



Wales and West Federation of Winemaking Circles

Newsletter

October 2008

From the Editor's Wine Glass

It's Autumn, the hedgerows have been raided, the apples crushed and winemakers everywhere are in the middle of one of the busiest times of the year.

In this part of the world, the fruit harvest has been patchy; there have been plenty of apples and blackberries, some elderberries, but hardly any damsons, plums and sloes. Oh well, we will do what we usually do and make what we can with what there is.

Autumn is also the start of the circle dance season. Several circles are announcing dances in this issue; I'm sure there are many more and if you are prepared to travel throughout the Wales and West region, you can go to a circle dance every Saturday evening from now until March.

Try to support other circles' dances. I have had several emails from circles who have organised dances but have had to call them off because of low ticket sales. As I have said before in this column, the annual dance is the main source of income for many circles and provides the funds for events like inter-circle competitions and day trips for the circle members.

Peter Coombs informs me that not only will the successful 2008 Pensford Beer Festival be repeated in July 2009 (date to be confirmed, according to their website), but there will also be a Wine Festival in the village on 14th March 2009.

Go to www.pensfordbeerfestival.co.uk or call Geoff on 01761 490371 or Steve on 01761 490347 for more information.

In this Newsletter you will find:

- More information about the 2009 Festival;
- News from Bath, Bradford on Avon, Brockworth, Churchdown, Coleford, Newent, Newport, Rumney and Timsbury Wine Circles.

News from the Federation

Festival 2009

The Committee is making good progress with the 2009 Festival, which as you may know is the 45th or, in wedding anniversary terms, the Sapphire.

Brochures and Publicity

Brochures

Brochures which include the accommodation booking form and the Show entry form will be posted in the next two or three weeks. As before, those of you who have been to previous Festivals and are on Nobby Clark's database will get your own copy of the brochure; in addition, a number of copies will be sent to circle secretaries for newcomers.

Publicity

In the light of falling attendances, the committee has decided to publicise the event more. To this end, A2 sized posters are being sent to homebrew shops and other outlets throughout the country, together with A5 leaflets which provide an introduction to the Festival.

Changes to the Show

Changes to the Trophies

Thanks to the generosity of two circles, we have two new trophies. These are the Rumney Wine Guild Cup and the Luton Friendship Cup.

The Rumney Wine Guild Cup will replace the Wales and West Trowbridge 1975 trophy in Class 28. This trophy is definitely past its sell-by date!

The Luton Friendship Cup will replace the Ken Shaw Trophy in Class 44. This class, which used to be for Newcastle Brown Ale, will now be for Porter, original gravity 60 to 70.

The Ken Shaw Trophy will replace the Friendship Trophy in Class 43.

Also, a few trophies need some restoration before they can be used again. These are the trophies for Classes 31, 33 and 51, and in 2009 the winners of these classes will receive one of our spare trophies. But don't despair, the names of the 2009 winners will be engraved on the proper trophies.

Original Gravities of Beers

For some time, the original gravities specified in the Schedule for some of the beer classes have been different from those specified in the Judges' Handbook. The schedule has been changed and now the original gravities specified are the same as those given in the Judges' Handbook.

Pre-printed Bottle Labels

The committee has introduced pre-printed bottle labels for the 2009 Festival. This is partly out of sympathy for Entries Secretary Bridget Berrecloth who in previous years has handwritten around 2000 labels.

The new label is the same size as the old one and uses the same green cover. It will include the same information as the previous one, but those of you who enter the liqueur classes will still have to write the type of liqueur on the label.

The labels are printed on a thermal imaging printer from a roll of blanks. They are self-adhesive but unfortunately the adhesive is not water soluble and becomes more firmly stuck the longer that it is on the bottle. You are advised to leave it as late as possible before sticking your labels on your bottles.

Entertainment

The programme is not finalised yet, but there will be entertainment every evening in both the Ballroom and the Queen Vic. There will also be a Gala Dinner and a Sapphire Masked Ball.

And there might be something completely different, about which I will say no more.

Finally, of course, there will be a number of tastings throughout the weekend.

Postscript to the 2008 Festival

Did you see the report on the 2008 Festival by Charles Hill in the NAWB newsletter *News and Views*? He was very complementary about it all and challenged the committee to do even better next year. Challenge accepted Charles!

Member Circle Contacts

I have not been told of any changes to member circle contacts since the last newsletter

News from the Circles

Bath Wine Circle

Members of Bath Wine Circle enjoyed a day out on the Severn Valley Railway on 10th August and judging by the photos sent to me by Bath members Doug Webber and Ken Burgin, a good time was had by all. I think that this picture, taken by Ken Burgin outside the Railwaymans Arms at Bridgnorth, really captures the spirit of the day.



In July, Doug Webber and Pat Beswick took part in a 10-mile sponsored walk and raised about £500 for the circle's charity.

While still on the charity theme, this year's Harvest Home raised a further £176.25 for the charity.

Bath's annual Wine Show will be held on Saturday 15th November. The closing date for entries is **Monday 3rd November.**

The Christmas Dance is at Culverhay School on Saturday 20th December and the Annual Dinner and Dance is at Conygre Hall, Timsbury on Saturday 17th January 2009.

