

A.G.M. CHANGES NAME TO 'NATIONAL ASSOCIATION'

A change of name to "The National Association of Amateur Winemakers" and the granting of a vote to individual members (and two votes to member Circles) at the annual meeting . . . these were the two principal decisions taken at the annual general meeting of the Amateur Winemakers National Conference and Show in London on 24 October.

Delegates from 39 Circles attended and were welcomed by the chairman, Mr. C. J. J. Berry, who recalled that the 1965 Conference had been a great success, with nearly 800 participants and some 1,800 bottles of wine exhibited. The popularity of a Butlin's camp as a Conference centre meant that they need never again have difficulties over finding a venue, the more so now that they were officially listed as a Conference of some consequence.

Financially the Conference was sound, and it owned its own show equipment. In pursuance of their desire to maintain and improve the standard of the Conference, a new scheme of membership had been introduced in May, and this was designed to yield a predictable and regular income which would enable them to have more financial freedom and make it possible to meet legitimate expenses from income. There were now 72 member Circles and 61 individual members, but the Committee had some misgivings about the amendment of a resolution at the 1964 A.G.M. the effect of which was to deny an individual member the right to vote at—or even attend—the A.G.M. The Executive Committee felt that this should be re-examined, since it had become obvious recently that this was artificially restricting interest in the Conference.

He went on to ask for more administrative co-operation from Circles; all too many Circles never studied or acted upon circulars sent out by the committee and this greatly complicated organisation. He made an especial plea that changes of officers should be notified promptly to the secretary, Wing Comd. R. W. Woodley, Chalkpit Lane, Monxton, near Andover, Hants. A form would shortly be devised to facilitate the provision of full and correct information.

HARROGATE

The forward planning for the next Conference at Harrogate on 15, 16 and 17 April was well in hand and a sub-committee which visited Harrogate reported that it was an excellent venue. Schedules should be in the hands of Circles by the second week in January; there would be no centralised booking and direct application to hotels would be necessary. A list of hotels would be circulated.

Turning to the work of the committee, the Chairman said that they had been really dismayed to hear that, for business reasons, their old friend and colleague, Mr. Laurie Gilbertsen, had had to tender his resignation from the committee. As show manager he had done invaluable work and they could not thank him enough. They had been sorry to lose, too, the services of Mr. Mann (likewise because of increased business commitments) for he had given steady and sound service. Finally the chairman thanked the committee members for their loyalty and hard work throughout the eight committee meetings and four sub-committee meetings of the year.

After Mr. I. Morgan, the former treasurer, had presented the balance sheet (as published previously) for the previous year, and after it had been adopted Mr. R. C. Lucas presented the current balance sheet, explaining that it had been set out in a fresh form to allow all Conference assets to be shown.

In answer to a query from Mr. Baker, Mr. Lucas gave details of receipts and payments, and a breakdown of free-entry workers, and said that there was an apparent discrepancy in booking fees for which they could not wholly account. Asked for a financial forecast for the 1966 Conference, he explained that this was difficult to give with any accuracy but he would expect attendance to be limited by the cost of travel and hotel accommodation. The accounts were adopted.

THE RESOLUTIONS

First resolution discussed was that of Tally Ho Winemakers' Guild, whose Mr. Gawthorp proposed, in effect, that Circles be allowed to send two voting delegates to the A.G.M. Mr. Spark, of Andover, proposed an amendment that individual members also to be given a vote, and the upshot of some rather complicated voting was that both these proposals were passed.

East Barnet then moved a resolution—which was carried—drawing attention to the suitability of Alexandra Palace, North London, as a Conference venue, but one note of caution was sounded by Mr. S. W. Andrews and others—there was a comparative lack of hotel accommodation in the neighbourhood. Dr. Lucas also pointed out that the answers to a questionnaire at Clacton showed that although some 59% of the participants were from the Greater London area 73% were in favour of holiday camps as Conference centres, and only a very small portion wished to have a Conference in London.

