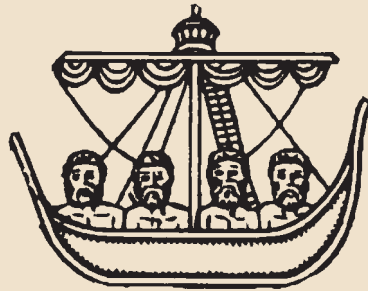


Momentous Minutes

Issue 1

December 2000



1000 – 1493 AD

The Lords of the Isles arriving at their seat of power: Islay



Every other weekend

136 Irishmen arrive in rubber dinghies at Ardbeg

Welcome...

We hope you enjoy this first issue of Momentous Minutes which we've produced for members of The Ardbeg Committee. The Committee is still in its infancy – it was launched just 9 months ago. Yet we're delighted to report that already there are over 3,500 members,

joining from far-flung places all over the world... India... Bahrain... South Korea... Thailand... and Namibia. Some Ardbeg fans closer to home are going to extraordinary lengths in their devotion: 136 made it over here in dinghies from Northern Ireland, for a dram and some

Ardbeg hospitality! It's good that our website at www.ardbeg.com seems to be so popular. If you live within the EU, you can use it to order your supply of Ardbeg – worth remembering if you can't get hold of your favourite vintage elsewhere for Christmas!



THE  Ardbeg
Committee

MISSION STATEMENT

It's a quirky fact that Islay, with a population of just 3,000, has more than 140 Committees. So in keeping with the whisky-celebrating spirit of the island, we have established our own Ardbeg Committee here at the Distillery. No matter how near or far, our members share a common purpose: to celebrate the re-awakening of Ardbeg and dispense drams to those deprived of knowledge about The Ultimate Islay Malt Whisky.

Life at the Distillery has been extremely busy with the launch of 10 Year Old Ardbeg and the Committee. In fact, to celebrate, we threw a ceilidh here for the islanders, which was hugely enjoyable. Soon after that we took part in Islay's Whisky Festival, hosting it here on the last, very sunny, day. Over 200 visitors came along, 100 of whom filled their very own cask with fresh Ardbeg spirit (including Lord Robertson, General Secretary of NATO who was on holiday here). It was hectic to organise but well worth it for those involved. We've also had the pleasure of hosting a wedding for a couple from Canada whose first love was Ardbeg! Also, 95% Proof, a local blues band, has played here a couple of times.

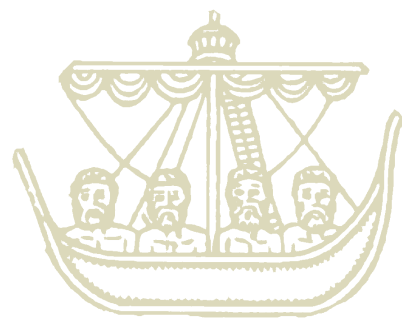
This hospitable inclination has meant that we've needed to hire another 4 folk to help us manage all the catering! Next on the agenda is preparing the new Committee Room upstairs. We've been so rushed off our feet that we haven't been able to make as much progress with the room as we would have liked. But if you make it out to meet us before we've finished the room, rest assured, you can still claim your free dram in The Old Kiln.

Please help us to make the Committee a success by writing to Momentous Minutes with your anecdotes, comments, photos, suggestions for what you'd like to read about... anything at all! The Committee is all about getting to know Ardbeg supporters, as well as giving you even more pleasure from The Ultimate Islay Malt Whisky.

Enjoy.



Next on the agenda
is preparing the new
Committee Room upstairs



The first Committee
on Islay
1000 – 1493 AD

Islay's Finlaggan –
Seat of the Lords of
the Isles

The oft-quoted fact that there are over 140 committees on this little island of 3,000 people is a little less surprising when you consider the history of Islay. The habit of getting together is ancient; the first committee on Islay was no less than The Lords of the Isles who ruled this part of Scotland from Islay between 1000 and 1493 AD. Their court at Loch Finlaggan was the seat of power for the entire Hebrides and west of Scotland, and it became a focus for council meetings, inaugurations, fairs and markets. The Lords met regularly, discussing their rule. It was the golden age of Gaelic culture - among the 'learned orders', poets held pride of place as the intellectual leaders of medieval Gaelic society. And as for alcohol, there was no whisky as it had not yet been invented; claret was brought from France.





