



SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW™

EDITION 16

AUTUMN 2001

A SMALL INVESTMENT

Too many producers continue to spectacularly misunderstand the requirements of high value whisky sales.

The thinkers for the 'profitable-single-malt' sector have failed to appreciate the distinction between the couple of thousand Whisky-Enthusiasts and the million(s) of Whisky-Curious.

I'll say it again; there are only a couple of thousand collectors in the world who frequently spend over £100 per bottle. These Enthusiasts are taking an increasingly constant flogging with expensive expressions that are in volumes and at prices that cannot possibly be sustained. Valuable and rare malts have tremendous desirability; heritage, history, rarity and exclusivity—which by definition means expensive.

After all, if you want to make something desirable, then make it expensive. The market will decide if it wants to buy.

This rant is about the failure to give some thought to expanding the market for collectable whiskies—to bring in lots of new customers.

The Whisky-Curious enjoys his dramming, has a few unopened bottles that won't get opened and can easily resist the charm of a limited edition rare bottling with maximum exclusivity, if only because it's too expensive. However there are many who could not resist but as yet do not know of the pleasure of the subject matter of whisky and the opportunities to assemble a rewarding and fascinating collection. They can be found among the millions of collectors of stamps, china, golfing or rock memorabilia, vintage or model cars, antiques, wine or miniature bottles...

Miniatures? Hold on! That's how most of the Enthusiasts became so; they started with miniatures! So why for over a year has there been only disappointment for a miniature collector looking for new expressions?

My suspicion is the producers' idleness. I do know that they are failing to expand and invest in the future of their potentially very high return stocks.



ANTIQUE WHISKY MIRROR SELLS TO RIGHTFUL OWNER

and *nearly* returns to its spiritual home—see back page.

JIM BEAM SELLS TO MANAGEMENT BARGAIN

OPPORTUNITY

American giant, Fortune Brands, has sold its Jim Beam subsidiary—JBB Greater Europe, to a heavily financed management team in Scotland's biggest ever management buyout. The deal involves a £208m debt for the new owners 'Kyndal International' comprising eight directors and managers of what was Whyte & Mackay and Invergordon Distillers.

"The Americans have written off about £400m in this sale to rid themselves of an unhappy adventure into Scotch Whisky. Kyndal have got themselves a good buy." Industry analyst Alan Gray of ING Barings told SWR.

Kyndal now own Invergordon grain and Dalmore, Jura and Fettercairn malt distilleries, as well as Tullibardine and Tamnavulin (currently "mothballed"). 'Kyndal' as a name has an implausible explanation based on an "expression of our commitment to innovation".

INVER HOUSE SELLS TO SIRIVADHANABHAKDI

Pacific Spirits, part of the Great Oriole Group, controlled by Thai entrepreneur Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi, has bought respected Scottish independent distillers Inver House for £56million.

Pacific's CE, Oooi Boon Aun, told us, "We have watched Inver House with great admiration for 14 years. This represents an important addition to our beverage interests. While Inver House will retain its independence and autonomy, we look forward to benefiting from the skills and experience of the talented workforce."

Two thirds of the cash goes to two founding directors who headed the £8.2m management buyout in 1988 when the industry was recovering from its greatest low. One tenth of the sale is to be shared by the 130 workers who benefit from an employee share scheme established in 1997; some will get £50,000.

Inver House owns Balblair, Pulteney, Speyburn, Balmenach and Knockdhu distilleries, all working.

Now read 'Devil's Advocate'—our new column by Turnbull Hutton—on page 4.

THE BENEFACITOR



Ian Good was awarded the CBE in 1992 for services to the Scotch Whisky Industry and was recently elected Chairman of the SWA.

LFW: What is your job?

I am Chairman and Chief Executive of the Edrington Group. I am also Chairman of the Scotch Whisky Association. The Edrington Group is a private company; it originates from Robertson & Baxter and the Clyde Bonding Company, both created by W. A. Robertson in the mid-nineteenth century.

Recently, in the mid 1990s, we decided to simplify things and created the Edrington Group as an overall business umbrella for R & B and Clyde Bonding. In 1997 a share scheme was created for employees in the group rather than the individual companies. In 1999 we acquired Highland Distillers often considered a sister company.

Edrington now controls the former businesses of Robertson & Baxter (brokers), Highland Distillers (distillers—Bunnahabhain, Glenrothes, Glenturret, Highland Park, Macallan & Tamdhu, plus The Famous Grouse and Black Bottle blends), Lang Brothers (Glengoyne Distillery and Lang's blend) Clyde Bonding (maturation and bottling) and Clyde Cooperage. We also have a half share in the North British grain distillery and Cutty Sark International.

LFW: But Cutty Sark belongs to Berry Brothers.

It may be easiest to explain by looking at the history. It is complicated though! R&B was a whisky broking business whose founder, W. A. Robertson, was also one of the founding directors of Highland Distillers in 1887.

R&B were the brokers or agents for Highland's new-make spirit; if you wanted some new make Bunnahabhain or Highland Park for example, you dealt with R&B. A substantial proportion of Highland's new make was bought by R&B and laid down for future blending. R&B blended for a number of brands on behalf of the brand owners, the largest of which was Cutty Sark for London

wine merchants, Berry Brothers & Rudd. BBR paid R&B for the blend and Clyde Bonding to bottle it. BBR then marketed it. The success of R&B and Highland has been closely linked to that of Cutty Sark, particularly through the 1950s, 60s and 70s when it was one of the top selling brands in the USA.

Because of this long and excellent relationship, in 1997 Edrington and BBR formed a joint venture called 'Cutty Sark International', a straight 50:50 joint venture in terms of distribution, sales and marketing, while Edrington remains responsible for the production. Cutty had developed principally in the US but now requires active marketing elsewhere. As we share in the success of the brand it is right that we share the risks and investment in further developing the brand which is why CSI was created. CSI is also responsible for the marketing of Glengoyne which was R&B's only malt distillery), Glenrothes, BBR's malt brand (produced by Highland) and Lang's Supreme blend—I said it was complicated!

LFW: And Robertson & Baxter?

As brokers, R&B prospered passing from father W. A. to son James and then, in the mid 1940s, to the three granddaughters of the founder.

These ladies were unmarried, business was booming and they realised that when they died there would be serious death duties and the company would almost certainly have to be sold. With great foresight they transferred their shares into a holding company choosing the name Edrington after one of their farms. They donated all their shares to the company. Edrington was controlled by a charitable trust they established called the Robertson Trust, and the profits of Edrington went to the Trust. Edrington had two principal subsidiaries, R&B and Clyde Bonding. Over the years it has acquired others, most notably Clyde Cooperage and Lang Brothers.

LFW: Who benefits from the Trust?

The Trust is very wide ranging in terms of who benefits. Most organisations with charitable status are eligible for consideration. In the year to April 2001 almost £5m was distributed to charities—almost entirely within Scotland.

A proportion of the profits available to shareholders is payable as dividends. The recipients are either the Robertson Trust or the employees of Edrington.

The Trust is run as a separate entity from the business. Edrington pays tax in the normal way, it is the charity that has tax benefits.

LFW: Are you involved in the Trust?

Yes, the sisters said in the trust deed that two of the Trustees should be from the business; currently there are three other independent members.

I was fortunate to know the sisters. They were incredible ladies. To donate the entire value of their shares to ensure that the company stayed a private, independ-

ent 'family' company shows the passion they had for this company. Their main influence was their father rather than their grandfather; it was he who did a lot of the development of the business. He died in 1946, after which they had an interesting approach to running the company; they never did anything unless all three agreed. Miss Babs had the responsibility for the business, Miss Elspeth was a County Councillor for the region around Berwick and Miss Agnes looked after the farms. On Sunday evenings they sat down to discuss the issues which were likely to come up in the week ahead.

