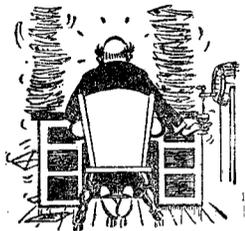


# The Amateur Winemaker

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*From the  
Editors  
Chair*



## OUR BIG OCCASION

The stage is now virtually set for the 1961 National Conference and Show, and it promises to be a great occasion. Halls are booked, speakers engaged, schedules have been circulated, and Circles all over the country have responded so magnificently to the committee's appeal for monetary backing that as far as can be seen finance is not likely to present any serious difficulty. So far £95/2/6 has been subscribed, the most recent clubs to help being Nottingham, Luton, Bristol, Hertford, Amersham and the Oakfield Wine Appreciation Society. It would be a great help if any club which intends to contribute but has not yet done so would see that the subscription reaches the treasurer (Mr. I. Morgan, The Cottage, Newbridge, Cadnam, Southampton) by May 13th at the latest. This has really been a generous and united response, and the committee (which is to have one more meeting" on the spot" at Harrow on May 14th to tie up the remaining loose ends) only hopes that it will be able to provide an enjoyable and worthwhile day. The members have certainly spared no effort to do so (though if they succeed in pleasing everyone it would be a miracle !) and all that is now wanted is a good attendance and a large entry for the 27-class wine show. Both seem likely, so much so that accommodation is likely to be sorely taxed, but that is by no means a bad thing. Now's the time to start sorting out your best wines and to be thinking about your entries ... get them off as soon as you can, won't you? so as not to throw too much burden on the harassed secretary at the last moment *Entries close on 24th May.*

## JUDGING STANDARDS

For the conference we have tried to ensure a good standard of judging by asking clubs to nominate judges upon whom we could rely; any other judge is one who has been already "accepted," so to speak, by the movement, and who has officiated on many occasions before. We undoubtedly need many, many more judges all over the country, but they must be sound, and have trained for the task, or their opinion is not likely to be acceptable. The old maxim: "It is not enough for justice to be done; it must be *seen* to be done," applies particularly in our case! *Festina lente* must therefore be our maxim in this matter, and we must devise means of training more and more *efficient* judges. Therefore we do agree to a large extent with the comments of a correspondent from Kettering (the signature looks like "Gordon Smee ") who says :

"Many of us ask if we are getting a very loose standard of administration among clubs. We hear of a woman committee member of a fairly new large club, judging' wines. Until 18 months ago this woman had never made home-made wines, nor shown any interest whatever in the subject. Surely this must be discouraged in wine clubs, if we are to gain and keep a good reputation? We urge you to use your influence to this end through the magazine, either by printing this letter, or writing an article on the subject. May I say how much we enjoy your magazine ?"

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## WHY A PUNT?

Our cover picture quiz last week provoked one particular question from several readers, and the same query been raised in connection with exhibiting at "the National." Why must wines be shown in punted bottles?" Why will not flat-bottomed bottles do? There is no practical objection to flat-bottomed bottles, of course (many commercial wines are sold in them) and indeed they may well be easier to obtain. The National Honey Show (may they be forgiven !) specify, I am told, flatbottomed bottles" of the whisky type." The reason for the Conference Committee having specified punted bottles is that, right from the start, the main objective of "organised" winemakers has been to raise the standard and status of their craft. The most direct way of achieving a high standard is by having competitions. and the most direct way of improving our "products" reputation is by presenting it well. The package sells (or helps sell) the goods, as most manufacturers would acknowledge! Our rules for competitions should therefore work towards that end, and when it came to deciding, for the sake of fairness and uniformity, upon the type of bottle to be specified, the National committee agreed (after some argument !) that a punted bottle always showed wine off to the best advantage, and that its use should be made standard practice, if possible, in competitions. So the only reasons for a punted bottle are aesthetic ones, and we must concede the point to our critics who otherwise completed the quiz that there is no valid reason why a flat-bottomed bottle should not be seen in a private cellar. But don't use one in "the National," or your entry will be disqualified!

## CLEAR BOTTLES

Another point where our practice differs (and quite rightly, I think) from that in the commercial wine world, is that we exhibit (as distinct from storing) red wine in clear bottles. At a recent wine show a judge who had wide knowledge of commercial wines commented that he had been horrified to see red wines in clear bottles, and said that he hoped that winemakers did not keep their wines thus, or they would lose their colour, etc., etc. He obviously did not appreciate that the clear bottles had been specified for this day only-for his convenience !

