

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS AND VIEWS OCCASIONAL

AUGUST, 1977

Dear Members,

My last missive to you was towards the end of May and, like you, I was looking forward to a long hot summer. As I now write it is the end of August and summer is fast on the wain. It was neither long nor hot but I did enjoy it - both days. The Farmers are talking of a record harvest despite the weather. I wonder if the wild fruits will be a success. I am not over-optimistic. I have remembered this year to make some raspberry liqueur with Vodka. You may remember in the October, 1976, issue the recipes so kindly sent by Mrs. Shiela Fisher. I am looking forward to tasting mine.

The most noticeable event in winemaking during the last couple of years is the great increase in the development and sale of the "Three Wine Packs". I have tasted some but I am still undecided about them. Others I have talked to seem quite impressed, especially in the aperitif style wines. I would be interested to hear members' views on these wines.

Many Breweries stated that they were making special brews to celebrate the Jubilee year. If they did, they have kept them well hidden: I have not come across any to-date. The only special brew I have found - and that was at Scarborough - was to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Bass. This was a particularly good bottle of bitter beer and I can heartily recommend it to anyone, that is if they can find any.

In the Schedule for Scarborough I had a page in which I invited members to state the style and type of items they would like to appear in News and Views. This could have been handed in at the Show or posted on to me later. Although over 3000 Schedules were printed and circulated I only received three replies - one per thousand copies. Either you are very happy, or just apathetic. In my arrogance I will try to believe the former.

I am pleased to note that I am still receiving letters, which are published in this edition. Keep it up, there's still £2 for the most interesting letter published in each issue. Don't be shy. Air your views and maybe get paid for it. I will also be happy to print dates of any future shows. All I require is plenty of advance notice as we only publish four times a year. My next idea is a little late for this year but could perhaps be of help for next summer: it is that any Club who would be happy to receive visitors could supply their name and where and when they meet and I would be happy to publish it so that anyone who is on holiday in the area or in a strange town for an evening would know if there was a Circle where they would be welcome to call, to spend an evening. If you are interested, please furnish me with your Circle's name, where and when you meet, and I will publish it in the next edition. With so many people having to travel around the country in their job, why wait for the summer? Do it now.

Lastly, may I make a plea to all Circle Secretaries. Will you please draw the attention of your members to your copy of the

"News and Views" and leave it available for them to read. So many Club members tell me that, although their Club is a member of the N.A.W.B., they are never acquainted with the contents of "News and Views". I appreciate that it would take too much time to read it out at the meeting, but please do not do - as some secretaries appear to do - which is read it to themselves and then put it in their file. Please leave it on the table for your members to read. Thank you.

KEN HILL,
Editor

NEWS

Membership

To those who have not already renewed their membership, may I remind you that it is due and should be sent to Ken Bilham, 4c Summerhill Villas, Susan Wood, Chislehurst, Kent, who sends the following information:

"Application for membership of the National Association of Wine and Beermakers (Amateur) may be submitted AT ANY TIME during the year, as before, and I shall be delighted to receive subs on any one of the 365 days from the 1st July to the 30th June. The only difference to the working of the system is that, whereas we were spending money in sending News Letters, Schedules, etc., to those who were not rejoining in any particular year, we now delete from our mailing list the names of those whose subs are not paid by 31st July, thus effecting a saving in postage and printing which, of course, is your money in any event."

Although, as Ken has stated above, that you can join on any day of the year, if you WISH TO BE ELIGIBLE TO ENTER THE MEMBERS' CLASSES IN THE 1978 SHOW AT NOTTINGHAM AND ALSO ATTEND AT THE MEMBERS' RATE OF CHARGES, YOU MUST BE A PAID UP MEMBER BY 7TH JANUARY, 1978. If you have not already done so, become a member right away and avoid disappointment.

The N.A.W.B. National Conference and Show for 1978 will be held at Nottingham University on Friday, 31st March, and 1st & 2nd April, 1978.

This is the same venue as the very successful Show of 1976. Although the accommodation will be in the same Halls of Residence and the Show bottles will again be in the Sports Centre, the Lectures and the Dance will be in a better building in the University complex, and should be a great improvement upon our previous visit. Your own wines can be drunk at your tables and the Saturday evening Dance but not in the Bars, which are in each Hall of Residence.

The following is the programme arranged for the weekend.

