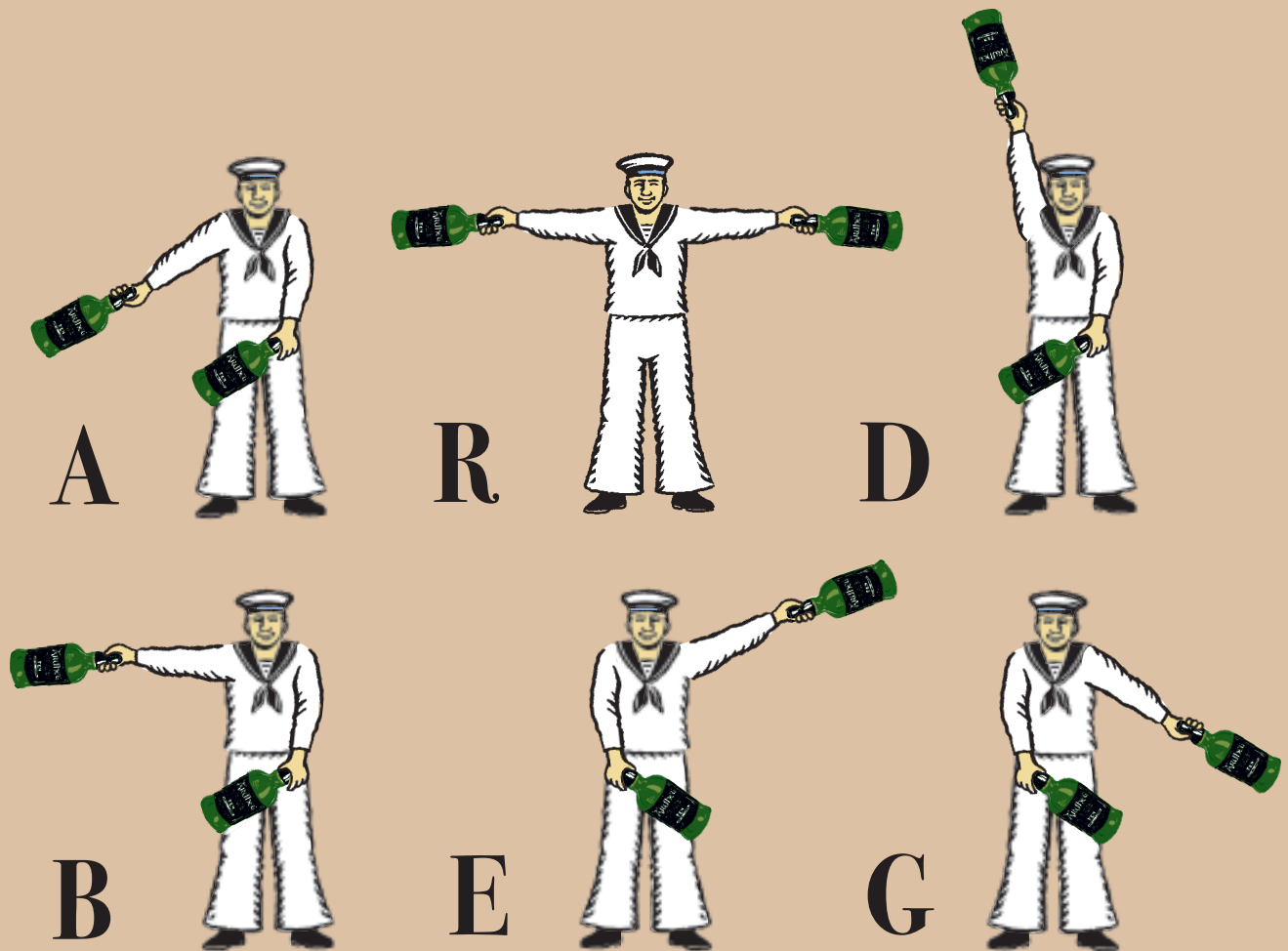


Momentous Minutes

Issue 4

August 2003



Abandon ship, we're drinking!

Mid-June saw the surprise visit to the Distillery of an extremely honoured guest, all 20,000 tons of her – HMS Ark Royal.

