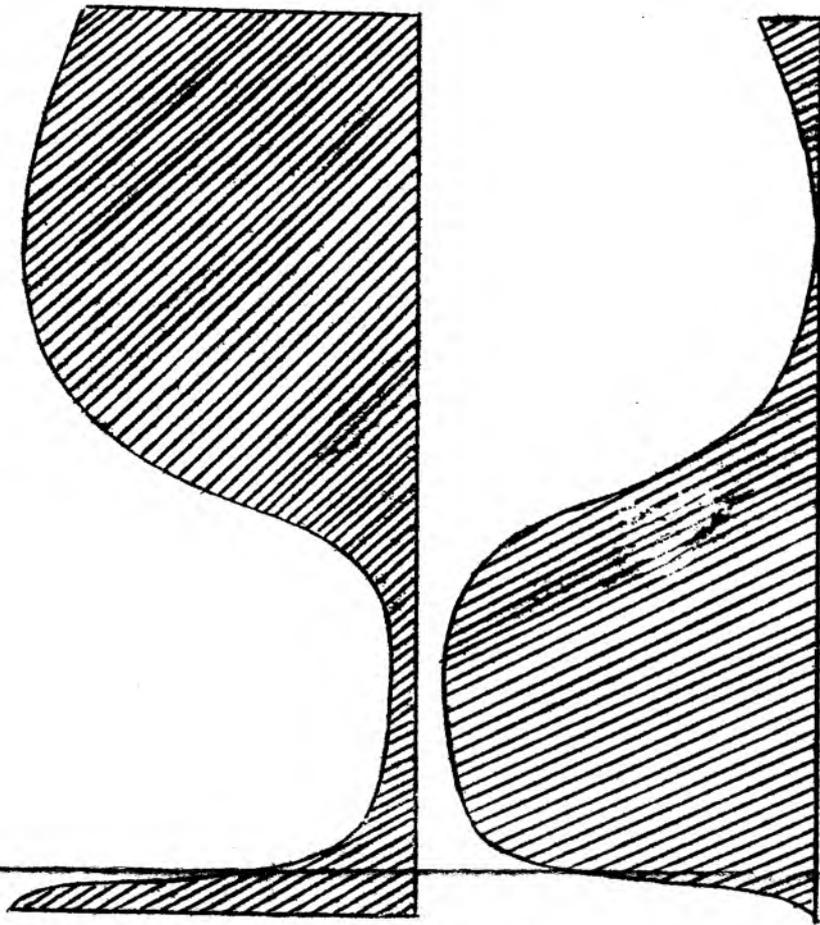


National Association  
of  
Wine & Beer makers



NAWWB

NEWS & views

February 1982.

PATRONS - Chempro Ltd., Continental Wine Experts Ltd., Edme.,  
Ritchie Products., Southern Vineyards Ltd., Unican Foods Ltd.,  
Viking (Geordie) Brews Ltd., Vina Home Winemaking Supplies Ltd.,  
Walker Desmond & Sons Ltd.

After a very hectic last few weeks we are now certain this will be our best National yet - the best laid plans etc. --- Your Committee are knee deep in the final preparations and entries are simply pouring in - if you haven't entered yet get that form filled in now and we hope that Norman will smile favourably on you if you happen to be a couple of days late - but of course you have already sent your entries in haven't you? Maurice tells me all you lucky judges will be having a very busy time indeed but then that's what we enjoy isn't it?

One or two things have again slipped past our scrutineers' eagle eyes in the schedule so here are one or two points to note:

FRIDAY NIGHT FANCY DRESS DANCE will begin at 8.00 not 9.00. Judging will take place at 9.30 and the prizes will be sparkling wine.

JUDGES' BRIEFING is in the Spa theatre and not the Ocean Rooms, Sat. am at 8.30.

TROPHY PRESENTATION AND AGM on Sunday am in the Spa Theatre not the Ocean Rooms.

Some entries will be received on Saturday morning from 8.15 to 8.45 but only if absolutely necessary. After all you don't want to have your wine judged when it hasn't had time to settle do you? The longer on the judging bench the better so let's have them all in on Friday if at all possible. Cookery entries remain as per schedule.

Under no circumstances will you be allowed to take commercial wine or beer into the Conference Areas - you have been warned. Even home made wine in commercial bottles which still have commercial labels on them will be frowned on so wash the labels off.

