

Momentous Minutes

Issue 10 (coincidentally)

September 2009



A Perfect Ten

Ardbeg is in a celebratory mood once again. Not only is this our 10th edition of Momentous Minutes, but we're also paving the way to 2010, which will mark the 10th anniversary of the Ardbeg Committee. We'll drink a dram of Ten Years Old to that!

We all know Committees are ten a penny on Islay, but are any of them as tenacious as Ardbeg's merry band of followers? When we formed the Committee on the first day of the first month of the year 2000, we tentatively asked fans of Ardbeg to help make sure the doors of this precious Distillery never close again. A decade later, we have the weight of a 50,000-fan doorstop wedging them firmly open.

This is not to suggest that the work of the Committee is done, for apparently there are some people who are yet to be smitten by the ultimate Islay malt. It is therefore our intention to issue members with a splendid new mission next year. Until then, you must all remain on tenterhooks...



Ardbeg
COMMITTEE





It was all fun and island games at this year's festival day...

The exciseman was a Bastard

This was no illegitimate claim for the distillers of Ardbeg in 1871. Indeed, they had to contend with a whole house full of Bastards residing near the Distillery, for this is where Her Majesty's Excise Officer, William Bastard, lived with his wife Patience, daughter Annie and son Thomas; all Bastards, and in all likelihood very amiable neighbours!

Mary Reid	Head	36	2nd
Alister Do.	Head	37	2nd
William Bastard	Head	36	2nd
Patience Do.	Head	36	2nd
Annie Do.	Head	36	2nd
Thomas Bastard Do.	Head	36	2nd
William Bastard	Head	36	2nd

Heated debate

Many a Committee Member must have mulled over the question of whether it is possible to make an Ardbeg hot toddy without contravening the spirit of the Committee, as stipulated in the [Rules and Regulations Section 5, Paragraph 17](#). For can a toddy be made without diluting the dram with any substance other than water?

In arguing that it can indeed be done, the Distillery Manager defers to the authority of his predecessor Colin Hay, who in 1911 wrote to a Mr William Harley Hind on this very hot topic:

"I should say the whisky and sugar should be put in first, and pour boiling or nearly boiling water over it. A sherry glass of whisky should give a good strength."

This is not deemed to be in breach of the rules, since the solvent is water and the sugar merely a supplement.

As a post script, it might be noted that hot toddies were originally concocted to make the taste of Scotch more palatable to female drinkers, but since Ardbeg's perfect balance is enjoyed by men and women the world over without the need for sweeteners, there is perhaps not much call for such a recipe these days.



Count to ten (or more)

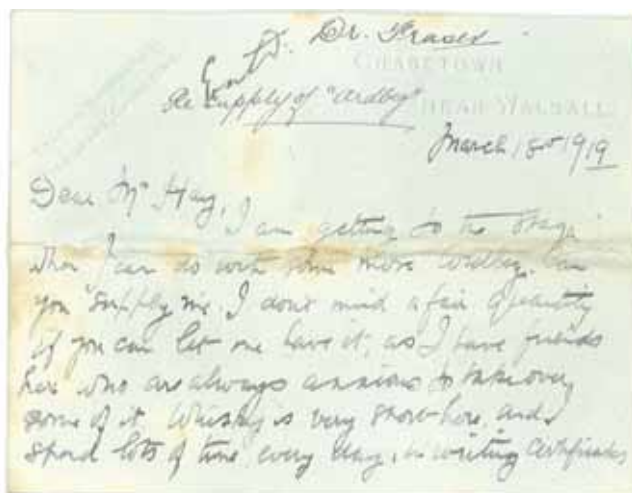
Are you paying attention? We've hidden a number of 'ten's in this edition of Momentous Minutes. When you think you've spotted them all (both alphabetic and numeric), email your answer to distillery@ardbeg.com and if yours is one of the first ten names pulled out of our hat, we'll send you a bottle of something suitably potent.*



I Spy Ardbeg

We always like to keep a little eye open for Ardbeg on the big or small screen. The latest cameo appearance for the iconic Ardbeg Ten Years Old was in an episode of 'Spooks', a British drama series about Security Intelligence Agency MI5. At the end of a long day, Ardbeg was the dram of choice for the Head of Counter Terrorism as he celebrated "saving the free world". As toasts go, they don't get much bigger than that, and it's certainly no secret that whisky doesn't get much bigger than Ardbeg.

