

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEER MAKERS
(Amateur)

NEWS AND VIEWS

SEPTEMBER 1989



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N A W B (A)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINE AND BEERMAKERS (AMATEUR)

NEWS & VIEWS

SEPTEMBER 1989

EDITORIAL

This issue's envelope encloses some new reading material for you, in that I am sending everyone a copy of the free quarterly newspaper, 'Homebrew Today', courtesy of the Editor and Publisher, Mrs. Evelyn Barrett. For the information of anyone that has not previously seen 'Homebrew Today', perhaps I should explain that it is a completely free paper - no hidden catches - supported wholly by the income from trade advertisements. It is distributed through homebrew wholesalers as a free service to their retail shop customers, to give out to their customers, the general buying public like you and me. The wholesalers receive their bulk stocks direct from the printers.

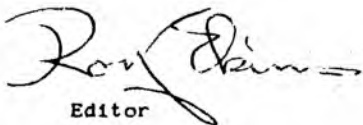
I make this detailed explanation, so that it will be clear to everyone that you can only get future issues from your homebrew supplier. There is no point at all in writing to Evelyn Barrett or to your 'News & Views' Editor for later issues, as neither of us will have a stock from which to supply you. If your local shopkeeper doesn't stock 'Homebrew Today', then insist that he gets copies from his wholesaler. It won't cost him a penny, provides a useful service to his customers, and helps attract newcomers to the hobby. Correspondence about winemaking and brewing and the hobby

at large is, of course, always welcomed by the Editor of 'Homebrew Today'. Make sure you get your quarterly free copies of the paper in future.

And now to switch to another pleasant subject. Arrangements for the next 'National' weekend, to be held at Scarborough on April 6th-8th 1990, are going ahead steadily. Some of the Committee have met with Keith Norton and other representatives of the local authority, whose guests we shall be, and they are being as helpful as possible. The Spa Complex has had a multi-million pound modernisation and facelift since our last visit, as you can see from the pictures on a later page. I am happy and relieved to tell you that the cliff lift, that strange mountain railway in miniature, is still running, so you won't have to toil up the hill on foot if you don't wish to.

Scarborough is a most attractive town, and South Bay has a wealth of hotels and boarding houses to choose from, to suit all pockets. Apply to the Tourism & Information Office, St Nicholas Cliff, Scarborough, if you want further details. Don't forget to mention why you are visiting the town. More information in the December issue of 'News & Views', which will be accompanied by the Show Schedule for next year.

Finally, please note that the list of Patrons on the front cover is bang up to date, and we would like to welcome our new Patrons, DDD Ltd, who are now the manufacturers of 'Chempro', and Young's Home Brew from the West Midlands. NAWB's Patrons are all respected and reliable suppliers of homebrew materials or equipment, some with many years of service to the hobby. These firms have all contributed hard cash to help support NAWB(A), and we ask you to be loyal to them in return and select their goods whenever there is a choice.



Editor

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

Sometimes more than you think. In the last issue of 'News & Views' I blithely commented on the change of name of the one-time Bedford Truck Wine Circle to the White Lion Wine & Beer Guild, after the pub they now meet in.

Only they don't! The White Lion actually refers to the White Lion cut into the chalk hill-side near Whipnade, outside Dunstable, and the straw boater to Luton, which has long been famed for its hats. Luton Wine Guild also wear straw boaters to celebrate their town's industry.



My apologies to the White Lion Guild, and to the landlord of the White Lion pub, wherever it may be, for falsely raising his hopes of selling more beer!

Chris Stevens, Chairman of the W L W & B G pointed out my error, and went on to say:

"Could this be the start of something big in News & Views? Perhaps we could have a run-down from each Guild/Circle belonging to NAWB. In a large organisation it's nice to know where people come from, and something about them, therefore fostering friendships. For instance, from what ashes did 'Phoenix' arise? From what part of the country is Scraptoft Village? (You'll get carpeted for that! - Editor) Is Bexley really that Old? Are the 'Ace of Clubs' any good at card games - they do pretty well at winemaking! And where on earth is the Vale of Clwyd? Etc. etc.

Perhaps a short article from one or two Guilds/Circles could be published in each News & Views; it would help the Editor recover from writer's cramp, and help us all to know each other better.

As regards the National at Blackpool, I would like, on behalf of the White Lion Guild, to thank Judith our Chairman, her hard working Committee, and all the stewards for the excellent weekend. Both for the show, the wine-tasting - HIC! - and the

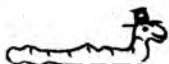
entertainment. All in all a great wine making and drinking event in our calendar.