The amazing visit was prompted by a gesture by Jackie and Stuart who had discovered that Lieutenant Commander Paul Russell, serving aboard the Ark Royal, was a Committee member. As well as dispatching a bottle of special Committee

Reserve, they extended an invitation to him to pop in if he was ever in the area.

Imagine their surprise when they received a phone call to let them know that as she happened to be passing and it was the crew's afternoon off, the Ark Royal would be dropping anchor off the coast of Islay near to Ardbeg later that day.

The largest of the Royal Navy's three aircraft carriers, it is known that this great flagship has cruising capabilities of up to 30 knots. Jackie and Stuart couldn't help but wonder whether her crew might possess boozing capabilities to match!

It was all hands on deck at the Distillery in order to prepare for such an esteemed visit

continued...



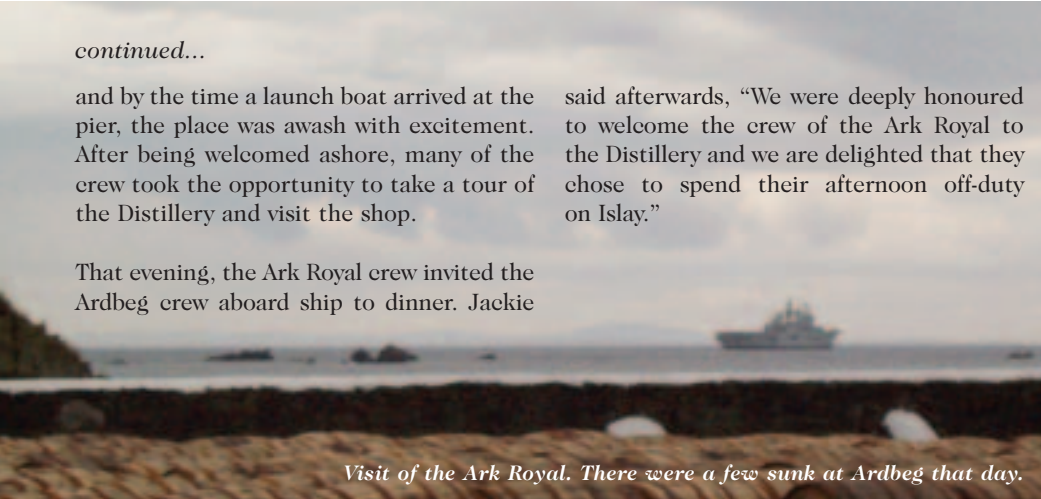
THE **Ardbeg**
Committee

continued...

and by the time a launch boat arrived at the pier, the place was awash with excitement. After being welcomed ashore, many of the crew took the opportunity to take a tour of the Distillery and visit the shop.

That evening, the Ark Royal crew invited the Ardbeg crew aboard ship to dinner. Jackie

said afterwards, "We were deeply honoured to welcome the crew of the Ark Royal to the Distillery and we are delighted that they chose to spend their afternoon off-duty on Islay."



Visit of the Ark Royal. There were a few sunk at Ardbeg that day.



Courtesy of seafari-islay.co.uk

There's something else on the horizon...



*...3 new bottles
emerging*

Members will be thrilled to hear that we have more treats in the storeroom: three special Ardbegs are due for release over the coming year.

First will be our new Uigeadail bottling (pronounced Oo-ga-daal), emerging in the autumn. Before the end of the year our next Committee Reserve will be available (as yet un-named, but undoubtedly a great stocking-filler). Finally, 2004 will herald the auction of our finite supplies (just 270 bottles) of Ardbeg 1965.

Amazing wool power

It's not often that we hear of anyone going to desperate lengths to escape our island, but according to reports, certain members of the animal kingdom have been sighted making a determined dash for the coast and beyond.

Jura may translate as 'deer island', but still we were a little surprised to hear that a herd of deer was spotted doggy-paddling over to our neighbouring isle. An investigation has since revealed that they may have found themselves somewhat inconvenienced by the suspended service of the Jura ferry, out of action once again on account of its big end going (not to mention its thinning bottom).