Don't forget to inform us if you see Ardbeg stealing any more scenes on your screens...



It seems that doctors' handwriting was no better in 1919 than it is today, so we have transcribed it for you here.

Doctor's Orders

While the world is gripped by the spread of swine flu, here on Islay we are reminded of the Spanish flu of 1918-1919. Ninety years ago, before the arrival of tamiflu and NHS hotlines, how did the medical profession cope with the queues of influenza patients clamouring for a cure? According to this correspondence, at least one doctor was prescribing Ardbeg, and in such a quantity that by March 1919 he was forced to write to the Distillery to request further supplies. While we could not possibly promote the use of Ardbeg for medicinal purposes, we feel sure that a dose of the ultimate Islay malt would have lifted the spirits of this fraught physician. And in the midst of a flu pandemic, that's not to be sneezed at.

Re: Supply of 'Ardbeg'

Dr William Fraser,
Chalstown near Walsall,
18 March 1919

Dear Mr Hay,
I am getting to the stage when I can do with more Ardbeg. Can you supply me? I don't mind a fair quantity if you can let me have it, as I have friends here who are always anxious to take some of it. Whisky is very short here and I spend lots of time every day in writing certificates to show that various influenza patients require it. I wish the Government would begin to loose some more of it. We have had an awful winter. I hope we shall never have such another. I hope that we have passed the summit of this last wave but there is still a fearful amount of work about. It has really been most depressing and has wiped out a lot of decent people. I hope Islay has escaped the ravages. Perhaps you will be good enough to let me know what you can do for me.

*All entries will be carefully examined by the Sub-Committee for Distillery Quizzes and Competitions, which reserves the right to withhold answers, prizes and reasonable explanations for its decisions as and when it pleases. Unfortunately we cannot dispatch Ardbeg to North America.



Corryvreckan... Meet the person who dived and survived

Where we left aft...

We have news to warm the cockles of those who thought the first release of Corryvreckan was a drop in the ocean. Its singular popularity means we are launching the second wave of this wonderfully wild dram worldwide, with

its briny character of crispy seaweed, sweet vanilla and rich, dark melted fruits. Corryvreckan will be available at ardbeg.com and in outlets worldwide from 21st September 2009.

Meanwhile, rumours have reached us of a modern legend; someone who took on the might of Corryvreckan, dived and

survived. Can you identify who it was? To see a sea-quel with a twist, visit ardbeg.com/twist and help spread the word of Corryvreckan even further beyond these shores.

ardbeg.com/twist



Corryvreckan, in a league of its own

Dress to spill: wet T-shirt competition

For the perfect Ardbeg fan, just add water. Send us a picture of yourself getting soaked and you could win one of these limited edition Corryvreckan t-shirts. Email your photos to distillery@ardbeg.com or post them to:*

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





Get your rope, you've pulled: victory for the home team

Follow your nose...

...along the most famous pages on the information superhighway and in time you'll arrive at...

www.twitter.com/ardbeg_com

Until a few months ago, Ardbeg thought a 'tweet' was the sound issuing from the beak of a local willow warbler. But that was before we joined the ranks of tweeters, twitterers or twits (we are still learning the terminology) in order that our friends can tune in to the Distillery's lesser-spotted goings on from wherever they are in the world...

One too many

The Committee is more than aware that we at the Distillery are partial to a bit of experimentation, and 9 times out of ten we pull it off. But you can't get it right all of the time and our latest wheeze – AKA giving members the right to buy two Committee bottles of supersonic Supernova instead of limiting it to the usual one – was a bit of a damp squib for those who missed out altogether. Thus we acquiesce. Future Committee bottlings will revert back to the previous dictate of one member, one bottle. But you know what that means: you'll need to be quick off the mark to get one (that's just one, mind).

A story full of spin

Those who braved the welly-sucking, 2 hour muddy climb up to Loch Uigeadail during the 2003 whisky festival will tell you that getting there is no walk in the park. But they'll also declare that it was well worth it, as this beautiful spot on Islay supplies the soft, pure water that tumbles 800 feet down the hill to Ardbeg, where it is transformed into lovely, peaty whisky.

