

General Manager of The Savoy



The picture above is of Gastronome **Kieran W. MacDonald**, who we warmly welcome to the amicale.

Kieran brings over twenty eight years experience within the hospitality industry to this distinguished position, beginning his career in 1981 at the London Penta and London Tara Hotels in Rooms Division.

Kieran later moved into Food and Beverage management at the Royal Garden Hotel, and the 700-room Metropole and Warwick Hotels, Birmingham.

He joined Fairmont Hotels & Resorts in 1995 as Director Food & Beverage at The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess and held that position until 1998 when he was promoted to Hotel Manager.

In 1999, Kieran was appointed as General Manager at The Fairmont Waterfront and returned to the Scottsdale Princess in 2003 as General Manager.

In 2006 Kieran moved back to England and took up the position of General Manager at The Savoy.

A graduate of Ealing Polytechnic, London, Kieran holds a Degree in Hotel Management and is married with three children.

Kieran gives Gnome de Plume a full update on The Savoy's restoration, and the reasons for the delayed opening of the hotel until 2010

Since the hotel's closure 18 months ago much has been happening on site. Indeed, I hope Savoy Gastronomes will have had a chance to follow us on this historic journey by visiting our website, www.the-savoy.com and viewing my General Manager's Updates, and other personal stories and anecdotes on how the restoration is progressing. The website also gives a full overview of The Savoy's core messages, *Leading The Past*, which discusses the hotel's legendary history and heritage; *London Ahead*, which references the excitement and vibrancy of the capital city and *First Again*, which introduces you to the new Savoy's design intention and renderings by the interior designer Pierre Yves Rochon. By downloading the video one can see his vision of the design intent for the new Savoy, marrying the classic Edwardian and Art Deco influences.

You will be pleased to hear that upon re-opening, in order to display our unique heritage, we will have an exciting new feature - **The Savoy Museum**. As custodians of one of the oldest and most extensive hotel archival collections, this will be another First for The Savoy and priceless memorabilia and documents revealing colourful details of bygone eras and important historical occasions will be on display for the first time. Our dedicated Archivist, Susan Scott, is in partnership with James Sherwood, Curator and Historian, to assemble this unique collection. James was kindly introduced to us by Mark Henderson of traditional tailor and military outfitters, Gieves & Hawkes, where he has created a stunning museum display of the historic Savile Row company's memorabilia.

The restoration of The Savoy is one of the most ambitious undertaken in Britain, costing over £100 million and involving the entire building, including the famous Savoy Courtyard where I'm delighted to say traffic will continue to enter on the right-hand side of the road!

The enormity of this project, although steadily moving along, has not come without its share of complications and set backs; the consequence of which I am afraid is a delay to the planned re-opening this year and I regret to advise you that our anticipated winter re-opening is now unlikely to be before early 2010. This will no doubt be disappointing news for all our guests, as indeed it is for all of us involved in the project.

The delay has been caused essentially by two key factors. Firstly, we discovered that much of the services infrastructure (water, heat and power) was in a far worse condition than we had anticipated. In most cases the pipeline and electrical networks had to be completely replaced and of course this is such invasive work. Secondly, and more encouragingly, as the restructuring works 'peeled back' layers of history, original design elements were revealed that had been hidden for decades, and it was important that these were either protected or, in some cases, incorporated into the new designs.

Nevertheless, if you are able to access my most recent update on our website, you will see that I am delighted to report a large amount of completed work such as the 9th floor corridor ceilings and all of the Art Deco Guestrooms, which are now just waiting for the snagging to take place - a critical juncture that establishes the acceptable standard of finish going forward.

Downstairs, the public areas are a different story as progress has been painfully slow. Talk amongst the construction team is how the programme hinges on the impending arrival of the new glass dome for the Thames Foyer, and once this is in place work on other key elements of the interior design can rapidly move forward.

Chef Mayer's kitchens are progressing well and for those passing by Savoy Court lately, they may have seen the dismantling of Sir Howard Robertson's 1929 iconic steel canopy for restoration; and over the coming weeks beautiful granite pavings will replace the bitumen road surface, a fitting upgrade for such a famous courtyard.

Lunch at Mosimann's Sunday 22nd March 2009

Following a lively Saturday evening and excellent dinner at The Langham, we brought the 2009 Reunion to a close on Mothering Sunday with Brunch at Mosimann's Dining Club in Belgravia.

Sunday proved a bright sunny day as we each made our own way to the Club, where the Chef himself and his family greeted us at the street entrance. Originally a Presbyterian Church built in 1830, the building consists of many levels up to the spire Belfry. We climbed many steps to the Parmigiani Room for a **Lanson** Champagne reception.

As all fifty-three guests arrived and Champagne was consumed, the lively chatter increased in volume until it was time to climb one more flight to the Belfry for Brunch.

Seated at tables of ten, we enjoyed great conversation and a delightful meal of Smoked Salmon, Lady Curzon Soup, and a platter of Mosimann specialities, finishing with a light bread and butter pudding, coffee and petit fours. Jim toasted the Mothers present for Mothers' Day and Chef Mosimann was thanked and applauded for lunch.

2009 Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held prior to the Annual Reunion Dinner on the Saturday evening of a wonderful weekend in London, hosted by **President Duncan Palmer**. The meeting was attended by twenty-one members, including new member **Nahoko Asano** participating at her first Gastronomes event.

The meeting was opened by Chairman Jim Sarton, who gave his annual report of the year. This was followed by contributions from Virginia Masser reporting on the ever-developing Olive Barnett Award, Maggi Smit with the accounts, Anna Coakley on the website and handbook, and finally Julian Payne Snr. on possible initiatives for our 40th anniversary in 2011.

Savoy Gastronomes Scarves and Ties were available for purchase at a special one night only price and there was a veritable scrum of lady members clamouring for the Scarves! Should you wish to purchase a bespoke specially-designed silk scarf for £30 or tie for £20 please contact Maggi Smit or Virginia Masser.

Lanson International

The Savoy Gastronomes are indebted to Paul Beavis, Managing Director of Lanson International London (telephone 020 7499 0070) for his generous support of the Amicale. www.lansoninternational.com



Janet and Graham Banford with Treasurer Maggi Smit.

New Savoy Representative Committee Member

There is always a seat on the Committee for a Savoy Representative who is currently based at The Savoy, this position has been empty for the past year. We are delighted to welcome now **Ronald Dooremalen**, the new **Rooms Division Manager at The Savoy** onto the Committee. Ronald joined The Savoy in 2003 as a Receptionist and has worked his way up through the ranks, being a key member of the team when the Savoy began its new reign with Fairmont.

While The Savoy has been closed Ronald has been a key member of the Fairmont team opening their hotel in **Beijing** and numerous Front of House projects in their Far Eastern portfolio. We are delighted to have Ronald on board; he will be a great ambassador for The Savoy Gastronomes with a brand new Reception team, along with fellow Gastronome **Ollie Ormond**.

The Scarpa's come South

It was wonderful to see **Ampelio and Lea Scarpa** in London for the Reunion in March who had travelled down from their new home in **Perthshire** having moved from Venice.

New Gastronomes

We are delighted to welcome new Gastronomes this year, **Pia Minas** who is currently working for Mandarin Oriental in Munich and **Nahoko Asano** who is based with Mitsubishi in London.

Spaceship hotel set for landing

An ultra-modern £250 million hotel is being planned for the north bank of the Thames. The provocative design, which has been likened to a spaceship, will be built at Puddle Dock by Blackfriars Bridge in the City of London, if the planners give it the go-ahead, on the site of the former **Mermaid Theatre**. The five-story structure will have a sheer-glass front overlooking the waterfront and will be clad with translucent stone. It will include a double-height ballroom for 400 people, a spa, bars and restaurants and a roof top terrace.



