

From N&V June 1987

LLANDUDNO 1987

Though many references to Llandudno and the 1987 Conference, Show, and AGM have been made already, there must be members unable to attend who are wondering just how the weekend went. Well, firstly, for early April, the weather was unusually kind, and except for an occasional fresh breeze (probably a Russian hurricane for some of our southern brethren) the sun shone, the skies stayed (almost) dry, and the weather generally was quite clement; I never used a topcoat or mac. And to look out of my hotel window at 6.30 am and see the sea creeping in, lapping gently at the golden sands, was incredible though true. Being a keep-fit fanatic, I took my cup of tea and Anadin back to bed instead of standing around providing a spectacle for the early joggers on the Promenade.

Friday started with my breakfast being interrupted by the announcement that I was now the proud grandfather (Gosh, that sounds old!) of my first grandson, a match for my other daughter's daughter. The day ended with (nearly) a small civil war due to the incapability of the civic authorities of accepting that Doug. Ives as Show Manager knew what he was talking about. This was aggravated by the fact that since we first decided in 1985 to go to Llandudno, the average attendance had risen from 500 to 750, and the entries from 3600 to 4500 approx. Despite the problems that such growth brings, most of which can be sorted out with a little goodwill and tolerance towards fellow members, it is delightful to see **NAWB** going from strength to strength. The major part of the evening was most enjoyable, especially for those present for the Fancy Dress and for the Welsh Morris Dancers (there's novel for you, bach!).

Saturday brought the usual mixture of stewarding or judging, or shop-window examination for those free to idle their time away, Judges at the Bar, and a Sainsbury's talk and tasting by your Editor, reminiscent of the parable of the loaves and fishes! Where do all these winemakers and brewers come from? Thank goodness it wasn't a wet day! And in the evening, we were the guests of the Mayor of Aberconwy, Cllr.Mrs. E.K.Pattinson O.B.E., a lady of great presence and good humour, who at once made us all feel quite at home. As well as the dance, we were entertained by a Welsh Choir and a delightful lady soloist singer.

Sunday brought the AGM - always worth attending, the one time of the year when members can - and do - stand up and say what they think, outrageous or plain common sense. It also gives the Executive chance to explain what went wrong and why, and what the Association's plans and policies are for the future. A good occasion for clearing the throat and clearing the air!

This was followed by the award of the trophies, again by the Mayor, and the weekend suddenly came to an end. I won't exaggerate by saying there wasn't a dry eye in the place; I'm sure there were two or three among the 750 who came to Llandudno who were ready for their own fireside, if only to recover, dry out, or even refill their internal reservoirs. Your noble Committee members, of course, went back to work, with another meeting on Sunday afternoon, before escaping to their home grounds.

A good weekend, notable for, amongst other things, the first official contact between NAWB and the Scottish Association. We were honoured by a visit from Ian McNeill, their Chairman, and Marie Balfour, Hon. Secretary, and their spouses, and we hope that this is the first step towards a closer co-operation between the two bodies of Winemakers and Brewers. Though we haven't yet got to the stage of suggesting NAWB 1991 should be at Edinburgh..... though you just never know.

With regard to the National returning some year to Llandudno, we have learned that new buildings are to be erected, on the land adjoining the Aberconwy Centre that is currently used for car parking and a little children's playground. Perhaps then there will be ample room for our expanding membership.

All sorts of things do happen at the National, of course, apart from liver degeneration, and I was highly amused at breakfast one morning to see an eminent member of the NAWB Committee accosted by a lady under the impression that he was the driver of the coach for her holiday! Such is fame. And the story of the steward who had tasted so many vermouths that when he found a glass that was totally lacking in nose, flavour and character generally, it was a while before he realised he had picked up his water glass by mistake.

These are the incidents that make the National entertaining, and home-brewers being what they are, will continue to do so in future years. Everyone will have their own little stories - do write in with them - and these human touches are what makes the National so very worthwhile.