



# SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW

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## PEAT BEFORE THE BEAK\*

Our delight in the news of Glenmorangie acquiring Ardbeg will be evident elsewhere in this edition. We firmly believe that, of the many bidders, the (16?) Men of the East are the best for the job. We would also express our thanks to Allied Distillers for making Ardbeg available to a competent competitor, a bold decision but there is plenty of room for expansion in the peaty whisky sector and the big push will be easier with Glenmorangie's help.

Ardbeg is something of a matter of pride in Argyll—the bottle sports a stark but effective label with a subtle but distinctive type-face reflecting the Celtic heritage of the county and islands. The malt inside is the most extreme whisky produced anywhere in the world. Historically the level of peating has been erratic (owing to an absence of fans in the drying kilns) giving rise to a variable quality product but when it is good, Ardbeg is the best.

For the last period of production, that between 1989 and 1996, Ardbeg's malt has been prepared at Port Ellen maltings with a peating specification some 25% greater than that of neighbours Laphroaig or Lagavulin, this means very heavy and consistently peated spirit thus overcoming Ardbeg's quality variance.

So why the lesson in elementary malting? These days, such a significant number of our customers are bemoaning the reduction in 'character' in all three heavily peated Islay whiskies that there must be some truth in the matter. Just recently Lagavulin has joined Laphroaig and Bowmore in the dock—accused of being 'toned down'. This may not be a matter of peating alone, maturation conditions or cask recipe will have an influence, but if true there will be good commercial reasons for this.

Our plea is simple:

Please, please, Glenmorangie, never tone Ardbeg down.

\*Note for our overseas readers; a 'beak' is slang for a judge or magistrate.



## ARDBEG SAFE!

Good news! At the end of February it was announced that Glenmorangie plc, owners of the Glenmorangie and Glen Moray distilleries had acquired Ardbeg distillery and stock from Allied Distillers, owners of neighbouring Laphroaig Distillery.

Edinburgh based Glenmorangie is to pay a purchase price of £7 million which breaks down as £5m for maturing and vatted stock and empty casks, £0.3m for the Ardbeg brand, and the balance for the distillery assets and surrounding land. Glenmorangie has also negotiated a three year payment schedule for the value of the stock.

Peter Darbyshire, Managing Director of Glenmorangie, has told Loch Fyne Whiskies that it is hoped that production will restart in August after some £500,000 has been spent on repairs.

A mainstream bottling of Ardbeg will be available early next year as will several "wonderful old Ardbegs, superb vintages" taken from the extensive inventory of 17 years and older stock.

More on page 5.

## DISTILLER'S BEEF

Watch your butcher's slab. If the marketing boys are awake we may be seeing *Scotch Whisky beef* soon.

Research shows that animal feeds arising from the making of malt whisky appear to be "spectacularly efficient" in the production of prime beef cattle.

A herd of cattle on the Wester Elchies Farm at Aberlour is being finished entirely on a diet based upon distillers feeds, home-grown barley, grass and hay. Distillers feeds are a combination of barley dark grains—the protein and energy-rich pellets made from draff and pot ale syrup; and malt residual pellets—the nutritious dried rootlets remaining at the end of the malting process.

The value of such feeds has been known to farmers for hundreds of years. The difference in this case is that distillers feeds are the main part of the diet. Farmer Eddie Aldridge says that the animals are gaining weight much more quickly and that some of them could be ready much earlier than expected.

The final test will be soon when the quality of the beef on the plate is known.

## THE ALL-ROUNDER



**John Grant is the head J & G Grant, one of very few remaining family run whisky companies.**

### **LFW: What's your job?**

I've never had to write a job description but the title on my business card is Managing Director which is pretty accurate. It's only when you start travelling and meeting people that you need a description, not for the people here. Thankfully we're still of a size where everybody knows everybody.

### **LFW: You're a direct descendant of the founder?**

Yes. We bought the farm of Rechlerich in 1865. The family had been farming in Blairfindy behind Glenlivet since the 1600's and this was bought as a place to rest stock and fatten them before going onto market. Rechlerich had a distillery in the corner of a field and for five years the founder of Glenfarclas put his son here to farm. The distillery was a sideline and subcontracted to John Smith who in 1870 went onto build Cragganmore.

There was a fairly nomadic population from the factories of the industrial revolution, who came to work on the land from sowing time to harvest and then return south. After the harvest, if you had a wee distillery in the corner of a field, which is what this was, you could keep one or two good people on full time. It was a hobby until 1896 when the whole place was rebuilt. After that we were more interested in distilling than farming.

Even now there's no great spread of relatives involved in the company. In the old days of death duties and inheritance tax it was better to be more devolved but now there is only a handful, my two sisters, two cousins and my son who is 20 years old. That's it. There are only three Directors, myself, Father who is Chairman and an accountant friend in Glasgow, so board meetings are less formal. I have been accused of running a dictatorship, up to a point true, but it means we can be flexible with instant decisions!

I started here before I left school; I spent the summertime taking people round or painting or whatever. After school I spent three years with the Bank of Scotland and three with Wm. Teacher & Sons, who were a family business in those days. I came back here in 1974 and shortly after Father went onto a three-day week!

I spent the first eight months just looking at what we did. I thought there's no point in upsetting the Distillery Manager as he was doing a good job doubling the capacity of the distillery without losing a day's production. I suggested to father that I should travel around the world for three months and meet all these people that were selling Glenfarclas for us. I couldn't find any records of the last visits and was informed that usually they came to us! During my travels everyone was amazed that someone had come out to see them! We took the decision that our future lay in bottled sales, particularly with the excess capacity we'd just built in.

Until the early 1970s, the distillery ran flat out producing 'fillings' for blenders to mature. In those days we didn't have all this haggling over pennies—the price was set after the 'pot still meeting'—all the maltsters would turn up and prices were agreed so you had a price list for the following season. You then had this wonderful job of allocating production instead of having to go out and sell it.

### **LFW: Does a reduced number of whisky companies mean a reduced demand for your fillings?**

Fewer customers—bigger orders! I think not being part of a big group is an advantage; we're not directly competing with our customers. Agreed we sell a few bottles of malt but that's not upsetting them—it's a niche market. Luckily what we make is the best and the blenders like to have it in their blend and long may it continue.

We've bottled Glenfarclas since the 1870s but then only as a hobby, most important was producing fillings.

Now bottle sales are very significant to us and the percentage that we keep for ourselves has increased but the day we keep all of our production for ourselves won't happen in my lifetime.

### **LFW: How often do you get your overalls on?**

I used to pride myself that I could do every job here, but with new technology taking over I couldn't do a shift in the mash or still house. I know what has to be done but not how, which buttons to push, valves to open. That annoys me but at the end of the day you can't do everything. Now I'm spending a lot of time away from home, I'm the last to get a call out when something goes wrong; although we do live on site.

### **LFW: How much time is spent travelling overseas?**

Too much. For me that was more than

six months last year as we are now trading in over 30 countries. We have a sales and marketing manager, but there are certain markets where I have to go, I've got into a rut. I love it but I hate the travelling and loathe aeroplanes. The world is far too small, too convenient. I'd like to turn the clock back 50 years and go by rail and boat—it would be wonderful!

We try to get to see all our importers/distributors at least once a year. We produce the product and marketing backup. We call on them to discuss things and give them suggestions, ways of selling Glenfarclas. It's a two way thing.

