

7/16/84

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEER MAKERS

NEWS AND VIEWS



AGENDA

For the Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday 1st April 1984

MINUTES

Of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 27th March 1983.

PATRONS: CUEMPIO LIMITED; CONTINENTAL WINE EXPERTS LIMITED;
EDME MALT EXTRACTS AND BEER KITS; RITCHIE PRODUCTS;
SOUTHERN VINYARDS LIMITED; UNICAN FOODS LIMITED;
VIKING (GEORDIE) BREWS LIMITED;
VINA (HOME WINEMAKING) SUPPLIES LIMITED;
WALKER DESMOND & SONS LIMITED;

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS AND VIEWS

February 1984

Dear Members

As you will have seen on the front cover, this edition of News and Views also contains the minutes of last years Annual General Meeting which was held at the University of Southampton, and this year's Agenda for the meeting to be held at Nottingham University (the first notice having appeared in the schedule sent to all members before Christmas).

It has been noted, in past years, that although each member has been sent a separate Notification for the Annual General Meeting several weeks before the conference, somehow those 'extra' sheets of paper have been mislaid during the pre-show build-up and polishing of bottles, necessitating a further distribution just prior to the meeting. So, in the light of economy may I respectfully remind members who are attending the AGM of a quote from the Earl of Chesterfield, 'I recommend you to take care of the minutes: for hours will take care of themselves'.

Nottingham University has always been a popular venue, situated as it is almost in the centre of the country, apart from the welcome we receive and by all accounts it should prove to be an even better show than those previously held there, hopes being raised even higher at last weeks Executive Committee Meeting by an announcement that the number of entries could well reach the 4000 mark.

We need 40 more wine stewards, 10 Beer stewards, about 25 General stewards, several more helpers for the Tombola stand (as well as gifts- due to its success last year when it was a complete sell-out) so if you feel that your palates need educating and your tonsils need a little toning up, drop a line to the appropriate members of Committee on the cover opposite.

The same applies if you haven't yet paid your subs, or sent off your Entry and Accommodation Forms - there may still just be time to join in the greatest show on earth!!

Perhaps I had better pre-fix that with the words 'Wine', 'Beer', 'Amateur' to save any come-back, from 'Barnums' under the Trades Description Act.

I will rejoin you on page (8) and leave you pro tem with this thought:-

Fill every glass, for wine inspires us,
and fires us,
With courage, love and joy,
Women and wine should life employ,
Is there aught else on earth desirous?



NAWB

National Association of Wine and Beermakers (Amateur)

Patrons:

Chempro Limited . Continental Wine Experts Limited . Edme Malt Extracts and Beer Kits
Ritchie Products . Southern Vineyards Limited . Unican Foods Limited
Viking (Geordie) Brews Limited . Vina (Home Winemaking Supplies) Limited
Walker Desmond and Sons Limited

Dear Members,

Once again we draw close to the climax of a year's work, to stage the most important event in the calendar of home wine and beer-making, the National Show.

We have had five committee meetings, written many letters, and spent hours on the telephone. Every year we think we have it 'scwn up tight', but sure as eggs are eggs, something, somewhere along the line, goes wrong.

For the last few years finance has been our biggest headache. Speaking personally, I am sure our friends in the North-West and the Wales and West, have hit on the right idea, i.e. to use holiday camps. We must not encumber ourselves hiring halls and bands, and trying to sell accommodation. But can we find suitable venues to be able to move the National around the country, as we do at present?

There has been a lot of criticism regarding the conference fee being the same for members as for non-members. I am not convinced this is wrong. By giving members their subscription fee back by way of a discount at the annual show, we have to charge non-members a higher conference fee. In effect, they pay the members' subscription, and we cannot put on a show without asking our non-member friends.

It is too early a stage yet to predict the outcome of the sub-committee who were looking into ways of attracting new members, finance, management, and service to our hobby, but the first discussions have taken place, and the minutes are being studied by the committee as I write this report.

We are all very pleased that the 'new look' News and Views has been so well received, and that correspondence has started to flow. Please keep it up, and let us know all your feelings, good or bad.

I would like to endorse Vic Goffen's ideas on membership. In 1984, everyone get a friend to join N.A.W.B. result 100% increase. We must get out and preach to the unconverted, i.e. the non-members.

We are putting a proposition forward at the A.G.M. to reduce elected committee members to eight. We feel this will help to cut expenses and increase our efficiency.

May I close by saying Thank You to all my friends who have supported and encouraged me. I look forward to the National at Nottingham, when I hope members will come to talk to me, and that everyone will have an enjoyable time.

God bless you all.

Laurice the Chair.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in the Large Sports Hall, Nottingham University, on Sunday, 1st April 1984, commencing at 10.00 am.

Members and Delegates attending this meeting may obtain admission cards from the N.A.W.B. table during the period of the Show and Conference and no later than 9.30 am on the day of the meeting on production of either :

- (a) A current Membership Card, in the case of Individual Members, or
- (b) A signed letter of identification from the Circle, Guild or Federation, as appropriate.

Admission cards will be exchanged for voting cards, if needed, when Members and Delegates enter the hall.

Note : Constitution 4 (Voting) states : "Each paid-up Member is entitled to one vote on attendance at the General Meeting."

Unauthorised persons will not be admitted to the A.G.M. but arrangements may be made for spouses and partners of authorised persons at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

D.B. Ives.

General Secretary
N.A.W.B.(A).

AGENDA.

1. The Meeting will be opened by the President of the Association, Mr C.J. Berry.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of the 1983 Annual General Meeting.
4. Matters arising.
5. Chairman's Report, 1983-84.
6. Treasurer's Report, 1982-83.
7. Election of members to the National Executive :

In accordance with Rule 8(d), one third of the 12 elected members retire.

Mr R. Butcher, retiring member, has resigned for health reasons and is not seeking re-election.

Messrs P. Awbery and K.R.T. Bilham, retiring members, are also not seeking re-election.

In addition, Mrs M. Drysdale retires as co-opted member.

There will be four vacancies to be filled.

The following nominations have been received, duly proposed and seconded :

Mr L. Drysdale retiring member.
Mrs J. Irwin retiring Circles' representative.

The closing date for receipt of nominations having now passed, no ballot will be required and the above two named members will be elected following the acceptance of the members present.

Mr M. Matthews has been nominated to represent the N.G.W.F.J.,

The names of one nominee each, to represent :

- a. Member Circles
- b. Member Federations

will be received, in writing, by the Secretary of N.A.W.F. prior to the start of the A.G.M.

Where no such nominees are received for posts (a) or (b) above, the Executive may nominate a person to fill the vacancy. (Rule 8(c)).

8. Resolutions presented to the Meeting :

Amendments to Rules and Constitution.

Proposed that : The Executive shall be reduced in numbers from 15 to 11 comprising 8 elected members, 1 nominated by Member Circles, 1 nominated by Member Federations and 1 nominated by the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges. (NCWBJ). Reference : Rule 8 Constitution of the N.E.C. (b).

Proposed by the Executive.

Other Resolutions.

Proposed that : "Any Other Business" be included in the Agenda of all A.G.Ms. and the meeting cannot be closed without a majority vote from members present.

Proposed by Mr D. Ellis, Individual Member.

9. Any other business.
10. Nomination of President of the Association 1984-85.
11. Presentation of the Executive.
12. The President will close the meeting.

D.R. Ives.
General Secretary
M A W F (A)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the National Association of Wine and Beer-makers (Amateur) held at the University of Southampton, on Sunday, 27th March 1983.

Mr R. Butcher in the Chair.

Members representing 140 Individuals, 5 Circles and 1 Federation attended.

