

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE & BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

February, 1978

NEWS & VIEWS OCCASIONAL

NEWS

Dear Members,

By the time you read this Newsletter, it will be well into the New Year. Having recovered from the Xmas & New Year festivities, we can once again get down to the serious business of normal living again.

The momentum is building up towards Nottingham University on 31st March, 1st and 2nd April. I do hope that you are all making a special effort to attend, what no doubt will be a great weekend. I look forward to meeting you all over this weekend.

If you want to be a Judges steward, please contact Mrs. Sybil Hill, 18 Laxton Road, Liverpool L25 0PQ as soon as possible. We are also short of General Stewards. Any member who would like to help out as a General Steward should get in touch with the Chief Steward, Jim Chettle, at 45 Oak Tree Drive, Gedling, Nottingham. Please state the time and date upon which you will be available. All letters will be acknowledged. If you cannot commit yourself at present please contact Jim Chettle on arrival at the University.

The Treasurer, Peter Awbery has asked me to draw your attention to the fact that the facility of Bankers standing order is no longer available. If you had this arrangement for paying subscriptions in the past, will you please cancel at your own bank.

To those attending Nottingham University may I remind you that meals will be available up to 9.0 p.m. on the Friday evening.

It is hoped to present some of the prize winners with engraved glasses at Nottingham so make sure you enter. You could be one of the lucky winners. They will be given out by the Entries Secretary, Alan Briggs, at Bottle Collection time.

The following information is from Freda Stagg, our Programme Secretary.

NATIONAL WINE QUEEN, 1978

There is still time for you to enter the new and exciting event of this year's National Conference and Show. All entrants should be over 18 years of age, and either -

1. A member of NAWB, or
2. Wife or daughter of a member of NAWB, or
3. Member of a Guild or Circle  
which is a member of NAWB.

Some entries have already arrived but we shall be happy to receive yours as well.

The Show will be compered by Freda Stagg and the panel of judges will include active and well-known members of the Association and also non-winemakers, so that the utmost fairness will be shown to all contestants. Just to remind you, the points will be awarded for

presentation (or appearance), personality, and very elementary winemaking knowledge. Don't let the latter put you off, and remember just as a mature wine is most attractive, so also can be the more mature member of the fair sex.

Judging will take place during the Friday evening "Get-together". Full details in the schedule.

DEBATE on SATURDAY, APRIL 1st, at 4.00 p.m.

For the Motion to be debated, please see the schedule.

This is your chance to state your own, or your Club's viewpoint. Each speaker need speak for only 2 or 3 minutes - the more speakers the less the time allowed. Let the NAWB Executive know your point of view. You have one, so tell us. This is the only way we have of knowing your wishes - we are here to serve you.

So that the Debate can be organised within the allotted time, it would be appreciated if you would let us have your name, and whether you will speak for or against the Motion, in advance of the Show. Only in this way can it be ensured that you will be called to speak. Please send to Programme Secretary,

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

On the Saturday evening of Nottingham there will be a full dinner in the Halls of Residence, but there will NOT be a buffet supper at the Evening Dance, so if you like a buffet when dancing do not forget to bring what you want with you to the Dance.

On the 14th November, 1977, the Daily Telegraph had an article by their "Toronto Correspondent" under the by line "Crystals will turn water into wine". It appears that these magic ingredients which will be on sale in Great Britain in March of this year at a cost of approximately 99p per gallon of wine. It is alleged that the Italian Vintners have asked for the product to be banned, because they say it is indistinguishable from some of their own wines.

The producer, a Mr. Pills of Ontario, Canada, claims that everyone who has drunk wine made from his crystals has liked it. He says, "I'm not trying to appeal to the sophisticated; I'd like the ordinary family to be able to buy wine at a reasonable price."

In the Daily Telegraph of 20.11.77 under the heading "No, to instant wine", Mr. Edmond Penning-Rowell, Chairman of the Wine Society of Great Britain, tasted the new wine made from crystals and remarked "Nothing like a grape: more like a sour apple". The British Importers are Peabody Foods Ltd., of Feltham Plans. It is expected to be available by March.

Our Accommodation Secretary, Maurice Mathews, has had a packet of the crystals sent to him from a friend in Canada. I have seen the packet and it appears to be a mixture of yeast, colouring, yeast nutrient and acid with flavouring. Maurice has some in the making and he says the colour is rather violent, similar in colour to Condyl's fluid. Let's hope that it tastes better. I will let you

know what he thinks about it when he has made and tasted it.

A.G.M.

Will representatives of Circles and/or Federations, please note that they must produce a letter of authorisation signed by a responsible officer, i.e. Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, together with Membership card when applying for an entry card for the A.G.M. These will be exchanged for voting cards on the Sunday morning.

