

NEWS AND VIEWS OCCASIONAL

October, 1977

Dear Members,

It seems only yesterday that I posted off the last copy of the August Newsletter, and here I am again putting pen to paper upon your behalf. It is one of the quirks of our posting dates that there is only a gap of two months between the August and October issues. At this time of the year there hardly seems to be a weekend goes by without a major winemaking festival. As soon as I complete this Newsletter I will be rushing off to Southport for the North West Federation Conference and Show, which is going to be bigger than ever this year. Unfortunately, this Conference again clashes with the Midlands Festival and so, once again, I have had the disappointment of not being able to attend the Midlands Festival and the meeting of many old friends from this area. Being a Committee member of the N.W., my loyalty has naturally to be with them.

I know for a fact that the N.W. and the Midland Federations have tried to avoid a clash of dates but despite knowing each other's future dates they have still been unable to avoid a clash, through circumstances beyond their control. It must make it very difficult for the Convenors of judges.

Before you book for your 1978 holidays, may I advise all winelovers to keep clear of 19th July to 30th July - unless they are taking their holiday in the West Country. During this period the World Wine Fair is being held daily in the fair City of Bristol. Wines from all over the world will be available for tasting, along with demonstrations and talks upon wine and allied subjects. In conjunction with the festival is an Arts and Music Festival. You may wonder at England being chosen as the base for a Wine Fair. I gather it is because we do not have a large wine producing industry of our own. In this way no other wine producing country can complain of favouritism. If Clubs are thinking of attending and staying overnight, I suggest you book your accommodation early. I already know of one Hon. Sec. who has booked 100 rooms. Incidentally, wine will be available for sale at the fair. More about this exciting event when more news is available.

My wife and I had the pleasure of attending the Palace of Westminster for a tasting of Commercial Wines and Spirits, followed by a Dinner organised by the Club Oenologique. This was through the good offices of our Membership Secretary, Ken Bilham, who is a member of the club and the holder of their Gold Medal for judging. The National was well represented by our President and his wife, Babs, our Past President, Ben Turner, and his wife Mary, our Award Secretary, Roy Butcher, and other members of the N.A.W.B.

There were nearly 300 bottles of wine to taste. Apart from the well-known countries, such as France, Germany and Spain, there were wines from Japan, New Zealand and other such unlikely places. The tasting was followed by a most excellent Dinner, and after all that liquid we were in need of something solid. Upon the festive board wine was again in abundance with 15 and 21 year old Malt whisky. Despite the high rate of consumption we still had time to admire the dignity of the setting. A truly remarkable evening.

From the growing point of view this has been a poor summer and at least up North the crops of wild fruits have been poor. I have always felt the fruit quality is the major ingredient upon which the success or failure of a high quality home made wine depends.

Where the wild fruits are of a type that can be tasted, I always taste before picking. If they have not a good flavour I do not bother to pick. I feel that if the fruit has not got flavour before picking, turning it into wine will not endow it with any flavour not apparent upon picking.

Although it is only October, may I on behalf of the Executive wish you all a Happy Xmas and Healthy New Year. My next copy will not be out until late February.

KEN HILL,
Editor.

NEWS

Plans for the **Nottingham** Conference are well in hand and as a reminder of this great event I am reprinting the salient facts:

NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY, 31st March, 1st and 2nd April, 1978

The following are the charges for Full Board for residents. Please note that full board includes Cold Buffet upon arrival on the Friday evening up to 9.0 p.m. It also includes mid morning and afternoon tea or coffee.

Wine Queen

For the first time the N.A.W.B. have arranged a competition amongst the ladies for a Wine Queen at the Nottingham Conference and Show.

On the Friday evening of the National at Nottingham University in 1978, we propose to hold a National Wine Queen Contest. This will be during the "Singalong" in the Sports Centre.

Entries will be accepted from any lady member of N.A.W.B. or the wife/daughter of any member, or a lady member of any Guild/Circle who are members of N.A.W.B.

The contest will be judged by a panel of experts on:-

- a) PRESENTATION
- b) PERSONALITY
- c) ELEMENTARY WINEMAKING KNOWLEDGE

Dress is optional - in other words wear what you feel best in.

Lower age limit is 18 years, and entry forms are in the Schedule and Programme.

The Wine Queen we hope will be invited by Federations, Circles, etc., to join in their social functions, prize givings, etc. Expenses of the Queen will be the responsibility of the inviting party, and N.A.W.B. cannot be held responsible in any way or for any reason.

We do hope that the more 'mature' ladies as well as the younger ones will join in the fun. The winner will receive a memento to mark the occasion.

