

12th International Grand Chapitre

Goustevin Scotland - May 3rd 2019

by Ormond Smith

The “Glorious Twelfth” is not generally regarded as good news for grouse on Scottish moors, but for Goustevin Scotland, it seems more than appropriate for the 12th Scottish International Grand Chapitre held on May 3rd in the Highland Capital. Held in the truly spectacular Great Hall of the recently fully refurbished Town Hall, the ceremony was conducted with due “pomp and circumstance” before some eighty assembled members and guests, followed by a civic reception courtesy of Inverness City Council.

Overseas participation at Scottish Chapitres has always been an attraction and this event was no exception with a sixteen strong party from Rouen, including the Grand Connetable Joel Laurent, another dozen from the Mosel and from across “the pond”, the Weismans from the Indianapolis branch of the Confrerie. The international guests arrived by different transportation on Wednesday 1st and following a guided tour of the Town Hall, including the historic Council Chambers ([see Note 1 below](#)) on the Thursday, a free afternoon preceded the Welcome Dinner at the Glenmoriston Town House Hotel on Ness Bank (www.glenmoristontownhouse.com). On the Friday, the group enjoyed a Tour and Whisky Tasting at Glen Ord Distillery (<https://www.malts.com/en-gb/distilleries/glen-ord>), followed by lunch chez our Bailli, Dick Beach, at Fiddlers Restaurant (<http://www.fiddledrum.co.uk/>) in Drumnadrochit (*de rigueur!*) before returning to town and donning “the glad rags” for the formal evening function.



Glen Ord Distillery



A very well attended Town Hall Chapitre was graced by Inverness Provost, Helen Carmichael, as the Conseil d’Ecosse and overseas delegations were piped into the Great Hall, Connetable Nicol Manson opening the proceedings with a warm welcome to all. The prime purpose of the Chapitre is the induction of both new

members and promotion by merit of existing confreres, and being presented as **Ecuyers** were **Garry Macleod**, **Peter MacPhee** and **Graham Vine** with **Damoiselle** status being conferred on **Karen Jarvis** and from Jersey, **Sally Sharpe**. Gaining promotion to **Chevalier** were **Sandy Catto** and **Malcolm Ogilvie** (Edinburgh) and being elevated to **Dame** were **Kate Beach** and **Sallie Fraser**. Receiving the accolade of **Noble Dame** was **Ailsa Mackay** which left only the induction of the Guest of



Rt. Rev. Susan Brown is inducted as Noble Dame d’Honneur

Honour, on this occasion the **Right Reverend Susan Brown**, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, had accepted the invitation to become a **Noble Dame d'Honneur** of the Confrerie. The formal proceedings completed, the robed Conseil mingled with the guests to enjoy the civic reception prior to "re-convening" at the Drumossie Hotel (www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/our-hotels/scotland/) for the Gala Banquet, the assembly being greeted by a stirring selection of airs by the Queens Own Highlanders Association Pipe Band led by Pipe Major Jim Stout.....and a welcoming glass of **Crémant de Loire**. Connetable Nicol opened proceedings with a few words before inviting Grand Connetable Joel Laurent from Rouen to the microphone. He then introduced our Noble Dame d'Honneur, the Right Reverend Susan Brown, the current Moderator and minister of Dornoch Cathedral, who proceeded to regale the company with some of her experiences, both home and abroad, over her year as Moderator in a most entertaining and enlightening presentation.....indeed the sudden failure of the hotel's PA system did not even phase her.....she just increased the decibels to compensate!

The Banquet opened with a **Duo of Beetroot & Laphroaig whisky cured Wester Ross Salmon**, attractively presented and accompanied by a **2002 Pewsey Vale 'The Contours' Riesling** from Eden Valley, New Zealand (*see Note 2 below for Tasting Info on the Wines*). The main course was **Roast Loin of Scottish Beef**, complemented and enhanced by a **2013 Albret La Vina de mi Madre Reserva** from Spain's Navarra region. The cheese course, a selection of **Clava Brie, Blue Monday and Isle of Mull Cheddar**, although nicely presented was felt by some to be a "bit light" on portion size but nevertheless tantalised the taste buds and this dish was accompanied by a wine which certainly raised a few eyebrows and elicited opinions. The Tasting Sub-Committee of the Conseil had selected this particular wine over two other "more usual accompanying wines", the feeling being that it not only harmonised beautifully but would also expand the food/wine pairing knowledge of the guests. The wine was a **2007 Rivesaltes Ambré Domaine Fontanel** from France's Languedoc-Roussillon region, golden in colour and made from 100% Grenache Blanc grapes....well worth trying (with cheeses of course!). Rounding off the repast was a decadent **White Chocolate & Cointreau Mousse**, ably seduced by a **2015 Monbazillac Domaine de Grange Neuve** from the Dordogne.

By this time the Strathnairn Ceilidh Band were getting into their stride and the dance floor was soon "well populated", the mixture of music and tempos appealing to all. And, in the true tradition of what constitutes a good evening, "the bell tolled" seemingly all too soon (although it was 1 am!) but all in all, the evening was certainly in keeping with the Confrerie maxim of "*good food, good wine and good company*".

