



Food & Wine

MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WINE & FOOD SOCIETY EUROPE AFRICA

Issue 141

July 2021

BRANCH FOCUS: WEST YORKSHIRE

**WHY A WINE MAY BE FAULTY AND
UNDRINKABLE**

ALEXIS SOYER

Chairman's message



At the time of writing this in mid-June 2021, there are still considerable uncertainties across the globe about restrictions resulting from the Covid pandemic, as well as the speed of rolling out the vaccination programme across all countries.

However, before commenting on the continuing effects of Covid on our Society and its activities, I would like to bring you some great news about the opening of a new branch in EAZ. The branch will be known as International Wine & Food Society – Vignobles de Champagne or IWFS Vignobles de Champagne. Using WhatsApp, I briefly joined the inaugural meeting held in Semiers, a village near Reims, to welcome its founding members. The President of the branch, Fabrice Laudrin, joined IWFS as an independent member last year. He has already contributed to this magazine (March 2021). In due course, we can expect to hear further from Fabrice as he has recently finished training as a journalist. We are also in discussions to open a branch in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Society is very aware of the need to communicate with members during these abnormal times. As well as this magazine, I commend the IWFS online newsletters – Grapevine from the Society and EAZ's F&W online. Both have been redesigned to make access easier to the stories/articles you want to read simply by clicking on the story. You can also access Wine, Food & Friends, the Americas magazine, online. If you are uncertain as to how to login to the IWFS website, do contact someone in your branch who I am sure will help you and, if necessary, obtain your user name and a new password for you.

Later this year there will be a new monograph and a new directory listing all the key contacts around the Society. There will also be a video recording of the 2021 André Simon annual lecture. If you haven't seen the 2020 lecture, it is still available on the IWFS website when logged in as a member. Look out for an email launching the new lecture on the website later in the year.

Cover photo: Harewood House, Leeds

The Society was formed on 20th October 1933 in London by wine writer André L Simon and bibliophile A J Symons. Within a month there were 230 members. Today there are over 6,000 in 139 branches worldwide.

The Society, which is an independent non-profit making organisation run by volunteers, is divided into three areas – the Europe Africa Zone, the Asia Pacific Zone, and the Americas.

In André's words, "The purpose of the Society is to bring together and serve all who believe that a right understanding of good food and wine is an essential part of personal contentment and health and that an intelligent



approach to the pleasures and problems of the table offers far greater rewards than mere satisfaction of appetites."

In the over indulgent society of the 21st century we endeavour to examine some of the excesses of the western diet and to persuade consumers of the need for quality rather than quantity in the food and drink they consume. To this end we support suppliers of quality produce worldwide.

New members are always welcome, please see page 3 for details. Please also visit our website www.iwfs.org or for information about the Society in brief visit our Wikipedia page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Wine_and_Food_Society

International travel, particularly for leisure purposes, is still severely restricted both within Europe and between continents with the consequent impact on the Society's International festivals. These festivals are the headline events for the Society as well as generating crucial funds which assist in keeping members' subscriptions as low as possible. It is a great credit to our EAZ festivals co-ordinator, Stephanie Shepherd, that she has persevered with re-scheduling EAZ festivals and planning future ones during these difficult times. Her equivalents in APZ and Americas have been equally busy.

We are still optimistic that the weekend festival in Cambridge, UK, will be able to take place. For the Madeira festival in early November we are still monitoring travel restrictions, particularly for participants travelling from North America and Asia. Piedmont was postponed until spring 2022 and an Alsace festival will be launched later this year with the possibility to attend both.

In the UK, the expected final unlocking of restrictions on participant numbers at events is unlikely to happen on 21st June. Nevertheless, it is most pleasing to hear that some branches, both in the UK and in other parts of Europe as well as in Southern Africa, have already held events in 2021 or are planning a restart. Please let the editor have words and pictures of your events. Some branches, sometimes including guests from other branches, are continuing with online events – again please send the editor news of these events to the editor of Food & Wine (editor@iwfs.org).

Discussions on strategy and potential marketing initiatives have continued during the spring and are building to a meeting to be held immediately after the AGM, details of which are given on page 5, in Cambridge in September. If you have ideas as to how IWFS, particularly EAZ, should change by offering experiences to attract new members and more generally to generate wider coverage for the Society, please contact Leonie Allday at lallday@btinternet.com.

continued on page 3 ➔

Editorial

A time to reflect on the last 18 months of restrictions on what had always been accepted as 'normal' – familiar routines, IWFS branch dinners and wine tastings, social activities, entertaining friends at home, pubs, cafés, travelling for pleasure, visiting attractions. There are early signs of branches planning for the autumn and Christmas programmes; caution is expressed and there are encouraging indications from the hospitality sector of flexible booking conditions which should reduce our financial exposure if restrictions are imposed again.

An innovation for our branches has been the presentation of virtual events which seem to have been well received – the patterns have varied from wine tastings to full scale banquets, in some cases the wines and foods have been specified and delivered and charged for in the same way as face to face events. In others members were asked to source wines and ingredients locally at their own expense and the events were open to all.

Experience of virtual events highlighted practical issues – some technical but others included deciding on the practical limit of numbers of participants. Where food preparation was required between courses the flow of the event was disrupted. There were mixed reactions to using Zoom breakout rooms to allow for a wider range of discussions – similar to that used for business conferences. A great benefit was that these virtual events could be opened to members of other branches and members and guests based abroad joined in on several occasions.

For the future, virtual events could have an important place in branch programmes – alongside the face-to-face events of each branch; such virtual events would offer a greater number and range of opportunities for more members to participate. The concept of hybrid events is now part of the conversation. As an example a face-to-face tutored wine tasting could be streamed on Zoom for those who could not attend in person but who would wish to participate. There are financial considerations for paid-for virtual events but solutions are available and some already in use in several branches. Using hybrid arrangements would open IWFS to independent members and guests who live in areas where we do not have local branches; they could increase the activity level of the society and at minimal cost.

We look forward to welcoming you to the AGM and Members' Forum in September when we anticipate discussing many of these issues.

Peter McGahey

PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 17**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st July; publication mid August.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 142**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th September; publication to members in November.

Please send photographs separately from text.

Advance notice of your events at which members of other branches would be welcome can be included, along with booking details. As always, we invite your event reports, articles and pictures.

➔ *continued from page 2*

I would again like to thank the members of Exco and all EAZ branch committees for their work and efforts to ensure that you, as members, can continue to benefit from membership of the Society.

John Nicholas

Food & Wine

Food & Wine magazine is designed and published by IWFS Europe Africa Ltd

Editorial email:
editor.eaz@iwfs.org

Printed by
All Things Print (UK) Ltd
Upp Hall Farm
Salmons Lane
2 Lower Yard
Coggeshall
Essex
CO6 1RY
www.allthingsprint.co.uk

The Society welcomes applications for membership
For information please contact

Geeta Lloyd
Membership Secretary
Lai Yuen
Higher Lincombe Road
Torquay
TQ1 2EY
United Kingdom

email: info.eaz@iwfs.org

All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or part is strictly forbidden without prior written consent

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the IWFS

One copy, per address, is available for members.
For extra copies please email
Geeta Lloyd at
info.eaz@iwfs.org



Contributors

English Whisky, Brandy and Zulu Bibles

Dr Bernard Lamb has been making wines, beers and liqueurs for 47 years. He is a member of Wines of Great Britain Ltd (formerly called the United Kingdom Vineyards Association) and is President of the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges, 2017-2019. He has a DSc in fungal genetics and did research and teaching in genetics at Imperial College London for 40 years. His books include applied genetics, wine and beer judging, standards of English, how to use the Queen's English, and human diversity. He has been a member of the IWFS London Branch since 1993.



Alexis Soyer, 1810-1858

Helen Mills was born in 1924 and after leaving school joined the WAAF and became a Radio Direction Finding Plotter in various locations. After demob she did a teacher training course and taught in Croydon High School. She married her fiancé Geoffrey in 1950 and had three children. Geoff died in 1978. She carried on teaching, retiring in 1984. Helen has been involved with the Walton & Weybridge Operatic Society for 40 years and still pursues her artistic interests. She is President of Surrey Hills.



Why a Wine may be Faulty and Undrinkable

Keith Grainger is a wine writer, educator and consultant wine maker. His latest book, published in May 2021, *Wine Faults and*



Flaws: A Practical Guide covers the topic of his article herein. His book *Wine Production and Quality* (co-author Hazel Tattersall) won the Gourmand Award for the Best Wine Book in the World for Professionals in 25 Years, and is recommended reading for many wine courses. He has high technical knowledge and is a consultant winemaker in Cyprus,

Turkey and South Africa. He travels the wine world extensively, gaining and imparting knowledge at every opportunity and regularly works in China presenting wine masterclasses. Keith was one of the founders of the Association of Wine Educators and is a member of the Circle of Wine Writers.

COVID ADVISORY

IWFS EA Ltd advises that all event organisers, whether managing regional or local events, must ensure that their event conforms to local Covid regulations and best practice guidelines. It is vital that in these uncertain times we all take whatever steps we can to give our members confidence that they will be safe when attending IWFS events.

Attendees at events held within Europe Africa Zone should be able to demonstrate that they have been vaccinated. Vaccination in this instance means a minimum of two weeks after the final injection. If you have a Medical Exemption please notify the organiser when booking.

We recognise that in some countries this may be difficult to enforce if the vaccination programme has not been widely implemented. In such cases, local regulations relating to numbers, social distancing, location of venues should be rigorously enforced.

PROTECT YOUR BRANCH DATA

To avoid the email lists held by branches being misused by unauthorised people and companies always use the Blind Copy facility (BCC) when contacting your members.

Contents

Chairman's Message	2
Editorial	3
International Secretariat News	5
Annual Report 2020	6
Branch Focus: West Yorkshire	7
English Whisky, Brandy and Zulu Bibles	9
Why a Wine May Be Faulty and Undrinkable	10
The Redhead Twins Food and Wine History	13
Brazilian Cuisine	14
Alexis Soyer, 1810-1858	15
The Heptinstall Award	17
Did you know that about peas?	20
Branch reports	21
Dates for Your Diary	32

News from the International Secretariat

Dear members,

As we are nearly halfway through 2021 the pandemic continues to have an impact on the Society albeit in varying degrees, from country to country. We do hope there is some positive news in the coming months and that you are able to reinstate your programme of events.

What's new for members...

I can provide a brief update on what is in the pipeline for members:

Monograph on Blended Scotch Whisky – extended version for 2021

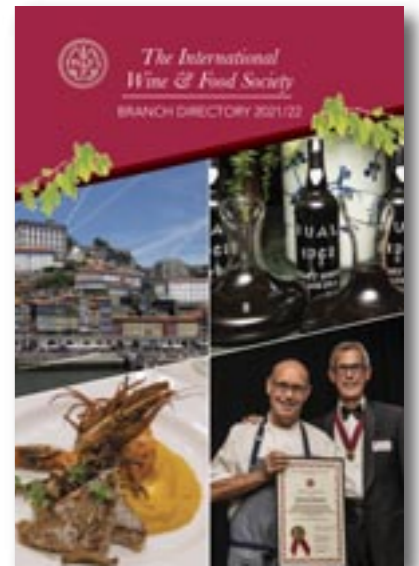
I am very pleased to provide more details on this exciting new monograph as authors Charles MacLean (pictured below) and Stuart Leaf are just putting the finishing touches to the text. You may well have your favourite Malts but this covers new ground as it would appear that very little has been written about this "extraordinarily interesting and delicious spirit". Chapters include its fascinating history, the art of blending, tasting notes on leading Scotch Blends, an introduction into collecting Blended Scotch Whisky plus going against convention in pairing blends with food and more. We are planning to publish this in the final quarter of 2021 and a copy will be distributed to



each member household. Be prepared to be converted...

Branch Directory for 2021/2022

You should have received a copy of the latest Branch Directory for 2021/22 along with this issue of Food & Wine – please discard your old copy. If you are beginning to make travel plans please do use this to seek out the local branch contact and find out 'the' places to visit and who is new on the local food and wine scene. Whether you are looking for a vacation at home or abroad this holds the key to a wealth of invaluable knowledge and recommendations – all part of your IWFS membership and something just money cannot buy.



Member App – new update

Have you downloaded this App yet onto your phone or tablet? This is a 'must download' for all members. Why? We are regularly reviewing the content and we have recently made additions. Now at the click of a button, on your phone or tablet, you can access the exclusive IWFS Vintage Card, read the latest issue of The Grapevine and your Zone magazine (and others too), view the Society Archives and also see the updates on the amazing Society Festivals planned around the world. Don't miss out. Visit the website and download now.



Until next time, from a sunny London...

Andrea Warren
International Secretariat

IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED AGM

Advance Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Impington, Cambridge on Sunday 19th September 2021 at 11.00 am for the following purposes:

- To receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.
- To appoint Michael Slator as Independent Examiner for the financial year 2021.

- To elect the Directors for a further term of three years.
- To affirm the appointment of the members of the Executive Committee.
- To transact any other ordinary business of the Company which may be transacted at an Annual General Meeting.

Formal Notice of the AGM will be delivered in due course. Members who are not attending the Great Weekend Cambridge are entitled to attend the AGM in any event.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

IWFS Europe Africa Limited

The Annual General Meeting of the IWFS Europe Africa Limited (Company or EAZ) will be convened for Sunday, 19th September 2021 to approve, *inter alia*, the Annual Report. The report was approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors on 1st July 2021 and the Independent Examiner, Mike Slator, has completed his examination and signed his report.

