

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS AND VIEWS

MAY 1983

Dear Members,

As some of our more astute members may have already noticed, several changes have been made since the last issue of the Newsletter.

A new cover.

The inside front cover, with information which, it is hoped, will be of use to the members during the course of the year.

New posts of responsibility for the National Executive Committee, and we welcome two new faces - Judy Irwin and Gerry Sparrow.

A more convenient size, in an endeavour to keep postal costs (and subscriptions) as low as possible, whilst giving you the same amount of information, albeit in a smaller print size. Before reaching for your quills, I would make mention that I tried out the new size on a number of unsuspecting (and mostly elderly) members at the Wales and West Festival and, without exception, all assured me that they could read the sample with ease. Even our Chairmen!

Lastly, my new address, and was it a coincidence that this was front page news a few weeks later? Richmond Council boasts the second best bottle bank in the Country - 253 tons!

THE CONFERENCE AND SHOW AT SOUTHAMPTON

Rain, icy blasts and some long spells of sunshine greeted us over the 3 days - much like the Show itself, somebody said.

Although, following the Show, the Committee were pleased to receive the usual appraisal, it must be admitted that there were several niggling circumstances (mostly not of their making - please read on) which prompted our regular (and not so regular) readers to write and, unfortunately, these criticisms have been passed to me by my predecessor and have to appear in my first Newsletter.

But before I endeavour to explain some of the unexpected 'happenings', I would remind members that in order to have the whole Show prepared for you from 2 p.m. onwards on the Friday afternoon, most members of the Committee arrive on the Thursday evening, to make an early start the following morning.

On this occasion, I happened to be first to arrive, I booked in at Reception and to kill time before the bar was due to open, I went down to the Students Union to discover, to my horror, during a chat with the Catering Manageress, that she and all her staff would not be vacating the hall until after 4 p.m. on the following

afternoon, due to an end of term luncheon for 700 students! Stunned by this news, I located the bar and imparted this calamitous start to the Show Manager, which helped the bar receipts, and even more so when the others arrived.

After a hasty breakfast, a deputation called into the University offices where we were informed they had made a ghastly mistake, failing to realise they had inadvertently arranged an organiser's nightmare - a double booking! And because the Catering Staff were hard at work in the kitchens preparing 700 lunches, and because the tables held only 400 people (causing a second sitting or, at best, a staggered sitting), and because there was no other hall in which to seat these diners, we left with the dismal prospect of having to kick our heels all the morning and to arrange the room at break-neck speed after the last person had finished their meal, and stubbed out their cigarette (totally ignoring all the signs to the contrary). At the appointed hour, before the final wisp of smoke could add a further stain to the ceiling, our Stewards pounced, all H... was let loose and just over an hour later - the hall was ready! Only just in time to accept the first entries.

At this point, I would apologise (again) to all those Stewards who were turned away because there was nothing to do, and I know that some of you had got up especially early, living some considerable distance away. The circumstances here were 1 in 25 (years) hopefully, but to evidence how difficult it is to estimate the amount of help required and offered, I would remind members that last year at Scarborough I had the services of 19 Stewards throughout the week-end, whereas, this year, offers of assistance topped the 70 mark! Sincerest thanks to you all, to our Local Liaison Officer, John Gorton and his wife Sue, to all the lovely raffle-ticket ladies on both evenings, and the Committee's particular gratitude to one of our 'oldest hands', Frank Scholes, who will just not stop working. He laboured from dawn to dusk, and on 3 occasions I had to lead him to a chair so that he would rest for a few minutes. As retiring Chief Steward last week, I proposed that, because of his dedication over many years, he should be rewarded by an Honorary Membership, to which the Committee agreed most gladly. Congratulations Frank, and just between you and me - Very Many Happy Returns on your 80th Birthday!

One excellent end-result came about by having a sufficiency of Stewards. All those who were not found jobs immediately were directed to sell tickets on the Tombola Stand, and Brian Edwards reported that every single item disappeared well before the Show closed. I will assume that's good news!

Brian did confirm that it was very good news at the following Committee meeting, and I can report that this '3rd rate Jumble Sale' (as it's described in a later letter), together with the raffles made a total nett profit for your Association equivalent to keeping your subscriptions down by £1 per head!!! Some individuals will knock anything. The reason for doubling the price of the raffle tickets on the Saturday evening was an experiment to reduce the actual number of tickets involved and so speed up the filling of the drum, apart from the fact that the prizes were of higher value.

Reverting to the Exhibition Hall, and to all the members who handed in their entries after the lunchtime panic, you will now appreciate the 'bare' look of the hall, the missing white paper from the benches, the non-appearance of the staging for the 3-bottle classes and the other usual embellishments.

