

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS AND VIEWS

November, 1980

Dear Members,

For the benefit of those members who have re-joined or new members who have joined since my last News and Views, I will repeat the announcement in the August News Letter.

I was delighted to receive a letter from one of our Past Presidents, Cyril Lucas. Unfortunately, due to a virus infection, his palate is not as acute as of yore and, as a result, he has had to withdraw from judging engagements. Cyril raised a point with me which I think is quite relevant. He pointed out that members who do not attend the A.G.M. do not receive the annual accounts. I think that one reason for this could be that after an A.G.M. you often find the notices left on the seats because, unless they are unusual, most members are not very interested. None the less, I take Cyril's point and I will see that, in future, he will get his copy. If any other members who are unable to attend the A.G.M. would like a copy of the accounts, I will ensure that they also get a copy. Cyril, who was one of the founders of our movement and a former Treasurer, will obviously have a greater interest than many of our members.

Stan Baker informs me that any club wishing to have a tasting of Portuguese wines (I don't think this will include vintage port) should contact Mr. Charters, Portuguese Government Trade Office, Portland House, Stag Place, London, S.W.1. The British Sugar Bureau will loan, free of charge, a film entitled "Make Your Own Wine". For further details write to British Sugar Bureau, Film Library, 16 Paxton Place, London, SE27 9SS, for 16mm film. For 8mm or Super 8 write to Barry Miles, Film Library, Screen House, Borden Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent. Don't forget that Norman Chiverton, Sutton's View, Woolscot, Rugby, still has a number of Sterling Silver Ladies Necklaces with the N.A.W.B. badge at the bargain price of £5 plus 25p postage.

1981 National Conference and Show

Friday, Saturday & Sunday. 27th. 28th & 29th March

Our forthcoming Conference and Show will be held at the University of Exeter - a modern complex set in beautiful grounds, just one mile away from Exeter City Centre. Accommodation and all meals are provided and there are facilities for making coffee and tea in the residential quarters. The accommodation is in the Halls of Residence, similar in style to that provided at Nottingham University. The University is one mile north of the City and has easy access from the M4/M5 motorways and is only one mile from St. David's railway station. British Rail are allowing 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % discount on the standard fare to those attending the Conference who are booked in for the weekend. There is no doubt that holding the Conference in such a picturesque area may tempt some members to have a spring break in this beautiful area of England. Exeter is well worth a visit and from my own experience of the West County, we will all be made very welcome.

There is no alteration to the classes which are the same as last year, but I would like to draw Members' attention to the new points system which has been devised in an attempt to avoid too many trophies being won jointly. All will be explained in the Schedule, which is at the printers and will be sent out with the November Newsletter. The following are the charges for the Conference:-

Members:

Full board from Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime £35 per person incl. V.A.T. and service

Non Members:

Full board, as above £42.50 per person incl. V.A.T. and service

"Full board" is all meals from Friday evening until and including Sunday lunch.

Members - Non Resident:

Day ticket, inclusive of Saturday Night Fancy Dress Dance £2 per person

Non Member, Non Resident Day Ticket, Inclusive of Saturday night Fancy Dress Dance £5 per person

The accommodation Secretary is Lenn Drysdale, 7 Richmondfield Drive, Barwick on Elmet, Near Leeds.

ERRATA

Lenn Drysdale has pointed out an error I made in the last News Letter: The crowning of the Wine Queen will be on the Friday night and not the Saturday, as stated in the August issue. "Sorry" K.H.

HOLIDAYS IN CALIFORNIA

Ken Bilham, 96 Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 7JA, is running a 19 day holiday to California, visiting the Wine areas of the Napa Valley, Sanfrancisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas; 1 night aboard the Queen Mary with optional trips to Grand Canyon, Hollywood, Tijuana, Mexico, etc. Special party rate £550. Wed, 30th September, to Sunday, 18th October. All enquiries to Ken Bilham.

