

The 26th Annual NAWB Conference

NOTTINGHAM: COMFORT and EASE

About 500 wine and beer makers enjoyed the sunny, spacious serenity of the Nottingham University campus setting for the 26th National conference of the National Assn of Wine and Beer makers (NAWB). There were some who lived near enough to travel in each day and others who chose to book their own accommodation in the city, but still 340 stayed in the comfortable rooms of the Cavendish and Ancaster Halls, where it was warm enough to keep all protected from the frosty nights and a few flakes of snow (on April 1 st!).

With an increase of over 800 in the number of entries, the National recovered strongly from a slight "low" in 1983, when Southampton proved a poor venue and was too far away for some of the most prolific competitors, of the northern Circles and Federations.

The sports centre, with one vast hall and



Mr Derek Pearman (Loftus) and his wife Doreen with their trade stand.

another slightly smaller, was the staging place for the show contest and for the Friday and Saturday evening dances. From 9 a.m. Friday morning, the NAWB committee was hard at work preparing the smaller hall for the staging of the bottles, 4,036 of them altogether, plus the cookery exhibits, which

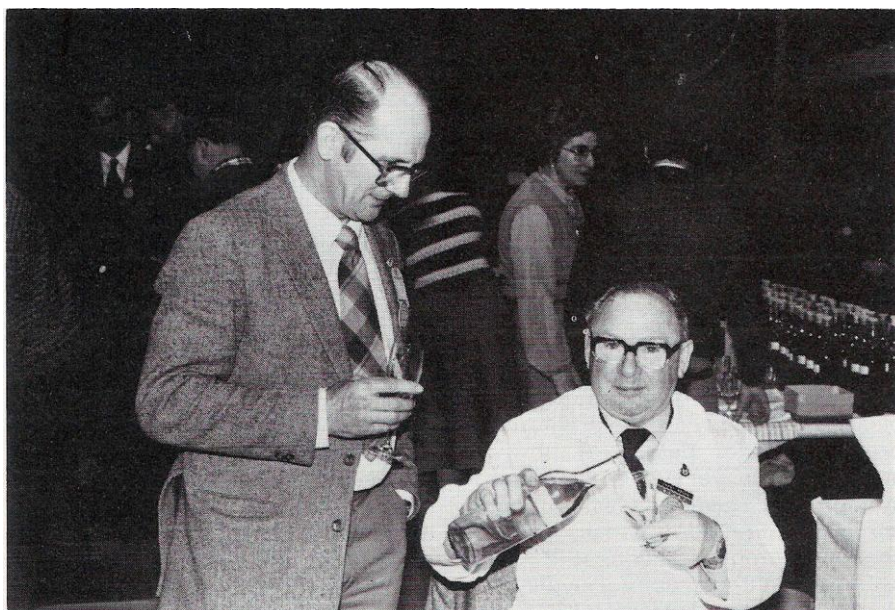
were also more numerous this year, and as ever, striking to look at. The bottle entry was the third highest of the last ten years.

In the afternoon, trade stands began to appear in the attractive sports centre foyer, with its seats and plants adding to the rather cosy atmosphere that prevailed. Those exhibiting included some of the regulars Mr Derek Pearman (Loftus), Chempro, T.A.S.T.E.R.S. (Taste and Savour Together, Epsom Region, Society) Boxes for Winemakers, Amateur Winemaker and, less familiar to the show, CWE.

The Tombola stand featured many enticing prizes including beer and wine kits.

Costumes

Friday night is traditionally the Fancy Dress dance, and some hard work and thought had been put into the costumes. One man, portraying a Huron Red Indian, did not have quite so much work in his costume - a feather and a loin-cloth were the total! The theme for the evening was 'United Nations' and outstanding imagination went into the 'Spirits of the U.N.: team from the Derwent Valley Wine Society: 'Irish Velvet' (long velvet dress); 'Napoleon Brandy', (Napoleon uniform), 'Black and White', 'Blue Nun', and various other famous names were cleverly translated in their home-made costumes and the Society took first prize for a group entry. They credited their committee



Harry Brown (sitting) and his steward Maurice Hallett judge the white or golden dry table.

member John Greenhill with the original idea.