So when it was discovered that the crumbling reservoir wall needed a bit of care and attention, you might have supposed that there would be strapping volunteers a-plenty, ready to lug 40 tonnes of sand, stone and cement up the hill. But not so! Repairs are thankfully completed, in spite of the fact that the island men were happy to leave all the hard graft to a bird from Inverness – namely an AS350B2 Squirrel helicopter which managed to airlift all the heavy materials in 5 hours over 42 round trips. Go girl!

ardbeg_com Shortie has been in the car park for the last 30 minutes greeting visitors as they arrive – he's barking mad!



ardbeg_com Just found out Ardbeg Uigeadail won a Best In Class award at New York Spirits Awards. Big A in the Big Apple!



ardbeg_com The warehouse boys have filled 73 casks with new make spirit at 63.7%. Casks a mixture of 1st fill bourbon and a few sherry butts.



ardbeg_com Third day of Festival – Jackie at the till all day as Ardbeggians collect their Festival Bottles.

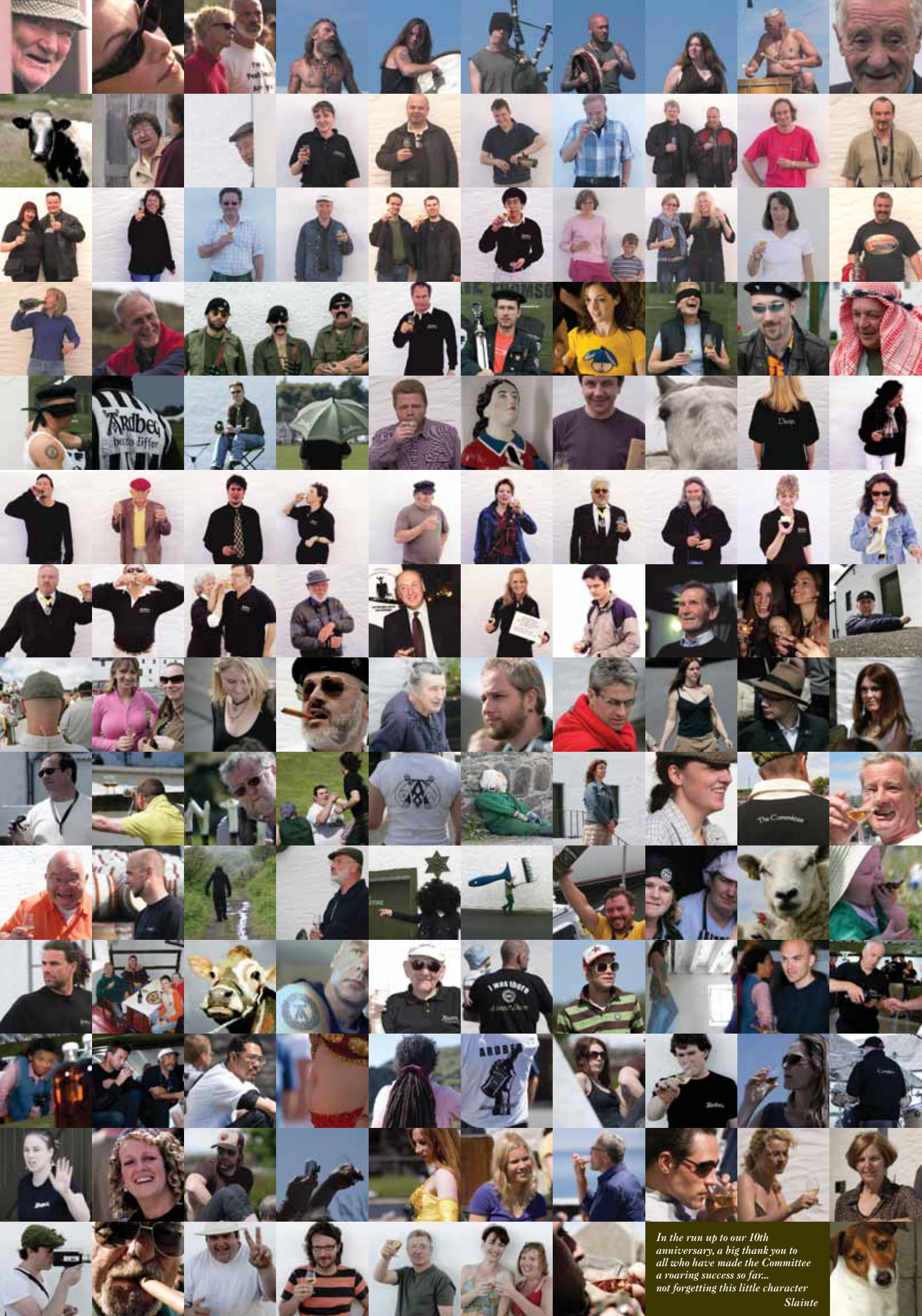


ardbeg_com Tonight Mackie and Dugga will be heading out to lay their creels and see if they can catch a lobster or two. That'll be dinner sorted!



ardbeg_com Mickey found a Message in A Bottle. The sender lives in Newfoundland and released his bottle into the Atlantic. Email is quicker...