### **LFW: How's Biz?**

I'm not complaining, 1996 was all right. If it rains or snows production will be satisfactory. It's been a very dry winter and we need snow to fill our springs at the top of Benrinnes or come the summer we may dry up.

As regards bottled sales, (that is Glenfarclas single malt rather than filling casks for others), I'm optimistic. Europe and Asia will be difficult because of the pound's exchange rate. The election here is causing uncertainty also.

Long term also I'm optimistic, not full of doom and gloom as I was ten years ago when distilleries were being closed. Now I think some will close and some will reopen. The news about Ardbeg is great. I'm very happy that it has gone to a safe pair of hands. It's good news for the people of Islay.

### **LFW: What do you think makes Glenfarclas different?**

We use the same malted barley as others, I do not agree that the malt affects the quality of the spirit. If it is properly peated and I can't tell the difference when I nose the spirit I'm happy. That and the yield, 420 litres per tonne or 380—that's the difference between good and bad malt. Unlike our friends on the other side of the river, we don't specify a particular strain. With the variety of woods we're going to change it over the next twelve years maturation anyway.

We do have a different water source so there will be differing trace elements which may have some influence. All distilleries are using similar yeast and so it is safe to say that the wash being produced by each distillery is pretty much the same. It is what you do after that that matters. We have very big stills with a boiling pot—the bulge at the bottom of the neck—which I believe is a great quality control aspect and we are still direct fired. That makes a huge difference, I don't know why but you do get different flavours.

We once put steam coils in a still and ran it for a week. One week, that was enough. The fuel saving was great, but we found that we took the body and guts out and it just wasn't Glenfarclas.

You can fingerprint a malt whisky with a gas chromatograph and by compari-

son you can tell which distillery it comes from. We sent samples away and they came back suggesting that it was similar to that of another Speyside distillery! We were not flattered at all!

This was during the 1970s when we had to investigate fuel efficiency because of rocketing oil prices. The theory was good; reduce fuel by 40% by using the heat from the wash still to drive the spirit still, but as nobody was going to buy it we took the steam out and went back to direct firing with real flames.

There are other distilleries which have adopted internal heating. It's more efficient but I think it gives a more bland spirit—you lose a lot of the character; that's what happened here anyway.

The still house is a pendulum; every time you swing to quality you have to sacrifice quantity, and vice versa. Half the fun of this industry is that everybody has different ideas and parameters and thankfully we all produce different spirits. Life would be awfully boring if we all made the same thing. Then it would come down to that terrible four letter word—cost.

**LFW: How relevant is still size to the product?**

If you compare us with Macallan who produce a similar quality product, we have great big stills and they very small. Our raw spirit has a more distinctive and sweeter nose than theirs.

What we should do is tanker a load of our wash across the river and vice versa and see what we would make. That would be fun! Then to take the experiment to its conclusion we should take a tanker to Islay!

**LFW: Which of your range are you happiest with?**

The 15 year old is my favourite. It's the only one we bottle at 46%. We played around with the strength and everybody preferred it. It's not a commercial strength—it should be at 40 or 43 like everything else—but we like it and it sells very well. Our 30 year old is very good value for money. We're lucky, after 30 years whisky can become too woody.

**LFW: You were the very first to produce a cask strength bottling.**

That was in 1968. We thought it would be something different for Christmas presents to bottle one cask at strength and see what reaction there would be. So we selected a sherry hoggie and bottled it, using its actual strength, 105° proof; the standard Glenfarclas was 70°. We got 27 cases out of it and I don't know how much we gave away that Christmas but by January we started getting calls asking where it could be bought. That was the birth of '105'.

We never spent anything advertising or marketing it and it was unique. I'm very proud of it.

What really put the fly in the ointment was when we went metric! Dear 105° had to go and it became 60% volume.

Sales plummeted so we decided to give it its own identity as we were up to a few thousand cases, so we registered the brand name Glenfarclas '105'.

I see a blender has brought out a 105 blend for the duty free market but it is 105° American proof which is 52.5% vol. That's annoying, imitation is a form of flattery, but if you're putting out a 105, why American proof? We've never used the American system in this country. It's not doing me any good either.

*We own  
Glenfarclas,  
we bottle it,  
leave it to us!*

**LFW: You object to others bottling Glenfarclas.**

Indeed, we have court actions going on. With a few exceptions these are one or two man operations cashing in for a quick buck and they can do an awful lot of harm by bottling things which are not good. For example, one company has bought a cask of Glenfarclas from a broker—firstly I'm annoyed that they've put our name on the bottle but more importantly it's the quality of what's inside that concerns me. It's from a cask that in my opinion is not good—it is a fact of life that you do get bad casks and bad whisky. We reject about a dozen or so every year that we would never use for a Glenfarclas bottling simply because the quality is not there, perhaps the wood may have been a little sour. We nose every cask before we fill them but there are some things that you can't pick up. To put this out as a single cask is beyond belief! The danger is that someone thinks, "That's Glenfarclas?—That's horrible!"

These bottlers who buy a cask and take a chance that they won't get prosecuted, ought to respect the proprietor's trade mark and the fact that they are building their brands. The concept of offering a choice of bottlings is great but they should pick the lesser known distilleries where the proprietor is not offering the product in bottle.

If the bottler has bought a cask and it's bad, he's not going to reject it, he's got to bottle it. If nobody knows where it came from I don't get excited about it provided our name isn't on the bottle. Our terms of sale state that you cannot bottle the single malt without our permission—a condition that is not a restraint of trade but merely there to protect our trade mark.

I know of 17 different 'independent bottlers' doing this now. It's got out of hand. These people are not spending a penny

supporting these products, there is no marketing back-up.

I support wholeheartedly anybody who is promoting and selling Scotch Whisky. What I do find objectionable is that we spend a lot of time and money building the brand and ensuring the quality so that when someone buys a bottle of Glenfarclas they are entitled to expect a certain quality. As the owners of the distillery and the trade mark we are responsible for the brand—what we put in bottle has our name on it and if there is anything wrong, the buck stops right here.

I feel very strongly about this. We own Glenfarclas, we bottle it, leave it to us!

**LFW: Yet you were instrumental in helping the Scotch Malt Whisky Society get started.**

We will take a hogshead and rack it into octaves (ten gallon casks) and then sell them to people round about, bankers, farmers, policemen—people who enjoy their whisky. It's a wee bit of fun and many have always bought their octave here, cash up front, into the back of the Land Rover and off they go. They then have a party in the kitchen decanting it into old milk bottles and such, it's great fun! It's never sold on the open market but used as presents or offered as a dram, it's a talking point. I have no qualms because we've checked the quality first.

Pip Hills had never tasted anything like this and started buying octaves with his friends in Edinburgh. They then thought up the idea of the Society and I said I would supply one cask at a time for members provided that they did not state it was Glenfarclas and there was no reference to the distillery. I'd give them a cask of my choosing which I thought was a good example of what we make so if it were recognised as Glenfarclas there's no harm and I'm not going to be upset. That's why all of their bottlings are numbered only. It was a gentleman's agreement with Pip.

But now they've bought casks from brokers that we've had no control of, and they've released a list identifying which distillery the numbers are which I think is wrong. That is against the spirit of the thing; the deal was there were no names, bottles with a number or code only. The concept is excellent but let's not upset the producers.