LFW: Tell us more about Ian Good.

I don't often admit it but I am in fact a Chartered Accountant! I qualified in 1967 and spent two years with Price Waterhouse working in Glasgow and London. I took a job with Lang Brothers in 1969 (acquired by R&B in 1965) thinking I would have a few years in industry before deciding what to do in life. After two years with Lang's I started working closely with the R&B Managing Director, John Macphail, with whom I got on extremely well. He was a remarkable man with a tremendous reputation in the industry.

John and I were working on broader matters rather than just those of Lang's and I joined the board of R&B in 1974. By then I had spent some months as a distillery hand and at the bottling plant, thoroughly enjoying all of my practical experience.

I became Chief Executive in 1989 and Chairman in 1994. A number of people have influenced my career but none more so than John Macphail and the Misses Robertson. They were gracious in everything they did and their passion for the industry and the people in it was incredible. They saw employees as members of the family. Take for example our Company ball, a very formal event. I recall Miss Babs explaining why this was such a formal do; everyone should dress up, even the office junior. But we had to make sure that if anyone didn't have a dinner suit and had to hire one, the company would pay and that everyone would go in a taxi, paid for by the company. That way everyone became aspirational, important for a night. It was that thinking and wisdom that impressed me so much.

LFW: You produce Famous Grouse.

We do the blending, yes but only since 1970 when Highland acquired brand owners Matthew Gloag and Son. Then Grouse was a relatively small player, just 40,000 cases in the UK. Since then an extremely consistent approach to quality and marketing has created the success of the brand.

Immediately after Highland acquired Gloag's there was a joint venture set up between R&B and Highland for the stock holding, promotion and sharing of profits. There was always a cross-shareholding between us; Highland has

owned 35% of R&B since 1948 when some of the family's cousins wanted out. R&B also had a small number of Highland shares prior to the acquisition of Gloag but since gathered more as they became available because of our mutual dependency. It was thought a good defence mechanism for all concerned, that and the complex supply agreements between the two companies. But as a public company Highland were vulnerable to takeover and in 1979 Hiram Walker (Ballantine's) made a bid for Highland which was only blocked by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Had it not been prevented we could have lost our main supplier and customer. This realisation that we were vulnerable because of our dependency on Highland despite our agreements and cross-shareholding was a defining moment as far as R&B was concerned.

Since then Highland acquired Macallan and they have developed their brands extremely well, but for five years their profits were flat because of the substantial investment behind their brands. Because of Highland's lack of profits growth the share price was falling. It was clear that they had got into a situation where they might again be vulnerable to anyone with an eye for a bargain. By this time we held 28% and made it clear that we would make it very difficult if someone tried to buy Highland, both in terms of shareholding and our agreements. Considering the consolidation in the industry and the need to continue investment in the brands we believed that the best way forward was to take Highland private. The board of Highland supported this and in November 1999 we secured the company.

LFW: An expensive shield.

The total cost was £601m which was financed by bank borrowing, our own cash resources and by William Grant & Son [Grant's, Glenfiddich & Balvenie] who came in as a 30% shareholder of the new 1887 Company which now owns Highland. Grant's were interested in a long term investment in some very good brands—for a while we had been talking to them about private companies and how we could work together in our changing industry. We agreed that this was one way and I'm delighted to say it is working very well.

1887 is the year that Highland was formed and also the year that William Grant started distilling at Glenfiddich, on Christmas Day. The 1887 Company has a joint board between Edrington and Wm. Grant & Sons. We both think it important that Highland is run and controlled from Scotland; it is an international market but we are very proud of being Scottish-based companies in a Scottish industry. Grant's have made it very clear that it was an investment but also that if there were ways of working together without compromising our in-

dependence then we would look at that and already there have been benefits such as joint materials purchasing.

LFW: Just to complicate things, Suntory has a share of Macallan!

Suntory of Japan has 25% of Macallan and 1887 now has 75%. There was an agreement whereby Suntory could exit at certain times and we expected that on our acquisition of Highland they might have chosen to leave but they are very keen to stay in, despite their recently acquiring Morrison Bowmore.

Highland Distillers is now a sales and marketing unit. Our business is brands led. The distilleries and production are under 'operations' which is Edrington run. Operations provides the service to the brands as does finance and administration; each sector supports the brands as a consolidated item. Our principal brands now are Famous Grouse, Cutty Sark, Glengoyne, Highland Park and Macallan—these brands are paramount to everything in the Group.

LFW: Is there favouritism towards Glengoyne?

I always think that Glengoyne at older ages is a very good dram; the 17yo is superb. It was our only malt distillery before 1999 and I suppose from that point of view it does have a sentimental attachment. But I wouldn't say that there was any favouritism!

LFW: What about your other malts?

Bunnahabhain is a tremendous and unusual Islay whisky and a wonderful malt. Now that Highland is part of Edrington we are working hard to communicate with the new shareholders in the company—the employees. I visit every site twice a year to explain how the business is doing, what the challenges are, how we've done, where we are spending money, etcetera. In January I was at Bunnahabhain when the employees said 'if you want innovations how about letting us be responsible for the bottling, labelling, packaging and selling of one of our oldest casks?' They selected a 1965 and now all 594 bottles have been sold. We are delighted with the project—a real example of innovation! Bunnahabhain is an important part of Cutty Sark but is not a priority brand as far as a single malt is concerned.

However the impetus for a brand comes from the market, and that doesn't happen with Bunnahabhain which is only one of a number of Islay malts. Highland Park is our island malt with a unique selling point of being the most northerly whisky distillery in the world and the only (supported) malt from Orkney.

Glenurret's main income is from visitors and as a small distillery is self-supporting. We are presently building 'The House of Grouse' there, a good location with a working distillery next door which will make this a very exciting visitor experience!

Glenrothes is very important in many

blends throughout the industry and as a single is marketed by CSI under licence to BBR. Tamdhu is also important in our blends. It matures early with a pleasing sweetness; great for blending but not one of our priority malts.

LFW: And Glenglassaugh?

Closed in 1986, it is now a warehousing complex. I don't see it distilling again.

In 1993 we formed a joint venture with International Distillers and Vintners and bought the North British Distillery in Edinburgh. NB was an important constituent part in our blends and it is also useful for trading for other grains, which are also important in our blends. You must have a balance. NB is unique because it uses only maize whereas other grain producers use wheat.

Since then IDV has become part of UDV, but they seem happy with our arrangement; NB is an important part of their expanded portfolio.

We are now self sufficient in terms of volume with some first class malts. The latest proof of that is Famous Grouse Vintage malt, a new product created by our blender John Ramsey made up of several of our malts. A tremendous dram and our fastest growing new product ever! We have blends, we have single malts and now a bridge. We've given it the assurance of the Grouse brand which encourages people who have heard about malts but are unsure—Vintage Malt takes them into the next category.

Next we have Famous Grouse port and Islay finishes. I'm conscious that we have to be very careful not to confuse our customers but I believe it shouldn't because of the way it is presented. These create another interest in the blended category, they give people something to talk about—that is the effect that wood has on whisky.

LFW: You are keen on co-operation.

It works! On the big scale, our Highland brands are distributed by Maxxium, a new joint venture between Remy, Kyndal (JBB as was), and Vin Esprit [Absolut Vodka]. A pre-eminent portfolio of high class products. On a smaller scale, our Highland Park workers are responsible for production at Scapa which is owned by Allied. As neither distillery was working flat out it was agreed Highland Park would run Scapa when required; Allied have secured us as their contractors to do so—more synergy!

I think that continuity of any relationship is fundamental to success and this is very much the philosophy of our business. The Scotch Whisky industry is much better at doing this than many other industries.

LFW: Your desert island dram?

