

N A W B (A)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE & BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS & VIEWS



DECEMBER 1988



EDITORIAL

One of the commonest complaints I hear about the state of our hobby refers to the ageing population of winemakers in the average Circle. "We aren't recruiting enough young people nowadays," comes the plaintive cry, "Where's it all going to end?" It's not going to end, the future of Wine & Beer Circles is much as it always has been. When did we ever recruit a lot of young people? Occasional Circles have been so blessed because they are newly formed, or are in an area of rapid urban growth that attracts young families. Most Circles are not so fortunate, and have few young members.

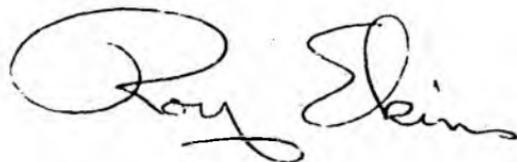
The simple truth is that the average Briton is older than before. All those post-war babies are now in their late thirties and forties - and their parents are in their late fifties and upwards. The shift is towards an ageing population, as less children are being born. And many of those reaching retirement age, and that will grow younger as the decades pass,

want to keep up standards, and share a bottle of wine over a meal, or a couple of glasses with visiting friends, or perhaps to reminisce over a pint or two. In many cases, homebeer and winemaking is the only solution. Inevitably our members grow older, but there'll be many sprightly middle-aged youngsters joining in the years to come.

News & Views this quarter is, I believe, a little brighter and more varied than before. This is thanks to those members who have stirred their stumps to contribute copy for it. I hope that having seen the difference it can make, others will follow their example and send me oddments and articles for future issues.

May I close by thanking all members for supporting NAWB throughout the year. Fruit has been fairly plentiful, so there should be thousands of gallons bubbling away in preparation for 1990's National at Scarborough. And there's still time to make a stone-fruit based liqueur to enter for Blackpool next year.

But as this calendar year is now nearly over, may I take this opportunity to wish every reader a Merry Christmas, and Best Wishes for successful winemaking and brewing in 1989. And if you would like a ready-made New Year Resolution, why not determine to recruit at least one more member during the year? Just one each, and we'd double in size. That's obvious, but what an exciting thought!



Dear Friends,

For the past few years I have been writing in this 'News & Views' as your Secretary, and urging you to do this or that. This year it is with great pride that I have the opportunity to write as your Chairman.

N. A. W. B. is very important to me, and those letter stand for many hours of friendship, happiness, and yes, hard work. Those particular letters I feel also represent, for me, the feelings at this particular time of the year.

N is for National, but also for Near. It is near at home at our Wine Circles that it all began, where one makes friends and shares the good times of dances and parties, all brought to a climax at Christmas.

A is for Association, also for Annual. We have our Annual Show, our A. G. M. s, our Annual Federation Shows, all well organised events, but the Annual event of Christmas gives us a chance to relax with friends and enjoy ourselves.

W is for Wine, but also for Wassail. The definition in the English Dictionary is "a drinking bout"; need I say more?

B is for Beer but also for Brewing. I expect most of you have already brewed your special Porters or Barley Wines in readiness for the festivities ahead.

Of course, every one of us could use these letters to represent their own expressions; might make an interesting competition, Roy?

So now I'd like to join with you

And drink a glass of wine,

To wish you all the very best

For now and '89.

A very Happy Christmas to you all: see you in Blackpool.

J. Judith.



. AND THE NEXT NAWB COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 5th FEBRUARY 1989. . . .

WINE AND BEER DIPLOMAS AND WINE AND BEER LABELS

Many Federations and Circles have relied for decades on the excellent Diplomas, the award cards designed by the Amateur Winemaker, just as many members have bought their artistically-produced bottle labels from the same source. The following announcement will undoubtedly be of interest to many of our members, who are encouraged to support this venture. David Ham is also the Secretary of the Home Beer & Winemaking Trade Association, which represents the retailers that we rely on for our equipment, ingredients, additives, and so on. David is in close contact for liaison with NAWB - he'll be at Blackpool - so make sure we support him the way the trade supports the hobby generally. See also David's advertisement on the inside back cover.

DIPLOMAS AND LABELS

The Amateur Winemaker labels and diplomas are known the world over and have been used with pride to enhance bottles of homebrew for many years. The pleasure of passing round a correctly 'dressed' bottle is only equalled by the satisfaction of receiving one of the much coveted Diplomas awarded at local or national shows.

Re-organisation of the Argus offices made it impossible for them to continue this service, but Argus Books Ltd. were concerned that it would still be available to their many customers and have arranged with David Ham Associates to continue the business of supplying the labels and diplomas, that originally started as a service to readers of the Amateur Winemaker magazine.

David Ham is the Secretary of the Home Brewing and Winemaking Trade Association and welcomed the opportunity of becoming further involved in the world of home brewing, and looks forward now to becoming better acquainted with NAWB members.

One immediate change is that the First, Second, and Third categories on the Wine Diplomas have been restored to stock, which should be good news for all the Secretaries of the Wine Circles and Guilds.

