

# Momentous Minutes

Issue 9

May 2008



## WE'VE ARRIVED!

### ARDBEG RENAISSANCE – A VERITABLE WORK OF ART

They say Rome wasn't built in a day, and if the production of the world's best whisky (i.e. Ardbeg) is anything to go by, we are inclined to believe the rumours. Over the last four years we have been patiently treading the path to peaty maturity where we have, at last, arrived. Our young Ardbeg has come of age and we have named it Ardbeg Renaissance. This is an historic moment indeed, as it marks the point from which all Ardbeg 10 Years Old will be bottled using only distillate produced since

our Renaissance in 1997. Therefore, this Ardbeg, the eldest in the family, is released in tribute to all Committee Members who have shown their unwavering support for Ardbeg over the last decade, and we humbly suggest that celebrating with a dram of Ardbeg Renaissance (55.9% ABV) would not be considered inappropriate.

In a manner certain to tingle Committee tastebuds, Chief Noser Rachel Barrie describes Renaissance as a "crackle of peat

setting off a chain reaction of flavour explosions... the taste goes on and on leaving a smoky jet stream of simmering peat oils, wispy vanilla cream and chewy liquorice whirls."

From the end of May, limited numbers of Ardbeg Renaissance will be available for Committee Members to purchase online ([www.ardbeg.com](http://www.ardbeg.com)) priced at £41.99. It will also be available from all good stockists in Asia and Europe from June.



**Ardbeg**  
COMMITTEE



THE PEATY PATH TO MATURITY IS TRODDEN...



#### Very Young Ardbeg

*2004 saw the birth of our first baby. We smacked its bottom and sent Very Young Ardbeg out into the world.*



#### Still Young

*Welcomed with open arms, Still Young joined its spirited sibling in the hearts and minds of the Committee.*



#### Almost There

*By the time Almost There arrived, Committee members were well along the peaty path.*



#### We've Arrived 'Renaissance'

*At last, our young Ardbeg has come of age – celebrate with a dram when we release it in May.*



#### ARBEG 10 Years Old

*The daddy of them all – Ardbeg 10 Years Old, with exceptional balance and depth.*

## SODDENLY, LAST SUMMER...

Cats and dogs. Bucket loads. Drowned rats. We had it all at Ardbeg's big day during the Islay Festival of Malt and Music last year. As the Distillery doors opened, so did the heavens. As we say in Old Scots, it was 'rainin' auld wives and pike staves' from dawn till final fling. We are apt to observe that no-one was dry at the end of it.

## POURING IT DOWN

Not that the dreich conditions succeeded in dampening any spirits. A warming dram and a hearty meal greeted the two hundred *drookit* visitors who descended on the Old Kiln Café for lunch. While the downpour precipitated the need to move our fun and games into the Store, everybody retained their sunny dispositions throughout, none more so than Committee Members Andrew and Barbara Hartley-Snazzel from San Francisco and the couple from Holland, who won a bottle of 1975 single cask and Ardbeg Mór respectively.

## SHY AND RETIRING

In April, Mary McKechnie retired after ten years' devoted service in the Old Kiln kitchen. Never one to court the limelight she deserves, even some of her biggest fans will know her better by her dumplings than her face, but we would like to take this opportunity to say that we already miss her smile about the place, as well as her delicious cooking.





The Chair is in session



The boys take a leek



Dugga, he's as daft as a brush!

## ARDBIG SUCCESS

Of course, it was the launch of Ardbeg Mór that made the biggest splash at last year's festival, with the first bottles being snatched up on the day and our remaining stock selling out within a few weeks. Size evidently did not deter the more determined Ardbeg fan. In the 8th edition of Momentous Minutes we speculated on how members would contrive to transport these hefty bottles away. One solution was found by four resourceful lads who carefully decanted the 4.5 litres of whisky into six empty 10 Years Old bottles (the contents of which had been responsibly disposed of elsewhere) so that they could be easily stowed in luggage for the journey home. Their ingenuity was highly commended by all and widely envied by those who wished they'd thought of it themselves.