Funnily enough, the majority including the Judges, liked the 'new-look', and a motion was tabled (1) at the following Committee meeting that, in future whenever possible, we should use the system of one, two or more single tables per class, the bottles placed in rows of 3 only, leaving room on the front half for the Judges equipment, which will eliminate having to position at least 50 EXTRA tables between the benches, and, more importantly, having to clear them away after judging - usually just before lunchtime.

It also saves 'breaking down' the staging and man-handling very heavy loads at the end of a very busy Saturday, following bottle collection.

From the economical view-point, it could save on transport and driver's costs.

The total number of bottles was 3204 from 283 exhibitors, bottle reception worked extremely well, but having Norman and Sarah Chiverton, myself and 3 Stewards hanging about during the last hour (7 till 8 p.m.) for a dozen or so bottles was considered a waste of time, especially as we all had to get back for dinner and to change for the evening's festivities, so the Schedule Committee may decide to bring the closing time forward to 7 p.m. The few problems associated with using the 'new' labels were quickly overcome, although it was pointed out by the Judges in the white classes that the labels COULD be read when holding the bottles up to a bright light. Naturally, they DIDN'T, and it will be remedied next year by using a dark outer cover.

Congratulations must also be on the cards for Roy Butcher, our Programmer, and Jim Chettle, the Manipulator (I suppose I've got that right!), together with 'that damned computer' (as it is ascribed in another later letter) for the wizardry and speed in producing the results - a full list being presented to the Amateur Winemaker by 3.30 p.m. and I understand that all the award cards have been despatched to their very worthy winners. Extra goblets have been engraved for the 'tied' trophies, and arrangements made for delivery.

The only REAL problem at the judging session were a few judges and wine stewards themselves. (Yes, I will say it, knowing that my remarks will be sent to the President, Chairman and Executive Committee of the Guild of Judges), but let me hasten to add that the recalcitrants are in the minority. Firstly, the writing of some of the Judges is little better than that found on a Doctor's prescription and leads to problems in the Awards section. (Please refer to the letter from Ben Turner). Far worse, and I will not mince words, we have been frustrated over the last 3 or 4 years endeavouring to clear the area after Judges have finished their individual classes to prepare the room for the opening in the afternoon. It's bad enough for the Stewards (the workers, not the tasters) to have to walk around groups of people holding up proceedings talking about the good, bad or indifferent merits of their class, but the real villains of the piece are those who INSIST on searching through all the classes in a vain bid to extract as many winners as they can find of their Circle colleagues.

After making civil requests that they leave the hall, then physically escorting them to the exits, they had the audacity to trick the Stewards, to creep back again - and even to going to such lengths as to stand behind finalising Judges, and to pry over their shoulders in an effort to scan the marking sheets.

In previous years, we have experienced fanatics peering through field-glasses from the balcony in an endeavour to scrutinise the bottle labels, but I would suggest the behaviour this year, apart from appearing unethical, is a disgrace and bordering on discredit to the Guild. Contentious, you may think, but it could restore rationality next year without the need for confrontation. It could also help to fill up the next Newsletter!

To the overwhelming majority of Judges, this year's Convenor, Maurice Matthews conveys his thanks for helping to judge some 3200 bottles of wine and beer, etc., stressing that it was a smooth and professional operation, and hopes that you all enjoyed yourselves. There now follows an apology on behalf of the Executive Party.

We apologise for inconvenience caused by holding the briefing in a room too small for comfort. The Committee made one mistake, and the members made 20. Let me explain. There should have been 85 stewards only, but because some people filled in the wrong Application Forms (requesting to be GENERAL Stewards), an extra 20 appeared on the Saturday morning, resulting in consternation coupled with embarrassment on the face of the Convenor, and 105 people to be assigned to 84 Judges. Hence, some Judges were lucky(?) in having two stewards. (The information on the inside front cover should clarify matters in future).

And whilst we are on explanations. The souvenir glasses. Yes, I agree, I dislike them too. Our supplier for many years has diversified (can't be blamed!) and after our Chairman had located a new supplier the glasses were ordered in good time. Unfortunately, this merchant let us down which resulted in a panic to find yet another one. Eventually, he was discovered but because of the time factor, we had to 'make do' with the straight-sided glasses, in which the Company (and their machines) specialised. The glasses were delivered just in time for the Show!

The Committee has received a suggestion that Beer Judges might appreciate a souvenir BEER glass instead, and first reaction from Committee is favourable. Through the Newsletter, may I ask if this idea would harmonise with the wishes of ALL Beer Judges. (Although better known for their thirsts than their letter writing, I will expect an avalanche after this interpellation!). Come to think of it, having totted up 237 wine glasses myself, I'll go along with that idea.