More remarkable was the news that a flock of sheep, brought over to Islay from their native Iona, had escaped from a supposedly sheep-proof pen and disappeared. A search party was duly dispatched and eventually the entire flock was found huddling together on the north-west coast of the island, the closest point to their place of origin. It was noted that there was neither a map nor compass between them, proving they are the first known breed of homing sheep. Here at the Distillery, it didn't escape our notice that if it was Provenance they were after, we could have helped them out...



Are these the culprits?

A deer game

It takes a certain strength of character to overcome the shock of having all your marigolds munched, then bounce back the following year to beat the culprits at their own game. Yet that is precisely what our man Dugga has managed to do. Usually happily ensconced in the warehouse, in 2002 Dugga found immense pleasure and pride in planting our flowers for the whisky festival. So imagine his dismay when he found that every single bloom, worth a four figure sum, had been guzzled overnight by a four-legged intruder – a deer with a staggering penchant for pansies. This year however, Dugga kept a watchful eye as he planted through the night, ensuring that visitors to this year's festival were treated to a magnificent and abundant floral display.



** West-Highland sheep tend to be unaware that Scottish Basking sharks feed exclusively on Plankton*



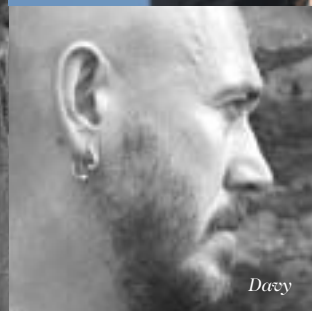
Tu-Bardh



Jacqui



Jamesie



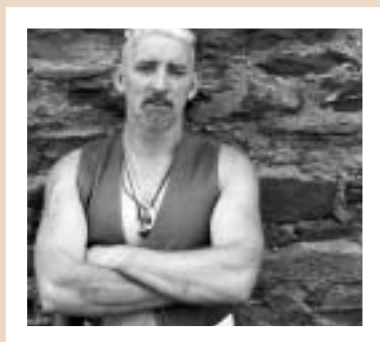
Darcy



Donnie



Drumming up support



Joe Kilna MacKenzie

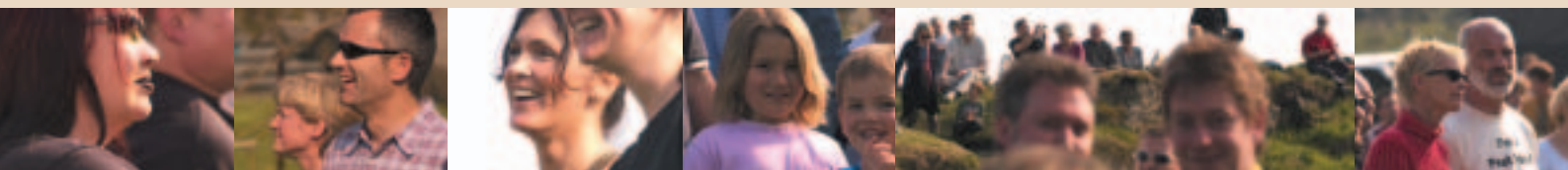
The initial experience is of something raw, robust and invigorating, followed by a more challenging, complex sensation. Finally, a mystery and a depth that leaves fans begging for more...

Such rhapsodising would not be amiss at any self-respecting Ardbeg tasting session, yet these words are equally well applied to the Scottish Celtic tribal band Clann an Drumma (Children of the Drums).

We were proud and honoured to welcome this extraordinary band of six, complete with mix of pipes, drums and tribal percussion and resplendent in Ardbeg tartan, to perform at this year's whisky festival. As the afternoon progressed we witnessed a level of uninhibited toe-tapping and thigh-slapping amongst the crowd for which we felt the freely-flowing whisky could only have been partially responsible.

We are also delighted that Clann an Drumma have committed their energies to supporting and promoting Ardbeg all over the world, where they have attracted something of a cult following. As surely our noisiest evangelists, they exemplify the sort of messianic endeavour so applauded amongst committee members (cf. Rules and Regulations Section 2, Paragraph 6).

