wines of the Ahr with like-minded friends? André Simon described his first visit to Germany in 1911 with the words “I fell in love with the Rhine and Moselle. How could I, or anybody else with eyes to see, fail to do so?”

Staying first with Wolfgang and Ulla Kohl at their cosy Weingutshotel in the village of Brauneberg on the banks of the Mosel, thirteen members of the Berkshire Branch gathered for a few days of wine & food indulgence. Wolfgang had arranged for us to take a trip to Luxembourg where we were given a detailed insight into the business of Bernard-Massard by Françoise Clasen, a member of the family who owns the business. Their range of sparkling wines, using mainly bought in grapes, is truly extensive and when one member described the first bottle we opened of their top cuvéé L’Ecusson Brut as “tasting of dog” we seemed to get increased attention – and a few more exotic bottlesand yes, the bottle in question was decidedly “off”! All the others wines we tasted were delicious and L’Ecusson is a match for a good champagne any day!

Wolfgang makes all his own wines mainly from Riesling grapes grown on both the prime Juffer slope and on the Klostergarten (Brauneberg) side of the Mosel. His tasting lasted nearly 3 hours and encompassed a huge range of flavours focussed mainly on more modern, drier styles of wines. This sparked-off the “Great Riesling Debate” from members whose memory of Mosel wines was of sweeter and low alcohol wines. The other topic for discussion was about the Andre Simon Lecture 2011, given by Tom Scott, on “German Viticulture, the Last 20 Years”, demonstrating how wine law bureaucracy can mess up markets. I thought that I was beginning to understand German wine classifications but now know that I do not, and nor will I in the future either.

Ulla had prepared her menus around the theme of “Moselfränkische Küche” and included an excellent Winzerstaek, marinated for 2 days then barbequed and the interesting “Schaless mit Apfelkompott”, grated potato, leek, celery and ham served with apple sauce. Brauneberg was preparing for the local wine festival and we had the opportunity to try two unusual wines: Federweißer and Federroter. These are young, sparkling, slightly cloudy, wines sold when they are just 4% alcohol and are very refreshing - excellent for a festival!

Leaving behind Brauneberg, we drove up the Mosel valley to just beyond Bernkastel, where we were lucky enough to have arranged a private tasting at Dr Loosen’s winery. Michael Stahlmann presented us with the traditional face of Mosel wines, Rieslings with richness, sweetness and very low alcohol – excellent. 95% of their production is exported and the UK is a major market.

Moving on from the Mosel we crossed the plateau of the Eifel through the National Park into the Ahr valley, entering at the western end into Altenahr where we were to stay for the next 3 nights. Set amongst the steep, vineyard covered slopes of the Ahr valley, Altenahr is a major destination for hiking, there being some 27 trails around the town and from early in the morning there was a continuous stream of hikers passing through the main street. Running in the valley floor next to the river are a road and a railway line, which we used to travel to and from Dernau, our next wine tasting location. Six members of our group walked the 10 kilometers along the Rotweineweg through the hillside vineyards from Altenahr to Dernau: not so hard when there are toilets, snack and wine stalls to pause at en-route!

The timing of our trip coincided with the annual Dernau Weinfest: who said the Germans do not know how to enjoy themselves? Albeit, whilst the focus of the young people was on quantity rather than quality, the entertainment, street parade and food stalls made for a colourful event. We fitted in another marathon 4 hour tasting hosted by our old friend Horst Bertram at Dagernova. Who could believe that there was so much still to talk about wine and winemaking? Dagernova is the large, but high quality, co-operative whose motto is “1200 Hands, 600 Hearts, and 1 passion!”. They specialise in red wines mainly from Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Frühburgunder, an early ripening form of Pinot Noir (also called Pinot Noir Précoce), which works very well in the relatively high latitudes of the Ahr valley. Highlights were their No.1 Spätburgunder and their Frühburgunder but their Blanc de Noir is also worth investigating.

Several of the company travelled by car and this made it possible to purchase a number of wines to bring back to the UK. We used these to put together a retrospective tasting, enabling members who did not come on the tour to share in the distinctive flavours and quality of the Mosel and Ahr valley wines we discovered. The use of a few photographs during the evening enabled us to relive very pleasant memories of a trip where we all enhanced our knowledge of German local wines and foods in good company.



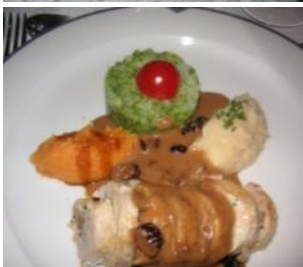
around the branches - Zurich



All Aboard for a Thanksgiving Dinner in Style

November 26th saw the Zurich branch members board the Salon Bleu for an American Thanksgiving Dinner. Le Salon Bleu is a dining car from the 1930's era complete with plush upholstery, beautiful mahogany trimming and stunning glass murals of birds of paradise. The train took us from Zürich to Basle then on to Luzern and finally back to Zürich some four and a half hours later. In that period we enjoyed a four-course meal preceded by an Appetiser accompanied by Prosecco Oro della Regina DOC made from 100% Glera grapes in the Asolani hills.