*A titanic achievement (perfect excuse to sink a dram or two)*

## OFFICIAL: ARDBEG IS THE BIGGEST WHISKY IN THE WORLD

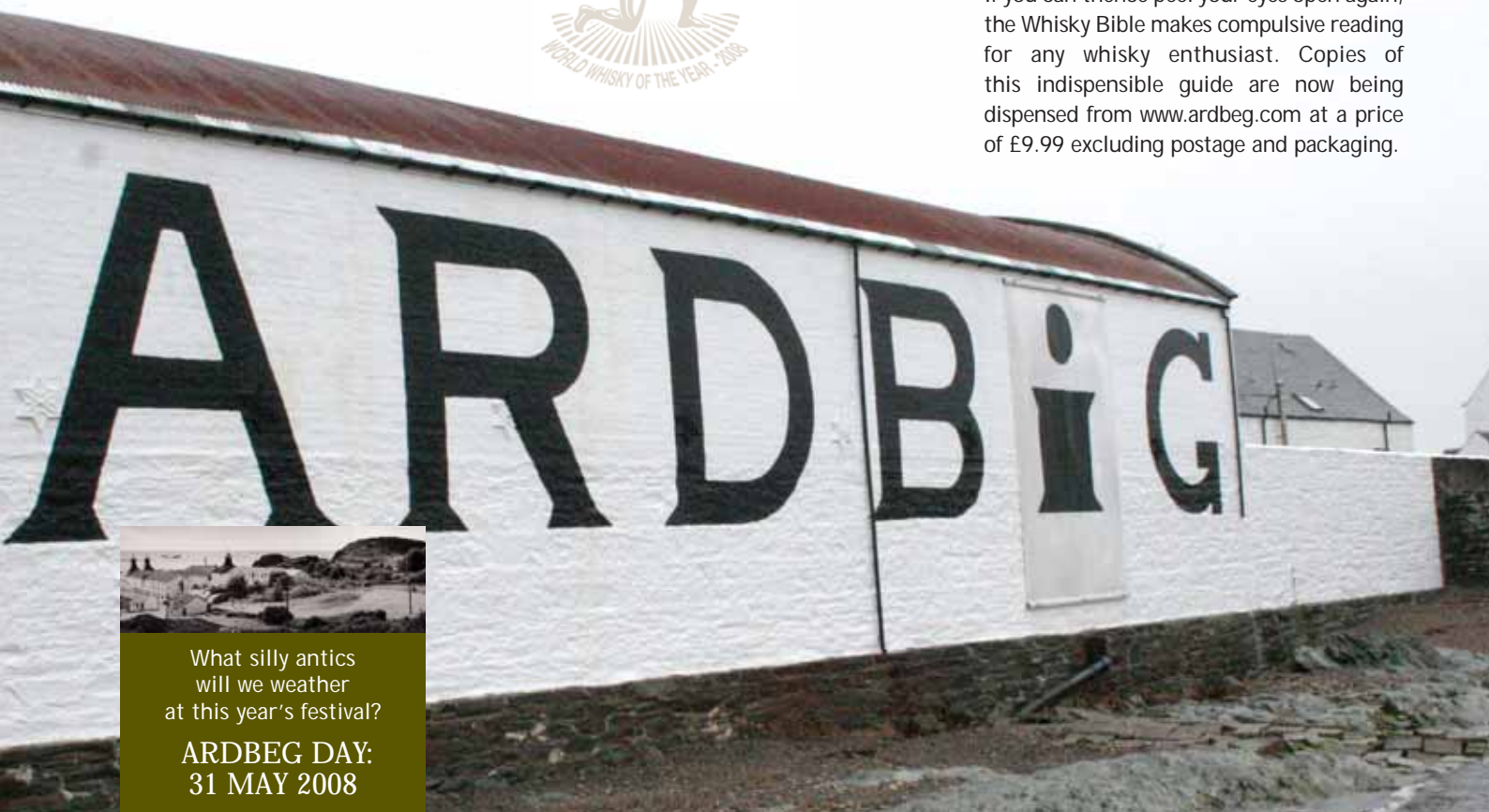
If you haven't already heard, you must have been hibernating. Ardbeg 10 Years Old has been officially proclaimed World Whisky of the Year in Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2008.