The Annual Report has been posted on the website. If you would like a copy of the full report sent to you either by email or by post, please contact Steve Graham at brackenridge.sp@gmail.com.

The following table has been extracted from the 2020 Annual Report.

IWFS Europe Africa Limited Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December

	2020	2019
	£	£
Total operating income	27,944	30,835
Total administrative expenses	32,846	35,050
Operating deficit	-4,902	-4,215
Net surplus from EAZ festivals and events	0	7,631
Surplus/deficit before taxation	4,902	3,416
Surplus/deficit after taxation	4,946	3,321

Balance sheet as of 31st December

	2020	2019
	£	£
Sundry debtors	746	0
Festival and event payments in advance	3,365	2,722
Cash at bank	290,696	281,720
Total current assets	284,442	284,442
Subscriptions received in advance	100	620
Festival and event receipts in advance	63,707	47,796
Sundry creditors	211	289
Deferred income for IT training and development	2,956	2,956
Total creditors	66,974	51,661
Net assets	227,834	232,781
Accumulated funds		
Balance brought forward	232,780	229,460
Surplus/deficit after tax for the year	-4,946	3,321
Balance carried forward	227,834	232,781

Commentary

The financial effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is reflected in the financial statements for the year. The deficit after taxation of £4,946 for the year arose primarily because of the need to postpone all planned EAZ festivals during 2020. This deficit is compared with a surplus after taxation of £3,416 in 2019, after inclusion of a surplus of £7,631 from EAZ festivals.

The operating deficit increased by £687 to £4,902k in 2020 compared with the deficit of £4,215 in 2019. The deterioration arose from lower revenue mostly offset by lower administrative expenses. Without surpluses from EAZ festivals, there are few years in the last 10 when income from membership fees has covered EAZ expenses.

Operating income decreased by £2,891 to £27,944 compared with 2019. Membership fees reduced by £239 to £27,544 reflecting another reduction of 66 in the number of members to 949, offset by a small increase in the level of membership fees. Operating income also included sales of merchandise and bank interest, both of which were lower compared with 2019 which also included sales of surplus wine from the 2018 London festival.

Total administrative expenses decreased by £2,204 to £32,846 compared with 2019. Costs charged by the Society (IWFS Limited) which include insurance, IT, marketing, publications and administration increased by £1,898 to a total of £21,031 compared with £19,133 in 2019. EAZ's share of insurance premiums increased by £922 as premium rates increased particularly in the US. EAZ's direct operating expenses, including the cost of producing and distributing the Food & Wine magazine, were lower in 2020 than in 2019, as a result of savings from virtual Executive Committee and AGM meetings using zoom, lower marketing costs and a one-off recovery from HSBC following complaints about their service.

The Company's balance sheet remains strong with accumulated funds of £227,780 reduced by the 2020 deficit after taxation for the year compared with 2019. These funds are held to cover the potential risks that the Company might face. Having built up these funds over the last few years, EAZ was able to absorb the deficit arising in 2020 and will be able to absorb the cost of the 50% reduction in the level of membership fees implemented for 2021 as agreed by the Executive Committee. It is hoped that the festivals in Cambridge and Madeira will happen as planned in the second half of 2021 and that they will produce a surplus sufficient to cover the 'normal' operating deficit.

The Executive Committee continues to consider how to 'invest' funds to sustain EAZ as a significant part of IWFS. During lockdown, numerous discussions have taken place and a number of branches are now involved with developing ideas. As well as attracting new members and branches, we are considering what initiatives EAZ can take to improve the IWFS offering to all its members, existing as well as future members. The core of our offering is our branch network and their activities. Ideas from branches, as well as individual members will be considered, especially if funds are required to implement ideas.

This is my last act as Treasurer of IWFS Europe Africa Limited. Steve Graham took over the role of Treasurer from 1st January 2021, though he and I agreed that it would be simpler in the handover for me to complete the 2020 Annual Report. I would also like to thank Mike Slator who has carried out the role of Independent Examiner for the last four years and will step down at the AGM.

John Nicholas

Chair and former Treasurer, IWFS Europe Africa Limited

BRANCH FOCUS: WEST YORKSHIRE

by Stephen Harrison

Early Days

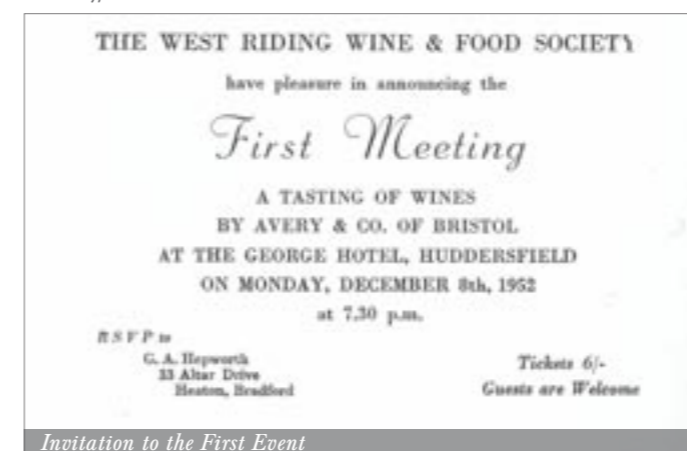
The West Riding branch (as it was first known) of the IWFS came about through the direct instigation of Andre Simon. Tony Hepworth, an undergraduate at Cambridge, was a member of the University branch of the Society and came to know André at IWFS events. André pointed out that Yorkshire had a significant number of independent members with no 'mother branch'. With Tony due to return to God's Country to become involved in the family business, André introduced him to two of these – Irene Pain and David Dugdale.



Tony Hepworth, Irene Pain and David Dugdale

This triumvirate, who came to play major roles in the new branch for almost 50 years, eventually held their first event at the George Hotel in Huddersfield on 8th December 1952. The event – a tasting of wines given by Ronald Avery, marked the beginning of a long association between the branch and the Avery family, which continued with Ronald's son, John, and in turn his daughter, Mimi, who attended the branch's 50th anniversary dinner in December 2002.

The early years of the Branch were highly successful. Events were held all over the county, usually based at hotels and restaurants, and were grand affairs. Venues which featured many times included The Foxhill Club in Leeds, the Baron of Beef restaurant in Bradford and the Pavilion Hotel in Scarborough. Food writer, restaurateur and broadcaster Michael Smith, a major influencer in British cooking at the time (and cited as a mentor by Brian Turner), hosted the branch on several occasions.



Invitation to the First Event



Lafite Dinner November 1954

Looking back, the list of events was dominated by the tastes of the time – overwhelmingly French wine, with many tastings of Burgundy, Rhone, Bordeaux (including an annual 'Claret Dinner'), and the occasional entry of Hock or Port. The relatively loose breathalyser rules of the era undoubtedly added to the enjoyment of the highly liquid nature of the evenings. Some events are almost unimaginable nowadays – November 1954 featured the 'Lafite Dinner' where members enjoyed vintages from 1896 to 1914.

Maturity

The pattern continued relatively unchanged for many years, with restaurants coming and going, and a small evolution in the range of wines – the first Southern Hemisphere wine (New Zealand) appeared on the programme in 1988. It may be true to say that this wasn't a hit with the membership, since it was another six years before the branch again ventured outside Europe for a South African tasting. The programme remained very traditional, and with hindsight, failed to evolve to reflect a better-travelled public with broader tastes than just France. By the late 1990s, the branch was in decline. The number of events fell from eight in 1995, to just five in 1996, and a low point of four in 1997. A new committee was elected and a more adventurous range of events cautiously began. Comparative tastings incorporating 'new' regions such as Argentina vs Chile appeared in 2001, new trends such as Organic Food and Wines were reflected in 2002 and, by 2006, the branch had even visited an English vineyard for the first time!

Reinvention and Renewal

Branch membership fluctuated, with the lack of a clear raison d'être the key issue. Debate within the branch frequently involved lengthy retrospectives of the 'good old days', and much soul-searching took place. At one event in 2007 (the first organised by the author) a mere five members and two guests ventured to visit the Black Sheep brewery at Masham (it was a cold and wet Yorkshire evening in November...). The need for change was pressing, and came from a further change in the Committee who took the radical step of asking the membership what they wanted to see. From this, a new purpose for the branch began to emerge. Above all, members wanted events



represent a very small portion of the overall mix – apart from the anniversary dinner, we would usually now only visit a restaurant if it offered something exclusive such as a special menu, or a tutored talk from the chef.

We like to travel, and have organised tours almost every year since the first trip (inevitably to Bordeaux) in 2010. Since then we have visited Jersey, the Rhone Valley, Friuli, the Alsace, Rioja and San Sebastian, the Douro Valley, Umbria, and most recently South Africa. These have proved enormously successful, with a party of 17 making the trip to Cape Town. Sadly the 2020 tour to Jerez had to be postponed because of Covid, however we are optimistic that 15 of us will travel to Jerez in September 2021 for an exciting programme of exclusive bodega visits. In the last four years we've also enjoyed weekends away in Morecambe Bay, Staithes in Yorkshire, and Brancaster in Norfolk

Pandemic and Survival

We started 2020 with an exciting programme arranged for the year. But after a hugely enjoyable evening in late February choosing the best supermarket chardonnay under £8 to accompany fish and chips (Morrisons, as I recall), the pandemic struck. The next two events were cancelled because of lockdown, however in June we ran our first 'virtual' event by Zoom – a 'Friday night lockdown takeaway' where we shared some fellowship and a few well-chosen glasses of wine. This was highly successful, and led to a full resumption of our programme, which has continued to the time of writing, entirely held via Zoom. We've enjoyed five-course banquets, with a selection of wines and food delivered through a 'hub and spoke' volunteer network, tutored tastings of Pinot Gris and Noir, a Christmas Quiz, and many more. We even shared part of one event with a good friend of our branch in Cape Town, which hints at the possibilities that new technology could offer... We plan to meet again in person later in June, and have already sold out our Midsummer Celebration.

Learnings and the Future

Over time, we've learned that, just like any successful enterprise, the branch needs both to move with the times and, in particular, to listen to its membership, which we actively attempt through surveys and open discussions at AGMs. We are blessed with a hard-working team of enthusiasts who share the workload, and have recently renewed our committee with two new recruits. We try to keep up with trends in the wider wine and food arena, but above all endeavour to find new ways in which, by following our mantra, we are able to experience and share unique and enjoyable 'gently educational' experiences with a friendly group of like-minded members.

The author would like to thank Tim Gittins and Bruce Naylor for their help recalling the branch's history.



Visiting the Oyster Beds on our Jersey Tour

that were fun, unique, with a gently educational focus. There was also demand for a balanced programme of themes – food-led, wine-led, and trips to suppliers in the form of food and wine producers, including farms and vineyards. A new and clear Unique Selling Point for the branch emerged, which has become a mantra against which proposals for content are matched, i.e., "things we can't do as individuals by ourselves". This might mean a wine tasting of Burgundy versus New world alternatives, with bottles ranging in price from £10 to well over £125, or a trip foraging food on the North Yorkshire coast with an experienced guide – each delivering the uniqueness, fun, and opportunity to learn that members want.

The annual programme now consists of a balance of events – food-led, wine-led, and producer-led across a wide but affordable price range. We aren't hung up on a particular price point, but are committed to offering value and uniqueness in everything we do. Responsibility for delivery of events is now shared between a small Committee and two flexibly-constituted groups – loosely the 'food committee' and the 'wine committee' – an army of volunteers who take the lead in terms of choosing, sourcing and preparing food and wine. Most events are very informal, and frequently held at a local Church Hall, which is 'dressed' with soft lighting, tablecloths and flowers by another group of volunteers to create a relaxed atmosphere. There is little doubt that these self-catered events are our most popular, and the absence of restaurant overheads means that most can be priced at under £30, whilst allowing a remarkable standard of fare to be enjoyed. The biggest short-term problem is now how to accommodate our membership – we have now grown to 46, and regularly sell out, which has led to the need to explore possibilities for a new home for self-catered events. In contrast to the early years of the branch, restaurant meals now

ENGLISH WHISKY, BRANDY AND ZULU BIBLES

by *Bernard Lamb*

Whisky

Our local Waitrose never has Edravour, my favourite single-malt Scottish whisky, so I searched for alternatives. I found what looked unusual and interesting: 'Cotswolds Single Malt Whisky, Small Batch Release'. It cost £39 reduced to £30. I bought it. The bottle was labelled '2015 Odyssey Barley, from Akeman Street Farm, 700 ml, 46% alc/vol., Estd. 2014. Natural colour. Non-chill filtered'. As proclaimed on the packaging, it is 'made in small batches using 100% floor-malted local barley. Long fermentations and double pot distillation, followed by maturation in premium oak barrels, create an elegance and richness with wonderful fruit character. Blended and bottled on site'. It is from Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire.

The light gold liquid had a pleasant, strong but not aggressive peaty and alcoholic bouquet, with some quince and pear tones. At 46% alcohol, I think it unsafe to drink neat, so I added a little water before tasting it. It was mouth-filling, with a big impact, tingling, alcoholic, peaty, fruity and very long. It was delicious.

Its awards include gold medals from IWSC, from World Whiskies Awards and from World Whisky Makers Spirits Business. They use barrels only once, for full-term maturation, not just finishing, including first-fill bourbon barrels from Kentucky, wine barriques from France and Portugal and sherry casks from Spain. Their

pair of traditional copper pot stills was made by Forsyths in Scotland. The barley is malted in Britain's oldest floor maltings in Warmminster. I was very happy with my speculative purchase.