**LFW: Your desert island dram?**

I'm biassed. I don't drink much whisky at home, I drink enough malt overseas while on my travels. I'm a wine or beer man, but I do enjoy a dram of our 15 year old and from a good old fashioned tumbler too.

If I picked another product it would be Macallan, or Longmorn. One of the nicest whiskies made in this part of the world is by our closest neighbours at Cragganmore and I like Aultmore too.

**LFW: Thank you.**



## WORDS OF WOOD

Gavin Smith

We live in times when science has eliminated so many of the mysteries of life that it is a pleasure to be able to report that the production of malt whisky continues to defy totally sober analysis. The men in white lab coats may be able to analyse and isolate most of the variables that go to make a great malt, but the cloning of distillery products to create a range of identical *McDolly* malts remains a happily remote prospect.

It is universally accepted that one of the most significant variables which shapes the ultimate whisky we drink is maturation, and in particular the type of wood in which the spirit is stored. The makers of the Glenmorangie reckon that 70% of the characteristics of whisky derive from the wood. Clearly, the cask is a great deal more than a container.

What happens during maturation is chemically very complex, but essentially the spirit draws flavour and colour from the wood of the cask, and higher alcohols are transformed into esters and other compounds with subtle aromas.

The rate at which maturation takes place varies from whisky to whisky. Generally, the more fully flavoured the whisky—say an Islay or a Speyside—the longer it takes to reach optimum maturity. Fifteen years may produce the best Islays, while a Lowland may not improve much beyond the age of eight.

The environment in which maturation occurs is significant, with a damp warehouse causing spirit to lose strength but maintain bulk, and this is generally considered better for maturation than a dry location where strength is less affected but bulk falls. The amount of bulk lost during maturation is known as the 'angels' share', and the excise authorities allow for a loss of up to 2% per year. More than that and they start looking for a secret bung hole and a long straw.

The 'breathing' of the casks—slight contraction in winter and expansion in summer—can also cause quite distinct changes to the character of the finished whisky in respect of local atmosphere. For example, whiskies matured on the Campbeltown peninsula tend to develop a salty aroma and palate.

The size and type of cask used, as well as the locality in which spirit is stored, are further variable factors in maturation. Generally, the smaller the cask the greater the loss through absorption, transfusion, exposure to heat, damp or cold, and therefore whisky matures more quickly than it would in a larger cask. In a 55 gallon *hogshead* some 60 sq. ins of wood is in contact with each gallon of whisky, while in a 110 gallon *butt* that figure falls to around 48 ins.

'Cask' is a generic term, like 'barrel', and there are a number of different sizes of cask in use in the whisky industry, of

which the *butt* and *hogshead*, or 'hoggie', are the most popular. Casks are usually known in the trade as 'wood', and oak is the optimum timber, as it is hard, yet sufficiently porous for the spirit to 'breathe' during maturation. American white oak and Spanish oak are generally considered to be the best varieties for whisky casks, as other types tend to be too porous.

As long ago as the early eighteenth century it was accepted that the use of sherry casks improved maturing whisky, and ex-sherry wood became a staple of the Scotch industry. One advantage of using former sherry casks is that their initial contents removes a considerable amount of tannin from the wood, leading to a smoother whisky flavour.



Today the only malt to be matured exclusively in former sherry casks is Macallan, which uses those formerly filled with oloroso. This specification of sherry type is important, for there is a very discernible difference in character between two samples of the same whisky which have been matured in, for example, ex-fino and ex-amontillado casks. Sherry casks tend to be ideal for robust Speyside whiskies such as Macallan and Singleton, but they are not suitable for all malts. That most characterful of whiskies, Laphroaig, is only matured in former Bourbon casks as sherry is considered inappropriate to its finished flavour. Several members of the panel taking part in a tasting session for *Decanter* magazine in 1993 expressed concern at what they considered the over-sherrying of a number of malts, feeling that the sherry was smothering other valuable characteristics.

American oak produces a lighter-coloured and less sweet spirit.

The best selling Glenmorangie single malt is matured in American oak, ex-Bourbon casks, and more specifically ex-Bourbon casks made from oak which originates in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. Ex-Bourbon casks have been regarded favourably by the whisky industry because of their availability as well as their suitability. Until recently, Bourbon and rye whiskeys had, by law, to be matured in charred oak casks which could not be re-used, so there was a plentiful supply for the Scotch whisky industry to acquire.

The American oak used by Glenmorangie preserves the inherent delicacy of the whisky, but Glenmorangie has been at the forefront of recent experiments with different woods, and is

now promoting a range of whiskies which have spent the first twelve years of their lives in American oak before being transferred to former port *pipes*, sherry *butts* and Madeira *drums* for a final period of maturation. The result is whiskies of increased complexity, which certainly merit tasting.

The practice of transferring whisky between casks during maturation is known as 'finishing' or 'double-wooding', and the Speyside distillery Balvenie also produces a whisky which has been sherry-finished. The Balvenie Double Wood spends twelve years in 'first-fill' and 'second-fill' Bourbon casks before being transferred to sweet oloroso casks for a further six to twelve months. Not surprisingly, the colour of the finished whisky is notably more amber than the standard spirit, matured exclusively in American oak, and has a rich body and a long finish. It has been suggested that it borders on the liqueur.

A 'first-fill' cask is new to whisky, while a 'second-fill' cask is one which has already been used once for whisky maturation, and when being filled for a second time the distiller must take into account the type of whisky which it formerly held. Obviously, a first filling of an Islay malt would influence the finished flavour of a delicate Lowland just as much as different types of sherry. Casks may be re-used for whisky several times, although the maturing effect of the cask diminishes with each filling. A new cask which has not previously been used or treated is known as 'plain'. Gordon & MacPhail have experimented with whiskies matured entirely in port and brandy casks, and Springbank of Campbeltown released a quantity of whisky in 1991 which had been matured in ex-rum casks. Although 'double-wooding' experiments have taken place in the trade for years, until recently the practice had never been tried on a commercial scale, but a tendency towards increasingly sophisticated consumer tastes in malts, and a gratifying level of growth in that sector of the whisky industry, has prompted the Balvenie and Glenmorangie ventures.

The process of maturation is an expensive one for the distiller, whose product frequently sits in a warehouse earning nothing for up to two decades and declining in bulk and strength along the way, so there has been considerable pressure from the men in grey suits on the men in white coats to develop a way of artificially speeding up this process. Despite their best efforts, however, the optimum method of producing a well-matured whisky remains to fill good casks with good spirit and sit back and allow the slow magic to work.

*A-Z of Whisky by Gavin Smith is published in May by NWP, price £7.99*

## ARDBEG

Claim from throughout Scotland greeted Edinburgh based Glenmorangie plc's announcement that it had bought Islay's Ardbeg. Glenmorangie is one of the strongest performing scotch whisky companies; their principal single malt brand (Glenmorangie) is the best selling malt in Scotland and second best in the UK, (Glenfiddich is number one).

Loch Fyne Whiskies spoke with Managing Director Peter Darbyshire soon after Glenmorangie announced the addition of the powerful, peaty Ardbeg to their portfolio of light, delicate Glenmorangie and midpoint Speysider, Glen Moray. "This complements our range perfectly" Darbyshire told LFW "the desirability of a good Islay malt has long been recognised by our company which has had aspirations for either Ardbeg, Laphroaig or Lagavulin. Consumers are fascinated by the taste of Islay. After a proper tutored tasting they go away raving".

