



NEWS & VIEWS

JULY 1996

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EDITORIAL

I must be mad! After eight years as Editor for News & Views, and just a couple of years' break, I have been coerced, conned, and co-opted back into the job! But who can say "No" to Lenn or Judith, respectively our past and present Chairmen?

John Gorton has gone on to another post in NAWB, and kindly sent me the Desk-top Publishing program he used for News & Views. Unhappily, due to a horrendous (and costly!) failure of the hard drive in my almost-new computer, I have had to revert temporarily to my aging and temperamental Amstrad PCW8512. So this issue won't be nicely laid out in columns and boxes, as previous issues have been.

However, now you know why it is late, and plainly presented. As was often and ominously said of me at school, "Could do better..." And the same answer: "I'll try hard...next time!" Please Bacchus I shan't have to write my Editorial three times in succession, for the next issue!

So Roy is back, and hoping you will continue to send me copy to put in the next and succeeding editions. Send it on 3 or 3½ inch disk, type it, write it out in longhand, dictate it onto standard or mini-tapes, FAX it, write it on the back of signed blank cheques! Anything - carve it on slabs of stone, as long as you pay the carriage! Except - so far - e-mail; I'm not on Internet or the World wide Web - yet!

So keep it short and relevant to our hobby or NAWB, and a laugh if you can.

CHIVERTON'S CHATTER

Well! Another 'National' under our belts. I see that Gerry Sparrow, even with making poor wine, still managed the odd award! I thought that the wine-tasting on Saturday was rather nice, and Arthur Francis' talk on 'The Prohibition - Bootleggers, Booze, and Bandits' was a real turn-up for the books. Any NAWB member who was at the last AGM will appreciate Arthur's wonderful turn of phrase! I do hope we hear Part II soon.

A big 'Thank you' goes to Judith Irwin and her helpers for stepping into the breach, to buy all the prizes for both Tombola and two raffles, which made us a fair amount of funds in the end.

I must say I was impressed with the attendance at our AGM, and the business was, as usual, conducted very well. We have a lot of talent, ideas, and know-how in our organisation. If we could channel it together, we would succeed in our objectives. We have to persuade people who are not members, to join us. It is a long-standing problem - I was on the Committee from 1977 to 1990, and we always had this difficulty. I think it is really a matter of communication. So there it is folks - go and communicate!

Unless the world comes to an end, I shall be attending (and Judging) at East London Federation, Middlesex Federation, Scraftoft Circle, various Coventry Circle functions, the Yorkshire Federation, and the Wales & West. (I apologise to my Midland friends, but the dates clashes with the East London Show this year). If you would like your President to come, GIVE ME A CALL. I can be reached on 01788 810344 evenings, 573552 days. I would be happy and honoured to be asked to award prizes etc; I feel that this is what I am here for.

On the home front, this Spring I bought a couple of whitecurrant bushes, on the advice of our Past President, Peter Awbery. I had the pleasure of tasting his white currant wine at Weston, which was most impressive, so I thought I would see if I could emulate it. Time will tell. I also have elderberries, blackberries, damsons, and sloes around the garden. Unfortunately, most of the good wine I make gets drunk before it gets into competition bottles. I think that retirement may change matters. I'm also getting back into the 'mashing' habit, so I could even be putting decent BEER in the National next year! I was not impressed with my own showing this year; I did get just one Second. But you wait, I'll be back next year, raring to go! Scarborough is always a good venue, so "SEE YOU THERE".

JUDITH'S JOURNAL

I am happy to say that after all the 'doom and gloom' there is definitely a glimmer of light on the horizon. The Conference at Weston super Mare just about covered its own costs, and thanks entirely to the members who were there, and who supported me so generously, we are beginning to climb back financially. No words from me will ever be able to express the feeling of friendship, and support for the Association I felt there; somehow I felt the old spirit coming back. It has not stopped there, either. I have received many letters giving suggestions and constructive criticism, which are always so welcome.