In the run up to our 10th anniversary, a big thank you to all who have made the Committee a roaring success so far... not forgetting this little character
Slainte

Oh my Lord! It's gone.

All good things must come to an end. But does it have to be Ardbeg Lord of the Isles? Sadly it must, and we're pained to report that that is it. It's all gone. Although, we are careful to never say never at Ardbeg as we've been witness to at least one miraculous renaissance before now.

Meanwhile, the good news is that Ardbeg Ten Years Old continues to increase in popularity around the world, thanks to the tireless efforts of you, the Committee. So when you raise a glass of Ten Years Old and bid adieu (or should that be au revoir?) to Lord of the Isles, comfort yourself with the knowledge that you are helping the Distillery to not just survive, but thrive..

An historic event

With The Lord of the Isles seemingly consigned to the history books, we are happy to recommend the only publication worth reading on the subject: David Caldwell's excellent *Islay: The Land of the Lordship*, which traces life on the island from the first residents to the present day. Unlike the whisky, this fascinating chronicle is available from our online shop.



The author reigns supreme at a book signing in November

New Chief Article has whisky on TAP

We've always had a penchant for lists. Shopping lists. To-do lists (memo: must build Committee Room). Cyclists. But now we think we may have found a list that tops them all, in the form of The Ardbeg Project (TAP).

This exemplary online catalogue (www.ardbegproject.com) exists for the sole purpose of recording all the Single Malt Whisky ever produced and bottled by the Ardbeg Distillery, which is then shared with other Ardbeg aficionados and initiates.

As compiler-in-chief of this extensive inventory, Tim Puett of San Jose, California (Committee Member 39321), manages to both indulge his passion for Ardbeg and also excel in the pursuance of his messianic duties, for which we have resolved to confer on him the title of Chief Article.

While such individual dedication is undoubtedly deserving of the Ardbeg anorak, Tim modestly acknowledges the help of many other Ardbegophiles and 'Ardnuts' that have come to know Ardbeg as "not only the greatest Islay whisky, but more importantly the greatest whisky in the world." Fine words from our arch-evangelist.

You can read more about the new Chief Article in the Committee Room at ardbeg.com.

Uigeadail uncorked

When Ardbeg Ten Years Old was named World Whisky of the Year in 2008, courtesy of Jim Murray's Whisky Bible, we didn't imagine that the accolade could be surpassed. How wrong we were! 2009 saw our beloved Uigeadail collect the coveted title and Ardbeg had the unprecedented double, to the delight of Ardbeg lovers everywhere.

You can watch Jim Murray talking to Rachel Barrie (Ardbeg Whisky Creator and Master Blender) as she lifts the lid on what makes Uigeadail the Best Whisky in the World. Click the YouTube link on our homepage.

RIP

We are sad to report that on 28th April this year, Joe Kilna MacKenzie died peacefully after a long illness. Many Committee Members will remember Joe, an unforgettable character and co-founder of tribal band 'Clann an Drumma', whose energetic drumming and piping captivated crowds wherever they travelled, and never more so than on the old pier at Ardbeg. He will be sorely missed by friends the world over.



Expressions of Delight...

It's like I bit into a piece of Islay's soil and sucked out the juice.

*Shahrukh Dandwala,
Calcutta, India*

*(of Supernova)
I think all the Peatheads around the globe (not to mention in space) will love it. In short, Scarlett Johansson with boxing gloves, ready to hit you!*

*Mikael Porseback,
Committee number 1457*

Where did that treacle and liquorice come from, did I also taste a trace of an electrical fault, burning bakelite? I need more.

*Mounthooly (AKA Alan)
on twitter*

I'm a founder member of The Arran Distillery. How I wish I was also an Ardbeg founder member, having only today tasted my first sip of the 10 year old. Heaven!

*Glyn Williams,
Parclyn*

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.