

# National Association of Wine and Beer-makers



News and Views Occasional

MARCH, 1975

Dear Member(s),

I have recently been accused of being very astute. I am not entirely sure whether this is praiseworthy or whether it is to be considered a crime! What the critic probably meant was that I am quite a well-known hand at covering up the bad things and of highlighting the good. Not really a fault in a P.R.O., I suppose.

But this time, the bad just can't be covered up. In spite of all our efforts, disaster has hit this year's National Show, and a disaster it certainly is. I am quite sure that all of us on the Executive are going to be soundly condemned and despatched to some uncomfortably hot place—for a long, long time!

So be it then, but just before the stones come hurtling in, I would ask each one of you a very simple question. Just what would you have done when November came around and the ugly head of the £18.50 question arose, who among you all would have been able to pull the remnants of the 1975 National safely from the fire? Even with hindsight it is difficult to see how all could have been saved when the blow actually struck.

Let me not cry, though, over spilt milk. Surely I can be astute enough to find a more cheering message for my Opening Remarks. What has been especially cheering to me over the past months have been the numerous offers of help with the programme that was being planned for Bognor. Several speakers had volunteered to fill a space, a Wine Circle had offered to organise a wine tasting for that difficult spot on Friday evening when the non-judges are on their own, Mr. Kwint (from Holland) and Woman and Home and her (or should it be their?) staff had all been very helpful with all the advance arrangements. I have recently been writing the sad and apologetic letters to all these kind persons and it struck me very forcibly how very helpful they have all been. But then, winemakers are ever thus.

### **Replies to recent Newsletters**

Every post I receive at the moment seems to contain a reply slip or two about Chempro SDP, and what you all think of this product. It's a little early yet for me to summarise all the replies, but it already appears that the exercise is going to be a great success. The only advance advice I can pass on is from the Blacklocks, Joe and Gladys, who have found that while the Chempro cleans bottles exceptionally well, it pays to be careful and to make sure the bottle is absolutely full of the solution. A half-full bottle, or a bottle with an air bubble in it, leaves a mark inside where the liquid level was, and this appears to be very difficult to remove later.

You will see that, at the end of this present letter, I have compiled another simple survey—this time on hydrometers. All answers are most welcome.

As to the earlier question I asked about keeping the National at Nottingham for a year or two, it appears that this would NOT be a popular move. Very few members indeed seem to like a National kept in one place however central that place may be. Several replies, such as one from Bryan Acton, indicated that they wouldn't object to holding it in the same place twice running if that would solve a difficulty, but not more than twice. The obvious advantage was pointed out that the Executive would gain experience of the limitations of the venue the first time round, so that the second time would be far better. So, the answer to this one appears to be—keep on moving around. You peripatetic lot!

And then the advantages of publishing all the major show dates herein. I did try, but the information just hasn't been coming in to me. Very few of the dates of this year's Regional or Federation Shows are known to me. A letter from Gladys Blacklock pointed out that she had carefully planned the North Yorks Federation Show on a date which would avoid a clash with any other show, only to find later that the North Western Federation had changed their date—and now the two events clash. The dates of both these major shows are now April 4th/5th. So, whichever side of the Pennines you may live, there will be a show for you to attend that weekend.

The other dates which I have in hand at the moment, and most of these are only known to me by coincidence of some sort, are :

12th April, Sussex Federation, Haywards Heath

3rd May, Essex Winemakers Federation, Witham

24th August, City of Leicester, Leicester

6th September, Tamworth Wine Show, Tamworth

27th September, Andover Wine Show, Andover

While mentioning the shows, I am sure we are all sorry to learn that the Surrey County Show is no longer to have a wine section. For many years now our stalwart and ever-smiling Jim Luker has organised a large wine section within this show. Now that Jim has retired from the organisation, it appears that this well supported event is to disappear from our calendar.

Talking of people, I had a bright letter from Elvin Plant from the depths of Suffolk. He is trying to make wine in a bungalow which boasts of no cellar. However, he tells me that he was in attendance at the Smithfield Show—not with his wines alas—but on the Howard Rotavator stand. His message to all NAWB members is : “Winemakers are always welcome”, and I am sure that they would be too. So next time you are in Stanningfield, wherever that is, just stand in the middle of the road and call “Elvin” at the top of your voice until you get thirsty.

Before I close this, my last Newsletter—yes, I do really believe yet again that this will be my last one to you all—may I remind you that the A.G.M. is on April 26th and, if you can get to Birmingham for it, I'm sure you will not only meet plenty of old friends but you may also have an enjoyable time throwing a brick or two.

But perhaps that would be unkind.

With best wishes to all members,

Astute Philip Delmon

P.S. Having three times accepted this adjective now, I really must explain the advent of it. This appears (or will shortly appear) in an open letter from Mr. Alan Smith. In fact I do apparently owe him an apology here. Will you, Alan, please accept my apology for my error in assuming that your earlier letter was written on behalf of the Yorkshire Federation? In fact, you were putting your own personal views.

While on this matter of letters for publication, is it not better that matters concerning the Association should be circulated by this newsletter. Sometimes, I do realise, the subject matter concerns a wider field of readers, but the winemaking magazines are not really official journals of this Association, and I may suspect that quite a few members do not even take the magazines. So, if you want your views to be spread around the members of this Association, why not write to the Newsletter Editor?