I have not had the opportunity to attend any talks since joining the Committee 10 years ago but I understand this year's speaker, Gladys Blacklock, was well appreciated. The wine tasting event did not attract as much interest as anticipated - only 48 having a go - and thanks are extended to Sybil and Ken Hill for having purchased the wine and for staging it. One wag (must have been a non-smoker) mentioned that so much time elapsed between the tastings that Ken could sit back and enjoy several of his cigars! Must have been why I failed on one of the reds - thinking it a Claret - with a cigar-box nose! Nonetheless Ken, I hope to be drinking with you at the World Wine Fair again this year. For those, who are, as yet, unaware of this event - it's at Bristol on the waterfront from 8th - 16th July, Advance tickets £4.50 which includes a free goblet and 8 wine tasting vouchers. British Rail and Coach Companies run combined fare and entrance day trips.

At the Friday evenings Social, there appeared to be plenty of room for everyone and, personally, I found the quietness of the bar (after I had disconnected one of the loud-speakers) and the seating most acceptable. It has now developed into a ritual for members of TASTERS to get together at the Nationals with their fellow travellers from previous wine tours - last year, following a visit to California, and this year, having returned from South Africa only 10 days before the Show. I only mention this (you understand) as a prelude to a rather amusing story!

After having made a 'ring' of some 2 dozen chairs in one of the corners of the bar, I placed a number of bottles, including a gallon jar, on the table next to the Circle signboard, and settled down to look at all the photographs being passed around when suddenly I became aware of a group of strangers standing behind us - merely holding empty glasses. Thinking they might be lost, I got up and asked their leader, a lady, if I could be of any help. Her reply was very matter of fact (which surprised me) asking if she could taste some of the wine from the gallon jar. Naturally, greatly flattered and gentleman as I am, I poured out half a glassful for her, whereupon (to my greater surprise), the rest of the party formed a long queue and held out their glasses! Obviously, after winning 40 National awards and 10 trophies, one gets the feeling that you can make wine, but I couldn't understand WHY a group of strangers should have descended upon me - and polished off half-a-gallon of my best elderberry! Eventually, curiosity (and thoughts for the remainder of my wine) got the better of me and, to their absolute embarrassment, it turned out that, having espied the board TASTERS placed on the table alongside the gallon jar, they had assumed it an invitation to request TASTERS!! I won't divulge which Circle this dozey lot are from, but next time I use your airport, I shall be disappointed if I don't meet Lorraine Chase with an empty glass in her hand! It's amazing what you can get away with by appearing silly.

The Saturday evening Civic Reception at the Guildhall could have got off to a wet start but, as luck would have it, the weather held, and so did all the Committee - their breath! This time, I apologise on behalf of the Bus Company which had received implicit instructions re pick-up and timing over 6 months earlier, in addition to a confirmatory telephone call only that morning and I can reveal why you had that lengthy wait at the entrance to the Halls of residence - all the buses went to the wrong place! When this was realised by the drivers, they had difficulty in getting back to us - finding their way around the one-way streets.

Mind you, they weren't the only bad navigators in Southampton. Some members didn't find the Show until Sunday afternoon. For this, the staff at the University have taken full blame - we should have been supplied with detailed maps, in time to send to you. Next year, as your new P.R.O. I'll get you to the Show on time, and if any of you miss it, I have authorisation from the Committee that you may take something lovely in the barME !!

By the time we arrived at the Guildhall, where we were the guests of the Mayor and Corporation of Southampton, everybody appeared to have a raging thirst and the complimentary glasses of wine were most welcome. The setting was perfect, the band made conversation impossible but, as consolation, I thought the Fancy Dress Parade was hilarious. Congratulations to all the contestants - winners and losers - for giving us all such a good laugh. How you survived the heat in some of those costumes for best part of the evening beats me, and no doubt, you will be pleased to hear that the Parade will revert to its normal spot on Friday again next year.

We were also delighted to have with us so many Past Presidents and their ladies, especially two of our Elders - Cyril and Lillian Lucas, who we now only have the pleasure of glimpsing on too few occasions. I believe Cyril Berry was the only missing Past President.

On the Sunday morning, doubtless after a few Alkasetzers, the Presentation started promptly and was carried out so efficiently that it caused a long time-gap (and consequent annoyance) before the start of the AGM. In future, the AGM will start after a 15 minute interval.

A.G.M. SOUTHAMPTON

The President, Mr Ken Hill opened the Meeting.