To anybody who did not go, hard luck. You missed a good'un. We have already booked our hotel for Scarborough and look forward to next year's 'National' and to meeting our friends from around the country"

Firstly, thanks for the Blackpool bouquet, Chris; it does sometimes work out unusually well, and I think 1989 was a year that did. The fact that the Norbreck Castle Hotel was partially gutted by a serious fire shortly afterwards had nothing to do with the Committee!

Scarborough is usually an excellent venue, and we're sure you won't be disappointed next April.

Secondly, I like your suggestion of a brief note telling us about different clubs in NAWB, and if any Circle scribes would like to drop me a line I would be delighted. Please use your club letterhead paper, if you have some. I can then reproduce the badge or logo in News & Views for all to see, and recognise when it is displayed on your table at future National Show dances.



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BOOKWORM'S CORNER



Stan Baker has read and reviewed 'Wine Snobbery' by Andrew Barr, and writes :-

Snobbery plays a big part in our lives. houses, cars, clothes - even the way we speak - so why should wine be an exception? The Thatcher period, according to the author, is "one of conspicuous consumption" and a bottle of champers is the cheapest element in a "champagne lifestyle." Many people are prepared to pay over the odds for a prestige cuvée which they don't like, when a bottle of dry sparkling elderflower would probably be better appreciated on the palate as well as in the pocket.

The author quotes several forms of wine snobbery. Some commercial winemakers vie with each other, not because they are greedy for money, but greedy for prestige. Andrew Barr regards this pricing policy as "stupid and dangerous", but in my opinion I cannot see the trend changing until "bubble" sales fall significantly.

Wine scandals always fascinate me, and the author's brief description of scandals past and present reminded me of the tricks, both administrative and in the wine-making process, that unscrupulous people in the wine trade are capable of perpetrating. The chapter "What's My Poison" makes very interesting reading for both wine and beer makers who are concerned about the environment and their own health.

I thoroughly recommend this book. Most parts are factual, but some parts are the author's own opinion, which is the reason why a panel of wine writers did not include "Wine Snobbery" on their short list for Best Wine Book Of The Year. Award winning wine writer Anthony Rose considered it as "an important work" and thinks it should have been included. So do I.

(Wine Snobbery, by Andrew Barr. Published by Faber & Faber, London 1988, price £12.95)

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A SUBSTITUTE FOR GELATIN FININGS ?

This little tale has no connection with winemaking, but I like it, and think you may do too.

Last Spring my granddaughter Wendy - just three - came to visit, and as the garden pond was virtually heaving with sex-crazed frogs I took her to be introduced to nature in the raw. Fishing out a handful of frog-spawn, I tried to explain that these were eggs that would become little frogs. She took this all in, thought for a moment, and then dashed into the house, shouting "Mummy, Mummy, come and see the jelly-babies"!

CORRESPONDENCE

The first letter comes from G. Sparrow, Esq (Gerry to you), about novice classes, and about the recognition of the fair sex (I'd recognise one anywhere, and they are tactically unfair - Editor) as competitors, and the award of a Ladies' Trophy :

Dear Roy,

I wish to make a comment on two matters arising from our A G M at Blackpool.

The first was from a member of the Ace of Clubs, in which he expressed the view that it was not fair that some members should win most of the awards all the time, especially in the kit and concentrate classes, that perhaps novice classes be added to the schedule in future.

The Ace of Clubs is a very competitive club, and I remember many years of admirable competition trying to beat them, and eventually doing so. We had to enter every class possible to gain points and I'm sure the level of winemaking is raised by this competition. After all, it is the National. To become the National champion you have to enter every section of the member's classes, including kits and concentrates - poor champions if they don't know about kits and concs!

I am very much against changing the format, and feel that one should prove one's self at local or club level, where there are often novice's classes, then progress to the Federation, before having a bash at the National. Even after that, one remembers blank years before some degree of success was forthcoming.

The second topic was from Doreen Procter, very ably expressed I might add, (both there and in N & V - Editor) about initials of partners, entry forms, and a Ladies' Cup. I have to admit I was not clear to whom Doreen was referring - Entries Sec., Membership Sec., or males in general, and I always thought our hobby was the least sexist of all!