Very Highly Commended, Highly Commended, and Commended categories are also available and can be particularly helpful in rewarding the loser in a close decision or those stalwarts who always support but never quite seem to win. Similar categories exist for the Brewing diplomas.

Send for a price list and remember to order your future supplies of diplomas and labels from:

DAVID HAM ASSOCIATES

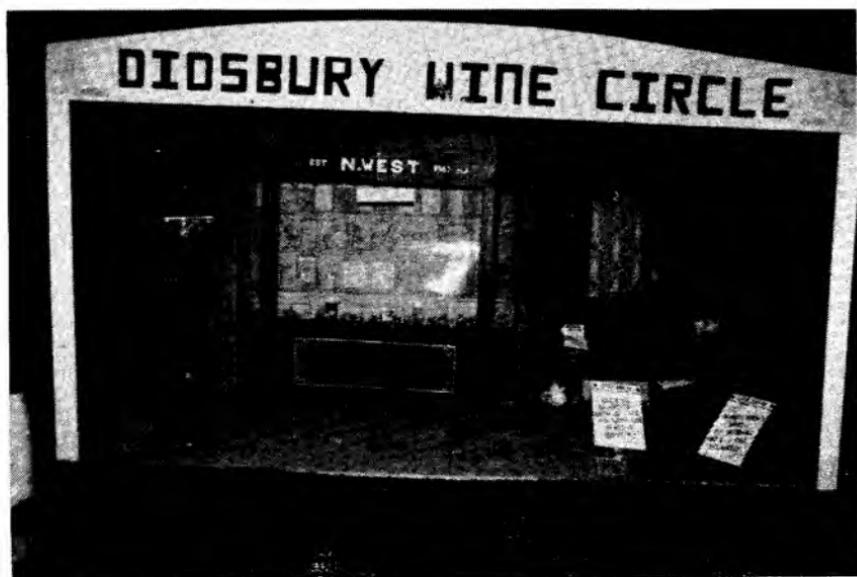
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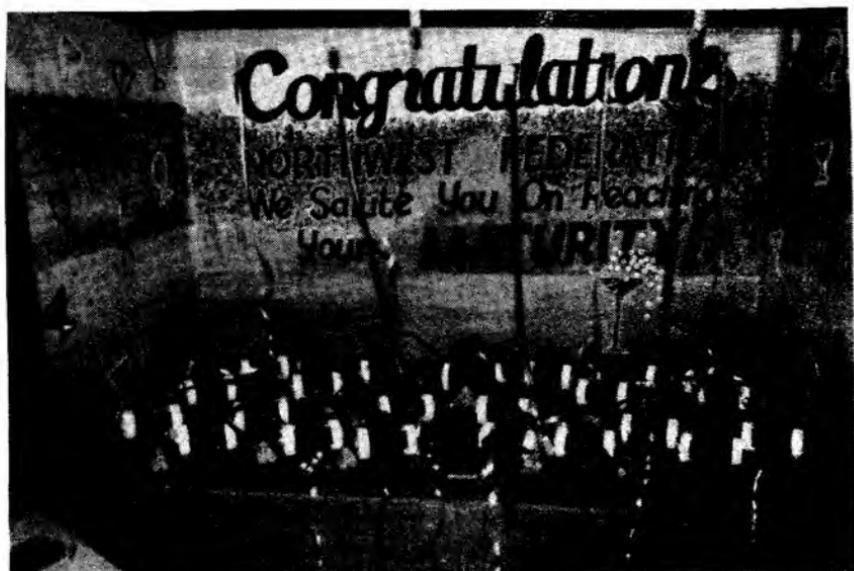
MIDDX. TW1 1HP

Telephone: 01-891 1253

NORTH WESTERN FEDERATION OF AMATEUR WINEMAKERS SOCIETIES
THE TWENTYFIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND SHOW, AT PONTIN'S, AINSDALE, SOUTHPORT



WINNING CIRCLE STAND



TWENTY ONE GUN SALUTE



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GEORGE LASHBROOK, OF TORQUAY

JUDGE'S BREATH TESTS

At the last North Western Federation Show at Pontin's, Ainsdale, seven of the Judges agreed to be breathalysed at Southport Police Station, following their judging stint on the Saturday morning. Most Judges will have been concerned in the past that they may on occasion have swallowed or absorbed through their mouth tissues enough alcohol to make them legally unfit to drive.

The results of the tests, taken on a Lion Intoximeter 3000 machine, were most encouraging. The breakpoint is 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath. The seven judges had tasted between them 39, 60, 56, 59, and 61 glasses of wine, 39 liqueurs, and 28 stouts and barley wines respectively. The results of the tests (two each) about 1 to 1½ hours after judging, ranged from 0 to 2 micrograms. All the judges were therefore well below the legal limit.

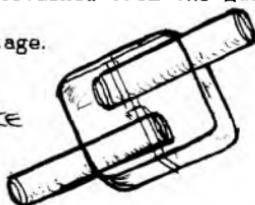
It would seem that judges following good judging practices, and delaying for an hour or so after judging, should not be over the limit. This assumes a meal beforehand, and no additional social drinking.