The President, Mr K. Hill, opened the meeting at 11.22 am saying how gratified he was to see so many Past Presidents and their wives attending and made particular mention of founder member Cyril Lucas and his wife Lillian.

The President read-out a letter received from Mr Butler, of Chempro, congratulating NAWB on reaching its Silver Jubilee Year.

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr C.J. Berry, Mr G. Christmas, Mr F. Forster Mr & Mrs B. Gent, Mr & Mrs B. Holt, Mr & Mrs P. Johnson, Miss E. Murphy, Mrs A. & Miss J. Newton, Mr & Mrs H. Ritchie, Mr & Mrs Timmins and Mr & Mrs J. Tomkins.

The Chairman, Mr R. Butcher, reminding members that this was our 25th Anniversary, made the unusual request that the Executive Committee should stand and drink a toast to the members with the wine that had been left over from the tasting competition - adding that had this tasting received more support there would not have been any surplus !

The Minutes of the 1982 Annual General Meeting, having been circulated, were taken as read and unanimously adopted by the meeting. Proposed & Seconded by Mrs J. Burrow (Leeds) and Mr D. Reed (Phoenix).

Arising from these minutes the Secretary, Mr D. Ives, reported, as was required under the Rules, that the maximum rate of re-imburement to Executive Committee members while on Association business during the year had been increased, having remained static for 3 years. The new rates are : Travelling expense - 2nd Class rail or 10.8p 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.

When asked by the Chairman, the Meeting approved the new rates unanimously. Proposed & Seconded by Mr Mills (Upminster) and Mr E. Tappenden (Bexley).

The Chairman, Mr Roy Butcher, in presenting his report, described the reorganisation which had taken place during the past year.

The Membership files are now computerised and easily reproduced - just in time as the faithful addressograph has finally given up the ghost and collapsed ! - this having allowed us to print the Schedule at a considerable saving in cost. The Chairman apologised that, due to teething troubles with the new system and alterations being necessary to the labels, the Schedule had been a little late getting-out to members. Complaints regarding quality of bottle labels will be dealt with by the committee. As for the Show itself, 282 exhibitors had staged around 3200 bottles and it was hoped that the Judges had found the venue satisfactory with its excellent lighting and quite reasonable amount of room.

Grateful thanks were due to Southampton winemakers who had supplied an abundance of Stewards thus making life so much easier for Chief Steward Ken Bilham and Local Liaison Officer John Gorton to cover any contingencies. Congratulations were offered to the Fund Raiser, Brian Edwards, whose Tombola had been a complete sell-out.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Committee for their support during the year and gave special thanks to the President, Mr Ken Hill. Three issues of the News & Views appeared during the year, at economical cost, due to the hard work of its Editor, Marjorie Ives who typed and printed, and Dave Pulley who distributed.

The Treasurer's report was given by Mr Peter Awbery who presented the Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ending 30th June, 1982. This showed an excess of income over expenditure amounting to £460.40 which, along with the current assets, produced a total net assets of the Association of £8554.21.

Mr Awbery stated that income from sponsorship has almost dried-up and in reply to a question from Mr Deal, explained that the donation of £250 to the N.G.W.B.J. had been a gesture of goodwill with no strings attached.

Mr I. Morgan asked if the Treasurer could give a breakdown of the £2949 cost of the 1981/82 Show. Mr Awbery quoted the hiring of halls and musicians as the major portion of the total and he agreed to Mr Morgan's request to produce a complete breakdown of Show expenses at future AGMs.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was Proposed by Mr Deal, Seconded by Mr Dixon and carried by a unanimous vote.

Election to Executive Committee :

One third of the 12 elected members having retired, as required by Rule 8(d), along with one co-opted member, four vacancies were offered. Of the seven nominations appearing on the agenda, one had now withdrawn having been nominated as Circle representative.

The six remaining nominees were presented to the meeting by the Chairman and a ballot held. The following were elected to serve for a maximum of three years :

Messrs. N. Chiverton, B. Edwards and D.B. Ives - all retiring members - and Mr G. Sparrow - Individual Member from Tyneside. Mesdames M. Drysdale and S. Hill were unsuccessful.

Additionally, the following nominated representatives were elected to serve for 1983/84 :

Mr M. Matthews, N.G.W.B.J. and Mrs J. Irwin, Member Circles.

No nomination had been received from Member Federations and this would leave a vacancy on committee for representative but the Executive have co-option powers if required.

Item for discussion : That, owing to the poor quality of cork flanged stoppers and the difficulty in their availability, in future flange corks with white plastic tops be used.

Mr N. Dixon (S.W. Counties Fed.) opened the discussion, thanking the committee for allowing time. He said that the matter of corks is of concern to all but he was well aware of the difficulties of the proposed change, one of which was the ease by which the plastic top comes off the cork. However, his own local area has great difficulty in obtaining the approved all-cork stopper. If one objection to the use of plastic tops was to be the variance in colour - albeit white - perhaps NAWB could obtain in quantity from one supplier and distribute for use at the National thus overcoming any suggestion of recognition of area by judges.

The suggested change was supported by the Chairman of S.W. Counties Fed., Mrs G. Murray, who said that following a period of discussion over 3 or 4 years, her Federation has now been forced by lack of supply to make the change to plastic topped - a change which has so far proved highly successful.

Mr K. Simpson (N. Yorks & S. Durham Wine Fed.) said that his Federation had initiated the change 6 years ago and in a recent survey of 1500 only 1 plastic top had come adrift. The breakage of standard corks had been far worse. A further advantage gained from the proposed corks was a better quality shank which was less dusty and did not create a messy bottle.

Mrs G. Blacklock, from the same Fed., thought that most Federations have now made the change and that NAWB was lagging. She hoped that after this discussion the proposed change would be voted upon at next year's AGM.

Mr E. Tappenden (Old Bexley) said that there is less of a taper to the white topped corks which could cause difficulty. Mrs A. Parrack (Tyneside Nationals) agreed and said that this could lead to oxidation or even leakage to those wines which are bottled early and then stored on their sides in the recognised manner.

During further discussion Mr I. Stagg mentioned that composite corks vary as much as the white topped version and Mr D. Reed pointed out that there are different shades of gold on beer bottle tops.

Several examples of price variations were quoted by members and Mr K. Bilham, from the platform, suggested that both price and supply difficulties of the present cork could be overcome by bulk purchase and resale via the Amateur Winemaker.

Bringing the discussion to a close, the Chairman thanked all who had contributed to a lively and interesting debate and suggested that possibly a survey could be carried out through the Newsletter.

No decision regarding any change would be made without consultation with N.G.W.B.J.

Nomination of President of the Association 1983-84.

The Executive nominated Mr C.J. Berry to be President. Accepting our invitation, Mr Berry had sent his apologies and deeply regretted not being able to attend the AGM. He was fulfilling a prior engagement in Cambridge lecturing to U.S. Winemakers. He appreciated the immense compliment afforded to him and would do everything within his power to further the interests of NAWB.

The nomination was seconded by the meeting and accepted unanimously. The retiring President, Mr Ken Hill, thanked everyone for their support during his two happy years in office.

The Chairman then introduced to the meeting each member of the Executive in turn, thanking them for their year's hard work and especially over the weekend of the Show. He singled out the Show Manager, Lenn Drysdale, and his wife May, Accommodation Sec., and made special mention of Jim Chettle who had acted in two capacities.

Mrs Sybil Hill, retiring Executive member, called for a vote of thanks to be given to Mr Butcher.