Royal Warrant Holders bag Shelley Anne Claircourt

Uber-smart Royal Warrant Holders Association has secured the services of Gastronome **Shelley Anne Claircourt** who runs her own company the PRes Office. If that wasn't acclaim enough, Shelley is working for Mrs Jennifer Emery, daughter of the late Sir Hugh Wontner, who owns Edward Goodyear with a very smart shop just off Victoria Street.

Savoy goes Green

We understand that the Savoy is to use left-overs and kitchen waste to power a green energy plant. It also plans to supply hot water to its 263 rooms using heat from its freezers and coolers. This is part of a move to cut its carbon footprint by 3,322 tonnes a year.

NEW ARRIVALS

Congratulations to Gastronomes **Becky Preston and Xavier Peirani** on the birth of their second daughter Emily. Belgian based member **Laetitia Pardo** and her, soon to be member, partner **Christos** welcomed their first son into the world. **Hilary and Jerry Kempe** were thrilled to announce the arrival of a sister Naeve for their son Louis and as we go to press our marathon-running bride from the last *Gnome de Plume*, **Zoe Gale and her husband Simon** had a bouncing baby boy, Joe. Congratulations to you all and also to any new Gastronome Parents and Grandparents out there also this year.

THE SAVOY GASTRONOMES OLIVE BARNETT AWARD 2009

A summary of another successful award year by *Virginia Masser*

This award, created by **The Savoy Gastronomes in 1975**, seeks to find the most promising young person under 30 working in any customer facing role in the hospitality industry in the UK, with a view to helping them fulfill their career aspirations. It aims to show-case excellence in the industry and the participants provide us with fantastic role models for others entering into or just beginning their careers.

The Savoy Gastronomes would like to thank our partner **Springboard** and to all of our sponsors for making this award possible. **The Langham**, who has been the main sponsor of the award for the last two years and this year, **The Savoy Educational Trust** who provide the prize money for our finalists, **The Hotel School, Lausanne**, who provide a place on their summer programme for the winner and who this year have added two further short courses for our runners up. We are also most grateful to **Learnpurple** who carry out a training session during the judging weekend; to **Caterer.com** who provide funds for the award and to **Laurent Perrier Champagne**.

The Savoy Gastronomes know that Miss Barnett O.B.E would be so proud, and it was particularly nice that Miss Barnett's cousin, Mrs Rosalind Potter, came from her home near Cambridge to join the occasion.

- Our judges this year were—
- **Virginia Masser** representing The Savoy Gastronomes and a former Olive Barnett Award Winner in 1993.
 - **Terry Foreman** representing The Savoy Gastronomes.
 - **Tim Gates**, The Langham
 - **Ian Burke**, Caterer.com

- **Edward Viita**, The Langham and Winner of the Olive Barnett Award 2008.
- **Anne Pierce**, CEO Springboard
- **Ian Scarth**, Hotel School Lausanne and previous Olive Barnett Award winner 1979.

The journey for our 8 finalists started in December 2008 when the call for entries was launched. All entrants were asked to submit a 750 word essay on the following:

'The credit crunch and current recession have started to impact upon the environment in which your company operates. Identify and explain four key strategic priorities that the company you work for could focus on to enhance quality customer service and so protect its business during this challenging period.'

This year, we attracted over eighty full applications and these were initially screened by Virginia and the team at Springboard.

Thirty essays then made it to the next stage where the final judging panel had the difficult job to agree on eight entries to make it through to the final.

- The finalists this year were:
- **Tim Bode**, Park Lane Hotel,

- London
- **Borja Eraso**, Intercontinental London, Park Lane
- **Amy Dignon**, De Vere Cameron House, Loch Lomond
- **Mark Field**, The Carlton Club, London
- **Benjamin McEwen**, Lexington Catering, London
- **Mike Swadza**, Jumeirah Carlton Tower, London
- **Viktoria Trosina**, The Intercontinental London Park Lane
- **Sarah Winterton**, Brown's Hotel, London

On 21st April the finalists were contacted, congratulated and informed they had made it to the final judging weekend at The Langham. They were also asked to submit their own 'personal career mantra' that helps them focus on their job and careers.

Stage Two of the competition for our finalists started at midday on Sunday 17th May at The Langham. For the finalists, the day started off with a presentation training session by industry training leaders Learnpurple. The finalists were then handed over to Ian Scarth from the Hotel School Lausanne who set them a task of creating

a presentation for the finalists ceremony. They were totally unaware of this part of the process and only twenty four hours to create it and rehearse.

Stage Three of the competition took place on Sunday evening, where the finalists were treated to a splendid dinner hosted by the Langham and interrogations from the judges. The judges were assessing their social skills, how they networked and interacted in a more social environment. This is a highly important part of the process as it allows the judges to get to know the finalists in a more informal situation.

On Monday 18th May Stage Four of the competition took place - the careers presentations. Each finalist presented to the judging panel their career achievements to date, their plans for the future, and how they would spend the grant should they win. The judges questioned them on their presentations and essay. At the end of the day all the scores from each section of the weekend were collated and our winner and two runners-up were decided.

At 6.30 pm over two hundred and fifty guests from the hospitality industry arrived. The ceremony commenced and the announcement of this year's winners took place.

OUR 2009 WINNERS

- **Sarah-Elizabeth Winterton** from Brown's Hotel, was the 2nd runner up and won a career development grant kindly donated by The Savoy Educational Trust, of £750 each year for a two year period, along with a short course kindly donated by the Hotel School Lausanne.
- **Mike Swadzba** from the Jumeriah Carlton Tower, was the 1st runner up and won a career development grant again kindly donated by the

Savoy Educational Trust, of £1250 each year for a two year period and a short course kindly donated by the Hotel School Lausanne.

- The winner, **Benjamin McEwen** from Lexington Catering not only won a career development grant from the Savoy Educational Trust of £1750 a year for a two year period but also a place on the fabulous summer school programme at the Hotel School Lausanne.

2009 was a great success and I am and delighted and rather excited to announce that next year and for the following two years, the award goes "home" as the main sponsor of the Olive Barnett Award from 2010 - 2012 will be **The Savoy**.

A success!

The following was received from a happy Gastronome following the successful 2009 Summer Reunion "what a triumph today was, well done. I enjoyed myself immensely; it is lovely to see everyone so relaxed. BP's gardens (Buckingham Palace) are wonderful and I was glad to have had the opportunity for a snoop around! With much love and many, many thanks.

Elliott leaves Stapleford Park

Former President **Rupert Elliott**, with his wife and daughter in tow, have re-located to **Bibury Court Hotel** in the Cotswolds. Rupert says that he is very excited by this new challenge and feels the hotel has a great deal of latent recognition and an owner dedicated to putting it on a new level. Watch this space.

Miss Dodie Cotter

It is with great sadness that we announce that **Dodie Cotter** died peacefully on 10th August, aged 94. An appreciation of her life will be sent to members in due course.



Eugenio Pirri Regional HR Director The Savoy and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Europe, Terry Foreman, Benjamin McEwen, Virginia Masser

ITALIAN JOB

Secretary **Anna Coakley** and husband **Robin** have just returned from two weeks in Italy, where they were lucky enough to stay at Savoy Gastronome **Stefano Leoni's** wonderful **Grand Hotel Bagni Nuovi in Bormio**. After enjoying the resort's thermal spas they headed to relax in Argegno on the shores of **Lake Como** before enjoying the opera in Verona conducted by **Placido Domingo**.

Bonjour Paris, hi NYC

Not content with having cracked the London Marathon at a commendable speed, General Manager of **Peter Tyrie's Threadneedles Hotel**, in the City of London, **Julian Payne** pounded his way round the cobbled Paris Marathon in an even quicker time; his wife Catherine and son Christopher meanwhile popped in and out of the Metro trying to catch him up. Julian is now planning to run the New York Marathon in early November this year.