Best couple were Dennis and Kathleen Goodyear (of Dunstable Circle), as Mr U.S.A. and Miss Russia. They also made their own costumes, including "Uncle Sam's" Stars and Stripes top hat.

'The Statue of Liberty' took the prize for best individual and under the spiked crown was Mrs Maisie Power of Plymouth Circle.

Show Day

A late night after the dancing did not prevent some of the cookery entrants being up at 6.30 to finish decorating their delicate dishes!

Despite a shortage of judges (due to illness), which caused some poor souls to have about 50 bottles each to sample, most of the marking was done by about 1 p.m., when the assembly went to its respective halls of residence for another tasty meal, served by a friendly staff. This year's conference fee included Sunday lunch; all four main meals and the breakfasts - the only time residents had to serve themselves - were enjoyed.

At 2.30 p.m., the show was opened to the public and competitors went back to the sports centre to wait for results, tour the stands or perhaps attend the open forum chaired by NAWB president C. J. J. Berry. Unfortunately, the acoustics of the large sports hall were bad, and this was aggravated by noise drifting over the central gallery from the smaller hall, where competitors were chatting to judges or amongst themselves, and some of the audience at the forum gave up the struggle to hear. However, interesting subjects were raised and discussed. Un the question, "Do entrants prefer the covered style of label used in the 1983 show (for absolute anonymity of entries while judging) or the plain 'class and entrant number' style, as used again in 1984?", plain seemed to be preferred, if only because they are easier to affix.

This year saw the introduction of small yellow comments cards for each entry. One judge at the forum said he preferred to talk to the competitor, but chairman Maurice Matthews pointed out that some people could not come with their entries. Have both

card and judge available, seemed the best solution.

An important point was that some entry labels had been filled in with soluble ink and a judge asked that, in future all could be written with biro, which did not run easily.

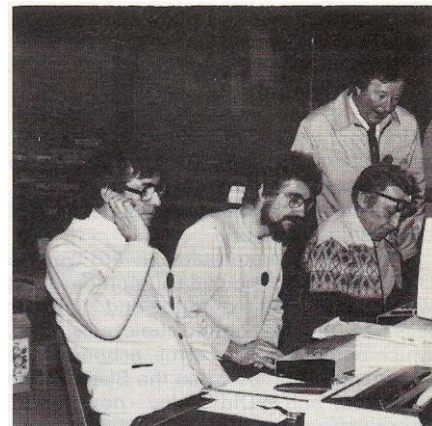
A vote on what sort of accommodation was preferred showed a majority for choosing their own. The issue was clouded, because some universities offered better facilities than others, but most of those present were quite set against holiday camps!

Mr Brian Edwards of the NAWB committee asked if a public holiday such as Easter would be a more suitable time for the show, as it would then not take anyone away from work. However, the combined public holiday pressures of more traffic, more expensive accommodation and family considerations caused a vote against the suggestion.

Results

In the show hall, people were finding the gloom or joy borne by the yellow cards next to their bottles; in the computer room, show manager Jim Chettle, general secretary Doug Ives and chief steward Dane Pulley were slaving to bring the results out as quickly as possible. The shortage of judges and the larger number of entries slowed things a little, but the lists were out by 4.20 p.m.

Mr Eric Tappenden of Old Bexley Circle was Master Winemaker for the second year running, and also took the NAWB Trophy (for the individual with the most points in the beer and at least three other sections). Runners up to Master Winemaker were Bob Marsdon of Wembley and Peter Oliphant of Tyneside Nationals. The latter Circle repeated their success of 1982 and 1983 and won the 'Amateur Wine maker' Shield. Phoenix Circle were runners-up. The Master Brewer's trophy, the Wilf Newsom Cup, was also shared, by R. J. Wheatley of Old Bexley and T. D. Hodkinson of the Tyneside Nationals; runner up was Vernon Whitehouse (South Devon).



L. to r. Jim Chettle, Dane Pulley, Doug Ives and Len Drysdale, in charge of computer.



The Statue of Liberty and friend- NAWB chairman Maurice Matthews!



Some of the 'Spirits of the U.N.' collect their prize.



