

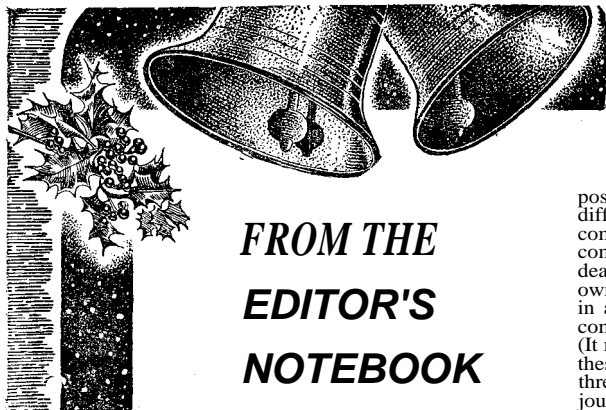
The Amateur Winemaker

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Editor: C. J. J. Berry,
North Croye, Croye Drive,
The Avenue, Andover, Hants.
Tel.: Andover 3177.

Canadian Agents: Wine-Art, *p.a.* Box 2701, Vancouver 3,
B.C.

Semplex of Canada, Box 1343, Winnipeg, Manitoba. New
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FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

FROM WOMEN'S TONGUES!

"In 1825 an Asiatic chief tan was presented with some Madeira and asked how he liked it. He said it must be a juice extracted from women's tongues and lions' hearts, for, after he had drunk sufficient, he could talk for ever and fight the devil."

Quoted in *The Taste of Kinloeh*

LOOKING FORWARD

Arrangements are now well in hand for next year's National Conference and Show at Brighton (April 19th and 20th). The last committee meeting was held in Brighton, at the Corn Exchange, where the Conference is to be held, to enable the members to inspect and assess the accommodation there. There is no doubt that the Corn Exchange, a large building forming part of the complex behind the Royal Pavilion, will be ideal for our purpose. There will be ample room in the lofty hall (far bigger than the Town Hall at Cheltenham) for the wine show and trade stands, and there is an admirable lecture theatre. There are also ample catering facilities which will allow morning coffee and tea to be served. The Brighton authorities are being really co-operative and, all in all, it looks as if we have an ideal venue for our 1963 Conference.



LIKE TO STEWARD?

This year Mr. S. W. Andrews, of the Hertford Guild, well known as a judge nationally, is responsible for convening the panel of judges for this important winemaking event, and is already well advanced with his arrangements, but he would welcome volunteers to steward for the judges. About 40 will be required, and there is never any shortage of enthusiasts wanting to help with this interesting task, so it will be a case of "first come, first served"! Judging will take place in the Corn Exchange, Brighton, on Friday, 19th April, and the briefing of judging and stewards will be at 11.30 a.m. Judges will actually start at 12 noon and go on, with a break for lunch, until tea time. Anyone who has the day free and would like to steward should write at once to:-Mr. S. W. Andrews, 6 Tamworth Rd., Hertford, Herts.

1964 VENUE

The Committee at its last meeting had so much business to transact that as yet it has been unable to come to any decision about the venue for 1964. At the annual meeting at Cheltenham this year there was strong pressure brought to bear that the 1964 Conference should be in the North, and preliminary inquiries are now being made in fulfilment of the promise then given to see whether this is possible. Harrogate and Buxton have been suggested as possibilities. At the moment, however, the practical difficulties are great. The principal one is that all committee members are in the south. Even now a committee meeting is a major operation, involving a great deal of travelling, and virtually all members travel at their own expense. A meeting in the north would involve them in a whole week-end away from home, and at least two committee meetings are necessary in the Conference town. (It may not be necessary for the whole committee to attend these meetings, but certainly three or four key people would have to do so). If long journeys and overnight stays are demanded, as they would be, the committee may well have to ask the annual meeting to sanction the payment of travelling and essential expenses to committee men, since it is obviously unfair that they should be asked to bear this continuing burden out of their own pockets. At the moment, however, with our present system of Conference finance, it is an open question whether the funds could bear this recurrent expense, and some solution will have to be found. The committee intends to discuss the whole problem in detail at its January meeting and it is to be hoped that it comes up with proposals of a solution which can be laid before the annual meeting.



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NO NEED TO FEEL INFERIOR

We notice that in his article this month Mr. H. E. Bravery is saying-albeit a little more forcefully-what we have long averred, that we winemakers have not the slightest reason to be apologetic about our products, and that most of them compare very favourably indeed with the ordinary wines of the Continent. Some of our wines may be far from first class, but there are indifferent wines on the Continent as well, you know, as he rightly points out. Buy a glass of ordinary cheap red wine in your "local"-and see if you don't prefer your own elderberry! What we tend to forget is that it is the better foreign wines which are exported. The "ordinary" ones stay in their country of origin as a rule. Far from feeling ashamed of our wines, I think we should be proud of the high standard we, *as amateurs*, have attained nationally, and certain' the enthusiastic amateur winemaker in this country 'tends to amass an even wider knowledge of the subject than the French or German countryman, who may have been making wine in quantities for years, but who does so by traditional methods and has never really bothered to study the background or the why's and wherefores of the subject. So far we would go with Mr. Bravery, but we cannot go quite all the way with him, for we see nothing wrong in studying in detail the methods of countries with centuries of winemaking experience, and adapting the best of them to our own use. Likewise we see nothing wrong with endeavouring to simulate well-known types of Continental wine, which hundreds of years' use have made popular. That is not to say that we need be ashamed of our own fruit wines-apple, plum, sloe, elderberry, cherry and so on-or that we should be afraid to proclaim them wines in their own right.