The meal began with a Frisé salad accompanied by Gorgonzola, walnuts and a Raspberry crostini. A pumpkin soup



with an infusion of ginger and honey followed. With this we were served a delicious Col Reale Veneto Bianco Terre di Pra' 2009, a very dry refreshing wine, a blend of 50% Cortese and 50% Garganega. By now we were in Basle and our dining car was being shuttled back and forth to the next train that would take us on to Luzern in central Switzerland. Awaiting departure the Col Reale was replenished. Once on the way again the main course was served under beautiful, highly polished silver cloches. Turkey breast was rolled around chestnut stuffing with rosemary 'jus', accompanied by sweet potato purée, broccoli, cauliflower, beans and cranberry sauce.

The wine, a Nerone di Calabria Crisera 2006 made from 30% Sangiovese and 70% Nerello Calabrese, was rich red, full-bodied, and somewhat tannic but went extremely well with the main course. As we arrived in Luzern, spot on time, our plates were removed and the table prepared for the dessert. There was some more shunting around the rail yards to our next platform and we had a 20 minute wait. This allowed us to have a walk up and down the platform and a few adventurous members went out of the station to see the Christmas lights in Luzern. A few less adventurous sat around with another glass of red wine or two! Needless to say our dining car attracted a lot of visitors who wanted to know who we were, where the car came from and what its history was. Finally we were hooked up to the Luzern-Zurich express and were on our way. A yummy dessert! A Classic American deep-dish apple pie with cinnamon ice cream followed by coffee or tea with a choice of Grappa, Kirsch, Mirabelle, Williams, Vieille Prune or Cognac. Truly a splendiferous meal with no stinting on the quantities of food or wine, plus a rare opportunity to travel on one of the great dining

wagons of the past. I must say the SBB went all out to make this a truly memorable experience.

Should you ever be in Switzerland you might want to do a little research to see if there might be one of these Schweizerische Bundesbahnen (SBB) (Swiss Federal Railways) "Erlebnis reisen" through their web site:- www.sbb.ch/erlebnisreisen

If your trip coincides with one, it is a treat. There is a Valentines Day excursion in February.... Hmmmmm, maybe?

John Macdonald

around the branches - Leicester



A Visit to Berry Brothers

Our thanks are due to John Nisbet who arranged for our branch to visit Berry Brothers in St James's Street, London on Tuesday, November 29th 2011. We had a tasting of Spanish wines followed by lunch, sitting at two long tables, in their beautiful brick vaulted Napoleon cellar. The sommelier gave us a brief history of their interesting family business which was started by a lady supplying groceries to St James's palace in the 18th century and has been run by the same family ever since.

We started with a sparkling Catalonian wine, 2007 Brut Nature, Gran Reserva. To me it seemed rather lacking in bubbles but I was told it had been poured for some time before the tasting started. Next we tasted two sherries from Jerez – Berrys' La Seguidilla, Manzanilla Sanlucar de Barrameda and Don Nuno Dry Oloroso, Solera Reserva, Emilio Lustau, both excellent. The tasting continued with the presenta-

tion of wines accompanying lunch. We were served with a plentiful supply of 2010 Lagar de Cervera, Albarino Rias Baixas from Galicia and a 2008 Rioja Blanco, Finca Allende. They complemented a confit of salmon with a cauliflower cream vinaigrette of brown shrimps and horseradish. We tasted two red wines – 2005 Clos Figueres, Priorat and 1999 Imperial, Rioja Gran Reserva, CVNE accompanying a roast rump of pork with white onion risotto and sage and onion pesto. Finally we enjoyed a third sherry a 1990 Oloroso, Anada Lustau with a walnut tart with lemon curd and clotted cream ice cream. We lingered over coffee and chocolates and finally left about 4 pm.

The price was £125 each, which is more than twice our usual Leicestershire prices but it was a great experience enhanced by seeing the Christmas lights and revelling in the unique atmosphere created by the Berry Bros. establishment.

Mary Jewell

around the branches - London



Esk Valley vineyard Hawke's Bay

White Burgundies versus New World Chardonnays

This event took place at the Naval Club on 22nd November. The idea was to compare, without prejudice, the attractiveness of white Burgundies with that of New World Chardonnays, and to see if people could tell the different types of wine apart. The wines were served blind in pairs, each pair consisting of one of each type of wine, with members voting after each pair for which was the better wine and which one was the Burgundy. Not everyone voted each time. The pairings were done mainly on age.

The Burgundies were chosen by Jeffrey Benson, and the New World wines were selected by the organiser, Bernard Lamb, an experienced amateur wine-maker and taster.

Round 1. Bouchard Finlayson, Chardonnay, Kaaimansgat, 2009, W. O. Overberg, South Africa, easily beat 2009 Chablis 1er Cru 'Montmains', Domaine Jean Goulley, by 13 votes to 4, with 6 people thinking that the South African wine was the Burgundy.