Cider Brandy

I came across Shipwreck Somerset Cider Brandy at the London Wine Fair in 2018 and was sufficiently impressed by the very small tasting sample to go to Fortnum & Mason and spend £40 on a 50cl bottle of eight years old, 43% vol., bottle 1701977, cask Allier/Napoli Cider Brandy. The back label states that: 'In 2007, en-route to South Africa, the MSC Napoli was beached off Branscombe in Devon. Her cargo included new empty Allier barrels destined for the Cape's finest vineyards. Protected from the sea by Bibles in Zulu, some of these barrels found their way to us. Ageing our cider spirit in these fresh oak barrels gave a smoked oaky finish worthy of single cask bottling'. The Somerset Brandy Company is based in Kingsbury Episcopi, Somerset.

This was tasted undiluted. Pale gold. Big legs. An enticing alcoholic bouquet, fruity, with apricot, peach and pear smells rather than apples or cider. It seemed to expand in the mouth, coating the inside and proceeding hotly down the throat. The flavour was mainly pears and alcohol, with a very long aftertaste which was almost sweet. I found it very satisfying and enjoyable.



WHY A WINE MAY BE FAULTY AND UNDRINKABLE

by *Keith Grainger*

It's that cold, stomach-wrenching, sinking feeling that almost every wine lover has experienced: the realisation that the wine in your glass, which you have been patiently nurturing in your 'cellar' in the anticipation of the complex delights of full maturity, is undrinkable. There are many faults which may affect wines: not all are totally devastating, and some will just reduce enjoyment. Perhaps the most feared is the musty reek of a damp sack from a so-called 'cork-tainted' wine. The cork may, or may not, be responsible, as discussed later. Another fault, that mostly affects red wines, is the Elastoplast or farm-yard odours created by the actions of the 'rogue' yeast *Brettanomyces*. Whilst it is true that the frequency of some faults and taints have declined in recent years, others have increased and issues that were once unheard of now affect many wines, including smoke taint which is very much on the rise in New World countries. In this article I will briefly consider aspects of just two of the most serious faults: so-called 'cork taint', and lightstrike.

The musty odours of so-called 'cork taint' (*haloanisole contamination*)

It's October 2019, and I'm in the classic surroundings of Brown's Courtrooms in London's Covent Garden. The building is now a restaurant and bar and people are no longer judged here, except perhaps by service staff. In the upstairs function room there is a small wine tasting taking place, held by a highly regarded UK importer. I've arrived early and the hosts have opened the wines, but not yet assessed them. I begin tasting. The very first wine reeks of wet sack and mushrooms. The ninth wine is really musty – so-called 'corkiness' at its very worst. Wine number eleven is affected too, albeit to a lesser extent. I ask for another bottle of each of the tainted wines: these are fine, indicating that, on this occasion, cork is almost certainly the culprit. Later in the tasting one of the reds suffers the same fate: a total of four of the 53 wines shown have issues. As I leave the building, I reflect that, notwithstanding all the measures taken by the cork industry and others to combat the problem, there are far too many *haloanisole* affected wines yet to unleash their sadness; they are lying in wait in wine cellars, on the shelves of retailers, and in glasses on dining tables.

Many wine lovers consider so-called 'cork taints' to be an industry specific problem. However, the taints may be found in many other products including beer, coffee, tap water, bottled water, over-the-counter and prescription medicines, chickens, sultanas and bagged ready-to-eat carrots. There are three main compounds involved: 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA), 2,3,4,6-tetrachloroanisole (TeCA) and 2,4,6-tribromoanisole (TBA). A concentration of just 1-3 parts per trillion (ppt) of any compound is sufficient to have a severe impact upon an affected wine, muting the fruit, and above 4 ppt the damp hessian and musty aromas overwhelm. By way of analogies, 1 ppt is equivalent to 1 grain of wheat in 100,000 tonnes or, from an alternative viewpoint, a single second out of 32,000 years. However, it is possible that young people are becoming desensitised to related taints – they have got used to their presence in many foods. Speaking to the San Francisco

Chronicle's wine critic Esther Mobley in 2018¹, Lindon Bisson, professor emeritus at the University of California, Davis gave the observation that when she started teaching some 30 years ago maybe one student in a 100, or even 200, could not detect TCA. "But then, over time, it started to be higher and higher percentages of the students." Bisson suggests that the reason was the contaminated bags of ready-to-eat carrots that are a student favourite.

The implication of cork closures in musty taints in wines is well documented, but particularly during the last two decades of the twentieth century there were numerous chais and cellars in several countries contaminated with haloanisoles, and there are still a few around today. Wines produced in contaminated cellars are readily tainted. TBA, which was not identified in wine until 2004, is not naturally found in corks and any presence in wines results from an external contaminated source. Several famous Bordeaux properties suffered contamination in the 1980s and 1990s, often consequential to renovations that had included the installation of new joists, purlins, and rafters. Disastrously the new timbers were treated with wood preservatives based on chlorophenol or bromophenol compounds, which are the direct precursors of haloanisoles. The level of chloroanisoles in some affected Bordeaux wines in the period 1986 to 1996 were up to a staggering 360 ppt – a hundred times aroma and taste thresholds! Many production and maturation facilities had to be rebuilt. Today architects are careful to avoid treated timbers in winery design, as exemplified by the magnificent chai at Château Talbot.



Contamination was also discovered in several wineries in California and in Chile in the 1990s and first decade of this century. From 2004 until 2006 Viña Errázuriz, a highly regarded producer based in the Aconcagua Valley in Chile, was faced with the realisation that parts of the beautiful old cellar at Panquehue was contaminated with 2,4,6-TBA2, prompting a strident eradication programme.

Haloanisoles are transformed from halophenols, mainly by filamentous fungi. The industrial use of halophenols began



in 1936 when pentachlorophenol was introduced as a wood preservative by the companies Dow and Monsanto. For many years post World War Two, most soft wood timber was treated with chlorophenol to prevent the growth of fungi which impart a blue or purple stain to the wood. Halophenols were also used as pesticides and herbicides. 2,4,6-tribromophenol, the precursor of TBA, remains widely used as an intermediate in the preparation of flame retardants, timber preservatives, and fungicides. It has been commonly used as a treatment for wooden pallets, with disastrous consequences.

It is a sobering thought that TCA and other chloroanisole contamination of corks and wines almost certainly did not exist before World War Two, although TBA contamination possibly did. Although Professor George Saintsbury refers to a corked wine in his classic work *Notes on a Cellar Book* published in 1920³, we cannot know the precise fault noted, but it is most unlikely that it was TCA. Even as recently as the 1970s, very few bottles of wine were perceived as 'corked'. Christian Vannequé, former head sommelier at Paris's La Tour d'Argent Restaurant recalls, that in the 70s he and staff would upon between 800 and 1,000 bottles a week, but rarely found more than four or five of them 'corked'. He says that if there were problems it was almost always with wines from the 1960s, rather than those from the 1930s, 40s or 50s. 'If you had a problem with a 1929 wine, for example, it was never cork taint. It might have been a crumbly old cork... but it wasn't corked'.⁴

There are several pathways to the formation of TCA that account for its presence in cork. Historically, chlorophenols were used as fungicides in cork oak forests, such use continuing until the 1980s. The activity of filamentous fungi would then convert the chlorophenols into chloroanisoles. The boiling of corks in municipal water containing chlorine, which was very often recirculated, and the chlorine bleaching process used historically, were both without doubt major contributors to the formation. The use of municipal water in the boiling process is not now permitted by the 'SYSTECODE' quality assurance system for the cork industry. Chlorine bleaching compounds are no longer used either, having been replaced with baths of hydrogen peroxide and ammonia. Today, following 20 years of R&D and the introduction of new processing and analysis procedures, the major cork closure producers say that no TCA is formed during the production processes. Amorim, the world's largest cork manufacturer, now claims to have eliminated detectable TCA from every cork it sells.⁵

If you are faced with a haloanisole tainted bottle, it is sometimes possible to partially clean-up the wine by inserting some Saran wrap (cling wrap) into a bowl and swirling the wine around. The product is made with polyethylene. The problem is that although over 96% of the taint compounds can be removed, to achieve this takes three days, by which time the wine is oxidised! Some desirable aromas and flavours are also stripped from the treated wine. So down the sink it is!

Lightstrike

I remember the evening well, and the horror haunts me today. It was a small party for my birthday, thrown by my new girlfriend who was not really into wine, but knew that it was a way of life for me. She had been given some years earlier a bottle of Louis Roeder Cristal. The glasses were poured with ceremony. The wine looked too deep in colour, but nevertheless I raised the glass to my nose. Skunk, garlic, and cooked cabbage! All the classic symptom of lightstrike. Cristal is bottled in clear glass, but the bottle is wrapped in orange coloured cellophane, which filters up to 98% of damaging UV light. As you may imagine, my girlfriend had removed this before storing the wine in her kitchen! The relationship was doomed.

Lightstrike is an all too frequently encountered fault, caused by the formation of undesirable volatile sulfur compounds consequential to exposure of wine to light, particularly ultraviolet light, but also visible light at the blue end of the spectrum. It mainly affects wines bottled in clear glass (flint) bottles, and is most likely to affect sparkling wines, and white and rosé wines. There is a deepening of colour, sometimes considerably so. The nose may exude odours of sulfur and garlic. There can also be aromas of wet wool or wet cardboard. Red wines have a higher degree of protection due to their



The bottle on the left has been taken from the shelf; the bottle on the right is newly removed from the carton.

levels of phenols. Lightstrike also affects milk, and beers – thankfully most ales or bottled in brown glass.

Whilst there can be little doubt that wines can look tempting in clear bottles, they can be hugely damaging. The photo, taken in a supermarket in France, shows two bottles of Premier Cru Classé Sauternes of the same vintage. The bottle on the left has been taken from the shelf; the bottle on the right is newly removed from the carton.

Interestingly, Louis Roederer was the first major Champagne house to switch to brown bottles (for wines other than Cristal) in 2010; since then several other houses have followed suit including Piper-Heidsieck and Drapier, so it would seem that at last the Champagne industry is beginning to take the problem seriously.

Lightstrike is caused by exposure to UV light and visible light at low wavelengths. Critical wavelengths are 340, 380 and 440 nm.⁶ It is generally accepted that clear glass filters just 10% of UV light, green between 50 and 90% and brown from 90% up to 99% at these wavelengths. There are some variances and, particularly with clear glass, ‘thicker’ bottles filter out more UV light. There has been a growing movement to bottle wines in lighter-weight glass – this has been primarily led by environmental concerns, particularly with regard to the impact of transporting additional weight. In fact, white wines packaged in clear glass bottles can be affected after just 3.3 hours exposure or, to the same degree, in green bottles after just 31 hours.⁷ Sparkling wines will be affected by exposure in the same time in clear, or 18 hours in green, glass.

The stinky volatile sulfur compounds are produced from riboflavin and amino acids by a photochemical reaction with light. Riboflavin (vitamin B2) is a very photosensitive compound, and has strong absorption of UV light. It occurs naturally in grapes. During the bottle ageing of Champagne and Traditional Method sparkling wines, prior to disgorging, sulfur containing amino acids are freed from yeast cells as part of the process of

autolysis. If exposed to UV light, the production of dimethyl disulphide which smells of boiled cabbage, or garlic is particularly likely. To make matters worse, bubbles amplify the sensory perception of the off-aromas

In conclusion care should be taken when buying white and rosé wines, sweet wines or sparkling wines in clear bottles. If possible try to have a new case opened, and when taken home keep away from light. Exposure to light also depletes sulfur dioxide levels, and increases oxygen uptake, so the wines will age prematurely. I have found the highest incidences of light struck wines in restaurants that have wines on display, and are lacking rapid turnover.

There is no treatment for lightstrike – the fault is irreversible. So once again, down the sink it is.

References

1. Mobley, E. (2019). The mysterious case of the cork-tainted carrots. *San Francisco Chronicle* 12 February 2019. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/wine/article/The-mysterious-case-of-the-cork-tainted-carrots-13595196.php>
2. Molesworth, J. (2007). *Chile's Viña Errázuriz confronts contaminated cellar*. http://www.winespectator.com/webfeature/show/id/Chiles-Vina-Errazuriz-Confronts-Contaminated-Cellar_3409
3. Saintsbury, G. (1920). *Notes from a Cellar Book*. London, Macmillan.
4. Taber, G.M. (2007). *To Cork or Not to Cork*. New York, Scribner, a division of Simon and Schuster Inc.
5. Schmidt, P. (2020). DB Exclusive: The World's Biggest Cork Producer Announces TCA Breakthrough. *The Drinks Business*. <https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2020/12/db-exclusive-the-worlds-biggest-cork-producer-announces-tca-breakthrough/>
6. Hartley, A. (2008). The effect of ultraviolet light on wine quality. <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/UV%20&%20wine%20quality%20May%2708.pdf>
7. Dozon, N.M., and Noble, A.C. (1989). Sensory study of the effect of fluorescent light on a sparkling wine and its base wine. *American Journal of Enology and Viticulture* 40 (4): 265-271.



THE REDHEAD TWINS FOOD AND WINE HISTORY

by *Phil and David Redhead*



I am David Redhead and my twin brother is Phillip. I was born 20 minutes before Phil and never let him forget it. We are both avid members of the Devonshire Branch of the International Wine and Food Society. I did not drink alcohol for the first 24 years of my life. I married at 26 years of age and for the dinner on my wedding night my wife and I shared a half bottle of Liebfraumilch. Wow! I was however an intrepid and successful home-made wine maker with many awards. I was a lecturer in Pharmaceutics at that time and had access to incubators, so that I could plate out yeast cells on Malt Agar plates and get the strains that I wanted in a pure form.