One other interesting point did emerge: one judge was asked to use a 'Gold Spot' mouth or breath freshener. This made the Intoximeter record the judge as being a/ twice the legal limit, and b/ three times the legal limit. It appears such sprays are highly alcoholic, and should not be used to hide the smell of drink on your breath. The effects of the spray had evaporated fifteen minutes later, and on re-test the judge had a breath alcohol reading of nil.

More detailed copies of the report can be obtained from the Editor, price £1 to cover photocopying, envelope, and postage.

STERILE MOUTHPIECE

—NOT A NEW AIRLOCK



CHRISTLETON FOR CHRISTMAS

I have just been reminded that fifteen years ago this month a letter from Dr. L W F Rowe was published in the Amateur Winemaker. Page 854 of the magazine for December 1973 featured his letter, which first brought to the public eye Dr. Rowe's recipe for a quick red wine, 'Christleton Red', which soon became famous throughout the hobby. So here, for those who have not tried this recipe, or who have lost it over the intervening years, is the way to make :-

CHRISTLETON (To make one gallon)

Ingredients:

4½ oz. dried elderberries
 2 lb sugar
 1½ pints dry cider
 Wine yeast and nutrient
 Pectolase
 1 heaped teaspoon citric acid
 Water to one gallon



Method:

Place the dried elderberries in a saucepan with enough water to cover them comfortably. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain off the juice, pressing lightly, and return the berries to the pan. Add just enough water to cover, bring to the boil again, and simmer for 10 minutes.

Strain again, and repeat this process, simmering for about 10 minutes each time, until just about all the colour has gone out of the berries. Stir the sugar, citric acid and yeast nutrient into the hot liquid and put aside to cool. When down to about 80°F, add the cider, Pectolase and yeast starter and ferment out in the usual way.

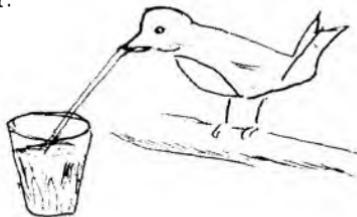
"You will finish up with an all-the-year-round light dry red wine, equally suitable for Sunday dinner or lazing in the garden on a hot day, and maturing so quickly that it is drinkable within a couple of months of being started. I doubt if it would improve much with prolonged keeping. None of mine has ever lasted long enough to find out."

In January 1975 Maurice Chant of Bristol published his suggested amendments in the AW. These consisted of replacing the sugar with glucose, and adding 3 x 3mg Vitamin B1 tablets (with the pectolase and yeast). This may cause the fermentation "to be completed in ONE WEEK . If made in a four-gallon batch, it clears in another week. It can be drunk after three weeks, but improves steadily thereafter....."

Why 'Christleton'? To quote Dr. Rowe, "There is a small village just outside Chester where I once took my wine to a party. But that's another story..."

I do think that after fifteen years he could let us into the secret!

Finally, I have been asked by one of our members for a 'Christleton White' wine recipe that was published at a later date; I cannot trace this among my records, so if any reader can send me a copy, or tell me where to find it, I would be most grateful.





'TWEAKING' WINE & BEER KITS

Brian Williamson, President of the Harpenden Amateur Winemakers, has responded to my comments in the last issue of News & Views, regarding the obnoxious practice of making up kits for competitive entries and varying from the methods or ingredients prescribed by the kit manufacturers, thus gaining an unfair advantage over other exhibitors. I reproduce Brian's contribution in full, as it goes far beyond my original intent.

Replies and comments should be addressed to the Editor, preferably on non-inflammable paper!

TWEAKING KITS OR BLEATING TWITS?

By 'ecky thump. Now you've gone and done it, Roy Ekins. Calling us cheats and dubious practitioners. Whatever next!

If the sinful admonishments contained in your article on 'tweaked' kit wines (Page 3 of N & V September 1988) were a ruse to provoke a response from your reluctant readership, then you have certainly succeeded in inciting this member to retaliate with some equally wicked words. For starters, how about "Down With Kit Wines In The National Show"? And there's more - "Rule 11 Is An Ass".

I exclude beer from this debate, since the quality of kit beers is in my view much more acceptable than kit wines, but in any event, I am first and foremost a winemaker, and I submit my case as the very model of a typical NAWB member. [No-one who writes to N & V can be a typical member - Ed.]

Brian Williamson,
Winetaster of the
Year, for 1985,
Hertfordshire Fine
Wine Society.



A dedicated enthusiast of our movement, regular exhibitor at our National Show (not without some modest success), I, like many of my fellow members, have developed our craft/hobby over many years, progressing from Club Shows to Federation level, and finally having reached the pinnacle of proficiency and ambition, joined NAWB and entered the National Show. Experience has taught us that in addition to our basic fruit ingredients, the judicious use of various adjuncts, such as acids, banana 'gravy', dried fruits, grape concentrates, and latterly a subtle variety of supermarket fruit juices, make the difference between a winning wine and an 'also ran'. At an early stage of our development we dabbled with concentrates and kit

wines, but soon discovered that on their own these products were thin, very often oxidised, and frequently accompanied by a totally unsuitable yeast. In our serious pursuit of excellence we came to the conclusion that the wine kits had no place in our craft, other than as an additive.

