

From the Editor's Chair



“THE GRAPE VINE”

Mrs. Littleton, incidentally, also sends us a copy of the St. Austell Club's excellently produced little news bulletin, *The Grape Vine*, which is far better written and produced than most such sheets. A special number was printed for the Royal Cornwall Show (at which the Circle had a stand) devoted to information about winemaking in general and their Club in particular for the benefit of anyone interested.

CHANGE OF VENUE

As will be seen from an advertisement in this issue the National Conference & Show has run into a little spot of bother over its 1970 venue. This was to have been Brighton and those who went there in 1963 were looking forward to a return visit. Now, however, it transpires that if the National goes there it would have to vacate the Hall by noon on the Sunday (owing to a double-booking) meaning that we would virtually lose a day of the Conference and have a much shorter programme. Consequently the Executive have done some pretty rapid re-arranging and the venue has now been changed to Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk, for the weekend of April 3rd, 4th and 5th. They are sorry about the change but it cannot be helped and you can be sure that they will do their utmost to make the Conference every bit as successful as ever.

WRITING TO US?

Dozens of readers write to us each week and it is one of the things that make the job of editing the “AW” so fascinating: each mail brings its quota of letters from “AW” readers all over the world—business letters, queries from winemakers worried about something that has “gone wrong,” requests for information, orders for books, chatty letters from dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts, letters from home-brewers, articles, and Club news. Often, of course, a correspondent will combine a personal letter, an order for books, payment of an account, and the Club report all in the one epistle, and then life gets a little difficult, for his letter has to “go the rounds,” with consequent delay both in our office and for him. If the various items had been on separate sheets of paper they could all have been dealt with simultaneously. If you want a query answered please do include a stamped addressed envelope for with such a huge mail we just cannot undertake not only to solve the problems “for free” but pay postage to do so as well! A 5d. stamp ensures a speedy reply in cases of urgency. And if you want

us to look something up or to send you a back issue do please try to be specific about dates and details, or someone on the staff has to spend hours doing research work to find the answer. We do our best to answer all letters and requests, and we only bring these points to your notice to speed things up and make them easier for all of us.

CIRCLE ORDERS

Talking of such things, it occurs to us to mention that it does not seem to be appreciated that it is no use leaving it right until the end of the month to advise us of changes in Circle bulk orders. To have a fair chance of reaching Clubs by the 1st of the month parcels of magazines have to be despatched by the 24th or 25th of the previous month, and in order to be able to do this despatch notes are made out two or three days earlier. So if an alteration reaches us, say, on the 28th of the month not only has the invoice already been made out but the parcel has been despatched. If the alteration is an increase, of course, the extra copies can be sent on, but if it is a decrease we can do nothing until the following month, and our correspondent perhaps feels aggrieved that we have apparently forgotten his request! So if you wish to alter your order, could you please let us know by, say, the 20th of the month?

SMELLS GOOD—IS GOOD!

This is the barbecue season amongst wine clubs, and just lately there have been three or four of them in Hampshire. A barbecue is certainly a function at which wine circles seem to excel, probably because our clubs already have the right degree of friendliness and informality which is a pre-requisite of success. And, of course, there is never any lack of what we like to think of as “social lubrication”! The Winchester and Alresford Clubs had an excellent barbecue at an isolated and very lovely farmhouse, the New Forest Club had its usual mammoth barbecue in the New Forest—this must be one of the biggest in the country—and Andover had its annual night out. Each had its own characteristics. The Winchester/Alresford one had as its central feature a whole suckling-pig, pre-roasted and carved by an immaculate chef, masses of appetising food provided American supper fashion by the members, and a well-stocked bar; the New Forest had a gigantic fire at which everyone cooked the provisions that they had brought, and at Andover there were four barbecues busy cooking a set meal for everyone, and a free cold fruit cup and beer. All different, but all equally enjoyable in their different ways. There is no doubt that wine circles have an undoubted flair for these events (as for wine and cheese parties, which they originated) and can carry them off better almost than anyone.

IN COSTUME

Another summer event we thoroughly enjoyed was the ambitious one-day exhibition staged in a marquee by the Wine Circle at Pressed Steel Fisher, Cowley. Not only did they have a wine show for their members, but they had arranged quite a comprehensive central exhibition on winemaking generally which attracted a great deal of interest, and a couple of trade stands. To crown it all, the lads and lasses of the Club turned out in some most striking period 17th Century costumes as serving wenches and vintners—an original touch. And most fetching they looked!

—THE EDITOR.