Elliott notches them up

To celebrate the return of some of his National Insurance contributions from Mr. G Brown, Founder Member **Tony Elliott** started his birthday with a very jolly family lunch at his house - followed the day after by being taken out to lunch in **Honfleur** and then over the weekend there was another grand family "bouffe" at Christiane's house on the coast. (of France that is - Ed)

Our 40th anniversary year 2011

We are thrilled that iconic hotelier **Natale Rusconi**, whose long and distinguished career was covered in some detail in the summer 2008 edition of *Gnome de Plume* under "Arrivederci Natale", has agreed to be our President in this anniversary year. Your committee is currently considering a number of issues to make this a particularly special year so if you have any ideas you would like to put forward please send them to the Chairman, Jim Sarton jim@dedhamhall.demon.co.uk

An Ethiopian odyssey

as recounted by Chairman Jim Sarton

In September 2007 our eldest daughter, Emma, went to Ethiopia with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) to teach at the University of Wollega. She was to initiate a National Diploma Teaching programme for the university lecturers and supervise the first intake. On our first visit in February 2008, with the site still under construction, there were 1,200 students. This year in February 2009, with buildings still under construction, the student intake had increased to 3,000. Eventually on completion they will number 12,000.

The University is situated in the town of Nekemte in the Oromiya Region. It is approximately 300km to the West of Addis Ababa with only an unmade road connection. A good 4 x 4 vehicle can do it in six hours hard driving. A public bus twelve hours if you are lucky. It is the ninth largest town in Ethiopia with a population of approximately 120,000.

Europeans are somewhat of a rarity and the source of much interest, known here and throughout the country as "ferenji". Water and Electricity are fragile resources in Ethiopia. The huge building projects currently taking place in towns like Nekemte have a tremendous impact on their supply. Cuts for days at a time are commonplace. Conservation, of water in particular becomes a way of life.

The staple diet is Injera, rather like a very large sour dough pancake made from Tef flour, and served with Wat; a sauce, which will contain meat or vegetables. Popular dishes include Tibs, small pieces of meat pan fried over charcoal, served piping hot. Kitfo is raw minced beef mixed with butter and spices or Kurt which are larger pieces of meat served

dipped in mixed spices. Tej is home made honey wine which is delicious and has deceptively high alcohol content. Tourism is now beginning to catch on, especially as an earner of foreign currency. There are many interesting things to see and so far Wendy and I have only scratched the surface on the two visits to a wonderful country populated by very lovely people. I am sure we will be making many more visits as on our last one we were present at Emma's wedding to Biniam. He is a Masters Graduate in Hydrology and will be much needed in his country. The ceremony took place on Saturday 21st February in the garden of Biniam's mother with 100 guests. It was a true Ethiopian wedding with all members of the family preparing the food and Tej. It was a very happy event with lots of music, dancing, fireworks and speeches in several languages. It culminated in a mad dash for the airport in the early hours of the morning for our flight home. Emma and Biniam are currently here with us and we have another grandchild arriving soon. Emma has a quick appeal to the Savoy Gastronomes - when she returns to Ethiopia she wants to set up photography clubs in schools. Currently schools lack any art or creative learning and all the photos taken in Ethiopia that people nationally and internationally see are taken by foreigners. If any of you have a basic digital camera stuck in the back of a drawer and have no use for it, could you donate it to this project? If so, please contact Emma on emmasarton@gmail.com or send them to me at Dedham Hall. With our grateful thanks.

Two London hotels get new names

Hilton has re-branded two of its hotels. The 64 room Bentley (*no relation to Gastronomer Michael Bentley*) has become Britain's first Waldorf and the 112 Courthouse in the West End has become another Doubletree, one of Hilton's brands.

Sherry back in UK

After a brief stint in New York, **Niels Sherry**, President in 2001, when he was heading up the cool St Martin's Hotel in London's West End, has returned to the UK and has set up as a Wine Consultant for those with some spare cash wishing to invest in wine.

Bow Street Magistrates Court to be luxury hotel

Just a stone's throw from the Savoy, Westminster Council has given the green light for the famous Bow Street Magistrates Court to be converted into an hotel. The Grade II-listed building was the site of the incarceration of Oscar Wilde, Dr Crippen, Reggie Cray and others. Whilst in the so-called West End I hear also that the old Odeon cinema in Leicester Square will also become an hotel and flats.

Former home of Bunny Club to be hotel

More than 20 years after the last bunny left the hutch the Playboy Club in London's Park Lane is set to become an hotel. Local Westminster Council has granted planning permission, so my mole in County Hall tells *Gnome de Plume*, to redevelop the outpost of Hugh Hefner which operated as a club between 1966 and 1982. And who is behind this - the **Dorchester Collection** none the less who will turn the site into a 48 room yet-to-be named hotel. Across the pond I hear designs have been drawn up by New York based architect Thierry Despont who has created homes for Bill Gates and Calvin Klein. Victor Lowndes, now 80, who ran the club, told *Gnome de Plume* "It was a huge success. The average bunny lasted two years and than married a millionaire" Call Dorchester CEO Christopher Cowdery for more.



Paul and Maria tie the knot

With the question popped during the ultra-successful Gastronomes Annual Reunion in Hong Kong and Bangkok in 2008, **Paul Brackley** wed **Maria Bolwell** at Farm Street Church in London, on the very day of the Gastronomes Summer event this year. Maria left for the service from the hotel Gastronomes were having lunch at; she was waived on her way by none other than **Jim Sarton** who caught a glimpse of her speeding past. A wonderful reception was held at the **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Ballroom** and it is reported that Maria was wearing the shawl that Paul gave her in Hong Kong. The Bride looked gorgeous in ivory silk, whilst Paul acknowledged his "roots" by sporting Gastronomer socks;

rumours that his morning suit was in fact his old Savoy uniform were unconfirmed. Gastronomer guests included **Christian and Toria Duffell**, and a fabulous time was had by all. We look forward to seeing them both at many more Gastronomes reunions in the future.

*Paul himself picks up the story - "As you know I asked Maria for her hand in marriage while staying at the **Mandarin Oriental in Bangkok** last year on our Gastronomes Reunion. So it was fitting to hold our Reception and Wedding Breakfast at the **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park**. It was a perfect May Spring Day and we enjoyed the Reception on the new terrace overlooking Hyde Park before sitting down to our **Wedding Breakfast**.*

***Gastronomer Rachel Angell** and her team looked after us and our guests so very well, we were all thrilled with the service, the great attention to detail shown and of course the quality of the food. We had chosen a traditional Spring menu of Scallops followed by Pea Soup then Saddle of Lamb finishing with Lemon Tart with Rhubarb Compote. We honeymooned in Italy. Our mini-tour started at the **Danieli in Venice** going on to join the **Mille Miglia** in our **Alfa Romeo** for a tour of Tuscany. Having taken in **Florence** we finished in **Rome**. Our last week was spent on **Capri** at the **Grand Hotel Qvisisanna**."*



Rachel Angell, Victoria Smalley and Asta Brandes having fun

Holland's wedding

*Wendy Sarton covered this happy event for **Gnome de Plume** On Saturday 21st March 2009, a sunny spring day in Warwickshire, Max Holland, **Gastronomer Michael and Christina Holland's** youngest son, married Rebecca Guest at St Nicholas Church, Kenilworth. Max and Rebecca have known each other since their days at University in Coventry. The reception was held afterwards at **Coombe Abbey Hotel**, which Michael developed, as a Grade I listed building for No Ordinary Hotel Group in 1995. All their guests felt very much at home and had a great party in the beautiful setting of the Abbey, amongst the daffodils in the surrounding parkland. I managed to take leave from the from the Gastronomes reunion in London and I had a wonderful time dancing half the night away whilst leaving the Chairman (my husband) to face his music alone! (*Ed's note - it was quite a Spring for the Holland's as another of their son's, Bobby, married three weeks later.*)*

Echle weds

Josef Echle has been off our radar since the stunning Venetian reunion in 2005, magically hosted by **Natale Rusconi** and his wife Connie, however I now hear that he is still in the wine-business - but only on some week-ends; Josef reports that he married Ingrid in August and they very much hope to join us at the next reunion. Congratulations Josef, and we wish you great happiness. Josef shouldn't worry too much as I hear from the Treasurer that he has paid two years subscription up front!