If it's a hot island, I'd love a Cutty on the rocks, otherwise a Grouse. For malts a Glengoyne 17yo in particular, or a Highland Park 18yo, but on balance I prefer blends.

LFW: Thank you.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE



TURNBULL HUTTON

SCOTTISH OWNERSHIP?

....OR JUST MORTGAGED?

LFW is delighted to welcome Turnbull Hutton as a contributor, until recently head of all distilling for industry leader GuinnessUDV. Informed, outspoken and independent, his comments are based on a lifetime in the industry.

The news of the £208m management buyout of the former Whyte & Mackay/Invergordon business from Jim Beam Brands contained the now obligatory reference to the business having returned to "Scottish Ownership." Great news one would think—shouldn't as much, if not all, of Scotland's most important industry be owned by we Scots?

However, this triggered a few thoughts as I carried on reading through the reported structure of Kyndal International—the name of the new business: German backers—WestLB: a layer of mezzanine finance; as well as the management team's own "investment in their future." All pretty straight forward—a classic MBO.

By the end of the report, probably half an hour later (no, I'm not a slow reader, I merely had a zizz half way through) speculation had already started as to when the new company would go to the market, after all that is the next step in the MBO process. No management team is going to deny themselves the rich pickings that have accrued to others in similar situations and with the best will in the world I cannot imagine German bankers having an overriding long-term interest in Scotch Whisky. Call me an old cynic if you must, but aren't they also pretty interested in getting a return on their investment pretty damn quick?

Following this train of thought through logically, it is at the time of any flotation that the much vaunted "Scottish Ownership" quickly goes out the window. In come the fund managers—primarily London-based barrow-boys—who will be courted to invest their clients' money in what will, by that time, be a new dynamic organisation in an exciting sector (where the leading industry player seems to be doing kind of OK

presently).

It is at this point where, to mix my film metaphors, 'Whisky Galore' meets 'Groundhog Day'. Have we not seen all of this before? Is this not vaguely familiar to whisky watchers the world over? After flotation will not this "Scottish Company" have to simply perform for their new bosses—their shareholders—who, surprise-surprise, will be unlikely to be (a) Scottish or (b) hellish interested in understanding the finer nuances of a sector that they have described many times as being "dull". Why invest in it then? Well, One does need a balanced portfolio if One is looking after say, a pension fund; risks have to be spread, and the boring, dull booze business just about keeps going. However in return for the initial investment in the flotation the fund managers will expect dazzling short term returns—after all they have benchmarks to beat if they are to be given the privilege of gambling with other people's money! This, they themselves feel, gives them the right to comment on a company's performance using a variety of "Key Performance Indicators". In no time at all these same individuals are putting pressure on Management to take possibly damaging and certainly short-term measures to maximise the returns. If this does not happen the share price will fall on the back of a view that it is a "dull" sector. Recommendations follow regarding mergers—or demergers—or MBOs.... you're beginning to catch on to this now. It is 'Groundhog Day'.

The words are always the same; "tremendous synergies"... "consolidation"... "asset utilisation"... Were these not the very words or arguments put forward when Whyte & Mackay took over Invergordon Distillers?—another "Scottish Company" as I recall (although it probably wasn't after their flotation following their MBO from Vickers—or was it British Aerospace?!)

We've been here before folks!

DCL—Scottish-based but 6% Scottish owned when the Guinness takeover was engineered, to keep out a company at least led by two Scotsmen but not Scottish owned. This became UD; then more synergies... Grand Metropolitan merges with Guinness... UD becomes UDV... Guinness/GrandMet becomes Diageo... exit Dewar's to Bacardi (certainly not Scottish)... Seagram carved up... hopefully, at some point... to Diageo and Pernod (hardly Scottish—unless we reconstitute The Auld Alliance!) I could go on but you've got my drift....

We now have an industry where "Scottishness" could be construed as a rare commodity. Don't get me wrong—we still make the stuff, nurture it, blend and bottle it, but the corporate power bases tend to be in London/Bristol/Amsterdam/Tokyo/Paris... Was this because our "Scottishness" was up for sale? As it

will no doubt be again?

So is it more power to the elbow of the smaller independents—Scottish owned, some family owned—or a salute to The Edrington Group who completely reversed the trend and took the publicly quoted Highland Distillers private, thus freeing themselves from any of the short term pressures referred to earlier. They concluded—and are now demonstrating—that understanding and investing in "Scottishness" is a long term strategy; promoting it to merely sell it on again seems a route we have trodden previously.

However, after having said all that—we are where we are. Truth is that the independent Scottish-based companies would be the first to concede that the multi-national big boys do one hell of a job using their collective muscle in creating the new market opportunities—whether ready to drink, new categories or simply raising the profiles of existing products. The Global Companies do invest heavily and, whilst they benefit themselves, there is no doubt a spin off for the whole sector—Scottish owned or not!

I should lie down now (another zizz perhaps) before I start wittering about nationalising the whole industry. Come to think of it, maybe this is not so daft. On the other hand it would no doubt lead to opportunities for synergies, better asset utilisation, consolidations—and allow the SWA the opportunity to make their usual helpful press statement along the lines of "1000s of jobs at risk.....!" (The counter to this is whenever a restricted whisky market 'opens up' the same organisation comes away with "1000s of jobs could be created.....!") Ever wondered if it's the same people who just get a job and then lose it again? That's another story altogether!

For now the Industry must learn from what has gone before; Scottishness is too important to pay mere lip service to. The 'new' Whyte and Mackay team must succeed. Apart from their personal financial opportunities in the long term, they will undoubtedly have some interest payments to meet in the short term! Can the new team be more successful as owners than they were as employees? And if so, why didn't they do it for their previous employers?

I once had a boss who was opposed to MBOs for that very reason; he believed that if individuals could do it better for themselves he should fire them for not doing it for the Company. On reflection he was probably a naïve old buffer like myself!

[And lo! Immediately after our receiving this piece, Inver House, a company formed as a result of a management buy-out, announced that they were selling themselves to an Asian buyer for £56m. We tried asking Turnbull for further comment but he had gone for his zizz.]

BOOK FAIR

Marcin Miller

My job, as Editor & Publisher of Whisky Magazine, does not make me an 'expert' on whisky. I ask others to supply expertise, or—more accurately—experience, authority, knowledge and the ability to write. I mention that as, although I am an enthusiast of whisky, I certainly cannot hold a candle in terms of dedicated application to the majority of our readers.

I don't know the answer. But I can get it from the person who does and, I hope, package it up attractively for you.

On my desk today, there are five new whisky books. It is the season for gifts, but more and more whisky books are being published. Book publishers are working in ever-decreasing circles. It would not be unfair to say that only one of these titles is worth looking at.

In order to find one ground-breaking whisky book you have to wade through dozens of half-baked, poorly designed, cut-and-paste jobs. These are a danger because mistakes and half-truths are repeated so often they become accepted as fact and it is too easy to miss the gems that really deserve your attention.

The joy I feel at opening something original is enormous and this is only enhanced by my enthusiasm for the subject matter. Similarly, I am depressed by missed opportunities.

We know what the established classic whisky books are. What is required is innovation rather than imitation. I enjoyed *Visiting Distilleries* for the simple reason that no-one had done it before. I found the fact that it was so clearly a personal account quite charming as well. Dave Broom's *Handbook of Whisky* attempted a new approach by focusing on individuals rather than the process, the distillery or the whisky itself (although, naturally, none of these was ignored). Michael Jackson's *Scotland and its Whiskies* allowed him free rein to write about impressions rather than tasting notes. Coupling his prose with the breathtaking landscape photography of Harry Cory Wright was a masterstroke. The departure here was to concentrate on the beauty of the land rather than the shape of the stills.

So many whisky authors, so few innovative whisky books...



