

# More about the National . . .

## Professional help?

A comment on a different aspect of the situation from Mr. S. Baker, of Chatham:—

In most spheres of activity, it is expected that changes will occur and when they do, people expect to know about them.

They need information on all the activities which are of concern to *them*, and they need it quickly. Information delivered too late is no information at all.

At the time of writing I, as an individual member, have not yet received any official notification from the Committee that the National Show and AGM at Butlins, Bognor, has been cancelled. And it is now 1 week AFTER the closing date for entries—nearly THREE weeks after the decision appears to have been made.

This fiasco is a classic example of a breakdown in communications which has undoubtedly cost the Association a tremendous amount of goodwill. Such goodwill engendered during the life of the Association, and especially during the last year, will have been largely wiped out by slowness in communicating a change of decision. Quite correctly, the Committee has the power to make changes in order to safeguard the welfare of its members. However, this is pointless if the Committee does not tell members about drastic alterations by the speediest available method.

The solution to these problems, as I see it, and to which I feel the members are entitled—is to appoint a full-time paid official executive, to ensure that ALL the members are kept fully informed.

In this age of inflation, there must surely be a sufficient number of dedicated winemakers and beer makers, Circles and Federations, who would be only too willing to subscribe a small, yet adequate, amount to an organisation which offers them an annual national show, an evening civic reception and dance, a properly printed news sheet expeditiously distributed at quarterly intervals and, in addition, an efficient and speedy communications system, to ensure that all relevant information would be readily available, and distributed.

A similar type of Association—CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, which only started a few years ago—has recently introduced a professional nucleus into their organisation, with dramatic effect. In a very short time, with the aid of investments from the members, they intend to purchase a number of public houses. While the NAWB has no need to invest in property—it has great need to invest in people.

The question should be asked, “How much are members prepared to pay for the service to which they are entitled?” rather than “How many members do we need in order to be able to afford a fully paid Executive?”

Another question which is bound to cause discussion is, “Where are the venues in this country which can accommodate several thousand wine-makers in one hall for a civic reception?”

I would suggest that quality is better than quantity.

One thousand five hundred dedicated members paying a subscription of £3 each is far preferable to 3000 less-dedicated members at £1.50 per head.

I consider the benefits of employing a full-time Executive would be immeasurable.

He would be available and accessible to ALL the members during normal working hours and, apart from all the usual duties expected from a person in this position, WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EFFICIENT AND SPEEDY DISTRIBUTION OF ALL NEWS AND INFORMATION. I earnestly believe that members would welcome such a service—unanimously.

## Think so too

And in much the same vein Mr. Elvin Plant, of Bury St. Edmunds, writes:—

Because the Constitution of the National Association is liberal it has some features which must be paid for and one is extra work, extra travelling, perhaps, but certainly more time and thought. Travelling costs have risen and I hope some more active members have recorded their concern in a resolution. Every member of the Committee absorbs some expenses, e.g. an odd stamp or telephone call on the personal budget—but there are hours and hours of unproductive overtime!

I must pay tribute to the Committee and say how much I appreciate the Chairman's letter. His remarks on representative members are timely. Like M.P.s the committee is there to steer the whole not just a part, or party, or class. Again, I must stress the work aspect. The average member has no idea of the inroads into private life made by work on a committee of this size and all the TIME is given free.

Some members may wonder how much longer the National can function without paid assistance in some form.