

Momentous Minutes



Issue 8

April 2007

the MÓR the merrier



The next big thing from Ardbeg...

For a small island, there's plenty that's big on Islay. Committees, for example. Knitting. Knickers on washing lines.

It is therefore fitting that in planning the 10th anniversary celebrations of our 1997 renaissance, we too should be thinking big.

What, we hear you ask, could possibly be better than a bottle of 10 Years Old Ardbeg? More than six times the amount of that delectable nectar in one gargantuan bottle of course – and this time, bottled at cask strength.

Hence on 2nd June 2007, during our anniversary festival frolics, we will release the first limited batch of supersized bottles, aptly named 'Mór Ardbeg'. (In Gaelic, Mór means 'big' or 'magnificent'.) Each will contain the same "oily, slapped-on-all-over-with-a-trowel peat" that

continued...



Ardbeg
COMMITTEE

continued from front cover...

you have enjoyed over the years. But bottled at 57.3% ABV, it will be just the ticket for getting you into the party spirit.

*'Ard to resist.
Even 'Arder to get home.*

At a height of 52cm, weighing in at 6.5kg and accommodating 4.5 litres of whisky, the challenge will not be whether you can

find the friends with whom to buy and share this mighty bottle (which carries a price tag of £350), but how you will contrive to transport it, store it, and even more importantly, pour out the liquid treasure within. We have no doubt that our Committee Members will relish such a challenge.

The first opportunity to taste and buy Mór Ardbeg will be at this year's Islay

Festival of Malt and Music when the first 50 bottles will be made available. Otherwise, you will have to wait a little longer to own this colossus in the world of Single Malt Scotch Whisky. Look out for it in key Ardbeg stockists and our online shop from August as a further 950 bottles go on sale. We anticipate that an event as epic as this will not go unnoticed.

Guzzler's Travels

The strange occurrences of the Second Day of the Sixth Month in the year A.D. Two Thousand and Seven.

I disembarked my vessel at the Port of Ellen on the southern tip of Islay, at a Latitude of 55.628°N, and immediately set out along the road to Ardbeg. I had already travelled many miles and for many days, but if I thought for one moment that the greatest adventures of my voyage were behind me, I was in for a big surprise.

With the sun on my face and a skip in my step I made swift progress, until eventually I reached the brow of the hill where the horizon falls away suddenly and marvellously to reveal the landmark I had longed to see: Ardbeg's pagoda roofs rising over lush green fields, triumphantly punctuating the clear blue sky as if to say "home".

"Curious," I thought. "I didn't remember there being four pagodas." Yet as I squinted I saw that the furthest one was not a pagoda at all but the pinnacle of a Big Top. My interest piqued, I raced towards the Distillery where a large crowd had already gathered for Ardbeg's 10th re-birthday celebrations. Music was playing; the joyful sound of a big band

colouring the air. Displays of giant vegetables and big cheeses adorned my view. And was it an optical illusion, or were there really huge bottles of Ardbeg walking

of my head. "I need a dram," I gasped. "And a large one at that."

"Mór Ardbeg then!" said Dugga and Drew the warehousemen in unison, leaning down from stilts to pour out a double stream of beautiful, golden, cask strength 10 Years Old, its heady aroma of treacly malt and tar smoke spiralling into my nostrils. As the liquid filled my mouth, a big hit of chewy toffee and rich spices that would knock the socks off any other Single Malt on the island of Islay. The band struck up with a brassy rendition of "roll out the barrel" and with that, the party was well and truly under way...

LARGE IT UP AT ARBEG

This mysterious account was scribbled

on a parchment found washed up on a beach inside a giant 4.5 litre bottle of Ardbeg (contents already consumed) some months before the date and event mentioned therein. Therefore in the interests of science and discovery (i.e. any excuse for a dram), Committee Members are invited to gather together on 2nd June 2007 in an attempt to replicate the described party as part of our 10th anniversary celebrations and to give themselves a fair chance of getting their hands on the first 50 big bottles of Mór Ardbeg.

around the Distillery? In fact, now I came to think of it, everything before me looked larger than life. Was the world getting bigger? Or was I getting smaller?

"Cloutie Dumpling?" a voice called out behind me. Turning a full 180°, I found myself face to fruit with a gigantic pudding. On top of it, Shortie the Jack Russell with an enormous grin on his face.

If my eyes could have opened any wider I believe they would have popped right out





We threw a party, Committee Members threw a sheep. Where else but at Ardbeg day last year?