FRIDAY

- 2.30 p.m. Staging of bottles commences
- 8.00 p.m. Judges Briefing
- 9.00 to 12.00 p.m.
Singalong and Dancing with the accompaniment
of Electric Organ

SATURDAY

- a.m. Judging of exhibits.
- 2.00 p.m. Show bottles open for public
- 3.00 p.m. Lecture by Dr. Martin Ledley, "FAITH OVER ADVERSITY"
- 4.00 p.m. Debate
- 'That this Conference deplors the present policy of the National Executive of moving to a different part of the Country for the Annual Conference and Show and that a permanent place is preferable.'
- 8.00 p.m. Conference Dance

SUNDAY

- a.m. A.G.M. and Presentation of Trophies. Grand Draw.

As mentioned in the above programme, it is proposed to hold a debate at the Conference - the Motion being as quoted under the heading "Debate".

So that the greatest number of speakers, 'for' and 'against' the motion, and the views of the whole country can be expressed, all Circles are invited to nominate 2 speakers, to speak briefly - one for and one against the motion. A strict time limit will be set, controlled by the number of volunteer speakers.

To make this really worthwhile, please join in the fun and let the Programme Secretary, FREDA STAGG, have your names as soon as possible so that an order of speaking can be arranged.

Programme Secretary: Mrs. Freda Stagg, 145 Manor Road,
Verwood, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 6DX.

As you can see, our Programme Secretary has drawn up a varied and interesting list of events for your entertainment. A notable addition this year is the Singalong and dancing on the Friday evening, which we are sure will be well attended. Saturday morning has been left free this year, apart from the judging. This is to allow those not engaged in work to have a look around the town centre of Nottingham.

Now to the most important part, the cost. The prices listed below are for accommodation from Friday night to Sunday lunch time and cover board, English breakfast, mid morning tea or coffee, lunch, mid afternoon tea or coffee, and Dinner. Facilities are also available for early morning tea and tea at supper time.

The Charges are:

To paid up members of N.A.W.B. (must be members by 7.1.78)

£16.75p This includes V.A.T. @ 8% and Service charges

Non-Members:

£21.75p. This includes VAT @ 8% and Service charge.

Children under 2 years of age: free.

CHARGES FOR NON-RESIDENTS:

Members: Entry to Show on Saturday afternoon and evening Dance:
FREE

Non-Members:
Saturday afternoon 2.0 p.m. to 6.0 p.m. 50p
Saturday afternoon and evening Dance: £1.50p

Accommodation is for single rooms, every room has washing facilities. Adjacent rooms can be arranged.

Your own wine can be consumed except in the Bars.

I am sure you will agree that in these days of rising prices the charges for the Nottingham Conference and Show are very reasonable and we look forward with confidence to your support.

The Schedule Committee have drawn up the classes for Nottingham and despite the small number of entries in classes for wines made from Fresh grapes, they have decided to retain these classes in hopes of a greater response. An additional class has been added that is new to the National, i.e. Liqueurs. Start making some now so that you will be ready.

Of interest to the beermakers is the fact that all bottles opened will eventually be re-sealed with a crown corker after judging has finished.

Of further interest to exhibitors is that all bottles that are pulled out for finalising will be awarded a white collar if they do not eventually receive an award card. This way you will know at a glance if your entry was in the running for a prize.

Schedules for the Show are at the Printers and will be sent out in the next postage - i.e. late October (approximately). In the meantime, make sure that your membership is up-to-date.

VIEWS

May I thank all those who took the trouble to send me their letters, which I have printed below. The winning letter for the £2 prize for this issue is:- Stan Baker of Chatham. Congratulations!

Keep sending them, please.

Letter from Stan Baker, 131 Gordon Road, Chatham, Kent.

KEEPING THE "CUSTOMER" HAPPY - by Stan Baker.

An element of luck plays a part in the lives of all of mankind and as most people will agree, there is an element of luck in the winning of awards at most competitive activities. Wine and Beer Shows are no exception and when the competition is greater, such as in the larger classes at the National Shows, then by the laws of chance - the element of luck must also be greater.

Of all the many values of knowledge, the greatest must be the freedom to doubt. Having accepted that luck enters into competitive activities, there must always be a vestige of doubt in the minds of most exhibitors - whether they have ever won an award or not - that under changed circumstances the end result might have been somewhat different.

Naturally, the people who have most reason to doubt are those who consider that their exhibits were of a better standard than was indicated by the judge's assessment. But there are occasions, even at Nationals, when award winning exhibitors know that a Judge may have been more than generous in his assessment. In other words, the exhibitor knows that his wine was of a poor standard, was only exhibited to make up the numbers and was most surprised that it ever received an award.