Well done everyone! And now to keep the ball rolling for the 1997 Show at Scarborough. The Committee has given a lot of thought to the the comments you expressed at the AGM, and is working on a slightly new format. Nothing too drastic, but hopefully going to improve the weekend. I am planning a jewellery demonstration for the Saturday morning, whilst the judging is in progress, and a further display in the afternoon. Hopefully there will be a visit from a company which makes boxes for carrying glasses, bottles, and judges' equipment around. I would really appreciate any other ideas and contact names, especially from members who live in or near to Scarborough. You will have realised by now that I have given up my Treasurer's hat for that of Chairman - yes, "Chairman", and as far as I am concerned, it always will be. I have handed the responsibility of finance to the capable hands of Joy Dinnage. John Gorton has become the new Membership Secretary - by the way, subscriptions are due now for 1996/97. Thanks, John, for all your hard work as Editor over the past few years. and thanks also to John's wife, Sue, who has handled the major part of typing the copy.

Our Show Manager for Scarborough is Lenn Drysdale, and who could do it better? Lenn knows this complex so well, having been Show Manager there several times, and living relatively close.

On the theme of thanks I would just like to say how nice it is to see Norman Chiverton, our President, so involved again after his ill health. I spend a lot of time going to shows, and wherever I go, I see Norman either judging or talking. Thanks Norman, for putting so much effort into supporting our Association.

I hope you are pleased to see me back in the chair again; I will do my best to keep on pushing NAWB back up the ladder to success. At least you won't have to listen to me going on about money any more!

If you would like to drop me a line, please do. When visiting my eldest grandson recently, the subject of equations came up, and I tried to explain the two sides of the = sign had to balance. Well, this is how I see us: -

Members' Involvement + Committee Effort = A Prosperous Association.

=====

VIC GOFFEN

Vic Goffen died on Wednesday April 17th, approaching his 80th birthday.

I had known Vic for close to 30 years. He was my mentor, friend, a superb winemaker and judge. He was eminently loveable, quiet, patient, always prepared to listen to one's views, and discuss them later. I never knew him say anything wrong or base about anybody; I don't think he had it in him!

Vic served the winemaking movement for many years. He was elected a member of the Guild of Judges in 1967, was elected to the Committee in 1973, and served as Secretary from 1978 to 1988, a long stint. He was President of the Guild of Judges, and very proud to be so, from 1988 to 1991. He exhibited at most 'Nationals', and usually came away with success. I remember when I was Convenor, he always asked for an Open Class, so he would not to judge his own wines.

We have lost someone special, and all I can say is "VALE VIC".

Norman Chiverton.

Another tribute for Vic came from Mick Day, for Liphook Wine Circle:

"Vic will always be remembered for his total commitment to anything connected with amateur winemaking, but especially to the 'National' and to the now-defunct Mid-Southern Wine Festival, for which he was Convenor of Judges for many years. He was always willing to assist and/or advise on wine problems, and he actively encouraged members of various Wine Circles to take the plunge and become National Guild Judges.

He will be sadly missed by the whole of the winemaking fraternity, but especially by Liphook Wine Circle. We have lost our founder and President, our mentor and a very very dear friend and gentleman of the old school."

Ed: So passes a charming gentleman, and a gentle man; remember him well.

Some happy recollections from Pauline Pearce, our Convenor at Weston:

W W W !- or WASN'T IT WONDERFUL AT WESTON

Good weather, superb venue, some excellent wines and beers, all shared with lots of friends. As I walked round the judging hall on the Saturday morning, partaking of the odd sample here and there (Yes, I do get offered a tasting now and then by some of the judges - purely in a professional capacity, you understand! It's called the Convenor's Perk.) I again thought, what a wonderful atmosphere prevailed in the hall; even though everyone was intent upon the job in hand, the spirit of camaraderie was most evident.

Of course, before all this comes about, a lot of hard work has already been done - not only by the NAWB Committee, but also by you, the member. Your contribution to the weekend, particularly the Show, is absolutely vital to its success. I was very fortunate to receive lots of help on both the Friday and Saturday, for which I was most grateful

Can I therefore thank everyone who came along to help, from those who assisted all Friday, sticking, writing, and stuffing envelopes, to the wine, beer and cookery stewards (hope you all enjoyed it) and lastly the Scribes, who once again worked through their lunch time in order to ensure that all the prize cards were completed and set out.

I am always most aware of the fact that the Judges come to the National Show to judge at their own expense, and some have many miles to travel. I and the NAWB Committee really appreciate their valuable contribution.

So it only remains for me to say thank you for your support, and I look forward to seeing you all in Scarborough for 1997.