All members wishing to attend the A.G.M. on Sunday morning please contact the Membership Secretary, Ken Bilham, with your Membership Card on the Friday or the Saturday of the Conference and you will be given an entry card; as stated above, these will be exchanged for a voting card when entering the A.G.M. on the Sunday morning.

KEN HILL

EDITOR.

VIEWS

Dr. John Harrison of Maidenhead has sent me further copies of Professor Gerry Fowles quarterly publication "Wine for all Seasons", price 25p per copy. They are a mine of information for the serious winemaker. It covers every aspect of winemaking, including some special recipies. It requires to sell 1,000 copies per edition just to break even. I do hope that you will all rally round and support this venture. It is remarkable value for money. This publication can be obtained from W.H. Smith or direct from Professor G. Fowler, 61 Church Road, Woodley, Reading, Berks. Please add 15p for postage. Winemakers will be pleased to know that John Harrison is recovering from his illness. We wish him well.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter from Jim Chettle, 45 Oak Tree Drive, Gedling, Nottingham.

Dear Ken,

In last August's edition of "News and Views", you published a letter from Richard Brooksbank suggesting that competitors be allowed to taste winning wines during "Judges at the Bar" sessions.

As you know, we tried this idea at our own Nottingham Show in November, and it proved to be quite successful. As usual, with new ideas, they take some time to catch on, and those competitors who did not read the schedule properly will get their opportunity next year.

For your information, our rule read as follows:

"It is a condition of entry that the Judge of a still wine be permitted to allow competitors in the same class to taste no more than one of the winning wines if so requested during the Judges at the Bar.

The judge shall not allow the dispensing of wine to cause the level remaining to fall below the bottom of the Show label.

The purpose of this rule is to demonstrate the difference between winning and losing wines and to encourage exhibitors to discuss their entries with the Judges."

Letter from: Mr. Ken Gunn, 57 Barnfield Road, St. Pauls Cray,  
Orpington, Kent, BR5 3LS.

Dear Mr. Hill,

Although the National Committee have so far declined to accept any recognition for the time and effort they spend in the running of our Association, I do feel that they should overcome their modesty and accept some sort of recognition from the members for, say, serving three years on the Committee, in the shape of some small item such as, perhaps, a tie-pin or something similar, suitably designed.

If you could find a small space in your Newsletter to print this it would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

KEN.

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

"Should the National Show schedule include more "Medium" Classes? The answer, in my opinion, is Yes - because it would improve the standard of the entries. It is agreed that the biggest number of faults in amateur shows is the number of sweet wines in "dry" classes and "Dry" wines in sweet classes. Few show schedules seem to acknowledge the fact that many people only make medium dry to medium sweet wines. On many occasions in the last decade have I discarded wines because they were too sweet or too dry to meet the requirements of the class in which they were entered. Often a winemaker has offered a sample of a wine they intended to exhibit at a future show. Often the white wines have a touch of residual sugar and I would advise them to sweeten the wine and enter it into social or sweet class. I knew, from experience, that a slightly sweet wine would have no chance in an amateur show, although many of the great commercial dry whites have a degree of sweetness.

This wide divergence of sweetness is most disconcerting to a trained palate and I have now reached a point in time when I prefer to assess a wine class in two stages. My system is similar to the technique adopted by the two co-authors of "The Good Wine Guide, 1978". They had to assess more than 1,600 wines at the rate of fifty a day. This is, of course, a considerably higher rate of assessing wines than my own, which is a mere 800 different commercial wines since I founded the Civil Service Winetasting Club in 1975. However, now that there are 48 meetings a year averaging eight or more different wines each week, the members and I hope to reach the total of 1,200 different wines by the end of 1978.

Not all commercial wines are good and some expensive old wines can be quite bad. However, one cannot expect the usual home-made standard to be as good as bought wines. The amateur judge, therefore, has little idea of what standard of wines to expect. They may all be very Poor - in which case, a wine discarded at an early stage could have been an eventual winner. For this reason, knowing that the palate is so fallible I prefer to use stage one mainly as a pre-judging stint - discarding all wines that are hopeless in terms of sweetness, dryness or heavy infection. Adequate notes of the discarded wines are written onto the judging sheets. These comments are transferred onto the clean comment sheet after the assessing stint is over.

This pre-judging system may leave more than half the wines in the class to be assessed for a second time. This I regard as a necessary part of the job, as a first impression of a wine may lead to a false conclusion. In addition, the mind may become fixated into thinking the wine is a possible winner. I have never considered that assessing wine should be a hurried process - although in an emergency I am able to assess over a hundred wines at one session.

Sampling wines in a different sequence also helps to give a new stimulus to the palate so the bottles should be "juggled" around and the labels turned away so that the liquid is assessed "blind". I prefer to assess commercial wines "blind" so that I am not influenced by prestigious labels or vintage years.