We suspect this will come as no surprise to many of you. After all, Ardbeg (like the mighty Titan, Atlas) has always borne the weight of the whisky world on its big broad shoulders. Nonetheless, the author of this mighty little book does point out that Ardbeg 10 "has gone up a couple of extra gears. This is now supernova stuff."

*Mr Murray evangelises thus:*

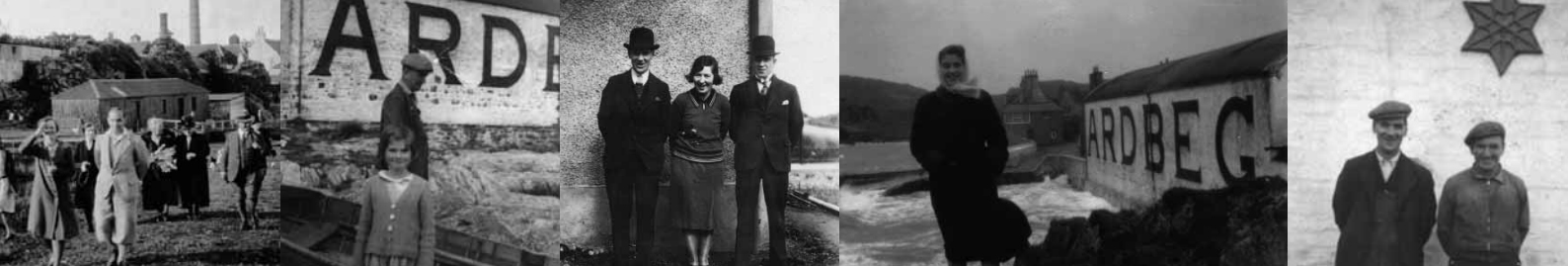
*"The peat is omnipotent, turning up in every crevice and wave... the smoke wafts around in a manner unique in the world of whisky when it comes to sheer élan and adroitness... like when you usually come across something that goes down so beautifully and with such a nimble touch and disarming allure, just close your eyes and enjoy..."*

If you can thence peel your eyes open again, the Whisky Bible makes compulsive reading for any whisky enthusiast. Copies of this indispensable guide are now being dispensed from [www.ardbeg.com](http://www.ardbeg.com) at a price of £9.99 excluding postage and packaging.