An interesting letter has been received from Marjorie Ives, a long-serving member of past Committees, a NAWB enthusiast, and wife of our present Vice-Chairman Doug. Ives.

Dear Judith

We have thought long and hard about the perilous state of NAWB(A) finances and hope we may have come up with a solution. Those of us who are devotees of wine and beer making (and drinking) would surely not object to making regular donations of a small amount of cash to the funds. The easiest way is by Standing Order - say £5 per month - £60 per year - and out of this could come Subscriptions and Conference tickets, leaving say £35 per person to help the funds.

If therefore 100 people agree, we have £3,500 to fund the next Conference. If 200 agree we have £7,000 - surely putting us in the black for a couple of years. As this is a purely voluntary action (NOT mandatory) it does not need ratification by the membership (at an AGM. Ed.)

Doug. and I would be very happy to make this commitment, and if the Committee agree, would it be possible to have a Standing Order form in the next News & Views to set the ball rolling?

Nice to see you looking so well. Hope you didn't overdo things with all that 'buying, lifting, carrying' etc. (Ed. This should NEVER happen again!). Well done on the fund raising, and I feel this is the kind of Tombola that people want. They were actually queueing to buy tickets!

Long live NAWB(A)

(signed) Marjorie Ives

Well, this hasn't yet been discussed in Committee, but I am sure it will be! There are many possible variations. Perhaps we could, for example, inaugurate a new classification of Subscription Members? As Editor, I see no reason why we couldn't incorporate or enclose a Standing Order form in 'News & Views', though from memory the banks haven't been too helpful with setting up such arrangements; it's certainly well worth exploring. Think of just signing a bit of paper, and forgetting about paying your subs, or having to remember to buy a Conference Ticket each year. A wonderful idea! Would our members like to comment on this suggestion - quickly - to Editor.

SCARBOROUGH 1997

Next year's Conference, AGM, and Show, will be held on the weekend of 21/23 March 1997, at the Spa Complex on the Lower Promenade, as before. We have been assured that the Cliff lifts will be working!

Friday night will probably be a 'Fun' night - elimination dances, spot prizes, 10p-rolling for a bottle of whisky, and so on. Nothing has been fixed as yet, but it is undoubtedly going to be an evening of great jollity well worth attending! Have we a volunteer (provisionally) to act as MC? One of NAWB's main aims at present

is to increase our membership. To encourage this, the Committee is raising the number of Open Classes to 8 Open Wine Classes and 4 Open Beer Classes. If we can entice non-members to visit the weekend, and they see what they have been missing they may decide to join NAWB.

All of us have friends who might be persuaded to come along as an Open Class competitor, so please do your best to get them to come. It is also planned to have a publicity campaign in the winter months, when Schedules will be available, and hopefully this will attract Open entrants who live within a modest journey from Scarborough. Remember, personal contacts count more than pamphlets do!



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Now for comments on the Weston week-end by our Show Manager and Trophies Secretary:

As this was my first time as Show Manager, I would like to thank everyone for all the help I was given; the back-up and hard work were very much appreciated.

What an excellent facility the Winter Gardens Complex is, and I am sure that everyone who attended will agree with me. All those who came seemed to thoroughly enjoy this year's Show; there may have been the odd hiccup, but this was soon remedied. Due to discussions and the decision made at the AGM, we should be back at Weston in 1998.

Next year we are at another favourite venue, Scarborough, on 21st to 23rd March 1997, so perhaps members who regularly attend the NAWB Conferences can pass on the message about "What a good weekend this is!" Maybe they could enrol a new member, or encourage a friend or friends to come along next year, maybe even convince them to enter the Open Classes. They'll find out for themselves what a good weekend they have been missing, and at the same time helping to make 1997 a bigger and better Show. Please think about this; we need your help. (continued on next page)

MOONSHINE

High Alcohol Kits

This latest innovative concept in Home Brewing from the Vina Group is the result of more than four years research into the alcohol tolerance of quality strains of yeast, the effect of the properties of natural micronutrients on the growth and life of yeasts and the acceptance of flavoured sugar solutions as alcohol producing mediums.

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9 varieties are currently available from all good Homebrew stockists and research and development continues which could well double the varieties available.

The attractive packaging has already been nominated for a design award.

CHEERS!!!!

(Show Manager cont.)

