



#### TESTING BEER KITS

All home brewers will be uncommonly interested in a feature which will be published in the November 1971 issue of "Handyman Which?" for it is to investigate home beer-making kits. The *Which* Project Manager contacted the AW some weeks ago for our help and advice, and we put them into touch with several Circles and groups all over the country from which they could select their brewing and tasting panels. Four brands based on hopped malt extract, and ten brands based on plain malt extract will be made up by groups of people strictly to the manufacturers' instructions, and they will subsequently give their comments about the ease or otherwise of the process, and their results. The beers will also be subjected to various laboratory tests and to skilled judging. From what we have seen of the plans for the project, it should turn up some most intriguing results, and at long last there may be some hard data available for a prospective customer. No doubt most confirmed home brewers will still stick to their favourite brand—the beer you like is the beer you drink regularly!—but this should be a fascinating piece of research, and for once comparisons will be far from odious.

#### PLANNING FOR EASTBOURNE

The Executive is now getting down to the planning of next year's National at Eastbourne, we hear, and they are hoping that it will prove possible, with an attractive programme and good planning, to recoup some of the £700 loss that, for several inescapable reasons, was incurred at Hull. One idea that is being considered is a Saturday morning trip around the Merrydown plant at Horam, which should prove a diversion for those for whom this is rather a dull time at any conference. The various offices on the National Committee, by the way, have been filled as follows: Chairman, Dr. R. A. Webb; Vice-Chairman and Programme Secretary, Mr. K. L. Hill; Convenor of Judges, Mr. S. W. Andrews; Membership Secretary, Mrs. D. R. Martin; General Secretary, Mrs. S. M. Hill; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. F. Forster; Entries Secretary, M. P. Awbery; Show Supervisor, Mr. L. P. Stagg; Schedule Secretary, Mr. F. Bastin; Chief Steward, Mr. E. Plant; Supplies Officer, Mr. H. Ritchie; Awards Officer, Mr. J. Luker; P.R.O., Mr. W. Martin; Journal Editor, Mr. P. Delmon; Local Liaison, Mr. B. Edwards.

#### QUICK CLEANER

Racking elderberry wine, which had been stored in clear 1-gallon glass jars for about six months, we found the insides of the jars were badly stained by the wine. This brown film resisted all of the orthodox methods of removal. Sand and water swirled around the jar and scrubbing with an abrasive washing-up pad on a wire handle only served to scratch the surface. The remedy was simple: two heaped teaspoonfuls of Chempro S.D.P. dissolved in a

gallon of warm water and poured into the jar, made the film disappear in about fifteen minutes, as if by magic. A couple of rinses with clean water left the jar sweet smelling and sparkling clean.

There is a lot to be said for the detergent and sterilising compounds which are now on the market (Chempro S.D.P., A.C. 200 and Silana P.F.) as they turn clean jars into perfectly clean ones with the minimum of effort. They do not leave behind the characteristic smell of bleach as the compound is easily rinsed away without leaving any residual film.

#### THEY ARE EVERYWHERE!

My note in the June issue, headed "They're Everywhere", drawing attention to the unlikely establishments in which wine circles were to be found obviously caused a great deal of comment, judging by the letters in our postbag. And still the list grows: the latest one for our "secret cell" list is at no less a place than the Atomic Energy Establishment, Winfrith, Dorset—the very first atomic wine Circle! Seriously . . . the Social Club there held the initial meeting of a Wine Circle in February, and it is now flourishing.

#### WINE AND TOMATOES, TOO?

Writing in *Amateur Gardening* recently a Mr. A. S. Richardson, of Hemel Hempstead, had a bright idea. It seems, he said, "so simple that one wonders whether it has been tried before. I therefore thought you may like to try it on your readers who are both greenhouse owners and wine makers.

"It is a well-known technique in horticulture to increase the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the greenhouse atmosphere in order to increase the growth rate of plants. By increasing the CO<sub>2</sub> to 0.1% concentration (three times that of normal air), tomatoes have been shown to have up to 40% increase in growth rate. This is especially true when plant growth rate is limited by the small amount of sunshine, rather than the greenhouse temperature, in the spring.

"Winemakers know that it is quite easy for a 1 gallon brew of wine to consume 1 lb. of sugar in a week. A pound of sugar produces 0.5 lb. of CO<sub>2</sub> and this has a volume of 4.16 cu.ft. This gives 0.595 cu.ft. of CO<sub>2</sub> per day, which would be sufficient to increase the concentration in the air of a greenhouse to 0.1%—assuming 2½ air changes per day (windows closed) in a greenhouse 8 ft. long by 8 ft. high by 6 ft. wide.

"All this for only 5p per week—cost of sugar—plus the dividend of a gallon of wine seems too good to be true!"

#### "THERE'S NOTHING NEW . . ."

. . . under the sun, Mrs. Blake, of the Pollards Hill Winemakers' Club reminds us. She has been reading a book, *1851 and the Crystal Palace*, by Christopher Hobhouse, which describes the building of the Palace in Hyde Park and the exhibits. Evidently nothing perishable, intoxicating or explosive was allowed to be shown, although there was a section labelled "Substances Used as Food", but Mr. Hobhouse goes on to say ". . . an exception having been made in favour of alcoholic drinks if "derived from unusual sources"; there are bottles of champagne made from rhubarb, bottles of "champagne sparkling hock" made from a mixture of raisins, sugar candy and honey, bottles of Madeira made from malt and sugar extract and bottles of Frontignac flavoured with the evil-smelling flower of the elder."

—THE EDITOR