Round 2. South Africa, Hamilton Russell Vineyards, Chardonnay, 2009, W. O. Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, South Africa, beat 2008 Meursault 'Le Limozin', Domaine Rene Monier, by 11 votes to 6, with 4 people putting the South African as the Burgundy, and 6 identifying the Burgundy correctly.

Round 3. 2008 Pouilly Fuissé Prestige, Domaine Ferrand, thoroughly beat The Lane, Single Vineyard, Unwooded Chardonnay, 2008, Adelaide Hills, Australia, by 14 to 0, with 5 people putting the Australian as Burgundy and 10 putting the French as Burgundy.

Round 4. 2008 Givry 1er Cru Blanc 'Clos de la Servoiseine', Domaine Joblot, beat The Lane, Single Vineyard, Beginning Chardonnay, 2007, Adelaide Hills, Australia, by 11 to 6, with 6 people putting the Australian as Burgundy and 10 identifying the Burgundy correctly. That made it two rounds to New World, two to Burgundy.

Round 5. Morton Estate, Hawkes Bay, Black Label Chardonnay, 2004, New Zealand, beat 2008 St Aubin 1er Cru 'Les Charmois', Domaine Marc Morey, by 10 to 5, with 3 people putting the NZ wine as Burgundy and 12 getting the Burgundy right.

Round 6. Would Burgundy catch up? Esk Valley, Hawke's Bay, Reserve Chardonnay, 2002, New Zealand, drew with 2007 Haut Cotes de Nuits Blanc, Domaine Guy et Yvan Dufouleur, 8 all! 13 put the Burgundy as that, and 1 put the NZ wine as Burgundy, although the age difference was a strong clue.

The final result was thus a win for the New World Chardonnays, beating the Burgundies by 3½ rounds to 2½. The participants really enjoyed the format of the evening and the very good wines.

Jeffrey paid these prices, ex VAT, wholesale: Chablis 1er Cru - £17.00; Meursault - £25.00, Pouilly Fuissé Prestige - £18.00, Givry 1er Cru - £22.00, St Aubin - £23.00, Haut Cotes de Nuits Blanc - £16.00, so they would cost a lot more if bought retail. Bernard's wines, bought retail, cost (rounds 1 to 6, respectively) £12.95, £21.95, £13.25, £20.33, £13.99, and 'price forgotten'. Details of each wine were given after the round in which they had been tasted, so the participants could learn about styles in each round.

Compared to the New World Chardonnays, the Burgundies were less generous, more noticeably acidic, and less ready. The New World ones were more opulent, seeming fatter. In the first four rounds, there were 21 cases of putting a New World wine as a Burgundy, with about 34 cases of putting Burgundy as Burgundy, 38% error rate, but blind tasting is difficult. Identifications were better in the last two rounds, so perhaps the difference in styles had been learnt.

For the organiser, the best wines were Esk Valley (light gold, huge lovely bouquet, oaky rich flavour, delicious, very long), Morton Estate, Hamilton Russell and the Pouilly Fuissé, with Bouchard Finlayson the best value wine.

Brenda Lamb provided a well-received light meal afterwards.

A special Indian Banquet at the Red Fort

On 28th January, Soho was packed with people celebrating Chinese New Year, but fourteen London Branch members went to the Red Fort in Dean Street for an Indian banquet organised by our chairman Jeffrey Benson. The restaurant was founded in 1982 by Amin Ali for Mughal Court cooking, using fresh British ingredients.

It was the best Asian meal I had ever had, here or in Asia, with everyone being really impressed. I had been worried that the food might be too hot with chillies, but all the spicings were subtle and beautifully done. The décor and lighting were subdued, with a few photos of the Red Fort in Delhi. Efficient service was provided by Asian men wearing black outfits – no lovely young ladies in saris!

We began with an aperitif, Le Petit Mas Roussillon Rosé, which went well on its own and with the food. Naan bread was provided with three chutneys: coriander, mango and a lovely banana one. The starters were all put on a glass plate: broccoli florets with roasted cumin, fenugreek and mustard paste; grilled fillet of seabass spiced with dried fenugreek and carom from the tandoor; a chicken breast piece marinated with coriander stem and cardamom from the tandoor, and lightly spiced grilled monkfish with ginger and saffron. It was all good and very filling.

Even the broccoli was made interesting by the spices. Two more wines were served, the white 2010 'Le Coste' Poderi dai Nespoli Trebbiano, and the suitably robust red, 2010 'Fio Grande' Poderi dai Nespoli Sangiovese with plenty of top-ups throughout the meal.

The main course items were served in dishes for about four people, so we helped ourselves: chicken pieces in a spicy brown onion, red chilli and saffron sauce; spiced rabbit roasted with mustard, chilli, fennel and onion seeds; jumbo prawns marinated with saffron, chilli and garlic; Welsh lamb and Basmati rice with spices, steamed in a sealed pot; baby aubergines with whole chilli in a peanut, sesame and tamarind sauce; sautéed spinach with garlic, onion and green chilli; steamed Basmati rice, and a selection of breads. All the items were good, with the tender, tasty lamb being superb.