Notes from the Chief Noser: The best way to taste your Ardbeg

It goes without saying that you can appreciate Ardbeg at any time of day. But it's a generally accepted fact amongst chemists that, physiologically speaking, your sensory abilities are at their optimum in the morning – especially if you're ravenous! Here we try the 10 Years Old and 1976 Cask Strength (for members who have recently joined, this was a special hand-bottling of 2 sherry butts to celebrate the inauguration of The Ardbeg Committee). Note that everyone will detect different aromas and tastes; Ardbeg is so wonderfully subtle and complex.

First of all, look at the colour. Sight is such an important sense, and no other product has such diverse colours. As well as increasing your anticipation, it shows you which type of cask it comes from. The gold of the 10 Years Old is from a bourbon cask. The deep walnut brown with hints of red

are typical of the sherry cask holding the 1976 Ardbeg.

Swirl it around, look at viscosity. For example, the 10 Years Old has loads of body, lots of legs. And the 1976 is so oily, so intense.

Next, appreciate the nose. Smell is the most important sense when it comes to experiencing any malt. Take lots of sniffs – the aromas will change all the time. In the 10 Years Old you may smell first fudge, cream, chocolate, rapidly followed by peat. When nosing the 1976 cask strength, be careful to sniff lightly, or, at 50% ABV or more, it can be painful! You'll smell treacle sponge, spicy fruits, marzipan and cocoa. Behind these you'll detect peaty notes of smoky bacon and salt.

Then add 50% water. This suppresses the alcohol and so releases more of the Distillery character. With the 10 Years Old, you may smell more oil, brine, incredible saltiness, then more cream, more honey. With the 1976, there's Old Jamaica chocolate, the rich spices of mulled wine, and the peat is always there.

Finally, the mouthfeel and taste. Your tongue detects sweet notes on the tip, salt at the front sides, sour at the back sides and bitterness at the back. So make sure you fully coat your palate and let some air in. Experience the mouthfeel. Does it have a coating effect? Is it chewing? Mouthwatering? Feel the whisky caress every tastebud. When you taste the 10 Years Old, after a few seconds the sweet peat explodes in the middle of your palate, then it rolls forward – taste the floral, fruity character. You're left with a dryness on the palate, like cocoa, with an incredibly long finish. It's incredibly well balanced. It leaves you with a pleasant sweet peat. When you first taste the 1976, initially you experience a burst of sherry fruit and chocolate, then after about 10 seconds, the peat. It's plummy, dry, multi-dimensionally floral. It rolls on the palate like a wave, gently caressing, the flavours constantly evolving. It's perfectly balanced, totally satisfying and leaves your mouth watering.

Note: For more information about 1976 Ardbeg or to place an order for a bottle, please phone the Distillery on +44 (0) 1496 302244.



The Islay People's Half Marathon Committee

The Ardbeg Committee would like to thank The Islay People's Half-Marathon Committee for their thanks for Ardbeg's sponsorship of the Islay People's Half Marathon. Thanks. We were delighted to be involved in the annual drench of runners from Islay, Jura and the mainland! Over 83 runners competed this year, 16 of which were from Islay. All the lady runners received floral tributes arranged by – but not presented by, as he was 'too shy' to give them himself – Bowmore's local butcher!



A stand-in for Bowmore's shy butcher

Ardbeg, porridge, bananas and oily fish – the recipe for reaching the age of 103!

At the age of 103, Ardbeg resident Marjorie MacGown frequently pops down to The Old Kiln for her lunch. She puts her healthy old age down to her diet of porridge, bananas, oily fish and a daily dram of Ardbeg. "For me," Marjorie said, "Ardbeg really is the water of life!"