Therefore, in my capacity as Committee Chairman I hereby nominate the members of Clann an Drumma, Joe Kilna MacKenzie, Brian Tu-Bardh Wilson, Jamesie Johnston, Jacqui Holland, Donnie MacNeil and David Morrison, as honorary members of the Ardbeg Committee. If anyone has reason to dispute this proposal, they should submit their objections to me in writing at the Distillery, where they will be most carefully considered and almost certainly disregarded.



You'd have to go a long way to find anywhere that comes close...

We are proud to say that since the Committee began, 18,617 individuals in 81 countries have become members. Indeed, many of you make the long journey to visit us on Islay every year and at this year's whisky festival we met old and new friends from many different nations. The tenets of the Committee have always been firmly placed in nurturing a global esprit de corps among members, so in order to advance cooperation and collaboration across the borders we are proposing a new initiative – that of twinning!

We are calling on Committee members to exercise their civic pride and nominate their home town or city to be twinned with Ardbeg. The chosen location will then become Ardbeg's twin for a year and a plaque commemorating the measure will be produced and displayed at the distillery. It is anticipated that if the idea is well received, a wall will be dedicated to the plaques as they accumulate year on year.

As well as bearing the name of the twinned town, the plaque will also display the name and membership number of the nominee, so this is an excellent opportunity to see your name immortalised upon the walls of the Distillery.

The criterion is for you to decide. It could be that your home town or city exhibits landmarks similar to Islay. It could be by the sea or it may be home to a fellow distillery or brewery. It may be simply that the populous boasts a higher than average number of Ardbeg aficionados. Perhaps there is an even more tenuous link...

The nominee of the chosen location will be furnished with a bottle of finest 17 year old Ardbeg* and a formal invitation extended to the elders and citizens of the twinned town/city to drop into Ardbeg whenever they are passing and enjoy a free dram! So please send us a few lines telling us why your town should be twin town 2003 and

send your nominations to: Ardbeg Twin Towns, Ardbeg Distillery, Port Ellen, Islay, Argyll PA42 7EA. All proposals will be carefully considered by the Chairman and the first Ardbeg twin town will be announced on our website no later than October 2003.

Section 3

7. Join any society, association, club (sports or otherwise), charitable organisation, body, amalgamate, institution, establishment or committee, formed for the purposes of alcoholic enjoyment or otherwise and form new friendships throughout the community.



Our beloved Islay. Home to the Lord of the Isles in days gone by, now to sooty shearwaters, black-headed buntings and, for the more eagle-eyed amongst us, the spine-chilling Devil's Tree. Keep your wits about you next time you are on the island and you may spot this eerie spectacle of Auld Cloutie dancing in his tree. But be warned! It is said (though not often) that the unsuspecting passer-by who so much as glances at the tree will never be quite the same again, unless the following steps are taken immediately:

- 1) Head straight for the Old Kiln Café, where you should jump up and down 666 times, then lie down with your legs in the air.
- 2) Using either your right or left hand, pour a dram of Ardbeg into your mouth, roll it over your tongue and swallow.
- 3) Repeat step 2 until all memory of the Devil and his tree have been eradicated.

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.

Stuart Thomson, Chairman.

*Unfortunately, we cannot dispatch Ardbeg to North America. In the event that the winner resides there, a voucher or other Ardbeg goodies will be offered.



The road to Loch Uigeadail (ooh-ma-legs) – through hill and high water

This year's Ardbeg day at the Islay whisky festival saw the introduction of a new and somewhat energetic pursuit: to take a hike into the hills and gaze upon the source of the water from which beautiful Ardbeg is produced. Many Committee members struck out bravely on the 6 mile walk, lured either by romantic notions of making a pilgrimage to Loch Uigeadail (pronounced Oo-ga-daal), or more probably by the promise of free drams along the way.

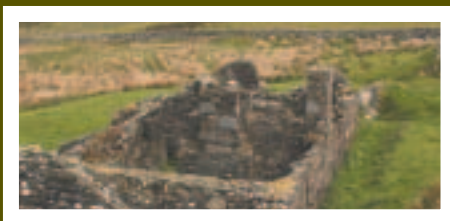
Should you want to follow in their footsteps, here are some of the sights to look out for:

COWS. Smiling is considered polite. However, proffering courtesy drams is not generally encouraged, as the subtle delights of Ardbeg are usually lost on our bovine neighbours.