Phillip meanwhile was initiated into the world of wine when a colleague of his asked him if he wanted to join a group who were buying 1982 Bordeaux wines ‘en primeur’. He accepted the offer and started his cellar before David. Phil lives in Torquay.

David decided to emigrate to Guernsey in 1968 and fairly soon after he was recruited to a high powered wine tasting group, called a ‘Blind Wine’ group. This was the highest level of wine tasting possible. He tasted a bottle of wine from each member per month, usually eight or nine. The rules were to bring a wine to a theme. It was not permitted to bring the wine in its own bottle because that gave too many clues as to its provenance. He did that for over 30 years. David learnt an awful lot about wine when he had to taste absolutely blind.

Meanwhile David was recruited to run a Wine Appreciation Course which he successfully did for nearly 20 years. Because of that he decided to start a cellar, a little while after Phillip started his. A lot of people think you need a lot of money to have a cellar filled with wine. David always told his class that all they needed to do was to buy an extra bottle of wine worth keeping for about £ 10 every week in excess of what they drink. In a year’s time they would have 52 bottles, in 10 years they would have 520 bottles. He asked his class “Can any of you not afford £10 a week! If you can you will could have a cellar of 520 bottles in 10 years.”

Phil initiated a competition in Torquay which was called a ‘Wine Bluff’. In this competition all the participants are given a taste of a bottle of wine which is suitably shrouded. Then three ‘experts’ give a description of the wine. One is the true version and the other two are ‘Bluffs’. It is an excellent fun way of getting an audience wrapped in attention to the taste of a glass of wine! He has done this on many occasions and besides furthering the cause of wine tasting has raised a good few thousands for charity.

David was also asked to do a lot of judging. He well remembers a judge of vegetables asking him wistfully how he managed to get his job! It was not quite as enjoyable as you might think. One of his last tasks in Guernsey was to decide on the best three spirits in a home-made class. There were 24 Sloe

Gins and 36 other spirits. Luckily the look of the spirit and the nose enabled him to eliminate a good fifth of them without even having to taste them.

Phillip has been busy since the early years of his membership of the Wine & Food Society. He first undertook the post of Treasurer of the branch in 1996, a position he still holds. For six years he organised trips to France for the Branch which were very successful. He drove a minibus there and back to visit Michelin starred restaurants among others. That ceased when he could no longer get insurance to drive a minibus because of his age. For all this work he was awarded the bronze medal of the IWFS which he wears with pride on formal occasions.

Now a sad bit. David rang Phil in January 2009 and said that he had the bad news that his wife had died overnight. He was astounded to hear that Phil's wife had suffered the same fate and about at the same time. So inevitably after a while it became obvious that two lonely twins should live together and even more importantly to amalgamate their cellars.

So now we have a cellar, which is thermostatically controlled with a wide variety of wines, and usually about 500 bottles. The cheapest is £3.45 and the dearest is £844 per bottle, a Mouton Rothschild 1986, which fluctuates in price all the time. We have nearly 100 bottles of Champagne. David always told his class

that it was best if you bought Champagne not at the top of the price range to keep it for at least a year when it softened, the acidity reduced and was much more amenable. We drank about two bottles of Champagne a week (before lockdown) with help from Phil's family so that means we should have 104 bottles. We are thus by definition understocked!

We both like to keep fit as we are both ex World Class fencers. Phil was picked to fence in the Rome Olympics but overtrained and damaged his elbow. The fencer replacing him (who he regularly beat in local competitions) came back with a silver medal. He thus has reason to think he was at that time about second in the World. David went to the 1970 Commonwealth Games and came seventh in the individual épée competition, quite high in the World Order but an also ran compared with Phil. We still go the gym and do an hours training three times a week (when lockdowns approve) and walk two miles a day on other days. We will be 90 years old in September this year. There is life in the old dogs yet!

Now all we have to do is drink the contents of the cellar, keep it stocked to a reasonable level, and cook food to fit the wines we drink and hope to be able to attend real dinners of the International Wine and Food Society in the not too distant future.

BRAZILIAN CUISINE

BlueSky Education press release

Brazilian chefs redefine the country's cuisine through controversial commercialisation of Amazonian traditions.

Several Brazilian chefs have attempted to redefine the country's cuisine through the use of traditional Amazonian ingredients – but this has caused controversy, according to new research from Professor Maria Carolina Zanette, NEOMA Business School, and researchers from FGV-EAESP, Brazil.

These chefs, who belong to a more dominant, marketed culture in Brazil, have attempted to commercialise Amazonian cooking methods, but in doing so they have disregarded aspects of the Amazonian producers' traditions, creating challenges for these minority groups.

"This scenario is called 'eating the other' – a process where difference is commercialised for the benefit of a dominant culture. This process imposes challenges for the producers from these ethnic minorities, who have to decide whether they accept or resist this process" says Professor Zanette.

In commercialising these ethnicities, members of the dominant culture – the chefs – have tended to change the forms of production used by ethnic producers to suit their own commercial purposes.

Consequently, ethnic producers have become confronted with challenges as they subsequently change themselves to adapt to the way the more commercialised chefs use their ingredients

and cooking methods. These challenges throw up different consequences, the research reveals. On the one hand, the rediscovery could present new economic opportunities for the ethnic producers in the Amazonian region, where inhabitants are amongst the poorest in the country.

On the other hand, the commercialisation of their cooking methods could lead to an exploitation of the Amazonian people's traditions, without bringing them any economic benefits.

"The Amazon region has historically been marked by developmentalist policies of exploitation, performed by state and company interventions that explore the natural resources of the region with unmet promises of economic growth and social improvement" says Professor Zanette.

These findings highlight the disparity between cultures in Brazil, the researchers state, and therefore further research is needed on sustainable development, supply chain practices, and marketing strategies, as more dominant cultures continue to engage and replicate ethnic minorities.

These findings were based on a multi-method qualitative study, and published in the *Journal of Business Research*.

For more information, contact Olivia Nieberg at BlueSky Education on olivia@bluesky-pr.com

ALEXIS SOYER 1810–1858

by Helen Mills



By Henry Bryan Hall. <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw40802/Alexis-Benoit-Soyer>. Public Domain. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=3001321>

I wonder how many of you will know that name and really what on earth has it got to do with food and wine? Are you sitting comfortably? asked Kipling? and so I will begin.

He was born in Meaux in France, a stronghold of Protestants and though destined for the Ministry he escaped to Paris and after various vicissitudes he finally joined Maison Douix in the Boulevard Italiens where he became principal chef. However when two of the staff were shot by supporters of Les Trois Glorieuses, he fled to England and joined the staff of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, where his brother Philippe was the head chef. Moving on through various kitchens with important Patrons and Patronesses in Shropshire, he then came down South to Twickenham under the patronage of the Marquess of Ailsa, a prominent Whig Reformer who became a lifelong friend. Through him Alexis took up the position of head chef at the newly built Reform Club where he designed the kitchens and where he remained from 1837-1850. His salary was £1,000 a year! A very considerable sum at that time. Some of his innovations were cooking with gas, adjustable temperatures and refrigerators. There were guided tours of his new kitchens. His 'Lamb Cutlets Reform' remains on the menu still. Cross & Blackwell marketed his 'Sultana's Sauce' – fast forward to Peter Jones's Eli's sauce perhaps? – a present day marketing phenomenon. Two thousand people were served breakfast at the Club on 28th June 1838 on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Coronation.

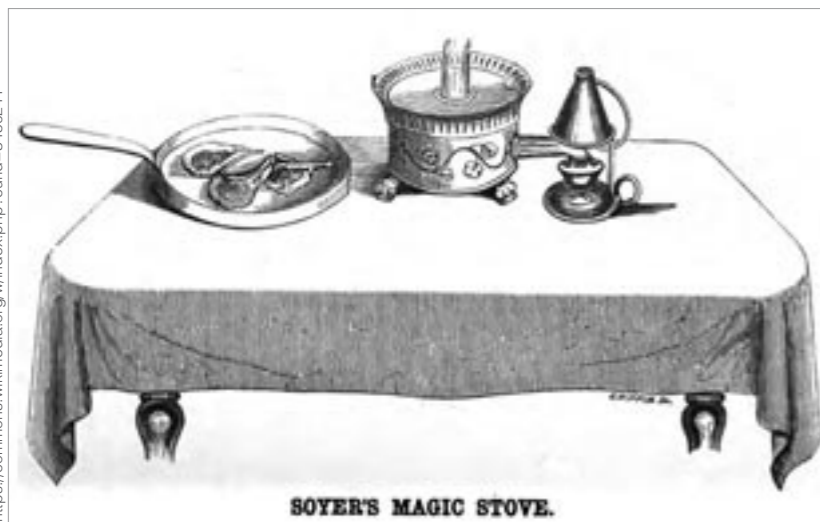
It was and still is a famous Club. Jules Verne used it as the start and finish of his fictional *Round The World in Eighty Days*, but in Michael Palin's real filmed journey he was not allowed inside for 'his' finish as he was not wearing a collar and tie! The IW&FS

had an office in the club in the sixties as I mentioned in Issue 138, I was only allowed into the foyer; now ladies are admitted.

During the Crimean War, the journalist William Howard Russell travelled to the Crimea and wrote in *The Times* newspaper about the appalling privations and conditions that the troops were experiencing. Soyer twice travelled to the battlefields himself and was horrified at the catering – so-called – and therefore realised that one way of improving their lot was adequate cooked food. He invented the 'Soyer Stove' which was instrumental in improving the morale and health of the troops. Would you believe that this stove was in use until the 1980s? He wrote a book about his experiences in the Crimea; there was no actual Army Catering Corps until 1945. Soyer lectured on army cooking and caused a model kitchen to be built at the Wellington Barracks. Between them, he and Florence Nightingale immeasurably improved the health and well-being of the soldier in the Crimea. During the Irish famine he gave the profits of his book *Soyer's Charitable Cookery* to the latter, a penny for each copy sold, and to various other charities, including the Irish. In 1849 he also designed his Magic Stove, a table top version. He really was way ahead of his time in designing kitchens as well as portable stoves. 'As the army marches on its stomach' modern equipment is needed and I have a good friend whose business is the modern equipment of Soyer's stove.



By Tallinn188. Own work. CC BY-SA 4.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=95130438>



He didn't remarry and therefore there were no heirs. Alexis wrote *Charitable Cookery, or the Poor Man's Regenerator* 1848; and the time he spent in Ireland had alerted him to their pitiable state. In 1847 he opened a soup kitchen in Dublin which fed up to 5,000 people a day! However he also wrote *The Modern Housewife* in 1849, it is said to be one of the most enjoyably 'odd books' of the era, as it is written by a French chef in the form of letters between two fictional Englishwomen!

He also wrote about the Victorian sickroom "that nothing is more painful to see any food ill-prepared for sick people, whose sense of taste is partially gone; so everything ordered by the doctors should be cooked in the greatest perfection simply and easily done, easily digestible and well presented so that the eye excited the appetite". What forward thinking he had as a premier chef in his culinary art and writings.

So here we have one of the three greatest Victorian chefs, all of French origin, who was definitely a progressive thinker and philanthropist and depicted as an 'all-round good guy', celebrated not only for his cookery and recipes, but altogether a really nice man. I would have loved to have met him!

N.B. If you 'Google' pictures of black people, you will find the two of which I have written. It is thought that the girls with the Bible were supported by ladies who had heard of the conditions in which the peoples, most likely slaves, of the Caribbeans were living and tried to improve their lot by providing clothes and books. No one knows if these girls were children of slaves or not. Emma could only have painted them here not in the West Indies.



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=72919970>

When in Shropshire he had had his portrait painted and through the artist, Simonau, he met his pupil Elizabeth Jones whom he, Alexis, married in 1837; she was one of the youngest exhibitors at the Royal Academy. Unfortunately she died as a result of premature childbirth in 1842, leaving him devastated. Her monument is in Kensal Green Cemetery where he is also interred. She also painted his portrait.

Three Frenchmen of that era Maurice Careme, Auguste Escoffier and Alexis Soyer were instrumental in promoting the culinary arts of that time and then of course many more have followed since. IW&FS bears witness to their talents worldwide.

Epilogue

Since I penned the above some more interesting details have come to light. Here they are. Watching *Fake or Fortune* on BBC4, the programme in which Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould research the provenance of pictures, they looked at two paintings, both of which depicted black girls.

One was a portrait of Dido Belle, a celebrated lady whose life is well documented and has even been depicted in film. This is displayed in Scone Castle and it also depicts her friend Lady Elizabeth Murray. However, the other painting was of two girls, both well-dressed, one holding a book possibly a Bible, the other looking demure and holding a hand to her heart.

Philip and Fiona went on the trail of these enigmatic portraits and under X-ray there appeared a barely decipherable signature... 'Emma Jones fecit', (i.e. made it) and the date 1831. Further research led them to the archives of The Royal Academy where... and I was waiting with bated breath for the outcome... and... YES, the artist was Emma Jones who had first exhibited there at the age of ten. This was the future Mrs Emma Soyer, unusually a woman painter whose work was seriously prodigious. As you will recall from the above, she died in 1842 at too young an age.

Alexis always had some of her paintings displayed in his kitchen at the Reform Club, although there is no reference as to how the atmosphere in the kitchen affected them! When he died and all her paintings that he owned were sold, he had willed that the monies raised were to be given to the relief of the Irish poor, so badly affected by the potato famine in the 1840s.