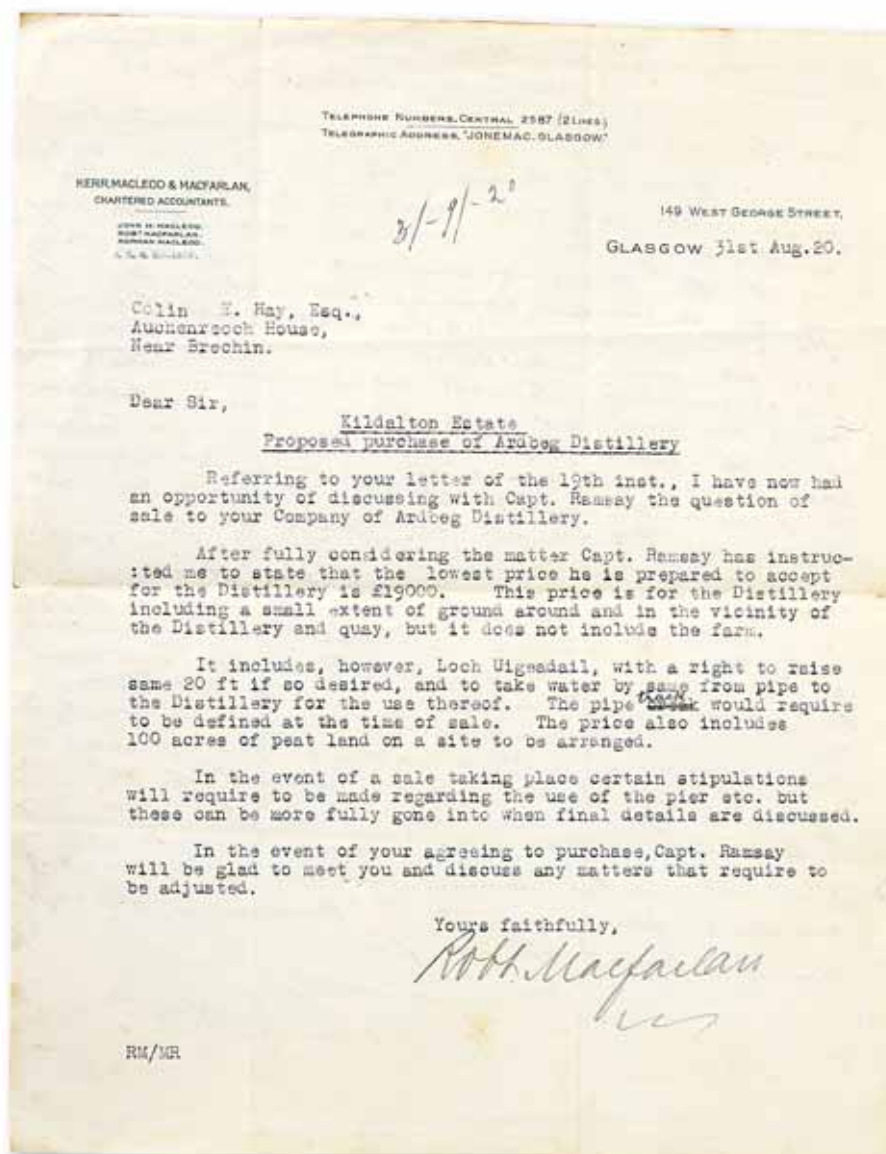
What silly antics will we weather at this year's festival?

**ARDBEG DAY:  
31 MAY 2008**



## SOLD: LOCH, STOCK AND BARREL!

*While digging around in our archives of late, we unearthed this little treasure: a letter referring to the 1922 sale of Ardbeg Distillery for a mere £19,000, including the loch with stock and a few barrels thrown in for good measure.*



## A FLYING VISIT

In order to raise money for the RNLI, several magnificent men from the Ballymoney Model Flying Club recently flew their flying machine to Islay from Northern Ireland. But this was no routine flight. Its outbound cargo consisted of a bottle of Bushmills, while the return leg saw a bottle of Ardbeg – later to be raffled – touch down on the Emerald Isle. The plane was controlled from a fast boat below while another boat raced ahead to allow another club member to take control of the landing at Port Ellen. We are pleased to report that both passengers and crew had an extremely bon voyage!



## A STREET CAR NAMED ARDBEG

A very desirable registration indeed. A.R.D.B.E.G. If it's not bicycles, houses or babies being christened Ardbeg, it's cars. This 1962 Chrysler New Yorker from New England is cherished by its owner: "Like Ardbeg, this car is huge, elegant, complex and a head turner," he



says. The emergency kit in the trunk consists of an unopened bottle of Ardbeg 10 Years Old, four dram glasses and a flashlight.

More power to your elbow



## A BIG PLUG FOR **ardbeg.com**

We trust that every Committee Member has [www.ardbeg.com](http://www.ardbeg.com) bookmarked in their 'favourites', but may we exhort any who have not logged on in recent months to visit the online shop where they can delight in browsing the virtual shelves with a view to purchasing the latest Ardbeg expressions and appurtenances by electronic means.

Following a recent glitch in technology, when one individual very nearly succeeded

in purchasing a bottle of 1965 for £0.00, we are pleased to report that all chinks in the metaphorical armour have now been repaired. This will ensure that items can only be sold at the price advertised, and come as a great comfort to those with limited technological aptitude, against whom this loophole would undoubtedly have discriminated (i.e. you can try, but you won't get away with it).





Don't stamp  
your feet.  
Port Ellen  
sub-post office  
is dispatching  
bottles of  
Ardbeg as fast  
as it can!