Members' Noticeboard

Since the launch of the Ardbeg Committee, you have been regaling us with stories of how Ardbeg whisky is being appreciated all around the world. Our members' noticeboard is a forum for you to share these experiences with fellow Ardbeg enthusiasts. So please send in letters and photographs of you with your Ardbeg – or even beermats and souvenirs from places where you've found Ardbeg being sold.

"Dear Committee Elders,
...What an intriguing little package to find on the doormat when I got home yesterday evening. It raised my spirits (pun definitely meant) tremendously..."
Vincent Ng

"We were advised of the potency of Ardbeg and substituted a hogshead of it for fifty gallons of red diesel. Unfortunately it left us powerless and drifting off Lady Rock. Please advise next move." The Capt. & Crew of CATHULA, Somerled Voyages, Loch Linnhe, Sound of Mull

"We have a really wet summer here in Germany. But there is something that brings a sunshine in my heart. It's a dram of my favourite Single Malt Whisky - the Ardbeg." Klaus Niessen Member 791 of the Ardbeg Committee

The Missionary Position

Please write and tell us about your messianic endeavours, fulfilling Members' Rules and Regulations:

Section 2 para 6.

Moreover, members are expected to actively pursue a serious and altruistic duty: to bring others into the Ardbeg fold. The result of the collective effect of this is to increase worldwide consumption, thereby ensuring that the doors of Ardbeg shall never close again.



Ardbeg Ice-cream

You read it right first time. We created an Ardbeg ice-cream (strictly for big kids only) exclusively for the 2000 Open Golf Championships which took place in July at St. Andrews. Vince Fusaro of Wines and Spirits merchants, Lucians, commented, "With Ardbeg's sweet floral notes and treacly peat smoke mouthfeel, we had no problem at all complementing it with our own naturally made ice-cream. Interestingly, the vanilla of the bourbon cask maturation combined beautifully with the vanilla in the ice-cream." There are unconfirmed reports that Tiger Woods enjoyed a cone before his last match...

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

Stuart Thomson, Chairman.



A truly momentous minute!

It's out with the old
and in with...
the same

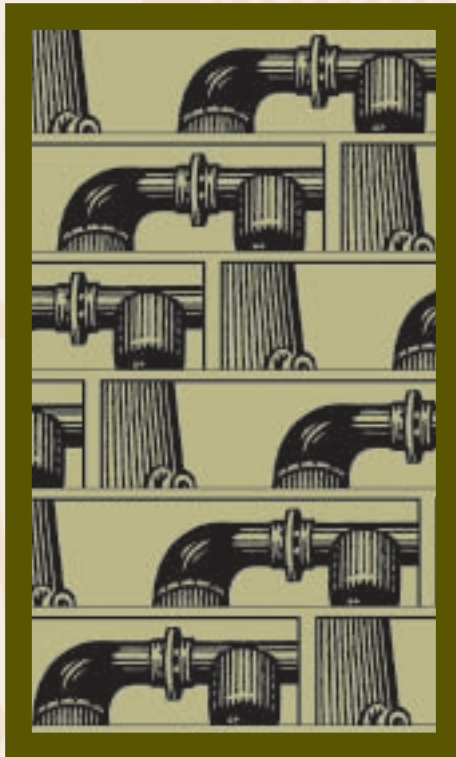
A hum of excitement has pervaded the Distillery at Ardbeg, as we await the imminent arrival of our brand new spirit still.

Since our relaunch in 1997 we have been renovating and replacing buildings and equipment. Most importantly, we have spent over 36 months planning the construction of a still, to replace the one which has been here for 51 years. The average lifetime of a still is only 15 to 18 years, so the still that has served us so long and faithfully truly deserves her rest. But she will not be lost to us entirely, for in her wake will come a replacement cast perfectly in her image.

As any whisky enthusiast is well aware, the shape, size and construction of a still influences the character of a whisky as much as ingredients and the surrounding environment. So we have given the Coppersmiths, Richard Forsyth & Sons Ltd, the exact measurements of the old still, from which they have masterfully fabricated her replica.