Close of meeting : Mr R. Fisher queried the exclusion of any other business on the agenda and was requested by the Chairman to forward any points to the Newsletter. Mr Fisher complained also that the AGM had commenced earlier than stated and asked that his protest regarding the conduct of the meeting be recorded in the minutes.

Mr D. Jackson (Phoenix) commented on the time-wasting between the close of the Presentation of Trophies and the opening of the AGM.

The President, Mr Ken Hill, thanked everyone for their attendance, especially those who had travelled a long distance, and wished all a safe journey home. He looked forward to meeting us all again at Nottingham in 1984.

Ken then handed the President's Insignia to Mr Derek Smith in Mr Berry's absence and was, in turn, presented with his Past-President's Badge.

The President closed the meeting at 12.20 pm.

DOUG IVES.

General Secretary.

There have been so many replies, letters, answers to puzzles, since my Christmas Bumper Issue that I shall have to precis a number of them, but I would take this opportunity of thanking all concerned for a magnificent response and for managing to find the time during the festivities to sit down and put pen to paper, and even better to have them typed.

But, first, I must mention that Ben Turner, one of an illustrious band of Past Presidents and a prolific writer to boot, received just reward following the publication of his letter in the November 1983 edition of *New and Views*, at which time he was delighted to note that our President and Vice-Chairman were going to study the subjects of membership and structure.

Ben continued 'may I be the first to throw my hat into the ring' advocating for a three tiered structure, and I am delighted to report that not only was the hat retrieved but Ben is now the proud wearer of that hat as an invited member of the said Committee.

The fourth member of this select Sub-Committee is Ted Adcock, chairman of the Guild of Judges and I understand from a reliable source that he will be fostering even closer ties and goodwill by becoming a fully paid up member of the National Association.

Details of the meeting are not yet to hand and apart from the following letter, the Committee would like to hear the views of members at the Open Forum on the Saturday Afternoon between 3 and 4 oclock.

An answer to Ben's letter and to Puzzle No.1, which commenced 'Membership of NAWB could be increased by

From Stan Baker.

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on another bumper newsletter, very interesting despite its late arrival! (Sorry, Stan, but they left my hands for distribution on 15th December. Ed.) Some very useful information; especially the map of the University of Nottingham. Having attended the two previous NAWB shows, with the aid of the map I shall endeavour to visit the City, noted in times past for its lace; perhaps better known today for its football teams. Is there any possibility of a guided tour of the city?

I note that my dear friend Ben Turner is once again advocating for a three tiered structure with a potential of 50,000 members subscribing to NAWB. My experience indicated that potential and reality are far removed. In 1975 I started the central London Civil Service Wine Society and with the hundreds of civil servants working in the capital city, one would think that it would be a thriving club. Taken across 48 meetings a year the average attendance is about 25 people. So much for potential, although it must be admitted that the members spend as much money on wine in one week than the average home winemaker spends on club subscriptions and raffles in one year!

I have found that people are most reluctant to donate even a few coppers in a cause in which they have little interest. I started several winemaking clubs in Mid Kent in the late sixties and without exception most of the programmes of these clubs are now on non-wine subjects. One club is in an affluent part of Kent and has a waiting list, but refuses to increase its subscription and recently voted to exclude commercial wine tastings because of the added expense! It would seem that the members are quite content to spend an evening sipping a liquid that to a connoisseur could be a most unpalatable wine. After the meeting they get into their expensive cars and drive off to their equally expensive homes!

Having been concerned with advertising since 1935, I know that increasing NAWB membership will not be an easy matter. Continued advertising or, better still unpaid publicity should maintain the membership at its present level and hopefully with an improvement in the economy even get a few additional members.

Different types of clubs have different approaches to increasing membership. A local social club that I joined nearly fifty years ago, but left at the out break of war is now in recession, its membership having dwindled from 100 to 150. The club has its own premises and is open seven days a week and intends to spend out more than £20,000 in refurbishing the premises. It also intends to cut its subscription from £10.00 a year to £2.50. I wish them every success.

The situation for NAWB is very different. The main commitment is the Conference and Show, which I hope will in future be called NAWB "Festival". In my opinion, the 1985 venue should be of a much smaller scale than in past years, sufficient in size to accommodate actual rather than potential members. The art of management is not to make a loss. My letter in the previous Newsletter about suitable NAWB venues was rather tongue in cheek, but I hope that members living in the smaller towns may have come up with some suitable idea. Failing that, the British Tourist Association have appointed a Director of Information. A letter sent in his direction could provide a satisfactory answer.

Cheers. Stan Baker.

(Thank you, Stan. As I mentioned on page 19 of the last News and Views, the Chairman's decision is final regarding the winning suggestion (s) and the prize of free membership for a year).

An Answer from Vic Goffen, 13 Monks Orchard, Petersfield, Hants. General Secretary of The National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges.

Dear Kenneth,

I have already given Judy my ideas on distributing a pamphlet laying out all the history and benefits gained by those joining NAWB. This pamphlet would be distributed by Judges when attending shows or when talking to Circles, and would be made available to organisers of all Regional Shows to which the public are admitted.

There is however a much simpler answer.

Let each member, as a New Years Resolution resolve that in 1984 they would persuade just one winemaking friend or acquaintance to join. Result, 100% increase.

Best Wishes

Yours aye,

Vic.

(No doubt, Vic, our membership Secretary will also have his tongue in cheek when he distributes an extra membership form to all!)

From Bernie Frank, 78 Sedley Close, Rainham, Kent.

Dear Editor,

My answer to Puzzle I: This is a very simple matter that must be completed in two stages.

Stage 1: The Committee must MANAGE the Association to the satisfaction of it's present members.

Stage 2: The appointment of a Recruiting Committee to consist of one elected volunteer member from each Federation. Their duties to include representing that Federation on national matters and to recruit new members from within it's own members clubs. This could be achieved in a number of ways, even a talk on the "History of the National" - all the better if these representatives are National Winners!!

We must all "PROMOTE" the National by "SELLING" the National to the Wine and Beer Makers on their own ground. Dispatch extra membership forms to all members and ask them to recruit more. Yes - this suggestion can be attributed to an increase in membership (testing my theory, last week two new members from "The Invicta" dispatched their monies).

Finally Mr Editor, I have now completed a check on my holdings of Lafite, Latour and Margaux and can assure you that none of them are capped with the finest "Flanged Cork". Please advise do I return them as not being "traditional".

Seriously we all must congratulate you on your professionally managed "News and Views" an unbelievable transformation that can only lead the Association back to it's rightful position. "The National"

Yours sincerely

Bernie Frank.

(Many thanks, Mr Frank, I shall be more than pleased to receive your First Growth Clarets but, to be fair, I would just make mention that I qualified the 'finest corks' (news and views, May 1983, page 7) with the added description of REAL, assuming it be understood they were straight sided. Incidentally, if you can better one bottle from each of the Estates pre-phylloxera - together with a '23 Yquem, I will bring my corkscrew over to your place. I consider 1923 the finest year this century. Why? I'll give you just one guess!!

Unfortunately, Mr Frank's letter had a more serious note, commencing with the paragraph, 'To express my views on the rapid decline of our National Movement all but a few will find my comments rather harsh'. In view of this, although I wished to print the letter, the Committee decided the reply should come from the Chair).

Dear Mr Frank,

Your disapproving letter to the Editor of our News and Views came as a bit of a shock to your Committee when it was read out on 5th February 1984. The management of the Southampton Show, and the mistakes in this year's Schedule, certainly fall short of what is expected of a National Executive.

Your letter will be answered in full when it has been studied. Certain points raised have already been dealt with, and I am sure more will follow. I would say, in mitigation, we are not professionals.

Thank you for writing to us,

Maurice the Chair.