'Uncle Sam' and 'Miss Russia'

Trade stands were closed down by about 5 p.m. and exhausted feet and bodies taken for baths and rest in time for dinner at 6.30 and the Saturday dance.

The large sports hall was throbbing with enthusiastic, lighthearted people by 8 p.m. As on Friday, the group's music was rather bland, but much dancing was enjoyed, more and more people taking to the floor as the evening went on.

The best decorated table award went to Old Bexley, who laid out a sumptuous feast with boar's head, ox tongue and fruit. The feast, and the mahogany cup centre piece, which bore his coat of arms, echoed those late medieval times when the Black Prince stayed at a pub in Old Bexley - now named after the Prince.

The club was particularly delighted, as the award came on top of those gained by members Eric Tappenden and Reg Wheatley; Mr Wheatley had celebrated his 70th birthday the week before and had been thinking of retiring from competitions, but the club wasn't going to let him, he said!

Another birthday celebrated, that day, was that of the chairman Maurice Matthews, who received several cards and had 'Happy Birthday' sung to him by the entire gathering.

The A.G.M.

Breakfast on Sunday was put back to 8.30 a.m., so about 230 fairly lively members went into the large sports hall for the A.G.M. and prize giving. Four committee members were to retire this year: Mrs Sybil Hill, Mr Roy Butcher, Mr Peter Awbery and Mr Ken Bilham. Chairman Maurice Matthews gave a charming resume of each one's services to the National Executive and to winemaking as a whole; Mrs Hill was completing 17 years, which had included the posts of chairman, vice-chairman and convenor of judges and Mr Bilham had, when fundraiser in 1975, had the excellent idea of asking for commercial patrons for the National. Mr Butcher had been largely responsible for the installation of the computer, which was a great boon. Mr Awbery had been in the National



Master Brewers Reg Wheatley (left) and T. Hodkinson (centre) with NAWB president C. J. J. Berry.

movement for 20 years and his committee places had included vice-chairman.

Mrs M. Drysdale was also retiring, as a co-opted member.

President C. J. J. Berry explained the idea that had been put to him by World Wine Fair director Ken Smith. This would entail running the 1985 and possibly the 1986 National Conferences in conjunction with, but not necessarily at the same time as, the World Wine fair in Bristol; the advertising powers of the World Fair would be behind them, plus support from Bristol City Council. Mr Berry asked that Circles and Federations consider this.

A major financial change was that Executive members were no longer to have all their conference expenses paid. They would continue to receive petrol money and

ordinary expenses, but for them to attend the annual show free each year was a tremendous drain on resources, said Mr Matthews. The audience seemed to feel that this was a fair move.

It had also been agreed by the Executive that they could, from this year, run the Assn with only 11 members, instead of 15. The Guild of Judges had offered to provide the convenor of judges and the offer had been accepted.

Mr Roy Ekins was taken on to the committee as Circles representative (there were no other retirements and posts within the Committee will be allocated amongst themselves).

The glamorous moments of trophy presentation arrived at last and several familiar faces but also some new ones stepped up to take their shining awards from the president.

The weekend ended with Sunday lunch and travellers set off in the early afternoon with the general feeling that 1984 had seen a good, comfortable annual show.

Hard Workers

Those responsible for a smooth-running National were: **Mr M. Matthews**, chairman; **Mr C. J. J. Berry**, president; **Mr D. B. Ives**, general sec; **Mr P. Awbery**, vice-chairman; **Mr B. Edwards**, treasurer; **Mrs M. Ives**, convenor of judges; **Mr J. Chettle**, show manager and membership sec.; **Mr L. Drysdale**, programme sec. and supplies officer; **Mr K. Bilham**, newsletter, PRO and patrons sec.; **Mr D. Pulley**, chief steward; **Mr R. Butcher**, schedule and awards sec.; **Mrs M. Drysdale**, trophies sec.; **Mr N. Chiverton** entries sec.; **Mrs J. Irwin**, Circle rep., minutes sec. and newsletter distribution; **Mrs S. Hill**, fund raiser and federation rep.; **Mr G. Sparrow**, accommodation sec.



Old Bexley's winning table's centrepiece, a mahogany cup - beautifully engraved with hops, grapes, "water" (the river Cray) and the Black Prince's coat-of-arms.

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