THE WILLIAM HEPTINSTALL MEMORIAL FUND

by John W Valentine

For more than 46 years the William Heptinstall Trust, aided by the Cooks' Livery Company and the European & African Zone of the International Wine & Food Society, has made this award to enable young chefs to widen their knowledge of the craft through travel and study outside the UK. The Award is open to all young chefs, aged normally between 20 and 26, currently working and resident in the UK and is recognised as bringing life changing experiences to young chefs at a key stage in their careers. Many of our previous winners have gone on to establish highly successful careers in the hospitality industry around the world. Today the trustee directors are volunteers drawn from members of the EAZ (Chris Bonsall, Janet Davies and John Valentine) and from the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (Brian Turner and John Williams), supported by Simon Fooks from the Cooks' Livery Company.

John Avery MW was associated with the Award from 1996 and was trustee chairman from 2005 until his death in March 2012. Avery's family was very keen to honour his memory and his contribution to both the Award and the IWFS, and made a generous donation to the Fund, enabling the trustee directors to expand the scope of the Award. From 2018 the value of the annual Award has increased by £500 to £4,000 for the Award Winner to undertake a stage or course to improve his or her vinous knowledge.

Given the extent and depth of the crisis facing the UK hospitality industry, we decided most reluctantly to cancel the William Heptinstall Award for 2020, and subsequently for 2021. We could foresee an increasing financial challenge for employers to encourage their key staff to apply for the Award, let alone release them for some months to attend overseas stages, even if such opportunities remained available. We expect to offer the 2022 Award in the normal manner, although we shall increase the upper age limit temporarily.

We recently approached some of our Award Winners and asked them how they had coped with the impact of Covid-19. I hope you will enjoy reading their comments as much as I have enjoyed putting them together. There is a wide range of views and emotions, probably reflecting the perceived potential impact on family and financial commitments. However there is a common thread of creative determination to survive, adapt and succeed. Clearly the trustee directors, officers, the Cooks' Livery Company, and members of the IWFS EAZ can be proud to have been involved in helping these young people gain such experience and skill sets.

2011 Winner: Paul Weaver

Until the end of September last year, I was head chef at Noble Rot Restaurant and Wine Bar, on Lamb's Conduit Street. I was there from the opening for five years and very sad to leave but we made the right decision for our family for our future. My Canadian fiancée was the Restaurant Manager!

We emigrated to Canada with our two-year-old daughter at the end of October. Covid here in Alberta has actually got pretty



bad just recently, the worst affected in the whole of North America, under lots of restrictions, restaurants back to take away only for example.

I am cooking some dinners in August on a local organic vegetable farm. Rosemary, the owner, would like to build a distillery and a restaurant on her land in the next few years which is super exciting. I have thrown my hat in the ring for a senior position!

In the meantime we are in the early days of setting up a cold smoking/curing fish business. We feel there is a gap in the market here for an artisanal, high-quality low yield, European style product. We have set up a smoker in our back yard and it's been really good to be able to focus my energies on something while slowly adjusting to a new country. We would love to be able to sell our fish at some local farmers markets this Summer if they go ahead.

2018 Winner: Charlotte Whatcott

With impeccable timing, I decided to leave my last chef position to pursue a freelance career just weeks before the pandemic began to take hold of the UK. My first freelance job



was to travel to Rome for a few months to cater for a film crew, but this was quickly cancelled. Soon enough, all other projects I had lined up as a food stylist were cancelled too or operating with skeleton teams which meant for me, someone who was not greatly established within this side of the industry, gradually losing all of my upcoming work and in turn any financial stability.

With no hope of work on the horizon I explored other avenues, eventually turning to online teaching. I decided to study for a TEFL which would enable me to teach English to students all around the world from my own home. I spent every morning during the first couple of months studying and taking exams. My first few lessons with students were nerve-racking but slowly I settled into it and we spent hours working on their grammar and conversational skills. Of course, everyone's favourite subject was food and students loved to talk about their own cultural cuisines and learn about my career as a chef.

During the past month or so as both the hospitality and styling industries have started to reopen with companies eager to make up for lost time, I have started to pick up more styling work for commercials, cookbooks and magazines. I have also taken a job at a local bakery to expand my skills and support myself. Things are starting to look up after a long year full of uncertainty, reflection, gardening and maybe just a little too much food and wine!

2014 Winner: Michael Harrison

In March 2020 I was into my second year working for Super 8 Restaurants (Smoking Goat, Kiln, Brat and Brat at Climpson's Arch). I worked across the group as Head of Sourcing and Supply Chain and also Sustainability Manager. I was also Senior Sous Chef at Smoking Goat, based there full time.



Despite the enforced closures, Super 8 remained fairly active. I headed up the group's contribution to Hospitality For Heroes (cooking 1,000 meals for local NHS staff over five days) and became group lead for Covid-19 (creating and implementing the necessary safeguards and government compliance plus training staff across the company). Alongside my other weekly duties of checking in with suppliers, weekly one-on-one calls to our staff, and working on reopening (and closing!) the restaurants I was kept quite busy!

I have just left Super 8 Restaurants and will be returning to Fin + Flounder to take over as manager. I hope to help develop what is already a celebrated family business. Behind the scenes I will be working on improving their sourcing and their supply chain. Making the business more sustainable will be a big priority too. There are also plans to launch a permanent street food operation from June onwards.

2017 Winner: Arthur Bridgeman Quin

When the pandemic started, it was six months since I'd been living and working at El Cenador de Amos in Cantabria, Northern Spain. We reopened in February after the annual holidays, and three weeks later we shut for three months! To be honest, for a while it was a nice break, but after a while I wanted to work again.

I cooked a lot at home, read books, tried to keep a routine so as not to become lazy! We went back to work in the summer. It was the hardest few months in a kitchen I have ever had, we were full every day. It went from one extreme to the other. Now I continue working there. At the start of this year I was given the opportunity to become the pastry chef. So that is this year's challenge, which I expect it to be harder than the last!

All this has been possible, thanks to the William Heptinstall Award, because most likely I would never have left the UK without this help.

2010 Winner: Sarah Frankland

Sarah is described by Pennyhill Park in Surrey as "our wonderful Head Pastry Chef, leading a team of 10 pastry chefs in the kitchens". She joined Pennyhill Park in September 2016 and is presently on maternity leave.

2019 Winner: Ben Cowley

As the pandemic struck, I was Head Chef/ GM of a small, local, French inspired bistro. We had been fighting to keep going for some time, mainly due to the recent decline in footfall and newer 'trendy' venues opening on the outskirts of town. Saying that, we had grown a following for our authentic, French dining experience – which had led to hosting a couple of wedding receptions in January and February. It's a big deal when there are only five of us (Front of House and kitchen combined).

We started to see a decline in regulars, and weekend bookings, and to begin with we hoped it would pass in a few weeks, then business could resume as usual. I remember me and my commis chef standing around the pass on the Thursday, before we got locked down, waiting for the first check on of the night at 19:00! Never happened before, we were both worried. And then, on the Saturday I believe, Boris gave the nod to shut it all down. It was hard to swallow. Deep clean went on until the early hours of the following day, then we said our goodbyes, not knowing what was to come – was this the end?



Watching the industry fall apart, and being able to do nothing was heart breaking. Seeing restaurants and cafes we had come to love, lead the field or be an institution for guests and chefs alike, close permanently was something I thought I would never witness.

Through it all, as a business, we survived. It was a golden opportunity to switch up what we do at the restaurant, and after seeing the strain it had put on suppliers and other businesses, we decided to scrap the French theme. We relaunched as a craft coffee/beer/wine bar, serving hearty food. The aim was to support as many local businesses as we possibly could. We go direct to breweries, farmers and wine merchants. We cook seasonally, highlighting the best local produce, but showcasing global cuisines. We became a local community hub – something the locals were screaming out for. It's going to be an extremely tough year for us all, but I am confident the industry can bounce back and come back stronger than before!

2012 Winner: James Forsyth

Being head chef for the Ineos Grenadiers cycling team, I had been set to travel to Colombia for a training camp when the first lockdown was announced. This was cancelled and three months were spent in lockdown. Living in Italy at the time, restrictions were different as employees of professional sports teams had special exemptions for work and travel, with free movement permitted once lockdown was eased.



Racing was postponed initially but we resumed with training camps in France in June and races across Europe in July. Since then it's been business

as usual and most events have been in their normal yearly slots. I have been fortunate that the pandemic had a minor effect on my job.

I cook solely for the riders in the team. So that's seven or eight people per day depending on the race. I work closely with a nutritionist as the food has to serve a purpose for performance. Breakfast is standardised but I create seven dishes per night depending on quality and produce availability when moving around Europe.

Currently I am cooking for riders at the Critérium du Dauphine and will be heading to the Tour de France for the fifth time at the end of the month.

I started this role at the end of 2015. It's definitely given a great deal of life experience. To be able to travel the world and see some amazing places but also to get paid and work within a team with one unified goal is a phenomenal lifestyle! Before this I was helping some friends in London restaurants after returning from a couple of years of travelling to the Far East and Australasia. Most notably I worked with Ben Marks at Perilla, Smoke & Salt, and Mac & Wild.

2016 Winner: Adam Boon

After working in Sweden at the end of 2018 with the William Heptinstall Award I had found it hard to know which direction to go in terms of work. So much can be said for fine dining and its role in developing a chef's career, but it can also starve the creative and hamper time to learn a wider skill set; be it management of people or kitchen economics. I took on the Sous Chef role at The Laughing Heart to take that step in being part of the creation of menus, helping to make a break-even restaurant turn profitable, and learning the intricacies of a smaller restaurant team.



As 2020 started we had been successful in the above, but when the pandemic hit there was lots of fear, realising the 'wolf was not very far from the door'. We 'transitioned' to a takeaway format, changing the menu each week to keep ourselves busy and doing guest menus to try and help support and keep our contemporaries' names out there.

Albeit being the strangest and confusing time it did help us push for a better way of working. Stripping back our menus to highlight some fantastic regenerative agricultural suppliers. Realising the time we had with family, our support network or bubble (the skeleton restaurant team in our case) was important. We have tried to keep that up and change the sometimes isolated working lifestyle that restaurants can foster. Since the turn of the year I have taken over the kitchen at The Laughing Heart, where we have an amazing team.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT PEAS?

by Simon and Kate King, Restaurant 1861, Abergavenny



Spring is such a wonderful time! It's also a time when the humble pea comes into its own. Pop open a pod and eat some fresh, sweet peas straight off the plant! Delicious. They're perfect in salads, omelettes, quiches, and so much more.

- 35,000 hectares of peas are grown in the UK every year and peas are at their best here in late spring.
- One serving of peas contains as much as Vitamin C as two large apples and more fibre than a slice of wholemeal bread.
- More than 9,000 peas are eaten per person, per year in Britain.
- The oldest pea found was 3,000 years old. It was discovered in Thailand. The pea is thought to have originated from Asia.
- The Romans grew more than 37 varieties of peas.
- The most popular garden varieties include Sugarsnap, Meteor, Feltham First, and Douce Provence.
- The sweet tasting pea was first grown in the 18th Century, by Thomas Edward Knight.
- The first frozen peas were frozen in the 1920s by Clarence Birdseye.

Today, we're giving you a recipe for **Pea Pesto Pasta with Ham**, the perfect use for sweet spring peas! You can also easily tweak it to make it a vegetarian dish. We hope you enjoy it!

Ingredients

400g of peas
 Half a bunch of mint leaves
 50g of Parmesan or Pecorino cheese, with extra to serve
 400g of pasta
 100g of half-fat crème fraiche
 175g of smoked ham, sliced thinly

Method

Cook the pasta in boiling water, adding 200g of the peas to the final minute. Drain into a bowl and keep back some of the cooking water. Blitz the rest of the peas, half the cheese, the crème fraiche, and the mint in a blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Tip the pasta back into the pan and place over a low heat. Add the smoothed mixture slowly and coat the pasta evenly. Add a little of the cooking water if it's too thick. Serve with extra Parmesan. This makes four servings. Make this a vegetarian recipe by substituting the ham with Quorn ham slices and substituting the Parmesan with a vegetarian hard cheese.

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire AN INTERLUDE OF NOSTALGIA

In March we held another online event via Zoom. This was very successful with 25 members and guests from several branches in the UK. It included members based in Portugal and New York. This may prove to be the way forward in these straitened times to bringing members together.

Hosted by Stephen Bennion who has led our previous virtual events – he does it so well!

He introduced the evening recalling the early days of Berni Inns: the menu ran to prawn cocktail, a steak and was followed by Black Forest Gateau, wine was available – red or white – memorable times when an evening out cost 7/6.

The members were invited to share their recollections of memorable occasions related to food and wine. We had participants from Bath and Bristol branch and around the world – including our Chairman John Nicholas. His memorable dinner

was in a cable car overlooking Lake Lucerne. Venues for meals ranged from Bolivia to Shanghai – Rugby to Albania and the food from turtle to crickets and crocodile.

The 'winner' chosen by John Nicholas as 'Raconteur of the Evening' was Peter McGahey who retailed a wine therapy experience at a thermal health spa in Slovenia. Instructed to immerse himself in warm spring mineral water in a bubbling Jacuzzi, he was attended by two attractive therapists who came bearing a tray with a flask of red wine and a crystal glass – the wine was served and with a smile the remainder in the flask was poured into the Jacuzzi and he was left pondering higher healthy thoughts for 30 minutes.

The prize – a bottle of wine.