BROUGHT

TO BOOK

Neil Wilson

Three years ago Duncan and Wendy Graham came to me, as a publisher of specialist whisky books, with an idea; 'We want to visit every distillery that claims to have visitor reception facilities and do a Good Distillery Guide from a punter's perspective. If they don't come up to scratch we'll say so and when they do, we'll shout their praises.' As a million visitors a year traipse around the Scottish countryside visiting distilleries the market was strong and there would be retail opportunities at the distilleries featured.

In *Visiting Distilleries* Duncan and Wendy made judgements on a number of factors. These included the practicalities of access, the cleanliness of the loos, the quality of the catering, the quality, depth and duration of the tour, the way the staff took care of them and so on. Most importantly, the overall ambience was critical to them in their final analysis.

On publication I naively assumed that there would be healthy sales to be had in the top ranked distilleries. However the reactions and ratings were curiously variable. While all the Seagram centres came out top with excellent ratings, they would not take the book for retail. Why? Because their visiting times had been changed at the time of publication!

Disappointing tours of another distillery resulted in a less than glowing report. Tours? Well, Duncan and Wendy went three times just to be certain their experience was typical. When the book was considered by the parent group for sales throughout its many distilleries, it was declined. No reason has been offered. The others? Many had good reasons for not selling it—"We don't sell books"—or were simply miffed at what was said about them.

But those distillers seem to have missed the point about this book. It is all about raising standards in the tourism industry and getting more people to buy Scotch. Spare a thought for the two French tourists in tears after one distillery tour, stating if that was what was on offer, they would never enter another in their lives. It transpired that this was their first-ever visit to a distillery and after a few minutes conversation Duncan and Wendy had sent them on their way deciding to continue with the other distillery visits they had planned. Duncan and Wendy weren't paid for doing that, but the abusive visitor centre manageress who berated them was! Where the book has been stocked, it has sold well with rewarding feedback. One helpful member of the public has written because we stated there was no catering at Tomatin—"There's a Little Chef across the road!"

BOOK FARE

Two German whisky enthusiasts have reprinted *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom*, a record of Alfred Barnard's two year journey first printed in 1887. The book is a fascinating snapshot of the emerging whisky industry during its greatest period of expansion. This reprint is a faithful facsimile even including the fascinating advertisements for contemporary whiskies and distilling equipment such as 'Lockwood's Patent Oscillating Furnace Bars'. One of the most essential books for a SWR reader. £25.

Malcolm Greenwood has assumed Barnard's coat and stick and retraced the journey by visiting 22 'modern' distilleries singled out for their uniqueness. *Unique Distilleries* features



Barnard's prose for each and then Malcolm's present day impressions and photographs. Like Barnard the description is of both the distilleries and the travel in between. The book also features advertisements and one wonders if they will be as fascinating in 100 years' time.



'A modern day Barnard' is how we describe *Visiting Distilleries*. Surprisingly none of the legions of whisky authors has thought to make a new record of the industry today, perhaps detailing the capacity of process logic processors and articulated vehicle turning areas(!) however the Grahams have found a very entertaining compromise by recording not only the yumminess of the baguettes and cleanliness of the loos but also the construction and capacity of the mash tun. A worthwhile read regardless of any intention to visit a distillery. £9.99.

Dave Broom's *Handbook* is a recommended buy for the whisky enthusiast while the much travelled Michael Jackson's *Scotland and its Whiskies* is for the whisky and/or Scotland fan; both are £16.99.





This year we offer more deals than ever before but space and pure *excitement* prevents us from pointing out anything specific so you'll just have to study our shelves! However, this year there are also more **FREE FREEBIES!**



Free with each order:

- A MINIATURE OF THE NEW **BRUICHLADDICH** 10yo!
- A COPY OF CHARLES MACLEAN'S **SCOTCH WHISKY!**
- A COPY OF THE NEW **SCOTTISH FIELD** MALTS GUIDE!

PLUS! Order any four or more malts from our stocklist and add two or more bottles of the **superb, award winning Loch Fyne** and we'll deliver **FREE** to a UK address! Steady now!

*** SMALL PRINT ***

These deals and freebies are while stocks last. Freebies are limited to one per customer and will not be included in 'gift' orders, where a single bottle is being sent to someone other than the person paying. (Collectors: These are promotional miniatures, sales not possible yet.)

OVERSEAS CUSTOMERS

Please check our website for delivery deadlines if important. Weight prohibits the inclusion of the Scottish Field guide to overseas buyers.

DEALS & DELIVERIES DEADLINE—SEE BACK PAGE.

TOP SHELF:

Last year's most popular deal is repeated: buy any two 'Classic Malts', get a free bottle of Glen Ord

OB CRAGGANMORE — 3Δ	12	40%	£ 23.50	Buy
OB DALWHINNIE — 2	15	43%	£ 23.50	any 2
OB GLENKINCHIE	10	43%	£ 23.50	for a
OB LAGAVULIN — 5Δ	16	43%	£ 28.90	free 70cl
OB OBAN — 4	14	43%	£ 26.50	Glen
OB TALISKER — 5Δ	10	46%	£ 25.50	Ord

SAVING.....

OB ABERFELDY	12	40%	£ 21.90	£ 4.00
OB AN CNOC (Knockdhu)	12	40%	£ 17.90	£ 3.70
OB ARDBEG — 5Δ	10	46%	£ 20.90	£ 3.00
OB ARDBEG — 4Δ	17	40%	£ 25.80	£ 3.00
OB ARDBEG — Provenance	'74/23	56%	£ 195.00	£ 50.00
CC ARDBEG	'90/11	40%	£ 19.90	£ 3.60
OB AUCHENTOSHAN — 1	10	40%	£ 17.90	£ 4.00
OB AUCHENTOSHAN — Three Wood		43%	£ 25.90	£ 6.50
OB AUCHENTOSHAN — WB	'78/18	59%	£ 31.60	£ 10.00
OB AUCHENTOSHAN — WB	'75/21	55%	£ 51.20	£ 10.00
OB BALBLAIR—WB, min & glass	33	45%	£ 99.00	£ 21.00
OB BALVENIE	10	40%	£ 18.90	£ 4.00
OB BALVENIE — Dbl Wood — 2	12	40%	£ 21.90	£ 4.00
OB BALVENIE — Single Barrel	'84/16	50%	£ 32.90	£ 5.00
OB BALVENIE — Port Wood	21	40%	£ 38.50	£ 4.40
OB BENROMACH	15	40%	£ 23.90	£ 4.00
OB BOWMORE — Legend		40%	£ 15.90	£ 4.00
OB BOWMORE	12	40%	£ 18.50	£ 4.70
OB BOWMORE — Mariner — 4	15	43%	£ 22.30	£ 5.60
OB BOWMORE — Δ	17	43%	£ 28.50	£ 7.10
OB BOWMORE — Darkest — Δ		43%	£ 26.60	£ 7.00
OB BOWMORE — Dusk		50%	£ 26.90	£ 7.00
OB BOWMORE — Dawn		52%	£ 26.90	£ 7.00



MIDDLE SHELF:

