

# ACE OF CLUBS IS TRUMPS!

**T**hose who had the good fortune to attend the 18th National Conference and Show for amateur winemakers and brewers at Nottingham University will remember it as an extremely agreeable one in very pleasant surroundings.

They had comfortable (albeit single!) accommodation in students' halls of residence, and were impressed by the architecture of this modern university, set in rolling parkland.

The smaller of two enormous sports halls housed the 3,000-bottle wine show and trade stands and the larger hall accommodated the lectures, business sessions and the packed Saturday night dance.

The University staff made their visitors welcome, the weather was superb, making an occasional walk across the sports fields most enjoyable, and the catering of an agreeably high standard.

## The show

Friday afternoon and evening was given over to the receipt of entries and the staging of the exhibits and trade stands, and members of the Nottingham Circle did yeoman work here. Judges were briefed by Mrs. S. Hill late that evening, so all was ready for an early start on Saturday morning.

There were no major hitches in the vast task of judging so many bottles, and Mr. R. Butcher had devised a remarkably close-knit and efficient awards system; so effective was it that by the start of the evening dance all the complicated mathematics necessary for awarding the many trophies had been done and the list of trophy winners printed for distribution.

**"The Amateur Winemaker" Shield for the Circle championship went to the "Ace of Clubs" circle—nobody could trump that!—and the individual championship (as represented by the the Bournemouth Master Winemakers' Cup) went to their Mr. J. Cotter, who**

**also won the Shaw Porter Cup and was joint winner of the Bastin Cup.**

Mr. D. S. Clements, of M.E.L., Crawley, repeated his successes of 1974, winning the Vina Trophy, and Turner Trophy, and T.A.S.T.E.R.S. collared the Marconi Club trophy and the Bilham Tastevin.

Three brewers tied for the "Master Brewer's" Cup (the Wilf Newsom Cup), Mr. T. W. Fogg, Mr. G. W. Newton and Mr. V. Whitehouse.

The programme of talks consisted of one by Dr. Ellison, of a yeast firm, on the subject of yeasts in wine and beer making, and one by Mr. Ken Hill, the schedule secretary, but both were poorly attended, possibly because of the shocking acoustics in that vast hall.

## Impressive sight

The evening dance was an impressive spectacle, for even a hall as large as this was filled, yet not crowded. Official estimate was that "well over 600" people were present. To us it seemed that number was nearer 1,000. Suffice to say that everyone had a whale of a time and "Auld Lang Syne" came all too early.

## Awards

Despite all this festivity, there was a full turnout on the Sunday morning to see Mr. Ian Smellie, of the Boots Company, present the impressive array of silverware to the winners, assisted by the Assistant President, Mr. C. W. Martin.

## Problems of venue

The annual general meeting was uneventful, the Chairman, Mr. L. Stagg, taking the opportunity in his report to explain the increasing financial difficulties with which the Show was faced, and the mounting problem of finding suitable yet economic venues for a show and conference of their size.

The accounts for 1975 showed a loss on the year's working of £544.01, partly owing to the late cancellation of last year's show, and the Association now had capital of £895.25.

Elected or re-elected to the National Executive were Mr. P. Awberry, Mr. A. Briggs, Mr. R. Butcher, Mr. K. Bilham, Mr. D. Robertson (Circles), Mr. Maurice Mathews (Federations) and Mrs. S. Hill (Guild of Judges).



**Mr. I. Smellie, of the Boots Co., presents the awards, helped by Mr. Alan Smith, Conference P.R.O.**

# —Nottingham conference report



A general view of the Saturday morning judging

## Subscription

Inevitably, there was a subscription debate, the meeting turning down a plea by Committeeman Ken Bilham for a flat £3.50 subscription for individuals, Circles and Federations alike, and voting for the proposals of the committee for £3 for an individual, £3.50 for a Circle, and £4 for a Federation, as submitted by P.R.O. A. Smith.

Lastly there was some discussion as to whether the Association should run its own "national magazine, run on professional lines", as suggested by the Heathfield winemakers, but the idea got a cool reception and no vote was taken.

The President, Bill Martin of Farnborough, was re-elected for a further term, and thanked all the committee for their services and the gathering for its support.

## THE WORKERS

Organisers of this highly successful "University" conference were: Chairman, L. P. Stagg; Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Sybill Hill; Treasurer, P. Awberry; General secretary, D. B. Ives; Membership secretary, K. Bilham; Show manager, N. Wilkinson; Entries Secretary, A. Briggs; Awards Secretary, R. Butcher; Chief Steward, Mrs. F. Dobson; P.R.O., A. Smith; Schedule Secretary, K. Hill; Accommodation, Mrs. F. Stagg; Supplies Officer, G. Christmas; Membership and Awards Assistant, Mrs. P. Timmins; Assistant Treasurer, B. Edwards, and Local Liaison, J. Chettle.

## Back from the dead

Some of the audience were a little puzzled during the presentation of awards when Cedric Austin, at the microphone, announced that he had come down specially to report on the progress of winemaking Circles on the other side, and could assure them that winemaking was flourishing there.

Light dawned when someone mentioned that the Cedric Austin Cup had been listed in the schedule as the Cedric Austin *Memorial* Cup, (we hope) highly prematurely.

Mr. Austin could fairly have said, with Mark Twain: "The reports of my death are highly exaggerated!"