Apologies - were received from Messrs. C.J.J.Berry, G.Christmas, Mr & Mrs P.Johnson, Mr & Mrs J. Tompkins, Mesdames A.Newton, J.Newton, E.Murphy.

The Chairman, Mr Roy Butcher, made the unusual request (on this, our 25th Anniversary) that the Executive Committee stand and drink a toast to the members, pointing out that the wine had been left over from the testing competition.

Rate of Expenses

Arising from the Minutes which were adopted unanimously by the Meeting, the Secretary, Mr Doug Ives, reported, as was required under the Rules, on the Rate of Expenses updated during the year. After a reminder that the previous rates had been held for 3 years, the new rates are as follows:-

Travelling Expenses	- 2nd Class Rail, or 10.8 pence per mile - road.
Subsistence	- Up to a maximum of £1.35 for 5 hours or over. £2.85 for 10 hours or over Overnight stay - £21.60

The Meeting approved unanimously.

Chairmans Report

The Chairman, Mr Roy Butcher, in presenting his report, described the re-organisation which had taken place during the last year, the Membership files now on the computer, and easy to re-produce, were completed just before the original Addressograph needed attention, and the Schedule had been printed with a saving in costs.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Mr Peter Awbery, presented the Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ending 30th June 1982 and after agreeing to a request from Mr I Morgen to produce a breakdown of expenses in future, the report was accepted and carried by a unanimous vote.

(I am advised that the Accounts and Balance Sheet will be forwarded to any Member upon receipt of a S.A.E. to the Treasurer. Ed.)

Executive

The following were elected:- N. Chiverton, B. Edwards, D. Ives, G. Sparrow.
Circles Rep: Ms I. Irwin

Item for Discussion

'That owing to the poor quality of cork flanged stoppers and the difficulty in their availability, in future flange cork with white tops be used'

This perennial issue was discussed yet again, for and against, and the Committee has suggested a referendum be obtained through the Newsletter, but the Chairman stressed that no decision would be taken without full consultation with the Guild of Judges.

I would just add a personal observation which may prompt some response after being amused to hear an elderly lady mention that most Federations have already made the change to plastic corks, and chiding the National for being behind the times. Surely, one can illustrate the difference with a very succinct simile:-

On the one hand, you will find various plastic stoppers, metal foil caps and other cheap closures on wines in Supermarkets -

On the other hand, only the finest wines, capped with the finest REAL corks are to be found in the finest wine merchants

Being 'traditional' cannot in any way be smirched disparagingly as being 'behind the times', but when Lafite, Latour and Margaux change to plastic corks, I will be the first to insist the National do likewise!

Nomination of President

The Executive Committee nominated Mr C.J.J.Berry, Editor of Amateur Winemaker, as President. Mr Berry has accepted and sent his regrets that he was unable to attend due to a prior engagement to lecture to U.S. Winemakers at Cambridge. The retiring President, Mr Ken Hill, thanked everyone for their support during his period in office and handed the Presidents Insignia to Mr Derek Smith in Mr Berry's absence.

A.O.B.

At the close of the Meeting, Mr R. Fisher queried the exclusion of any other business and was requested to make any points through the Newsletter.

(At the time of going to press, none received. Ed.)

The President closed the Meeting by thanking all for attending and in wishing everyone a safe journey home, his hopes of meeting again at Nottingham next year.

SOUVENIR GLASSES

The Committee wish me to clarify the position regarding the presentation of souvenir glasses. It has always been the policy to reward the services of General Stewards with glasses (as well as Judges and First Prize winners etc.) whilst it is considered an honour to be a Wine Steward for a Judge at the National Show.

A GROUSE (OR, PERHAPS, A BRACE OF GROUSE!)

Several Members, displeased to discover a caravanette on the campus at Southampton, enquired whether a charge had been made for this facility and, if not, whether it would be permissible to bring their vehicles next year to Nottingham University. It is understood that the occupants had purchased Day Tickets, and it is noted that full University Facilities had been used. A ruling will follow.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Staging as a whole, or could be encouraged to sell in small parcels. S.A.E. for details. Offers invited and all considered. Box 101.

Addressograph Machine slightly in need of repair, of interest, perhaps, to an Antique Dealer. Offers. Box 102

Corks unlimited supplies, all cork, flanged, suitable for competition in 100, 500, 1000, 5000 and 10,000 packets. £5 per 100. Large discounts over ½ million. Buyer collects (London) or carriage extra. Box 103

SURVEY - FEDERATIONS, CIRCLES, MEMBERS

We shall be pleased to receive the following details:-

1. The number of Circles (together with names and addresses of Secretaries, if possible) in all the Federations throughout the British Isles, whether or not members of N.A.W.B.
2. All Circles, whether or not members of N.A.W.B. or a Federation, together with name and address of Secretary and approximate number of members.
3. Names and addresses of individual wine-makers, who are neither members of N.A.W.B. nor a Circle.