The wine tasting on Saturday morning will have four types of commercial wine to titillate your palate - white, 2 reds and a rosé. You will be asked to state the year, country of origin and type. Should be easy enough??? The winner will receive 2 goblets and well deserved too if she gets that all right. Come on ladies don't let me down.

We have not had the response we expected for stewards so we hope some of you will come forward and give a helping hand. All welcome.

Can I point out that the Conference rate at the Ambassador Hotel of £36 does not include Saturday lunch. Those of you not involved on the Spa on Saturday morning - we hope most of you will be of course spending money on the tombola, trying the wine tasting and visiting the trade stands - will perhaps be taking the opportunity of visiting some of the little jewels of Yorkshire at this time so will not require lunch at the hotel.

Can I suggest that a visit to my own City of York - of which I am justly proud - is a must for anyone in this part of the world for the first time. Today, with the sun shining on the Minster and the Walls, it looks absolutely breathtaking. You can get here by diesel - a 40 mins. trip and the Scarborough station is quite handy for the Spa. It's about the same time by car.

A visit to Filey - just 5 miles south - straight up the road from the Spa, is another good idea. We had some marvellous holidays there when our children were young - gosh that's some time ago.

Whitby, Sleights and Robin Hood's Bay are all beautiful fishing communities and just wait till you taste our Yorkshire fish and chips. There's nothing to beat walking along the harbour wall to the lighthouse eating fish and chips out of a paper. Trouble is you usually meet that 'posh' friend and try to hide or jump in the water. A Harbour Bar ice cream is a must as well.

But I digress, back to Saturday lunch. The Spa restaurant is open and you can get a good meal there or the restaurants and cafés are open in the centre of town.

Three letters in my postbag this time. No. 1 comes from Vic Goffen, Secretary of A.W.N.G.J. of 13. Monks Orchard, Petersfield, Hants.

Dear Marjorie,

I'm sure that many others, like myself, feel very deeply for you after accepting such a taxing post as P&O and News Letter Editor to find that your public's reaction is so negative.

I often feel the same as Secretary to the Guild. Although since taking office I have dealt with over a thousand pieces of correspondence, I too feel neglected if a whole week passes without a line from someone. But have no fear, it takes but one controversial letter to start the ball rolling. I well remember at school having to speak during debates against a subject I would normally support. The aftermath was terrific. I was 'beaten' from pillar to post after these debates and so I believe it can be if someone sets the ball rolling with a 'wayout' letter. How about it folks, who dares?

We are always looking for something new to stimulate more interest in New and Views so dig friends and send in your ideas. One idea I had in mind was a competition, no prizes needed, to ask members to relate their most embarrassing moment while pursuing this great hobby of ours. The Sunday Observer used this as part of their 'Win Your Weight In Wine' competition this year and some of the stories were out of this world.

Tell you what, here's one to start the ball rolling.

I was giving a talk to the Worthing Wine Circle on 'Yeasts and Fermentation' and had emphasised the importance of using the starter bottle method to produce a healthy, fully working media under near sterile conditions.

A charming old gentleman asked many pertinent questions and finished by saying that he was never successful in getting his starter bottle active, was there anything I could advise him to do that he had not already done. Well! It appeared that he had in fact done all one would deem necessary so I jokingly replied, 'Each time you pass your bottle give it a shake and say a little prayer'.

Immediately the audience went berserk. They clapped, laughed, and stamped their feet.

'Goodness', I said to the Chairman, 'was it as funny as that?' 'My dear fellow' he replied, 'What do you think. That was the Vicar'.

Best wishes to you both, Vic.

Many thanks Vic. Anyone cap that 'embarrassing moment'?

A letter in reply to my comments about liqueurs last time from Stephen Ramsey of Belmont Wine Circle, Co. Durham.

Dear Marjorie,

The News and Views Nov. '81 have moved me to write in defence of home-made liqueurs. It was a pleasure to read Bob Marsden's points about the use of Spirits akin to the liqueur type aimed for and his suggestion that liqueurs should be in a class of their own. I would add that we should only need enter a half-size bottle in the liqueur class. Has anyone else noticed the increasing difficulty in obtaining Polish Spirit since the sad troubles in its country of origin. I question the comments which followed Bob's letter:- Liqueurs banned? Indeed not! Must contain homemade wine? Is so, how much do you advocate - one ml, 19 fl. ozs? NO, the rule of thumb is IF you use wine in making Liqueurs then it must be homemade. So far as not wanting to judge the liqueur class, neither would I (even if I were a Judge) if I was judging mere fortified wines purporting to be liqueurs.