Change of address

Please let us know if you have moved. We do like to keep in touch with our far flung members in forty four countries. Tell the Secretary Anna Coakley annajc38@hotmail.com

CENTENARY OF SIR HUGH WONTNER'S BIRTH

With customary style Julian Wontner, one of Sir Hugh's sons, arranged a special peal of bells at City of London Church, St Lawrence Jewry in October 2008 to celebrate his Father's birth on 22nd October 1908. Sir Hugh was Lord Mayor in 1973/74, when Judith Payne, wife of Founder Member **Julian Payne**, was working in the Public Relations office of the Corporation of London. Sir Hugh had a lifelong connection with the City of London and different livery companies, especially with the Clockmakers and Feltmakers. His forebear Thomas Wontner Sr came in 1763 from afar in Leominster Herefordshire, as a teenager with his elder brother John, to be apprenticed to the Feltmakers and John to the Clockmakers. Thomas was to be elected Master twice, in 1792 and again in 1830 in his 83rd year. John's son, John Wontner, also a clockmaker, became Upper Marshal and had a terrible accident in procession to Guildhall with his horse, but lived and was appointed Governor of Newgate Prison. Sir Hugh began his career in the London Chamber of Commerce in the era of the great Stock Market crash, later to be appointed Secretary to the then British Hotels and Restaurant Association in 1931, founded by the Savoy. He was invited to join the Savoy in 1938, allegedly being interviewed by **Miss Olive Barnett**, prior to being offered the job. He became Managing Director in 1942 at the early age of 34 and by example was responsible for the founding of the British Tourist Authority (now Visit Britain), and the International Hotel Association later being a Life President. Well known for his robust defence of the highest values of the Savoy, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and the City Corporation, he set up the Temple Bar Trust to bring the ancient Grade I listed Wren gateway back to the City. He passed his Aldermanic and Temple Bar banner to Sir Christopher Collett and then oversaw the final hurdles to its restored place today as the entrance at Paternoster Square from St Paul's Cathedral. After the quarter peal of Surprise Major, Julian Wontner's guests processed on foot, wrapped up against the autumnal chill, from St Lawrence Jewry through the twilight, to the charming private room above Temple Bar for a presentation toast with, appropriately enough, magnums of De Venoge, once the Champagne of the Savoy.

Hans Hanson



It is with great sadness that we announce **Hans Hanson** died on 19th April 2009 after a long illness, bravely born. He will be remembered with great affection by many Gastronomes and we send our deepest sympathy to his wife Louise. Twelve Gastronomes attended the funeral held at All Saints Church in his home village of Elston. The Church was full to overflowing and forty four members of the male voice choir, of which Hans was a member, gave a rousing rendition. Donations in memory of Hans for The Bell Repair Fund at All Saints Church may be sent to E Gill & Sons Ltd, Funeral Directors, 55 Albert Street, Newark Notts NG24 4BQ. Louise Hanson's address is 10 Paddocks Close, Elston Newark Notts NG23 5PJ

Gastronome Hugh Wainwright recalls his entertaining encounters with Hans over many happy years "I first met Hans in 1968 through a mutual friend, Cameron Buchanan.

Cameron was spending a year in Italy to study the language and whilst there visited the local Anglican Church where Hans's father was the Vicar. Cameron claimed his attendance was not so much for his spiritual benefit but as the obvious start for his social networking. The Vicar's son, Hans, Cameron and a young Curate, Jim Wynne-Evans met and forged a lasting friendship. This was typical of the friendships that Hans made, which were loyal and long-lasting. At Hans's funeral in Elston, near Newark, where Hans and Louise lived for many years, Jim, now an impish seventy-four year old, recalled some of the happy times they shared.

When I met Hans I was considering going into the hotel world and I was unsure of which route to take into the industry. It was Hans's enthusiasm for The Savoy training scheme that convinced me that this was the path to follow. His advice to me, when I joined the scheme was, if I did nothing else, to ensure I spent part of my training working in the Reception at the Savoy. As a result of his advice I was able to join, many years later, the Savoy Gastronomes and to continue my friendship with Hans both within the hotel world and outside it. Hans had a great capacity for friendship and, during his time as an inspector for Michelin when travelling around the country he would, whenever possible, drop in on my parents' home in the West Country and he remained in regular contact with them. I went on several skiing holidays with Hans before he married Louise and he was always great company. Not only was he an amusing companion, he was also

a fantastic linguist. The last time we skied together was with the Gastronomes at the magical snow-bound annual reunion hosted by **Ernst Scherz**, owner of the legendary **Palace Hotel** in Gstaad in 1991. This was the year when **Dodie Cotter** and **Peter Stafford**, wrapped up warmly together, took a ski-lift to the top of a mountain. An engaging moment. Also there were **Graham and Janet Bamford** who flew in specially from Singapore. We were travelling between the slopes and the hotel in a bus and Hans carried on lively conversations with a number of the passengers. This was no mean feat; the conversations were in French, Italian, and German and Hans flipped from one language to the other without pause and furthermore, injected a great deal of humour judging by the laughter from the other passengers. As well as being a great conversationalist Hans was also a very good listener and he was always keen to respect other people's points of view.

All of us who knew Hans can recall his occasional capacity for putting his foot in it. One of my recollections was the occasion Hans and I were invited to a formal dinner in tree-lined Surrey. Hans pitched up wearing chinos, sandals and an iridescent Hawaiian shirt, much to the horror of his host and hostess. Hans, with his usual aplomb, overcame this minor transgression and made an excellent and amusing addition to the party. I have greatly appreciated Hans's ready wit and companionship; my life and numerous others will be duller for his parting."

Shelley walks up Kilimanjaro

In a fascinating story *Gastronome Shelley Anne Claircourt recounts a life-time ambition finally fulfilled.*



As a schoolgirl in Rhodesia, there was not much you are not taught about Mt. Kilimanjaro, it is Africa's Mountain and almost an old friend. The tallest free standing mountain in the world standing at 3,895 meters/19,340 ft, so when we arrived on 28th December seeing the spectacular views of the ice capped mountain from our hotel, suddenly the enormity of the task at hand seemed overwhelming.

The first two days of the trek were rather beautiful, with verdant vegetation to distract; but that night, things changed dramatically. My trekking mate succumbed to acute mountain sickness and had to be taken down. It was then that the gruelling fitness programme kicked in and it became a challenge of my mind. The next four days, trekking with my guide, not to mention the hundreds of other climbers and their porters, were tough. At times the terrain was a vertical rock wall to be negotiated as if a mountain goat, at others it seemed to be days of volcanic scree with nothing but rocks to break up the monotonous landscape.

By the time I arrived at camp, the tent was up and cook had tea brewing with popcorn waiting. A bowl of hot water was produced to wash and then preparations for the night would begin to ensure all was ready for when the sun set around 6.00pm when the temperatures would plummet.