ARDBEG BURN. To be traversed by whatever means you see fit. Wading in Wellington boots, hopping across stepping stones and hitching piggy-back rides are all acceptable methods.

ROCK LEGENDS. Off the barely-beaten track, look for the face carved into a slab of rock in the hillside. This elegant graffito is said to be one of five portraits depicted

by a roaming 19th century shepherd, and may have been the inspiration for the American Presidents at Mount Rushmore USA – or not, bearing in mind that the sculptor Gutzon Borglum almost definitely never stepped foot on Islay.



SOLAM. The ruined shell of a stone cottage is all that now remains of the village of Solam, or “the plague village”. Legend talks of a sailor who, returning from his voyages, brought home a plague that killed off the villagers one by one, after which all the houses were burned. If you haven't yet dipped into your reserves of Ardbeg, may we propose pouring a dram and drinking to the poor lost souls of Solam.

TRICKY TERRAIN. Beware soggy peat bogs and rocky outcrops of quartzite underfoot! While potentially treacherous to the walker, remember these are the very features that contribute to the unique Ardbeg flavour.

THE WATER SOURCE. Tradition dictates that as a mark of respect a dram of Ardbeg must be returned to the loch in order to “give back what it has given us”. This practice was strictly observed on the day of the festival, but with so many at the loch-side and limited supplies of Ardbeg, it was decided that the task should be entrusted to just one person, and that the honour should go to whomever had journeyed the furthest. A survey was promptly carried out, producing a close-run result between Minnesotan couple Debra and John Sauke (Committee member 2643). After much debate it was established that, as John slept on the left hand side of the bed (due west), he had travelled approximately two inches further.

Should you wish to complete this ritual yourself, we invite you to intone the following words before pouring into the loch and partaking of another well-deserved dram:

For nature's gifts of barley, peat and soft pure flowing water;

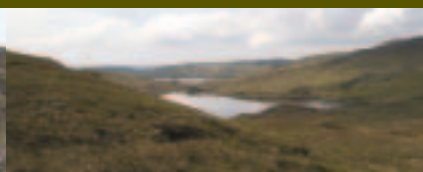
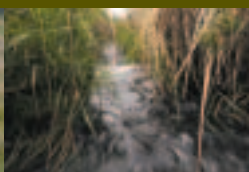
For Ardbeg's first distillers – two Daniels and a Walter;