Sue Smith

London

FINE CHOCOLATE AND ALCOHOL TASTING – ZOOM WINE TASTING

"Never economise on the small luxuries of life. Drinking fine wine and eating chocolate won't solve your problems – but they won't hurt either," said Ernie J Zelinski. Taking this quotation to heart, London Branch held a wine and chocolate pairing event by Zoom.

None better to lead the tasting than Chantal Coady OBE, an internationally renowned chocolate expert and business woman. Her OBE is unique "for services to chocolate making". She focuses on sustainable chocolate that keeps value within the local economies where it is made. She has invested in a small cocoa farm in Grenada which donates all the beans to the Grenada Chocolate Co, a small co-operative of organic cocoa farmers.

A pack of six types of chocolates, separately identified only by number, was posted to each of us beforehand. Groups of generic types of alcoholic drinks were specified in advance for us to select and provide for ourselves.

Chantal told us about each numbered chocolate in turn, linking it to one of the following groups, for us to pair with the particular drinks we had got.

- A – Gewurztraminer from Alsace / Muscat Beaumes de Venise / Moscato Asti / Sauternes
- B – Tawny Port / Australian Sparkling Syrah / Spanish Muscatel
- C – Vintage Port / Pedro Ximenez (PX) Sherry / Rum / Armagnac
- D – Banyuls / Argentina full body Malbec / Beaujolais Villages
- E – Pedro Ximenez (PX) or other sweet Sherry

The quotations below describing the luxury chocolate are from Chantal's website: <https://www.chocolatedetective.co.uk/>

Comments below on the pairings were made by a number of individual participants.

Grenada Special Cuvée 85% Broken Dark Chocolate
 85% cocoa dark chocolate. Flavoured with a touch of Malden sea salt and given a light dusting of gold." It had bone dry minerality. PX and oloroso sheries were a rewarding match, as was port.

Madagascar 63% menakao
 Oloroso sherry, tawny or vintage port. Alsace Riesling. Whisky went well. Sparkling Shiraz was not thought to be a good match.

Grenada 60% Organic Chocolate with Roasted Cocoa Nibs
 Slightly sweet and rich, this has a mellow but complex chocolate brownie flavour owing to the high amount of Grenada cocoa butter. The roasted nibs add a delightful nutty crunch. A superb texture. Sweet wines were not suitable. Whisky was very good.

Silver Ox very dark milk chocolate (sea salt) 61%
 These extremely thin slivers went well with tawny port and with whisky. Dry red wine did not enhance the first three chocolates, but worked with this one.

Golden Sea Salt Wafer Thins
 Thin discs of chocolate made with 40% cocoa milk chocolate. Flavoured with Malden sea salt and given a light dusting of gold. Muscat Beaumes de Venise made a good pairing.

continued on page 22 ➔

London

ITALIAN REDS – SANGIOVESE FROM TUSCANY

Members of London Branch and friends from other Branches Zoomed to Tuscany to taste three types of red wines made from Sangiovese, the most planted grape in Italy.

Ambitious and dedicated wine producers are drawn to Tuscany. Once the aristocratic Florentine wine merchant houses such as Antinori and Frescobaldi held sway. Now there are also very many smallholders, some of whom have moved in from other parts of Italy, Northern Europe or the United States. There is no shortage of investment both for traditionally made wines and for innovation.

There are wide variations in altitude and terrain. The hills, from the western coast to the Apennine Mountains along the border with Emilia-Romagna, moderate the summer heat of the Mediterranean climate.

Sangiovese

More than 80% of Tuscany's production is of red wine, and the Sangiovese grape is responsible for the best. It goes by other names – it is called Brunello in Montalcino and Prugnolo Gentile in Montepulciano. It is most celebrated as the principal grape in Chianti, where it is often blended; it is the primary variety in *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*; and the sole variety in the complex long-lived Brunello di Montalcino.

Unlike Cabernet Sauvignon, which is readily identifiable wherever it is planted, the Sangiovese grape is not genetically strong. It has numerous clones of various sub-varieties, in different localities. It is extremely sensitive to where it is grown and not an easy grape to cultivate. So the wines vary according to the particular clone, terroir, micro-climate, altitude and how the wine is made.

Viticulturally it is early budding and late ripening, and therefore susceptible to springtime frosts and the cooler temperatures of autumn. It enjoys direct sunlight, which is a benefit of the many hillside vineyards in Tuscany. The higher elevations, where the majority of vineyards are situated, also increase the night temperature variation, helping the grapes maintain their balance of sugars and acidity as well as their aromatic qualities.

➡ *continued from page 21*

Foraged Fennel & Cardamom Wafer Thins

Flavoured with foraged wild fennel seed, cardamom and a touch of Malden sea salt. Finished with a light dusting of gold. This was white chocolate. The fennel and sea salt cut through the sweetness. Again the sherry and the whisky made good combinations.

Chantal had also proposed contrasting a bar of 'mass-produced' **Cadbury's Bournville dark chocolate** – very high in sugar – with 'single estate', to the great benefit of the latter.

Colour is relatively light, from ruby to garnet. Generally, the aroma is delicate yet earthy. The taste is of bright red fruit when young, developing a savoury earthiness, sometimes with notes of prunes, black tea, chocolate or tobacco, leather, and a spicy finish. The fruit spectrum may include blueberry, sour cherry, red or black berries.

At one end of the scale it is possible to get a harsh acidic thin wine with astringent tannins and no aromas. At the other, the wine can be concentrated, matured in oak for development over years, with good acidity and structure from the tannins.

Super Tuscan

Wines informally named Super Tuscan may include a proportion, even a majority, of non-indigenous grapes, particularly, but not necessarily Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Sangiovese blends well with Cabernet Sauvignon, which although not a native grape, has been cultivated in Tuscany for 250 years.

This name came about because of the rigidity of the Italian wine classification laws in the 1970s. The categories DOC and DOCG did not permit the inclusion of non-indigenous grapes. Certain Tuscan wine makers were experimenting by blending Sangiovese with non-native grapes to make high quality wines. These wines originally had to be categorised as *Vino di Tavola*, although this category was intended to be the most basic. Antinori was an early innovator in introducing Cabernet Sauvignon to create its 'Tignanello' blend in 1971, which retails today at around £100 a bottle.

In 1992 a new classification allowed for more creativity. IGT (*Indicazione Geografica Tipica*) status denotes a wine that is produced in a specific area, focusing on the region rather than grape varieties or wine styles. Tuscany is the home of Italy's most famous IGT category 'Toscana IGT'.

Dogajolo Carpineto IGT 2018 Toscana £10.99

80% Sangiovese, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. It is inexpensive for a Super Tuscan. The Majestic tasting note actually refers to it as a 'Baby Tuscan'.

Some found this wine acidic, but most of us found it immediately attractive, soft with a smooth finish. It had some

We concluded from this tasting that red wine was not the best match for the chocolate. Soft and sweet wines could be paired. Whisky, port, PX and oloroso sherry were consistently successful.

Chantal's favourite pairings with chocolate are white tea, port, whisky and rum. She says, "Alcohol goes very well – the higher the alcohol level, the more it will make the chocolate sing".

Thanks to Roger Ellis for organising this excellent and unusual tasting.

Rachel Burnett

oak-ageing combined with the fresh fruit of a young wine. It was agreed to be good value.

Tenuto San Guido Le Difese IGT 2018 c. £20-£24

70% Cabernet, 30% Sangiovese. This wine had strong acidity, good structure, texture and character, with supple tannins and a good length. It had a smooth palate of cherries, red and black berry fruit, notes of herbs, leather and tobacco.

The Tenuta San Guido estate is renowned for Sassicaia, Italy's only single estate vineyard with its own appellation: DOC Bolghari Sassicaia, costing well over £100 a bottle – mainly Cabernet Sauvignon and a tiny proportion of Cabernet Franc.

Chianti Classico Riserva

Chianti is Italy's most important red wine, of DOCG status, from central Tuscany. The vineyards are often at relatively high altitudes in the hills. The climate is predominantly continental with Mediterranean influence. Winters can be cold and summers intensely hot. The terroir is of 'galestro', the name for the rocky, schistous compacted clay-based soil that can crumble into flakes, found in most of the best vineyards.

Chianti Classico's pink label with the Black Rooster seal is the symbol of the Chianti Classico Wine Consortium, to promote the wine and to prevent wine fraud.

Chianti Classico Riserva has a minimum 80% Sangiovese; other red grapes up to a maximum of 20% may be Canaiolo, Colorino, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. There are rules about vine cultivation, yields and vinification. Its minimum alcohol level is 12.5%, and it must be aged at least 24 months.

Villa Antinori Chianti Classico Riserva 2016 £19.99

90% Sangiovese with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Malvasia Nera, aged predominantly in large oak casks. This full- to medium-bodied elegant wine needed aeration. It was still developing. It was ruby red with garnet reflections. Aromas were of ripe cherries, redcurrants, and wild berries. There were hints of undergrowth, earth and smoky oak. The opulent palate was fuller and firmer than the previous wines, a velvety texture and a structure supporting the fruit and savoury cinnamon notes. Some of us found dark fruit: blackberries and plums. The fine balance between citrus freshness and well integrated tannins led to a long finish.

Antinori is a most distinguished Italian producer, one of the world's oldest, dating back to 1385 in Florence. It has expanded enormously since the 1960s, with vineyards around the world. Its heart remains in Tuscany.

Vino Nobile Di Montepulciano DOCG

(Montepulciano here is a Tuscan town. This wine must not be confused with wine made from the Montepulciano grape grown in the east of central Italy, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo.) This wine must be at least 70% Sangiovese, which may be blended with other native varieties like Canaiolo Nero and Mammolo, and international varieties Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The best examples of this wine have been described as a sort of cross between Brunello di Montalcino and Chianti Classico



Riserva. It matures more quickly than Brunello but the latter has tended to have more form and finesse. However, its quality is improving.

Vino Nobile Di Montepulciano 2016 Bonacchi DOCG £13.99

100% Prugnolo Gentile (Sangiovese). This wine was deep coloured. For some of us, the aroma was quite powerful, spicy notes and vanilla hints. For others, the nose did not reveal as much as the palate. Balanced and medium bodied, it had an appealing taste of red cherries and strawberries with a touch of oak.

Bonacchi is family owned and operated. Its centre is in Montalbano in the heart of the Chianti production zone. Ivan Misuri, the winemaker, won Tuscany's Giulio Gambelli Prize in 2020, for a "winemaker under 40 whose wine has been able to better interpret the spirit and vision of Giulio Gambelli", who was celebrated as a superb taster and champion of the Sangiovese grape. The citation said that Misuri, a graduate in oenology and viticulture from the University of Florence, came closest to the way of making wine to show maximum respect for the raw material, the variety, the vintage, and the characteristics of the territory.

Brunello di Montalcino

100% Sangiovese. 'Brunello' is the clone of the Sangiovese grape found only in the hill top town of Montalcino, near Siena. It creates prestigious wines that are concentrated, intense, tannic and powerful, and can age for decades.

The terroir has poor infertile soils. The climate is mild, and different micro-climates affect the viticulture in the area, so the wines made by many small family producers differ according to the microclimate, location of the vineyard, and techniques used. Brunello di Montalcino Normale requires five years of ageing with two years minimum in oak and four months in bottle.

Agostina Pieri Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2015 £25.99

This powerful wine was deep purple with a brick-coloured rim. It had a complex nose of cherry jam and spices, with hints of coffee and minerals. The palate was full bodied and dry with bright acidity, showing red and black fruits, mineral acid and ripe tannins. It had good length.

The small family winery was created in 1991 by Agostina Pieri who runs it with her sons, one the winemaker and the other the vineyard manager.

The quality of Tuscan Sangiovese wines is high and consistent, thanks to great expertise from the winemakers themselves or oenologists hired into the estates or small holdings, and ongoing interest in developing excellent wines.

Rachel Burnett

London

AN ITALIAN TRIO – AN ON LINE EVENT

Our foray by Zoom into Italian wines concluded (for now) with three quite different wines:

- A white from a native grape grown in North West Italy
- Wine from a native red grape grown in Sicily
- A red wine from North East Italy, made by the 'ripasso' technique.

Each of us had a selection of the wines described below, bought from local branches of Majestic. The prices are those at the time bought, and may vary.

Gavi DOCG, Piedmont: Cortese grape

Gavi is made exclusively from the Cortese grape, in a tiny area of hills surrounding the old fortress town of Gavi, in the south east of Piedmont, North East Italy. The climate is mild, generally warm and temperate.

Gavi wine has high acidity with relatively low alcohol, refreshing for drinking young. It is likely to be a pale lemon-white colour, with delicately scented aromas which may be floral, herbal or grassy; the palate is crisp and dry, with a mineral flintiness.

A wine labelled 'Gavi di Gavi' or 'Gavi del comune di Gavi' means that the vineyards from which the grapes come are located within the borders of the town of Gavi. 'Gavi' wines are made from grapes grown within the DOCG zone, but outside the town itself. It is about location, not a differentiation in terms of quality.

It can compare favourably with white Burgundies of the Côte Chalonnaise and Mâconnais, and most of us thought these examples did. However, some people, including one or two of our participants, do find Cortese overrated and uninteresting.

La Toledana Gavi di Gavi DOCG 2018/2019 £12.99

The Toledana vineyards face south, about 200 metres above sea level. The average age of the vines is 20 years. Oak is not used. There is selective manual harvesting of limited yield high quality fruit. The juice is fermented without skins for 15 days in stainless steel tanks and stays there for a further six months on the yeasts. Bottling takes place only a few months after the harvest, to preserve the freshness.

