

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEER MAKERS
(Amateur)**

NEWS AND VIEWS

DECEMBER 1985



President: Mrs. F. Stagg

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Editorial

Sometimes, when judging a glass of wine that isn't quite up to standard, or slogging away pressing half a hundredweight of fruit in my little Walker Desmond press, I wonder why I bother. Many commercial wines of a drinkable quality are available fairly cheaply, and with the inflated cost of bought ingredients the differential in price of a cheap shop wine and a reasonable home-made wine is not as great as it used to be. But there is one big advantage the home winemaker has — he or she **knows** what has gone into his gooseberry or blackberry wine, and there is no possibility of it containing adulterants such as banana-boat scrapings, ox blood, synthetically produced spirit, and latest but not least, diethylene glycol. Well, there's nothing like a couple of glasses of homebrew to keep the cold out, but drinking anti-freeze is ridiculous, as well as being poisonous. Only a minute proportion of the wines sold are contaminated in any way, but it's those few that make one glad that simple ingredients will make a wholesome homemade wine.

To be fair, it must be reported that the trade and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food were quick to arrange analyses of suspect wines, which were withdrawn from sale pending clearance. But if diethylene glycol was not discovered as an adulterant for some years because nobody knew they should test for it — and who can blame the analysts — then it does leave one with the thought that there may be other contaminants in use, undiscovered because nobody knows to look for them. Nobody, except of course the unscrupulous and unforgivable people who knowingly supply or deliberately use such alien substances, putting personal greed before public well-being.

Finally, I must apologise for the lack of an Autumn edition of "News & Views". Partly through delay at the printers and partly through my own temporary illness due to stress, it proved necessary to produce just this one issue. It's a bumper Xmas bundle, and I hope you enjoy it. Merry Christmas to all!

ROY EKINS

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

Eastbourne seems a long way off, and we are approximately only 4 months from our 28th Annual Show and Conference at Scarborough.

Scarborough is a good venue, with warm hospitality from the local winemakers and also the Members of the Yorkshire Federation, who have assured me they will be giving our Show their fullest support.

The Schedules are now being circulated, so now is the time to start making your arrangements, to meet us all at Scarborough on April 11th.

The Conference programme is an interesting one and the classes in the Show Schedule and the Trophies to be won are sufficiently wide and varied to stimulate the interest and competitive spirit of all Winemakers and Beermakers.

To all Members I say — This is your Show and Conference — it fully deserves your support. Success can only be achieved by the fullest support from all Wine and Beermakers, be it Individuals, Circles or Federations from all parts of the Country.

The standards of entries has grown with the stature of the Show and it is widely accepted that to win an award at the National is success indeed! And therefore the Show has become a 'must' for all Wine and Beermakers everywhere.

The Show Committee will be the first to admit that a successful show is impossible to achieve without the full and enthusiastic support of all members and a host of Wine and Beermakers outside NAWBS memberships, broad acres.

Let us have a large influx of entries; attendance at the Show and Conference and a large gathering at the Friday and Saturday evening dances — this will make the weekend an unqualified success, show-wise; conference-wise; social-wise; and financial-wise. If you did attend our successful Show and Conference at Eastbourne you will want to come again, if you didn't visit Eastbourne don't miss Scarborough in 1986. This is your show and conference, I invite you all to give me your support.

Your NAWB Committee deserve your admiration and congratulations in all that they do for you, they deserve success and that can only be achieved by the fullest support from all members of NAWB Circles and Federations throughout the country.

I say to you all, we in Yorkshire have a reputation for friendliness, hospitality and good humour — we also make good wines and beers. Come to Scarborough in April and enjoy our Yorkshire friendship, hospitality, humour and wines, but in any event let's have you entries in the Show, they may be good enough to land a trophy.

May I in the meantime take this opportunity to wish you one and all, all the very best for the forthcoming festive season, may you all enjoy good health, happiness and success, and once again I look forward to meeting you, once again, at SCARBOROUGH.

Cheers for now,

Lenn Drysdale.
Chairman

MAURICE C. HUGHES

It is with great sorrow that I have to announce the passing of this well-beloved and gentle winemaker, after five years of intermittent suffering. Maurice was taken ill during a German wine tour recently, and returned home, but to survive for just a few days

Maurice had a long and illustrious career in the hobby, serving his fellow wine-makers and brewers for many years, as an official, and as a sage tutor and advisor. A long-standing member of the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges, he was their representative on the NAWB Executive Committee for this year. Maurice was also President of both Buckhurst Hill and Leytonstone Wine Circles. Once an active officer of the Essex Federation, and member of NAWB for many years, Maurice also found time to teach winemaking at the Local Education Authority's evening classes.