Other brief suggestions from various Circles, which representatives may wish to follow up or advance at the Open Forum.

- I. Include families at functions, make family accommodation available.
2. Extra complimentary copies of News and Views to be sent to Circles to be distributed amongst members.
3. Existing members (?) who give talks, to mention the National Association at meetings.
4. Leaflets stating aims of the Association to be sent to Federations and judges who could distribute them at shows.
5. Collect subs at the National Show week-end. (This is only practicable if there are no changes in subs at the AGM on the Sunday morning. Ed.)
6. Increase Circles subs to include all circle members as NAWB members. (Obviously, NAWB cannot increase their subs, and I would think this is the most difficult hurdle for the three tiered system. Another initial stumbling block might be in obtaining agreement on a common financial year for the National Association, all the Federations and all the Circles. Ed.)

The following are ideas put forward to increase publicity for the National Association.

7. Hold week-end seminars with a particular topic, i.e. white German Wine and give tastings. (The National Association have tried similar events in the past but, to my knowledge, they have all had to be cancelled due to lack of support. Speaking personally, talks and tastings by districts are best done at Circle level or in small groups circulating to individual homes, preferably accompanied by a dinner. Ed.)
 8. One representative per Federation to be in contact with the Committee rep. (Theoretically, this has been in existence for a number of years, refer inside front cover, Mrs Sybil Hill but communication from Federations have not been forthcoming. Ed.)
 9. Use local radio as a publicity media.
 10. More direct contact with Circles. (All members now classed as Individuals, Circles, Federations and Guilds receive 4 News and Views per year, as well as schedules, and it has been found that the majority of Circles wish to remain autonomous and not receive further 'intrusion' from outside. Refer inside front cover, Mrs Judy Irwin. Ed.)
- II. The conference and show to be held in holiday camps or in hotels - not Universities. (In complete agreement. Ed.)

12. Members from Circles to be asked, in advance, to sell raffle tickets.
13. Hold the old-type raffle but in the middle of the year - not at the show.

(As already mentioned, any brief reply is my own personal view and not necessarily that of the Committee. Ed.)

And a final letter on increasing membership from Mrs Sheila Etheridge. 72
Grant Road, Croydon, Surrey.

Dear Ken,

Membership of NAWB could be considerably increased by sending to each Circle in the Federations affiliated to the National Association one copy of your excellent 'News and Views'.

Best of luck

Sheila Etheridge.

Well, Well, Well ! Flattery will usually get you everywhere, dear lady, but as Oliver Cromwell remarked at a sitting, 'Do not flatter me at all, paint pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it'.

Fortunately, I have long lost such imperfections and, dear lady, with the cost at 32 pence per copy plus bulk postage to each Federation, it displeaseth me to lament that you have not won a farthing either, but if - ere chance - you happen upon me in the tap-room during the course of the show, prithee dear Madam, I plight thee to purchase a small posset. By my troth! Or, better still, by yours!!

A letter from Janette and George Rawlins. Shanrah, Lower Waites Lane,
Fairlight, Hastings, E Sussex. TN35 4DD.

Dear Mr Bilham,

We have now received our November News letter which has been forwarded from our previous address and we will be pleased if you will now amend your records.

Unfortunately we will be unable to attend the National this year, and so will be unable to add our support and any possible vote on future venues. We would however like to endorse your suggestion of using self catering holiday villages. Since we began attending the National we have preferred to book 'outside' Hotel accommodation rather than use the universities as we prefer the facilities of private bathrooms etc. Self catering chalets at most Holiday villages are very comfortable, we have spent many holidays in them, and Pontins have a large number of suitable sites North, East, West and South.

We wish everybody a good and succussful time at Nottingham, sorry we cannot be there,

Yours sincerely,

Janette and George Rawlins.

And, now, a humorous letter from Stan Baker.

Wine, Weather and Second Honeymoons.

Package tour holidays are one of the great British inventions. Until recent times the British tended to be rather insular and rarely travelled abroad for their annual holiday. Realising that an organised party could travel cheaper than as individuals, a Mr Thomas Cook invited people in need of adventure to travel on the new-fangled railway for a short journey to York, the hometown of our General Secretary. This trip was so successful that Tommy then organised tours to the Continent to the classical cities of Europe. Within a few years, well-to-do women were riding up steep mountain slopes on the backs of donkeys.

This occurred in the middle of the last century and it needed nearly a hundred years of technological changes in transport and a higher standard of living before the 'package' tour became the competitive industry it is today.

In the early days the main objective was to see the great cities of Europe or spectacular scenery but in recent years package tours of a more specialised nature have become very popular. These include tours which would appeal to lovers of Art, History, Architecture, Wild life and a host of other interests including wine.

A tour of the wine producing areas of Western Europe can be strongly recommended as a relaxing, enjoyable holiday. Wine is the common interest and alcohol always seems to help people to socialise. Because of meticulous planning, most wine tours are usually incident-free, but if things do go wrong the courier usually has the situation well in hand, so sit back and enjoy yourself.

Rarely are delays lengthy but fog at airports can create chaos. Several years ago when air charter companies were short on reserve aircraft one wine tour group had to wait several hours for the fog to lift so that their scheduled plane could complete a flight to Majorca and back (scheduled for the previous evening) before it could transport the group to Frankfurt in Germany.

The group were very philosophical about the delay; most people spent the time quenching a thirst which was beginning to build up. Two of the group had indulged rather heavily the night before and felt in urgent need of sleep. As the waiting room was crowded with people there were no spare seats but being of an inventive nature they borrowed newspapers - by now read from cover to cover - from the remainder of the group and the two tired tourists then spread the newspapers on the floor, curled themselves up and went soundly to sleep, being woken up by the courier nearly seven hours after the scheduled take-off time. As the courier had arranged a late night tasting at a Rhine Wein Festival the same evening, the thirst quenching activities were finally back on schedule.

A few people have problems crossing the Channel and while some prefer the ferry with its more spacious amenities, other people prefer to get the journey over quickly by travelling in aircraft. Again the weather can play havoc with the tour operator's schedule and occasionally rough seas delay a ferry but, whether flying or sailing, most people relax better with a drink in their hand.

On another tour, a group was scheduled to land at Dijon, the administrative centre of the wineproducing region of Burgundy in France. When the airport became fog-bound the pilot was instructed to divert to a military airfield a hundred miles further south. The extra air-journey took but a few minutes, but the return journey back to Dijon in the coach could have wasted several hours of valuable drinking time. The Courier being well trained in public relations persuaded the air field commandant to present several cases of wine to the tour party. This was most welcome but in any event, some of the group had already considered the possibility of a long coach journey and were already well stocked with duty-free refreshment!

"Natural" breaks are a necessary and accepted routine on all coach tours. At intervals the travellers are given the opportunity to stretch their legs, to purchase some refreshments or to have a look around the local "sights". When a group has returned to the coach, the courier makes a visual check to ensure that everyone is aboard. After one such "break" on a recent tour, the courier noticed that one of the lady passengers was missing. Eventually she was located; locked in the lavatory of the nearby cafe. The door lock, being rather ancient, had jammed; but after a few reassuring words and some skilful manipulation of the lock mechanism the problem was solved. The lady gratefully rejoined her companions on the coach who had, by this time, struck up a chorus of "They were there from Monday to Saturday"!

People on coach tours are expected to be reasonably punctual in returning to the coach, but if they are not, then they should at least be resourceful. If departure times continue to be delayed, then the whole schedule may be wrecked. A courier, usually allows a few minutes for stragglers to arrive but after a lengthy wait, he has little option but to instruct the driver to proceed.

