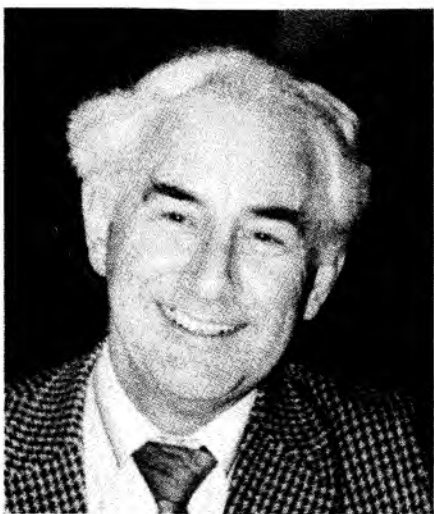


. . . and a look back at the National



By ROY EKINS

Blackpool was an excellent venue for the National, and the only complaints heard stemmed from the fact that two halls booked by the committee had been cancelled at the last minute.

Although there were understandable complaints about inadequacy of the Imperial ballroom for the Friday evening briefing and social, all credit is due to the organisers for finding accommodation and avoiding cancelling any part of the conference and show. Everything advertised took place, unlike that arranged at Butlins, Bognor Regis, in 1975, which was completely cancelled. As the larger shows can all testify, finding a suitable venue can be a difficult and worrying business.

A trial amendment of the show rules was announced for the National this year. This provided for judges to taste an exhibitor's wine with him or her, the better to discuss the wine's merits and faults during the "judges at the bar" session. Although greeted with a ripple of applause, the general opinion of the judges later seemed to be that there were more snags than benefits. Few exhibitors took advantage of the rule; had it been more widely taken up, then the judges might have needed their judging kits and buckets of water for rinsing glasses, to make the whole thing workable. Another view was that there was little to be gained if the competitor could not compare his wine with a better exhibit, and there was no provision for this.