Maurice was a well-known winemaker and judge; his many friends throughout the country will mourn his passing, and undoubtedly our sympathies go out to his widow Doris at this unhappy time. Let's drink to his memory, **that's what he would have liked.**

SPECIAL NOTICE: CONFERENCE, SCARBOROUGH 1986

The last Edition of News & Views listed Maurice Hughes as Booking Officer for 1986, and this entry may also appear in the Show Schedule if it is too late to advise the printers. All Booking Forms should therefore be sent to:

Norman Chiverton
'Suttons View'
Castle Lane
Woolscott
Rugby CV23 8DC

pending appointment of a replacement Booking Officer.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Apart from various cosmetic changes, the following alterations have been made by the Scheduling Sub-Committee.

1. The Fruit Wine – Red Dry section has been altered to include Bilberry Dry. (Class 15D)
2. The Liqueur class will be "Cherry Base", as mentioned in one of last years "News and Views". Looking forward to 1987 the base will be "Herbal".
3. The Judges Classes will be "Dessert Red" and "Dry Stout".
4. Entry Fees will be 25p per bottle throughout (i.e. including Open Classes) for all individual members, except for Special Class A, which is 50p.
5. The points system has been altered with a view (hopefully) to give a better chance for the 1st prize winners.
6. The names for the Beer classes have been altered to tie-up with the Judges Handbook.

Please bear in mind that any changes made can be altered in future years, if they are found to be unsatisfactory.

SCHEDULE AMENDMENTS

Please make the following amendments to page 1 of your Schedule for the Twenty Eighth National:—

- 1 Chairman: address is No 7, not 6 Richmondfield Drive
- 2 General Secretary: telephone number is now 0747 83672
- 3 Vice Chairman & Show Manager : 0904 58238
- 4 Chief Steward: 091 2533873

The late Maurice Hughes was the Booking Officer and NGWBJ representative. The Booking Officer is now Gerry Sparrow, also Chief Steward. The Guild of Judges new representative is Frank Stead, 11 Booker Road, Woodseats, Sheffield S80, Tel: 0742 749610

And of course members only will be allowed to participate in the AGM (page 2).

If you now turn to page 6 and its definitions you will notice that there is a serious printing error. The "Dessert Wine" entry should read:—

"**Dessert Wine:** A rich bouquet and flavour, full bodied, medium to sweet and high alcohol content."

This should be followed by:—

"**Flower Wines:** Light body, high alcohol not necessary".

Finally, since the Schedules have been received from the printers, the National Guild of Wine & Beer Judges has held its AGM. The Chief Examiner for the Guild (see back cover of the Schedule) is now Mr. D. Hodkinson, 113 West Dene Drive, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE 30 2SZ, Tel: 0632 570671.

A PLEA FROM THE HEART

Scarborough 1986 — We need lots and lots of stewards — general stewards, wine stewards, beer stewards. Stewards to set out the hall, stewards to accept the entries, volunteers to sell raffle tickets, and a score of other tasks. The Executive Committee was reduced drastically two years ago, as an economy measure, and even before that day there were always more jobs than bodies to do them.

So please don't be shy or unwilling — it is our Show weekend. "Many hands make light work" is not an excuse for a surfeit of electricians, it's a good old proverb we hope many of you will heed. Gerry Sparrow will love to hear from you, any time.

AND ANOTHER

Regular attenders at the Annual National Conference and Show will have certainly been aware of the absence this year of our Chairman's wife and partner, Mrs May Drysdale. This was because of ill-health, but I am sure many members are unaware of the nature of her terrible and progressive disability.

A letter follows asking for financial support into research, and although charitable causes are not normally put forward in "News & Views", for there are so many worthy calls on our goodwill, I am sure you will agree that this is an exception. May and Lenn have put years of voluntary work into NAWB, the Yorkshire Federation and the hobby in general. Can we not show our thanks in a more tangible way than applause at the AGM. I leave it to May's letter and to your generosity.

Dear Editor,

I wonder how many people have heard about the best kept secret, "Motor Neurone Disease". I had never heard of it before, until I was told I had it. Can you imagine my reaction, not knowing what I had to face up to? No treatment because the Medical Profession don't know enough about it or what causes it.

A Branch has now been formed in West Yorkshire to help those patients who are suffering from this crippling disease, and to carry on research. Money is needed. As in all charities, we depend on fund raising and donations, so if anyone would care to help, please send it to me, no matter how small, and thank you.