As you will have noted, there is a reduced charge for residents who are members of N.A.W.B. To take advantage of this reduction you must be a paid up member by the 7th January, 1978. You have been warned. Membership Secretary, Ken Bilham, 4c Summerhill Villas, Susan Woods, Chislehurst, Kent. (Why do these Hon. Secretaries have such long addresses)?

Exhibitors who are entering the Cookery Classes will be pleased to know that a fridge will be available in the Exhibition Hall for storing exhibits prior to staging. We are pleased to announce that the Awards will be presented on the Sunday morning by Mr. A. D. Spencer, Managing Director of Boots, the Chemists. (Sorry we could not get Glenda Jackson!)

I am sure that all southern winemakers will be delighted to know that we have a pencil booking for Brighton for our 1979 Conference and Show. We hope that this will be confirmed in the near future. I for one thoroughly enjoyed our last visit to Brighton, but that was more years ago than I care to admit.

You may recall that at the last A.G.M. a proposition was carried instructing the Executive to work out a set of expence allowances that were more in keeping with present-day costs. A sub-Committee was set up to look into this matter and they have reported to the Executive. They offered two alternatives:

- a) Cost of petrol plus 10%
- b) 5.1p per mile

The Hon. Treasurer, Peter Awbery was in favour of the proposal "B" as he thought this would present less difficulties to the Auditor.

After consideration the Executive have adopted the following:

2nd Class train fare, or if travel by car, 5.1p per mile
 $\frac{1}{2}$ p per mile for each additional passenger.

Subsistence: over 5 hours £1; over 10 hours £2.50
overnight stay £10.50

May I draw your attention to the debate which is to take place on the Saturday afternoon at Nottingham. The notion is "That this Conference deplores 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." We would very much like the Circles to take part in the debate. So think about it and come prepared.

VIEWS

Only two letters to the Editor this month - none the less they were very welcome.

Letter from D. R. Padwick, Hon. Secy., 23, Woodroffe Drive, Basingstoke, Hampshire

Dear Ken,

With regard to holiday visits to clubs in other districts it has been said that in any national raffle the first prize could be a week's holiday in Basingstoke and the second two weeks holiday in Basingstoke, such are the town's attractions supposed to be -

so I doubt whether many members of other clubs would come here for their holiday! However, there must be people who have relatives here and should any of these be wine-making enthusiasts I know that they would be welcome at any of our meetings. We meet on the second and fourth Fridays of each month, at 8 p.m. at Oakridge Community Centre, Oakridge Road, Basingstoke.

I share your lack of decision about the 'three-week' wines. Following a talk by the 'Larsen' people whose Headquarters are at Feltham in Middlesex as you probably know, many of our members became quite enthusiastic and purchased and made many of them. I made a white wine and found it very good but later, with an identical wine but with their recipe drastically changed, I found it had a distinct metallic taste.

I wrote to them and complained and they suggested that I send them a sample. I did this and sat back awaiting the reply to the effect I should sell my organ as my monkey was obviously dying!

Instead they wrote and said that it was well below the correct s.g., that it had been exposed too long to oxygen and had probably stood too long on the must. I had followed their directions faithfully as I did with the first 'pack' and as indeed one must do with these 'quick' wines if one is to succeed - so that comment was not very helpful to me. But in fairness to them they sent me a packet of 'Polyklar' and instructions on its use to restore the balance, and offered to replace the kit or send me a cheque for the cost of the original kit and sugar. Quite fair, you will probably agree, but I am asking for the money and I don't think I shall bother again with 3-week stuff.

Anyway, best wishes and thanks to you and all the other volunteers for your good work on our behalf.

Yours sincerely,

D. R. Padwick.

Letter from Bob Marsdon, 117 Haig Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex UB8 3EQ.

Dear Ken,

I have just read the "News and Views" for August, in which you say, that you only received three replies to your invitation to members to state the style and type of items they would like to appear in it. I am not surprised, as I personally think the "News and Views" are all right as they are. I can think of no improvements that could be made, myself.

I must say I like your idea of information regarding Clubs that would welcome guests who are visiting their vicinity. I have often thought I would like to attend a Wine Meeting when I have been visiting such places as Bournemouth, Blackpool, Bridlington or Bath. I hesitate, however, to furnish you with details of my own Club, the Wembley Guild, as I can visualise a hundred thousand soccer fans on Cup Final Day congregating outside our Club Room singing "Imbibe with me", or "E - I - Addio - we want a sup".