A mammoth feast!

(Jellied bear paw, anyone?)

For reasons too complex to be discussed within this correspondence, the British gentry has always nurtured a certain eccentricity. Islay, too, has attracted its fair share of idiosyncratic individuals over the years. Thus when a wealthy English landowner chooses Islay as his adopted home, behaviour that errs toward the peculiar may be positively expected.

With this in mind, we would like to bring to the Committee's attention one Talbot Clifton Esq, Laird of the Kildalton Estate between 1922 and 1928.

As evidence of the singularity of this wealthy explorer, readers are invited to scrutinise this menu of questionable epicurean delights, served up by Clifton as Christmas Dinner while on expedition in Siberia in 1901:

TO START:

Bear soup

FOLLOWED BY:

Jellied bear paws

Roasted wild Siberian ram (of a species first discovered by Clifton only moments before shooting it)
8,000 year old mammoth (from the deep freeze)
Siberian Capercaillie

TO FINISH:

A plum pudding of Clifton's own invention



Bunfight at the O.K. Café

For those who have not had the pleasure of dining at the Distillery, may we modestly mention that the cuisine issuing from our kitchen is so delectable that we have earned quite a reputation for hosting events, parties and receptions. We recently enjoyed a big knees up with 70 delegates from the European Small Islands Network. We have also welcomed over 10 Committee Members who have tied the knot here at Ardbeg.

The Committee would like to extend sincere thanks to Jackie, Mary and the team for their unstinting work behind the scenes.



A sample menu from the Old Kiln Café

TO START:

Islay Smoked Beef, Pastrami and Venison served with Green Salad and Red Chilli Jam

FOLLOWED BY:

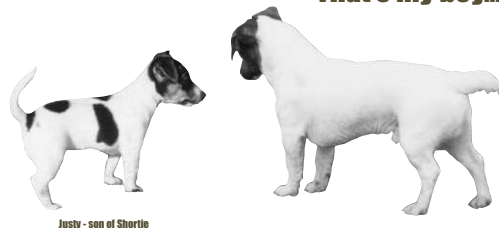
Tender Islay Beef in Red Wine served with Fluffy Rice
Irish Stew served with Homemade Herby Dumplings
Fishtastic Seafood Salad - prawns, smoked mackerel, smoked and roasted salmon, herring with crusty bread

TO FINISH:

White Chocolate Cheesecake served with Scottish Raspberries
Honey and Pecan Bread and Butter Pudding with a splash of Serendipity

"I want to grow up to be as strong as you!"

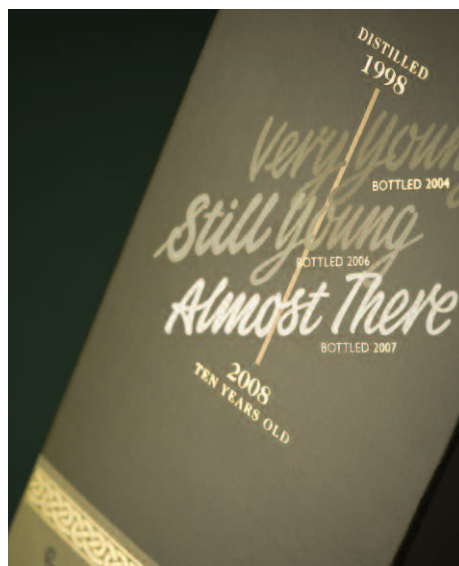
"That's my boy..."



Justy - son of Shortie

The final leg(s)

My, how our young Ardbegs have grown since we sent our first little treasure out into the world in 2004. This March, our family will be complete with the launch of Almost There, an older brother at 9 years old for Very Young and Still Young. The last sibling to tread the peaty path to maturity is a beautiful straw gold expression at 54.1% ABV. This youngster boasts a cheeky mixture of peat bogs, pine cones and birch tar, interlaced with the sweetness of fudge, while layers of honeycomb and gooseberries mingle with aniseed balls. To complete your family of young Ardbegs, order Almost There for the price of £29.99 at ardbeg.com.





Plastered around the village

(Emma's picture, that is)

Visitors to the Distillery will be familiar with this face, though not necessarily adorned thus. Hearty congratulations were the order of the day back in October when everyone's favourite Distillery tour guide turned a youthful 40. Emma celebrated in true Islay style with a tippie or two of Ardbeg, before being snapped by the local paparazzi and finding her photo fly-posted all around Port Ellen for all to see. As well as commemorating four decades, this year sees Emma also marking one decade working at the Ardbeg Distillery – a cause for celebration indeed!