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE
C/O Mrs M. Drysdale,
7 Richmondsfield Drive,
Barwick in Elmet,
West Yorkshire LS15 4ER

LETTERS

Well, a lot may not have happened since the last Issue of 'News & Views', but our correspondents never seem to lack topics of interest. Peggy Vanstone stirs the pot happily as follows:

Dear Editor,

There seems to be an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with some of the National Judges in various quarters these days. Complaints of big-headedness, rudeness and pomposity are becoming more prevalent. Has any thought been given in recent years towards the way these people are "selected"? It seems a very inefficient practice to drag potential judges hundreds of miles to be examined in the handbook, winemaking, and choosing the good wines out of the dregs in some seventeen to twenty bottles. Surely the results are a matter of luck!

In my opinion some real thought should be given by the NAWB Committee to reverting to the better method of bringing one or two experienced National Judges to the bigger shows such as the Wales and the West purely for the practical examining of applicants who have already passed a written test on winemaking and the handbook, under the supervision of one of their local national judges.

After all, we are making wine as amateurs, and few of us are chemists or scientists: it is purely a hobby, and to attempt to emulate the professional Master of Wine is quite absurd and pretentious. For Heaven's sake let us get back to the happy cheerful days when local people were given a chance to become National judges at their own shows.

Yours sincerely
PEGGY VANSTONE

Perhaps the first comment to be made here is that the Guild of Judges is not under the control of NAWB, and it is the Guild's officers and Committee, and the Guild members at their Annual General Meeting who decide on the pattern of recruitment of new judges. As a point of interest, the Guild held an examination for new judges at the Wales and West Show in 1985, and if there are sufficient applicants, will be holding a further examination there in 1986.

With regard to the opening sentences of this letter, I can only say that it surprises me. I personally know a great many National Guild judges, and have always found them to be courteous and helpful, even before I became a judge myself. I'm sure the Guild would be interested in any specific instance of such alleged rudeness; vague allegations such as this are useless.

Guild judges are not 'selected', they are simply amateurs who have voluntarily attained sufficient skills to qualify through the Guild examinations, and are usually devoted to the hobby. It is often difficult to get happy local wine makers to enter their own shows, but judges regularly travel hundreds, or even thousands of miles every year, and give up a great deal of their free time providing this voluntary service to the hobby. And they too are amateurs, i.e. working without financial reward, whatever their full-time occupations may be.

One of the Guild's declared aims is to advance the knowledge and ability of its members; surely the greater the judge's skill and experience, the better the judgement, be it of wine, crime, or budgerigars. A praiseworthy aim, I would have thought.

And now to a longer but deeply interesting rarity, a letter from our reigning Master Winemaker, who is also a National judge, Eric Tappenden.

Spending most of my day in an administrative capacity, and therefore usually reluctant to put pen to paper on matters affecting my hobby, I nevertheless feel drawn to comment on recent letters in the 'News and Views'.

Firstly, Vic's article on the pointing system, particularly that relating to the awarding of the Master Winemaker Trophy.

However the pointing system is arranged, I would hope that the Master Winemaker would demonstrate his ability to make award-winning wines right across the style range e.g. aperitif, table, dessert, mead, sparkling, flower and fruit. Of course, it would satisfy the 'justice' of the thing if he or she managed to get three or four 'firsts' in the process (cannot always guarantee that, I'm afraid).

I must admit I am tempted to concentrate on trying to make three or four wines of excellence rather than trying to 'cover the card'. Life would certainly be a lot easier.

It is not quite as simple as winning a first, though. Can you for instance compare a first in the Dry Red Table (120 entries), Table White, Rose, (about the same) the Three Bottle Class (3 x 68 sometimes) with, say, a first in the Dry White Fruit excluding A, B, C, D etc. (24 entries), the Dry Red Stoned Fruit (average 25), Dry Elderflower (average 30 entries) and so on.

This year for instance, a VHC or HC in the Dry Red Table class would have been a notable achievement. So high was the standard that the judges wished to give additional awards.

The making of a First-award winning prize can be largely a matter of luck; all of us at some time have made a wine of exceptional quality without knowing quite why. If it were for example a dry white fresh grape of quality (mainly a matter of obtaining quality grapes) it could be entered in at least 3 or 4 sections e.g. Dry White Fresh Grape, Dry White Table, 3 Bottle class and, slightly sweetened, in the Medium Table, enough potential points to become Master especially with increased points for first places.