The night of the final ascent was the toughest. All routes lead to Barranco Hut. Hundreds of climbers and their porters were gathered; camps were everywhere, like Glastonbury without the music. The excitement was palpable and it was impossible to doze, let alone sleep; everyone was waiting for midnight. The weather oscillated from freezing hailstorms to a blazing heat when the clouds scudded off. Finally it was 11.30 p.m. Wearing all my clothes, I

emerged into the -6C biting cold. The snake of walkers ascending up the rocky paths, all wearing headlamps under a breathtaking canopy of stars, gave the scene biblical proportions. As it was just me and my guide, Leon, we pushed rapidly up the frozen scree finally reaching Stellar Point. Here, altitude sickness really kicked in, I sat down to recover and somersaulted back over the rock, my head throbbed, breathing was difficult and I was becoming more and more confused. Leon reckoned that it was an hour to the summit but I could do it in 45 minutes and after that we would need to run down, so that I could recover from the altitude without any adverse effects. We pushed on. Every step felt like a descent into hell. Then, at last the steep gradient began to level off; a wall of frozen air permeating from the glaciers greeted me. We plodded on, and finally reached the summit at 6.00 a.m. Dawn was just breaking and the red sun poured pink light across the glacier. Silhouettes of other walkers could be seen emerging from the darkness. We spent five minutes at the summit, marvelling at the curvature of the earth below; but at -20C with a freezing wind howling around us, it was time to go. Leon was not joking; we were off, almost skiing down the slopes of sandy scree which were thawing rapidly in the bright sunlight. My water remained frozen for another hour or so as did my precious last Mars Bar. By the time we reached camp, I was exhausted, exhilarated and energised in equal measures. There was an hour to sleep before eating a quick meal and our camp was packed up and we started our descent. It was six days up and one day down. The enormity of what I had achieved did not really sink in until about a week later and then I was truly amazed as I sat on a boat in Zanzibar, toes amongst the rainbow coloured fish.

100th anniversary of birth of Cubby Broccoli

2009 is the year film buffs and particularly fans of 007, which Cubby Broccoli brought to the screen, will celebrate his talents. A flamboyant Italian-American his story lives on through his daughter Barbara and stepson Michael who are at the helm of EON, the production company that Broccoli founded in 1961. Broccoli, the high roller, ex-Hollywood agent and close friend of **Howard Hughes**, cut an incongruous figure when he arrived in austerity-era Britain in 1948 to attend a car rally. "Where's the Kings Arms? he asked a passer-by when he was trying to track down a pub where he had an important meeting "Oh, around the Queen's a*se", he was told - a sardonic reply that delighted him. The **Savoy** became his second home and his daughter recalls that on his first visit to have breakfast the waiter came to the table and said "what would you like, sir"? He said "I'll have bacon and eggs and a pot of coffee." The waiter had to explain that thanks to rationing that wouldn't be possible. A few days later, the waiter turned up at his table saying he had a surprise. Underneath a huge silver cloche, he unveiled two boiled eggs. Broccoli asked the waiter how he got them. "Oh, I brought them from home," the waiter replied. Such was the Savoy.

Thomas marries in South Africa

Gastronome **Peter Thomas**, who worked alongside **Julian Payne Snr** in the days of starched collars and white aprons in the Savoy Grill, married his long-time partner, former Concorde Stewardess **Angie Manley** on Monday 25th May. They live in glorious Hermanus, South Africa

Bauer's go West

Spotted holidaying in England's gorgeous West Country were none other than Former President **Willy Bauer** and his wife **Zdenka**. They were caught on camera at **Gidleigh Park**, formerly run and owned by American Paul Henderson and his wife Kay; later they visited Kit Chapman and his family, owners of the **Castle Hotel** in Taunton.

Savoy Archives

Reassuring news is that Susan Scott, part time archivist of the Savoy, is being retained and the wonderful archives will be reinstated. Gastronomes with a certain fondness for very fine pieces of print that cover over much more than just the history of the Savoy, but represent an overview of legendary classical cooking and wine lists, will be able, by prior appointment have access to these archives.

Slippery slopes

Gastronome **Derek Picot**, Regional Vice President of Jumeirah Europe and General Manager of the **Jumeirah Carlton Tower**, (and born in Jersey if you really want to know - Ed) missed the annual reunion as he was skiing in France. Some years back he had a nasty accident on the slopes but I can report that Derek was as chirpy as ever and recently spotted amongst friends at the summer reunion. He tells about hand-held electronic voting devices that are used at his quarterly staff meetings to ask staff key questions on the business. The system works anonymously and the answers are instantaneous. As a consequence of this Derek is now teaching some staff to speak English! Yes, well, helpful Derek!

Holland's Grappa

When not sailing their Catamaran in the Med, Italian based **Michael and Christine Holland** can be found either treading their own olives or making their own fine Grappa. We are hoping to persuade them to part with a little for an event in Italy in 2010. Salute!

Win a bottle of Lanson

Who said..... "I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best".....? Answers to jp@pdpr.freeserve.co.uk please. First one received gets the bottle.

Not again

Our mole in the rushes on the river bank spots (if moles could see - Ed) fun-loving Gastronome **Anna Roberts** celebrating yet another birthday; this time at the swish **River Café** in West London. It is one of Anna's favourite haunts; owned by Ruth Rodgers and her controversial world famous architect husband Lord Rogers, who has recently drawn blood over his controversial scheme for the old Chelsea Barracks with the "Prince of Wails."

Annual Reunion 2009

Friday 20th March

A Lanson Champagne reception was the commencement of the 38th Annual Reunion this year on Friday evening. With an arts theme, we visited and dined at the Tate Modern on the South Bank. It was an informal affair, with an optional self-guided tour of the paintings and sculptures with time for warm reunions before dinner.

Chairman Jim Sarton proposed an opening toast and the evening started as we meant to go on! New faces mixed with old friends and a thoroughly fun time was had. The eagerly anticipated night-cap was to follow with a kind invitation from Duncan Palmer to join him in the Langham's Artesian bar for hot toddies. There it was wonderful to see former Head Barman of the Savoy's American Bar, Peter Dorrelli, in full swing awaiting our arrival.

The modern twist to the Gastronome evening ended in a suitably late and happy mood, with everyone looking forward to participating in the full events of the weekend ahead.

Chicago-based Founder Member **Michael Duffell** was sadly unable to attend this year so sent this rhythmical witty greeting –

Good wishes Mr. President and all friends of The S.G., Have a terrific dinner across from the BBC. Gisela and Michael Duffell are sorry not to be here - Save us some cake and truffle to mark the 38th year! Well done Duncan Palmer - though your year will be up soon - Welcome to your successors - those Johnstons - Ian and June.

In his down-time Michael can be found on the charming **Willmette Golf** course, just north of Chicago, off Interstate 94. Curiously enough this is close to where **Julian Payne Snr** used to live in Glenview in the early '60's, when he was a busboy at **Henrici's Restaurant** at the O'Hare Inn right by Chicago's international airport. The original, and well-regarded Henrici's, was on Randolph Street in the downtown theatre district of Chicago and opened in 1868.

Hong Kong based past-President **Andrew Hirst** sent this more prosaic message

"It seems like only recently that the Savoy Gastronomes were in Hong Kong from where I have pleasure in conveying my best regards on the occasion of the Savoy Gastronomes 38th Annual Reunion. My congratulations and best wishes to Ian and June Johnston as they take on the mantle of Joint Presidents of The Savoy Gastronomes - a fitting

tribute in recognition of their staunch support and hard work over the years in support of our beloved amicale."

Saturday 21st March

Hugh Wainwright picks up the story.

All the best fairy tales start with the words 'Once upon a time...'

So, once upon a time a group of young men came together to organise a dinner at The Connaught to thank the Savoy's Reception Manager, Nicholas St. John Brooks, for his guidance and help during their time as Receptionists at The Savoy. The amicale that became known as The Savoy Gastronomes was born.

Thirty-eight years later the tradition continues and this year the dinner was hosted by Savoy Gastronome President, **Duncan Palmer**, at The Langham Hotel. Under Duncan's ever watchful and keen eye The Langham has recently undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment programme. The theme for the evening was traditional fairy stories, in line with the theme for the re-opening of the hotel.

Nearly one hundred Savoy Gastronomes and their guests met in The Artesian, the glamorous cocktail bar where we were treated to **Lanson** Black Label and cocktails especially created for the evening. A seemingly never-ending supply of beautiful canapés was offered until we were ushered into dinner.