## THE ANSWERS HAVE BEEN FLOODING IN

(You obviously Noah thing  
or two about Ardbeg)

The deluge of responses to our Quiz of the Decade revealed remarkable though not unpredicted knowledge, loyalty and enthusiasm for Ardbeg. Also noted was a striking prevalence of postcards featuring various birds and beasts, although we have been unable to draw any significant conclusions from the observation thus far.

We are delighted to award the prize, which is the priceless gratification of having one's name published in Momentous Minutes, to Simon Mitchell of Sheffield (Committee Number 7266). As well as answering the quiz questions with supreme accuracy, Simon provided a lengthy discourse on the subject of being Ardbeg's biggest fan, from which we quote:

*"I took my Committee duties seriously and became an Ambassador for Ardbeg... Of course, I couldn't have carried out such an important job without the support of my family. My children... were Very Young when we first visited, and are Still Young now. We were lucky, or was it Serendipity, that they fell in love with Islay's beaches. My wife has become like (I'm told) the 1965 – no signs of ageing but very expensive. Me? I'd like to think that in the last Ten Years I've matured stylishly, like a Lord of the Isles, but I guess to my children, I'm just Very Old. It's been great fun."*

Dog-matic: some  
fans take their  
Committee duties  
extremely seriously



## CORRYVRECKAN HAVE YOU MISSED THE BOAT?



Glug...blup...glug...

Our latest Committee bottling is named after the fierce whirlpool to the north of Islay, and the Viking prince who braved the perilous tumult for the love of an Islay princess. A heady and intense dram, Corryvreckan is bottled at a powerful 57.1% ABV.

This limited edition of 5,000 bottles, released to the Committee 'for discussion', is selling out fast. We are busy shipping bottles out as we speak, so get your order in quick if you want to get your hands on what is rightfully yours.

Visit [www.ardbeg.com/chapter1](http://www.ardbeg.com/chapter1) to see what you could be missing.

## EXPRESSIONS OF DELIGHT...

*In this issue of Momentous Minutes, we salute our Swedish fans whose delight in Ardbeg is always unstinting, never understated and not always expressed in words...*



Rickard Falk,  
Sweden

*"An Ardbeg moment marks the day, when every challenge melts away. The golden warmth and a welcome place, an amber beacon in a crystal embrace. Elevating spirits with honeyed voice, indecision falters and all can rejoice."*

LABUFFA,  
Sweden

*"Every time I buy a new bottle of this heavenly tasting whisky, I float up on a higher cloud. I have now visited six different clouds. And I like being in heaven. The latest cloud was the Airigh Nam Beist. What a trip. Thank U."*

H Trobbe, Trelleborg,  
Sweden

*"At a tasting session in the south of Sweden and a dram of Still Young. I felt love – Holy Smoke!"*