When people are on holiday, time often appears to stand still. Two ladies on the wine tour of the beautiful Loire Valley (including the one who had already been locked in the lavatory) were so enraptured with the jewel-like quality of the stained-glass windows of Chartres Cathedral that they completely lost all sense of time and returned to the coach pick-up point half-an-hour later than the scheduled departure time. The courier realised that the two women were resourceful enough to find the local information centre (Syndicat d'Initiative) and were directed to the railway station where trains to Tours, the final destination, were both fast and frequent - a fact which the courier knew having made an exploratory journey around the area some years earlier. The train arrived at the terminus just 50 yards from the Hotel a few minutes after the coach had off-loaded the passengers and luggage, and, by chance, the courier just happened to glance out of his bedroom window and noticed the two women emerging from the station entrance. Running down the hotel steps, two at a time, to the amazement of the hotel staff, he was able to contact them before they disappeared into the streets of the city. C'est la vie. All's well that ends well!

A courier needs to be kept informed of birthdays, anniversaries or any unusual circumstances. It is not uncommon for honeymoon couples to go on package tours, but if they forget to mention the fact that they are newlyweds, they do need to have a sense of humour, otherwise they are naturally accepted as a "normal" married couple.

On one occasion, the hotel management unknowingly offered a honeymoon couple a twin bedded room that was long and narrow, with the two beds placed "in-line" so that the couple would have been sleeping toe to toe! After viewing the room, they explained the situation to the very surprised courier who was left in no doubt that they had no intention of spending their first night of wedded bliss playing "footsie". The hotel was fully booked and the hour was late, so the possibility of exchanging rooms was out of the question. The courier, being sympathetic, gradually placated the loving couple and then presented them with a Magnum of Champagne. He finally left them, each holding a full glass of bubbly and gazing into each others starry eyes.

The surprising outcome to the story is that although as expected the couple were late at the breakfast table, they were delighted to confide to the courier that they were thoroughly enjoying their honeymoon and that he need not bother to change their room after all!! Discretion prevents further detail, but as that particular organiser has had the responsibility of two thousand holiday makers over a period of some 15 years, nothing short of a revolution would come as a surprise to him on future tours.

On yet another occasion, a courier was mildly surprised to find a youthful middle-aged couple sleeping a great number of hours in the coach during its daily journey. The reason became apparent when the couple confessed that they had treated the tour as a second honeymoon, as their bedroom contained an enormous circular bed. The story goes that, commencing at twelve midnight, they changed positions in bed to coincide with the hour hand of the church clock across the road until at six o'clock in the morning they were facing entirely the reverse way! At the end of the tour they congratulated the courier for the marvellous 'time' they had enjoyed!!

Even on specialised tours, few people have exactly the same approach or objectives. The organisers will allow at least one day when each member may do as they wish, especially as they may have visited beautiful estates, vineyards, castles, chateaux and tastings in cellars for several long days previously. The "free" day will vary considerably - some people continuing actively, others relaxing-dependant upon the individual and the venue.

People expect at least two things from their holiday. They want a relaxing, enjoyable time, and value for money. Since the days of Thomas Cook, most tour operators have aimed to meet these objectives. All tours are thoroughly planned in advance but there is always a remote possibility that something may go slightly wrong.

When it does relax you are on holiday.

Looking forward to the 'next time'.

Stan.

(Thanks, Stan, for all your contributions. Although I have used another of your letters as a 'filler', I still have a further article to pass on to my successor! Ed.)

Answers to Puzzle No. 2. were not nearly so numerous as for Riddle No. I, and the Chairman has no hesitation in awarding the prize to Vic Goffen for having completed the grid with a total of 52 named drinks, AND finding 16 extra ingredients - to my amazement, two more than I had estimated - Ling and juice!

Vic's letter makes interesting reading!

My Dear Ken,

Having just completed riddle No.2, and finding all 52 drinks in a record time (sic) of 2½ hrs I then turned to part two, finding as many ingredients as possible. And there you had me, because using all the letters in the grid the only fruit I had to omit were Quince and Fig, no Q or F, so finished up with seventy-two. Then, clever wife, says I dont think that is whats wanted and on re-reading I think she's right and all you are asking for are ingredients following the same rules as in part one ie, up, down, diagonally etc. That being so I hereby offer what to me seems a very short list.

Apple	(Reis)Ling (Heather)	Tomato
Cocoa	Juice (Fruit)	Pear
Coffee	Orange	Pea
Ginger	Rye (Cerial)	
Lemon	Sap	<u>Total 15</u>
Lime	Tea	

If you think I am mutilating my News and Views just to send you the puzzle, think again dear boy, I save all my copies in mint condition so have no intention of cutting large lumps out of it - unless of course, you feel like sending me another.

Best wishes for a very happy and exciting New Year.

Yours aye,

Vic.

Answers to Puzzle No. 3.

Surprisingly - none! Or is it so surprising? You may recall that the winner would receive a years free subscription after completing the sentence 'I wish to join the National Executive Committee because' Apathy? Lethargy? No, I don't believe that. Mind you, the winner would have to complete a different type of 'sentence' - of being imprisoned in a windowless room, polluted throughout a long day (II.30 AM to 5 PM) with the stench of cigarette (and cigar!) smoke, inducing sore eyes, reducing visibility, and invoking appeals to wash thoroughly after returning home - weary from appalling conditions on the motorway. That apart, coupled with the frustrating delays in trying to produce the Newsletter on time, I would not be hanging up my quill at the end of this newsletter.

In comparison, how civilised are the Guild of Judges Committee meetings - with a total ban on smoking.

But, at least, I shall be able to concentrate more fully on pursuing a few hobbies, including the intensely absorbing pastime of formulating special wine tours and ('anonymous') this is a last brief mention:-

After the Australian jaunt in March 1985, how about joining us on a 'Tour of Superlatives'?
To Brazil (huge area still unexplored), Rio; to Paraguay, stay Asuncion; to Bolivia, stay in the highest capital in the world - La Paz - in the vast mountains of S.America; to Peru, stay in Cuzco, once the capital of the mysterious Incas, and Lima, City of Kings and only 12° south of the Equator. Also included: a hydrofoil on Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world; a rail journey across the ceiling of the world - the Andes - passing the highest point of any railway system; and a visit to Iguacu Falls, higher and wider than Niagara, where more than 30 rivers converge to pour millions of gallons per second into the Paraguay River far below. Add to that wine tastings and a full day to Machu Picchu, only discovered a few years ago - as wonderfully preserved today as it was centuries ago and a lasting monument to the Children of the Sun - and it should be a memorable trip. Autumn 1987 - a few seats left!

A letter from afar. R J. Newbold, Chairman of the Australian Beer Society.

We wish to advise the existence of The Australian Beer Society, a beer consumer organisation where objects include the bringing together in one group, persons who have an objective interest in beer. For example, historians, sociologists, collectors of beer cans, bottles or other beer art or memorabilia, home brewers.

We publish a bi-monthly magazine called "Beer Matters", and we feel that many of your members will be interested in our Society, and to this end, we invite enquiries from interested persons.

The address is P.O. Box 193, Collangatta, 4225,
Queensland, Australia.

(if you get similar response from beer judges as we have had, Mr Newbold, P.O. Box 193 will remain empty. There is still not one reply to the Committees request (News and Views, May 1983, Page 4.) to be advised if beer judges would appreciate a presentation Beer glass at the National Show. Doug Ives, General Secretary, has replied to the letter and also passed a copy to 'The Amateur Winemaker'. Unfortunately, Collangatta is over 600 miles away from the nearest point, Sydney, during our forthcoming Australian wine tour, but I'll send you a copy of this edition of News and Views. Ed.)