The Landau Restaurant is an elegantly panelled room that easily accommodated all the members and guests at tables seating from four to fourteen. Following Grace, spoken by Natale Rusconi, we enjoyed a carefully chosen menu created by **Executive Chef Andrew Turner**, that comprised a delicate white bean and truffle soup followed by a rich crab torte. The main course of duck, was cooked to a perfect rosé and pudding was a crème brûlée served with a pretty pink



Alan and Anne Robinson with David and Rosita Wardle



Gastronomes at the BBC

champagne rhubarb velouté. Australian Chardonnay and Shiraz wines accompanied the meal.

After this delicious dinner Duncan made his formal farewell speech as President. He recounted his happy times at The Langham and looked forward with enthusiasm to his new role in the Far East. Duncan handed over the Presidential Plate to the incoming joint Presidents, Ian and June Johnston. Finally, Duncan introduced his Guest of Honour, the urbane David Levin, who talked about his ownership of The Capital Group. Amongst those present were **John Grant** from Monaco, **Tony Elliott** and **Christiane Rivolen** from France, **Tim and Ina Whitehead** from Canada and **Sylvia and Yossi Heksch** from Israel.

I feel sure that everyone who attended the dinner would like to join me in thanking Duncan for hosting another memorable reunion and continuing the tradition started by those young men thirty-eight years ago in The Connaught.

Raffle Prize Winners and Donors

Thank you to Gastronomes who kindly donated prizes for the raffle held at The Landau on the Saturday of the Reunion. We very much appreciate your generosity especially in the current climate. The income from raffle tickets helps our funds enormously and keeps the cost of the annual subscription

very low.

Kurt Dell Oro's daughter Kirsten, attending the reunion from their home in **Dusseldorf**, won a two night stay at the **Trump International Hotel and Tower in New York** donated by **Suzie Mills**.

Jonathan Hennessy, guest of new member **Sebastian Knoerr**, won a case of delicious **Château Bernadotte Haut Medoc 2005**, a wonderful year for Bordeaux, donated by Chairman **Jim Sarton**.

Julian Payne Snr's renowned **City of London walking tour and lunch** was won by **Claire Austin**.

A **Chess match and bottle of Champagne** with **Julian Payne Jnr** was won by a guest of the Johnston family, **Andy Wood**.

A bottle of **Champagne**, donated by **Derek Picot** in the Gilt Lounge at the **Jumeirah Carlton Tower** was won by **John Rhodes** whose postal raffle tickets also netted him dinner at **Foliage at the Mandarin Oriental** donated by **Rachel Angell**.

Terry Foreman was the lucky recipient of one of the hottest new restaurants in London, **Min Jiang at the Royal Garden Hotel** donated by **Graham Bamford**.

Finally **Paul Brackley's** prize of dinner in **Refettorio at the Crowne Plaza The City** was won by **John Grant**.

Congratulations to all the lucky winners.

Sunday 22nd March

Our London Reunion dawned bright and sunny, and after breakfast (numerous Gastronomes are to be heard raving about the Langham's almond croissants) we met on the steps of the world famous British Broadcasting House, for our exclusive tour of the building.

An iconic example of Art Deco architecture, building work began in 1927, and took less than five years to complete, with the BBC taking up their residence there in

May 1932. Dominating the front entrance is a statue by Eric Gill of Prospero (symbol of wisdom and benevolence) and Ariel. We learn that Ariel's nakedness caused a stir at the time, requiring his manhood to be "adjusted"; thus a vintage Gastronomes tour began!

We started off in the beautiful Radio Theatre, the walls of which are covered in intricate friezes, reflecting themes such as music, sport, dance, religion and poetry. Originally designed as a classical music concert hall, the original design features (including one of the various contemporary clocks in the building) have been painstakingly preserved, and the theatre is now used for a variety of broadcasts. After a short introductory talk, we moved to the semi-circular Council Chamber, which, having played host to the major decision-making processes in much of the Corporation's history, and most recently used in the Jonathan Ross scandal.

In the lobby just along the hall from the Artist's Green Room, we are treated to an excellently timed celeb sighting, as Diana Rigg emerges from the lift! Suitably star-struck, we continue upstairs, to the radio studios: octagonal rooms meticulously sound-proofed and arranged in maze-like formation along narrow corridors. It is exciting to realize that, despite its long and changing history, Broadcasting House remains the engine room of the BBC Radio output and that morning, the scene of the Great Gastronomes Radio Play; a haunting tale of a lonely mansion and its dubious inhabitants. Who knew that the sound of bats could be re-created with a pair of leather gloves, that a Champagne cork could spring from a bicycle pump, or that the sound of boots tramping up a gravel path is simulated by, well, an old pair of boots in a tray of gravel?!

We finished our thoroughly enjoyable tour on the roof of the building, where the terrace affords an amazing view over All Souls Church, and of course, the historic Langham Hotel.

Huntington Hartford

Founder Member **David Ward** has been saddened by the death in May of his former employer and heir to a grocery fortune, Huntington Hartford. Hartford was born into one of America's wealthiest families and inherited \$90 million at the age of 12 but blew it on a series of quixotic artistic ventures and expensive wives. David knew him during one of the happier times of his life when he bought **Hog Island**, a two mile strip of farmland in the **Bahamas**, hoping to develop it into the St Tropez of the Bahamas. He renamed it Paradise Island and built the Ocean Club, a luxury resort with 25 acres of gardens modelled on those at Versailles and featuring a 12th century French Augustinian monastery, originally purchased and dismantled by **William Randolph Hearst**. At the other end of the island he built himself a palatial home where he (*Mr Hartford, not David Ward that is - Ed*) played host to a cast of celebrities including **Winston Churchill, Aristotle Onassis and Zsa Zsa Gabor**.

The Savoy Archives

An up-date from Susan Scott, Archivist

When I wrote about the Savoy Archives last year, I had hoped that by the time you read this, they would have returned to the hotel. Well, a year later it will not have escaped your notice that the restoration project is behind its original schedule; the archives have therefore remained safely in storage just outside London. In the meantime we've been working on an additional plan for a permanent history display at The Savoy. This will be installed in the space at the top of the stairs leading to the American Bar, which was previously a landing and the Savoy Gift Shop. So, for the last few weeks, I have been dashing down to the archives periodically to plough through the boxes looking for objects that might be suitable for display.

We're certainly not short of colourful printed ephemera and photographs, but the challenge is to make the displays as three-dimensional as possible. I have found an extraordinary selection of the oddest things, from boxes of sample Cuban cigars (circa 1936, possibly a little past their best) to three pairs of spectacles previously the property, according to the catalogue, of Sir George Reeves-Smith. Personal favourites include the vintage monogrammed dressing-table sets from the Ladies Cloakroom. These were actually handed over to the archives by Housekeeping in the weeks before closure as we all packed up to leave the building.

When The Savoy does re-open, there will be one small corner that pays tribute to its extensive and illustrious history, as the revitalised hotel faces up to its future. I do hope that you will come and take a look.

THE SAVOY - An Update

The Savoy closed its doors on December 15, 2007 to embark on one of the most extensive Hotel restorations in London.

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts as the Hotel operator, is overseeing this important restoration, and is uniquely positioned to undertake this project having successfully transformed other such historic hotels as the Fairmont San Francisco, Fairmont Banff Springs in Canada and most recently managing the reopening of The Plaza in New York. The Savoy's owners, Kingdom Holdings and the Bank of Scotland, have invested over £100 million in the restoration, and more than two years in the planning process, to ensure enough time is taken to fully understand and respect the Savoy's illustrious past so we can sensitively shape its future.