Even if you think you are forwarding a duplication of facts, we shall be pleased to hear from you.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 13th - 19th August - Ardennes, Rhine and Mosel, Luxembourg, Trier, Wine tour, 6 nights, Private Luxury Coach, Stay Rundesheim, Wine Museum, Tastings etc. £175. Details: TASTERS, 8 Hollybank Close, Hampton, Middlesex or phone 01-979-9725. (Our 54th Wine Tour)
- 3rd - 8th October - Champagne and Rhineland. Sea/Coach 5 Nights £158.50
Details: Dave Ellis, Medway 79111
- 8th - 22nd October - New Wine Tour to Penedes, Spain. Flight from Getwick, 14 Nights, Full Board, Hotel on Beach at Salou, Visits and Tastings at Torres, Codorniu, Freixenet, Montserrat, Liqueur Tasting, Barbecue, All Rooms Private Bath, W.C. etc. Optional Excursions to Barcelona, Andorra in the Pyrenees etc. £225 (5 Seats Available) Details: TASTERS, 8 Hollybank Close, Hampton, Middlesex or phone 01-979-9725.

- 21st - 23rd October - The Surrey and South Thames Wine and Beer Making Federation South of England Festival at Warners Holiday Camp, Hayling Island, Full English Breakfast, Four Course Lunches and Dinners, Dances and Cabaret on Friday and Saturday. £45. Details: R. F. Curtis, 82 Inglewood Avenue, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1SL
As their Founder and First President many years ago, I feel it not unduly pertinent to ask why there are no BEER classes?
- February/March 1985 - Wine Tour to Australia - 1 week Melbourne, 1 week Adelaide, 1 week Sidney, Visits and Tastings to Australia's best, Clare, Watervale, Barossa Valley, Tshbilk, Coonawarra, Hunter Valley etc.
Details: TASTERS, 8 Hollybank Close, Hampton, Middlesex or phone 01.979-9725 (18 Bookings already)
Just for interest, Melbourne is roughly the same latitude as Jersey, Sicily and San Francisco. Sidney is almost the same as Morocco, Beirut, Cape Town and Los Angeles.

NEXT NATIONAL

Nottingham University - March 30th/April 1st 1984

THE NATIONAL GUILD OF WINE AND BEER JUDGES

A completely revised 63-page Handbook entitled "Judging Wine and Beer" has been published by the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges and is available at £2 per copy from Amateur Winemaker Publications Limited, South Street, Andover, Hants., or from A.P. Broadwater, 199 Cambridge Road, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex, IG3 8NA.

Produced primarily for the benefit of all concerned with judging, organising and competing with amateur wines and beers at the many well-supported shows, the new Handbook includes for the first time sections on judging mead, fortified wines and liqueurs. The Guild standard methods of judging wine and beer have been further developed to reduce subjective differences between judges, and these are backed up by an extensive glossary of wine and beer terms, since it has been found the disagreements on the quality of wine and beer are often based on different meanings given to words describing sensory impressions.

Inevitably, amateur wines and beers are compared, usually favourably, with commercial products and the new Handbook includes detailed descriptions of the main types. These will be of value even to those for whom the tasting of blackberry port or home-brewed bitter are unknown pleasures.

Further information from:-

Public Relations Officer,
National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges
T. McArthur, 19 Tenbury Crescent, Preston Grange, Tyne & Wear, NE29 9EP
Telephone:- North Shields 575805

AN APPEAL

From Mr W. A. Barrow, 5a Fearnville Grove, Leeds, LS8 3DR

On Saturday, 16th April I received 3 photographs of young men dancing with the "Dancing Dummy" together with a note signed 'Victor Sylvester' these were taken at the Guild Hall, Southampton.

The envelope is postmarked "Romford" 7.45p.m. 14th April.

They are not the ones I was expecting mine, being of Doctor Doolittle inspecting a young lady's tonsils.

There being no address to which I could write I appeal through your columns to the owner or the sender to write to me.

With anticipatory thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Bill

(Sounds intriguing. If I'd had that sort of a week-end, the last thing I'd do is to write about it! Ed.)