Storage capacity has no particular relevance to the ability to become Master Winemaker. I live in a bungalow and so does my father-in-law Reg Wheatley (this year's NAWB Champion). Both of us make much use of our garages, the cars being banished to the drive. If it gives encouragement to anyone, I can assure you that with the exception of Red Dessert and Sweet Mead, most of my award-winning wines have been made in the year immediately preceding the National.

In my view freshness and youth are currently in National judging terms more appreciated than age and maturity. I wish it were otherwise.

I don't quite understand the fuss on the subject of the Master not winning any Firsts. To my knowledge it is the only time it has ever happened, at least in recent years.

Incidentally, it is theoretically possible to become NAWB Master on four HC's as long as one of them is beer and the other three are in different sections. I wonder what Vic would think of that?

Secondly, Ben's article on Gold, Silver and Bronze awards: I am very much in favour of any system that highlights excellence in wine and beer quality, but I have one or two reservations. To be valid such awards should be decided by a panel of judges to promote consistency from year to year. I don't know how this could be managed administratively, but I foresee difficulties. I think it could only be applied realistically to the 'purpose' wine classes.

Too many comparisons are made between what we do and what is done in the commercial world. After all, it is one thing a panel of international judges awarding Gold, Silver and Bronze medals to a one class wine from a single vintage and probably a single or unique blend of grape varieties; and quite another with one judge attempting to do the same thing to a Sweet Elderflower.

I don't think I like the idea of a judge using the system, not to reward merit, but to diminish the placings he had reluctantly given to poor wines as he sees it. Believe it or not, great encouragement had to be given to most winemakers to get them to show at all without trying to belittle their success.

If, however, the aim is to have a much smaller 'National' with say 500 bottles of the best wine

in the country to be judged by a privileged few, then this suggestion is one step down the road.

Thirdly, as a National judge of some experience, I personally deplore the withholding of awards. I am quite happy to use the judge's comment sheet to air my views on the general quality of the class. I am not in the least worried about a competitor jumping for joy because Eric Tappenden gave him a first. Good luck to him, it was adjudged by me to be the best wine on the day, no more, no less, and if his success encourages him to keep showing and therefore inevitably improving his wine quality, then I shall be well satisfied.

Yours in the craft
E.W. TAPPENDEN

Well, thanks Eric, you might not write often, but when you do . . . Here's Stan Baker's views on the same topic —

Dear Editor,

Ben Turner and Vic Goffen, in their letter published in the July 'News and Views', both projected ideas well worthy of consideration. As readers recall, Ben declined giving some awards at the Eastbourne National because he considered that some awards were not merited, and that giving awards to poor exhibits tended to give the movement a bad image.

I agree with Ben's suggestion that NAWB should follow the commercial practice and grade the exhibits — gold, silver and bronze — dependant on the points awarded to each exhibit. This could be indicated on the award certificate by a coloured star, or serrated circle. If the stars were affixed by the Judge over the area of the certificate where he signs, then the signature would endorse the grade of the certificate. 'Letraset' stars, available from graphic art shops, are very difficult to remove cleanly.

Ben's suggestion of the use of a supervisory judge would be especially useful to the less experienced judge who may have passed the National examination one week, and who may be assessing a National class of very high standard the following week.

Vic Goffen's idea of a greater points differential than at present used by NAWB has much merit but I would suggest that a variable points system and Ben's grading system be combined. This would mean that award winning wines in the top grade would receive more points than award winning wines in the lower grades. This would even up the different standards which exist between some National classes. Extra work for the Awards Secretary, but perhaps the computer can easily cope?

I agree with Vic that shortage of space may deter some NAWB members from entering sufficient classes to become Master Winemaker, but I do recall one very eminent 'National' winner whose only storage space was a garden shed. Other National award winners have stored their wines under or even on the stairs. Some have made space under the floorboards. Where there's a will, there's a way!

STAN BAKER

So there's another variation on the marking system. Who'd volunteer to be Convenor of Judges? And, from the deep south, a letter from Peter Witherden of Poole.

Dear Roy,
No fear of libel or undue length here.

I concur completely with Bob Marsden (July 'News and Views') on Judges' Reference Numbers as a waste of time for both judges and competitors. It is 'justice seen to be done' taken to the nonsensical extreme.

I noted many competitors at the National searching for exhibitors' numbers at Judges at the Bar in a class of a hundred or more which were not in numerical order, and eventually giving up

in exasperation and disgust after fruitless handling of bottles on the back rows which could not be seen, and breakage disaster being narrowly avoided. What has happened to the 'Do not touch exhibits' rule?