Despite a ten year gap in production there are very significant stocks of older than 17 years and under seven. It is early days for any decisions regarding the final manifestation of the standard bottled malt, according to Darbyshire, "We are doing all the blending and testing to see what at what age Ardbeg is going to be at its best; obviously we haven't firmed up on that yet. There will be a mainstream Ardbeg by early next year or perhaps Christmas this year."

The company plan to repeat the *SPUR* program which investigates the effects various conditions have on the maturation of the spirit including age, warehouse location and style. This builds up a picture that allows them to predict with certainty what will happen with any spirit put in cask. For the last five years 100,000 samples of Glenmorangie have been subjected to this intricate research and the Ardbeg tests are now under way.


We asked if there were any plans to repeat the wood finishing process whereby the whisky is transferred to a variety of alternative casks (in the case of Glenmorangie: port, madeira or sherry) for a few years prior to bottling. Darbyshire said "Until we've had time to run more tests, we honestly don't know. The core of Ardbeg is authenticity. The peating will be at the traditional Ardbeg levels, but not with a floor maltings because you will not get a consistent level of peat in the malt which causes variance in the quality of spirit. We will take our own Ardbeg cut peat to the maltings at Port Ellen".

Darbyshire added, "Please alert your customers that there will be some superb older vintages of Ardbeg available soon; we have enough stock to start recruiting fans now."



### LOCH FYNE WHISKIES

in association with  
The George Hotel, Inveraray  
is proud to present



## A SEASON OF CELEBRITY WHISKY TASTING EVENINGS



*Thursday 22nd May, 7pm, Price £12.00*

**JIM MCEWAN, ESQ**  
Distillery Manager, Morrison Bowmore Distillers  
*"Considering Bowmore"*

Jim takes us through the Bowmore range highlighting the changing characteristics amongst the 12, 17, 21, 25 and magnificent 30 year old!

There will be a quiz with prizes.  
Evening concludes with a light buffet.

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*Thursday 26th June, 7pm, Price £12.00*

**RICHARD PATERSON, ESQ**  
Master Blender, Whyte & Mackay  
*"Your Dram"*

Learn the history of blending Scotch Whisky while tasting some rare samples of blend and malt. Then take part in a practical session and competition to produce your own ideal blended Scotch for which the top blender will award certificates.

Evening concludes with a light buffet.

*Thursday 18th September, 7 for 7.30pm. Price £25.00*

**IAIN STOTHARD, ESQ**  
International Malt Whisky Specialist, Matthew Gloag & Son  
GOURMET EVENING  
*"Who needs wine with a meal?"*

Whisky as an accompaniment to a meal works as well as wine. Donald Clark, Proprietor of The George dusts off his apron, brandishes his steels and joins forces with Iain Stothard to demonstrate a mouth-watering combination of Scots food and Scotch whisky flavours.

Cook's recipe and suggestion pack will be available.  
Price includes four course gourmet meal and coffee.

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*Thursday 2nd October, 7pm Price £12.00*

**JOHN CAMPBELL & JOHN RUTHERFORD, ESQs**  
Brand Heritage Director & Manager, Allied Distillers  
*"The Whisky Trade - in a nosing glass"*

John Rutherford introduces the new single malts from Allied Distillers. John Campbell guides us into the creation of some of the exclusive aged Ballantine's range via a sampling of the components including the little known 'Cromarty Malt'.

Evening concludes with a light buffet.

Price includes your whisky. Value for money guaranteed. There will be offers on selected featured whiskies during the evening.  
All participants will take home a Loch Fyne Whiskies melamine malt whisky appreciation mat (value £4.90).  
Tickets from Loch Fyne Whiskies, Inveraray, Argyll, PA32 8UD. Credit Card bookings 01 499 302219  
Standing on tables & chairs prohibited. "Sporrans over 1.5kg must be muzzled in accordance with local bye-laws."

Five of the Scotch Whisky industry's great experts and raconteurs travel to Inveraray over the summer to take part in a very exciting programme of entertaining and fascinating whisky tasting sessions. We hope that many of you will be able to attend at least one.

The events are being held in The George Hotel across from our shop and proprietor 'Big D' Donald Clark is as determined as we and the celebrities are that a very enjoyable evening is on offer.

The events include one gourmet evening (£25) and three tasting evenings with light buffet (£12). There are no additional charges and during each evening there will be deals on some of the featured whiskies. You will also take home a special whisky tasting mat. All of our celebs are going to be doing something a little special—to find out more inspect our poster above with suitable magnifying equipment.

For those of you without a spare bottle base to peer through, the relevant details are:

**22nd May:** Jim McEwan, Distillery Manager, Morrison Bowmore Distillers: *'Considering Bowmore'*.

**26th June:** Richard Paterson, Master Blender, Whyte & MacKay: *'Your Dram'*.

**18th September:** Gourmet Evening Iain Stothard, International Malt Whisky Specialist, Matthew Gloag: *'Who needs wine with a meal?'*

**2nd October:** John Campbell & John Rutherford, Brand Heritage Director & Manager, Allied Distillers: *'The Whisky Trade - in a nosing glass'*.

#### Tickets

**Spaces** are limited and only available from LFW, so please book early.

**Accommodation** in Inveraray is often scarce, so it's best to arrange where to stay at the time you book. The fastest should 'phone The George *now* on 01499 302111; there are new bedrooms and they're magnificent!

Other information on where to stay can be discussed with Inveraray Tourist Information Office, tel: 01499 302063.





*“Like all the best things in life, whisky is a fairly simple business that can easily be made to sound exclusive and impressive by a judicious application of the arcane and a liberal sprinkling of jargon. Knowledge of whisky, like love, is a matter of a basic theme made more enjoyable by an infinite number of variations. The really experienced may even find themselves able to combine the two, a thing real ale enthusiasts could never do.”*

David Milstead

Bluffer's Guide to Whisky

## NEW CUSTOMER PAGE

The busy summer season in the shop is the time when Loch Fyne Whiskies welcomes new customers to our growing band of happy whisky fans. The following pages are for those who are developing an interest in the marvels of Scotch Whisky. We feature some explanation of the bottlings from our Stock List—OB, C, G&M, MM, S etc., but we'll start with by far the most often asked question:

**I can't remember the name but it came in a dumpy green bottle, can you help?**

Bunnahabhain! (Boo-na-ha-venn).

**What is whisky?**

Literally the alcohol spirit produced by distilling fermented cereals. Whisky is produced in many countries, historically those that had climates more suited to growing cereals rather than grape/wine production.

*Scotch Whisky* is the world's most popular spirit and must be (amongst other things) made and matured in an oak barrel for not less than **three years** and **in Scotland**, otherwise it cannot be called *Scotch*.

**How is whisky made?**

Easy, mix some processed grain with water, add yeast and let it ferment in the same way that beer is produced. Boil up your beer and collect the steam which will be mostly alcohol. Voilà, whisky! Throw this away as it is probably poison, your hair will fall out—and apart from that it's illegal.

*Scotch* whisky must contain barley and Malt Whisky be made exclusively from



## OFFICIAL, OWNERS OR ORIGINAL BOTTLINGS (OB)

When bottled by the owner of the distillery, we call such bottlings official, owners or original bottlings. These 'official' presentations are examples of the best in quality, packaging and design. Here is the range of ages and strengths from Glenfarclas.

water, *malted* barley and yeast only.