The pudding was an attractively arranged crumb pie filled with vanilla ice cream, topped with toffee sauce, hazelnuts and thin slices of strawberry. Tea and coffee followed. The head chef, Azadur Rahman, came over to us and was rightly highly praised for this complicated but utterly delicious meal.

Dr Bernard Lamb.



Azadur Rahman

around the branches - Manchester

Christmas Lunch at The Church Green Restaurant, Lymm, Cheshire

The annual Christmas Lunch, arranged by Monica Galt, one of our Committee members, was held at the Church Green on 3rd December 2011.

Restaurant Chef – Proprietor, Aiden Byrne, who had a Michelin Star whilst working at the Dorchester Hotel at the age of 22 (the youngest person to do so) was to prepare our meal, and if meals in the past were anything to go by, we were in for a treat.

Our aperitif was a sparkling Burgundy from Louis Boillet of Nuits St Georges, which had slight Chardonnay overtones and some peachy aromas. This was accompanied by canapés of basil pannacotta with almond jelly and pork rilette, cumin and roasted apple sauce, all were well received.

The starter was roasted scallop with apple, fennel & lemongrass. Unfortunately, the late delivery of the scallops caused a delay, and in the confusion some guests did not actually receive this course. However, those that did, enjoyed it, but there could perhaps have been a little more lemongrass. We drank Chateau Belair 2010, Entre de Mers, which, with a dry flavour, complemented the dish very well.

For the main course we had smoked oxtail ravioli, glazed shallots and beef sirloin. This was well received and the ingredients complemented each other. The Mount Trio Cabernet Sauvignon 2009 from Western Australia was enjoyed with this course.

The dessert consisted of Pistachio Cake, Black Cherries and Goat's Cheese and had interesting flavours and textures. This was served with Chateau La Grave 2009 St Croix de Mont which was a good accompaniment. Although some people felt we had had better meals at the restaurant in the past, overall it was an enjoyable event.

Bob Lloyd



AGM at Aspire

The Training Restaurant Trafford College, Altrincham, Cheshire

How do you prepare partridge for 64 discerning IW&FS members? This was the challenge facing students as the Manchester Branch returned to Aspire for its AGM. With total aplomb was the verdict of many members although the odd bird refused to conform to the necessary succulence- a problem which even professional chefs have to face. Uniformity cannot be guaranteed.

The evening began with a glass of Canard-Duchêne NV, delicious canapés served by the students and the meeting and greeting of old friends. After the AGM we got down to the serious business. The first course of cured wild venison was served with a Waldorf salad and roasted walnut dressing. This was beautifully arranged with match sticks of apple and celeriac and roasted walnuts. It was served with Dolcetto di Ovada La Caplana 2009 which was generally thought to have the right amount of acidity to accompany the venison.

The main course of Pot Roasted Partridge Bonne Femme with Cocotte potatoes received varied comments. Some thought it tender and juicy whilst a few found it to be tough and dry. However, the robust Bellarmine Pinot Noir 2008 had the fruit and spice to complement the dish. The wine was served through to three cheeses - Cornish Yarg, Lancashire Blue and the Dorset Blue Vinney which were delicious and in tip top condition.

Finally the Trio of desserts Sticky Toffee Pudding, Orange Parfait and Raspberry Panna cotta were surprisingly complementary and served in just the right 'tasting' amounts. Mercifully no large slabs of sticky toffee pudding! These were accompanied by the deliciously sweet Montbazillac Château Pech La Calavie.

The average age of the students in the kitchen was 17½ years. Together with their tutors and the 7 students serving at table all deserved the applause of the guests.

Chris Redman



around the branches - Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

Christmas Party at The Chester Grosvenor Hotel

We decided to hold our Christmas Party at the prestigious hotel in Chester, the 'Chester Grosvenor'. After spending a spectacular event there on the last night of the Merseyside Festival in June, we thought it only befitting to repeat the night for the benefit of all the local membership. It was a superb success and one enjoyed by all who attended. The management were delighted as the availability of places was 130 in total and the Branch attendees were 60! A truly splendid evening was enjoyed by all. The Christmas Party spirit commenced with a Champagne Reception followed by a super menu.

MENU

Hot smoked salmon with lemon creme cru, Dorset crab & soft quail egg

Carved fillet of beef with cannelloni of oxtail, caramelised onions & truffles

Chestnut semi-fredo, single estate chocolate & orange composition

Coffee & Sweetmeats

Sommelier's choice of wine flowed throughout the meal and was enjoyed by all!

The scrumptious dinner was followed by music, enjoyable company and dancing. Carriages arrived at 1.00am.

The Michelin starred Restaurant created the usual special meal which compared favorably to that created by their chef, Simon Radley, for the Festival.

As the evening was so memorable, we may decide to repeat the venue for Christmas 2012 - only 11 months to go!



Liqueur Tasting & French Dinner

The Branch once again returned to a favourite venue, La Boheme Restaurant in Lymm, Cheshire.