Jimmy, Engelholm,  
Sweden



*And they're off!  
Some of the  
sights you may  
encounter along  
the way...*



*You'll be feeling wrecked by the time you get here, but pedal on...*

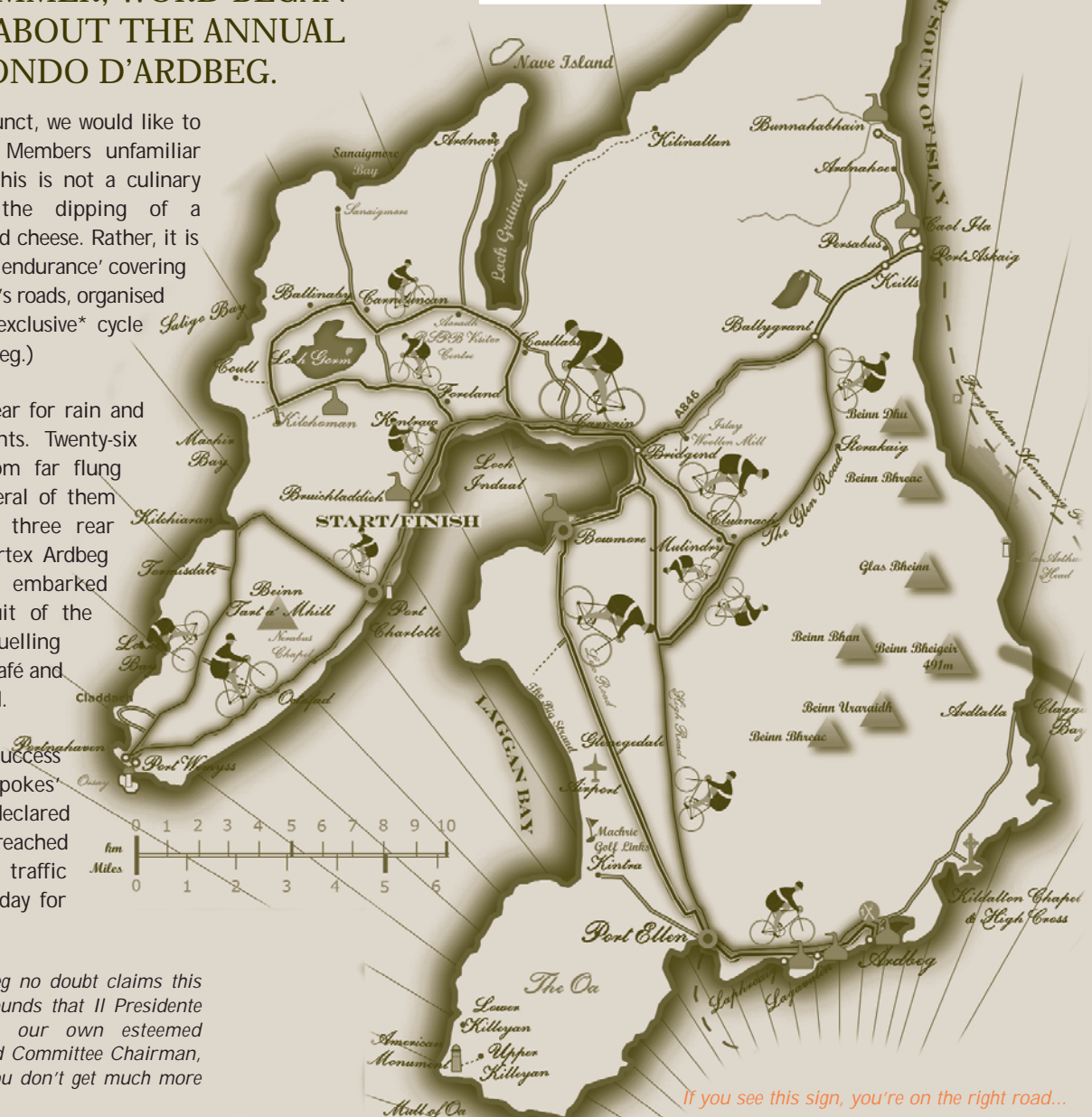
IN EARLY SUMMER, WORD BEGAN  
TO SPREAD ABOUT THE ANNUAL  
GRAN FONDO D'ARDBEG.

(As a preliminary adjunct, we would like to reassure Committee Members unfamiliar with the lingo that this is not a culinary exercise involving the dipping of a grandmother in melted cheese. Rather, it is a bicycle ride of 'great endurance' covering over 100 miles of Islay's roads, organised by the world's most exclusive\* cycle club, Velo Club d'Ardbeg.)

2007 was a record year for rain and number of participants. Twenty-six riders turned up from far flung parts of the UK, several of them sporting the classic three rear pocket breathable aertex Ardbeg cycling jersey. They embarked on an arduous circuit of the island, enjoyed a refuelling stop at the Old Kiln Café and got thoroughly soaked.

Commenting on the success of the event, a 'spokes' person for the club declared proudly: "We finally reached the magical mobile traffic jam." A momentous day for Islay indeed.