				SAVE.....
OB BOWMORE — D	25	43%	£ 89.00	£ 30.00
OB BOWMORE — D — Δ	30	43%	£ 124.00	£ 30.00
OB BUNNAHABHAIN — 4	12	40%	£ 18.90	£ 5.00
OB-dCAOL ILA	15	43%	£ 29.90	£ 2.00
OB-dCLYNELISH	14	43%	£ 29.90	£ 2.00
OB-dDALUAIN — 3	16	43%	£ 27.90	£ 2.00
OB-dROSEBANK	12	43%	£ 29.90	£ 2.00
OB DALMORE — 3	12	40%	£ 18.90	£ 6.00
OB CARDHU	12	40%	£ 20.90	£ 4.40
OB GLENFIDDICH — 2	12	40%	£ 18.90	£ 3.00
OB GLENFIDDICH — Solera — 315	40%	£ 22.90	£ 6.00	
OB GLENFIDDICH	18	40%	£ 32.50	£ 7.40
OB GLEN GARIOCH	15	43%	£ 19.90	£ 5.00
OB GLEN GARIOCH — WB	'78/18	59%	£ 31.60	£ 10.00
OB GLENGOYNE — 1	10	40%	£ 19.90	£ 2.00
OB GLENGOYNE — Δ	17	43%	£ 28.90	£ 7.40
OB GLENMORANGIE — 2	10	40%	£ 20.90	£ 2.00
OB GLENMORANGIE — Port	12+	43%	£ 21.90	£ 4.00
OB GLENMORANGIE — Madeira	12+	43%	£ 21.90	£ 4.00
OB GLENMORANGIE — Sherry	12+	43%	£ 21.90	£ 4.00
OB GLENMORANGIE — Δ	15	43%	£ 26.40	£ 4.60
OB GLENMORANGIE	18	43%	£ 35.50	£ 4.40
OB GLENMORANGIE — S Reserve	43%	£ 22.00	£ 2.90	
OB GLENMORANGIE — WB	'77/21	43%	£ 51.00	£ 8.90
OB G'MORANGIE — Original 50cl	'74/25	43%	£ 95.00	£ 74.00
OB GLEN MORAY — Chardonnay	40%	£ 14.50	£ 2.00	
OB GLEN MORAY — WB	'59/40	51%	£ 435.00	£ 90.00

BOTTOM SHELF:

OB GLENROTHES	'89/12	43%	£ 29.20	£ 6.00
OB GLENTURRET	12	40%	£ 20.90	£ 3.00
OB GLENTURRET	15	40%	£ 35.50	£ 4.00
OB GLENTURRET	18	40%	£ 49.90	£ 4.10

SAVE.....

OB HIGHLAND PARK — 3Δ	12	40%	£ 19.90	£ 4.00
OB INVERARITY — 2	10	40%	£ 17.90	£ 2.00
OB INVERARITY — ISLAY — 5	10	40%	£ 20.90	£ 3.00
OB INVERARITY — Ancestral — 314	40%	£ 23.90	£ 4.00	
OB ISLE OF JURA	10	40%	£ 18.90	£ 4.00
OB KNOCKANDO	'87/12	40%	£ 15.90	£ 5.70
G&MLINKWOOD	15	40%	£ 23.20	£ 4.00
OB LOCHNAGAR (Royal) — 3	12	40%	£ 20.90	£ 3.40
OB LONGMORN — 3Δ	15	45%	£ 21.90	£ 5.00
OB MACALLAN — 3	10	40%	£ 19.90	£ 4.00
OB-dMORTLACH	16	43%	£ 29.90	£ 2.00
OB OLD PULTENEY — 4	12	40%	£ 18.70	£ 3.50
OB-dROSEBANK	12	43%	£ 29.90	£ 2.00
OB SPRINGBANK	10	46%	£ 22.50	£ 2.00
OB STRATHISLA	12	43%	£ 18.90	£ 3.00
OB TAMNAVULIN — 35cl	12	40%	£ 7.50	£ 2.50
OB TAMATIN	10	40%	£ 17.40	£ 2.50

THE 'CLASSIC MALTS' DISTILLERS EDITION (— DE)

OB CRAGGANMORE — DE	'85/15	43%	£ 30.50	£ 3.00
OB DALWHINNIE — DE	1985	43%	£ 30.90	£ 3.00
OB GLENKINCHIE — DE	1986	43%	£ 30.90	£ 3.00
OB LAGAVULIN — DE	1984	43%	£ 34.60	£ 3.00
OB OBAN — DE	1985	40%	£ 30.90	£ 3.00
OB TALISKER — DE	1988	46%	£ 32.90	£ 3.00

SOME LIQUEURS

OB GLENTURRET — Malt Liqueur	35%	£ 18.00	£ 1.70
OB HEATHER CREAM	17%	£ 9.40	£ 1.50
OB OLD PULTENEY LIQUEUR		£ 11.90	£ 3.00

BEST DEAL OF THE LOT! (?):

BUY ANY 4 OR MORE MALTS FROM OUR STOCK LIST AND 2 OR MORE BOTTLES OF LOCH FYNE FOR FREE UK DELIVERY!

OB LOCH FYNE	40%	£15.30
--------------	-----	--------

Check lfw.co.uk for any late deals and up to date availability.

ON BUYING A DISTILLERY

Charles MacLean

Have you ever dreamed of owning a malt whisky distillery in Scotland? I can assure you there are many who do: I have been asked to advise half a dozen interested parties over the past two years. Trouble is, distilleries don't often come up for sale, and when they do, their owners are often reluctant to allow the purchaser to continue to distil whisky, since they have probably been closed because there is surplus production. And this is just the first hurdle to jump...

One such dreamer is the London-based wine merchant, Mark Reynier, but unlike most, he has realised his dream. Here's how it came about.

Together with his partner, Simon Coughlin, Mark began to bottle odd casks of single malt whisky in the early 1990s, under the label 'Murray McDavid' – his maternal grandparents' surnames. In 1996 they were joined by Gordon Wright, former marketing director for Springbank Distillery, Campbeltown, from whom they had been buying occasional casks since 1991.

The dream of owning a distillery began to shape itself in their minds about then. They made a pitch for Islay's Ardbeg Distillery in 1997 and were runners up to Glenmorangie; soon after this they heard that Bruichladdich Distillery, also on the fabled whisky isle, might be available. Its owners, Jim Beam Brands, had mothballed it in 1994 but seemed uncertain what to do with it. I remember telephoning JBB's Finance Director in about 1998 on behalf of another interested party and he was very oblique: "We might be prepared to sell to the right people, but the distillery is not officially for sale", etc. Mark will have received the same perplexing reply, but he persisted for four years and was rewarded at last, in January 2000, when JBB said they would sell for £6.5 million (which included several thousand casks of mature whisky at various ages) on condition he obtained the backing of a major bank.

"The Bank of Scotland said they would support the venture to the tune of £3 million, provided I raised the balance from private investors. I don't think they believed I could do it but I discussed it with friends and customers. The support for such a home-spun venture was heartening, especially since we were not an industrial giant, with huge financial credibility. At last I had forty-eight investors, all private: one third of the equity came from Islay and over half from Scotland. I went back to the Bank, who evidently were shocked that I had succeeded and that they now had to take me seriously! JBB's closing date was 12pm on Friday 12th December; by 10am we were still £300,000 short, but were assured that the money had been 'sent' but had been lost in cyberspace – and from another branch



of the Bank of Scotland! At 11.59am with one minute to spare, the funds were in place. Phew! For reasons I never understand it took a further week to shift the funds to JBB and we took possession, 30 minutes after the birth of my first child – and ten years of trying! One hell of a day!" Although the distillery was technically operational, a lot of repair and restoration work had to be done. Reynier and his partner were incredibly fortunate in managing to tempt Jim McEwan, former Distillery Manager at Bowmore and a legendary brand ambassador for malt whisky and Scotland, to sacrifice his pension and join them as Director of Production. If anybody knows about distilling, Jim does. He began working in distilleries thirty-eight years ago as an apprentice cooper and his passion for whisky is matched only by his love for his homeland, Islay. "In a small way, I believe Bruichladdich can be a catalyst for rebuilding the island community. Not all the youngsters who go to Glasgow or London for degrees want to stay away. We need to bring them back, but there has to be something to come back to."

Using a team of mainly local men, Jim set about putting the distillery to rights in January this year. The first spirit flowed from the stills at 8.26 am on 29th May. It was a nail-biting moment; when anything is replaced at a distillery, people get nervous that the spirit character might change. In this case, Jim had to wait for far longer than he expected for the foreshots – the first running of the still – to clear so he could start saving spirit. "We couldn't look at each other," he says, "for fear of breaking down into tears".