The National Show Schedule caters for all our needs within the 18 various classes and wine styles set out in Sections 1 & 2. Bearing in mind that we are talking about the National Show - and at last I come to my point - I query not only the necessity for a Section 3 (Kit Wines & Grape Concentrates) but the overwhelming content of no less than 9 Classes, of which 5 Classes exclude Grape Concentrates.

Can you, dear Editor, deal with the following questions:-

- 1/ Please tell me how many poofers (cissies) entered Class 21 - "Kit wines, excluding grape concentrate, Rosé Medium Dry"?
- 2/ Convince me why any self-respecting winemaker should spend time and money on a kit of (say) Ginger wine - sweet or dry - to enter in the All-England Premier Wine Show, as a test of his/her skill.
- 3/ Can you elucidate what skill there is in adding 6 pints of water plus a measured amount of sugar to a packet [or can] of ingredients?
- 4/ Can you justify the unequal competition of 'Gold Medal' and 'Superior' expensive kits against the cheaper 6-week wonders?
- 5/ Can you please explain why, having gone to the trouble of requiring entrants to identify the make of kit, you then negate the whole point by leaving the name of the winning product unpublished in the results?
- 6/ Finally, what is the point of introducing Rule 11 which you will never be able to enforce?

Don't bother, dear Roy, for I have the perfect solution to the problem

which will satisfy the honour of all parties. The kit makers with their inferior products [Shame! - Ed.], the NAWB Committee [Boo!-Ed.] in its hypocritical subservience to the sponsors [Unfair! - Ed.], the loyal members [Hurrah!-Ed.] in their bemusement [Hear Hear - Ed.] can all avoid the stigma of being called a cheat, by the simple expedient of reducing Section 3 to a single Class :-

"CLASS 19 - The Best Tweaked Wine Kit in the business, any colour, any style. (Delete rule 11)."

You might even attract some entries from real winemakers.

Well, Brian, not being 'bent' that way, I can't answer your first question, but I can announce the number of exhibitors in Class 21 in the next N & V, probably in February. Regarding question 5, Dave Pulley went to a lot of trouble extracting all sorts of information from the entries, including the brand-names for the prize-winning kit entries. Unhappily, I, as Editor, took much less trouble in accidentally filing them in the rubbish bin, and by the time a new set of statistics could be prepared, it seemed to be too remote in time from the Brighton Show to be of practical use. Mea culpa! Blackpool 1989 will be a bright and shining new occasion to right these wrongs - and that's all the crawling you're getting from me! With regard to the other questions, I would love to fill the rest of this



issue with my own answers, but prefer to await the superheated replies I expect from your fellow-members to do it for me. I hope the next issue will be full of fulminating fellow fermenters' furious effusions. Phew!

MORE ON TWEAKERS... A letter from Alan Procter of Darlington:

I was very interested in your comments on tweaking kits in your last newsletter. As a National Wine & Beer Judge I would find it difficult to decide which kits had been 'tweaked' because the quality of kits varies considerably.

One particular kit that I make requires only the addition of water and produces a fair wine. However, other wine kits require the addition of water, sugar, and chemicals. Also I note that some beer kits give a sachet of isomerised hops which can be added to give extra taste and flavour.

To overcome the problem of the vast amount of differences in judging kit wines and beers, whether they are tweaked or not, would be:-

a/ for everyone to use the same brand of kit in a particular year. This could be printed in the Schedule. The brand could be varied from year to year.

b/remove the kit classes altogether from the Show. However, I feel this would probably deter many winemakers from making their first entries in the the Show, and the kit manufacturers would be dismayed at the lack of provision for such classes. (Especially our Patrons! Ed.)

The present system does seem unsatisfactory and open to abuse. Perhaps the committee could resolve the situation so that everyone, from the competitor to the judge, would be satisfied with the end result.

Yours sincerely

A Procter.

(Similar views were expressed at the NGWBJ weekend, and I made it clear then that my intentions in stirring this hornet's nest had not been to add to a judge's difficulties - I too know that no Judge can always and positively identify such kit adjustments on the show-bench - but to make it clear to competitors what was intended by the Show Rules. As with many other Rules - - fortification, adulteration with commercial wines, declaration of ingredients for particular classes, as examples - both Show Organisers and Judges have to rely on the honesty of the exhibitor, and I am sure that in all but rare, isolated cases, if the exhibitor is told clearly what is and what is not permissible, then he/she can be relied on to observe the rules - Editor)

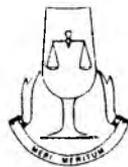
JUDGING - Despite putting my foot in it nearly every time I open my mouth, I am pleased to say my palate has not suffered from this repetitive mishap. I am therefore proud to continue as a member of the National Guild of Judges. Twenty five years ago, NAWB members gave birth to a lusty infant, and the Guild has grown to a responsible and skilled adult. I am happy to publish the following announcement by the Guild's retiring Chief Examiner:

NATIONAL GUILD OF WINE AND BEER JUDGES EXAMINATIONS

The NGWBJ examination is being reorganised into two distinct parts.