The family owned establishment is owned by Olivier Troalen, the head chef, with his wife Adele, ably supported by an experienced team with a strong French influence in both the kitchen and the front of house.

La Boheme presents traditional French Cuisine in an elegant and classically designed restaurant with a friendly and attentive service.

Olivier has a passion to create and produce exquisite cuisine using fresh ingredients and all dishes are meticulously presented with delicious flavours and tailored accompaniments.

We enjoyed a superb menu as follows:-

MENU

Fois Gras a La Didou & Brioche

Didier's fabulous foie gras flavoured with Armagnac, served with Prune Chutney, shot of Sauternes wine & roasted baby brioche

Or

Gratin De Crustaces A La Normande & Anette

Gratin of fresh king scallops, king prawns & mussels, bound in creamy cider, diced apple & dill sauce, topped with bread crumbs & oven baked until gratinated

Etouffe De Chevreuil A La Poire & Porto

Scottish Venison shoulder slowly braised in a Port, balsamic vinegar & pear sauce, accompanied with a creamy mash potato, braised red cabbage with Autumn fruits

Crepe Suzette served in hot Grand Marnier & orange sauce & delicious orange & Cointreau ice cream

Or

Creme Brulee & Tuile - vanilla flavoured Brulee with homemade tuile & mixed fruit compote

Coffee and Mints

Mike, our Cellar Master, presented his superb selection of wines to accompany the meal.

The meal was followed by a very interesting talk on liqueurs which was presented by the founder of the business, Rosie Sedgewick. Rosie explained in detail, how she became inspired, interested and ultimately involved in the making of her liqueurs.

Her brand name is 'My Gineration' and she sells to a wide range of retail and wholesale outlets including the Scottish based Demijohn. The assembled members tasted a variety of her produce and a considerable number of bottles were purchased!

Val Brookfield-Bishop



around the branches - Malmö



Restaurant Atmosfär on 11.11.11

We have been to the Restaurant Atmosfär a couple of times before and the only difference this time was that the owner Henrik Regner was out hunting elk to fill up his fridges and therefore not able to look after us. He had no reason to worry though. His head chef Daniel, sommelier Kate and other members of the staff did a great job presenting us the following seasonal 5 course menu after a tasty mushroom cappuccino with pata negra accompanied by a fresh Crément d'Alsace 2007 from Dom. Dirler-Cadé:



Menu

Fois gras de canard with shiitake mushrooms and savoy cabbage

Pinot gris Vieilles vignes 2007, Dom. Bruno Sorg

Lobster bisque with redfish à la Daniel

Chateauneuf-du-Pape Blanc 2009, Clos du Belvedere, Ch. de Vaudieu

Scanian duck with rösti, cherries, creamy salsify à la julienne and port wine sauce

Volnay-Santenots 2007, Dom. Francois Mikulski

L'Hospitalet du Gazin 2007

Cheeses

Gigondas 2006, Dom. Bosquets

Orange sorbet, chocolate, citrus mille-feuille

La Perlara 2008, Recioto di Soave, Ca'Rugate



The residual sweetness in the pinot gris balanced the fois gras very well and the delicate slightly oaked white Chateauneuf-du-Pape with exotic fruit went well with the soup.

Both the Burgundy and the full-bodied merlot dominated Pomerol matched the duck nicely.

The mature cheeses needed the fully mature classic Gigondas and the sweet Soave, with taste of honey, also had the acidity needed to cope with the citrus in the dessert.

In all it was, as usual in this restaurant, a complete culinary experience on which we all agreed.

The last event of the year was a tasting of a range of very good examples of South African wines from top producers, including Bouchard Finlayson, Cederberg, Niel Ellis, Hartenberg and Kanonkop. The tasting was followed by a tasty casserole from the above restaurant with more wines. Many members took the opportunity of ordering some of the wines tasted as Christmas gifts to their own cellars, to ensure a happy new year!

Rolf Fransson, Photo: Pierre Mens



around the branches - Sussex

Christmas Festivities

Christmas kicked off in style with a visit to the Newick Park Hotel, a lovely renovated grade 2 listed Georgian building which is set in 200 acres of gardens and parkland. On arrival we were ushered into a private dining room, which was beautifully and subtly decorated for the season. We enjoyed our aperitif, Cava, Castell d'Ollerdola Brut Reserve, before embarking on dinner. The Jerusalem artichoke soup was creamy, smooth and delicious with an added bonus of truffle oil. The home smoked Newick Park duck breast was very tasty and attractively presented with apple, beetroot and walnut salad. Sadly some members felt that the third alternative, crab risotto, wild rocket and gremolata failed to live up to expectations and was rather bland.

The fillet of beef served with parsnip puree, fried potatoes, button onions, green beans and thyme jus proved to be the most popular main course. As always, it was difficult to please everyone, certainly the beef was slightly overcooked for those who prefer it "blue", but it was tender, full of flavour and enjoyed by all. My choice of monkfish tail with beurre rouge was accompanied by some more unusual vegetables, namely salsify, braised leeks and wild mushrooms, all of which were cooked to perfection. The third choice of corn fed chicken breast with artichoke, chorizo and rocket salad was just as attractive and flavoursome.