When the Savoy reopens in 2010, guests will enter an hotel of understated English luxury and striking sophistication. An essential aspect of the planning process has been to ensure the integrity of the hotel's art deco heritage from the 1930s and that its original Edwardian features are honoured. These two aesthetics will merge seamlessly thanks to the vision of interior designer, Pierre-Yves Rochon. Every design decision has been tested against the hotel's commitment to preserve and restore those physical attributes, regarded - and respected - as Savoy hallmarks. Given the Savoy's constant change and evolution over its illustrious 118 year history, identifying and understanding those elements has been one of the most challenging, yet rewarding aspects of the design process.

London Ahead

The Savoy has always taken its lead from its historical and theatrical surroundings, and, set against this background, it has played its part in shaping the city's cultural landscape over the years by hosting many famous

personalities and important events.

Situated in its unique location overlooking the River Thames, and conveniently located between Mayfair and the City, just a short walk from Trafalgar Square, the Savoy's closest neighbours include the theatres of the West End, the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, home to The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet, the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery, the newly rejuvenated Southbank Centre, which includes the Festival Hall and the Royal National Theatre; and in addition, the exciting regeneration of the Covent Garden area adds further interest and value to what is already an ideal location.

The Restoration of an Icon

The complex programme of restoration at The Savoy includes the upgrading of all the signature river view suites in order to offer guests the highest levels of luxurious design and comfort, with an additional array of aesthetic enhancements. The bathrooms have been relocated away from the river frontage windows, allowing guests to enjoy the most sought after river views from every aspect of their suites. Of the 268 guest rooms, 174 are being restored in the Edwardian-style and 94 will be given a fresh interpretation of the art deco style. A splendid new addition will be the Savoy's sumptuous **Royal Suite**. Furnished at a cost of £2.5 million, this 3,400 sq ft suite will stretch the full length of the 5th floor and offer the most magnificent views along the River thus setting a new standard for luxurious living and distinguished personal service.

The Savoy's public areas will delight our longstanding, valued guests already familiar with the

hotel, as well as those entering for the first time. Turning from the busy Strand into the serene and iconic **Savoy Court** they will find the peaceful contrast of a striking crystal *Lalique* fountain, adding further enhancement to this unique hotel entrance.

Upon entering the **Front Hall**, hues of celadon green and off-white, classic Edwardian-inspired English furniture, and timeless polished black and white marble floors will blend beautifully with the restored mahogany paneled walls and ornate ceiling. Guests will be drawn to the wood burning fireplace and the intimacy of the **Reading Room** where those wishing to enjoy a traditional registration can do so.

For guests who wish simply to relax or socialise in the hotel, the renowned **American Bar** with baby grand piano awaits them. Retaining its art deco-inspired design, its barmen will be on hand to serve cocktail favourites such as the famous "White Lady" - one of many famous cocktails invented by Harry Craddock in the American Bar which set London alight in the 1930's.

A new first for the Savoy will be the opening of the **Beaufort Bar**, a luxurious 46-seat champagne bar adjoining the Thames Foyer. Fashioned in a sophisticated jet-black and burnished gold art deco-inspired colour scheme, its onyx leather bar will be flanked by scagliola clad columns elevated upon the very stage where the legendary Savoy Big Bands played for guests during the "Stompin'-at-the-Savoy" dinner dances.

For the **Thames Foyer**, the restoration sees the reinstatement of a spectacular glass domed ceiling above an ornate gazebo centrepiece, bringing an intimacy and elegance to this wonderful room. Renowned as the perfect setting for a quintessentially

English afternoon tea, the experience will be further enhanced with the opening of **Savoy Tea**, a bijou shop, reminiscent of the Burlington Arcade.

From the legendary French Chef Auguste Escoffier to modern day celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsay, the Savoy has always set a high culinary standard of cuisine in London. Much missed by its loyal guests has been the Savoy's loved **River Restaurant** due to re-open as part of the restoration. With its prime position overlooking Embankment Gardens and with a view to the River, its art deco-inspired interior design and Modern French cuisine, it will evoke a vibrant and natural buzz and once again become one of the most popular restaurants in London.

The Savoy Grill's special ambiance, further enhanced in 2005 by the Los Angeles interior designer, Barbara Barry, will once again be expertly presided over by famed Michelin-star chef, Gordon Ramsay and his team. A private, 30-seat dining room will replace Banquette - the casual upstairs restaurant above the Grill, with an outlook across the Savoy's main entrance.

Hosting Events has always been a vibrant part of the Savoy's operations. Each of its 12 function rooms offers unique character and style, and none more so than **The Lancaster Ballroom**. First unveiled in 1910, The Lancaster's interior design was based on an 18th century Parisian Salon, with its soaring, decoratively-relieved walls and ceilings and has always enjoyed the reputation as the venue of choice for many signature events in the social calendar of the London scene. Supporters of these great rooms will be reassured to know that little here will change.

Savoy Style

Understanding all the elements that have made the Savoy so world-renowned has, and

continues to be, one of the most rewarding journeys. Whilst appreciating each person's unique memories of the Savoy, the common thread has been how special each individual was made to feel while they were in the hotel.

The service culture of the new Savoy will speak directly to its past, encapsulating the eras that defined its style, thus creating Charm (Edwardian influence) and Spontaneity (Art Deco influence) as its new hallmarks.

The Savoy Training Academy

Back in 1946 the Savoy recognised that to be one of the most luxurious hotels it had to develop its own brand of Hotelier. The Savoy Training Programme was therefore established and over the next 50 years garnered a reputation as being the "gold standard" and the greatest training the Industry could offer. Although disbanded in 1995, we are excited now at the opportunity to re-launch and reposition it as the Savoy Training Academy. The level of intense training our colleagues will undergo when they first join the Hotel, and our ongoing commitment to their development thereafter, will define the Academy and its ultimate success.

A Green Future

An extensive level of infrastructure work has enabled the Savoy, in partnership with Evolve Energy, to fully embrace its environmental responsibility. Examples include the replacement of the four enormous steam boilers with energy efficient models, the investment in heat recovery systems and the installation of state of the art in-room energy control systems, clearly demonstrating our commitment to reducing the hotel's carbon footprint and positioning itself as the most environmentally responsible luxury Hotel in London.



Palmer heads East, again

Immediate Past President **Duncan Palmer**, who worked so hard during his year of Presidency has returned to Hong Kong. However Duncan left the Langham on many a high note, not the least was a restaurant bill run up by four clients on January 8th for £2,911! Duncan's new address is Vice President - Design, The Langham Hotels and Resorts and Managing Director - The Langham, Hong Kong

8 Peking Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong
T (852) 2378 9556 F (852) 2782 5568 E duncan.palmer@langhamhotels.com. When not in the Far East Duncan can be found in Maida Vale or Torquay.

Annual Subscriptions

If you have not already done so please let us have your annual subscription. The very modest amount of £25 helps to defray some of our costs; cheques should be sent to the Treasurer, Maggi Smit, 4 Paxton Road, London W4 3QX. maggi@gofishingworldwide.co.uk

BEVERLY GRIFFIN MEMORIAL TROPHY

Founder Member Tony Elliott reports on this year's hot weather event, named after a former General Manager of the Savoy.

This year was the 10th anniversary of the **Savoy Gastronomes Golfing Society** and we played for the Trophy at **Martin Harvey's** home club, Malden in Surrey, in scorching temperatures, more akin to Mauritius than the UK.

We had seven players, resplendent in Pink Shirts, SGGS Caps and Socks, including Michael Duffell from **Chicago**, Peter Thomas from **South Africa**, Tony Elliott from **France** and Peter Banks from **Yorkshire**. A truly international day.

Chairman **Jim Sarton** won for the third time - punching ever closer to Christian Duffell's record of 4 wins. Peter Banks and Tony Elliott were joint second. Jim, who played brilliantly, also won the "Longest Drive" whilst "Nearest the Pin" was won by Christian Duffell.

Next year plans are underway to hold the match at Peter Bank's hotel, **Rudding Park** in Yorkshire in July, where we understand Peter is proposing a super "deal".