From Bob Marsdon, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Middlesex.

Dear Ken,

Many thanks for publishing my viewpoints in the November NAWB "Newsletter". Unfortunately you prefixed my name with the words "National Judge". I have never had the honour to be a member of the N.G.W.B.J. Nor have I ever inferred either orally or in writing, that I am a qualified judge. I therefore respectfully request that you retract the title you bestowed on me, in your next "Newsletter".

Yours fraternally in winemaking,

Bob Marsdon.

From Mrs Joan Burrow, 5a Fearnville Grove, Leeds.

Dear Editor,

Through your columns I wish to stress a point of order that people wishing to speak on behalf of a Federation or Circle at the Annual General Meeting must be duly authorised by their Secretaries, in writing, and to sign in as such.

At last years A.G.M. several speakers stated they were from Federations, they may have been, but not as an authorised representative to speak on behalf of their Federation.

Item 8 on the 1983 Agenda is a point in question, the S.W. Federation was not in attendance according to the 'roll call'. Only the Yorkshire Federation had an authorised person in attendance therefore strictly speaking, item 8 should have been struck from the agenda.

As there was no voting involved and to avoid displeasure, I did not raise this point of order. I trust that this situation will not occur at future Annual General Meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Burrow
Membership No. 3128.

(I read out your letter at the last Committee meeting and here is the official reply from Doug Ives, the General Secretary. Ed.)

Dear Joan,

Thanks for your letter and may I say points taken:

Care is always taken at NAWB AGMs, when issues which require a vote appear as items on the agenda, that the Individuals or representatives associated with such proposals are present and duly recorded.

It has been thought to be not so essential in the case of "Items for discussion only" when no vote is taken by members present.

However, if members, when rising to give their views on any item on the agenda mention their allegiance to a Member Circle or Federation - as distinct to their being an Individual - then of course such organisation should have made themselves known at the point of entry to the A.G.M. and have been duly recorded as being present.

I am sure that you will find that this will be strictly adhered-to at all future Annual General Meetings.

Thank you Joan, not only for your own keen support, but also for that of the Yorkshire Federation, which has been represented at the 'National' for so many years.

Yours sincerely

Doug Ives.
General Secretary
N.A.W.B.(A).

I also raised the next letter at the Committee Meeting - from Arthur Cottenham,
30 Bowness Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.

Dear Ken,

May I add my congrats to the many you have already received regarding the new format of News and Views and the added interest created. I would like to respond to a couple of the points raised by the Chairman in his November letter, but realise that I may not be in time for the next News and Views - assuming that there will be one more issue before the National.

1/ It is a shame that the Wine Queen competition never ever "took off" but in view of the pathetic response, I suggest we ought to forget it for a decent interval, at least. Far better surely, to spend any monies that are available on "making more" of the Kings (whether male or female) ie, the very top award winners and I think especially of the Master Winemaker, who (in my opinion) does not receive the honour due.

2/ You mention (and of course I agree) that the presentations of trophies is the climax of the National. I have always regretted the unseemly haste with which the trophies are presented - in particular the deplorable habit of handing over "parcels" of awards.

Surely after all the work put in by the winners, we can spare the time for trophies to be individually presented and why do we not make more of the very top winners ie, Master Brewer, NAWB Champion and Master Winemaker. Competitors work hard all year (sometimes for years) to achieve their success let us honour them properly - not just one clap for an armful of cups.

Sometimes competitors feel that they are considered to be the least important people at the National - surely this can't be right? What about a few changes.

Sincere good wishes.

Arthur Cottenham.

(This was discussed by the Committee and here is the official reply from the Chairman - brief, but to the point. Ed.)

Dear Arthur,

Yes, it sure is time for some changes. Let us follow this year's A.G.M. with a rapturous round of applause for our very worthy winners, and give them the accolade they so richly deserve.

To me, the competitors at the National are V.I.P.'s.

Sincerely,

Maurice the Chair.

A GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION HIERARCHY (!)

President

Leaps over large Wine Shows with a single bound
is more powerful than a locomotive
is faster than a speeding bullet
walks on water
gives policy to God.

Chairman

Leaps over small Wine Shows with a bit of a struggle
is about as powerful as a bulldozer
is not as fast as a speeding bullet
walks on water if the sea is calm
purrs to God.

Vice - Chairman

Leaps little breweries with a running start
is almost as powerful as a locomotive (downwind)
is faster than an airgun pellet
walks on water in indoor swimming pools
talks to God if special request is granted.

Treasurer

Barely clears nissen huts
loses tug of war with locomotives
can fire a speeding bullet
can stay afloat in a mae west with proper instruction
is occasionally addressed by God.

Secretary

Runs blindly into Shows and Halls of Residence
recognises locomotives two out of three times
is not issued with a gun
dog paddles
talks to members.

Chief Steward

Makes funny noises when falling off buildings
is run over by locomotives
is not issued with ammunition
swims very well under water
talks to demi-johns.

Entries Secretary

Falls over doorsteps when trying to enter buildings
exclaims "Look at the choo - choo"
cannot afford a fire-arms licence
plays with himself in puddles
mumbles class numbers to himself.

P.R.O and Editor

Lifts large Wine Shows and walks under them
pushes locomotives off their tracks
catches speeding bullets between his teeth
freezes water with a single glance
he is God.

Show Manager

Sweeps large Wine Shows and sports centres
puts locomotives back on their tracks
picks up spent cartridges after speeding bullets have been fired
collects the water to be frozen
he is the Son of God.

Information from the Show Manager:-

The venue for the Open Forum on Saturday afternoon is the small music theatre, shown as "music" on the university map. This is close to the halls of residence.

The bars in the halls of residence will be open for pre-lunch and pre-dinner drinks. Please don't take your own wines and beers into the immediate vicinity of these bars.

The nearest shops to the university are down Broadgate (immediately opposite the west entrance) or on Woodside Road (Take the path by Ancaster Hall to Woodside Road and turn right).

Those of you who have been to Nottingham before, and are thinking of going into town, details of public transport are on the back of the university map. The free bus service which was available last time, has now ceased. Pressure from we rate payers - you'll understand.

A fascinating proposal from National Judge, Derek Fraser, 172 Rochester Drive, Bexley, Kent.

(Who I have been trying to disown since introducing him (and his father Andrew) to a friend of mine, Prof. Dr Helmut Becker at the Geisenheim Research Institute, and an incident requiring us to visit the Police Station at Rudesheim! Nothing serious, I assure you!! Ed.)

Dear Ken,

About a year ago I wrote a letter which was subsequently published in "The Judges Newsletter" the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges equivalent to "News and Views" - concerning the NGWBJ's annual general meeting.

At the time I considered that the letter was probably quite controversial and expected it to produce quite a large response, whereas in fact, the response (at least, in print) was minimal. (I know the feeling. Ed.)

Nevertheless, a number of fellow judges did approach me at last years "National" just afterwards, generally sympathising with my suggestions, despite certain difficulties. Within the last few weeks, two more of my fellow judges have again commented on the idea to me, so obviously the idea was not totally dismissed.

As "News and Views" - the official organ of NAWB is also read by a fair proportion of judges as well as NAWB members, I would like to take this opportunity to 'air' the idea again and perhaps elicit some response from both sides of the fence.

Question: When do the largest number of Guild judges already meet at a single venue each year?

Answer: The NAWB annual conference and show. So, could the AGM and the NGWBJ be held at the same venue?