Sensory assessment over long periods is tiring but the use of nose and palate, tongue etc., should always be limited. In fact, at most National activities involving empirical assessment there is usually a panel of Judges involved. At international art competitions, about eight or nine judges are used.

Professor Amerine in his new book - "Wines, their sensory evaluation" points out that panels of at least three to five Judges are used for assessing wines at National level. He considers that the judges should be limited to about fifty wines of varying standards for assessing at one period and not more than ten wines of similar standards in another period.

About half of the ideas in the World have been produced by professional bodies, but talented amateurs have provided the remainder. Usually, it is the professional bodies with their greater day to day experience who evolve the techniques and lay down the procedures by which things should be assessed. Amateur associations usually follow. It would seem that a move towards the procedures already in use by professional wine and beer judges could well be adopted by amateur associations.

After all, it is the function of the organisers of wine and beer Shows to keep the "customers" happy, for without any exhibitors there would be no Show. It seems logical, therefore, that if the customer knew that each of his exhibits was to have a "second opinion", he would be more satisfied than with the verdict of only one person. Obviously, no Show, even Nationals, could afford to employ a panel of judges to assess each wine. However, the use of two judges for each class is not impracticable and was used some years ago by the National Guild of Judges when the examining judges were assessing the capabilities of the candidates in the practical test. The examining Judge started from one end of the class and the candidate from the other. The bottles having been more or less equally divided before judging commenced, the judge and candidates "changing ends" at half-time.

Naturally, the presentation may be checked twice but obviously the air gap only once. More important, the colour, clarity, bouquet and balance may be assessed by two independent judges. The maximum number of bottles that the judge should be expected to assess should not be more than sixty bottles, so classes of larger numbers should be further sub-divided and a Judge on a small class of thirty bottles or less should be transferred to assist in the assessment of the larger class.

"Double assessment" will place more work on to the Convenor but if customer satisfaction is assured, then it is all worthwhile. The largest classes should have two final assessing judges. Any

wines that have widely differing marks from the two Judges should be further assessed until some agreement is reached - obviously one of the judges is making a mistake. A small "sticker" could be placed on all bottles reaching the final assessment.

Employing additional judges to provide a "back-up system" would obviously be more expensive than just employing the one judge on each class, but the cost would be minimal as most Judges appreciate that Show organisers have to be frugal and therefore only charge basic travelling expenses. The increased cost can be met by charging more for bottle entry. Most exhibitors would accept the fact that an assessment by two judges will cost more than by one judge, but would consider the "second opinion" worthwhile.

There are usually an adequate number of trained Judges in most areas, so the only disadvantage with "Dual" assessment is that more floor space is required to accommodate the extra judges and stewards in the classes of over thirty bottles. As stated earlier, the judges on the smaller classes will need to move around the room. The space problem is by no means insurmountable - some of the exhibits could be judged in rooms adjacent to the main hall.

Having made a start on keeping the customers happy by providing second opinions, the next stage is to ensure that the exhibitor is able to obtain information about his entries when the Show is opened to the public. A "Judges at the Bar" session of thirty minutes is adequate at the smaller Shows when the most bottles entered by an individual is about a dozen. But fifteen minutes at the National for the enthusiasts who have entered thirty or more bottles is of little use. It is not possible to contact a Judge every thirty seconds!

Even in this electronic, technological era, the written word still has a use. A comment sheet, countersigned by both judges, affixed to the Show bench would be invaluable to those exhibitors who, for one reason or another, would be unable to have verbal contact with the Judges. The essential information is, of course, the bottle number and a simple comment on the contents. A general comment on the characteristics of the class would also give further "Customer" satisfaction.

To act as a Judge's Steward is one way of gaining experience in the art of assessment but sometimes the potential Judge is deterred from acting as Steward, because the Show rules state that exhibits of both Judge and Steward should be removed from the Class. In order to avoid the risk of losing a possible award many exhibitors abstain from acting as Stewards.

Most convenors are aware of this problem and are usually most helpful in ensuring that the potential Judge is not selected to go to a class in which he has an entry. An application form requesting a "stint" as steward and including the numbers of the classes entered, sent well in advance, will usually receive a favourable reply.