Loire Valley: 6 days, 17th August, 1981, and Rudesheim: 6 days, 14th September are two further holidays he is running.

THE 'NATIONAL' WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- Mrs. T. B. Hutchinson, Maldon, Essex.
- Mrs. A. Bergeman, Tilehurst, Reading
- D. A. Garrard, Newcastle-on-Tyne
- Mrs. M. B. Bowen-Jones, Bishop Auckland
- Mrs. R. E. R. Budge, Worcester Park
- Kent Invicta Winemakers, Rainham, Kent
- Mrs. M. E. Power, Plymouth
- Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Napier, Woodbury, Devon
- D. King, Rainham, Kent
- Mrs. P. Pearce, Rainham, Kent
- Cranford Ales, Paignton, Devon
- B.H.E. Rose, Sidmouth, Devon
- Mr. and Mrs. D. Hawkins, Swanland, North Humberside
- Mrs. V. R. Waters, West Wickham, Kent

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter from V. Wadmore, 10 Lawrence Street, Sandiacre, Notts, NG10 5DM.

Dear Mr. Hill,

Is it the Executive's idea to commit suicide? After last year's fiasco we now read there is to be a fancy dress on the Saturday night. Surely Saturday night should be kept formal. If you must have a fancy dress, have it on the Friday night - or does the National revolve round the North West Federation? My mind boggles at the thought of Sybil Hill dressed as a Bunny Girl, and the Mayor and Mayoress as Kermit and Miss Piggy - or is the idea that the members make fools of themselves whilst the Executive, dressed in all their finery, sit aloof and laugh? Surely a change as big as this should be put to the members at the A.G.M.

I also read there is to be no change to the Schedule. I would have thought as there is a class for Newcastle Brown we should have a class for Watney's Bitter, Double Diamond, Pale Ale, Whitbread Pale and all the rest of the commercial beers. Surely there is no such thing as a Northern Brown just as much as there is no such thing as 'Southern' Bitters.

Yours faithfully,
V. WADMORE.

"I can assure you that the N.A.W.B. Conference does not revolve around the N. West Federation Conference, despite the great popularity of the N. West Fed. Conference. Many members of the Executive thought that the members may like a Carnival Dance with fancy dress. The reason for holding on a Saturday night at Exeter was twofold:-

1. As there will not be a Civic Reception and therefore no Mayor will be present, and -
2. Saturday night was chosen because many members will have quite a long journey and have bottles to enter and would not have time to change if they wished to wear fancy on the Friday night.

I can assure you that my wife will not be going as a 'bunny girl' (I only wish she was one). I do not wear fancy dress but I know a lot of people who do and get great fun from doing so. The Executive will not be laughing at those who wear it - rather they will be with them.

Re the beer classes: Many of these are described as a style that is known nationally e.g. I.P.A. Mackeson, Guinness, etc. Newcastle brown is also one of these and is quite distinctive in colour and style from most other browns. These are my private opinions and your letter will go forward to the next Schedule Committee for consideration.

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

Dear Ken,

Many of our members will be aware of a Boots advertisement which appeared in "Winemaker" earlier this year, and also a leaflet which has been available in Boots shops, regarding the Boots Silver Demi-John. The NAWB Executive is well aware of certain errors which appeared in the advertisement, and these have been sorted out with Messrs. Boots, should they decide to repeat this exercise next year.

I am aware that some of the circle information which appears on the back of the leaflet is out-of-date, as far as the circle officers may be concerned. This is due to the lapse in time between my supplying the information to Boots, and their eventual printing of the list. Omissions are due either to particular circles not being paid-up at the time, or because they have only joined recently.

The original advertisement only elicited a handful of letters, but numerous enquiries have come forth following the leaflet.

I would be pleased to receive information from circle secretaries, as to whether they did get any new members arising from the advertisement and leaflets. This will give the committee some idea whether this type of exercise is worth the effort.