Well, it would involve:-

- a) Changing the time of year of the AGM together with all the constitutional problems that that involves.
- b) An effort on the part of members to reach the NAWB conference venue in time for a Friday evening session. This assumes that the practice of holding the judges briefing on the Saturday morning continues and that this session does not start until after the "bottle entry" period is over.
- c) The hiring of another hall or room for judges only on the Friday evening for their seminar/lecture (or possibly the AGM).
- d) A friendly agreement with NAWB concerning the timing of "judges at the bar" (if held) on the Saturday afternoon, in order that judges may meet in separate (additionally hired) rooms for the AGM (or seminar/lecture, if the AGM is held on the Friday evening).
- e) Loss of AGM's separate competition, but remembering that there are two judges classes in the NAWB show. These could be adopted more seriously.
- f) Probable loss of the AGM's formal dinner, unless arrangements could be made for such a dinner to be held on the Sunday lunchtime or Saturday evening after the afternoons AGM but before the evening dance. Saturday lunchtime would be totally inappropriate due to the inevitable rush at this time, between the end of judging (eg. finalising judges who cannot start until sub-classes have been finished) and the beginning of "judges at the bar" - if this is not superceded by the "comments card" system.

Problems? Yes there are inevitably problems, which I have overlooked, but I believe that the embryo idea is worthy of serious consideration. It would bring two very expensive annual events together, which must greatly reduce the overall cost, as well as possibly bringing these two bodies; NAWB and NGWBJ closer together - with a more representative proportion of the NGWBJ being present. Any Comments?

By the way, I must congratulate you on the improvement in the News and Views, since you have taken it over - the last couple of issues have really been interesting (and amusing)
Good luck and hope to see you at the National.

Derek.

(I have just two brief comments to make, Derek. Firstly, I totally agree with the concept and can visualise this very necessary 'merger'. Secondly, its a bit 'infra dig' finishing off the page in your letter with a 'By the way' congratulatory message. Why not start off, 'I am writing to tell you how much !! But I will still look forward, with pleasure, to having a drink with you at Nottingham! Ed.)

From Fred Bastin; one of our stalwart Past Presidents.

'I am impressed with the new-look News and Views and congratulate all concerned in its production' was followed by 'I am not sure because of Bab's health that I will be able to attend this years Conference but I wish it resounding success'.

Sadly, two weeks later, I record his second letter: 'just a note, in sorrow, to tell you my wife Muriel ('Babs' to our countless winemaking friends) passed away last Sunday evening, February 5th, following a stroke that morning. She had been in poor general health, allied to even poorer eyesight and hearing for some years, but with unfailing cheerfulness she always made light of her problems.

Though no longer able to enjoy winemaking activities her interest in our hobby never flagged.

Sincerely yours

Fred.

Doug Ives, the General Secretary to whom the letters were addressed has officially replied:-

Dear Fred

I am sure that the whole winemaking movement will join the NAWB Executive as we offer you our deepest sympathy at this time of great loss. 'Babs' was a friend to all and will be sadly missed. Our love and thoughts are with you in your sorrow.

Very sincerely

Doug Ives.

ARE THE BEST WINES NATURAL... OR MAN MADE? Asked Stan Baker.

Most winemakers appreciate that naturally made wines existed long before Man ever roamed across the surface of the planet Earth. The grape vine is self fertilising, needs no insects for propagation, only sun and a little wind, so there is every reason to assume that an over-ripe bunch of grapes could be blown from a vine during a summer storm and fall into a hollow of a large stone. The skins would break on impact and the yeast cells on the skins of the grapes would digest the sugar in the juice and produce alcohol. The resultant wine would be short-lived as a palatable alcoholic beverage; either bacteria would cause it to become vinegar or oxygen in the air would soon cause the wine to oxidise.

Most wines in the early years of recorded history were drunk young and even when the wine was vinegar it was drunk by the "lower orders" as it was safer than some of the available water of those times. At their best the "early" wines were probably not quite as palatable as the delectable wines that are enjoyed today. It was with the control of oxidation and freedom from bacteria made possible by the use of the long shaped impervious glass bottle and the micro-filter effect of the cork stopper, in addition to sulphur, which has been used since Roman times, that made quality control possible.

Man has made a living from making wines for more than two thousand years. It is known that the Phoenicians - the sea traders from Greece - travelled to the English shores to barter wines for furs and ancient Greece developed a wine trade with both Egypt and Rome. Some of the vineyards that were planted by the Romans still exist in France, Spain, Portugal and Germany and produce good wines. But there are some wine regions in Europe that only remain viable because of the intervention of Man, natural wines from these regions were difficult to sell. The Wines of the region of Champagne were thin and acid in most years, being situated in the north of France and often suffering from adverse weather conditions such as the hailstorms that recently devastated some of the most prestigious vines in nearby Burgundy. The Champagne wine often only partially fermented because the cold air temperatures of the early Winter caused the yeast to become dormant. In the warmth of the following Spring the champagne wines began a secondary malo-lactic fermentation and the harsher malic acid is chemically changed by bacteria into the softer lactic acid. The by-product of the secondary fermentation is carbonic acid gas, the weakest known to Man. When trapped within the wine the gas gives a delightful prickle on the palate and as wine matures on the yeast cells lying in the bottle and as yeast cells eventually break down into amino-acids, the secondary fermentation further increases the complexity of the wine.

It was the invention of man and also a women that produced the methods by which champagne wines are traditionally made today. Firstly, Dom Perignon, a blind priest in charge of wine production and a master blender of champagne grapes learnt, possibly from Portuguese travellers in northern France that the cork stopper was the ideal substance to prevent fermenting wines from blowing out the stopper or exploding the bottle. By securing the cork stopper Dom Perignon was able to retain a secondary fermentation within the bottle.

The resultant champagne wines were often cloudy as the yeast cells swirled around when the wine was poured and coloured wine glasses were used to disguise the cloudy wines. An inventive French widow - Veuve Clicquot thought up the idea of teasing the yeast sediment into the neck of the bottle. She is said to have cut circular holes in her kitchen table to make an improvised "pulpit". By a daily spinning of the inverted bottle the yeast gradually collected into the bottle neck and was then removed.

The wine producers in the triangle of chalky soil, similar to champagne in the south west of Spain that we know today as the Sherry region, were having equal difficulty in producing wines that would sell. Yeast cells can live for centuries and in the certain types of wines. When these wines are matured for several years in wooden barrels they develop into very subtle dry wines.

Man further discovered that new wines eventually developed the same characteristics as very old wines and that the process could be accelerated if the wines were stored as an interchange system whereby not more than one third of the contents of a barrel were removed in one year.

A later discovery indicated that wines stored near to the Atlantic shores gained a further subtlety from the salt laden winds.

Other airborne moulds affect the character of very ripe grapes. One is the noble rot which occurs in the Sauternes districts of France and some wine regions of Germany when the Autumn days are sunny with damp evenings.

Certain soil types also have a great effect on the character of a wine and volcanic soils are possibly the most notable. The great "Tokai" wines of eastern Hungary are grown on volcanic soils by traditional methods. Only a few bunches of grapes to each vine and these are allowed to ripen until they become rotten with the mould known in Latin as *Botrytis Cinerea*.

The tokai berries (as for the top quality French and German wines) are picked berry by berry as they ripen with mould and the resultant Must from the free-run (that is grapes being squeezed by their own pressure) is termed an "essence". The French and German styles of this "noble rot" wine are fermented in the same way as home-made wine but Tokai is slowly fermented for seven years followed by two or three years maturation. It is only logical that with its limited production, these types of Tokai wine are becoming increasingly rarer.