**What is the difference between a single malt and a double malt?**

A **single malt** is the product of one malt whisky distillery and that one distillery only. There is no such thing as a double malt unless you are with your rich father-in-law at the bar (technically—'a large one'). Single malts are enjoying considerable acclaim at the moment, they are no longer Scotland's biggest secret. Their intensity and complexity of flavours, previously a handicap to wider sales, are now being sought throughout the world.

Malt whisky is one of four types of Scotch. The most common is **blended whisky**, a mix of many different single malts and grain whiskies prepared by a blender using his sense of smell and years of experience. 92% of all bottled whisky sold is blended whisky and it is appreciated the world over for its satisfying subtlety and complexity.

**Grain** whisky is industrially produced from a variety of cereals including malted barley. The spirit is not fully distilled—a degree of impurity is required

to add character. It is also matured in Scotland in oak barrels for at least three years before being used for blending. Occasionally you may come across a single grain whisky but its use is mainly as a carrier for malts in blends.

The fourth category of whisky is a **vatted malt** which is a blend of several malts but no grain. Malt bottles lacking the word 'single' may well be vatted; other clues are descriptions such as 'Pure Malt' or '100% malt'.

A single malt is a happy accident of science, nature and circumstance. Blended and vatted whiskies are one man's opinion of what he thinks you think a good whisky should taste like. Many members of the industry claim to appreciate blended Scotch the most.

**Why don't you stock a certain brand I had once?**

Whisky brands tend to fade away faster than get created as the industry changes from hundreds of brand owners to just a few. As big companies expand by the acquisition of small they find that they have two brands on the same shop shelf at the same price so one has to go. Some

### CADENHEAD (C)

Campbeltown in Argyll is home to independent bottler Cadenhead's, who buy and mature casks of whisky and bottle each cask individually at natural cask strength, occasionally as high as 67% alcohol.



### MURRAY

#### McDAVID (MM)

A new name on the Loch Fyne Whiskies list, Murray McDavid are gaining great respect for a small range of excellent and unusual whiskies bottled at 46%, in our view this is the perfect bottling strength, just strong enough to tingle the tongue!



### SIGNATORY

#### (S)

A range of malts bottled at both 43% and at cask strength. Edinburgh based Signatory Vintage Whisky Company has been enjoying success with some excellent rare bottlings.





### GORDON & MACPHAIL (G&M, CC, Cask)

The leading and most respected independent bottler, G&M bottle a bewildering range of single, vatted and blended whiskies from their Elgin home. G&M are unique amongst independent bottlers in that they mature all their whiskies from new and have done so for 100 years.

Shown above are examples of the *Connoisseurs Choice*, *Cask* and *G&M* range.

brands are only available overseas because they are better established there than in the UK.

#### How many Scotch Whiskies are there?

The Scotch Whisky Association draws attention to the Claiive Vidiz collection in Brazil of over 4,000 bottles of Scotch. Not all of these will be available today and Campbell Evans of the SWA reckons that there are about 200 in the UK and 2,000 around the world.

Loch Fyne Whiskies has the most comprehensive range of UK available malts with examples from about 120 distilleries. There are currently about 85 open and working; others are either mothballed, closed or demolished. There have been about 750 distilleries licensed since Ferintosh in 1689.

#### How am I supposed to drink my malt whisky?

How you like! Although it does seem a shame to mix a £25 malt with a sweet, fizzy mixer. Addition of water (anything from a drop to 50:50, depends on the bottling) often reveals more character because your nose is happier at lower alcoholic strengths, so experiment with each new bottling. Bear in mind you have four senses of taste and these are on your tongue, not in the back of your throat. Plus you have some 30 or more senses of smell so use the schnoz. Ice in malts is a no-no; you put ice on bruises and in blended Scotch in hot climates.

#### How do I know which malts I will like?

Most single malts will have the region of origin on the label, either Lowland, Highland, Speyside or Islay and these give a clue to the character of the contents—but there are many exceptions to the rule. The **Lowlands** are the most gentle; mild, almost wine-like. The **Highlands** can be further divided; those

from the south are akin to the lowlands, those from the north are fuller flavoured. **Speyside** is a category of its own within the Highlands. These whiskies are complex and half of Scotland's distilleries are found here. The most fully flavoured whisky is produced on the island of **Islay** (pronounced eye-la). Islay whiskies are unguided missiles in the wrong hands—you will either love them or wonder what the attraction is in smelling hospitals.

Books are useful sources of information and we recommend in particular: Value for money—*Collins Gem Whisky* £3.99.

Most informed—Charles MacLean's *Pocket Whisky Book* £7.99.

Taster's bible—Michael Jackson's *Malt Whisky Companion* £12.99.

#### How come they taste so different?

Malted (germinated) barley has to be dried before milling and fermentation and traditionally this has been done over an open fire. In Scotland a variety of fuels is found locally including peat (decomposing heather) and coal. The amount of **peat** that is used to dry the barley has a big influence (on Islay it is the only source of fuel). Other influences are the style of apparatus employed in the production, particularly the **still** and how that still is operated by the stillman. The final major influence is the type of oak **cask** or barrel employed to mature the spirit; it could be one of many categories from a brand new barrel to a well-used second-hand sherry or bourbon cask.

#### Where's Cadenhead's/Connoisseurs Choice/Gordon & MacPhail's Distillery?

These bottles are from Independent bottlers who buy the malt whisky from a distillery and bottle it with their name foremost as their badge of quality. With

all independent bottlings look for the distillery name which will be in smaller print.

#### What are 'Cask Strength' Whiskies?

Whisky matures in the barrel at about 65%. Prior to bottling it is diluted to 40% so as to incur the least alcohol duty (originally a wartime measure). Cask strength whiskies are at natural, barrel strength which provides more impact and immediate flavour. These whiskies should be diluted in the glass after exploratory sips otherwise anaesthesia will numb the pleasure. Because of the variety of casks employed in the industry each *single-cask* bottling will have the character of the barrel variety as well as that of the distillery so there is great variation.

#### Why are some whiskies so expensive?

The first thing to check is the age of the whisky. If it is say 21 years old (the time spent in the cask—once bottled it does not 'age'), it will be dearer because of the additional storage required. Also whisky evaporates in the barrel by about 2% each year so after 21 years only two thirds remain. The other thing to look out for is the degree of alcohol strength as duty is applied according to percentage alcohol. Most whiskies are bottled at 40% alcohol by volume (abv), some at 43% or 46%—15% stronger and so dearer than the 40%. We stock many whiskies with strengths of up to 65% so these are the equivalent of over a bottle and a half!

#### The right glass for malt whisky.

A traditional whisky tumbler is fine for a blended whisky with a mixer but for malt whisky appreciation a tulip or balloon glass is preferred.

A classic nosing glass has a generous belly to accumulate aromas, a narrow rim to focus those delights for consideration and a watch glass lid to keep them for you rather than the fairies. Engraved graduations allow accurate dilution.

For relaxed whisky drinking we recommend a port glass. A wider rim and better balance aids contemplative enjoyment. We also enjoy using the simple water carafe, far less fuss than a lipped jug.

Classic Nosing Glass .....	£7.50(a)
Port Glass .....	£3.50(a)
Carafe .....	£3.50(a)



# The LOCH FYNE™ Blend of SCOTCH WHISKIES

## THE MALT DRINKERS BLEND™

We're very proud of our unique blend created for us by Professor Ronnie Martin, O.B.E., former Production Director of industry leader United Distillers.