This would also account for the lack of enquiries from exhibitors to the judges: I had just three enquiries from a class of forty-eight. Plain common sense should tell the committee to revert to exhibitors numbers only placed in numerical order.

Yours sincerely

PETER WITHERDEN (NGWBJ)

Definitely another tacky topic. The ideal solution is to continue using the existing fool-proof labelling system, but to re-sort the bottles into exhibitor order after judging. But with the size of some classes we might have to look for stewards willing to fast over lunch-time. Any offers? Or any better ideas? Incidentally, your committee has already committed itself to using the same labels in 1986, for such plans have to be made long in advance of the Show.

The last edition included a note by me, wearing my 'Circle Representative's hat', that hardly any Circles ever wrote or contacted me in any way. This provoked a rapid reply from the Secretary of Burnham Wine Club, who said, inter alia:

In the July Newsletter, you complain that you hear from very few Secretaries (only two, and one of them advising of change of Officers - was this us?) so perhaps you could advise me whether 'Speakers' are popular with other Clubs? It has been our experience over the last four years since our formation, that when we do engage one, the attendance figure for the monthly get-together goes down. A handful of us find these talks very interesting but the vast majority want more socialising. My own view is that after all we are an amateur wine-making Club, and if anyone can give us a few tips on improving our fermentations it must be for the good. We can only manage to find about four 'experts' a year, and the rest of the time is 'social'. Anyway, I should be interested to have your views.

Yours sincerely

MAUREEN CORNELIUS

Well, how's that? A response, and thank you Maureen for taking the trouble: but shame on the rest of you, for not even writing once, let alone twice, as Maureen has. The point the lady raises is an interesting one and there must be many Circle Secretaries going grey-haired over next year's programme, not knowing just what the members want. My own Circle canvasses its members most years, and almost invariably we are told to provide more talks and less socials, more socials and more tastings, or less technicalities and more whoopee! What's the answer? There ain't one, friend, but I certainly would love to publish your views on Circle programmes.

PUBLICITY CORNER

Did you see our little 'plug' in the 'Daily Express'? On July 17th the 'Express Money' page was a double side headed 'The pounds and the pence in pints and plonk' and covered in miniature almost every aspect of the commercial and homebrew field. In one corner it referred large scale operations to the English Wine Centre, at Drusilla's Corner, and amateurs to me, as NAWB's PRO.

As a consequence I was deluged with strange letters, like the unqualified guy who wanted to become a Master Brewer in the trade, or the chap who seemed to be considering starting a vineyard in Glasgow! All he wanted was "any information regarding the growth and cultivation of vines". A modest request you must agree. Of course, everyone was sent a polite reply, with helpful suggestions where possible. Oh, there was one — and only one — person who asked about NAWB, but he just wanted to publicise his new homebrew market stall, and not actually thinking of joining us himself. So much for the national media!

THE SEVENTH NATIONAL AMATEUR WINE AND BEER SHOW

Seventh? No. I've not gone mathematically mad, or Nationally numb! This heading refers to the National Amateur Wine and Beer Show to be held in McLaren Vale, South Australia, in late 1986.

It has been suggested that a reciprocal arrangement is made, for a selection of their best wines to be entered in our National, and a batch of our best selection to be entered in theirs.

If all goes well the Australians will be noting particular wines at their November 1985 Show, with a view to entering Scarborough 1986. And at Scarborough, if all goes well, we may be looking for potential prize winners to send to Australia for their show in October or November 1986. Its all very tentative at present, but there's enthusiasm on both sides. We are at present exploring the intricacies of the Customs & Excise — they seem a bit reluctant to reply — and ways and means of flying the entries around the world as inexpensively as possible, perhaps "flying the flag" with British Airways.

Half a dozen bottles of Aussie homemade wine were judged in parallel with the British entries at the Wales and West Federation Show in May 1985. I tasted them all, and I think we can give them a run for their money! It will be great fun, and lots of prestige to be gained. I'll let you know as soon as I've anything definite to report.

AND TO NEW ZEALAND

And here, probably to his everlasting horror, are a few passages from a correspondent who lives in Christchurch, New Zealand. It does help to show the difficulties some hobbyists will overcome to make wine. I know that some New Zealand wines were entered in the 5th NAWAB Show in Australia by eight or nine competitors, and they won some medals. But back to Ray Derrett's letter —

Dear Roy,

I like the way you travel through the country picking up wine-making ingredients as you go mostly from hedgerows. We can't do that here. The only fences we have are wire and posts. In Canterbury there are gorse hedges and in some of the riverbeds grow elderberry, blackberries and that's it. Unfortunately the "Amateur Winemaker" Mag. is very hard to procure here and the few copies that do come in are, of course, out of date by the time they arrive and are very, very expensive. Most of the A.W. publications are available here at a price. I wrote to Argus Publications for a copy of National Guild Official Handbook but they said it was out of print and returned my money. I would like to get hold of one.