VIEWS

A letter from Mr K. M. Norman, 21 Mayfield Road, Pinhoe, Exeter, EX4 8PR

Dear Editor

Having returned to "God's own country", Devon from my first ever "away National" I must say how much my friends and I enjoyed our week-end at Southampton. Many thanks to all those concerned in the work involved to arrange for it and to run it.

Until "cardiac hill" venue was chosen two years ago I was sure that the results of my gallon lots would never gain recognition in such an organisation. Encouraged by my fellow winemaker who never does winemaking by scientific calculations but all by taste and, who states categorically in good Devon humour that "he chucks it all in" I studied the schedule, joined the National, and ventured to submit six different wines, and to my joy received significant recognition in two. The stalwart who gave me encouragement received similar recognition in his wine also.

This year having the opportunity to attend at Southampton we again had another go at submitting a few wines that we normally make for drinking at our inter club functions i.e. not made especially for showing but always with a hope that it will be of that standard. It gave us great satisfaction and added to our enjoyable week-end also to come home again with some recognition each.

There was just one "little disappointment" that one of the Rose judges was missing during the "Judges at the Bar" Session the very judge whose opinion was most sought after by me. However, it was a large class and all concerned in the judging session were very late for their lunches and, I understand that National Judges give their services free, so maybe the absence was absolutely

necessary.

Having received our prize cards in less than a fortnight after the event those responsible for compiling them and their prompt despatch deserve our sincere congratulations.

Yours faithfully,

An "Isco" Winemaker.

Congratulations to you, Mr Norman. We hope you will become a regular exhibitor and a regular winner.

And now a letter from our President, Mr Cyril Berry.

Dear Editor

Ben Turner has done me the courtesy of showing me copies of the two letters which he has sent to you on the subject of the 1983 Conference and Show at Southampton, and has invited my comments.

Whilst I make it a general rule never to criticise on the basis of second-hand information I am on this occasion tempted to agree with all his suggestions in his second letter, although I do realise that to try to include so much in the schedule would probably make it unduly expensive to produce. Some tight sub-editing would be necessary!

Difficulties of scattered accommodation which so plagued everyone at Southampton should not arise at Nottingham next year.

As regards the Presidency, mentioned in his first letter, the first I heard of the matter was, I think, about three weeks before the National, when I was surprised, though obviously both honoured and happy, to be invited to serve for a second term. I naturally took it that the Committee had discussed various possibilities and had good reasons for their choice (it is embarrassing to have to confess that I thought it an excellent one!) but certainly I had not sought the office or expected it. Having been elected, however, I shall naturally do all in my power to help, and Ben knows me well enough, I hope, to concede that the last thing I would want to do is to take office if it is felt that I am depriving old friends of their just deserts, or if it is not the general wish. Life is too short!

Yours sincerely,

C. J. J. Berry
President

The two letters from Mr Ben Turner, Past President.

Dear Editor

In years gone by, I always returned from the National inspired to make more and better wines. This year I returned depressed and motivated only to write to you to air my views.

The Schedule was the first irritation; printed in gobbledegook letters that made it look not only very unimpressive but also extremely difficult to read. Furthermore, its white and silver manilla cover looked more appropriate for the

Order of Service at a funeral for a child - had it even been of a manageable size to handle.

Arrival at Southampton University and finding a rather bleak room a car ride from the dining hall, started a depression that deepened steadily as I drove from one building to another trying to find the correct entrance to the room for the Friday Get-Together. Next day, having found where the judging was to be held I discovered that the briefing was to be held in a room that proved to be quite inaccessible for me. Why could it not be held in the foyer or lounge adjacent to the judging room? I gather that it was held in a room that was far too small in any case.

After judging, a car ride back to lunch then another back to Judges at the Bar - my deepest sympathy for those who had to make what I was told was a 25 minutes walk each way. Clearly, no one had visited the University to inspect the facilities, for no one with any knowledge of what was required would have accepted such desperate facilities.

Even the French made spirit and/or liqueur glasses seemed ill chosen with their straight sides quite unsuitable for wine - or beer!

The Trophy presentation and A.G.M. on the Sunday in yet another difficult to find room, was further cause for gloom. There are now so many trophies and for such extraordinary purposes that the glory of winning must be tarnished even if the silver (?) is polished.

The A.G.M. was a farce. Badly timed and poorly conducted with no opportunity for comment on the Chairman's Report, nor, indeed, for general views on any matter from the floor. This was not a conference but the rubber stamping of an autocratic committee. No wonder so few attended.

The appointment by the committee of my old and valued friend Cyril Berry as President for the second time was announced to the members. We had no opportunity to comment, to approve or to disagree. On the face of it Cyril's appointment indicates the committee's paucity of knowledge of personalities that can only be described as perplexing. Has no one on the committee heard of Ivor Morgan, a founder member of the Executive Committee and still working hard in the Guild of Judges, or of Gerry Fowles who has done more for the amateur winemaker in the past five years than any other person?