Jim Chettle,

Membership Secretary

Letter from Alec Milner, Moltano, Rocky Park Road, Plymstock,
Plymouth, Devon, PL9 7DQ.

Dear Editor,

I am concerned about the type of beer bottles permitted to be used in major shows, including the National. The rules allow entries of brown, green or colourless one-pint beer bottles, sealed with black screw stoppers or gold coloured crown seals. Surely it would be to the advantage of all if a standard beer bottle of the type

mainly used by the commercial brewers, and sealed with a standard coloured crown seal were adopted. By this I do not mean the use of non-returnable beer bottles.

Every entry, except Barley Wine which is usually exhibited in half pint beer bottles, would then look identical. Wine bottles, except champagne type, are all of a standard shape with identical seals of one type only.

This letter in no way seeks to cast aspersions on the impartiality and integrity of the judges or any other persons associated with the Show, but merely to illustrate the advantages of complete uniformity in exhibits.

Yours sincerely,
Alec Milner

Your comments will be forwarded to the next Schedule Committee. K.H. Editor

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

In reply to A.K. Nicholls' observation in the recent "News and Views" that - "In view of the fact according to the table (Dr. Carr's of a previous issue), the older we get the more difficult it becomes to recognise flavour, would this indicate that a retirement age should be set for judges, or that the older we become the more time should be given, or the lesser number of bottles allocated to ensure that accuracy is maintained?"

My immediate answer is to re-state part of the thoughts of the late Jean Piaget, quoted in the "News and Views" August, 1980...."The great danger today is of slogans, collecting opinions, ready made trends of thoughts."

I do not know the sources from which Dr. Carr derived the information to define the threshold levels of taste, but I do know that human beings age at varying rates and whereas one person may be physically and mentally active at eighty years, another person may be ageing at forty years.

The taste buds on the tongue and palate are basic cells and although their distribution seems to alter as the individual approaches maturity it would seem they remain stable in their pattern across the surfaces of the tongue and palate for the remaining years of the person's life. Therefore in the same way that good sight and hearing enable a person to enjoy the visual and aural arts into advancing years, there is no reason why older people should not be able to appreciate good wine and beer.

It probably is a question of continually educating the brain to understand what is meant by quality in alcoholic beverages. Once the basic faults of wine and beer have been fully understood and the judge is able to eliminate these from the quality entries, choice may then become a matter of personal preference.

Studying the reactions of members of a commercial wine appreciation group, meeting weekly throughout the year, one is continually surprised at the variation in their preference pattern and the varied opinions given in the assessment of the different wines. Some wines get a high rating by most of the group but may be termed "undrinkable" by others. There may be occasions when a wine or beer judge may find little to choose between flavours and then has to use other means to give one entry more points than another. Often the presentation points have been the deciding factor, but I suggest that more time be spent on re-assessing the bouquet and the length of finish. Wines and beers often change character in the glass, so even a few moments of waiting may help decide the issue.

Mr. Nicholls at thirty three years of age has probably a very good palate but there must be thousands of wine and beer lovers around the World who are double that age and who consider that they have a sufficiently sensitive palate to be able to know a good wine or beer from a bad.

Next year's Conference and Show at Exeter promises to be an exciting, enjoyable event and will undoubtedly provide the ideal venue for lovers of alcoholic beverages to once again re-educate their palates. Roll on, Exeter.

From the Editor: I have a further article from Roy Roycroft, which came too late for the August issue which I intended to print this time but as I have had another letter from Roy, replying to a letter from the August issue, I have decided this would be more relevant and I will hold over to next time his letter on Colour, etc.
K.H.

Letter from E.A.W. Roycroft, 44 Newell Road,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 9PB.

Dear Ken,

N & V, page 5, 4th paragraph: August.

Mr. Scholes refers to Stan Baker's letter regarding palate refreshers and rightly comments about the variations in water from different sources. He also refers to defrosting water and test for hardness. Similar query has been raised in N.G.W.B.J. publication as to the suitability of different waters for cleansing judges' palates, and more especially the use of one's own tap water if it had 'peculiarities'.