Your "News and Views" newsletter of the NAWB was most appreciated. Send me more. We are starved for winemaking news here and avidly read everything. Mr. Goffen has been in touch and has helped our Judges (Embryo) Guild no end but we still have a long way to go. In the South Island of New Zealand we only have about 10 amateur wine clubs none of them very old and spread over about 600 miles so its not very often we can get them together for a delegates meeting. Everyone wants to rush in and become a wine judge -- nothing to it! We will have to devise strict taste and olefactory tests to weed them out. I myself have been judging (and making) wine for very many years and have never had an exam. However I've read a lot and am a graduate chemist (retired).

There are 3 amateur wine clubs in Christchurch. The one I belong to is the "Pegasus Winemakers Society" so called because it is on Pegasus Bay at Christchurch main beach resort, New Brighton. We have about 70 members. I founded the darn thing and am a life member. We are about 15 years old. Jack McNae belongs to Canterbury Club which is a bit older. We spend a lot of time visiting commercial vineyards for tastings etc. New Zealand is now a very large wine producing country but none of them make a grape concentrate so we envy you. They say the demand is too small.

Well Roy it was great hearing from you. When next I see your smiling mug peering from the pages of "Amateur Winemaker" I'll be able to say "I know that joker he's a friend of mine."

With very kind regards

Sincerely

RAY DERRETT

Now there's a man who goes onto my PRO's list for a copy of "News and Views". Must be a good bloke to take the trouble to write. My smiling mug, indeed! Perhaps it's a fair description.

BOOK REVIEWS

TRADITIONAL BEER AND CIDER MAKING IAN BALL

What a delightful, informative and easy to read paperback this turns out to be. The purpose of the book is to introduce readers, young and old, male or female, novice and experienced to these ancient crafts.

The background to the history of beer making is interesting and not boring as is so often the case. He then goes on to the many and varied aspects of beer making — even cooking with beer. Methods, know how and problems arising are listed step by step. The actual ingredients are easy to obtain, relatively cheap and what impresses me is just making one gallon at a time to try the varied recipes from the past, present and exotic. Perhaps if a criticism has to be made I would say his use of hops appears a little excessive but there again this is a personal taste easily adjusted.

In the cider section we are at long last given ample scope on how to deal with the hundredweights of apples everyone appears to have offered from time to time. Again a methodical way approach to the whole concept of cider making. I was disappointed that he was too brief on the 'love' aspect of cider making but what can you expect for the price!

There is bound to be something in this book you will want to know, make or try. Well worth reading for anyone. £1.20 from Elliot Right Way Paperfronts.

GERRY SPARROW

COMPETITION CORNER

A limerick is a piece of potted poetry of a definite meter and line pattern. A typical example I have just invented is:—

There was a winemaker from Hull
Whose wine was just fit for a mull
He mixed Rum and Rioja
With a glowing hot poker
One swig blew the wig off his skull!

Not elegant, but it does illustrate the basic rhythm and layout of this lowlife line in literature.

Now, just to encourage you to display your poetic talents, I will offer a £5 note for the best entry received by January 18th. The competition results will be in the next issue of News and Views, so make them as boozy and Christmassy as you like! I will publish the winner and any runners-up that deserve it. (Bawdy limericks will be published privately and sold, at a high price, in plain brown covers, for the fund for relieving Roy's thirst).

So there it is: have a bit of fun, and perhaps win the price of a bottle to drink in the New Year. Here's another original to inspire you:—

There once was a National Judge
Whose bones all turned soggy, like fudge
When folks asked him why,
He replied, with a sigh,
"Twas your wines — But I don't bear a grudge!"

1000 WINE AND BEERMAKING HINTS AND RECIPES BEN TURNER

A portmanteau of a title, which is appropriate for a book of nearly 400 pages crammed with information. Our well beloved Ben has produced this new book for Marks & Spencer PLC, who are selling it for the remarkable bargain price of £1.25p a copy.