On September 6th Jim and his team launched their new range of Bruichladdich single malts, at 10, 15 and 20 years old, all at 46%Vol and bottled without colouring or chill-filtration. I was there, and can assure you that they are outstandingly good. I have never been a fan of Bruichladdich, but these whiskies are something else. It just shows what you can do when you have someone who really knows what they are doing to select your casks. Just another thing for those who dream about owning a malt whisky distillery to bear in mind...



COLLECTABLES...

A year ago **Macallan** established a think tank of whisky specialists to consider what to do with their stocks of aged whiskies (see Glen Barlow SWR 14). The first result of these workshops is the '1861' or 'McWilliam', a faithful replica of our favourite bottle from their archives (£89) with over 17,000 produced it's still very desirable. Sales have shown our thinking to be popular. Also comes the first of a series of Vintages, each of finite and declared quantity, The 1951 (632 bottles) is £1350; the 1961 with half as many bottles (379) is a relative bargain at £725.

The **Laphroaig—Erskine Hospital** bottles (£290) are described on the back page and selling well to Islay fans.

Balvenie Islay Cask Finish (steady Dave!) is nearly sold out. A huge quantity has been moved and it wobbles between being collectable or drinkable; now one per person. (£53.90).

At £36.90 the **Glengoyne Scottish Oak** finish (Dave?) is a bargain, the right combination of quantity (5,000) and price for a genuinely unique and interesting product. Previously all casks have been imported, local oak being better for warships or charcoal for iron and gunpowder, hoard one and drink one.

We're down to the very last few cases of **Aberlour a'bunah Silver Label** (£65) one of the most innovative and impressive presentations; 2,000 bottles only.

...and DRINKABLES

All three **Bruichladdichs** are as expected—superb! The 10yo—traditional style; 15yo—slightly sherried, biscuity and fruity; 20yo—a sublime whisky.

We got a wonderful surprise when we got round to opening the **Ledaigs** on our list—very peaty (again, bottlings had gone quiet) and great quality; the 15yo is good, the 20 worthwhile. That **Ardbeg** 1977 is getting low and the peatiest yet. **Bunnahabhain** and **Glengoyne** have been exceptional—stock profiles at the distillery mean that we are drinking much older whisky than declared on the label! The 'Goyme is the current personal favourite; crisp apples!

A new range of un-chillfiltered malts from **Signatory** contains top sellers, in particular the oaky old highlander Millburn, the fruity Glen Rothes and the long finishing Caol Ila.

We're looking forward to an OB Port Ellen, PE's getting expensive, so hesitation ill-advised. Rare Malts have four new bottlings imminent including a promising Glen Mhor, Brora, Millburn and Bladnoch. The current **Glenury** and **Teaninich** are fantastic, big old-fashioned highland styles, really chewy. **Tamnavulin** at 28 years is not something that many may consider but if you want balanced complexity with chewy fruitiness....dram on!



A CHEQUERED HISTORY

Dave Broom

It was a beautiful day on the Dufftown golf course. Grant Grant-Grant (though it might have been Gordon Gordon, historians disagree) was on the 17th fairway. "Pass me m'two wood," was what he meant to say but, mind already on the 19th hole and the reassuring comfort of leather armchair and tweed carpet, out came: "Make mine a double wood, caddy!" With that, the 'finish' bandwagon began to roll. Balvenie (owned by a distant relative) latched onto Grant-Grant's idea and Glenmorangie followed soon after. UDV sought out the most obscure types of fortified wine in the world. Allied started a programme then forgot the question, while Bowmore sent Ginger Willie out in a rowing boat to try and salvage the wine barrels that had fallen into Lochindaal after Jim McEwan had shown everyone the correct way to load a puffer.

Like all great ideas the principle was fiendishly simple. Take a mature malt whisky aged in bourbon cask and give it a glossy new coat by finishing it for a short period in a cask that had previously held another liquid [sherry, port, Madeira]. You got the character of the original malt, but with a new twist.

Those sun-dappled days of joyous optimism have long gone. Those fresh-faced youths who so happily skipped down the finish lane have become haunted figures, obsessed with finding new barrels to finish their product in. "Just one more", they are heard to whisper to their MDs, "I promise, it will be the last". The addiction is so far advanced that rumour has it that Glenmorangie has placed security guards outside Bill Lumsden's bedroom after he was caught trying to smuggle a consignment of Zimbabwean Gewurztraminer barrels into Warehouse No1 under cover of darkness.

The situation is now so out of control that barrel dealers, taking their inspiration from Burke & Hare, are breaking into the warehouses of famous chateaux, port lodges and sherry bodegas and making off with their stock. Every night, the residents of Jerez are woken by cries of "Get yer hands off my butt!" There are armed patrols on the streets of Vila Nova de Gaion the lookout for suspicious Scotsmen with large bulges under their jackets. Colombian cartels are rumoured to be trying to muscle in on the action.

And still they come. Finished whiskies of every hue, of every age, doubly matured in dubiously acquired barrels from the world's wine regions are flooding the market. These days it's 'unfinished' products which are the innovative newcomers. The industry is in the grip of a weird madness. Don't get me wrong. I too like finished products, but Grant-Grant's slip of the tongue on the Dufftown golf course opened up a Pandora's box. Not only must every firm have a finish, but must have

a finish that no one else has tried before. The problem is that in this relentless push for the new frontier the original principle of finishing has been forgotten, namely putting a different spin on the distillery character. Now the finish has become more important than the whisky rather than the other way round. Fact is, while some—indeed many—work beautifully, you can cover up a lot of faults with a finish: refresh a woody old malt for example, while there are some which simply don't work. If I want the flavour of new American oak barrels then I'll buy a bourbon thank you very much. Neither do I want a whisky that tastes (and looks) like you've accidentally poured a dram into someone's half-empty wine glass. What started off as a production-led innovation has become marketing madness. It's been said that finishes are a way to stimulate the market, to attract new drinkers yet when I talk to brand managers they admit, somewhat sadly, that the people who buy finishes aren't new consumers but existing whisky drinkers. This isn't about 'growing the category' it's about ensuring that people keep buying your brand. Hard-nosed marketing lies behind the two new Islay finishes, hybrids which combine two strong brands 'Balvenie/Grouse' and 'Islay'. Another box has been opened. A source has told me that one distiller is working on a Port Ellen Speyside finish, while new independent bottler Alba Quercus is currently taking a malt on tour around Scotland, finishing the whisky for six months in each of the regions, ending it with a period in herring barrels to capture the original Campbeltown reek. The German market is reportedly very excited by this innovation. What we've ended up with here is the whisky finish whisky, which I'm sure you'll agree is a wonderfully post-modern notion, though one which isn't that distant from that unfashionable old-time concept, blending.

Maybe we could have coped with our credulity being stretched that little bit further had Grant Grant-Grant not sat down at the 19th hole, once again within earshot of local distillers and asked for "A Family Reserve and a Caley IPA". "What a combination", he cried to no-one in particular. "Someone should bottle this." You know the rest and you also know that it won't stop there. As soon as one firm brings out a new finish all its rivals have to trump it.

There are currently research teams in Edinburgh's Diggers dribbling McEwan's 80/- into nips of White Horse. There's a Fowler's Wee Heavy and Tennent's Super finish in development. There's even talk of the half an a half an a fish supper finish. I can reveal that Jim Beam trying to force Richard Paterson to make an Aftershock finish triggered the MBO at Whyte & MacKay. That's not all... Last week I heard of plans to use ex-Finlandia vodka barrels to do a Finnish finish.

BEYOND DISTILLING pt.I

GAVIN D SMITH

We have commissioned Gavin to guide us on the journey your dram takes between the malt distillery and your tumbler. Future articles will explore this fascinating world of logistics, bottling, packaging, etc.