Part I will consist of an oral examination on the Guild handbook and one on Theory. This part will be taken locally at a time and place mutually convenient to each candidate and the appropriate regional examiner.

Part II, the Practical examination, will be held annually at the venue of the NAWB Conference and Show on the Sunday morning following the Show.



Candidates must pass Part I before taking Part II. Those failing Part I would in most cases have time for a re-sit within the year before the next Part II.

The first Part II examination under the new arrangements will be held on Sunday March 19th 1989 at Blackpool, where all candidates who have passed Part I of the wine judge's or beer judge's examinations will be invited to partake between 9 a.m. and 12.30p.m.

One obvious benefit is the opportunity for the candidates to 'fine tune' their palates by stewarding at the National Show on the day before the examination.

The new arrangement is expected to be more efficient and will benefit all concerned.

Doug. Hodgkinson, Chief Examiner

=====

POLLUTION,

or

SELF-EMBALMING IN ONE EASY LESSON

Have you considered how the yeast
Consumes sugars in great haste?
And then the dirty little beast
Drunken, dies from its own waste!

Roy Alliver

WINE TALKS AND TASTINGS

Over the past three years several thousand winemakers have enjoyed the free talks and tastings offered by J Sainsbury PLC, through their Wine Spoeaker service. Unfortunately, that service has now been terminated.

In view of the many appreciative letters I have received, I have decided to continue as a freelance lecturer on commercial wines. I would be delighted to arrange a talk and wine tasting for your Circle. Distance is usually immaterial.

The cost of a tasting depends mainly on two factors - the number of people attending, and the number, type, and quality of the wines selected.

Let me give you an example. For an average tasting of six table wines, such as a dry, a slightly sweet, and a medium sweet white wine, a couple of dry reds, and a dry or medium sweet sparkling wine to finish with the type of tasting Sainsbury's supplied - the cost would be approximately £2.50 per head for up to 48 people, plus travelling expenses. For 49 to 108 audience the charge is approximately £2.25 per head, and over 108, £2 per head. both plus travelling expenses. Why not link with another Circle to bring your numbers up and qualify for a lower rate? Federation events, involving larger numbers, might be cheaper still.

For this sum, I will provide the wines and tasting sheets, and give a talk for up to 2 hours (depending on your wishes, audience questions etc) The provision of glasses (preferably Paris goblets) and refreshments such as French bread, cheese and biscuits, etc. would be the organisers' responsibility. I can supply disposable plastic glasses at cost if required, (approximately £2 for 25), but glass is much better.

I can, of course, quote you for any type of tasting, for any number of

people, and can run specialised tastings based on particular varieties of grape, or countries of origin, or on the basis of a specified type of wine. If you wish to run an event on a theme (eg, Naughty French Wines, a Sherry Morning, or a Champagne Party), I would be happy to cooperate with you.

Please do ring me to discuss without any obligation, the type of tasting you might wish me to arrange for your organisation. Whatever your query, I should be happy to hear from you, and to help you if I can. Whatever your wishes, I am sure I can accommodate you. An application form is attached for you to use if you wish.

Finally, may I make it clear that this is not a wine-selling campaign. I do not carry large stocks for sale, employ salesmen, nor solicit orders. Wine for sale by the mixed case can be arranged if requested. My aim is just to provide a pleasant evening, with as much information mixed in as suits the occasion.

Roy Ekins

HOLIDAYS ABROAD



News & Views will gladly announce details of holidays recommended by members, brochures available from various wine holiday companies, and items of news about places of interest to visit.

To start with, we have a few comments about the La Mare Vineyards; it's pointless trying to conceal the name, as it is the only commercial vineyard in Jersey. Entry costs £2.50 (1988) and this apparently entitles one to "wander at your own speed" following the Vineyard Trail, after viewing an introductory video. This small estate makes wine and cider, marmalade (how exciting can you get?) and provides wine by the glass (if you pay for it)

and cider too (if you pay for it). Homemade Food is on sale at the Farmhouse Kitchen, and wine, cider, mustard, marmalade, and preserves are on sale in the Vineyard Shop. There are plenty of notices about how wine is made, but if you want a sample.....pay for it.

Members will remember the dreadful and destructive hurricane of 1987. The La Mare vineyards seemingly have made the most of this catastrophe by gathering such surviving grapes as they could from the storm-damaged vines, vinifying them, and with the aid of a special bottle label are selling the wines of the hurricane year at over £12 per bottle. I am sure members of NAWB will be fascinated by this bargain souvenir. And at duty-free prices, too!