The retiring President told us to write to News and Views to express the thoughts that we were not permitted to say at the A.G.M.

I beg leave to do so.

Yours sincerely

Ben Turner

Ben's follow-up letter:-

Dear Editor

Lest it be thought from my previous letter that the cold has entered my heart and withered my love for the National, may I offer the Executive Committee some constructive suggestions for next year's gathering.

1. Return to the old style of printed schedule and throw away that damned computer.
2. Publish in the 1984 Schedule the Judges' reports on the classes at the 1983 Show to help the 1984 exhibitors in preparing their entries for the different classes. Tell the 1984 Judges that their class comments will be published in 1985 and ask them to be particularly constructive in their comments
3. Advise exhibitors in certain specialised classes, e.g. sherry, port, sparkling wine, that the appointed Judges will meet them in a private session - that may only last 10 minutes or so - to discuss with them the techniques of producing that style of wine and how to avoid the problems noted by the Judges.
4. Include in the Schedule the information, so ably set out in the Judges' Handbook, on how to prepare wines, beers etc. for a Show.
5. From the same source, include wherever possible before a class, the definition of what wine or beer style and/or what the Judge will be looking for.
6. Hold every activity in the Nottingham University Sports Complex including the presentation of trophies and the A.G.M. Use no other buildings except the residential accommodation.
7. Let the President present the trophies. External dignitaries add nothing to the occasion that the President cannot give.
8. Follow on immediately after the presentation of the trophies with the A.G.M. and leave plenty of time for discussion on every topic and for anything else. The committee should be giving an account of their stewardship and they should give the members plenty of time to comment and ask questions.

Sincerely

Ben Turner.

(A number of points have been dealt with in the foregoing text. Ed.)

A letter from Mr Ivor Morgan.

Dear Sir

I am sad not to be able to write and congratulate the 1982/83 Committee on a successful Conference and Show, it was a travesty of its old self.

Why people pay to become members and are prepared to attend this event, at great cost to themselves, which is no better and, in fact, inferior to any Federation event defies my comprehension.

Southampton University accommodation was 'tatty' and we did little to improve it with the poorly prepared direction signs and information placards. The Trade stands presentation was poor (where were our patrons?) and with the exception of the "A.W." lacking in interest, the Tombola stand was reminiscent of a 3rd rate Jumble Sale.

The one bright spot was the excellent organisation of the competition entries and the work of the Convenor of Judges is to be applauded, although who imagined it was possible to squeeze 200 odd Judges and Stewards into Physics B allocated for the Judges briefing should do their sums again.

Finally, the A.G.M. bordered on the illegal, a meeting called for a certain time

should conform to that detail, and who ever heard of an A.G.M. where there is no Any Other Business to enable the members to voice their opinions of their Committee and Association?

I wish the new Committee every success, but my word they really have got to work hard to make the 1984 Conference (the 24th, the National Association was not formed until 1961 at Harrow, prior to that they were organised by Andover and Bournemouth circles at their expense and risk) come up to the original standard.

Yours faithfully

I. C. Morgen

And finally, a letter from Mr Stan Baker.

Dear Editor

The continued success of any organisation is directly related to the way in which it responds to the needs of the majority of its members; otherwise the membership declines and the organisation becomes defunct.

Many changes have occurred during the first 25 years of N.A.W.B. and although the membership is not as high as it was in the "golden years", sufficient new members join to make up for those who no longer renew their subscription. Perhaps a questionnaire should be sent to immediate past members to ascertain the reasons why they left N.A.W.B.

N.A.W.B. members attend the big weekend for several years. A few may use the venue as a means of exploring the local countryside and few "family" members may treat it as a break from the domestic chores. The great majority of N.A.W.B. members see the Conference and Show as the ideal opportunity to renew old friendships, to meet new acquaintances and to exhibit their wines and beers. If they are lucky they may win a gleaming trophy or at least a place card.

The end of March is "out of season" at seaside resorts, conference towns and universities - that is why N.A.W.B. is offered such favourable rates. Although only the beginning of Spring the average weather over 25 years has been reasonable. TV weather maps have taught us to appreciate the same weather conditions relate to the whole of Britain.

Accommodation wise, many N.A.W.B. members prefer the seaside venues, because they are full of hotels offering a wide range of amenities with prices to suit all pockets. The central complexes are often only a few minutes away along shop filled streets.