When sending out mail I must admit to putting only the man's

initial, because that is traditional, and I disregard her comments on this. However, Doreen has a very relevant point when it comes to entry forms for the National, where there are partners in the same house. Two schedules were not sent to each couple, because along with the Newsletter, postage already amounted to 26p. per envelope. The solution is obviously to put two entry forms into each schedule, and we will endeavour to do that.

Regarding a Ladies' Cup, I think this is very sexist, and to me detracts from what the National is all about. What with Novices' Cups and Ladies' Cups, what next? I hope other members might like to offer their views on these topics.

 What next indeed, Gerry - a Gentleman's Cup ? A Pensioners' Cup? A Loving Cup - Ah, now you're talking! Put me down to judge that one, please! Novices or experienced prizewinners, I just don't care.

On a less flippant note, a letter from Ken Hill, a Past President of NAWB :-

Fred Forster

It is with a great sense of personal loss, that I sadly report the death of a former member of the Executive Committee, Fred Forster, of Faversham, Kent.

Fred was elected to the Executive Committee in 1967, and was for many years a very able Treasurer. A man of Kent, Fred was the embodiment of gentleness and good humour. A winemaker of great repute, and a NAWB Master Winemaker.

His great loves were winemaking and gardening. Fred was always a generous host, with a great sense of fun. Unfortunately, poor health had prevented him from attending recent Nationals. Our thoughts go out to his wife Marcia, who is also in bad health, and to his son and daughter. I will always be grateful for having the good fortune to have known Fred and his family, and to have enjoyed his company both at meetings and socially. Rest comfortably old friend: you are sadly missed. Ken Hill

Stan Baker wrote on the same subject:-

"Fred Forster, NAWB member since 1963 and a past Treasurer, has passed away after a long illness. Fred was a man of many talents; excelling as a gardener, winemaker, and as an active member of Faversham Philharmonia Society. His award-winning soft fruits were the ingredients of award-winning wines, which enabled Faversham Winemakers Guild to gain Third overall points at the Brighton National in 1963. Fred's most outstanding National achievement was to gain the Master Winemaker award at Bognor in 1967."

As Editor and an Executive member, I am always very conscious when publishing obituary letters such as these, of the tremendous debt we owe to the older members of NAWB, who laid the firm foundations that later Executive members are able to build on. I did not know Fred personally, but I know that I, and all my fellow Committee members, will always be grateful for the groundwork that he and his contemporaries prepared on our behalf - Roy Ekins.

Sybil Hill rang me shortly after I typed these lines to tell me that Fred's widow, Marcia, who herself had poor health, had passed away on August 19th. Sadly, she joined Fred in such a short space of time, but in view of her illness she may well have preferred not to be left here without him. We offer our sympathy to their children for this double loss.

Stan Baker also writes about Show standards:-

Convenors of wine shows, when commissioning their judges, usually request the judges to indicate a preference for the class or classes of wine which they would prefer to judge. Most mature palates usually prefer dry wines, so the Convenor is not always able to comply with the judge's requests. Most convenors appreciate, or should appreciate, that not all judges are of the same standard for the very simple reason that they do not all have the same amount of experience. The

development of all sensory skills requires much practice, and the enthusiastic student slowly reaches ascending levels of sensory perception. Judges and exhibitors are in a similar situation and I recall, in the early days of the winemaking movement, the dissatisfaction expressed by several expert home winemakers when their products failed to satisfy the palates of some of the judges who were then officiating.

Whilst I accept that home winemakers can, if they wish, make a gallon of wine every day of the year, and many commercial winemakers are only making wine for a few weeks in each year, it has to be accepted that the majority of commercial winemakers are reasonably competent. Not having to make a living out of his or her winemaking skills, the home winemaker is not under the same pressure to make a quality product.

Andrew Barr in his controversial book "Wine Snobbery" says:-

"Conventional wisdom has it that making white wine is 25% grapes and 75% winemaking, whereas for red wine it is 60% grape and 40% winemaking. Tannin in red grapes from pips, skins and stalks helps to protect fermenting wine from all but the most incompetent winemakers." I would also add that many red table wines are blended.

It is also the general opinion of the wine trade that good white wines are more difficult to make than good red wines. In my opinion this means that the white wines in a show would usually be of a less high standard than the red wines simply because many wine clubs now give little training to their members. For this reason I believe that judges with long experience should judge the red blended wines, and judges with lesser experience should assess the white single ingredient wines.