This new St. Michael publication covers wine , beer and cider making, mead, liqueurs — even vinegars produced on purpose — and there are also chapters on the law, hygiene, wine circles and suppliers. As well as a detailed index, which I consider necessary for a book of this type, Ben has included a good glossary of the words used in our hobby, which will prove invaluable to any inexperienced reader, or one who wishes to attempt some new branch of our hobby.

“1000 Hints and Recipes” is a well balanced combination of easy reading and detail, and should be on everyone’s bookshelf - and at that price, why not?

EDITOR

FINO SHERRY

Among the bars and cafes of Jerez, the south-western town at the heart of Spain's sherry-making region, the call is invariably for fino, the driest type of this famous aperitif. The Spaniards drink it chilled, usually accompanying it with 'tapas' — savoury tit-bits that can range from pieces of ham and cheese to fried squid, olives and mushrooms in garlic.

In Britain, where we drink more sherry than anyone else (50 million bottles a year) fino comes third in the popular choice, after oloroso (sweet) and amontillado (medium). Yet a fino will invariably be the first choice of 'professional' people in the wine trade — following the general tendency for tastes to move towards dry with experience.

Fino is very pale gold in colour, and has the freshness of taste and bouquet resulting from a yeast-like substance, called flor, which appears on the surface of the developing wine.

Some say fino is the ultimate aperitif. Light, dry and crisp, it adds particularly to the appreciation of all sea foods and is the ideal wine to take before a meal. Chilling accentuates both the flavour and bouquet and prepares the palate for the meal to follow. Put the wine in the fridge for a hour before you need it.

The lightest and driest of all sherries is Manzanilla, a wine that has been matured in Sanlucar de Barrameda by the sea. It goes perfectly with shell-fish.

Tailpiece: In the early 1600's, English merchants in India were drinking sack — as sherry was then known — which came out from England in ships of the East India Company. On finding the wine so improved after the voyage, it became the practice for sailing ships, and later the tea clippers, to carry sherry from England on long voyages and back home again.

Louis Pasteur theorised that the improvement came about by the 'blows of the liquid against the walls of the cask, causing sudden and continual changes in the internal pressure.' The same treatment was accorded to Madeira wine.

FREE TALK AND TASTING

As you will see from the Programme, the 1986 Conference includes a talk and tasting of some of Sainsburys wines.

This is a completely free service the firm offers to any group interested in wine, and that meet reasonably near to a Sainsbury's store. Minimum audience is 50, and you provide the meeting place, glasses and spittoons if required. Sainsburys provide the wine and the speaker.

Further details are obtainable from:

The Consumer Public Relations Department,
J. Sainsbury PLC.,
Stamford House,
Stamford Street,
LONDON SE1 9LL

CHETTLE'S CHATTER

THANKS!

Many thanks to all those folk who put little notes of greeting in with their membership applications. It's impossible to acknowledge all of these, but they are greatly appreciated.

THANKS AGAIN – SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many thanks, also, to all those members who make their cheques payable to me. It's a nice thought, but Brian Edwards does not approve! "NAWB" will suffice – no need to write the full title.

QUIZ

Which well known Past President was seen in Ludlow on Monday, 19th August? Answers on a post card to Mrs Cyril Berry.

AWARDS

I believe all awards should be given. A silver medal will always be given for second place, even if the second place runner is a mile behind a marathon winner. As Arthur Cottenham has written, the judge's comments sheet will state when awards have been given to the "best of a bad bunch", in the same way that films record the situation in athletics, Ben Turner's "Olympic Medals" is a good idea, and must be followed up. I'm not sure I agree with Ben's second paragraph. Surely people enter shows to win – "Judges at the Bar" is a bonus. Vic Goffen's quarrel with the points system has been looked at, and alterations have been made (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

A GOOD BOOK

According to the latest newsletter from my book club, Roy Ekins' new book is in the Top Ten. What a pity I don't read!

TO FORTIFY OR NOT TO FORTIFY

There is a move afoot, both from within the committee and from without, to do away with fortified classes in the show. The Schedule Sub-Committee decided to leave things as they were for 1986, and to ask the members for their thoughts. Not being a maker of the fortified product, I must admit to abstaining when the vote was taken for their introduction. Write to Roy.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTHS QUIZ

(1) Yes (2) 1963 (3) Stan Baker or Vernon Whitehouse.
(Presumably the questions will follow later – Editor)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

If the number on your envelope label begins with a 4, then you have not renewed your subscription. Please help us by renewing as soon as possible. As these labels are sent to Roy Ekins some time before the despatch of "News & Views" there may be some of you who have renewed in recent weeks.

Any opinions stated in this column are not necessarily those of the Committee or the Editor.