Organisers of Shows want to see their "customers" coming back year after year, so any move to improve relationships between exhibitors and Judges should be welcomed. Absenteeism from Shows has usually resulted from some form of dissatisfaction in the past. Perhaps a questionnaire in the "Newsletter" may induce further ideas.

Stan Baker, 131 Gordon Road, Chatham, Kent. (Medway 48345)

**Your point re 'collars' for wines that reach finalisation has been taken up - K.H. (Editor)

Letter from Arthur Bradley, "Greystones", Guntons Road,
Newborough, Peterborough, P.E.6 7RT.

Dear Mr. Hill,

I have been a member of N.A.W.B. of only 2 years but feel I know all the Committee like old friends just by reading the Newsletter, not just once but many times over. I did make an effort to attend Scarborough; the booking of my touring caravan was a great idea. The wife and myself were looking forward to a wonderful weekend. My wine and beer was all prepared and we were waiting for the day to move off! But it wasn't to be: instead of going North on the happy day we were going South, taking my wife into a London Hospital. Glad to say she is now O.K.

Top marks for Mr. J. Whitfield's letter in the last issue. I didn't smile, I just laughed. Dare I mention that the City of Peterborough (population 300,000) has one Wine Circle and about three members are members of the N.A.W.B! Looking at the challenge Trophy Awards the Ace of Clubs should change their name to the Club of Aces. Thanks for the interesting reading.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Bradley

Thank you for your kind remarks. Hope you can make Nottingham.
Editor

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Letter from R.N. Brooksbank. 17 Dovecot Lane, Beeston, Notts.

Dear Ken,

We all had a marvellous time at Scarborough - many thanks to you and Sybil for all the work you put into it.

The only thing that saddened me was the near death of "Judges at the Bar", with only 15 minutes. One of the main purposes of our movement is to improve winemaking, and what a good opportunity we have at the National to learn something. The discussions we had with competitors in past years were excellent.

I would like to propose that we really make something out of "Judges at the Bar", with a modification of a procedure we use at Nottingham. After our quarterly competitions have been judged, the winners take their wines round and all can taste them. This is the way to learn.

I propose that at the National any competitor (in that class) could ask the judge to be allowed to sample any one of the winning bottles against his own entry. This would have to be supervised by the judge, and the amount of wine finally taken from any bottle limited to, say, a half. The competitor would have to quote his entry number to avoid thirst gatecrashers!

The Dutch distribute their wines randomly to the social gathering in the evening at their National, and the Australians allow any exhibitor to taste any of the wines at their Shows. If these others can do it, why not us? - or are we too mean with our wines?

Personally, I would like to do it with any class I might judge next year.

Yours sincerely,
N. N. Brooksbank, A.W.N.G.J.

A very interesting idea, which I believe is being tried out at the Nottingham Association Show this year. I would be very interested to hear how it turns out.

I don't think that the Schedule Committee could institute this without knowing the members' views. How about you putting it before the members at the A.G.M. Editor.

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Letter from Elvin Plant, St. Cidd, Stanningfield, Bury St. Edmonds.

Dear Ken,

Bored in the country? Well this was my Saturday, July 2nd. In the afternoon I had a meeting in the Southgate Community Centre at 3.0 - tea and biscuits - to launch a local guild. Joe and I decided not to pack the milk in the car as we were taking a guest to meet friends en route from a study weekend at Felmingham Hall near N. Walsham. We decided on Swaffham because it had a large Market Square - we would easily meet there at 10.30 -11.00. The Square was packed - absolutely full to bursting - MARKET DAY.

Eventually I found a parking place and the Guest and Joe decided to watch the A47. Every road was jammed - police operated the lights - it was stop go - stop go. At 12.0 I decided to ring the Police. No enquiries for us and no message from Felmingham so eventually I contacted the Hall. Our Guests had been bitten - both had swollen arms and had gone to Norwich Hospital. This news I took to Joe watching the A.47 and was knocked over by a motor-cyclist (my fault!). Then I decided to ring the Hospital but by this time Joe and Lynn had spotted the car and we eventually got together. They had had a breakdown - loose distributor lead.

Meanwhile I had seen a woman's scarf blowing under the Stalls - picked it up and went round asking whose it was - no claims. Eventually I threw it in the car. It was Joe's! It had blown from one end of the market to the other.

I dropped Joe in Bury St. Edmonds to hold the Guests and dashed home for milk, tea, biscuits and my papers.