On the other hand, university complexes were designed for stays of three years "on campus" not just for three days. Physically they are designed for young active students who would find the twenty minute walk from hall of residence to lecture room an appetizer rather than something of a chore as did some of the aging N.A.W.B. members at the recent Southampton National. Looking to the future, Nottingham is planned for 1984 - the best university complex for N.A.W.B. needs. If the 1986 Warwick University venue has any of the problems of Exeter and Southampton, it may as well be cancelled now!

It has been said that there are few suitable venues in the South but return visits to Bournemouth (last visited in 1964), Torquay (1968) and Margate (1974) could prove very enjoyable, especially as both membership and bottle entry are smaller.

Holiday camps, at one time, were used as N.A.W.B. National venues and Clacton 1965 and Bognor 1967 have adequate hotels outside the camp as well as all of the facilities needed to keep the children occupied within the camp. I cannot recommend the seaside resorts of Caister, Southport and Blackpool - they were, to say the least, rather cold. Perhaps a member of the N.A.W.B. committee could contact the P.R.O at Great Yarmouth?

The Wales and West Festival, second only to the National in size, according to their P.R.O. has held its Annual Show for the past few years at Pontins at Breans Sand, North Somerset. The chalets are self contained with T.V. and meals are either self catering or at the restaurant. There is some private accommodation in the nearby town.

Although we are approaching 1984 "Big Brother" in the shape of TV has not yet caught up with smaller organisations such as N.A.W.B. and members have to be content with a Newsletter. Old fashioned but if published at frequent intervals, still very effective. In the immediate past, the frequency has been somewhat reduced and I am sure that some of the least interested members had almost forgotten that N.A.W.B. existed.

Subscriptions are due again in December 1983, so a questionnaire could be included with the subscription form. The replies may indicate to the N.A.W.B. committee members whether or not they are meeting the members needs.

Cheers.

Stan Baker.

(In fact subscriptions are due on 1st July 1983. To save members forgetting that N.A.W.B. exists, I will endeavour to produce quarterly Newsletters, if I remain as Editor after this edition! Ed.)

Two additional letters received on the day of going to press and which will be answered in the next issue.

The first from Frank Scholes, now an Honorary Member.

Dear Editor

At the A.G.M. at Southampton my wife picked up a Circle League Points Table.

As I do not know how this worked or calculated I took it along to our Circle Meeting and all our Officials were puzzled by it.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to explain how this works in the next issue of News and Views.

Yours fraternally

Frank Scholes.

One final letter from Mr and Mrs Roger Peck, Colchester.

To the P.R.O. SecretaryA letter you may print in the NEWS AND VIEWS.
Please would you get some facts and make a comment

Member No. 1151 Mr & Mrs R. Peck, 'Elvira', Fox Street, Ardleigh, Colchester CO7 7PN

Just had to put pen to paperafter hearing so many comments at the Nationalmany about the item which upset us

First of all congratulations on 99.99% of itThe only black mark we came across was the 25th Anniversary Engraved Glasses distribution.....

On costing the weekend for two at around £130 we found it hard to get home with no souvenir glassYes we did put in many entries but no luck

Please can you tell us how many were purchased?

How were they distributed?

An honest answer pleaseaccounting for every one.....

Because we were told that none were to spare....Not even to buy as in other years and it looked as if boxes of them were given to certain dignitaries on the Sunday morning awards occasion and probably at other times.....Please correct us if we are wrong.....

If we are correct and these are perks for work donecongratulations..... you all did a wonderful job which not many of us would undertake.....But surely the honest bread and butter member must be given a chance to purchase a souvenir (I've got a couple of ties)

We see that the membership dropped from 717 to 611 last year We wonder why? And now a cry for help....If anyone has just one 25th Anniversary glass to spare please get in touch.....

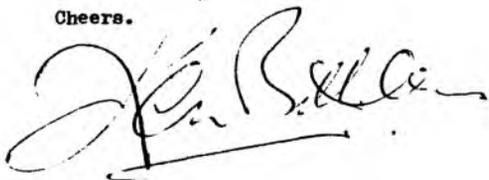
Any comments please from any other members on the subject.....

Yours.....

Roger Peck and Mrs D. G. Peck.

(I was going to end this Newsletter by continuing to be contentious and tossing in the thought that, by amending the Rules, it may have been just sheer coincidence that we missed a number of people at Southampton but, having read the above letter I will dispense with that idea and merely push the typewriter to one side, massage my aching fingers, pour out a glass of wine and sit back to reflect upon that percentage - 99.99%. Thanks Mr and Mrs Peck, it makes it all feel worth while.)

Cheers.



KEN BILLHAM
Editor