As a final plea, I don't really care what the rules are: vodka/whisky; with/without wine; fortified wine class/liqueur class of its own, I will continue to follow the rules and compete with the best of you but PLEASE leave liqueurs somewhere in the schedule so that I can at least TAKE PART in the NATIONAL.

Yours amateurly in wine, beer and liqueur making, Stephen Ramsey.

Sorry Stephen you have failed to move me from my own point of view but I must just point out that we have a class for liqueurs in our schedule and we also ask for  $\frac{1}{2}$  bottles only.

And now from my old friend Stan Baker:

In reply to Philip Delmon's letter about the sample bottle of competitors' entries known

affectionately among the winemaking fraternity as the 'perks-bottle'. It could be termed as an unsavoury practice but when one is dealing with wines, commercial or home made, it is not always possible to fully assess the quality until the wine is in the mouth. The wine should then either be swallowed or ejected into a vessel such as a spittoon.

A 'perks bottle' is essentially a bottle for the collection of wine that is left in the glass after the assessment has been completed. Wines that are bacterial or are grossly unsound should be poured into the spittoon; only wines that are sound but out of balance should be blended for future consumption.

I first saw the practice of pouring the leftovers into a perks bottle when I first started assessing wine quality in the middle sixties and only on occasion have I made use of a 'perks' bottle. In recent years I have almost totally abandoned the habit because, at best, the wines are of a characterless nature, Blending the leftovers probably works best with dessert wines when flavour, sweetness and alcohol tend to mask out all unsavoury tastes. or in a medium sweet white class when several of the wines are over acid and some are too sweet. Rarely have I found a dry class, either red or white, making a good blend.

Blending is a very important aspect of commercial winemaking. Nearly all commercial wines are blended - only the varietals - Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay etc. are single grape wines. Usually the proportions of grape varieties used in blended wines varies from year to year dependant on the summer weather.

Blending is the art of the winemaker. Formulae are not always effective because of variation in the vintage. Although white champagne is mostly made from red grapes it is the blend of grape flavour, alcohol, combined with the long maturation of the wine on the lees in the bottle, combined with the trapped carbon dioxide, that transforms an often poor basic wine into something elegant, capable of commanding high prices. Autolysing yeast cells are often used to produce flavours in wine. Some years ago at an Essex Show, Master Winemaker, Rosa Dodds provided the table wine for the Judges' lunch. All comments at the table were very favourable and only after the last drop was consumed did Rosa announce that the wine was a blend of filtered out wine lees.

Regarding Philip Delmon's comment about the wine being the property of the competitor. Most competitors 'donate' the bottle of wine in the hope that it will get an award. If the wine wins in its class it may have to go into another class as best wine in show etc. In my opinion, if Judges were rationed to the amount of wine that they may use for assessment purposes it would tend to inhibit their style. Some judges need more wine than others in order to assess the bouquet.

I hope the Saturday afternoon lectures at the National will continue and the commercial winetasting contest, this year organised by Sybil Hill will become an annual event. Recognising commercial wines is one of the most challenging and enjoyable tasks I know.

Cheers, Stan.

Many thanks to Jo and Bob Deal for their letter and good wishes.

Our condolences go to the family of Ken Gore-Browne, a past Chairman of York and District Winemakers' Circle. Ken did quite a lot of printing for the National in the past and had in fact, just finished printing the cards for the AGM when he passed away suddenly last Monday. He will be sadly missed.

Nominations for committee this year include - P. Awberry, K. Bilham, K. Butcher and J. Chettle. all retiring members who are seeking re-election, Mrs. S. Lucas who was co-opted onto committee this year to fill a vacancy, Dave Pulley, this year's Fed. Rep. Marjorie Ives, this year's Circle Rep. and Mr. G. Lashbrook an individual member from Taunton. As there are eight nominations for the seven places there will of course be an election at the A.G.M.

I have some information on self-catering accommodation and caravan sites for anyone interested. Give me a ring if you want the details.

STOP PRESS. We have had another trophy donated for this year's Nationals - from the ACE of CLUBS CIRCLE we have received a shield to be presented to the winner of class 15E - Fruit Wine - White or Golden Dry - Apple Base. Yet another trophy to be won win a single bottle.

See you in Scarborough,

*Marjorie Ives*