Slightly sweet and slightly smoky, The Loch Fyne appeals to malt whisky fans as an easy-drinking, well flavoured blended whisky; something to drink and enjoy rather than concentrate on. We have given The Loch Fyne to the three top professional tasting writers and while all enjoy it, their tasting notes are completely different—proof that it is something for everyone!

Michael Jackson's note is characteristically analytical;

*Colour; rich, sunny, gold.*

*Aroma; fruity (honeydew melon?).*

*Body; medium, slightly syrupy.*

*Flavours; light heather-honey, grassy, fragrant, smokiness develops, especially in the finish.*

With typical eloquence, Charlie MacLean's tasting note wins by a nose: *"The deep amber colour of this whisky, (darker than many blends) implies age and this is supported by the (undilute) nose, which is rich and vinous, with no trace of grain. All the indications of mature fillings.*

*There is an interesting aroma of apple dumpling (suet crust), and this remains when water is added, enlivened by lighter citric notes (oranges and tangerines), and by some oil-related aromas (walnuts, linseed oil). Phenolic notes are slight, and express themselves more as 'roast meat' than peat smoke. Medicinal phenols are present in a very slight trace of oilskins. Overall the nose is subtle and relatively closed. Not much water is needed for this whisky.*

*The mouth-feel is smooth and well balanced, engaging the whole palate with acidic, salty, sweet and dry flavours, and coming down ultimately on the side of sweetness. The overall impression is fresh and smooth—mellow without being flat. The finish is quick and clean, and surprisingly warming. It is extremely easy to drink.*

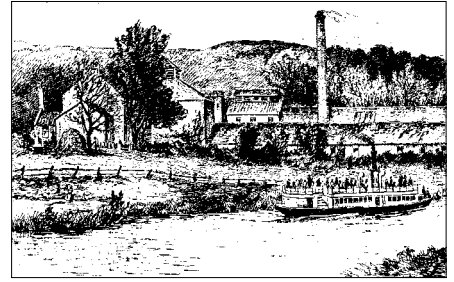
*Conclusion: A true premium blend which has clearly used well matured fillings. There is no harshness in it, no cereal notes or feints, no artificial caramel notes. A whisky which is appropriate for any time of the day. **Perilously smooth, mellow and easy to drink.**"*



Soon after its launch The Loch Fyne won the bronze award in the blended whisky class at the influential International Wine & Spirit Competition. The Gold Medal went to the world's top selling Scotch, Johnnie Walker Red Label.

More praise comes from Carol Shaw who in her recently published Collins Pocket Reference Book 'Whisky' describes The Loch Fyne as 'A malt drinker's blend, full flavoured, with a raisiny, sweet spiced nose, mellow smoothness of taste and a warming finish. A very easy to drink whisky.'

Scotland's Gourmet magazine called it a 'gem', and noted that 'only a little more expensive than a standard blend, it appeared to be of a higher quality.'



## THE DISTILLERY

Our label depicts the Glendarroch Distillery sited on the Crinan Canal that links Loch Fyne with the Sound of Jura. Also known as Glenfyne, the distillery was built in 1831. A succession of owners held the distillery until 1919 when it came under the ownership of the Glenfyne Distillery Co.

The cameo by Gail Gordon depicts the distillery at the time of Alfred Barnard's visit in 1885. Barnard's detailed description of the buildings enabled us to recreate the floor plan and Gail was able to complete her task from this combined with etchings in his book.

Barnard was clearly taken by the setting, the distillery and hospitality afforded him. His book devotes six pages to his visit, much taken up with details of the buildings e.g. "a new kiln, one of the finest we have seen in Scotland, it is 51 feet square" but also with the location: "It is built at the foot of the Robber's Glen which runs upwards from the banks of the canal into the heart of the hills in the background; this glen was once the haunt of smugglers, and no more romantic spot could have been chosen for the distillery."

Glendarroch was complete and well laid out. Barley was unloaded from the canal direct to the malt barns then moved through the process clockwise around a courtyard to the kiln, tun room, still house and warehouses. Whisky was then shipped to market via the canal. Eight houses were available for the workers and two for the excisemen. There was also Glengilp House and Glendarroch House for the manager and the owner respectively. At the end of his day's visit Barnard's party "donned our 'war paint' and proceeded to Glendarroch House to enjoy the hospitality of the owner".

The distillery closed in 1937, unusually as there was a distilling boom at that time, although the warehouses continued to be used for storing whisky until the mid seventies. A brief life as a joinery followed until the eighties when a salmon hatchery made use of the buildings and water which was also the drinking water supply for Ardrishaig and Lochgilhead.

In 1990 the Regional Council acquired the water rights and every last trace of the distillery has since been removed.

**Additional information:**

**Brian Townsend, SCOTCH MISSED.**



## TASTERS...some of the new bottlings available...

### GLENGARIOCH & SISTERS

Jim McEwan, Manager

Morrison Bowmore Distillers

Morrison Bowmore Distillers have a portfolio representing the three primary whisky producing regions: Auchentoshan in the Lowlands, Islay's Bowmore and the Highland representative Glengarioch. An eastern Highland malt, it confusingly labels itself as Glen Garioch, whilst the distillery's name is all one word.

Pronounced 'Glen-geery', the distillery is in the village of Oldmeldrum, about eighteen miles west of Aberdeen making it the most easterly in Scotland now that Glenugie and Glenury have closed. Oldmeldrum's other claim is as the birthplace of Sir Patrick Marston, a 19th Century researcher in tropical medicine—a strange occupation for someone from a village north of Moscow!

The distillery stands on Distillery Street and it is said to have been founded in 1797 after which Oldmeldrum appears to have grown up around it. It has had a number of owners including William Sanderson, of VAT69, who took it into the mighty Distillers Company in 1937. DCL were not satisfied with its water supply and, after suffering shortages, closed it down in 1968. After two years it was sold to Stanley P. Morrison who sank a well in a nearby field for a new and more reliable water source. Morrison made various improvements including a new still and within three years production was trebled.

Glengarioch shares two particular features with Bowmore. It maintains its own floor maltings—the malt is lightly peated using local peat, taken from New Pitligo Moss, which is moistened before being burnt to reduce the amount consumed. Also like its island sister it uses heat recovery in an innovative way. A waste energy scheme begun in 1976

remains unique in the industry; it was the first malt distillery to convert to North Sea gas and waste boiler flue gases are used to generate steam for firing the stills. The distillery is moth-balled at present. The adjoining land is being sold off but with the increase in interest in malt whisky I am hopeful that production will resume soon.

Three exciting new additions to the Glen Garioch stable are at cask strength. The 1978 is a vatting from several casks while the 29 and 27yo's are single casks the former (vintage 1968) is matured in fresh sherry butts and the 1970 from first-fill re-made hoggies.

There are also two new bottlings from Bowmore, both without an age statement but with 12-15 years in cask. *Dark-est* is finished in sherry casks for two years giving the classic Bowmore flavour with a subtle toffee-like flavour. Bowmore *Cask Strength* is bottled at 56% for those who like Bowmore with impact. One of the most incredible whiskies I've ever tasted is Auchentoshan 31yo, cask strength. You will not believe the aromas wafting from your glass. The taste is well, 'to die for'. It proves beyond doubt that quality casks make quality spirit; the first filled hogsheads used to mature this cracker have done the job. Auchy is underrated and naturally sweet and does not require the assistance of sherry casks.