Assessment should be related to analysing the chemical substances in the wine and oxidation, maderisation, caramelisation and acetification may be acceptable within certain limits. In excess, these are "negative" substances but in moderation they may become "positive" Factors.

"Medium" classes in my opinion should be introduced into the Club Competitions - as medium wines are very popular. If the surge of entries becomes too much for the appointed judge to cope with in his allotted time, there is no reason why a competent person should not "pre-judge" the wines, discarding all those that are obviously hopeless. Most judges of long experience agree that there are only a few bottles in each class that really need expert opinion. It is the desensitising of the palate by large numbers of poor wines that causes errors to be made.

Commercial producers need to understand the public palate to a greater degree than amateur judges. After all, the professionals have to make a living from the wines that they sell. In recent years more medium white and sweet white table wines have appeared in retail outlets. The Spanish also produce a medium sweet red wine - Taban. These wines could be the criteria for the "medium" classes.

People may say that "Medium" classes are already included in Show Schedules; being termed "Social" wines. In my opinion the term "Social" is too ambiguous. I know some winemakers who drink dry sherries and Clarets as social wines and I know others who drink sweet sherries and Ports as social wines. Being more specific in definition would make life easier for both the exhibitor and the judge.

I have been pushing this opinion about "medium" classes for almost a decade, but few Show schedules include a "medium" category. Many people enjoy medium wines - they should be given the chance to exhibit "medium" wines - of all ingredients - right up to National level.

The current National schedule was planned to cope with the very large classes of the late '60's. Now, I think it could be revised to great advantage as some classes are as large as ever with sometimes a very poor standard of entry.

Stan Baker.

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### POTTED HISTORY OF THE EXECUTIVE

Leslie Stagg first became interested in winemaking some 20 years ago as a result of visiting the home of a friend of a friend to look at and admire his idea of a modern central heating system, where he had removed all internal doors. In one of these open plan rooms were several jars making the now familiar 'plop-plop' noises. After a few samples I reckon I was hooked and immediately wanted to produce my o

Birchington & Thanet W. Guild. Hon. Secretary: Daphne Langridge, 12 Grayton Road, St. Peter's, Broadstairs. Tel. Thanet 68194.

Meeting: 3rd Thursday each month, 8.0 p.m. Village Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington (2 minutes from Railway Station)

Richmond (Surrey) Guild: Social Secretary, Jack Chandler, 21 Berwyn Road, Richmond, Surrey.

Meeting: 1st Wednesday & 3rd Thursday of each month at Richmond United Reformed Church, Quadrant Road, Richmond, Surrey.

Worthing W.G.: Hon. Secretary: Mrs. E. A. Moore, 74 Northcourt Road, Worthing, West Sussex.

Meet: 3rd Thursday of each month except June, August and November, at Broadwater Parish Room, Broadwater Green, Worthing, at 7.30 p.m.

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Many thanks to Arthur Bradley, "Greystones", Guntons Road, Newborough, Peterborough, for his very kind remarks re the Newsletter.

Editor.

WORLD WINE FAIR, BRISTOL, JULY, 1978

I hope you will be making tracks to Bristol in July. Interest in the N. West is very high. Ken Scambler of Southport has booked coaches and accommodation for 106 winemakers - yours truly amongst them. Our genial Membership Secretary will be on Stand 77 for the Guild of Cellar Masters where he will welcome all winemakers to the Stand. It would be a handy place to make arrangements to meet your friends: STAND 77

I will be calling (staggering) there from time to time and hope to meet you all. Editor

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WINE HOLIDAYS Holidays with the addition of wine tasting etc:

Rhine & Morel Valley. Chateaux's of the Loire. Andalusia, Spain. N. Africa. If you are interested, write to Ken Bilham, 4c Summerhill Villas, Susan Wood, Chislehurst, Kent. BR7 5NG.

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PLASTIC WINE FIVES I have many times read about differing views upon the use of plastic wine fives for storing wine. I have just had to clear my loft to allow the electricians to re-wire the house. From the loft, apart from 30 years of accumulated rubbish, I removed 165 gallons of wine which was all in plastic wine fives - the youngest was dated 1971, the majority and the oldest ranged from 1962 to 1966. Much to my surprise they were all sound - a little lacking in fruitiness but no oxidisation that was tasteable.

This was after extreme heat in summer and cold in winter. Don't ask me why it was stored so long. It was not the original intention. But it makes you think. K.H. Editor.

WINE TIPS If you have any good and original tips for winemakers, please send them to me, Newsletter Editor. Short, simple and original, please.

Last, but not least, this month's winning letter was by Frank Scholes of Wakefield. Congratulations. Your £2 is on the way. Keep them coming.

SEE YOU ALL AT NOTTINGHAM. GOOD LUCK.

Editor: K. Hill.

18, Laxton Road, Liverpool.L25 0PQ

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