Warm pear and almond tart with bitter chocolate sorbet or white chocolate and truffle panna cotta with avocado and pistachio cream made a very pleasant change from Christmas pudding or mince pies. A good selection of cheese was also on offer for those who preferred it to a dessert.

Two very pleasant French wines were served throughout: Chablis 2008, Domaine des Malandes and Bordeaux 2008, St Emillion 'Lussac' Chateau Tabuteau. The evening was rounded off by coffee, delicious home-made petit fours and much appreciation from members. Apart from a few reservations concerning the risotto, the cuisine, ambience, service and were excellent throughout.

This was a new venue for us, one which had been on our 'list' for some time, and we were not disappointed. In fact some members felt it was the best Christmas dinner for several years as there were definitely more menu options offered than usual. This is a lovely, tranquil place to visit – perhaps in the summer when the extensive gardens could be properly appreciated? We will be back!!

Lesley Berry



around the branches - Berkshire



Christmas Lunch at Bel & The Dragon, Cookham

The Bell & Dragon in Cookham High Street, built in 1417 is one of the oldest licensed houses in England and has had a goodish reputation for many years. In 2010 it became 'Bel and The Dragon', one of five (Cookham, Windsor, Reading & Godalming), restaurants owned and run by Joel Cadbury and Ollie Vigors. The business re-opened in May 2011 having been given a substantial makeover, with a very interesting focus on fine wines. An excellent crowd of 28 members attended the Berkshire Branch Christmas Lunch there in early December.

The menu offers diners a wide choice. In particular the pumpkin soup was delicious and the main courses served with every imaginable accompaniment, with the possible exception of bread sauce! A rich fig chutney set off the British Farmhouse cheeses very well but in fact all the dishes were tasty and imaginatively presented.

Our arrival glass of Prosecco was exactly the thing to get us in the mood for an early Christmas celebration and we had opted for the house wines with the meal. The Haut Poitou 2010, Sauvignon Blanc had a very powerful characteristic nettles and cat's pee nose combined with gooseberry on the palate, this had to be one of the best House Wines we have tasted. The red, a Garrus 2010, AOP Coteaux de Languedoc blend of Syrah, Grenache & Carignan was lighter on the nose but with full-bodied mature fruit in the mouth. It seemed to go down very well with the full range of main courses, as well as the British Farmhouse cheeses. We all found the staff to be efficient and helpful which made for a very pleasant lunch.

However, their Wine List requires more consideration. Joel Cadbury and Ollie Vigors have invested heavily in an excellent cellar which includes many wines from top Chateaux and from the best vintages. They are keen to share their love of fine wine with customers which means that pricing is extremely competitive and might allow for 4 to share a great bottle of wine for a very reasonable sum. See "From the Cellar" part of the wine list online at <http://www.belandthedragon-cookham.co.uk/fooddrink.php>.

The **Starters** presented a choice of:

Pumpkin Soup

Hebridean peat-smoked sea trout

Crispy Cornish whitebait

Salad of duck, spring onion & radishes

Main Course choices were:

Traditional Turkey Roast

Spit roasted suckling pig

Pan Roasted Sea Bass

Wild mushroom & chestnut risotto

Dessert choices were:

Christmas Pudding

Vodka and lemon sorbet

Chocolate and hazelnut tart

British farmhouse cheeses

We will be back!

Chris Graham



around the branches - Northampton

Annual Dinner at Hambleton Hall: October 2011

The 41st Annual Branch Dinner this year was held once again in the sumptuous surroundings of Hambleton Hall under the watchful eyes of proprietor Tim Hart and chef Aaron Paterson. We enjoyed a Champagne aperitif in the library, with delicious canapés, then moved into our private dining room for a starter of Cauliflower Velouté with Scallop and Black Pudding, served with Granny Smith apple pieces and pumpkin seeds running through. It was accompanied by Friulano Vigne Osborne Bastianich Colli Orientali Del Friuli 2009, made from Tocai Friulano and perfectly suited to the dish. The next course was a taste of Provence – a Tumbet terrine with tomato and basil consommé with a Whispering Angel Côtes de Provence 2010. For those not entirely conversant with Tumbet – it was a terrine of potatoes, aubergine, pimento and olives.

The main course was Roast Grouse with all the traditional accompaniments and a Crème de Mure sauce along with a Falernia Carmenère Syrah Elqui Valley 2007 from Chile, which was robust enough to stand up to the very gamey flavours of the grouse.

Dessert arrived at last; Pear in Mulled Wine Jelly with Blackberries with little tastes of Butterscotch with some delicious sea salt flakes and small doughnuts, with 2009 Coteaux du Layon Chaume Domaine des Forges Branchereau 2009, and we finished off with coffee and chocolates.

Many thanks to Hambleton Hall for accommodating us once again, and to Betty Meadows for her continued organisation of this annual event.