This careful and precise copying of every detail and dimension has been a lengthy and painstaking procedure - and crucial in maintaining the quality and character of Ardbeg whisky.

The body of Ardbeg's still has a relatively broad girth, which narrows into the collar



at the base of its tall neck. This bottom-heavy shape contributes to a heavier flavour, and because of the cleansing properties of the copper in contact with the spirit, the flavour is intensified. But Ardbeg also has a purifier on the lyne-arm which forces the heaviest volatiles back

down to the pot to be redistilled. Together, these features contribute to the remarkable balance found in Ardbeg Single Malt, achieved by taking the lightest and sweetest volatiles of a naturally phenolic and highly flavoured spirit. Their replication ensures that the distinctive Ardbeg character will be retained.

One further feature that we have been at pains to keep is the intricate riveting which runs round the top and the bottom of the still, depicting Celtic knots. Harking back to an age before welding, the rivets are no longer structurally relevant, and our insistence on them being replicated may seem pedantic. But we think not! They are part of the old method of construction, and the Celtic design is also testimony to the Distillery's heritage and history – and the Spirit of Ardbeg.

The moment of her arrival is something we have dreamed of for a long time. We shouldn't pretend there won't be a few obstacles to overcome as she settles into her new home. And the story of her journey to Islay by sea will undoubtedly be told in the next issue of Momentous Minutes! But thanks to years of scrupulous and exacting preparations we can all relax in the knowledge that at least nothing about the whisky is going to change.





How to arrive at



Essential information to help you come and claim your free dram

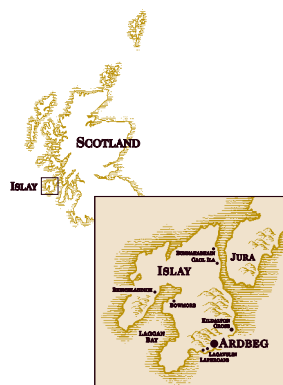
All visitors are welcome at the Distillery, but none so much as our new Committee members! So to help you find us, we thought this very practical information would help.

Once you arrive on Islay it's very easy to find Ardbeg – although not quite so simple as following your nose. Take the low road south towards Port Ellen, pass Laphroaig, Lagavulin then before you come to the Kildalton Cross you'll see Ardbeg's rocky cove. We're open 7 days a week during the summer, but from October to June we close for the weekend.

You can pick up a road map when you arrive in Islay.

By car ferry

Caledonian MacBrayne (tel: 01475 650100) run the ferry between Kennaraig on the mainland and Port Ellen or Port Askaig on Islay. Timetables obviously change during



the year. There are normally 3 daily sailings, except Wednesdays and Sundays. The crossing takes about 2 hours and, on a fine day, is absolutely beautiful! Prices start at £6.85 for a foot passenger and from £36 for your car. Coach services operate from Glasgow to Kennaraig, contact Scottish Citylink Coaches for details on 0990 505050.

By air

British Airways (tel: 0845 7733377) fly from Glasgow airport twice daily, first thing and last thing. The flight takes only 1½ an hour. It doesn't quite land on the beach – just right beside it. It flies over

neighbouring island Arran and the Mull of Kintyre en route. And best of all, you can see Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig as you fly along the coast of Islay, before coming in to land. The wee plane has twin propellers, and be warned, it can be distinctly bumpy in the winter months.

By your own boat

Map C64, produced by Imray, features Islay within the area of Belfast Lough to Lough Foyle and Crinan. You can moor here or at one of 10 yacht moorings at Port Ellen, where you'll find a range of facilities...a hose and fresh water! Please be very careful – over 250 shipwrecks and strandings are known to have occurred around Islay's rugged shores.

By rubber dinghy

Inflate your dinghy, don a life jacket and paddle like mad. Or use a motor and follow the example of our devotees from Northern Ireland.

A warming dram and hearty congratulations especially awaits you.

Ardbeg Distillery, Port Ellen, Islay, Argyll PA42 7EA

www.ardbeg.com