Following comments made to me and to other Committee members after the AGM regarding the Open Classes, it was decided in Committee to reduce the Wine Classes to 8 and to introduce 4 Beer Classes. So please encourage non-members to have a go, at the next Show, with a view to joining NAWB.

As Trophy Secretary, I would like to thank all of last year's Trophy winners for the excellent condition in which the Trophies were returned; this saved me and my Stewards hours of cleaning time, and made my job much easier. Most of the Trophies now have their own boxes, thanks to members' generosity in making and supplying them; these of course keep the Trophies safer and in much better condition. There are still a few Trophies without boxes, so if anyone is feeling generous, a box would be appreciated.

Thanks to everyone for their help.

We the Committee look forward to seeing you all next year, and hope a few more will be entering and attending Scarborough.

Reg Redfearn

Show Manager & Trophies Secretary

(and as Ed. I can only support Reg's remarks, except to say that we want a lot more attending, and many more entries! You/We can do it! REE)

HOMEBREW TODAY

The newspaper for the home wine and beer enthusiast.
HOMEBREW TODAY is published quarterly and is obtainable
from your local homebrew specialist shop.
In case of difficulty please send two second class stamps for a
sample issue and list of stockists to:

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HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTS HP1 2DP

Dear Editor,

(from member and keen competitor Keith Simpson)

As the dust settles on the 38th National Show & Conference, and I sip the last few winning beers (they will not keep once they are opened), I reflect upon the weekend with both joy and concern.

Not being concerned with judging, for the first time since 1973, I expected a quiet and relaxed morning to help me get over Friday night. Not so! I worked six hours non-stop, and I saw for the first time the amount of behind-the-scenes work going on. General Stewards earn their wineglass!

I was a little concerned at the mess some judges left after they had finished; I cleaned some of it up. Still on Judges, I was amazed at the differing comments on the neck labels of my entries, where the same wine had been in more than one Class, i.e. Red After Dinner, IPA etc. 'Poor' to 'excellent', 'thin and acid' to 'superb', 'not suitable to class' to 'lovely, I did not spit this one out'.

The Saturday night dance was one of the worst I have been to. Not the fault of the Committee, I think. Firstly, the presentation of prizes must go back to Sunday morning, also the Stewards Raffle etc., it kills the dance atmosphere. The non-trophy winners were either talking, drinking, falling asleep, or downstairs in the bar, and who can blame them?

Sunday morning people are more awake, and a bit more sober.

Thanks to Al Procter and friends for going early and getting tables together, also Tynemouth close by to give a bit of atmosphere to the presentation. We enjoyed it because Phoenix won 23 trophies.

I could not understand so many people with tickets for Saturday night just not attending at all.

The commercial wine tasting Saturday afternoon was very good and well presented. The AGM Sunday morning was lively, I thought the Chairman could have had better control, but we did get down to some important discussion.

I would like to see more space for the classes. I did attend Judges at the Bar, but with four rows of bottles in some classes and the neck labels on each bottle, I knocked two labels off each time I lifted a bottle in an effort to find my wine for the number to ask the judge about it.

Lastly, the hall was too warm for judging, especially the beers

I did enjoy my weekend, there is nothing like it and already I am looking forward to next year, mmm! I may make some barley wine tomorrow.

Cheers to all my friends, K S

Well, Keith, as already stated, I wasn't at Weston on this occasion, but after that letter I am sure you will see some response in our next issue! But one or two points seem to need immediate comment. Firstly, it is up to the Judge's Steward to ensure that the judging area is left immaculate; it seems unfair on the face of it to criticise the Judges for this.

You refer to the variation in Judge's comments, but don't say what comments refer specifically to which wines or beers. I don't see the relevance of quoting "red after dinner, IPA etc." This means nothing as it stands. As for the comments, for example, assuming they referred to one wine in two different classes, 'not suitable to class' to 'lovely, I did not spit this one out' seem eminently sensible to me, not contradictory, and they appear to be two fair criticisms, on the information you have given.