A 1975 cask strength vatting (i.e. not single cask) also being introduced is superb, the finish just lasts forever. Believe me the Lowlands are on the move, this category has been hidden for too long. It's bright, fresh, clean tasting with lots of complementary style and elegance. *Space prohibits full publication of Jim's copious tasting notes but here is a selective tawl:*

**Glen Garioch — '70/27yo**

Palate—*custard & fudge sweetness.*

**Glen Garioch—single sherry cask—'68/29yo**  
Finish—*a real heavyweight bursting with power. One to try sitting down. A cabertossor if ever I saw one.*

**Bowmore — cask strength**

Body—*full, beefy and brawny.*

Finish—*the flavours soar in like sea birds before a storm.*

**Auchentoshan — single cask — '65/31yo**

Nose—*it's incredible, marmalade, pineapple, coconut, fresh pine, fudge, freshly cut oak, hints of African violets, a kaleidoscope of aromas.*

**Auchentoshan — '75/21**

Palate—*candied fruits, blackcurrants, heather flowers and a beautiful oaky flavour give a really unique complexity to this classic lowland spirit.*

...and an old bottling...

A discontinued trial product, 'Jackson's Row' appears on our list. After an unsuccessful test marketing in Glasgow this frosted and printed glass bottle is to be re-packaged as 'Buchanan's Blond'. Collector's item, stocks restricted.



### FIRST OFFICIAL SCAPA & A TOP CLASS GLENDRONACH

Allied Distillers have released the *other* Orkney malt, Scapa, onto the home market for the first time. An old LFW favourite that until now has been bottled by Gordon & MacPhail, this medium-light style reflects its bourbon cask origin with honey and toffee and will be enjoyed by fans of Dalwhinnie or our house malt, Inverarity.

Best known for Laphroaig from Islay, Allied complete their new malt line up with a truly sensational new bottling of Glendronach—this time as a 15yo, 100% sherry cask matured. This is essential for dark whisky fans and a real challenge to the Macallan 18yo's sherry-encrusted crown.

Transparency of  
Bunnahabhain  
with hairline keyline

### BUNNAHABHAIN FOUND!

In 1984 some of the last home floor-malted Bunnahabhain was bottled to celebrate the centenary of the distillery. This 21yo was then tucked away and finally, after re-bottling in 70cl size, all 900 bottles are available—buy now or weep! Bunnahabhain '63/21 has a more heavily peated taste than the 12yo.

...also...

New 'Rare Malts' due by the end of May are: Caol Ila, Lochnagar, Teaninich and Dallas Dhu. We are carrying the new Johnnie Walker Pure Malt, an applesy 15yo worthy of the JW appellation. Gordon & MacPhail are expanding their CC range into 35cl size and by May we will be carrying half bottles of Caol Ila, Benrinnes and Bladnoch. Furthermore the CC range is getting a label facelift. The first elegantly packaged OB of Pultney is due about now—8 and 12yo.





# THE WHISKY TASTING WHEEL (under construction)

## Draft

### FIRST TIER

- (second tier): & third tier descriptors

#### 1) CEREAL — (*Organo-nitrogen compounds*)

- (cooked mash): cooked maize mash tun draff  
 cooked potato skins hens' mash  
 weetabix porridge  
 bran cattle cake  
 - (cooked vegetables): cooked swede boiled corn  
 baked potato skins sweetcorn  
 mashed potato  
 - (malt extract): malted milk Horlicks  
 Marmite  
 - (husky): chaff-like dried hops  
 mousey pot ale  
 iron tonic  
 - (yeasty): meaty gralloch  
 gravy pork sausages  
 boiled pork roast meat

#### 2) ESTERY — (*Ethyl acetate, Isoamyl acetate, hexyl acetate*)

- (citric): oranges tangerines  
 mandarins limey  
 peel zest Kiwi fruit  
 nectarines pineapple cubes  
 banana pear drops  
 green apples lemonade  
 peaches apricots  
 greengages fresh figs  
 cherries gooseberries  
 Victoria plums raspberries  
 fruit salad ripe pears  
 strawberries fruit pulp  
 - (cooked fruit): stewed apples stewed rhubarb  
 candied fruits fruit in syrup  
 wine gums fruit gums  
 rum-toft marmalade  
 raspberry jam boiled sweets  
 banana rum rotten fruit  
 raisins sultanas  
 prunes dried apricots  
 dried figs mixed peel  
 christmas cake mince pies  
 black bun Dundee cake  
 prunes  
 - (solvent): paint thinners nail varnish remover  
 ethyl alcohol barber's shop  
 brylcreem turpentine  
 bubble gum American cream soda  
 artificial fruit sweet cigarettes  
 acid drops fresh paint  
 pine essence cellophane  
 saccharine

#### 3) FLORAL — (*Acetal, acetaldehyde, phenylethanol, beta-ionone, phenylacetaldehyde*)

- (fragrant): perfumed scented  
 rose carnation  
 coconut milk  
 gorse bushes chrysanthemum  
 lavender wild flowers  
 lilac honeysuckle  
 air freshener fabric softener  
 Chanel No.5 scented soap  
 geraniums green tomatoes  
 violets flowering currant  
 florist's shop Parma violets  
 tomato leaves sherbert  
 Love-hearts apple mint  
 spearmint peppermint  
 green leaves lawn cuttings  
 crushed green bracken green sticks  
 cut grass laurel leaves  
 green vegetables pea pods  
 sappy fir trees  
 pine cones pine nuts  
 - (hay-like): dry hay coumarin  
 herbal mown hay  
 heather flowers barns  
 hamster cage sage and onion  
 mulch

#### 4) PEATY — (*Phenolic*)

- (medicinal): TCP iodine  
 sea-tangle sea-spray  
 carbolic coal tar soap  
 neoprene germoline  
 Friar's balsam Benylin  
 ether Victory V's  
 surgical spirits hospitals  
 deisel oil lint  
 bandages tar  
 creosote menthol  
 - (smoky): guaiacol burnt wood  
 bonfires wood-smoke  
 scorched paper peat-reek,  
 smouldering embers exotic smoke  
 burning cinnamon sticks Lapsang suchong tea  
 incense

#### Peaty continued..

- (kippery): smoked salmon smoked oysters  
 smoked mussels anchovies  
 dried cran shells dried shellfish  
 sea shells  
 - (mossy): birchy earthy  
 fresh peat turf  
 moss water sphagnum moss  
 bog myrtle fishing nets  
 hemp ropes

#### 5) FEINTY — (*volatile acids, organo-nitrogen, amines*)

- (honey): mead heather honey  
 flower honey pouring honey  
 beeswax  
 - (leathery): new cowhide digestive biscuits  
 mealy poultry-food  
 leather upholstery calf book-binding  
 libraries

- (tobacco): fresh tobacco stale tobacco-ash  
 rolling tobacco aromatic tobacco  
 tea chests tea pots  
 furniture polish piggy  
 stale yeast lactic  
 cheesy buttermilk  
 baby vomit sickly  
 old gym-shoes dirty laundry  
 scorched plastic plastic buckets  
 oilskins plastic macs

- (sweaty):

- (plastic):