It may seem unseemly and unseasonal to divert your attention from the notion of rich, golden malts consumed beside a blazing log fire with a favourite Labrador draped over your feet. However, we are about to talk not turkey but gin.

This is because that most quintessentially English drink is now almost as Scottish as whisky. Around three out of every four bottles of gin produced in Britain actually originate in Scotland, and worse still, for the malt purist, that most quintessentially Russian drink Smirnoff vodka is also a product of Scotia's shores.

Far from having its origins somewhere in the Home Counties, Gordon's London Dry Gin is distilled exclusively at United Distillers & Vintners' Cameronbridge distillery, close to the village of Windygates, on the banks of the River Leven in the county of Fife. Here Grain Neutral Spirit (GNS) for Gordon's and Tanqueray gins, Smirnoff and a range of 'sweetened products' is distilled alongside vast quantities of grain whisky for use in United Distillers & Vintners plethora of blends.

If your idea of a Scottish distillery is something built from whitewashed stone, crowned with bold copper pagodas, then a visit to Cameronbridge might come as quite a shock. The plant is vast in scale and modern in design, and its buildings betray nothing of their function until you get close enough to see that the two glass-fronted structures the size of blocks of flats house a range of stills. One contains three Coffey stills for grain whisky production, while the second is home to nine patent stills for Grain Neutral Spirit production.

There are no pagodas, not even cosmetic ones, to make the nostalgic visitor feel comfortable, though the distillery, in fact, has a long and honourable heritage, and a number of 19th century stone buildings remain, hemmed in by their newer and bolder neighbours.

A large, imposing redbrick building stands at Markinch, a couple of miles from Cameronbridge, and although no longer connected with whisky, it still bears the name of Haig in large letters. This was the centre of the Haig whisky empire for more than a century, from its construction in 1877 until its closure during the 1980s.

Historically, Fife is very much Haig country, and no Scottish family can claim a longer involvement with distilling. Back in 1655 one Robert Haig was re-



quired to appear before the Kirk Session for the heinous crime of distilling on the Sabbath, and from the 18th century onwards, Haigs were major players in the Lowland distilling movement.

Robert's great-great-grandson John married into an equally powerful Lowland whisky dynasty when he wed Margaret Stein in 1751, and the couple's five sons trained as distillers at the Stein-owned Kilbagie distillery. The youngest of the five Haig boys was William, who went on to build his own Seggie distillery at Guardbridge, near St Andrews, which he passed on to his son John in 1837. John was already proving to be a chip off the old block, however, having taken out a licence for a malt distillery at Cameronbridge in 1824, while still in his early twenties.

In 1830 John decided to listen to what his cousin Robert Stein of Kilbagie had been saying about a new-fangled type of 'continuous' still he had developed, which had the potential to produce spirit far more quickly, cheaply and efficiently than traditional pot stills. The first pair of Stein's continuous stills outside of Kilbagie was installed at Cameronbridge, and amazingly, one of them remained in use until 1929.

Initially they produced 'silent malt' spirit, but by the time that distillery chronicler Alfred Barnard visited during the mid-1880s, Cameronbridge was also equipped with a pair of more efficient Coffey stills and was turning out mainly grain spirit, utilising a variety of cheaper grains rather than the traditional malted barley favoured by Scottish pot still distilleries. In addition to the two Steins and the two Coffeys, a pair of pot stills survived, and malt whisky was made at Cameronbridge until the 1920s.

Writing of Cameronbridge, Alfred Barnard noted, "The actual buildings cover about 14 acres, and the Bonded Warehouses are capable of stowing 3,000,000 gallons... The whisky made here is said to have no rival in the world. There are several kinds manufactured, first patent "Grain Whisky", second "Pot Still Irish", third "Silent Malt", and fourth "Flavoured Malt". The annual output is 1,300,000 gallons, but this could be increased if necessary".

A few of the current statistics available

from UDV's Communications Manager Peter Smith are enough to give you a sense of just how much John Haig's original Lowland malt distillery by the Leven has grown and developed over the years, recently building on the reputation for diversity it enjoyed in Barnard's day.

The actual buildings occupy a 75-acre site, and in a fortnight the distillery produces more spirit than many reasonably large malt distilleries do in a year. Annual output of grain whisky is around the 70 million litres of alcohol mark, and grain neutral spirit around 25mla per year. 170,000 tonnes of wheat—most of it grown quite locally in Fife, the Lothians and Angus—are consumed by the plant each year, along with 2.7bn litres of water. Some 100,000 tonnes of animal feed are recycled annually by the distillery.

The current Coffey still house was constructed during the 1960s, and two of its three stills are more than 30 years old. The third was transferred from Carsebridge distillery when it fell silent in 1983, as the old Distillers Company Ltd began a programme of closures that would result in the concentration of DCL—later United Distillers—grain distilling at Cameronbridge and Port Dundas in Glasgow. Despite the many advances in technology of all kinds, the basic still design remains much the same as that developed by Aeneas Coffey and patented in 1831.

In 1989 Cameronbridge changed from being a large-scale grain whisky distillery into a 'dual-purpose' site, when United Distillers' Grain Neutral Spirit operation was transferred to Fife from Wandsworth in London, and 24-hour, seven days a week working practices were introduced. Now GNS for white spirits and 'sweetened products' such as Archers, Pimms and Gordon's Sloe Gin, was produced alongside grain spirit destined for blended whisky six or seven years down the line.

Before the expansion, Cameronbridge employed over 200 people, yet despite the vast increase in output, today's workforce is around the 120 mark, principally due to greater automation. Four men work in the main control-room, conducting the actual distilling via computer screens.

Such is the requirement for quality con-

trol at every stage of production that twice as many employees are to be found in the on-site laboratory, where rows of miniature stills are active, performing test distillations, with juniper and coriander for gin manufacture being subjected to stringent analysis. Sadly, the miniature stills are not for sale to curious members of the general public – not even as Christmas presents for LFW customers. “The overall quality of what we produce is hugely important”, says General Manager Billy Mitchell, “because it supports very important brands worldwide”.

Following the merger between United Distillers and International Distillers & Vintners in 1998 a considerable amount of rationalisation was required, and one aspect of that rationalisation was the concentration of UK white spirit production at Cameronbridge. The White Spirits Complex dates from 1999, and it produces Gordon’s and Tanqueray gins and Smirnoff vodka.

The new complex contains the Gordon’s gin stills that were formerly located at Laindon in Essex, and the undoubted star of the new stillroom is Old Tom, a gin still which has been in continuous use since the reign of George III. There is something quite surreal about finding a still that was making gin while Bonnie Prince Charlie was alive and drinking brandy in exile in Rome cheek-by-jowl with an ultra-modern computer-controlled room in a two year old building. Across from the control room are 11 stainless steel Smirnoff columns, where charcoal filtration of the Russian tipple takes place.

For those of us who like our stills copper-coloured and curvaceous the old riveted gin stills are comfortingly reminiscent of the still house of a malt distillery, and below the control room is a marvellously fragrant ‘botanicals’ store, where the high-tech world is again left behind for a few moments, and the



aroma of juniper, camomile, angelica and coriander escapes from old-fashioned hessian sacks.

The fashionable lemon-flavoured drink Smirnoff Ice has been produced at Cameronbridge since September 2001, having been developed at Santa Vittoria in Italy, and in the run up to Christmas demand for it was stretching capacity at Cameronbridge. As Billy Mitchell explains of the changed dynamics, “With the grain spirit for whisky there is about a seven year gap between production and use, but now we can bring in wheat today and in ten days time it can be Gordon’s gin”.