In each instance the fundamental reason for using one particular water - your own tap water - has been overlooked. Anything to which your senses of smell or taste are regularly exposed ceases to affect your assessment of something else. It is said to be environmental to you. Smoking is perhaps the best example of being environmental. To the regular smoker the effects of smoking are environmental and do not lessen or affect the smoker's ability to assess wine. Likewise your own tap water; whatever its composition; is environmental to you and does not affect your assessment of wine. Therefore the best water for cleansing your palate is your own tap water. If necessary, carry it with you to tastings or for judging.

There is also another fundamental for using tap water. It is the most neutral palate cleanser you can use. Considered the second most neutral is white bread but, whilst chewing it, the enzymes in saliver convert starch to sugar and a sweetness is left in the mouth. Water removes the sweetness. A sharpish apple is considered another good palate cleanser but leaves an acidity in the mouth. Water removes that.

Cheese is one of the worst things to chew whilst assessing or judging wines. It coats the mouth with grease which hides defects and faults. Cheese is excellent for wine and cheese parties for this reason: it hides the wine faults and makes the wines taste better.

N & V, August, page 6, 4th paragraph.

Before seeing the August issue I posted to Ken Hill a write-up expanding my comment in February which was deliberately worded as published in the hope that readers would react and send in their comments. No comments in May issue so I sent the write-up, but now Mr. Nicholls has done so. To answer his queries and comments:

'Light' has many and varied meanings depending on its application and the text in which it is used, but in reference to colour, as I used it in February issue, it has only one meaning "pale coloured" (Oxford Dictionary). I stated 'light red' and translated this as 'pale coloured red'. 'Light' is not a term applied to body which is referred to as 'thin' or 'fat' nor to flavour, which is referred to as 'poor' or 'full'. A light wine without any qualification to colour (such as light red wine) means 'low alcohol content' and its opposite is 'heavy' meaning 'high alcohol content!'. However, as 'light' has so many different meanings which can become confused, perhaps it would have been better if I had stated 'pale red'.

In any case, no new class for colour is required because colour is only an indicator to and not a palate difference, which also throws further (should I use the word?) light on Mr. Nicholls earlier - page 5/6 - remarks about rosé. But note rosé= light crimson (Oxford Dictionary) as used by Mr. Nicholls in 'rose/pink' for the colour of rosé wine.

Mr. Nicholls also posed the query as to how many competitors mature their Red Dessert to true tawny. From my experience at the Show bench there is only a small proportion of winemakers that produce true dessert wines - the majority entered are simply sweet wines: and of that proportion extremely few exhibit true tawny. The golden/browns

I agree are usually over-oxidised/maderised/enzymic browned. As to where they should be entered, presumably under the colour which they started as the ultimate colour of all wines, irrespective of their colour density, is BROWN if kept long enough. White wines gain colour to the ultimate brown whilst reds lose colour to the ultimate brown. But those golden/browns are faulty wines because of the over-oxidation/maderisation/enzymic browning so are they worth being entered at all? In my mind the serious problem with true tawny desserts is that they are given the full marks they deserve. Most Shows with dessert classes are for white and red only and a true tawny should be entered in the red dessert class, but is often penalised for its colour if not for its palate characteristics.