#### 6) SULPHURY — (*organo-sulphur compounds, di-methyl sulphide, di-methyl tri-sulphide, mercaptans*)

- (vegetative): marsh gas drains  
 bogs brackish  
 stagnant spent matches  
 turnips cabbage water  
 exhaust fumes brimstone  
 minerals matchbox striker  
 cordite spent fireworks  
 dirty shot-gun barrels hydrogen sulphide  
 acetylene calcium carbide  
 new rubber (tyres) burnt rubber  
 pencil eraser bakelite  
 industrial electric cables  
 elemental sulphur hot sand  
 sandy beach linen  
 fresh laundry starch

#### 7) WOODY — (*Lignin, Hemicellulose, Vanillin*)

- (new wood): sap-like resinous  
 pine-like cedar-wood  
 cigar boxes sandalwood  
 sawdust orange peel  
 ginger tannic  
 spicy peppery  
 cloves allspice  
 cinnamon nutmeg  
 curry powder

- (old wood): musty fusty  
 cork bung cloth  
 blotting paper cardboard  
 newspaper mushrooms  
 damp cellars mould  
 old books earthy  
 metallic inky  
 tinny wet iron  
 pencil-lead chewed pencils  
 paraffin naphtha/camphor  
 glycerine custard powder  
 treacle toffee  
 butterscotch fudge  
 caramel tablet  
 Russian toffee sticky toffee pudding  
 caramel wafers toffee apples  
 creme caramel golden syrup  
 brown sugar meringues  
 treacle condensed milk

- (toasted): barley sugar roasted malt  
 burnt toast coffee  
 cocoa coffee  
 rice pudding skin brown toast  
 burnt cake coffee grounds  
 aniseed liquorice

#### 8) WINEY — (*Vinous extractives*)

- (sherried): oloroso sherry fino sherry  
 sauternes chardonnay  
 madeira port  
 burgundy brandy  
 drinks cabinet wine vinegar  
 brown sauce  
 - (nutty): marzipan benzaldehyde  
 walnuts hazel nuts  
 Brazil nuts almonds  
 praline roasted peanuts  
 rape seed oil gun oil (Youngs 303)  
 linseed oil sun-tan oil  
 mutton fat tallow  
 candlewax oiled wood  
 olives  
 milk chocolate bitter chocolate  
 butter cream



[www.dot.dash.slash.hic](http://www.dot.dash.slash.hic)

James Thompson, Clearcut Ltd

The thirst for information is helping fuel several projects that have appeared on the internet. Glenmorangie, Laphroaig and Isle of Arran all have websites that provide considerable background information.

As publishers of the scotchwhisky.com website and six other commercial whisky sites, we decided to ask our readers to vote on their favourite brands, so we could learn about their interests. Over 8,000 votes revealed that, of the mainstream malts, the more distinctive, such as the south coast Islays and the sherried Macallan, come out well ahead. In March Charles Maclean chaired a three day tasting session over the 'net—the first global tasting ever held. The site is still on [www.scotchwhisky.com](http://www.scotchwhisky.com), although the exhausted nosing panel is no longer convened. If you are 'on-line' take a look, (and let us have your views). The purpose of this event is to discover what words whisky drinkers around the world use to describe aromas and flavours (see page 10). The protocol has been translated into six languages, and around 3000 people visited the site over the three days.

In response to the oft-asked question about the LFW website: our official line is "definitely—well, maybe soon(ish)"

### BACK ISSUES OF SWR

We have some stocks of back issues for which we are now asking a £1 per copy charge (and why not?).

The first (SWR1) consisted of 4 pages; SWR2 was eight pages and featured an interview with Alan Rutherford, production head of United Distillers.

SWR3 featured Andrew Dewar-Durie of Allied Distillers.

SWR4—George Urquhart, G&M. 12pp. SWR5—Ronnie Martin, creator of the (award winning) *Loch Fyne* blend.

SWR6 pestered Alan Gray, Stockbroker and briefly mentions news of our award winning blend *The Loch Fyne* winning an award.

One pound per copy please, plus total postage of £1 if sent to Europe and £2 to the rest of the world.

### THE A-Z OF WHISKY

by Gavin Smith (see page 5).

Published by Neil Wilson Publishing in May 1997. Price £7.99. Formerly part of Carcanet's *Book of Words* series, this unique reference work is absolutely essential for anyone whose interest in whisky extends beyond the plethora of looks-like-jacko's tasting tomes.

LFW recommended.

In response to a letter from France we now stock whisky-flavoured condoms. Gentlemen should ask Richard or Roddy for "a comb, a packet of aspirin and a tub of Brylcreem". We'll try and get them to you for the weekend...



### EXCLUSIVE! — ARDBEG HERRING-WOOD FINISH

Speculation persists that Glenmorangie are proposing a new range of wood finishes for their recent acquisition, Ardbeg. Acclaimed for their innovative range of port and madeira expressions, Glenmorangie no doubt realise that as Ardbeg is a huge, powerful, peaty whisky it will not be influenced by namby-pamby wine styles. Our picture, taken at the beginning of April and smuggled off the island, shows considerable activity at Ardbeg pier, apparently of fish barrels being prepared for filling. A spokesperson for Glenmorangie refused to comment.

### SPRINGBANK NEWS

The problems a distiller faces in stock and production planning decades ahead are exemplified by difficulties currently experienced by Springbank. Stocks of the 15yo are exhausted for three years and for the next few months there will be no 12yo 100° proof. We have been advised that while the 21yo will continue, in future there will be occasional bottlings of older vintages rather than a standard 25 or 30yo.

In about three years time a core range of three 10yo's each entirely matured in bourbon, sherry and rum casks, will line up with the 12, 15 and 21. Some time this year an anniversary bottling of 18yo is expected. Work is underway to produce a new triple distilled whisky called Hazelburn, utilising manager Frank McHardy's experience at Bushmills in Ireland. There are also plans to build a completely new still-house for a further new product.

A 10yo Longrow, the heavily peated style, will be available as an official bottling in November.

### WORD-SEARCH WINNER

Our xmas whisky word-search produced a superb response from LFW customers. Michael Heads, brewer at Laphroaig, stopped by and drew Peter Cawthorne's correct entry out of the barrel. Peter wrote in appreciation of his prize of a rare bottle of 10yo Ardbeg and described it as having a 'sweetish, salty taste and a smooth texture'. He also asked that we convey thanks to Iain Henderson of Laphroaig for donating the prize.

## The LOCH FYNE™ Blend of SCOTCH WHISKIES

Include 12 bottles of the (award winning) *Loch Fyne* and get free delivery of your order. Alternatively collect from the shop and we'll knock off £6 each case.

### WHISKY FESTIVAL

There is a lot of hot air coming out of Edinburgh (nothing new there) about a Whisky Festival in October. Contact the Festival Office, 0131 556 9808.

*Our photograph above of herring curers at Holmsgarth was taken by the great Scottish photographer, George Washington Wilson (1823-93), University of Aberdeen Collection.*

SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW is free to all bona fide mail order customers. **If you have not bought by mail order from the last (Autumn) catalogue and do not buy from the accompanying (Spring) list then we will not be troubling you again.**

We are no longer sending out Stock Lists and SWR's to prospective customers more than once. If you or a friend would like a current stock list please ask and you will be sent one with a back-issue SWR. Your name will not be placed on our mailing list for current SWR's until you have bought by mail order.

## PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT US!

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