Another type of soil that affects wine flavour is the schist (slate) soil that is found in the Duoro (of Gold) region of Northern Portugal. Britain first began trading with France in the eleventh century but during the Napoleonic wars it was not political to deal with French merchants so several British entrepreneurs went to Portugal and created links with the wine trade. The original Portuguese wines were harsh and alcoholic and the saying of the time was "Claret for boys and Port for men" and when after the war French wines became politically acceptable the sales of Portuguese wines in British markets slumped and growers had to find wines that would appeal to the British palate.

Some new technique was required that would make the wines less harsh and alcoholic and it was probably a chance discovery by the Duoro winemakers that the wines could be made fruitier and less harsh by allowing only sufficient fermentation to extract colour and then pouring the still fermenting wines into wooden barrels that had been one third filled with grape brandy.

The art of distillation had been known for several centuries, as it was discovered by Islamic chemists who needed to find solvents for extracting certain perfumes.

The new Sweet Port wines appealed to the British ladies of the nineteenth century and "Port and lemon" became the "in" drink. Surprisingly more Port wines - red and white - are sold to France, yet the sale of sherry in France is almost unknown.

Fermentation temperatures are critical, to both home winemaker and commercial producer and the recent hot spell the hottest July for over three hundred years may have caused a few home-made wines to "Maderise" - that is, become affected by the heat. White wines lose their fruity freshness and become unpalatable, but the effect in red wines may not be so easily detectable. The wines of Madeira are "created" by man, following an accidental discovery that the rather harsh wines made on the beautiful island in the north Atlantic were much improved if they were subjected to heat. Several barrels of Madiera wine had been used as ballast on a sailing ship that twice crossed the Equator on a long sea voyage, so the Madiera wine producers then began to subject all of their wines to heat treatment.

'Rainwater', the least well known Madeira wine, again resulted from an accident of nature. Several barrels of the heavier Madeira wine were left on the quayside of Funchal, the island's only port, in the heat of the summer sun. Eventually the wooden end of the barrels leaked and during a rain storm part of the wine was replaced by water. The Wine shippers appreciated what had happened but having no time to replace the spoiled wine, despatched the consignment to customers in the United States. A few weeks later the shippers received a "letter from America" but instead of criticising the wine quality, it was a request for more of the same. I cannot say whether today's Rainwater is diluted with best Madeira water, but served chilled it is a delightful drink on a hot day. (I had a glass of 'Rainwater' at the World Wine Fair. Ed.)

Some winemakers may have read the story describing the opening of the wine vessels that had lain for almost two thousand years within the Great Pyramid of Egypt all that remained of the wine were grains of mineral ash, but provided a wine bottle is sealed properly an aging wine will only slowly lose fruitiness, acid, sweetness and alcohol. One wine, that during its life actually increases in sweetness is a white wine made from Chenin Blanc grapes grown on volcanic soil near the Loire river in northern France. Unlike other wines in the region which are fermented to demi-sec (semi-dry) the Savennieres wines are fermented to dryness.

For several years the wine remains dry and acid but in good years it is often rich and then is an ideal complement for a white fish course, such as the Loire trout. Then occasionally, the wine changes completely in character and according to an expert of the wines of the region "gains a bouquet of breeding and develops into a big wine with a sweetness at the point of swallowing".

Another expert of the wines of the region differs in opinion and suggests that the changed character is a quirk of the palate and that the sweetness is caused by the loss of acidity in the wine. Personally, I considered that the degree of sweetness was too positive to be caused by loss of acidity.

We all appreciate the problems of determining "How sweet is sweet"? when sipping a "sweet" wine with an even sweeter pudding or less sweet fruit.

Several winemakers may have vines that may appear to be reaching the end of their days but again according to the experts - the Savennieres wines are made from grapes of vines that are sixty years old. It seems that age is less important in the making of white wines than red.

Often a home winemaker is heard to say - "The wine just made itself" but in the commercial world of wine a professional approach is essential. The making of wine is full of problems from sources both Natural and from Man. The laboratory chemist now controls the winemaker, especially in the larger wine establishments. In the smaller winery the winemaker is able to use his artistry rather than rely on a scientific report, but generally it would seem that Scientific Man is now in control. Perhaps some of NAWB's readers may have other ideas?

Stan.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

4th - 6th May 1984. Wales & West Festival.

Brean Sands Holiday Village, Burnham on Sea, Somerset. Comfortable Chalets with private facilities, self-catering, £15 per person. Restaurant and table service available, sports facilities including indoor swimming pool, two dances and disco, bars, etc. Details from A Hill, 5 Goitre Coed, Isaf, Abercynon, Maintain Ash, CF45 4EL.

20th - 29th July 1984. Wine Tour to Loire Valley.

Luxury coach throughout tour, stay in hotel at Saumur, visits to beautiful chateaux cellars, troglodyte caves, tastings, wines, liqueurs. £203. (8 places left). Details: Roy Sperry, 67 Wentloog Road, Rummy, Cardiff.

16th - 23rd September 1984. Portuguese Sun Fun and Fine Wines - Known and Unknown.

Depart Heathrow, 6 nights full board in 4 star luxury hotel built on beach huge stretch of silver sand, wine and coffee with all meals. Two heated pools, beauty parlour, solarium, nightclub. Visit and overnight stay at a Sanctuary in Douro Valley, other visits, tastings, vinho verdes, ports, Vila Real, Avelada, Penafiel, Oporto, Amarante, Viano do Castelo - home of folklore etc.
8 day luxury Wine Tour - £375, (9 places left). Details TASTERS.

6th - 20th October 1984. A repeat of Spanish Sun Fun and Fine Wines - Known and Unknown.

Wine tour to Penedes, Flight from Gatwick, 14 nights, Hotel adjacent beach at Salou, visits and tastings Montserrat, Barcelona, Falset, Liqueur tasting, All rooms private bath and W.C , balcony. Many optional excursions. Cost includes Party night and free bottle of wine. Also Airport charges. 15 days in 3 star hotel, full board - £269 details: TASTERS.

March 1985

Wine tour to Australia - 1 week Melbourne, 1 week Adelaide, 1 week Sydney, visits and tastings of Australia's best, Clare, Watervale, Barossa Valley, Tahbilk, Coonarrarra, Hunter Valley as well as city sight-seeing excursions etc. Special group rate being negotiated.
Details: TASTERS, 8 Hollybank Close, Hampton, Middx. or phone 01-979-9725.

29th - 31st March 1985

The National Conference and Show. Eastbourne.

11th - 13th April 1986

The National Conference and Show. Scarborough.

Last quarters deliberate mistake: Maurice the Chair landed in a hot-air balloon in NAPA during our tour of California (right in the middle of Moet and Chandon) - NOT NAPLES!!



Maurice the 'Chair' on his way 'up' to the Editor!

I would end my Editorship by wishing wine and beer makers everywhere even more success with your ferments and I shall look forward to meeting you (again) at the show.

In the meantime, I'll drink a toast to all individual members, Circles, Federations, Honorary Members and Past Presidents - one at a time!!!

If you happen to find yourself between Hampton Court Palace and Heathrow, you'll always welcome to pop in.

Cheers

FEN BILHAM
Editor

P.S.

Please contact if your Circle would like a talk, illustrated with slides (and appropriate wines, if required) on any of the following districts:-

California; South Africa; Madeira; Bordeaux; Burgundy; Loire Valley; Alsace/Kaisentstuhl; Rhine/Mosel Valley; Austria/Vienna/Salzburg; Rioja; Madrid/La Mancha/Valdepenas; Jerez/Montilla; Penedes/Priorato; Portugal/Port; Tuscany/Chianti; Dolomites/Oberammergan; Denmark;

And after March 1985 - Australia.