Grain whisky production is still at the heart of the Cameronbridge operation, however, and its grain is to be found in all UDV blends to a greater or lesser degree. With Port Dundas and ownership of 50% of Edinburgh’s North British grain distillery in addition to Cameronbridge, UDV has between 35 and 40% of the total grain whisky market in Scotland.

Contrary to popular belief, grain whiskies from the country’s eight grain distilleries are far from being characterless ‘silent spirit’. North British, for example, is made with maize, and is tangier and sharper in flavour than the more gentle, slightly sweeter Cameronbridge, distilled principally from wheat.

“Our role in life is to produce a clean, consistent spirit for blenders to hang other things on”, says Billy Mitchell. Not all the grain whisky ‘make’ of Cameronbridge goes for blending, however. Some is bottled as Cameron Brig single grain, and enjoys an enthusiastic local following in Fife.

For those of a technical bent, the process of making grain spirit at Cameronbridge begins with the wheat being cooked under pressure in giant cookers, then as much as 10% malt is added to help release fermentable sugars during mashing. Each mash takes some 44 hours. Cameronbridge boasts no fewer than 26 large washbacks,

where the wash undergoes two days of fermentation—less than it would in a malt distillery.

The fermented wash at 7.5% is then either directed into the Coffey stills to produce grain whisky or the column stills of the neighbouring GNS plant. Those of a technical bent will already be comfortable with the complexities of what happens in the twin analyser and rectifier columns of the Coffey still, and the rest of us can content ourselves with the knowledge that grain whisky is distilled to 94.8% and GNS to 96.3%.

The grain whisky is taken away to be casked and matured, while the GNS that is not processed on site into gin or vodka is tankered to nearby Leven, where in the ‘SPA’ (Sweetened Products Area) Pimms, Archers, Gordon’s Sloe Gin and Smirnoff Ice are miraculously created from it by a process of ‘in-line’ mixing, involving the addition of flavouring and sugar to computer-controlled recipes. The ‘stickies’, as the SPA products are colloquially known, are also bottled at Leven, with the exception of Smirnoff Ice, along with gin and vodka distilled at Cameronbridge. The entire world output of Pimms and Gordon’s Sloe Gin is produced at Leven, which is also the only UK site making Archers and the coconut-flavoured rum drink Malibu.

The Leven site dates from 1973 and covers 150 acres, including warehousing, blending, sweetened product, packaging and coopering operations. It currently handles 141 different brands and employs 440 permanent staff. A few years ago it was concerned solely with whisky, but today some eighty percent of its business involves packaging white spirits. According to Billy Mitchell, “Taking Cameronbridge and Leven as one, probably no other site in the world has the diversity we have here”.

Now, if you wish, you may replace the Labrador and go back to thinking about those malts. Admit it, though, a Scotch G&T would slip down nicely before lunch...



MIRROR IMAGE

A 100 year old advertising mirror has returned to its spiritual home—well almost! Measuring a massive 10 feet by 4 it is far too big to be displayed in our shop and now has to reside in The George Hotel, across the road.

The mirror, featured in a recent Phillips auction in Edinburgh, advertises four whiskies sold by William Foults & Co. 'Distillers of High Class Scotch Whiskies—Paisley, Ardrishaig & London' including the Loch Fyne on sale for 4/- (or 20p).

Several people called to tell us about it and as owners of the Loch Fyne brand we just had to have this monster addition to our heritage—never mind that we had nowhere to store it!

The Loch Fyne trademark was registered in 1884 by J. M. Borthwick and passed to William Foults with their acquisition of the Glenfyne Distillery at Ardrishaig in 1889. On liquidation in 1919 the assets were acquired by renowned Glasgow whisky brokers Robertson & Baxter, from whom Loch Fyne Whiskies bought the trade mark in 1995. We decided that the mirror was part of the brand and something that many other brand owners would be very envious of. It was a bargain at any price—although a significant cost was moving it from Edinburgh to Argyll!

GEORGE URQUHART

The whisky trade was saddened to learn of the death of George Urquhart, Chairman of Gordon & MacPhail, in September.

We interviewed Mr. George, as he was known by his employees, in SWR4. It is evident there what a charming and influential man he was and without argument the father of the malt whisky business that we know today. Since becoming head of G&M in 1956, he steadfastly bottled single malts for connoisseurs to enjoy and G&M gained the highest regard in the whisky industry under his guidance. The company, which employs 114 people in Elgin, is now run by his three sons and one daughter.

In 1998 he was joined by Prince Charles for the re-opening of the recently acquired and restored Benromach Distillery, a dream fulfilled.

With G&M for over 60 years, Mr. George protected the integrity of the Scotch Whisky industry through changing and challenging times. He will be a great loss to all those who knew him or enjoyed the benefit of his vision.

The interview is at lfw.co.uk/swr



THE ULTIMATE WHISKY COLLECTION...

...is how Distillery Manager John MacLellan has described this gathering of ten bottles of 1965 Bunnahabhain, each signed by one of the distillery workers involved in its production and referred to in Ian Good's interview (page 2).

"This bottling using the very last cask of 1965 was the result of suggestions made to the Chairman of our company during his visit to the distillery and all decanting, bottling and packaging was done at the distillery. The total number of bottles produced was 594 and each bottle is signed by myself and one fellow worker giving ten variations. All were sold very quickly."

A tiny quantity was made available to LFW and we realised we almost had a complete set. With the assistance of distillery administrator, Lillian Mac Arthur, appropriate swaps were made and the unique complete collection is on display in the shop. "I know of no other such collection, not even in our company" said John.



To mark Prince Charles' birthday Laphroaig gave him a cask of his favourite. Fifteen years on, HRH donated the cask to the Erskine Hospital for ex-service men and women and Allied Distillers squeezed out 270 bottles for them. Of these, 105 had a 'Craggs' and 105 a 'Barrels' label. The remainder have a third label described as 'Mansion House'; these are being retained by the Hospital for later fund-raising.

To date 46 Crag and 46 Barrel bottles have been sold, raffled or auctioned by the fund-raisers, resulting in £32,000! Each bottle comes with an elegant lidded box and an explanatory certificate signed personally by distillery manager Iain Henderson and hospital chief executive Martin Gibson.

Loch Fyne Whiskies has volunteered to sell and deliver the remaining 120 bottles. The price is £290 per bottle and all proceeds go to the hospital.



NEWS FROM LFW.CO.UK

Our Collectors' Loft in the shop is now being posted online in manageable chunks. Every two weeks or so a dozen old, rare or discontinued bottles are featured on lfw.co.uk and is, for us, a huge success! Sales have been very quick as evidently many of you are watching closely and frequently. You can access the Collectors' Loft through lfw.co.uk/news

Two new photo stories have been enjoyed by visitors. The second Islay Whisky Festival covers two long pages, pictures from which have made it into Whisky Magazine. The launch of the new Bruichladdich features more important people drinking far too much! Both of these are at lfw.co.uk/swr

Check online for new items and stock availability. All the deals featured in this SWR and any latecomers can be ordered securely online.



ALL CUSTOMERS—VIRTUAL AND REAL PLEASE NOTE

All deals offered at lfw.co.uk and in pages 6 & 7 are valid for mail order customers placing orders before **noon, Monday 17th December**. This date is also the deadline for orders being delivered in time for Christmas.

Online orders may not appear to include certain deals but be assured they will be included when serviced, if available.

Merry Christmas and a Good New Year to all our friends and customers.

SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW is free to all *bona fide* mail order customers. **If you have not bought by mail order from the last (Spring) catalogue and do not buy from the accompanying (Autumn) list then we will not be troubling you again.** We are no longer sending out Stock Lists and SWRs 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 further mailings until you have bought by mail order from us. Your name will not be passed to any other organisation.

© COPYRIGHT RESERVED 2001

LOCH FYNE WHISKIES

Tel. 01499 302219 e-mail shop@lfw.co.uk