If you're thinking of crashing the party, don't forget your Helmut!

A swifty for a nifty fifty

Talking of birthdays, Committee Member 1093, namely Helmut Niederwieser recently celebrated his 50th in true style. Ardbeg's Stillhouse – every Committee Member's idea of a perfect party venue – was the surprise destination Helmut found himself bound for back in April. After his wife phoned ahead and asked us to arrange something special, we sprang into action and Helmut and his family arrived to find a table complete with white linen, a bottle of Ardbeg, and canapés set up in the warmth of the Stillhouse. Helmut wrote to say thanks after the event and informed us that his new nickname was 'the old man and the stillhouse' (not to be confused with the old man and the sea).



Warehouseman Drew's father-in-law and friends recently cycled the Alps

Lights, camera, Ardbeg!

The Ardbeg Distillery has always been very much in the international spotlight, but never more so than when it played a starring role recently on singlemalt.tv. The Old Kiln Café was deemed the perfect setting for the web-based whisky 'tv channel's' interview with the French food and whisky expert, Martine Nouet. Martine was filmed chewing the cud about the Old Kiln Café menu, Islay whisky and Islay life in general. It's not the first time Ardbeg has graced the small and large screen however. It can often be spotted in the shop in that great British soap opera, Emmerdale. And Keanu Reeves can be seen enjoying a healthy swig of the Ultimate Islay Malt in the Hollywood blockbuster, Constantine. If you spot Ardbeg somewhere else on celluloid, do let us know by writing to the Distillery. No doubt Ardbeg's Equity Card will be winging its way to Islay soon.

Thanks for pitching in

Whether or not you have weathered Islay's changeable weather in person, you can perhaps imagine that school sports on Islay frequently resemble something akin to mud wrestling rather than the traditional games of soccer and rugby.

To rectify this situation, a local Committee (naturally) entered a lottery draw to win funds for an all-weather pitch at Port Ellen Primary School. Our bid was then put to the public vote. Cutting a long story short, we are delighted to report that our project was eventually awarded the prize for overall runner-up in Scotland, which equates to the very grand sum of £50,000. Huge thanks to all Ardbeg Committee Members who voted for our pitch. The next generation of fit and healthy Distillery staff is ensured!

Wheelie great tops

Getting on one's bike has been a much more appealing proposition since the launch of the official Ardbeg cycling top. Arguably the most stylish garment ever to be seen in a velodrome, or in more likelihood, here and there on the backs of honed and toned Ardbeg Committee Members, these smart jerseys guarantee the wearer will be lauded wherever he or she goes. Indeed, Tom Thomson, a recently retired chemistry teacher from Port Ellen, sent his daughter a top for Christmas. When Morven, a keen cyclist now living in Australia, embarked on a New Year's Day cycle, she was stopped no less than seven times by other cyclists demanding to know from where she had procured her Ardbeg cycling top. So if you or someone you know would appreciate their very own cycling jersey, we're peddling them at ardbeg.com for the very reasonable price of £39.95.

A win for Scotland in the World Cup

We are proud to announce another triumph for Ardbeg 10 Years Old, which recently scooped the awards for Best Single Malt and Best Peated Whisky at the Single Malt World Cup 2006 in Sweden.

Blind drunk by 1300 lucky Swedes (which is not to suggest that the Swedes were blind drunk), our little champion fought off competition from over 100 different whiskies in Scotland, Ireland and Japan.

This is a rather better performance than any by the Scotland soccer team at the World Cup. On no occasion have they proceeded beyond the first round – of whisky no doubt.



Heads up on the new Distillery Manager



Exciting news for all Committee Members! In March we welcomed our new Distillery Manager and Committee Chairman, Michael Heads, a native of Islay with whisky running through his veins. His father and grandfathers all worked at Islay distilleries and Michael himself cut

his teeth at Laphroaig in 1979. He even enjoyed a brief stint at Ardbeg before emigrating to Jura in 1999 to manage the distillery there. He brings back to Islay experience, passion, a wife called Margaret and a rival for Shortie, as Michael explains:

"I have a 4-year-old Cocker Spaniel called Poppy. They get on famously: Shortie growls at Poppy and Poppy growls back. Fur should be flying soon..."

He is also looking forward to meeting each and every Committee Member. That should keep him busy!

Top 10 places to drink Ardbeg before you die – the results!