Twenty years ago most winemaking clubs were active in the competitive field and members were expected to compete in local, regional, and the annual NAWB show. Today many clubs are little more than social clubs, some not even bothering to buy a few bottles of inexpensive commercial wines in order to

train the members' palates to appreciate flavours other than their own homemade wines.

Consequently when members of a 'social' club enter their wines into the club's own show the members are unable to determine whether the wine is good or bad. They are waiting for a judge's decision rather than risk their own palates, or indeed, their health.

Much has been written about pollution in the environment, but little has been written about the pollution in some homemade wines. I can find no logical reason why people with trained sensitive palates should be expected to assess home made beverages which are really well below standard.

Stan Baker

That's fighting talk, Stan, but it is a letter worth re-reading. Quite apart from winemakers deficient in skill, there certainly have been competitors in the past who would dump any old rubbish in a show out of a mistaken loyalty to their Circle, "just to help the number of entries..." Happily there are fewer than before of these misguided souls, but they do still exist! I have always said (albeit in jest) that judges should carry insurance, and occasionally after a particularly putrid mousey wine, I have said it unsmilingly. What do you think, dear readers? How does your Circle train and educate novices without boring the old hands to tears? How do you convince the old hands they don't know it all anyway? I'm sure you can put forward some interesting replies to Stan's provocative letter.

And just to prove that there is someone out there that does actually read 'News & Views', I gladly print the following report:-

Dear Mr. Editor,

In your last edition, you were good enough to tell us that there would be a Wine Fair in Bristol this year, just when I thought I had attended my last show, last year.

Through the good auspices of your alter ego, one Roy Ekins, Pauline and I were able to attend on a Complimentary Ticket. There's not much you get for free these days, and that's exactly what we got - not much!

The show was smaller than last year, which for me emphasised the growing presence of the "wine hustlers", who seem to have been taking it over lately. When the fair first started, you could walk around without having the hard sell pushed at you all the time. Whilst the food was outside, Three Choirs Vineyard were fighting a losing battle against the Chinese Take-away and the Sausage Shop.

Not a lot of decent wines about, although we spent a pleasant and further free time at the Hungarian Stand. Other 'interesting' wines were from Luxembourg, India (?), and a 'homemade' wine from Hawaiian pineapples.

On this performance, it will take a great improvement to get us there again. But, how do you know until you get there?

I've got a feeling that the Decanter/Sunday Times Wine Show in London at the end of October will be a better, though more expensive, bet.

Jim Chettle

Thanks for the report, Jim; unfortunately, I was unable to attend this year, so can't make any critical comment. In defence of the Wine Fair, the company that ran it stepped in to prevent the Fair from being closed down completely. This is their first year, with comparatively little time to prepare, and I assume it is the pushy sellers of German wines - they don't need naming - that have jumped in quickly to make a fast buck, as usual. We can only hope that next year will see a further Wine Fair at Bristol, with improvements arising from this year's experience. If I get any news through the trade press or Press Releases, I will pass it on through 'News & Views'. As for London, anything's more expensive than a free ticket!

THE PRIZEGIVING.....Roy Alliver

It was printed in the programme they'd hand out every Cup,
At the Norbreck, Sunday morning, but someone mucked it up.
There stood the Mayor's Deputy, and wasn't it a shame,
She really thought the Chairman, the Chairman was to blame.

"It wasn't me!" said Judith, " I never left my seat,
It must have been the Circle Rep., so blame it all on Pete!"
Peter Johnson, the Circle Rep., Peter was to blame,
He spoiled the presentation! Oh, wasn't it a shame?

"I'm not to blame" says Peter, as away he softly fades,
"I couldn't even see the cups through my Mafia 'shades',
Just one man was responsible, Mike Hayter is his name.
So the Treasurer, Mike Hayter, the Treasurer's to blame."

"I am the wicked Treasurer, I'll try to grind you down,
And if you've only 13p I'll charge you half a crown!
But for the presentation, the Hon. Sec. is to blame,
And Lenn Drysdale, Drysdale, Lenn Drysdale is his name."

"That's not right or proper" said our Yorkshiremen called Lenn
And he gave a 'Harvey' signal with his double-barrelled pen,
"But if you want a culprit, it's very plain to see
The man to blame is Peter, yes, Peter Awbery."

"I can't have that," says Peter, who then was President,
"I only helped to hand them out, I don't know where they went!
The only man who can explain, and answer that quite fully,
Is the Secretary for Awards, and his name is Dave Pulley."