La Raia 'Il Borgo' Gavi 2019 £9.99

The family owners have returned the land to biodynamic farming (orchards of chestnuts, elderflower and acacia) since settling here two decades ago. This wine is made on biodynamic principles, without fertilisers or synthetic chemicals. The vineyards are about 400 metres above sea level, south, east and west facing. Harvesting is by hand and the best bunches are selected in the cellar for a soft pressing with light musts.

Controlled-temperature fermentation with indigenous yeasts is carried out in stainless steel tanks. Then the wine is left in

contact with the skins for some days, and on the lees for two months before it is bottled.

Nero d'Avola, Sicily: Nero Oro Riserva DOC 2017 £11.99

Nero d'Avola is grown successfully in south east Sicily, where temperatures often exceed 40°, and not really anywhere else outside the island.

There was a time when it used to be sent to mainland Italy to add colour and body to lesser wines, or kept locally for blending. Now its fortunes have changed. The Wine and Spirit Educational Trust calls the grape a "viticultural superhero", within the canon of great Italian reds. It is Sicily's flagship red – its most important and widely planted red wine grape variety.

It has a naturally high yield, and ripens relatively early – mid-September – mid-October- avoiding inclement autumn weather.

It grows in a variety of soil types, so the styles and characteristics of the wines can be diverse. The grapes of the wine we were tasting were grown in the local red sandy soil known as "Ferretti" which produces grapes with concentration. Variety can also extend to a number of biotypes of the grape, from selections by viticulturalists over the years, with differing yields, bunch shapes and berry sizes.

It thrives in the hot, relatively dry Mediterranean climate, but without being a big, rich heavy wine. It typically has high tannins, but softer than the structure of Cabernet Sauvignon or Nebbiolo. Its characteristics may be compared to Syrah, which flourishes in the same climate conditions.

The colour is dark, cherry red or plum. The aroma is fruity, with underlying spices. The taste is of red fruits and plums or cherries, dry with spicy and savoury notes. Acidity enlivens the finish.

There must be a minimum percentage of 85% of the grape in a wine with the Nero d'Avola label. In this wine it was blended with 5% Frappato - another indigenous grape - and 5% Shiraz. Nero d'Avola and Shiraz were picked in mid-September, Frappato about two weeks later. De-stemming is followed by a soft pressing. Once malolactic fermentation is completed, the wines are blended together and aged in Slavonian oak barrels for about 12-18 months.

The Wine People is the company producing this wine, registered in Trento, North Italy. They cover a range of wines throughout Italy, and control the whole production process from grape management, winemaking by their own winemaker, to packaging and sales.

Valpolicella, Veneto, North East Italy: Corvina grape

Veneto is Italy's largest wine producing region. There is a diversity of micro-climates and terroirs. Generally the region is a cool continental climate, so that acid levels are maintained and sugars build slowly.

The particular wines we were tasting come from the west of the area, east of Lake Garda and north of Verona.

Valpolicella DOC

The Corvina grape is late ripening, producing light wines with low tannin levels. Since 2010, DOC law allows 45%-95% Corvina in Valpolicella DOC. Other local grape varieties may be blended in.

Valpolicella wine is usually bright-red, ruby-red or cherry. The bouquet has a sweetish smell. There may be hints of cherry and rose, and bitter almond. The palate will be fresh, soft and dry, slightly tannic and bitter, with cherry, strawberry or raspberry notes.

Valpolicella Superiore has been aged in wood for at least a year to develop the flavours, and must be a minimum 12%.

Ripasso

We were tasting Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso. 'Ripasso' is made by repressing the Valpolicella Superiore blend in a second fermentation, with the partially dried pressed grape skins and solids left over after being used for Amarone, or occasionally Recioto. Both these are full-bodied wines made from dried grapes, with alcohol levels of 15-16%.

Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG and Recioto della Valpolicella DOCG

Grapes for Amarone (again, principally Corvina with other local grapes) are the last grapes in Valpolicella to be harvested, to be as ripe as possible. Unlike other late harvest wines, the presence of botrytis cinerea is actively avoided. The grapes must be kept

dry in the vineyard and harvested before rot can develop. They are then dried out for four-five months, concentrating the sugars and flavours. This produces a unique rich dry wine.

Recioto della Valpolicella is a dessert wine which preceded Amarone, using the same grapes and winemaking process. However, the winemaker stops the fermentation before all the sugar ferments, leaving residual sugar in the wine so that it is sweet.

Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore

The ripasso process strengthens the fresh fruitiness of Valpolicella, adding depth, richness, complexity, and a longer finish. The wine is cheaper than Amarone, and has lighter alcohol, normally 13% or 13.5%.

Two Ripasso wines had been suggested for this tasting.

- Villa Borghetti Valpolicella Ripasso 2018 £10.99
- Domini Veneti 'La Casetta' Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore 2017 £14.99

The leftover skins added for this wine are from Recioto, giving a further dimension of flavour and some sweetness.

We enjoyed three contrasting wines, from different native grapes and from different regions, illustrating the amazing variety of Italian viticulture.

Rachel Burnett



Grapes growing in the Italian wine region of Valpolicella in the Veneto

Manchester

MANCHESTER BRANCH AGM



We are still in the grip of the third national lockdown so the meeting and event was held by Zoom. The business of the meeting was attended to promptly, and our focus soon shifted to the enjoyment of food and wine together.

The food was a Mediterranean sharing platter provided by Amato Food Products, a food wholesale company supplying restaurants with staples and more specialist products. Deloras Amato is a member of our branch and a co-Director of this company. Deloras talked us through the delights of the platter which contained a wonderful variety of top quality produce in generous quantities.

There was a selection of meat and salami:

- Napoli Dolce made by Veroni in Italy – gently smoked with a little garlic and black pepper.
- Spianata Romana – a flattened shape and spicy with paprika.
- Salami Finocchio from Tuscany – full bodied and seasoned with fennel seeds.
- Prosciutto Crudo – deliciously salty cured ham.

Likewise, there was a wide selection of cheeses

- Gorgonzola – a soft creamy blue aged for 3-4 months.
- Provolone – a semi-hard cheese from Southern Italy made from stretched curds.
- Manchego – a classic Spanish cheese with 30 days minimum ripening. This example was mild with a firm creamy texture. It

has won two firsts in global contests and a Silver medal in the Nantwich Cheese Awards.

- Mozzarella – this example was made with cow's milk and was very much enjoyed with homemade pesto drizzled over the top!
- Goat cheese – a young mild example.

The platters were made up on the morning of the event and were lined with a bed of fresh rocket which had been bought at Smithfield market that same morning! Dotted around the platter were Roman style grilled artichokes, mixed peppers from Southern Italy, olives in herbs from South East Italy and sun-dried tomatoes prepared in house and marinated in herbs and olive oil. There were also pots of hummus and pesto Genovese prepared in house to Deloras' own recipes.

A few members enjoyed the vegetarian platters which contained additional cheeses, a smoked applewood Cheddar and a

Lancashire, in house sun dried tomato tapenade and grilled courgettes.

These delights were accompanied by a wide selection of artisan crackers and breadsticks including Ines Rosales – individually hand wrapped flaky tortas scented with rosemary and thyme.

As if that were not enough, Deloras had sent each platter with a gift of Sicilian Cappuccino Cannolis, crispy little cakes filled with a creamy paste!

With food this good the bar was set high for our wine expert, Bob Lloyd. His brief was to find a good white and red for no more than about £12 a bottle from Majestic so that members could have their choices delivered if that was their preference in the pandemic. The recommended white was the Definition Gavi 2019 from Piedmont in North West Italy. It was fruity, slightly lemony and fairly dry and much enjoyed by all who had taken the recommendation. Members were at liberty to drink wines of their choice and Gavi from Tesco, Waitrose and Aldi were also enjoyed and discussed.

The recommended red was Dolcetto D'Alba 2019, also from Piedmont. This was a soft and smooth wine with cherries on the nose. It stood up well to the robust flavours of the platter and was an excellent choice.

More than anything, Zoom brought us all together to enjoy friendship and company and brighten up our lockdown existence.

Nicola McLoughlin

Manchester

VIRTUAL LUNCH BY ZOOM

Forty members of Manchester Branch attended a Virtual Lunch on 12th April. Some members had food only, but the majority joined in the Zoom meeting, in what was a highly successful event.

The food was supplied by Duncan Dickinson of Herb & Spice from Bowdon, Cheshire. We started with homemade asparagus and parmesan tart, served with spring vegetable salad and pea shoots.

The dish was accompanied by Orvieto (Argillae) an Italian wine from the town of the same name in Umbria. The wine is made from Procanico (a Trebbiano varietal) together with varying percentages of Grechetto, Verdello, Drupeggio and Malvasia. The wine was light and very dry and is produced in the hills above Orvieto, 500 metres above sea level. It was a little closed on the nose, but with plenty of fruit on the palate, had balanced acidity and a reasonable finish. The tart was well received and the wine complemented it.

The main course was Lancashire Hotpot, tender chunks of Cheshire Lamb casserole with leeks and carrots, potatoes and rosemary, topped with sliced potatoes and served with tenderstemmed broccoli and fine beans. Although the lamb was from Cheshire,* it was delightfully tender and succulent. Most

members thought it to be the 'dish of the day'. The vegetarian option was Vegetable Lasagne – seasonal vegetables cooked in a tomato oregano and basil sauce, layered with pasta and a parmesan sauce, served with a side salad. This dish was enjoyed by all those who sampled it.

The red wine to accompany the two main dishes was Marquis de Riscal, Rioja Reserva 2016. It was a good example from one of the great vineyards of the area. It had a lovely blackberry nose, with red berry fruit and liquorice vanilla spice typical of classic Rioja. The bodega uses 50 year old vines and was the first Spanish vineyard to use French oak barrels to mature its wine, a practice that is used all over Rioja to this day. The grape is 100% Tempranillo.

The dessert was Apricot and Orange Blossom Fool with crushed meringue and Chantilly cream, which brought to an end an exceptionally tasty meal.

The food was organised by Ronnie Costello and the wine was sourced by Bob Lloyd.

Bob Lloyd

*Editor's note – Bob is a Lancastrian!

Manchester

SUMMER APERITIF WINES AND FORAGING

On Thursday 27th May, the Manchester branch of IWFS held a Zoom meeting to sample three Summer aperitif wines with an informal discussion of seasonal produce and foraging.

Our first wine, a crémant de Loire, was introduced by our wine expert Bob Lloyd with a brief history of the Bouvet-Ladubay family, a company in which Tattinger own a share.

Unusually, it's made from 100 % chardonnay as opposed to the typical chenin blanc from The Loire. It was a delicious, light sparkling wine, a great alternative to champagne for Summer evenings in the garden.

Deloras Amato, CEO Amato Food Products Ltd, then gave a presentation about foraging. She discussed how hawthorn is the most successful hedgerow plant because of the blossom scent that attracts all the pollinators. She pointed out that some mushrooms are perfectly safe to eat but when mixed with alcohol can cause allergic reactions. Surprisingly, when elderberry stalks are purple they are full of cyanide and finally it's not just the leaves and flowers that are edible from wild garlic. It was interesting to hear about garlic capers, which are phenomenally flavoured and intense.

The second wine, one from Provence, was typically light in colour. It was a blend of three grapes, grenache, cinsault and syrah. It was a great example of a dry rosé with light raspberry

tones; it got a unanimous vote of approval for a very easy drinking wine that all could enjoy.

Deloras then introduced some seasonal produce and mentioned the traditional way to grow Jersey royals was with a covering of seaweed. We had an exhibition of British asparagus and a surprising new variety of purple asparagus that is so sweet and crisp it can be eaten raw. Bunches of fresh carrots are in season which include the wonky varieties and rhubarb is becoming increasingly popular in cocktails and flavoured gin.

Bob's final wine choice was a white Rioja – Vina Majestica. It was creamy and lightly oaked and it had body and richness with fresh citrus tones.

Chris Redman



Manchester

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUTURE FOR MANCHESTER BRANCH

As we write, restrictions from the Pandemic are still in place and the end of restrictions is up in the air...

Throughout the pandemic Manchester Branch has provided a varied programme of events delivered via Zoom – wine tastings, a Sunday Lunch, and an Italian Platter. With the continuing uncertainty our next event will be a cookery demonstration / wine tasting and attending members will receive a video of the demonstration for future reference.

For us, Zoom is a 'needs must' stop gap and we will return to a programme of face-to-face events when these are permitted. We miss the social interaction and spontaneity that can only be achieved with live events.

Manchester has always been a very active branch, exploring many different types of cuisine, such as French, Catalan, Indian and Cantonese, and many different types of establishment from Neighbourhood restaurants to nationally acclaimed City establishments. Our membership is drawn from all directions

outside the City and so we also make sure that we visit these areas as well holding events centrally in Manchester. When we have our freedom back we shall once again embrace these opportunities with gusto! The important guiding principal for us is that all events are open to all members – unfortunately, Zoom disenfranchises those who are not computer users.

Our live programme is always open to other branches and we will continue to welcome our friends from Merseyside and Mid Cheshire and Blackpool who are regular attenders as well as any members from other branches. We are also willing to organise a regional event provided that it is open to all members to attend (accepting that the size of a venue may mean that places have to be allocated on a first come first served basis).

Manchester Branch is about an exciting variety of great food and wine, great company and fun!

Nicola McCloughlin

Surrey Hills

A VERTICAL TASTING AND A 97th BIRTHDAY AT HIGH CLANDON

Surrey Hills branch enjoyed their first event of the year with a vertical tasting and picnic at this beautiful 'boutique' estate, organised by Stephanie Shepherd. It was probably the warmest day of the year so far. The elevated setting is spectacular, with views to central London and beyond on such a clear day.