Mr. Nicholls either I expressed myself very badly or you misunderstood my description of Social wine. I did not intend to be derogative and meant the reverse to 'no-one intends to make Social'. I agree there is an art in making really good social wine, but the biggest proportion of wine is made to recipes of one sort or another, that are without purpose and are basic. The resulting wines lack the full characteristics of Aperitif, Table or Dessert. Even purpose recipes are basic and do not always give the intended results because they cannot cover all the adjustments required by the multifarious variations between batches of the same ingredient. There may be instructions elsewhere in the book about making adjustments but frequently winemakers 'stick strictly to the recipe'. When the adjustments are not made the wines usually end up non-Aperitif/Table/Dessert, because they do not have the correct characteristics. The only real place for them is in Social Classes or the conglomerate and meaningless White Dry, White Sweet, etc., etc. Hence I referred to them, as they are "the run of the mill wines without specific purpose". The fact that a wine is too soft for Table; too thin or too light for dessert; does not make them poor wines for drinking socially. Most will have a lowish alcohol content (I did say 'nor too high in alcohol to be of the best' - Feb. issue) but the alcohol content is surely of no consequence for Social Wine when judging at the Show bench. The lightness or heaviness of a social drink is a matter of the drinker's personal preference. Some prefer to drink non-alcoholic beverage, others light wine, others heavy wine, whilst others drink spirits. On the Show bench therefore both low alcohol and high alcohol, as well as the in-betweens, have to be accepted.

Mr. Nicholls last paragraph raises very intriguing questions regarding retirement age for judges in connection with taste thresholds. These possibly require the 'wisdom of Solomon' to answer. Like Mr. Nicholls, I offer no opinion just observations. The table does not quote thresholds for ages 60-74 years and leaves the query 'was the major part of the decline between 60-74 or 75-89? Also, each period is for 14 years so which year of a 14 would be set?

In any case thresholds vary from person to person, with sex and with health, which means the tables were 'averaged'. Thus it could well be that with two judges the thresholds of one in the sixties could be higher than one in the eighties, making the one in the eighties the more efficient in recognising sweetness, bitterness and sourness. Further smell, via the nose and via the mouth, plays a much larger part in the assessment of wine than the tastes. Are there any comparison figures available for different ages? In regard to smell, I can say my mother-in-law's (82) sense of smell is more acute than my wife's but neither can detect the faint odours that I can. Finally should consideration be given to experience, knowledge and the ability to identify different nuances in wine? Could not these factors in an older judge be to his/her advantage outweighing any disadvantage in the decrease of the threshold sensitivity of taste?

To give my opinion solely as an opinion: judges should retire when they find their ability to assess wine is declining in comparison to other judges, AT ANY AGE. Whether such a ruling, or recommendation, would work, I have serious doubts. As for fewer bottles and/or more time for judging, all judges would appreciate this at many Shows, but is a large number of bottles or short time any more of a burden to older judges than to younger? They may be as mental processes tend to slow down with older age.

All the best,

ROY

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Member,

It seems no time at all since I was elected to be Chairman of N.A.W.B., and now my term of office is at a close.

Have I enjoyed it? Yes - although there have been times when I have worried over things not going too smoothly and wondered 'why I joined'.

So many times the question arises "What do we get for our Membership - apart from the News and Views and the Conference?" We have tried Seminars, and the Dinner - which had to be cancelled for lack of support - so why not let your Committee know what you want, and if you will guarantee to support it we will be only too pleased to work on it.

Our News and Views should be a great help in keeping you all informed of the "goings on" in other Clubs and Circles around the country, but I must admit that the letters always seem to be from the same people - so, come on, fellow wine-makers, - put pen to paper and don't leave it to the few people who are regular letter-writers.

Blackpool was one of my great worries, for just a few days before the Conference my Vice-Chairman and Awards Boffin - Roy Dutcher - was taken ill, and for the following six months was laid flat on his back. He has slowly made progress and we have great hopes that we will have him fighting fit for 1981 at Exeter. This appears to be one of our costly Conferences - at Exeter University - but everywhere is costly these days. I hope you will all give N.A.W.B. your support. The Saturday night dance is called a Carnival Dance - to enable those of you who wish to wear fancy dress - to let your hair down. We are able to do this for this year - but of course when we are at a Conference Town - we are guests of the Mayor and may only do as the Mayor and his Corporation wish. Incidentally, we have been invited to hold our 1982 Conference at Scarborough and they inform us they have made many alterations and extensions, so we are promised very comfortable accommodation.