(This dreadful drama continues on the opposite page - Editor)

"Don't try to pin me down" said Dave. "for I've an alibi,
I was at the Guild exam., see my bleary beery eye!
So it must be Tom or Roger, or Brian, Doug or Roy,
Perhaps it's Gerry Sparrow, or Hugh's a naughty boy?"

So round and round they wrangled, apportioning the wrong,
The wicked words they uttered are not in 'Love's Sweet Song'.
But at last upon a waiter fell the full Committee's wrath,
By chance he had concealed two cups - beneath a table cloth!

The moral of this story is very plain to see:
When your entries in the National win prizes, two or three,
The Committee will award the cups, as far as it is able,
But if your trophy's missing, just look beneath the table!

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Home Brewing and Winemaking Trade Association



HOMEBREW EXXPO 90

This is to announce that Homebrew Exxxpo '90 will be held at the De Vere Hotel, Coventry on Saturday 12th May 1990.

The exhibition is the annual showcase for the commercial industry and all major suppliers of home brewing, winemaking, and associated products will be there.

Homebrew Exxxpo will be open to the public on Saturday 12th May and will be of special interest to all home wine and beer makers. It provides the opportunity to see and sample a tremendous range of products, and all the latest innovations.

Many of the visitors this year expressed great enthusiasm for the event and said what a really enjoyable and worthwhile outing it had been. It was certainly a very special day for all who entered the Wine Competition, which was so well organised for us by NAWB. At least five wine classes and two new beer classes will be open for competition in 1990.

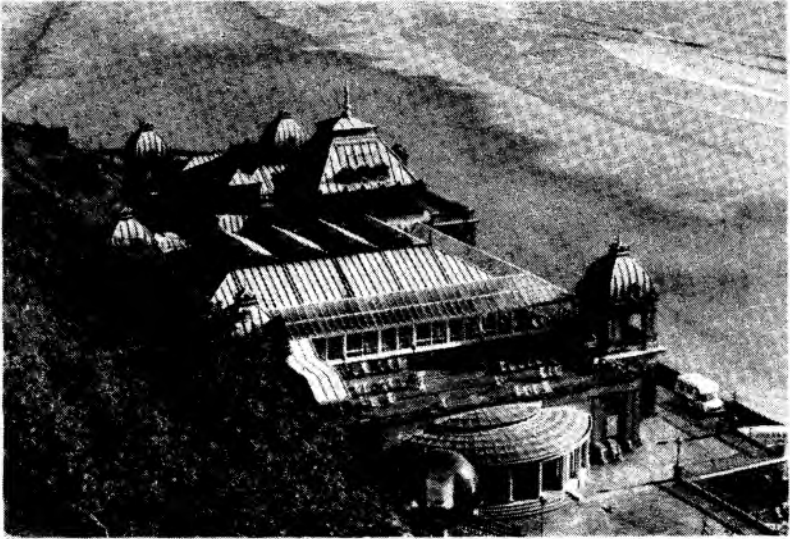
Will all Secretaries of Wine Circles, Guilds, Federations, Groups etc please note that this will be a great day out for their members, please give them the date and please tell them that there will be a competition to enter, so in organising your 1990 calendar please make Homebrew Exxxpo a target for 12th May.

Further information will be available from the Secretary, David Ham, 21 Cole Park Road, Twickenham, Middx. TW1 1HP (telephone 01 891 1253)

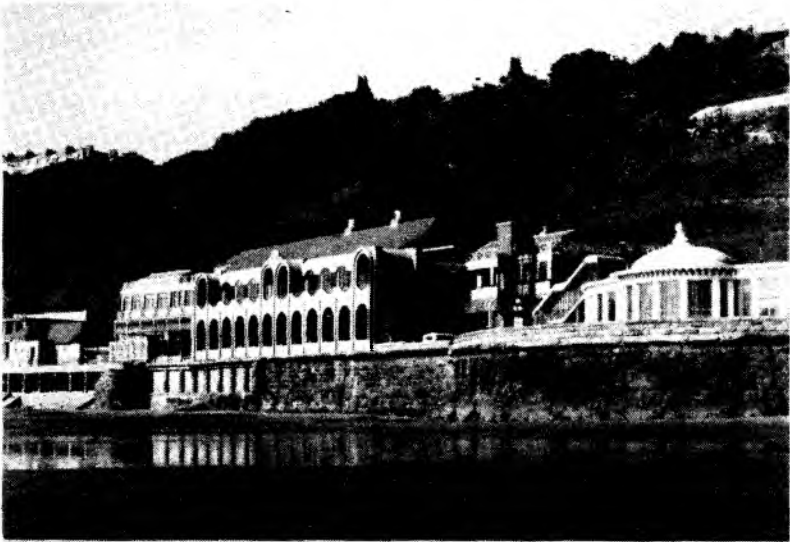


**HOMEBREW EXXPO 90 - SATURDAY 12TH MAY - COVENTRY
DON'T MISS IT!**

(Circle Secs. may apply direct, or wait for further details to be made available through 'News & Views' as in 1989 - Editor)