High Clandon Estate Vineyard is the smallest of the five vineyards situated on the North Downs between Guildford and Dorking. These in the order from west to east are Greyfriars,

Chilworth Manor, Albury, High Clandon and Denbies. Most specialise in sparkling wines.

To call High Clandon small is rather an understatement. There is just an acre of vines, all 1,200 of them, from which are normally produced around 2,000 bottles a year. The ground is free-draining chalk below a very thin (5-10cm) layer of topsoil. The vines were planted in 2004 with the first usable harvest in 2008.

This is a near perfect location, south east facing, and owners Sibylla and Bruce Tindale – both later-life graduates of Plumpton College – caress their vines and select their grapes to produce sparkling wines that can rival the best from Champagne. Unlike the 'Grandes Marques', they do not attempt to blend their wines to produce the same taste every year: they make only vintage wines and are very happy for each vintage to display its own unique character.

Interestingly the planting is of alternate rows of the Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, not in blocks of single varieties as is frequently the case. This scheme allows each variety to have an equal chance of success. After a short tour of the planted area, we tasted four wines in reverse chronology, as well as a liqueur and a gin. All the wines were very pale, and well balanced, without the biting raw acidity of many Champagnes.

Our tasting started with their Endymion cuvée from 2015. We loved the biscuit on the nose, with brioche, spice florals and ripe peach. Total acidity was 8 to 9 grams per litre, less than is common. It will be really interesting to try this again in a few years time.

continued on page 29 ➔



West Yorkshire

THE HAREWOOD HOUSE PILOT PROJECT

Why it was done?

The overall brief was to look at the purpose and structure of the IWFS and suggest changes that would grow the membership. This is the main focus of the Executive Committee of IWFS Europe Africa and complements initiatives being taken by the Marketing sub-committee. It was decided to focus on the 16 IWFS branches in the UK first. In order to facilitate the concept, it was thought that a regional team approach could be more focussed and therefore be more relevant to both existing and, with a raised local profile, reach new members.

A small group of leaders from the five UK branches based in the North of England held Zoom meetings to explore possible approaches. A key platform of IWFS strategy has been to increase inter-branch events but these result in increased expense with travel and/or accommodation required. Perhaps the experience of virtual events during lockdown would enable wider inter-branch interaction.

The membership statistics showed that the West Yorkshire branch had been the only UK branch to increase their membership in 2020 and progressively since 2018. What were the reasons for this? Was there something that we could learn to help others?

Stephen Harrison, the chairman, was contacted and immediately it became clear that there was a can-do approach being used with good communication to members and interesting events being organised. That had led to more

➔ continued from page 28

The Halcyon cuvée from 2014 was quite different: it had much more flavour and complexity, less biscuit and more rounded flavours of peach and pineapple. This trend continued with the 2010 Magna Carta cuvée – "expressive aromas of toasty almond and citrus with interesting minerality" according to the tasting notes – which had won two gold medals and a bronze, and the 2008 Golden Jubilee cuvée: their very first and still absolutely delicious, with honeyed fruit but still lively and crisp on the palate.

All had an imperceptible sweetness from their well-judged amount of sugar in the dosage. Our experts were very impressed by their quality and completely agree with their



people wanting to be involved, some who had not even been to any face-to-face events.

During the various lockdown stages a team of three West Yorkshire committee members had organised a number of virtual events. As a result a close relationship had been formed with the Harewood Estate enterprise HF&DP (Lascelles family owned) who had a creative chef and as importantly have adopted a sustainable food policy based on, where practical, raising their own meat and vegetables sourced from the estate with a number of virtual events organised with HF&DP support.

One of the original motivations of André Simon when founding IWFS was to have a close liaison with those in the business of producing excellence in food and wine and that was clearly being replicated by West Yorkshire and could be a key part of a forward-looking template.

Blackpool, Manchester, Liverpool, Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire branches showed interest in a virtual event and West Yorkshire agreed to organise a three-course meal with Harewood and the Blackpool Chairman Ron Barker, who is also the chairman of the IWFS Wines Committee that *inter alia*, produces the Vintage card for members worldwide, agreed to suggest suitable pairings with six wines; two for each course. Each branch was provided with 250ml bottles, paid for by EAZ as a grant, and each of the wines was decanted by a branch volunteer and delivered to the other participants in each branch.

philosophy of making wines of one vintage, not blends. Each one was different, which adds interest and gives one an excuse to taste several instead of one standard multi-vintage blend. Their tasting efforts to get the right dosage sounded exhaustive but fun.

All the wines spend at least four years ageing on the lees, and between 18 months and eight years post-dégorgement ageing.

Owner Bruce was top of his class in his degree at Plumpton and really knows what he is doing, and Sibylla's knowledgeable commentary was amusing and well-judged for the audience.

By chance of timing it was just a day or two before our longest-serving member, Helen Mills, reached her 97th birthday. She was invited to perform *le sabérage* on one of the bottles, which she achieved with great confidence after just two trial runs!

A picnic in the shade of a splendid spreading tree, including a specially commissioned birthday cake, was then enjoyed by all.

Overall, it was a remarkable day out with a really good host and hostess, and wines and views. Seeing and talking with real people, not screens, was a wonderful change!

Kip Punch, with input from Bernard Lamb and Alan Shepherd

**Menu**

Halibut The fish is cured with a Douglas fir salt, which is a type of fir. This gives the fish a resinous, pine-like and grapefruit flavour. The garnish is made up of preserved and pickled vegetables, such as fermented kohlrabi and pickled shallot. These have a slight pine flavour but the carrying flavour is the 'lactic' flavour from the fermented kohlrabi. To finish the sauce is made from parsley and pine oil and buttermilk. To summarise, the main flavour profiles of this dish are pine (resinous, grapefruit), kohlrabi (sharp, sour, lactic) and buttermilk (tangy, dairy, creamy)

Lamb This dish is made up of our aged Hebridean lamb rumps, which have a fantastic flavour and rich marbling. The garnish is made from swede in a couple of forms but the main profile of the swede is a caramelised nutty flavour. As well as the swede other dominant flavours are of the garlic, first being black garlic, which is essentially slow cooked over a period of three months, giving it an intense flavour of balsamic vinegar and treacle. There is also the last of our aged wild garlic seed capers through a flavoursome lamb jus, which gives a pickled garlic flavour. To summarise, main flavour profiles of this dish are the lamb (rich, grassy, lamb fat), black garlic (balsamic vinegar, treacle) caper sauce (lamb, reduced wine, garlic and vinegar) Swede (nutty, earthy, caramelised).

Dessert Similar to the starter, a key flavour is pine, in this instance it is infused into dairy, really bringing out that resinous flavour. This is garnished with poached rhubarb and Harewood honeycomb. The rhubarb is poached in a syrup that is strongly flavoured with rhubarb and a touch of honey, so the flavour of the rhubarb is really enforced. To summarise the key flavours are pine (resinous, grassy, grapefruit) rhubarb (fragrant, mild tang, fruity) and honeycomb (floral, sweet, slightly caramelised).

Wine from the Wine Society paired by Ron Barker: "I was tasked with choosing six wines to accompany the 'Taste of Harewood' event from a single supplier to a budget of £10 per person.

"Obviously I have not tasted the food so these are my best choices from the Wine Society. The pine flavours in two courses are the greatest challenge."

Halibut

- AL15651 Alsace Riesling Brandluft, Boeckel £13.50
- NZ12011 Kumeu Village Chardonnay. £10.50

Hebridean Lamb

- SP15461 Momo Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera del Duero £13.50
- AR4321 Weinert Carrascal Corte Tinto Mendoza. £11.50

Rhubarb

- LO16101 Coteaux du Layon Saint Aubin. £14,50
- FC39661 Domaine du Tariquet, Cotes de Gascogne. £16.00

Virtual inter-branch and member communication

In February /March 2021 online was the only way of doing this in the lockdown period.

The event needed participants to be comfortable with zoom and training was laid on for three of the branches.

There was an awareness that this pilot could shape the way for further initiatives following a better link between branches and following the spirit of André Simon and Yorkshire.

Some forty people attended the event from the North of England, Wales and a member of the Zürich branch now based near Oxford.

The food and wine selections for this event were generally well-received, though a few members thought that the 'prep' and timing for the final delivery of the food in each of the participant's households was not as easy as it might have been. Others had no problems!

The experience was deemed to be a success with some lessons learnt and future ideas included education, regional celebrations, clarifying the real advantage that IWFS offered to both suppliers and consumers through social media and from this to paint the picture of how we saw the IWFS in five years.

The how we achieve this is to brainstorm the options and to recommend to the Exco committee a route forward. This is an ongoing project that will culminate with an actual face to face event later in 2021 where the conclusions will be presented.

Tim Hodges

*Zürich***VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS 2020**

Due to the Corona lockdown, the traditional Year End Event was not fine dining and drinking as a group, but a pseudo group event, where our members individually tasted the same wines.

Since we had to endure quiet times without great social life, we realised an idea of member Wendy Levitt in a modified form. She suggested a cooking kit, but all of our members received a wine (tasting) kit. The wines were supplied by our Valais friends Jeannette and Pascal Bonvin, whom we met at our Valais Festival in 2018 (see pictures).

The two wines were an Amigne and a Syrah to go with the *hors d'oeuvre* and the main dish. Amigne, a Valais specialty, is delicately scented (honey, linden or dried mandarin peel character). Slightly tannic, very fine, flattering and soft on the palate, it is best consumed with foie gras or the dessert, but can also be enjoyed as an aperitif (10-12°C). Syrah, already known in the Mesopotamian era, was most probably the biblical wedding wine of Canna. The Valais Syrah is a dark red wine with purplish reflections, a peppery nose with a hint of blackcurrant, very tannic and structured on the palate. It goes well with red meat or spicy sauces (15-17°C).

Our members were asked to 'taste' these wines, and send a 'report' what they felt and what they did while enjoying these



Swiss wines. They were also asked to judge the wines, to describe the food that was going with wine, and take eventually a photo.

The reaction was very positive, as to the idea and the quality of the wines, but unfortunately nobody has taken pictures for documentation. Now, we hope, that real gatherings will be permitted in the near future. A first step has been made by allowing the reopening of open spaces of restaurants.

Kurt Haering
Chairman



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Groundhog Day! Once again I am writing this report secure in the knowledge that nothing is certain. When will the UK government relax their restrictions? On 21st June? Possibly not. Medically it seems unlikely but the political calculus is different. Where does that leave us?

On-line Cookery Classes

Cookery classes do not appeal to all IWFS members, but by using Zoom we can bring together keen cooks across the UK. We can also benefit from the skills of chefs who are very familiar with a particular cuisine.

There are chefs from all over the world offering on-line instruction these days. So if you might be interested in exploring a variety of cuisines in this way do get in touch. Let me know what you would like to do. This applies to members in other parts of the region too, not just the UK. We may have to limit participation to UK members only because of the need to ship the ingredients. If we can find a solution to this, it will just be a matter of getting the timing right.

Great Weekend Cambridge

16th to 19th September

This event is almost fully booked but there is still time to grab a place, if you're quick. Full details are on the international website.

Madeira Festival

30th October to 6th November

At the time of writing this tour is still going ahead. We will be keeping an eye on the current travel restrictions in the coming weeks and confirming details with suppliers. If anything changes we will

let participants know as soon as we can. However, we are still in a very fluid situation.

Alsace Festival

25th to 30th April 2022

This will be an opportunity to explore the wines of Alsace in some depth. We will be staying in Colmar and visiting some of the best wine makers in the region as well as dining in some of the best restaurants. We will be formally announcing this tour in September. Emails will be sent to all members and details will be on the international website.

Piedmont Festival

2nd to 7th May 2022

We have had to delay this tour twice because of the pandemic. The programme will be broadly similar to that already announced but we are very aware that some suppliers may no longer be able to receive us. The details are being reconfirmed and it is planned to re-launch the tour in September. We will contact those who have existing reservations individually.

This is no time to be an events organiser. In today's world, it is hard enough to arrange events within the UK but even more of a challenge when there is an international dimension. We realise that this is a worrying and frustrating time for anyone making plans to join any of our tours. All we can say is that we are doing our best to make decisions about whether and when to go ahead on the best available evidence, and in a timely manner. Our over-riding aim is to keep everyone safe while continuing to provide the sort of events we all enjoy wherever possible.

People have been used to making their travel arrangements long in advance, but in today's world of ever-changing restrictions, a few months is an eternity. We just have to live with it or give up!

Stephanie Shepherd

Events Co-ordinator (London)

Last Friday I received news that will require the date for our festival to be changed. In the past, the En Primeur tastings for the wine trade and journalists always took place in the first week of April. We understand that a decision was made to change it to the last week of April in 2022. It is of course impossible to hold our festival at the same time because none of the vineyards will receive our members during En Primeur week. We have come to the conclusion that our best alternative is to postpone our festival by two weeks – Thursday May 5th to Saturday May 7th in Paris and Sunday May 8th to Friday May 13th 2022 (departing on Saturday May 14th) in Bordeaux.

It is likely that some members that are already signed up may have a conflict with the new date. Currently our roster is full with 100 members attending and we have started a wait list. If you are considering joining us on this magical trip, I would strongly advise signing up on the wait list now. Any vacancy is filled in order of the date/time a member signs up for the festival. You can sign up through the website or, if unsure, call Rose Clemson at 908-719-1237 (EST).

Steven Greenwald

Chairman IWFS Festivals & Events, Americas



Madeira