I had a letter some weeks ago from a member wishing to know how one was elected to the Executive of N.A.W.B. So, for anyone else wishing to know, may I tell all those enthusiastic persons - please write to our Secretary, Doug Ives, 33 Heworth Road, York, giving the name of the person to be nominated and the name of the person who seconds the nomination. This also applies to anyone putting a motion to the A.G.M. So don't be shy - but firstly, make sure the person wishes to be nominated.

You will note that over the past few years we have been unable to receive entries to the National Conference Competition, by post or rail. This was not a service widely used but had to be curtailed when the premises we were using refused to accept parcels as part of a Security measure. For those who wish to enter wine or beer and not able to attend personally, I am sure someone attending from the local Club would be only too willing to assist. If you are near an Executive Member of N.A.W.B. I am sure you will receive some assistance.

I hope to enjoy the weekend at Exeter with many of you and will remind you to book through Mr. Lenn Drysdale for accommodation. Competition entries to Mr. Norman Chiverton, Tombola to Mr. Brian Edwards. The Fancy Dress on Saturday Night is optional - but there are prizes for a good effort. Best of all, come and enjoy the weekend - you won't have to worry about drinking and driving. Those coming by British Rail can claim a reduced rail fare for attending the University of Exeter weekend Conference of N.A.W.B.

Now I feel it time to wish every one of you a bright and Happy Xmas and may 1981 be Happy and Prosperous for you all.

Cheers, Happy Drinking.

SYBIL HILL

CHAIRMAN

STOP PRESS

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Additional information received from Committee Meeting held on 23rd November, 1980:

PATRONAGE

A number of firms have been invited to become Patrons of N.A.W.B. We are delighted to announce that the following companies have become Patrons:-

- CHEMPRO LTD.
- CONTINENTAL WINE EXPERTS LTD.
- EDME MALT EXTRACTS AND BEER KITS
- UNICAN FOODS LTD.
- VIKING (GEORGIE) BREWS LTD.
- VINA (HOME WINEMAKING) SUPPLIES LTD.
- WALKER DESMOND & SONS LTD.

EXETER CONFERENCE

Anyone attending the Exeter Conference on either full board or a day ticket, must apply in advance to Lemm Drysdale, Richmondfield Drive, Barwick in Elmet, Near Leeds. No applications at the door will be entertained.

Children up to the age of ten years will be charged at £16, plus V.A.T., for full board for the weekend.

WANTED - PROJECTIONIST

An appeal from our Programme Secretary, May Drysdale, for some volunteer to operate a Projector - 8mm - on the Saturday morning of the Conference from 10.0 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

If you can help, write to May at the above address.

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Request from Membership Secretary, Jim Chettle - 45 Oak Tree Drive, Gedling, Notts. Will all Circle Secretaries please let Jim have your new address if it has changed since you last forwarded your membership.

WINE STEWARDS

Will anyone who wishes to be a Judges' steward at the Exeter Conference, 1981, please write to the Convener of Judges, Maurice Matthews, 1 Meadow Way, Ringwood, Hants, BH24 1RY.

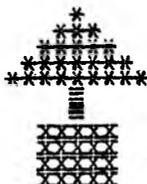
1981 DIARY

T. I. & J. Smith Ltd., London, SW19 3UT have produced "The Compleat Home Wine-maker's and Brewer's Diary", priced at £2.55 which contains recipes for wine and beer for each month, and a list of ingredients to avoid and a wealth of information for the home winemaker and brewer. The diary is produced in association with our Past President, Den Turner, St. Jude, Ladygate Lane, Ruislip, HA4 7QT.

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If any members of your Circle have not yet joined this year, will you please point out to them that, to enjoy all the rights of membership, including entering in the Members' Classes, they must have joined by the 6th January, 1981.

ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE
MAY I WISH ALL MEMBERS A
CONVIVIAL XMAS AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR



KEN HILL,
EDITOR
18 Laxton Road, Liverpool,
L25 0PQ