Alex Corrin

around the branches - Restaurant Awards

St James's Branch



Members of the St James's branch met in November to present a well deserved Restaurant award to 'Galvin at Windows', the Galvin brothers flag ship restaurant at the top of the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane.

The team at Windows had treated the branch to an outstanding dinner in the full tradition of the Society last March (see report June 2011 page 34). The award was presented by Chairman, Ari Sofianos to the manager, Fred Sirieux of TV programme 'Service' fame.

Andrew Brodie

London Branch



Following the resounding success of the London Branch dinner in the Krug Room at the Dorchester described in the last issue of Food & Wine, the EAC agreed to a Restaurant Award for chef Henry Brosi and his team.

This was presented at an identical follow-on event in November. The photo shows the award being presented to Henry Brosi by Branch Chairman Jeffrey Benson.

Alan Shepherd

Wessex Branch

The Stables Restaurant is part of the attractive 17th century thatched inn The Langton Arms in Tarrant Monkton near Blandford, Dorset. It is owned and managed by Barbara Cossins whose husband James runs the Home Farm at nearby Tarrant Rawston, which provides much of the beef and venison served in the restaurant. Produce not home grown is sourced locally as far as possible.

Our Saturday lunch in August, for which they won the award, started with the "Platters to Share". Large dishes, one containing a variety of seafood, another slices of smoked duck breast and duck liver parfait, from which we could help ourselves. This was accompanied by a bowl of creamy mushrooms.

The beef and the venison for the main course came from the Home Farm and were universally applauded, being both tender and very tasty. The sea trout was equally good, a thick fillet fresh from Poole that morning, liberally encrusted with herbs and perfectly cooked.

Desserts were first class, particularly the excellent home-churned ice cream. A selection of fine West Country cheeses was very well received.

The restaurant has a very good wine list, but to ensure that the wines matched the food perfectly our Chairman, David Packer, who had arranged the event, brought in his own selection. They were a Saumur Rosé (Gratien & Meyer); Chablis, Domaine William Fèvre, 2009; and Minervois, La Livinière, Château Sainte-Eulalie, Cuvée Cantilène, 2008 (Coustal). Both the dessert and the cheeses were accompanied by a rich old Oloroso.

The service was informal but efficient with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The award was richly deserved.

David Packer, Chairman.

Head chef Seb Paulinyi, David Packer & Barbara Cossins



Society Restaurant Awards

Has your branch presented a restaurant award in the last year, if not why not? You must have enjoyed at least one memorable restaurant meal. Top class restaurant owners, managers and chefs need to be encouraged with a Society award. Most importantly an appropriately mounted and framed certificate on a restaurant wall gives the Society publicity and widens our profile.

Applying for an award is simple. You can either contact the EAC Awards officer (details below) to request a form or you can download one from www.iwfs.org. On the website log into the members section with your password, in the European & African area hover over 'Resources' on the drop down menu, click on 'Branch Resources', click on 'Restaurant Award Form' and print it off. You will see you need signatures of supporting members, these are best collected at your next meeting. Important, make sure that names of the restaurant owner, manager, chef etc are correct as these will appear on the certificate. Any extra information you have such as a menu is useful when the Awards Committee are considering your application.

Please remember when you are presenting the award, invite the local media, get as much publicity as possible for the Society. Also contact F&W editor with details and photos and inform the restaurant that they are entitled to a free advert and to contact the Editor.



Awards Officer: John Legg, The Dean, 7 Harrop Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9BU. Tel: 01619280466 e mail: johnlegg@talktalk.net



Le Gavroche

In the fifties the slogan was coined, 'Go to work on an egg.' In the sixties Albert and Michel Roux turned that concept upside down and founded a dynasty that was built around the egg. The original Le Gavroche opened in 1967 in Lower Sloane Street and became the first restaurant in the country to receive a Michelin star, the first to win two, and the first to win three in 1982 after moving to the beautifully decorated premises in Upper Brook Street, Mayfair. As Albert will tell you himself the foundation of their success was the soufflé. The Roux brother perfected the art of producing this airy, flavorful, rich, light and truly elegant comfort food. Albert's son Michel took over the restaurant in 1993 when his father retired and, despite his numerous TV appearances, can be found overseeing his restaurant on a daily basis, as did his father before him. It is nearly thirty nine years since we last enjoyed a memorable meal at this world famous restaurant.

We had to book for lunch two months in advance and were very much looking forward to our visit. The menu offers a very good value lunch at £52 for three courses, coffee & petit fours and half a bottle of wine each. We started with a delicious glass of the house rosé Champagne at £12 a glass, with this we were served tasty canapés of phyllo wrapped chorizo and crab tartlets. These were followed by an appetizer of a tiny fillet of tuna with an oriental dressing. Salted and unsalted butter was offered with the bread but the salted was unneeded as the bread was perfectly seasoned. Something you rarely find these days in this nanny state.