SCARBOROUGH: SPA COMPLEX FROM THE CLIFF TOP



THE SPA COMPLEX IN ITS NEW-FOUND GLORY



VINA'S FIRST QUARTER CENTURY OF SUCCESS

Twenty-five years ago this October Lawrie Barker started a little mail-order homebrew business in the back of his father's Crosby toyshop. The business was launched with publicity in the form of a 'classified' advertisement in the 'Amateur Winemaker', costing all of 40p. (The 'AW' then cost 5p...) With an initial capital of only £200, Lawrie had soon formed a limited company with co-director Alan Shellard and expanded into the first retail shop. Since then the VINA directors, a loyal staff, and from 1978 Tommy Procter as Personal Assistant, have built up a huge business. VINA is now one of the largest wholesalers of homebrew kits and equipment in the country, with a 22,000 square foot warehouse in Bootle, and Tommy has been promoted by way of Company Secretary to his new appointment as Managing Director. Another new Director is Colin Herbert, responsible for Warehousing and Distribution, following years of successful service as Warehouse Manager.

VINA, one of the original Patrons of the National Association, has always had a keen and forward-looking policy relating to the introduction of new lines, and all products and ingredients are sampled thoroughly before being accepted or rejected under their stringent control checks. An example of the thoughtfulness that goes into the running of the company was when, a couple of years ago, Alan Shellard was approached for a contribution to NAWB's Tombola. "One of your Committee works nearby," he said, "Ask him to collect the prizes, and you can have extra prizes to the extent of the postage we save." The number of prizes donated by VINA must have doubled! And so it has continued each year since.

VINA has survived the worst years of the hobby's depression, and taken under its wing several other brands that have struck difficulties - e.g., Cumbria Homebrew - rather than let popular and well-known brands disappear. May the Company's Directors and staff continue to enjoy their well-earned success for many years to come; I look forward to writing another report when I'm 86 years old, on VINA's Golden Jubilee celebrations in the year 2014. Let's drink a toast to VINA! May their Sunrise keep appearing every day!



REVIEW CORNER

MUNTON & FISON, those far-famed maltsters from distant (from me!) Suffolk have kindly supplied some of us with sample kits of their new Yorkshire Bitter kits. This particularly pleased your Editor, as he had already received an identical kit to review for another publication. Five gallons don't last long in this household! Especially when it is a beer that I really enjoy drinking. It has clear simple instructions and trouble-

free brewing. Gerry Sparrow, NGWBJ, agreed, but added that it was advisable to skim the beer during the fermentation to avoid any undue bitterness. His tasting notes read: "Started June 11th; bottled June 21st. Approximate strength 5.5% Tested July 5th: Crystal clear, slight but reasonably firm yeast deposit; light golden brown. A light creamy head formed, good retention, which clung down the sides of the glass. Strong beery nose, pronounced malt extract edge to it. Smooth, ample body, with a satisfying aftertaste that beckoned MORE! Beware, however, this beer has quite a kick. Bitterness just right. I would certainly recommend this kit for beginners and connoisseurs alike for ease of making, because of the time factor, and quality of the final result." Roy Dutson NGWBJ concurred, and said this was a remarkably successful kit beer.

VINA (HOME WINEMAKING SUPPLIES) LTD have their own special range of no less than seven wine kits (No. 1, No.2, No.3....Yes, you've got it!). So far I have made up three of them, and drunk the lot, with a little help from the family. If they have a weak spot, it lies in the bouquets, which are disappointing, but the general balance of the wines, and the ease with which a gallon is produced, is quite satisfying. *(That should have read 'five gallons', but I accidentally gave my 5-gallon kits to the National Tombola at Blackpool! That's why they gave me the job of Editor, where I could do no lasting harm...)* But to return to the kits:

No. 1 is Crisp White, which I made up with Gervin No. 3 Yeast. This turned out well, good acidity, quite a delicate light wine. No. 2 is Medium White, a Liebfraumilch style of wine that goes down easily. No 4, the Sweet White, is full-bodied and flavoursome, and is excellent value. I must confess to only sweetening one bottle for review purposes, and drinking the rest of the gallon with great enjoyment, as a strong and fruity, fairly dry table wine.

