

# GUILD OF JUDGES NOW LAUNCHED

**A**FTER a great deal of initial spadework by the Committee of the National Conference the Amateur Winemakers' National Guild of Judges was successfully launched at a meeting in London on Sunday, 10th November

The enthusiasm at the meeting, which was attended by virtually all the judges now on the "National's" panel—only three were missing—was infectious, and the newly-appointed treasurer was nearly killed in the rush to pay subscriptions!

Mr. C. J. J. Berry, Chairman of the National Committee, presided at the outset, with the support of Mr. B. C. A. Turner (hon. secretary) and Mr. S. W. Andrews (Convenor of Judges for the National, and Chairman of the Judging Sub-Committee). Mr. Berry explained that it had gradually become evident that some form of organisation which could lay down procedure and standards for judging was necessary, and Mr. Turner had conceived the idea of a Guild of Judges which could perform these functions, and membership of which would be regarded as a high privilege.

Mr. Andrews, as Chairman of the Judging Sub-committee, had been entrusted with the task of drawing up a judging procedure and code, and this had already been adopted by the committee for use at next year's National Show.

He thanked everyone of the company of forty for attending—many had come long distances—and invited Mr. Andrews to explain the proposals in more detail.

## What the Guild will do

Mr. Andrews, doing so, said that the general proposal was that they form a Guild of Judges which would henceforth advise upon and control all judging activities, which would lay down standards acceptable to the majority, devise a set procedure for judges to follow, and, having done that, set up machinery for the training, examination and qualifying of judges.

The first step towards this was the production of a procedure for judges. This had already been done and would be available for discussion later (everyone was given a copy) and the next step would be to embody this, with much other material, in a judge's handbook, which would become the textbook for all would-be judges. Later it might be possible to devise one-day or week-end courses for tyros, and an examination which they could take in order to qualify.

## Spreading knowledge

It was hoped that gradually in this way they would set up small "cells" of qualified judges all over the country, all with common standards and knowledge, who in turn would pass on their craft to others.

On one thing they of the National Committee were agreed. All would-be judges *must* have a good practical winemaking background, have won prizes in open competitions, and have stewarded at the National or other important shows under the supervision of a qualified judge. In other words, they must not come completely "raw" to a judge's course, and they should preferably have had fairly wide experience of judging at Circle or other shows before attempting to qualify as a judge at national level. Membership of the Guild was to be regarded as one of the highest honours in winemaking, and not to be lightly won.

It was also intended that the Guild should devise specimen sets of rules and specimen schedules for all sizes and types of wine show, from a Circle show or local flower show right up to twenty and thirty class shows, so that these could be available on request to any show secretary.

## Founder membership

One of the difficulties with which the committee had been faced was to know how to obtain a founder membership. Who should be included and where did they draw the line? Finally, it was decided, since they had to start somewhere, that the only fair way of doing this was to send an invitation to all those whom the committee had agreed should judge at the 1964 National

Show to attend that meeting and become founder members—on payment of the subscription. Thereafter admittance to the Guild would be by examination only.

It was also the intention that the Guild should be under the wing of the National Conference.

The meeting obviously approved wholeheartedly of these proposals and after discussing a few minor points agreed that the Guild should be formed, and should be called "The Amateur Winemakers' National Guild of Judges."

## Officers

The meeting then proceeded to elect officers. Mr.

Andrews was elected Chairman (and then took the chair), Mr. B. C. A. Turner secretary, and Mr. A. Moore, of Marconi (an accountant) treasurer.

There were sixteen nominations for the ten-man committee and, after a ballot, those elected were: R. C. Lucas (Bournemouth), C. J. J. Berry (Andover), E. A. Roycroft (St. Albans), Dr. R. A. Webb (Bristol), G. W. B. Acton (Greenhill), C. Rickman (Harrow), Dr. Paxman, F. Spark (Andover), L. Gilbertson (Cardiff) and Wing Cdr. R. Woodley (Andover), (with the officers).

From this committee there will be chosen sub-committees to compile a handbook, to formulate classes, to discuss ways and means of raising funds, and to discuss judging procedure.

## Subscriptions

The meeting agreed that the Guild subscription should be £1/1/- per annum, and that an entrance fee should be payable by anyone wishing to take the examination. (A proposal by Mr. Berry that a membership subcommittee should be set up to deal with the admittance of new members until such time as the examination could become operative—he foresaw a rush of applications to join—was heavily defeated, the meeting insisting that henceforth entrance must be by examination only).

The meeting, with warm thanks to Mr. Andrews, adopted as a basis for discussion the suggested procedure for judges which he had drawn up—it is published elsewhere in this issue—and the next meeting was fixed for 15th December ..

All in all, this was an excellent and encouraging meeting, and one felt that it was almost certainly an historic one. There is little doubt that, given the support of Circles, the Guild of Judges will become a real force in winemaking. It will almost certainly be welcomed by the Clubs for, whilst it will in no way trespass upon their autonomy, it will always be there to advise and help.

This will make it possible for all winemakers throughout the country to have at their disposal the best advice on judging, schedules, and the staging of shows and competitions of all sizes, and to use common standards and methods, surely a great advantage.

The Guild is likely to be hard-worked in its early days whilst all the ground-work is being done, but we are sure that all Circles will give it every support and encouragement in their power.