

There is a revolution happening in our backyard. If you close your eyes and listen very carefully you might hear it but then again perhaps you won't acquaint what you heard with the uprising upon us. For the breeze you hear tickling the vines along the thousands of rows of sticks in the ploughed fields at the bottom of Kits Coty is the wine equivalent of the rabble marching in time together to bring down a long time dictatorship.

English Wines, including our very own Chapel Down being grown at the back of Aylesford, are now serious contenders in the viciously competitive international wine market. Our fizzy whites are challenging the Italian Proseccos and French champagnes while our deep reds take medals from the Spanish Riojas and Argentine Malbecs.

It has been a quiet revolution over time but one that has been led from Kent with our chalky and well draining grounds. Nationwide we have 470 vineyards and this year won a record 120 medals at the International Wine Challenge, the Olympics equivalent for wine! Supermarkets like Waitrose have reported a 13% increase in the sale of English Wine and major British restaurants and retailers are now marketing themselves on selling English Wine, such as P&O who announced they will be serving homegrown produce on its ferries.

I raised this in Parliament once. I couldn't believe our Embassies around the world were serving French wines when we have our own industry to champion to foreign dignitaries. It caused such a fuss but the Foreign Office and Defra took note and have started to introduce it into their catering requirements.

So the quiet revolution continues and as more is produced, sold and consumed the lower prices will become. In the meantime here in Kent the industry becomes a successful part of our tourism offering, with successful tours and restaurants alongside its wineries; something we can all raise a glass to!