The comments about Saturday night, for which (oddly) you absolve the Committee from blame, will doubtless be discussed, amongst others, at the next Committee meeting in September. "The worst I have been to.." and ".I could not understand people not attending at all". Um, er, no doubt! Perhaps we have clairvoyants amongst our members, who knew better than to attend! Will all far-viewers please register with the Convenor in good time, as foreknowledge of the results would save her and the judges a lot of work! And personally, I abhor comment labels, especially when there is a 'Judges at the Bar' session; one of the two is a waste of time, in my view! Anyway, thanks for writing, it is always a good experience, in one way or another, to hear members' comments on the weekend. We shan't be at Weston super Mare until the year after next, so I am sure that the points you make (insofar as they are within the Committee's control or influence) will have been thoroughly debated and determined as far as possible. Editor

Would you like to Judge at 'The National' ?

Any member who would like to become a National Guild Judge should contact:-

Mr Hedley Jackson
24 Steadfolds Close
Thurcroft
Rotherham
South Yorkshire S66 9JY

Who as Hon. Secretary for the Guild will be pleased to receive applications from suitably qualified wine or beer makers. Examinations are held in various parts of the country at regular intervals.

From our Chief Steward:

TO ALL GENERAL STEWARDS AT THE NATIONAL:

A great big THANK YOU to the many Stewards who offered their time and energy during the National weekend at Weston. Your efforts were very much appreciated. You all helped the show to run very smoothly and I was most grateful.

I would like to ask a favour of you all who might wish to help next year - please let the Chief Steward know beforehand that you will be available and at what times, so that some forward planning can be arranged.

Yours sincerely,
Anne Parrack

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Editor's note: John Gorton passed over to me two recent issues of the Essex Winemakers Federation newsletter, so I assume I am free to crib from them; my thanks or apologies to E W F, as appropriate. Here goes:

A man was caught in a flood. Two men came by in a boat to rescue him, but he waved them away, shouting "No, the Lord will save me!" One hour later another boat came along, but again the man said "No, the Lord will save me!" Eventually a helicopter arrived, but the man insisted "No, the Lord will save me!" Unfortunately the man drowned, and at the gates of heaven he asked St. Peter "Why didn't the Lord save me?" And St Peter replied....."For crying out loud - He sent two boats and a helicopter - what more do you want?"

Q/ What do you call a winemaker with a cork in each ear?

A/ Anything you like - he can't hear you!

And a pearl of wisdom for 'wannabee' prize winners at the National next year: -

A dictionary is the only place where success comes before work.

Finally, thanks to Sue Bennett EWF ex-Editor, and Jo Holloway, her successor.

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THE GREAT REVIVAL OF NAWB is under way, as you have probably gathered from our earlier pages, and here to help it along is a letter from Anne Parrack, writing as a private member, i. e. without her Committee hat on! :-

Dear Roy,

As I mentioned at the AGM in 'Any Other Business', I have been a member of NAWB since 1972, have entered wines, and where possible attended the National most years since. NAWB has always been there, and I cannot imagine there not being a National Show to work towards and to which to look forward every year. Competing and judging makes one feel very involved, and now of course, with Jim and me both being on the Executive Committee, we are even more committed.

We are all now aware of the current difficult financial situation in which NAWB finds itself. Hopefully, this year's Show will have covered itself, but we could certainly do with a 'cushion' to help protect us against any unforeseen losses in the future.

As individuals, it is very important that we regularly support NAWB by paying our subs. annually, and by attending the Show and entering our wines beers and cookery. However, it would be a great help if all affiliated clubs (and individual members too - Ed.) would consider holding some sort of a fund-raising event, and donating part or the whole of the proceeds to NAWB, to help keep this great organisation afloat.

I am not an 'ideas person', but I am sure there are lots of members who can think up some good ideas to raise funds. I do hope you will give this matter serious consideration Our NAWB Treasurer will look forward to the fruits of our endeavours.

Some possible ideas put to me are:

- 1/ Holding a symposium, and charging those attending over and above that which covers costs.
- 2/ Commercial winetastings.
- 3/ Winetasting Competitions run along the lines of the old Sainsbury's Winetaster of the Year competitions.
- 4/ Special raffles.
- 5/ Sponsored walks/runs/swims etc.
- 6/ Social events.

GOOD LUCK - Yours sincerely,

Anne Parrack

Ed.: Another suggestion: Obtain a supermarket 'points' card, and give the savings to NAWB - it's painless! And while we're on finance, why not use the enclosed form to pay your subs. by Standing Order? Membership form overleaf also needed; cut it out, or send a photocopy.