## STANDARDS

Talking of standards, the Coventry Wine Circle has drawn up for competition purposes its own specification of various types of wine, so that exhibitors know in advance for what the judge will be seeking. They have "anglicised" the more commonly used terms, and refer to an "appetizer" wine, red, and white dinner wine, dessert wine, and "social" wine. This strikes us as a most useful idea that could be copied by other Circles .... more of this next month.

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# COME TO HARROW

By B. C. A. Turner

THERE was civilisation in Harrow before William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings.

You no doubt know that soon after William was crowned King of England, he brought over from France Lanfranc to be Archbishop of Canterbury. But did you know that, as a special gift, William gave Lanfranc the Manor of Harrow? Such was the value of Harrow as a gift 900 years ago.

Lanfranc immediately set about building a worthy church right on top of the hill. After long delay, due to intrigue following the deaths of both William and Lanfranc, the Church of St. Mary's was consecrated in 1094. Although the upper fabric has been rebuilt from time to time, the foundations and lower walls remain the same. The magnificent spire has sparked the muse of many, from Byron to Betjeman. Whichever way you come it will be a landmark to you, and your first sight of Harrow.

## HOW TO GET THERE

The Manor of Harrow became known for its culture and gracious living and through many centuries entertained the great of the land, from Kings and Cardinals downwards. As everywhere else, a school was held in the churchyard. Then John Lyon, a wealthy gentleman of the neighbourhood, sought from Queen Elizabeth I a charter, which she granted in 1572, so that he could found a Free Grammar School for poor scholars. This was the beginning of the great public school whose many buildings now crowd the crest of the hill. If, like so many others, you decide to pilgrimage to this temple of learning and light you will still see the boys, each in pin-striped trousers, black tailed jacket and straw boater, and with both hands deep in his pockets !

Harrow remained a very small town until well into the 20th century. Then, almost overnight, such was the speed of urban development between the last two wars. Harrow became the biggest Borough in the country with a population of a quarter of a million. Alas! we have as yet no more than "plans" for a civic centre, including a Town Hall and other public rooms. So the Amateur Winemakers' National Conference, 1961, has to be held in the Rest Hotel.

**Mr. Turner, the President of the Harrow Guild, is the author of "Enjoy Your Own Wine " and coauthor of " The Winemakers' Companion." Here he sketches the backdrop to the third (1961) National Conference to be held early next month (2nd and 3rd June) in Harrow.**

For those travelling by road: The Rest Hotel is in Kenton Road, which joins the Edgware Road (A.S) to the Harrow Road (A. 496). Large car and coach parks are available free to Hotel users beside the railway at the back of the hotel. If you are coming by train, the hotel is right next to Kenton Station, which is on the Watford branch of the Bakerloo Line. There are frequent direct trains from and to Paddington, Charing Cross and Waterloo, main line stations.

Should you plan to stay overnight, you are advised to make early reservation. There are facilities at The Rest Hotel itself and at neighboring hotels within easy reach. A list of these hotels and their charges will shortly be available from the Conference Secretary. Some members of the Harrow Guild of Winemakers are willing to offer homely accommodation and application should be made to H. G. Timbrell, Esq., 128 Headstone Road, Harrow. Obviously only a limited number of guests can be so entertained.

The Rest Hotel has two large ballrooms one above the other, each able to accommodate 400 people. Each ballroom has a large luxuriously carpeted foyer with separate cloakroom and toilet facilities. The lower ballroom, which will contain the great wine competition and the important exhibition of trade stands, opens on to a loggia where you will be able to see the stands of individual clubs and circles. From here you can wander into the gardens for refreshment and to discuss the merits of all you have seen.

Upstairs in the other ballroom on Saturday, the main lectures will be given before and after the Conference luncheon, which will be attended by His Worship the Mayor of Harrow, the Town Clerk and other guests. It is hoped that a very great number of visitors to the Conference will attend the luncheon, and share in this corporate act of gracious living-good food with good wine in good company.

Although we haven't the seaside facilities of a holiday centre, we are within half an hour's journey of "The Great Metropolis" and but a few minutes from really lovely countryside. Furthermore, Harrow-on-the-Hill attracts to its ancient and historic buildings countless visitors from all over the world. Come to Harrow then, for we are confident that at The Rest Hotel we can provide a comfortable and cultured atmosphere in which to discuss our special symbol of gracious living, the making and drinking of wine at home.