The only other news of holidays abroad received to date is of the 1989 Wine Tours organised by President Travel Specialists of Manchester. If you have a Circle holiday in mind, why not give them a ring on 061 834 1660 ? Do mention News & Views, for this is the sort of cooperation that keeps the hobby strong and self-supporting. President have organised a Belgian Beer tour, a visit to the Rhine Valley, a trip to Bernkastel for the wine festival, and a tour of Bordeaux and its wonderful clarets. These can be booked by individuals for pre-arranged dates, or can be organised for groups at dates to suit you. Why not ring now for details?

If you or your Circle are involved in any similar holidays, why not let the hobby know through News & Views? No charge for a bit of publicity!



STOP PRESSING!

A commercial brewery whose beers have the remarkable property of reaching unusual parts, so they say, has recently been advertising their Cobergh's Black Currant Aperitif in the trade press. This aperitif is said to sell marvellously in Holland, and is now being introduced into the UK. The advertisements all feature strigs of a soft fruit, presumably the fruit from which the Black Currant Aperitif is made. How surprising that the illustration appears to be of a bunch of Red Currants. The aperitif presumably reaches the plants othe aperitifs do not reach.....





NATIONAL SHOW, BLACKPOOL, 17-19 MARCH 1989

Everyone must know by now that the 1989 National will be held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, on Blackpool's North Shore Cliffs, on Friday, March 17th to Sunday March 19th inclusive. There is accommodation for about 500 winemakers and brewers at the Norbreck - do ask for the Conference terms if you are staying there, (Dinner, Bed & Breakfast £25 per day, or just B & B for £17.50) - or you can make your own arrangements to stay elsewhere in the town, at the hotel or guesthouse of your choice. The Norbreck is on the Promenade, so you can get a tram to the door (almost), or there is room for a lot of cars to park on the hotel forecourt. The postal address is Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9AA, and the telephone number is 0253 52341. Don't delay if you wish to stay there, it's booking up rapidly.

STEWARDS are wanted urgently - wine and beer stewards to assist the judges, and general stewards to receive entries, sell raffle tickets, release

entries after the show, and a score of other tasks. The Committee members work all the year round to stage this weekend; won't you do your bit to help your Association to continue staging the greatest amateur wine & Beer Show in the world? Use the application form enclosed with your schedule, and join in the fun and comradeship of helping your Association to put on the best Conference and Show yet! Come on, enjoy yourself and earn a free wine glass doing it!

Conference tickets will, as already announced, cost £6 for members and £16 for visitors. the cost is up slightly this year as we expect to have to pay for the wines for the tasting Judith Irwin, our Chairman, is running on Saturday afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE: -

The Civic Reception on Saturday evening does NOT include a buffet supper. So much food has been wasted in the past - at Brighton it was dreadful! - that this seems quite reasonable. The Committee accepts this, as most people have had a dinner beforehand, and do not require a substantial supper halfway through the evening. The Norbreck is willing to have catering facilities available for those who require them, in snack bars etc., and this will be arranged if sufficient members ask for them in advance.

MISCELLANEOUS:-

We hope to have a variety of trade stands at the Norbreck; parking for 800 cars is free, and there is a petrol station on site; the hall for the dances is perhaps the largest we have ever had the use of; the Norbreck has an indoor swimming pool, snooker and games room, bars, nursery, sauna, massage, beauty therapy (I must try that!) and hairdressing (I'm past

caring!). There are 339 bedrooms, each with private bathroom, colour TV, radio, telephone, and tea/coffee making facilities.

May I remind you that there will be no National Grand Draw this year, and if we are to remain solvent, then everyone must support the Tombola and the Raffles to their fullest extent. And gifts for the tombola and raffles will be received most joyfully by Brian Edwards, our Fund Raiser, or by any member of the Committee - see inside front cover of News & Views, or within the Schedule - anything at all is welcome, from Federations, Circles, or Individual members.

HOW DO YOU TRAVEL to the National? If not by car, read on:-

RAIL TRAVEL

British Rail has a special arrangement of rail ticket fares for people attending conferences, called 'Conference Connection'. If any members intend to travel to Blackpool by rail, will you please write to me personally. If there is sufficient demand, *and if I am notified by the end of December 1988*, then I shall register the National weekend as a Conference with British Rail. This will mean that any delegate travelling by rail to Blackpool will be able to apply for a concessionary return fare. As an example, London to Blackpool and return would cost (1988 figs.) £21, 2nd class. . Bournemouth to Blackpool return would be £35, whether by London or not. Travel from some towns outside London via London may incur an additional charge. Details from the Editor if required.





NEWSLETTERS: -

Editor Peter Coombs sends us the Wales & West Region's Newsletter periodically, and I was pleased to see one of Roy Alliver's 'poems' in the September issue, with the "Song of the Suffering Judges" immediately after a resolution that had just been passed; the W & W will use white plastic topped corks for showing in future. Our last issue included the article on page 18, "Is Your Circle Blacklisted?" from their newsletter.