Now for the letters! I cannot agree with Stan Baker's view that Amateur Wine and Beer Competitions warrant an excess of one judge per class. Apart from the added expense of this idea, there would also be a lot of extra work not only for the judges and their convenor but, also, for the General Stewards who, as Stan suggests, could be moving wines and beers into rooms adjacent to the main hall

for the extra space needed for judging, then presumably moving it all back to the main hall before the public arrived. Such movements, I guarantee, would set a few corks popping and cloud up a few beers on the Show Bench. Added to this is the obvious aggravation of two or more adamant judges being in total disagreement over a wine or beer. Then I suppose a third or fourth judge would have to arbitrate, leaving one judge smugly thinking "I told you so". Whilst the other judge would feel he'd been made a fool of. Although I like to win awards at any Wine Show, however large or small, I think this suggestion is taking it a bit too far. Surely the main object of competitions is to discover how good your wines and beers are, and how you might improve them.

This is why I agree with Stan's next point, which was also made by R. N. Brooksbank regarding the meagre fifteen minutes allowed for "Judges at the Bar" at the last National. I was so disgusted with the inadequate time, that I did not attend this session at Scarborough. I fully endorse Stan's idea of having a comment sheet affixed to the Show bench, on which the judge has written about each individual wine or beer. Not only is it often difficult to make contact with all the judges, but a verbal comment is not always taken in and remembered as well as a written one, especially if a queue of other competitors are eagerly awaiting the judge's attention.

I also go along with Stan's third point, about competitors being deterred from acting as Judges' Stewards for fear they may perhaps have to withdraw their best entry from the Show if they are picked to steward that particular class. I have always fought shy of stewarding for this reason, but then I probably take Award winning too seriously myself.

I must say I was puzzled by the statement by R. N. Brooksbank of Beeston, which read "The Dutch distribute their wines randomly to the social gathering in the evening at their National" and he goes on to say "why not us? - are we too mean with our wines?" Well, I can assure our friend that if anyone comes to the Wembley table at any National social, they will be most welcome to try any of our wines or beers, and I'm sure I speak for the whole winemaking fraternity when I say this would apply to any table at our National social.

In conclusion, I would like to say I am very happy with the arrangements for the 1978 Conference and Show. My wife and I are eagerly looking forward to returning to Nottingham University, even though we are among the number that advocates a different Conference venue each year.

Yours fraternally in Winemaking,

Bob Marsdon

The winning letter-writer who will receive the £2 for this issue is Mr. Bob Marsdon of 117 Haig Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex. Congratulations!

The following Club Secretaries have kindly offered their Club's hospitality to members who happen to be in their area on a Club night:

Basingstoke Amateur Winemakers who meet at Oakridge Community Centre, Oakridge Road, Basingstoke. They meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday each month.

Hon. Secretary: D. R. Padwick, 23 Woodroffe Drive, Basingstoke.

Wembley Winemakers who meet at Burham Reception Rooms, Harrow Road, Wembley. They meet on the 2nd Tuesday each month.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Ruby Cotton, 50 Coniston Gardens, Wembley

Merseyside Wine Society who meet at Christ the King Hall, Score Lane, Childwall, Liverpool. They meet the 1st Tuesday each month.

Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Sybil Hill, 18 Laxton Road, Liverpool, 25.

Richmond (Surrey) Guild of Winemakers They meet on the first Wednesday and the third Thursday of each month at the Richmond United Reformed Church (Richmond Presbyterian Hall), Quadrant Road, Richmond.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. A. M. James, 11 Broadland Court, Kew Gardens Road, Richmond Tel: 01 940 4302.

If any other Clubs are willing to extend their hospitality to winemakers passing through their area, I will be happy to print them.

OCCASIONAL

I hope to print each month a thumb-nail sketch of your Executive members:

1.

Maurice Matthews, Accommodation Secretary

Maurice admits to having passed his half century. Happily married to his wife, Thelma, they have three sons. He has served as an Engineer Officer in the Merchant Navy. He then took the unlikely job of pig and poultry farming. He has been making wine and beer for 25 years. This seemed to be more successful than farming which he gave up after a strong attack of fowl pest, which affected the fowls, not Maurice. He is a member of A.W.N.G.J. as a wine judge and hopes to qualify as a beer judge in the near future. He is very keen to undertake any job that will help to promote the hobby.

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I have just arrived back from N.W. Federation and Show. Three great sunny days at Pontins Holiday Camp, Southport.

1,300 winemakers were resident for the weekend and over 2,000 bottles in the competition. Dancing until 1.30 a.m. Friday night and Saturday night and yet 600 attended a great talk by Roy Sperry (Wales and West) on the Sunday morning. My God, what stamina!

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