Our starters were a velouté de topinambours, cepes et jambon maison and Oeuf Reine. The velouté was disappointing, the flavour of the Jerusalem artichokes didn't come through, it was just a light cream soup with slices of cepes and some rather tough diced ham in the bottom. I fared little better my poached egg, enrobed with hollandaise, was served atop a rather heavy, hollowed out brioche which was stuffed with what I think was a chicken and mushroom farce but it had little flavour. The whole thing might have been more palatable if it had been warm rather than very cold. We did mention our disappointment to the waiter when he cleared and were promptly offered another starter but declined as our main course was on the way.

My main course was cuisse de lapin grille et confite polenta et feuilles de bruxelles. The rabbit leg was tender, moist and flavoursome. The brussels were served as leaves, thank goodness, at least the French know the way to make this noisome vegetable appetizing. The dish was served with plenty of strong sauce that was soaked up by the polenta, a good combination. Very strong flavours which I enjoyed but some, I feel, would have considered the dish over salted.



The other half was a little worried when he ordered ragout de langues et rognons d' agneau a l'estragon. He loves kidneys and tongue but is only happy with the slightest hint of tarragon in a sauce. I told him I thought he could order with confidence as only that morning our daughter, whose business is herbs, had told me she was having a nightmare getting tarragon. It was in such short supply that a lot of chefs, that buy from her, had to change their menus. True to my predictions the sauce had only a hint of tarragon with a few leaves sprinkled on the top. The succulent kidneys and slices of tongue were served on a bed of haricot beans with plenty of tasty sauce. With this we drank a soft and fruity Château des Mille Anges 2007 that matched the dishes beautifully.

The cheese board at Gavroche is one of the most spectacular in London, so the opportunity to indulge at the set menu price, without the usual excessive surcharge, was a wonderful opportunity not to be missed. While I waited for my dessert to arrive himself reveled in the task of choosing just four from around fifty perfectly ripe cheeses on offer. The cheese was served with toasted raisin bread, celery sticks, quince jelly and raisins. For dessert I chose the only option for a pud lover in a Roux establishment - a sensational soufflé omelette with batons of poached new season rhubarb and rhubarb and ginger custard.

Good, strong, hot coffee was served with a excellent selection of petits fours. The service was impeccable and the atmosphere superb with none of the cold, stand offish service one often encounters in French restaurants.

By one thirty the restaurant was buzzing with only one table for five still empty. Michel had been out several times to chat with diners and when the last five, an all male party, arrived he quickly reappeared to greet them. When we left, after three, the wine was flowing and their lunch was still in full swing, obviously some bonuses were being put to good use.

So if you want to dine in the height of luxury next time you visit London try Le Gavroche ,with its elegant surroundings and faultless service, where the soufflé reigns supreme.

Le Gavroche, 43 Upper Brook Street, London W1K 7QR
020 7408 0881
www.le-gavroche.co.uk





EAC 'Awayday'

Autumn in the New Forest

17th/18th October 2012

Montagu Arms Hotel, Beaulieu, New Forest, SO42 7ZL Tel 01590 612324

The Montagu Arms Hotel, in the heart of the picturesque village of Beaulieu, has a history dating back to the 18th Century. The traditional English character of this country house hotel is reflected through its roaring open fires, large cosy sofas and beautiful oak panelling, all of which combine to create a truly luxurious atmosphere. The Michelin Starred Terrace Restaurant has 2 AA Rosettes and Head Chef Matthew Tomkinson is very highly regarded in the food guides. Guests will assemble on Wednesday evening for a reception and aperitif, followed by an excellent dinner accompanied by quality wines.

Thursday morning we have arranged to visit the New Forest Cider Farm as part of the inclusive price. This is a family run business close by Burley in the New Forest. We will receive a talk on cider production and see a press in operation. Refreshments will also be available. For lunch, at your own expense, there is the Jetty, at Christchurch Harbour Hotel where chef Alex Aitken, a well known figure in the New Forest, is now producing some very fine food in lovely surroundings.

There is an option of staying on for a second night at the Montagu Arms, and having dinner in the nearby Terra Vina Restaurant. It is owned and run by Gerard Bassett, who co-founded the Hotel Du Vin chain and who was recently awarded the title of "Best Sommelier in the world". The wines will be good quality and the food will also be of a high standard. Transport to the venue will be arranged.

The cost for members sharing a double room for the first night will be £175 each (£350 per couple) for dinner, bed and breakfast. The single room rate will be £250.

If you wish to stay for the second night the additional cost will be £155 each (£310 per couple) for dinner at the Terra Vina Restaurant and bed and breakfast. Single occupancy costs will be £210.

To book please send your name, address, phone number and e-mail details to:
EAC Treasurer – Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT, UK before the 30 April 2012, enclosing a deposit of £100 per person, payable to IWFS - EAC.

If you wish to pay by credit card please contact Jim Muir on 01633 420278 or e-mail muir112@btinternet.com (3% handling charge will apply).

Please state whether you wish to stay one night or two and if you would like lunch on Thursday

Please be aware that the EAC plan to hold the Annual Branch Representatives Meeting at the Montagu Arms Hotel, Beaulieu on the afternoon of the 17th October 2012. Full details of which will be sent out to Branch Representatives in accordance with the constitution.