Another newsletter - "On The Grapevine" - has been sent to me by Chris Lake, Secretary of the North West Kent Wine Federation. He too has kindly given me free licence to reprint any items that might be of interest to our members. Chris has suggested that members might like to read about the early days of the hobby, and the various swings and roundabouts that made up our history during the last thirty years or so. Are there any budding raconteurs out there? I'd be glad to drop a few hints to you, if so.

I rather like "Welsch's Laws of Winemaking", which they reproduced from the 1970's: -

- 1 The amount of one ingredient called for in the recipe will always be more than you've got in the house.
- 2 The foaming of all fermentations is always greater than the space left in the fermenter.
- 3 When bottling there will always be two thirds of a bottle left at the end.
- 4 The number of corks prepared is always less than the number of bottles filled.
- 5 Whenever a mess is generated, a child or pet will always walk through

it. (That's a law of life, not just winemaking!)

6 All apparatus dropped is glass.

7 The better the wine the less you have. (More specifically for me -every First in a show is my last bottle of that brew!)

8 The inclination to stain is directly proportional to the colour of the juice and the quality of the clothes worn.

9 Family and friends are never around during crushing, filtering, stoning, or preparation of the must.

10 Family and friends always appear during bottling - the better the quality, the more of them!

I'm sure there are a lot more; would anybody like to add a few? Like "The bigger the brew, the more likely it is to pick up an infection"? I'll leave it to you to think about.



IT'S A ROTTEN,
THANKLESS JOB, BUT
SOMEONE HAS TO DO IT!

(THANKS TO
ALAN ELDRED)

NATIONAL GUILD OF WINE & BEER JUDGES

At the Guild of Judges' 25th anniversary weekend - and what a superb event it proved to be - a little unexpected entertainment by Doug Hodgkinson and Dennis Rouston, accompanied by Betty Keeley on the piano, followed dinner and the toasts and speeches.

I have Doug's kind permission to reproduce his song here for your amusement:-

A WINE JUDGE'S LOT IS NOT A HAPPY ONE

When a gentleman's a judging at his table	(At his table)
He gazes at each bottle for to see	(For to see)
If the bottle, cork, the level and the label	(And the label)
Are exactly as it says they ought to be	(Ought to be)
If when the wine judiciously is view-ed	(Ly is view-ed)
There are four faults quite vividly in view	(Ly in view)
He gives a firm instruction to his steward	(To his steward)
For presentation give it minus two! [All] Oh....	
When the presentation judging's to be done	(To be done)
A wine judge's lot is not a happy one	(Happy one)

When the presentation he has finished judging	(Finished judging)
He gazes through the bottle for to see	(For to see)
If the marks that will be given without grudging	(Without grudging)
Are top for colour and for clarity	(Clarity)
But he often finds his line of vision clouded	(Vision clouded)
As best he tries to concentrate his gaze	(Trate his gaze)
The colour often permanently shrouded	(Ently shrouded)
In bacterially generated haze [All] Oh....	
When the clarity and colour's to be done,	(To be done)
A wine judge's lot is not a happy one	(Happy one)

When the wine bouquet he then attempts to measure	(Tempts to measure)
As in the glass he gently pokes his nose	(Pokes his nose)
He may marvel at the olfactory pleasure	(Tory pleasure)
Of an elderflower or perhaps a rose	(Haps a rose)
But too often is a vinous bouquet hidden	(Bouquet hidden)
Subdued by an intensive overdose	(Overdose)
Of the essence of a country garden midden	(Garden midden)
Or perhaps strong sulphite gets right up his nose	Oh.....
When the sniffing and the snorting's to be done	(To be done)
A wine judge's lot is not a happy one	(Happy one)

When he starts upon the all important tasting	(Portant tasting)
The task is full of danger there's no doubt	(There's no doubt)
For the wine may give his palate such a pasting	(Such a pasting)
He can hardly find the strength to spit it out	(Spit it out)
For what should be a pleasant operation	(Operation)
Enjoyed abroad or sitting in the house	(In the house)
Can be ruined by a touch of oxidation	(Oxidation)
Or the presence of a monumental mouse	Oh.....
When the chewing and the spitting's to be done	(To be done)
A wine judge's lot is not a happy one	(Happy one)

And if he survives enough to pick the winner	(Pick the winner)
Though frankly many fail to get that far	(Get that far)
He then stands just like a miserable sinner	(Able sinner)
To endure another 'Judges at the Bar'	(At the bar)
And there he answers question after question	(After question)
Exposed for all competitors to see	(Tors to see)
Fighting back a dreadful bout of indigestion	(Indigestion)
While he demonstrates his equanimity	Oh.....
So when everything about it's said and done	(Said and done)
A wine judge's lot is not a happy one	(Happy one.)

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NATIONAL BBC TV PUBLICITY FOR HOMEBREWING HOBBY

Home winemaking received a nationwide boost on November 16th, when it was featured on 'Daytime Live', the lunchtime programme from Pebble Mill.