For further details and for any Gastronomes interested in playing golf please contact the SGGS Captain, Christian Duffell, whose contact details are in the handbook.

(Tony also reports that he is trying to put together a package for the 2011 event to be played in **Normandy**, where he lives - spectators will be most welcome.)

Members' only dinner Friday November 20th 2009

Another Members' only dinner is planned to be held in London on **Friday 20th November** so please put that date in your diary and further details will be sent out in due course. However, we can announce that, through the kind intervention of **Martin Harvey**, we are being afforded the very special chance to dine in one of London's oldest clubs - **Brooks's** in **St James's Street, SW1**. Originally founded in **1778** and named after its original "caterer" it was at that time fit for gentlemen who centered their lives around gambling, gossip and good dress. We are most fortunate to be allowed to hold our dinner there and extend our grateful thanks to Graham Snell the Secretary.

Savoy Trompe l'oeil finds new home

Gastronomes with memories of the final rising of the dance floor in the Restaurant on December 31st 1980 will recall with a certain wry smile how the poor old "Savoy Dancers", already well past their sell-by date, or should that be "best before" date, had to perform on a floor that on being raised failed to meet the horizontal. Hence a rather precarious dance routine followed with well-worn feathers flying off battle weary Ra Ra skirts for the last time. Subsequently, the Beaufort Room was created from this space and well-known artist **Lincoln Taber** engaged to paint several Trompe l'oeil on the dividing walls by the then Savoy's Managing Director, and Honorary Gastronomer, **Giles Shepard**. A third of Mr Taber's fees were allowed to be taken in food and considerable drink. On the closure of the Savoy in 2007 and at the subsequent auction, John Mayhew, long-time owner of London's oldest restaurant, **Rules** in Maiden Lane, purchased the complete Trompe l'oeil and Gastronomes can now see parts of it which have been carved up and positioned in an attractive club-like first floor bar at Rules only one hundred yards from the Savoy. This is a fitting resting place for a fine segment of fairly recent Savoy history.

Thornton in China

David Thornton reports from his teaching post at Les Roches Swiss International Hotel School in **Shanghai** where one of his subjects is Brand recognition.

BAD YEAR



citigroup

NOKIA
Disconnecting People

Harvey's off-shore

A trip down memory lane was in order for **Martin and Dee Harvey** who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary by returning to **Guernsey** where they had honey-mooned. Before that they spent a long weekend in West Dorset's Jurassic Coast World Heritage site; stopping off for lunch at the charming Montagu Arms in the New Forest, once run by Savoy former Banqueting Manager **Nicholas Walford**. Martin, former Secretary of London's iconic **Garrick Club** for thirty years, spends quite a bit of time on the golf course in between looking after twin grandchildren. Martin was recently spotted with **Chairman Jim Sarton** on the glorious fairways of **Scotland**, having rented a cottage in the woods on the Moray Firth.

Sunshine State

Spotted amongst the salubrious snazzy palm-lined boulevards of **Los Angeles** was none other than **Graham Bamford** making an annual pilgrimage to his GSA based there to lubricate the wheels of the travel industry in the direction of his hotel - **The Royal Garden**. Graham and Janet recently acquired a charming holiday home in **Charmouth** on the **Jurassic Coast of West Dorset**, but such is the popularity of it they hardly get to use it themselves.

"Rather flat" as Noel Coward said

Christian and Toria Duffell were spotted east of King's Lynn in Norfolk attending a birthday party hosted by the brother of New York based Gastronomer, and generous raffle-prize donor, **Suzie Mills**.

Kurt Wachveitl retires from Oriental Bangkok

German-born legendary hotelier **Kurt Wachveitl**, who took such good care of the Gastronomes in March 2008 during our visit to Bangkok, has retired after 41 years at the helm. Edouard Ettedgui, CEO of the Mandarin Group, saluted this lifetime achievement and announced his successor would be Jan Goessing. That man on the crossing outside the **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park** reports that a rather splendid dinner was held there to mark his retirement co-ordinated by none other than Gastronomer **Rachel Angell**. More recently **Rachel** has been taking care of **Whitney Houston** who was in London to launch her new album. The 45-year old looked a picture of good health, despite spending a decade out of the spotlight fighting a high-profile drug and alcohol addiction.

Las Vegas hotels - high tech wizardry

Our man in the sand reports that MGM Grand are trying to add a bit of sparkle to room keys. As you put your key in the door, it knows this is the first time you have entered the room, and the room says - let's put on a show, folks. As the doors open a 42 inch plasma flat panel television warms up to play music as the curtains part. A high level of automation and technical wizardry, being introduced at **MGM's City Center** development which is due to open later this year, gives an idea what business travellers may expect from hotels in the future.

Cockin in town - Jane describes her French idyll

French based **Jane Cockin** joined in the Summer 2009 reunion after an absence of some years and it was great to see her again. She reports on her happy life there - "Zahra is now 5 years old and in January she was joined by a little baby sister called Ophelia. Ophelia is now 14 weeks old. She is a very happy smiley baby. Life is calming down a little bit now. Zahra loves her little sister and loves riding her little Shetland pony called "Little Rumba" who no doubt will be passed on to Ophelia. Will have to negotiate with big sister!

I have bought an old French farm house which is being renovated...its taking a long time in between looking after children and horses. This morning I had swopped my Todd's for Hunter wellies and I am in the process of emptying barns of tonnes of straw, and clearing out a lovely building which has the bread oven in. It will be my tack room. I have a Doberman and German shepherd type both rescue dogs bouncing around the court yard. They will be able to protect my tack. I love my life in France though do miss my friends".

Legendary Toastmaster Ivor Spencer dies aged 84

Gastronomes with a banqueting background may recall Ivor Spencer who presided at more than 1,000 royal occasions and tried to resurrect the role of butler. Spencer's progress from a working class background in the East End of London to rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous was accelerated by a fascination with the world of glitz and glamour and by his considerable gift for self publicity. But Spencer's chief qualities were his determination to succeed and an almost infinite capacity for hard work. One of his favourite stories was of the occasion when a waiter spilt wine into **Princess Margaret's** dancing shoes, which she had kicked off by her chair. Spencer surreptitiously took the shoes into the kitchens, where he "baked" them in the oven before replacing them unnoticed. While most nine-year olds might have been playing football or collecting stamps, the young Ivor was hanging around outside the **Savoy** observing the comings and goings of its privileged clientele. At 15 he left school to train as a chef at the **Dorchester** and it was there he saw his first toastmaster. He glanced into the banqueting room, he recounted later, and it was like a film set; full of diamond tiaras, ball gowns and a band. In the centre was the toastmaster and at that moment he decided that's what he wanted to be. He wrote to banqueting managers, posting some letters in Manchester saying he was an established toastmaster in the north seeking work in the south; and others in London saying he was well-known in the south and wished to expand in the north. He became resident toastmaster for 20 years at the **Savoy**. He was appointed MBE in 2002 and the author of *A Toastmaster's Story* published in 1975 and *Speeches and Toasts* in 1980.

Profile celebrates

Managing Director, and owner of hugely successful global hospitality recruitment company Profile, **Mark Norris** and his wife Gail, hosted a wonderful party at the turn of the year in the private environment of the **Royal Thames Yacht Club**, where Mark is a member. There was nothing private however about the guest list. Amongst the several hundred guests were most of the London hospitality industry movers and shakers. Originally founded by former Savoy Training Centre Director, the late Jacques Schnyder, and Mark, the duo made a formidable impact on the relatively new way of "Executive Search" process which previously had been a word-of-mouth affair. Based for many years in Hampstead, Mark can now be found in the heart of London's Covent Garden at Maiden Lane, WC2. When not there Mark can be tracked down indulging his passion on the water, sailing.

And finally...

For those interested, visit www.savoy2009.com which has been created to offer people an opportunity to stay in touch during the closure.

Please let us know if you have a story for **Gnome de Plume** which we can include in the next edition.

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