The Chairman proposed the resolution standing in the name of the Committee that the title of the organisation, now known as the National Conference and Show, be changed to the "National Association of Amateur Winemakers," giving as his reasons the fact that they would be only recognising what was already an accomplished fact. When the idea of a national association had been previously mooted it had been turned down largely because of fears of governmental interference. These had since proved groundless and the time was now ripe for the declaration on a truly national organisation—and what other could there be than their own?

Mr. H. R. Chandler, Hertford, and Mr. Baker, Cardiff, both spoke in opposition, and moved that the matter be deferred for a year, but forceful and persuasive support for the proposition came from Mr. E. A. Malin, who said that the committee in its dealings with the public was often sorely handicapped by not being able to describe itself as the winemakers'

(continued overleaf)

“NATIONAL ASSOCIATION” continued

national body, and the resolution was carried, the amendment having been heavily defeated.

The treasurer, Mr. Lucas, moved a technical amendment to the Constitution to enable the organisation to rank as a charity for taxation purposes, and this was passed after a brief discussion.

There was a lively debate and a whole flood of amendments to a resolution submitted by Mr. L. Gilbertson in the name of the committee. This was that committee members when travelling on Conference business should have travel and subsistence allowance at the following rates:—

Overnight stay	£2/7/0
Day—over 5 hours	5/0
Day—over 10 hours	10/0

Car allowance, 3½d. per mile plus 1d. per mile per passenger carried on Conference business.

Most of the criticisms of the resolution, mainly voiced by Mr. Baker, were that the scale was too niggardly and parsimonious but the committee pointed out that they had merely adopted a Civil Service scale and were quite satisfied, so amendments were defeated and the resolution passed, with certain additions.

The Chairman expressed disappointment at a complete lack of nominees for committee seats from member Circles, since the committee had really been hoping for some fresh blood; the two vacancies would now have to be filled by co-option. The four retiring committee members willing to stand—Messrs. S. W. Andrews, W. Martin, I. Morgan and R. A. Webb—were all re-elected.

Mr. Masters, of Torbay, invited the Conference to come to Torquay in 1967, and received support from several delegates. Mr. Stagg, of Birmingham, supported Mr. Masters but also pressed for the serious consideration of a holiday camp, since Midland winemakers had been well pleased with the facilities available at Butlins. Other venues suggested: Croydon, Margate, Minehead. Croydon had been investigated, but, again, hotel accommodation was inadequate. An invitation had been received from Margate to go there but this had not yet been examined. The secretary, Wing Comd. Woodley, reported upon his negotiations with Butlins concerning Bognor or Minehead and said that it looked as if the latter was the only Butlins camp available at the desired time. Dr. Lucas told the meeting that some 73% of the participants at Clacton had been in favour of a holiday camp conference and gave details of other suggestions.

In all, a lively and fruitful A.G.M.

COMMITTEE COMMENTARY

. . . here are some snippets gleaned from the last meeting of the National Committee, now busy finalising plans for the 1966 Conference at Harrogate . . .

Our good friend, Arthur Francis, has been chasing the hoteliers of Harrogate to find out which of them will allow guests to consume their own wine on the premises. We don't have all the answers yet but they should be available when the schedules are sent out after Christmas.

A lounge will be available in the Royal Hall throughout the Conference for the use of participants, but, please remember to bring your own glasses as well as "samples"!

After the A.G.M. the committee had to put their heads together to find people to fill the gaps in the ranks. Invitations to join the committee were extended to Mrs. D. R. Martin, of Farnborough, who already does a great deal of work for the National, and Messrs. J. C. Luker, of Guildford, and L. Stagg, of Birmingham, all well-known winemakers; fortunately all have been able to accept.

The annual re-shuffle of the executive has taken place and the chief officers have been appointed and details will be printed in the show programme now in production.

We have a full bill for Harrogate and admission will cost 25/- for the full Conference or 15/- for the Saturday, from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Holders of full Conference tickets will collect their Civic Reception invitations on the Saturday morning.

It looks very much as if the 1967 Conference will be at Butlins camp at Minehead. This is still subject to agreement on suitable dates, but there was certainly no doubt of the popularity of such a choice at the A.G.M.

—B.S.B.