*\*The Velo Club d'Ardbeg no doubt claims this superlative on the grounds that Il Presidente is none other than our own esteemed Distillery Manager and Committee Chairman, Michael Heads (i.e. you don't get much more exclusive than that).*



*If you see this sign, you're on the right road...*

*A couple of wheels from a bone-shaker of yesteryear perhaps?*



*Ewe have to be on your toes to get around the woollies that tend to flock to events like this...*







# Beastie still at large!

## A MONSTROUSLY DIFFICULT TASK

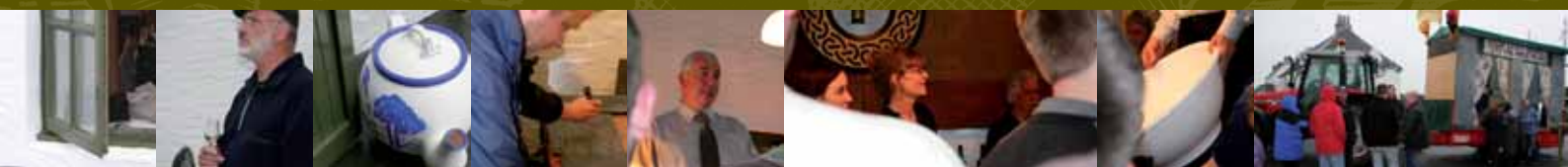
Tell folk you've spotted a giant beastie lurking in your undergrowth and it's likely you'll be accused of partaking of one dram too many. Unless you're on Islay of course. Because as every islander knows, Islay has always been a magnet for the weird and wonderful. Indeed, one has only to witness the crowds that flock to the annual Islay Festival of Malt and Music...

Such sightings of Islay's very own Beastie are rare but not unknown. And here Members are invited to summon close attention and study this image in the exciting pursuit of winning that traditionally reliable antidote to sheer terror – the stiff drink – namely, a bottle of beautiful Airigh Nam Beist.

If you can keep your nerve long enough, have a look at the image above. If you can spot the Beastie, send your answer on a postcard indicating the grid reference for your chance to win a bottle of our stiff drink! Please include your postal address, email address and phone number so we can contact you. Good luck and be careful out there!

### *Competition Rules and Regulations*

- a) Open to all Committee Members over the legal drinking age in their country of residence. Each member will get one stab at spotting the Beastie.
- b) Entries should arrive at the Distillery no later than Friday 13 June 2008. No responsibility will be accepted for entries damaged, destroyed, devoured or otherwise delayed in reaching us.
- c) The winner will be notified by 1 July 2008 and a bottle of Beastie duly shipped. As usual, Jackie's decision is final and (unusually for us), details will not be released 'for discussion'.







# Working here can be a comic affair



## GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR:

## ARE YOU A BIT OF AN ARTIST?

We've had a few comic strips here at the distillery before. Remember Patrick Brossard's appearance in the still room in the altogether one morning? (c.f. Issue 7.) However, a less obvious comic strip has eluded visitors passing through the old Mash Room for decades. For on the wall hang two strips, each depicting legendary Scottish cartoon family 'The Broons' (Browns), who featured in the Sunday Post newspaper every week from 1936 onwards. Even back then, the artist Ken H. Harrison obviously had a preference for Ardbeg, as he illustrates (literally) in his comic tales of this rarest of whiskies. As for feuding over Ardbeg, we draw the line at that.

**EEJIT:** Noun, meaning not the full shilling ('not the full shilling' meaning a bit of an eejit)  
**HAMMER-HEID:** Head shaped like a hammer  
**TUSSLIN':** In physical dispute  
**TUMSHIE:** A turnip  
**WINDBAG:** A person full of hot air  
**PAIR O' BAIRNS:** Two children  
**HELP ME BOABI:** Goodness gracious  
**AULDER THAN ME!** Very old  
**YEH KEN?:** Do you comprehend? (Rhetorical)  
**RARE:** In Scots, great or uncommon. In Scotch, a rare treat  
**A BOAB OR TWA:** A shilling or two  
**CAULD:** Cold  
**MUTTERIN' ABOOT:** Talking to oneself  
**DINNAE DAE THAT:** Please don't

As you know, creating Ardbeg is something of an art form in itself, but while pouring your next dram why not consider mixing it with a little of your own creative juices? The Committee regularly proves to be a comical bunch, and we wondered if any among you have a penchant for painting? With a little imagination perhaps you could do a comic strip and we'll show off your doodles in the next issue of Momentous Minutes. Send your artwork to us at the usual address below.

**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.

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