Reviews of nos. 3, 5, 6, and 7 will appear in later issues of 'News & Views'

PHYSIOLOGICAL SIDE EFFECTS OF DRINKING by 'Medicus'

Winemakers and brewers alike must long have been aware of the possible harm that alcohol can cause to their minds and bodies. Publications such as the 'Lancet' have carried learned reports of the deleterious effects of alcohol upon the liver and other organs, and the B M A has given much publicity to the results of excessive and continual drinking. Even the Government, through the Health Council, has tried to make the general public aware of the effects of the misuse of alcohol. Readers will therefore be interested in the latest theoretical developments in this field.

Those who have an eye for strange facts may have come across reports of the spontaneous combustion of humans, that have been reported quite regularly over the centuries. Numerous cases are on record of people, usually elderly ladies, being consumed almost entirely by fierce flames giving out intense heat. These explosive burnings have been without apparent cause until recently, but scientists now think a solution to this puzzle has been discovered.

The theory behind the explanation is that with constant drinking the body's tissues slowly become saturated with alcohol; this is held in the cells in combination with soluble fats. This process may continue for many years, until the unhappy day dawns when the circumstances are perfect for a conflagration to occur. Several cases are known to have had one common factor, in that the deceased had been sat in an armchair. It seems that the build up of fumes from the slow dissolution of the alcohol/fats has been released through perspiration due to the contained warmth of the enclosed space of the chair. The low flashpoint of the spiritous fumes has been suddenly achieved, perhaps by the heat from a firegrate, a sudden onslaught of a feverish cold, or even a static electricity spark from stroking the cat - a common practice with old ladies - and a raging inferno has occurred without warning. The victims of these dreadful events are always

reduced to a scattering of ash and a few charred bones. Homebrewers and other habitual drinkers, who are over thirty stones in weight and consume more than six bottles of wine or their equivalent each day, are warned against sitting near open fires, especially if they smoke or feel they have a cold coming on.

(Another report from 'Medicus's casebook has been promised for the next issue of 'News & Views'. Obviously, his profession requires that the author writes under a pen name - Editor)

GENERAL NOTES ON THE WORLD AT LARGE

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BOOKS

An advance note of a new wine and beer making book to be published next year. Judith Irwin and Roy Ekins are co-authoring a book for Colour Libraries Ltd. They show their joint accumulated experience - Judith was Editor of the magazine 'Practical Winemaking & Brewing', and wrote many articles for it, and Roy has a couple of books and seventeen continuous years writing for the 'Amateur Winemaker' and 'Homebrew Today'. Both have lectured extensively on homemade and commercial wines and beers, both are National Guild Judges of many years experience, and as most of you know, both have served for several years in a variety of posts on the National Executive. Judith has concentrated on the wine sections of the book, Roy has filled in on the brewing. Between them, this should be a book to set new standards in hobby literature. It will be lavishly illustrated with colour photographs. Such books are expensive to produce, but it is expected that NAWB members will have the opportunity of buying this book at a greatly reduced 'Special Offer' price.

SIP AND SWALLOW IN THE SPRING SUNSHINE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Imagine that next year, as Autumn fades and the miserable chilly wet weather of a drab British Winter sets in for a few

months, you will be transported for a glorious fortnight in the warm Spring sunshine of Cape Town. Well, this is a dream that can come true, for South African Airways are arranging another of the marvellous Wine Lovers Tours that members of the Sussex Federation have already enjoyed so greatly. Details have not yet been settled, but it is expected that the two-week trip will start in late October 1990. The flight will be direct to Cape Town, and the programme will include numerous trips to leading vineyards and wine cellars in the Stellenbosch and Paarl, and probably a visit to the famous Van Der Hum orange liqueur factory. There will, of course, be ample time for sight-seeing, and private excursions if you wish. South Africa has the advantage as a holiday centre of being on the same time-line as the UK, so there's no jet-lag to worry about. Just a quiet overnight flight (dinner and breakfast included) and you will be in the wonderful sunshine of a South African Spring-time. There will be 1990's 'nouveau' wines, and more mature vintages to taste, as well as all the colour and excitement of modern cities in exotic surroundings. If you are a wine lover, this is the holiday for you. Firm details will be published with 'News & Views' as they become available, or you can contact the Editor for a personal supply of information as soon as it is published, if you are interested in going on the holiday of your dreams.