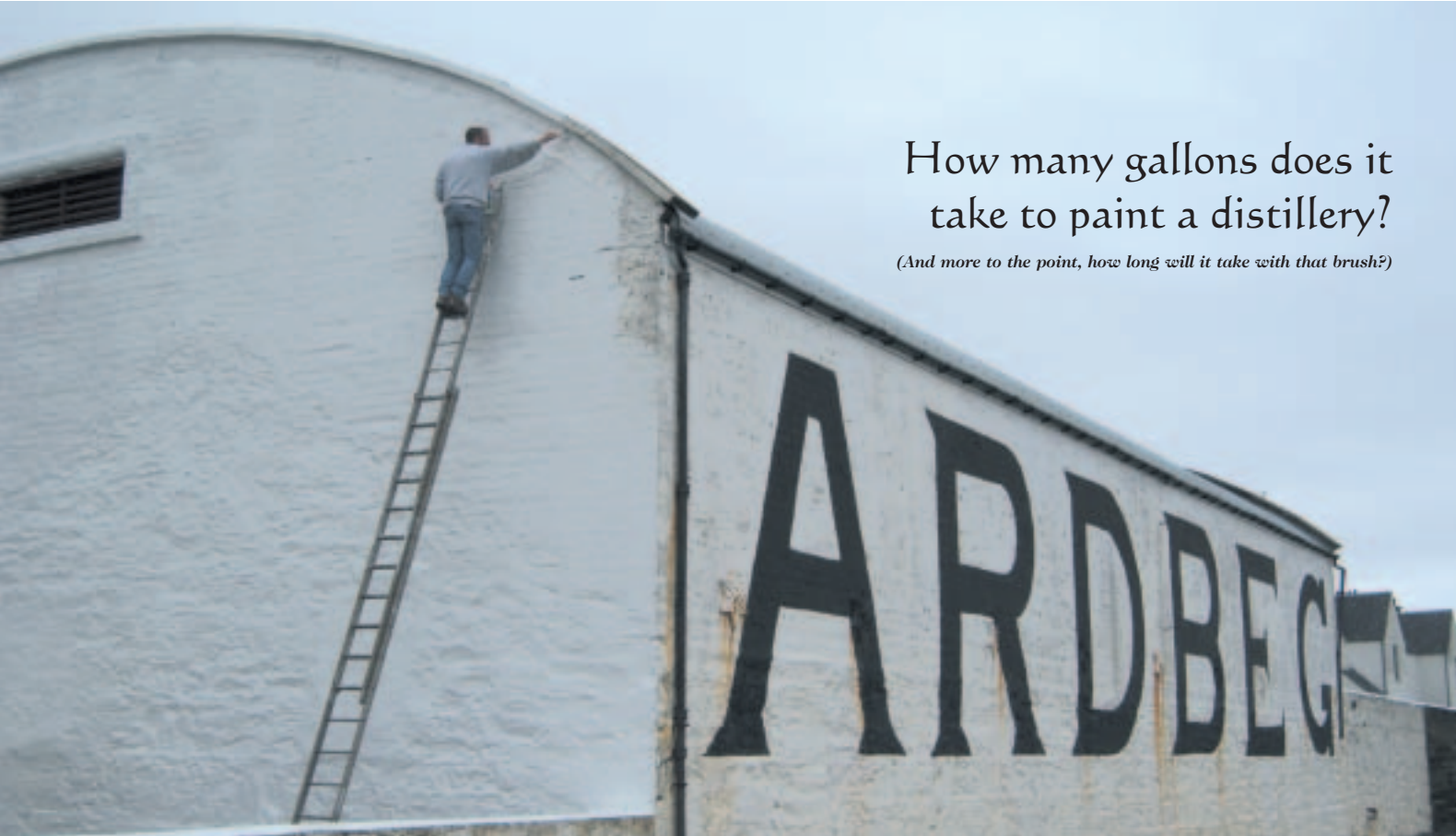
For sturdy legs and gritted teeth by which I somehow got here;

A simple Thanks. (And fingers crossed the next walk will be shorter.)

“I guess it's not for the faint hearted... although I walk that way home on a Friday”

DOUGLAS ‘DUGGA’ BOWMAN





How many gallons does it take to paint a distillery?

(And more to the point, how long will it take with that brush?)



Puppy – go on then, just the one

Single Islay malt pup

One face that may be familiar to Committee members is that of Shortie, the Jack Russell. He is often to be found dozing in the sun at various points around the Distillery and will soon be enjoying a starring role on our revamped website. However, this tale

concerns the fact that Shortie became a dad last year. Nothing odd in that you may think, until you learn that, instead of an average litter, his partner gave birth to only a single pup. Just the one! We know Shortie is fond of the odd tippie of the ultimate single Islay malt. Maybe he believes like us, that it's quality not quantity that counts...

Pretty deflated

You never know what's around the corner on Islay (apart from sheep and cows on the road). The last thing Dave Mullen (Committee member 8253) expected to find on an Islay hillside was a balloon with a message attached – the promise of a prize for the finder of the most remote balloon. An urgent telephone call was placed to the Overchurch Infant School in the Wirral,

North England and the find reported. Sadly, Dave's balloon was burst when he was told that the competition deadline had expired at the end of March. To add insult to injury, the lucky recipient of the prize had resided in Northern Ireland so Dave's Islay balloon would have been a winner all along...



Expressions of delight

"This is absolutely the best committee that I've ever sat on and the only one that meets at midnight beside a Celtic cross. Slainte!!"

*Dr. David Wishart,
Scotland.*

"Whisky on a plate! Fino 4699 ouch! Whack!, bang! – duck? Bottle it quick, but don't promote it too much."

*Tamara & Richard B,
St. Helen's, UK.*

"Absolutely brilliant day as always! If you count all the smiles here today, you would know exactly how many people that were here."

*Anders J,
Sweden.*