This meeting was the result of a letter to the local Press about a local Hort. Show and a Wine section and a meeting here in June. On Saturday, July 2nd, the meeting decided to encourage me to book St. Mary's Institute in Bury for the 2nd Wednesday of September - that will, we hope, be inauguration day for a Circle in Bury St. Edmonds. Regretfully the Thurston Circle (one year old) could not send a Rep. as they had a social event. It seems that at present beer makers predominate in Bury. In my remarks I made no bones about the difficulties facing a young Guild out in the Suffolk countryside. We are already heavily committed financially (my purse at the moment) for the numbers at present interested. The more confident members are predicting a membership of 50/60 before Xmas! and a second Circle within 2 years.

Regards to Sybil and the Committee.

Yours - black and blue!

Elvin

After 'teething troubles' such as you have had, may I wish you every success with your new Bury St. Edmonds Guild. With your perseverance it must succeed.

K.H. Editor.

Letter from The Association of Winemakers Federation.

The last meeting of the Association of Federations was held at Birmingham on Sunday, 29th May.

Amongst the many topics discussed was a feeling of concern by the Committee that the Association should be seen to be of real benefit to its members. The Constitution lays down that the Association is in being to further the interests of its member Federations but as the Committee amounts to about four people, its effectiveness must in the long run depend on the collective action of the member Federations communicating through the framework afforded by the Association.

The aim is to provide help in improving communication, exchange of information, publicity, and passing ideas from Federation to Federation, and storing information for future use. The Association is the Forum for Federations. A lot can be done by writing to the Secretary but the Delegates' meetings are the occasion for maximum exchange. These have previously been held in the Midlands but this still involves a long journey for outlying Federations. Accordingly, it was decided to take these meetings around the country. Venues agreed were Reading for the Home counties, Nottingham for the Midlands, Taunton for the South and South West, and Lancaster for the North.

The next meeting has been arranged for Sunday, 2nd October, at Reading. Secretaries will be informed as soon as the exact venue is confirmed but for those who must know, the Organiser for this event is Dr. John Harrison, Chairman of the Middlesex Federation (0628 27751).

J. H. Toule, P.R.O.

OCCASIONAL

The following letter has been received and will be of special interest to members in the London area. Please apply to the Royal Society of Health personally if you wish to attend.

Address: Royal Society of Health, 13 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7EN.

You are invited to attend a joint meeting on "The Wine Industry in Britain", in The Lecture Theatre at The Society of Chemical Industry, 14 Belgrave Square, London, S.W. 1., on 3rd November, 1977.

Programme: 14.00 Introduction by Chairman
'European Table Wines'
Mr. A. C. Simpson,
International Distillers & Vintners, Ltd.
'The Three Basic Processes for Producing
Fortified Wines'
Mr. R. W. Goswell, Chief Chemist,
John Harvey & Sons Ltd.,
'The Fermentation of Musts'
Mr. A. Cambitzi, Technical Director,
Vine Products, Ltd.,
'The Production of English Wines'
Mr. J. L. Ward, Director,
Merrydown Wine Co., Ltd.

16.30h Discussion
17.15h A tasting of a selection of English Wines will
be held in the Buttery, adjacent to the
Conference Room
17.55h Closure.

Registration: An admission charge of £2.00 + 16p VAT will be made to help offset the expenses of the meeting. Priority will be given to members of the RSH and SCI. Closing date 17.10.77

Cancellations: Full refunds of the fee will be made if notification is received in writing by the closing date. No refunds can be made after this date.

Our Supplies Officer, George Christmas, has a supply of N.A.B. ties for sale and the following colours: Dark blue, Maroon, Green & Brown, at £1.50 + 10p postage. From G. Christmas, Homestead Croft, Drift Lane, Bosham, Chichester.

As I complete this News Letter I am drinking a glass of Spanish Wine. A delightful red with a full flavour. It is a Catalonian wine from Penedes, bottled by J. Migul Torres, a Gran Corona, black label, costing around £2 per bottle and worth every penny.

Yours alcoholically,

Ken Hill.

STOP PRESS

Miss Ingrid Anderson, who is the representative for the Danish Producers of HERIFF three week wine concentrates, will be available for approximately the next six months, to give talks and tastings of HERIFF Three Week Wines. At present she will only be available to visit clubs within a distance of approximately 70 mile radius of Liverpool.

Any Circle secretaries who are interested should write to:

Miss Ingrid Anderson,
25a Stanley Park Avenue South,
Liverpool, 4.

Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.