A somewhat bleary eyed international group clambered onto the tour coach later that morning, accompanied by local members, for a trip north to visit the small but most attractive Dornoch Cathedral (dornoch-cathedral.com) where Susan Brown is the minister. She, unfortunately, had to be in Edinburgh but her husband Derek, (himself a minister and chaplain at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness), ably "deputised" and enlightened the group on the history of the cathedral (*see Note 3*) and its features. From the Cathedral, it was a mere stroll across Castle Street to the Dornoch Castle Hotel



The interior of Dornoch Cathedral



A lesson in Gin cocktails at the Dornoch Castle Hotel

(www.dornochcastlehotel.com)) where we were to experience a "gin mixology" before lunch. The owners of the hotel have founded a small craft whisky distillery and, of course, whisky has a legal minimum three year maturation period so, to generate income, they have included distilling gin which, by comparison, can be produced and sold almost immediately. Having seated ourselves, the "mixology" was created in two styles, passed around for appreciation and then we all received the style of choice.....a most

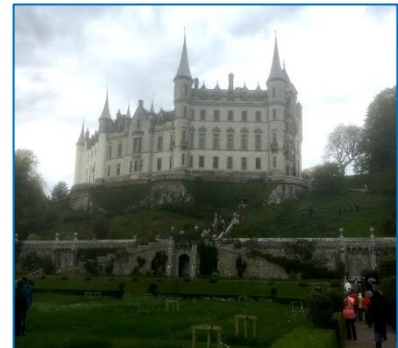
pleasant aperitif before enjoying lunch.

Suitably rejuvenated (or should that be "re'gin'evated"?), it was back into the coach and the short run up to Dunrobin Castle (www.dunrobincastle.co.uk) where, before visiting the castle, we made our way down to the gardens for the falconry display. First off



The Peregrine Falcon prepares to "take off"!

(literally!) was the largest of the species, the gyrfalcon, the display ably controlled by handler Andy Hughes, who put the bird through a routine and this was followed by a Harris's hawk whose hunting style is totally different. The falcons will dive at high speed from quite a height for their aerial prey whereas the hawk is a low level flight ground hunter preying on



"Fairy tale" Dunrobin Castle

small animals and rodents. The culmination of the display was by the peregrine falcon, the fastest creature on earth, capable of diving from a great height at over 200mph! Even flying on level flight they can travel at about 60mph and the display involved the bird "attacking" Andy's lures....but coming in at a low level. To stand and watch a peregrine falcon flying straight at you at speed and only about a foot above your head is.....challenging!!!! Display over, the group climbed back up from the gardens for a most interesting tour of this imposing castle, (which dates back to the 14th century) before the return journey to Inverness.

The visit culminated in a Farewell Dinner hosted by member Duncan Chisholm (Jnr) at his La Tortilla Spanish Restaurant on Castle Street (www.latortillaasesina.co.uk) the oldest Spanish tapas bar in Scotland. A most pleasant and relaxed evening was spent enjoying tapas and paella, accompanied by sherries and rather acceptable Spanish wines. All too soon, it was time to say our goodbyes to fellow confreres as they prepared for their return journeys the following day.....yes, by acclaim, it had been yet another memorable Scottish Chapitre and Tour!



"Bring on the Tapas, please!"

Note 1. The Inverness Town Hall was the setting in 1921 for the first ever sitting of the British Cabinet out with the Houses of Parliament in London. This was to discuss the Irish situation which resulted in "[The Inverness Formula](#)". The reason for the meeting being held in Inverness was because Prime Minister Lloyd George was on holiday in Gairloch at the time and rather than travel back to London, particularly as several of his ministers were also in Scotland on holiday the decision was taken to discuss business in Inverness. Among those present at the meeting were such well known politicians as Austin Chamberlain, Stanley Baldwin and Winston Churchill. The Council Officer had the presence of mind to get all Cabinet members to sign a sheet of paper, which is now on display in the Council Chamber!

Note 2. **Crémant de Loire** – This sparkling wine, made by the Méthode Traditionelle (bottle fermented method) comes from the house of Sauvion in the Loire valley. A blend of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay grapes, the wine has a rich frothy mousse with peachy flavours.

Pewsey Vale The Contours Riesling 2012. From the town of Eden Valley in Australia's Barossa Ranges, this wine is bottled aged for 5 years before release. Lemon and floral aromatics have given way to a complex mix of limes and brioche. A wine which will continue to develop and gracefully mature for many years.

Albret Vina de mi Madre Reserve 2013. Albret "Wine of my Mother" is produced in northern Spain's Navarra region and is 95% Cabernet and 5% Merlot – the wine is 100% oaked for 21 months then bottle aged for a further 30 months prior to release. A stunning wine with powerful aromas of intense black cherries, blackberries and hints of dried figs, while on the palate, supple fruit flavours merge with integrated sweet tannins, with a long lasting finish..... a great wine!

Rivesaltes Ambré 2007. This golden, 'off-dry' Vin Doux Naturel (a wine where fermentation is arrested by adding grape brandy) comes from Domaine de Fontanel in Rivesaltes in France's Languedoc-Roussillon area. After seven years in oak casks, it is then matured in the Solera system, giving the wine its aromas of dried apricots and orange peel with a delightful nutty flavour on the palate. From 100% Grenache Blanc grapes, the wine surprises many with its off-dry characteristics, and not, as to be expected, sweet and cloying!

Monbazillac Domaine de Grange Neuve 2015. From the heart of Périgord in South-West France beside Bergerac and in the Dordogne valley, this blend of Semillon, a touch of Muscadelle and some Sauvignon Blanc is a perfect dessert wine, elegant and not too sweet with hints of barley sugar and orange marmalade. A delicious pairing with desserts or blue cheese.....not to mention, a delightful aperitif into the bargain!

Note 3. A **cathedral church** is a Christian place of worship that is the chief, or 'mother' church of a diocese. The distinction of *cathedral* refers to that church being the location of the *cathedra*, the seat of the bishop. In the strictest sense, only Christian denominations with an episcopal hierarchy – those that are led by bishops – possess cathedrals. However, in common parlance, the title *cathedral* is often still used to refer to former Scottish cathedrals, which are now within the (presbyterian) Church of Scotland.