COMMERCIAL WINE There are thousands of wines on sale in the many multiple stores and independent suppliers in the UK. Oddbins has a great reputation as a retailer of little-known wines, and I have recently greatly enjoyed a bottle of their Domaine du Tariquet 1987, a Gascony white wine from Eauze, in the region that produces Armagnac. With a strong and oaky bouquet, and a rich exotic flavour of grape, citrus, and peaches, this is indeed a wine to be savoured. Certainly it deserves a better description than 'Vin de Pays'. Just under £4 a bottle.

BACK ISSUES OF NEWS & VIEWS For the benefit of recently-joined members of NAWB, back issues of 'News & Views' are available at 25p per copy, post paid, or 35p for two, 50p for three or more. Stocks, some very limited, are for Nov. 83, Sept 84, Dec 84, Feb 85, July 85, Dec 85, March 86, July 86, March 87, June 87, Feb 88, June 88, Sept. 88, Dec 88, March 89 and June 89. Please apply direct to the Editor, enclosing your cheque or P.O. made out to NAWB(A), and of course, your name and address.. All the above issues are the current size (A5) booklets, not the old foolscap-page prints.

DIARIES Collins have again printed their annual pocket diary for wine makers and brewers. This year (1990) a complete new set of exciting wine and beer recipes have been included, set out season by season for convenience. The diary also includes all the usual features - how to start winemaking, equipment, wine types and their service, wine and beer fault finders and glossaries, a couple of pages for a compact log, and many other features. Plus, of course, all the usual diary data.

The diary will be published at £3.99, plus postage if by mail order. By special arrangement with the suppliers, the 1990 Wine & Beer Makers Diary can be supplied to NAWB members at £3.50 a copy, inclusive of VAT and Post & Packing. Please send your cheque or PO made out to Roy Ekins. (Address inside front cover).



Please note: there is a limited supply of these diaries, and early application is advisable to avoid disappointment.

AND HOW ARE YOUR PURINE LEVELS ?

Thanks to Peter Coombs (Wales & West Newsletter) for the following. (This is not another 'Medicus' report! Editor):
 "The General Practitioner magazine, under the heading 'Lager Louts Risk Attacks Of Gout' informs the startled medical world that an increasing number of young men who imbibe the amber nectar to excess are suffering from painful swelling of the

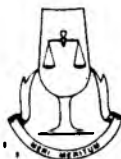
joints and are not responding to treatment. A consultant at Aberdeen City Hospital told the journal that he had seen a big increase in gout sufferers over the past year, and that many of them were young heavy drinkers. The problem is caused, he said, by the high levels of purine in their chosen beverage." (Peter's Editorial comment was "*Good grief, p'raps I'll stick to my dry stout*". I just thank goodness I am an old heavy drinker, not a young one! - Editor).

Purine is a white crystalline substance ($C_5H_4N_4O_2$) of very complicated structure which when oxidised forms uric acid (SOED definition). Uric acid in some form is believed to be a prime cause of gouty toes and other sore joints. Of course, we NAWB members all knew that already. Didn't we? And mind my blasted big toe!

NORTH WESTERN FEDERATION SHOW WEEKEND: This will be held at Pontin's Holiday Village, Ainsdale, Southport, on October 13/14/15th 1989. Details from Mrs Audrey Fordey, 226 Queensway, Rochdale, Lancs OL11 2NB (tel. 0706 40287)

MIDLAND REGION A W FEDERATION 23RD FESTIVAL. To be held at Brierley Civic Hall, Bank St, Brierley Hill, on Saturday 21st October 1989. Schedules etc. from Mr. D & Mrs. P Hill, 183 Woodbury Rd. Halesowen. (Tel. 021 421 6808).

JUDGING AT THE NATIONAL To judge at the National, and and some other major shows, one needs to be a member of the National Guild of Judges. Procedures for the examination have been altered. Details are available from the Chief Examiner, Mr. Eric Clarke, 'Rose Cottage', 75 College Ride, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5EW. Tel. 0276 74478



FINAL NOTE: THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF NEWS & VIEWS CAN ONLY BE SENT TO FULLY PAID-UP MEMBERS. HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBS? THEY WERE DUE FROM JULY 1ST THIS YEAR. SEE OVERLEAF IF NOT.