In response to our question regarding the consumption of the ultimate Ardbeg (in more ways than one), Committee Members have submitted various excellent suggestions, which have now been whittled down by the newly appointed Sub-committee for the Listing of Assorted Inspirational and Notable Tippling Environments (SLAINTE). The short list follows in no particular order:

- 1.** Sitting on the banks of Loch Uigeadail on a balmy summer evening, the water shimmering beneath you, the sun setting before you and a magnificent golden eagle soaring above you.
- 2.** Whilst bungee-jumping over Victoria Falls (being careful not to spill a single drop).

- 3.** At the top of the Paps of Jura with one breath remaining from the climb.
- 4.** Sailing aboard a dhow on the Suez Canal, heading for adventure.
- 5.** Sweeping across North America on the trans-Canadian Railway, heading for home.
- 6.** In the Ardbeg Spirit Receiver going down for the 3rd time.
- 7.** In the bath on a Friday night after a long hard week of employment. (The author of this submission helpfully points out that the soothing effects of the tub cannot be replicated in a power shower.)
- 8.** Listening to jazz in Bar Satoh, Osaka, Japan. According to some, this is "the best

whisky bar in the world", so where better to sample the best whisky in the world?

- 9.** On Copper Mountain, Colorado, while taking a swing on the highest championship golf course in the USA (around 9,600ft). The ball goes further at altitude. Sadly the same can't be said for the whisky.

- 10.** Anywhere you are offered anything less (i.e. any Distillery other than Ardbeg).

This record is by no means exhaustive (though it sounds exhausting) so if you have any further suggestions please, continue to send them in and we will gladly consider them for the list.



Top Spot – Loch Uigeadail



Unfortunately, we cannot dispatch Ardbeg to North America.

www.ardbeg.com



I verify that the minutes recorded here are correct and complete, and I am pleased to endorse their publication and circulation to Members of the Ardbeg Committee.

Michael Heads, Chairman.

Michael Heads



Island Fling: we love a competition at Ardbeg, from sheep-tossing at last year's festival (demonstrated above) to quizzes all about us (see below).

Quiz of the decade

Well aware that Committee Members know their Ardbeg better than the backs of their hands, we now beg the question: how well do you remember the big events that have taken place at the Distillery over the last ten years?

(Clue: most answers can be found in previous editions of Momentous Minutes, which can be downloaded at www.ardbeg.com. If that doesn't work, may we suggest that a wee dram of 10 Years Old may prove an effective and fitting *aide-mémoire*.)

Question 1.

Which enormous 20,000 ton vessel dropped anchor off Ardbeg Pier in 2003?

- a) *Noah's Ark*
- b) *Ark Royal*
- c) *Princess Royal*

Question 2.

In 2001, huge Ardbeg fan Stefan Bulger abandoned his holiday plans to launch what?

- a) *the boat carrying our replacement spirit still, which he then accompanied to the Distillery in person*
- b) *an investigation into the mysterious death of a wallaby near Islay airport*

- c) *a military coo in the middle of the Islay Malt and Music Festival*

Question 3.

What mighty event caused our roof to blow off the Old Kiln Cafe?

- a) *A sudden bodily expulsion of hot air*
- b) *A hurricane*
- c) *A heated debate over the correct pronunciation of Uigeadail*

Tie-breaker.

Tell us how your actions over the last 10 years demonstrate that you are, indeed, Ardbeg's biggest fan.

Answers should be sent on a postcard to the Distillery in order that a prize may or may not be awarded to the winner and/or runners up (or vice versa), as deemed suitable by the nominated Sub-Committee for Distillery Quizzes, which reserves the right to withhold answers, prizes and drams without further discussion as and when it pleases, as indeed it regularly does.

Expressions of Delight...

"Let's not beat about the bush. The six years gets ten out of ten, and when the six is ten I shall be first in line to buy a bottle or three."

*Jon Race,
Oban, UK*

"Everything I've tasted from Ardbeg was just wonderful. How to say... it's just like the baby Jesus in velvet breeches."

*Mario Lepage,
Bordeaux, France*

"After one of my colleagues expressed that "this ten-year-old Ardbeg tastes like chewing a torched fishing boat" I decided to try it. The best whisky ever!"

*John, Malmo,
Sweden*

"Ardbeg is Heaven. The Very Young, Uigeadail, 1977, 17YO and not to forget the Committee Reserve. Oh I want to be an Angel on Islay..."

*Benny Uldall,
Fredericia, Denmark*



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