Bradford on Avon Wine Circle

Bradford on Avon Wine Circle will be holding its New Year Dance on Saturday 3rd January at St

Margaret's Hall from 8 p.m. until midnight.

Please contact Sam Williams on 01225 761965 or email sam-bramleys@blueyonder.co.uk.

Brockworth Wine Circle

Brockworth Wine Circle will be holding its Winter Dance on Saturday 10th January 2009 at Sir Thomas Riches' School, Longlevens, Gloucester. Dancing will be to the ever popular *Jubilee* and the evening will include a plated supper.

For more information and tickets, please contact Carol Neale on 01452 617289.

Churchdown Wine Circle

Churchdown Wine Circle will be holding its Christmas Dance in the Churchdown Community Centre on Saturday 13th December from 7:45 p.m. until 11:45 p.m. Dancing will be to *Top Mix*.

The evening includes a plated supper.

There will be a full bar service but you will be allowed to take your **homemade** wines and beers, but not commercial drinks, alcoholic or otherwise.

Tickets are £8.50 each and can be obtained from the Social Secretary, Liz Petley, at 82 Brookfield Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2PD, telephone 01452 855544 or email bpetley@onetel.com.

Note: Attendance is limited to 150.

Coleford Amateur Winemakers

Coleford Amateur Winemakers have changed the venue for their monthly meetings. They now meet at the Evergreen Hall, Coalway, Coleford at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

At their October meeting, Coleford held a Harvest Supper and Product Auction. This raised £71 for circle funds, which is pretty good going for a

circle with only 20 members.

Newent Wine Circle

Newent's annual visit to Europe this year was different from previous years. Instead of taking a coach to a winemaking region, the members flew to Denia on the Spanish Costa Brava and spent a week by the seaside.

The visit did of course include a wine tasting, but this was not at a professional vineyard as usual but at an old Spanish house owned by a rather eccentric English amateur who makes his wines the old fashioned way. The wines were tasted but the general feeling was that they would not have featured amongst the winners in an internal club competition.

Newent's Annual Dance will be held at Newent Community School on Saturday 17th January 2009 from 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Tickets are £5 each and dancing is to the *Midnight Fox* disco. Bring your own supper and drinks.

For tickets, please contact Viv Vincent on 01531 820067.

Newport Wine Circle

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Newport Wine Circle had to cancel their Halloween Dance that was due to be held on Saturday 25th October 2008.

Timsbury Wine Society

At the October meeting, Society chairman Graham Nicholls gave a talk illustrated with slides of his and his wife Iris's travels in the USA. The trips started in 1979 with a visit to collect alpine plants and orchids and have been repeated every year since.

His talk was accompanied by Pecan pie, made by Iris, with wine to compliment the pie.

At this meeting, the Society welcomed back member Frank Grantham after a long spell in hospital, and also welcomed the residents of the Timsbury Cheshire Home.

Tickets are available for Timsbury's Christmas Dance in the Conygre Hall, Timsbury on Saturday 6th December from 8 p.m. to midnight, with dancing to *Sounds Company*. The Ron Ward Wine Match will be held at the Conygre Hall on Saturday 7th March 2009, from 8 p.m. to midnight, with dancing to *Tobacco Road*.

Contact Wendy Treasure at w.treasure@bopenworld.com or telephone 01761 435890 for more information about these events.

Rumney Wine Guild

For many years, Rumney and Aberdare circles have challenged each other to an annual "Call My Bluff" evening. Two teams of three members compete for the Jeff Howells Trophy. The words are all wine or beer related and some amazing and hilarious definitions are offered to the team who have to guess the correct one.

Over the years Rumney have suffered crushing defeats 15 times at the hands of Aberdare who are obviously better liars. Rumney have only won five times.

This year, the Rumney team, of Roy Sperry, Guild Chairman Gary Shemilt and member Sue Atkins took on Aberdare's Ron and Sylvia Williams and Colin Murray. Rumney Treasurer Peter Bird chaired the proceedings and kept the score.

Words such as Hantam, Flavay and Shizuka Saulo were used to baffle the opposition.

Who won? You've guessed it – Aberdare again! Congratulations to Aberdare, but look out for next year!

Well that is it for this issue. I hope you have found something to interest you, give you some ideas for your own circle, or maybe to inspire you to tell the rest of the Federation about what your circle is doing.

Don't forget I can accept digital photos of the goings-on in your circle by email. Please send them, in JPEG format, to the email address below.

My thanks for their contributions to:

- Doug Webber and Ken Burgin of Bath
- Sam Williams of Bradford on Avon
- Bridget Berrecloth of Brockworth
- Liz Petley of Churchdown
- Marian Nicholson and Pam Parsons of Newent
- Graham Scrivens of Newport
- Peter Coombs on behalf of the Pensford Beer Festival
- Marie Noonan of Rumney Wine Guild
- Wendy Treasure of Timsbury

The next issue of the Newsletter is due in January 2009. Please send your news to me:

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