PATRON COMES OF AGE

Twenty years ago a friend introduced me to a tiny homebrew business in College Road, Crosby, where I bought beer kits and strange things like airlocks and cheap dried bilberries. That little business was then just a year old, and now, as the mighty Vina wholesale business, supplying about a thousand retailers, it has just celebrated its 21st, its coming of age. This company started in the back of a small toy shop with £200 capital, but within five years had outgrown the premises and moved to St. John's Road where they opened a retail shop, and large corner premises for wholesale and mail-order business. These soon proved inadequate, the retail and mail-order side of the business were sold off to the Liverpool multiple, Brewit Home Brew Centres Ltd., and the remaining wholesale business was transferred in 1976 to a large warehouse in Marsh Lane, Bootle. Five years later the company's turnover had increased to such an extent that they had to move again, to their present premises in Hornby Boulevard, Bootle. On the 'open day' shortly after the move, it seemed impossible that all that 22,000 feet could ever be filled. Now, there doesn't look to be an inch to spare, and one wonders how long it will be before another move, or at least the acquisition of more warehousing space will be needed.

Vina is a progressive and lively firm, and the Directors are continually reviewing their existing lines, and possible new lines to add to their great range of stock items. As well as wholesaling many other firms' products, Vina has its own lines under its own brand, which have recently been brightened up with a colourful new logo.

The three Directors are Lawrie Barker, Alan Shellard (the founders) and Tommy Proctor, who became a Director about ten years ago. Their combined knowledge of the homebrew trade is immense, and they seem to have developed a flair for selecting lines that will sell well. Now serving nearly 1000 retail outlets, Vina must be among the most successful of the homebrew traders, and deservedly so. Perhaps you will therefore raise your glass and drink a birthday toast to one of our patrons; 21 this year — well done, Vina!

PATRONAGE

This seems an opportune occasion to remind all our readers that a number of large firms, who are always listed on the front cover of 'News and Views', give substantial financial support to the Association, and they are always willing to assist NAWB when the opportunity arises. An example of this was the free distribution by Vina of 1000 posters we printed for display by shopkeepers to try and recruit new members. This would have been a most difficult and expensive venture had we had to distribute them ourselves.

It is only fair, then, to ask our readers to support these firms, by choosing their branded goods when shopping, and recommending them to others when the chance arises. All of them produce high-quality ingredients, additives, and equipment, and often in a range of prices to suit all pockets. You'll never regret it!

AND TO THE FUTURE

And not just Christmas and New Year festivities, or the Conference and Show weekend for 1986. What we are looking for now are our long-term future prospects, and there are two basic matters to consider:—

(1) FINANCE

As you will have seen from the Association's annual balance sheets, we are losing money most years, and our capital resources are being eroded. So what, you may ask, why do we need capital? Well, it may surprise you to know that even with the reduced-size Committee we have, just one Committee meeting costs around £200. That includes a one-course lunch and a coffee, though members may be away from home from 7 am to 8 pm. Or one issue of "News and Views" incurs costs of over £400! And there are other associated expenses that must be met before the funds are received for a show-schedule, for example, and the costs of distributing them, and preliminary liaison visits, postages and stationery — the list is unending.

So I'm sure you will accept the need to recruit new members, to attend the AGM and Show weekend — it's free to members in 1986 — and to support the National Draw we are reintroducing this year. NAWB could face extinction! That is a horrifying thought, but the present trend must be reversed, or it could come to pass in just a few short years. Its up to you!

(2) FUTURE SHOW VENUES

As you well know, 1986's National is being held at Scarborough, and — believe it or not — we have been invited to return there in 1990! Its closer than you think. For your nice new 1986 Diaries, here's a carry-forward note to enter for 1987. We have arranged an exciting new venue for you all to visit for the 1987 Conference, that coastal gem of North Wales, Llandudno. Make a note of it now, for April 10/11/12, 1987, the weekend before Easter.

Naturally we will give you much more information in a future issue of "News and Views", but in brief, this is a visually and financially attractive booking, and Llandudno has many boarding houses and hotels, in price ranges to suit every pocket. It is easy of access, and almost every road leading to it will take you through magnificent scenery. The A5, the major road from the south west, passes through the northern outskirts of Snowdonia, with superb views of mountain, forest, and river to delight you. Llandudno faces out over golden sands and Colwyn Bay to Anglesey. It's magical countryside, and well worth taking a week or two of your holidays to explore it. Enlist a few friends as members for 1986, and bring them as a party in 1987.