On the previous day a car sponsored by the Coleshill 'Lions' had set off for France to bring back the Beaujolais Nouveau, and they were due back on Thursday 17th. In between, 'Daytime Live' decided to have their own 'Homebrew Run' featuring home-made wines; these country wines were brought to the studio by Snow White and an assortment of Dwarfs, otherwise WI members from the Evesham district, on skateboards, stilts, an ancient Victorian fire-hose cart, and a wheelbarrow (winebarrow?) from Alvechurch. A magnificent '20s Rolls Royce brought a red wine made from a commercial kit, borne by an attractive young lady in a charming Twenties dress. Unfortunately, she was not shown on camera, but her message came across loud and clear. The wines were received by Floella Benjamin, resident presenter, and Roy Ekins, National Judge, and National Association's PRO.

Later the wines were discussed by Liz Morcom, MW, Patricia Routledge the well-known actress, Glyn Christian, the TV cookery expert, and Roy, with Alan Titmarsh as the presenter. Not a home winemaker herself, Liz spoke quite approvingly of home winemakers who overcame the difficulties inherent in small-scale winemaking. The first wine was an elderflower, an excellent wine that brought great praise from the panel - "Can I buy a case?" asked Patricia - and a Damson Port-style 1985 was also very highly thought of. Glyn commended a spiced elderberry. The very tight timing of the programme precluded any further discussion of the wines, but Roy managed to squeeze in a few comments to the effect that Grandma's recipes should be discarded in favour of modern methods, and that hygiene was most important.

THE MIDLAND REGION FEDERATION SHOW was held on November 5th this year, so unhappily it clashed with the Guild of Judges weekend. Just the same, they managed quite nicely, thank you, with an increased bottle entry, nearly 1100 exhibits. As I only attended for an hour or so in the afternoon, I cannot report on the show to any extent. I did buy a 'Fizz-Keeper' from the 'Heart of England' Home Brew Retailer's Association stand. This is a neat little gadget designed to lightly pressurise screw-top PET bottles, so that soft drinks etc don't lose their sparkle. At first I thought "£1.99 to stop kid's pop going flat?" And then I thought again "What a cheap way of stopping my home-brewed beer from losing its fizz, if I don't feel like drinking the whole of the second 2-litre bottle!" Which is, of course, an entirely different kettle of fish. Quite a bargain at that price!

The trophy winners and class results are too extensive to quote in full, but Lichfield won the Inter-Circle Competition Trophy, Dudley the Federation Trophy for most points in classes 1-31, and G Jackson of Dudley the Goodyear Trophy for most points as an individual classes 1-29. The Steadman Cup for most points in the beer classes went to K R Sutton, also of Dudley.

What else? Cecil Vacuums had a stall for their excellent juice extractors, and Moswin Tours were advertising their attractive Wine Tours of Germany. Oh, just one other small but noteworthy item - Claude Ch...rs bought me a cup of tea! That almost made up for my being unable to attend the annual Dinner and Dance in the evening. This is always a swish and very enjoyable event, and the first I have missed in many years. Perhaps next year the two events won't clash, and we shall have the joy of attending both. If I'm invited again, that is!

CHELMSFORD WINE CIRCLE (formerly the Three Rivers Wine Circle) Secretary has sent me a Press report about the Circle's November meeting, which is entitled the **KEN JOHNSON MAGIC LANTERN SHOW**, when Ken showed the Circle members a series of colour slides, of pictures taken at club meetings, dances, wine shows, etc.



The picture above shows (l. to R) the President Jim Carter, the Mayoress and Cllr. David Frost, the Mayor of Chelmsford at the first show in 1986.
New members contact Mike Hart (Roxwell 791), or Dale Wyatt on Haldon 54664



WINE KIT REVIEWS After Brian Williamson's letter, I don't know if I dare print these! Ah well, I don't have a salary to lose, so I'll carry on. Freedom of the Press and all that - they can't muzzle me, and similar sentiments.....

CELLARCRAFT LETTERBOX KITS

I mentioned these in the last News & Views; the wines are now ready, clear, and stable. The red has good depth of colour, a surprisingly fruity nose and flavour, and is excellent value for a light-bodied red table wine. The white is not quite as much to my taste, but is a good pale straw colour, and cleared to a beautiful transparency without any extra attention. Neither wine needed the Bentonite that is included in the kit, though they might if drunk very young. These are quite good wines for £2.49 a gallon (plus 1 lb 12 oz of sugar), and equal to many a kit costing considerably more.

KOLDING DANVINO PIESPORTER TYPE

This Danish kit is attractively packed - if you can read Danish! - the English instructions are hidden inside the carton. The kit consists of a container of concentrate, and eight sachets, contents ranging from Wine yeast to start with, to Gelatin to clear the finished wine. The kit also includes a small bottle of Piesporter essence, which gives the wine an uncharacteristic golden colour, and a nose more reminiscent (to me) of Muscat rather than the Mosel. Nonetheless, slightly sweetened it is a pleasant and quite full-bodied Germanic style wine, nice and clear if all the sachets are used according to the brief but quite adequate instructions. Unfortunately, I cannot advise you where you can buy this kit, nor what the price is, as it came to me unexpectedly through the post.