



SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW™

EDITION 20

AUTUMN 2003

YOU SAY POTATO

Here's an email from Dave Broom, the only opinionated whisky writer worth reading (come to think of it, the only opinionated whisky writer...)

I see Bell's new incarnation is "a rich blend of pure malts" Can they make things any more confusing??

Discuss - d

I wasn't going to, but in discussion this morning (while asking if he knew anything about 'Crocodile' Dundee plc—he didn't) Dave goaded me further. He was working on a piece about the categories of Scotch and would be arguing for the elimination of 'pure', leaving 'single', 'vatted' and 'blended' as the primary definitions—with a further set of regulations, clauses & sub-definers clearly identifying authentic 'singles' (those named from the distillery of origin) or those bogus, non-attributable singles with non-attributable names. Bogus 'singles' should not be allowed to be called 'singles' but 'pure'... and so on. Amongst other things, he proposes a quality 'kite-mark' that only the 'pure'est 'single'-singles' could carry.

All with the aim of simplifying things for you lot, the punters.

Feeling mischievous I argued that, in the lay dictionary, there was nothing better than 'pure', and so more attractive than 'single' which is meaningless (and anyway only half as good as a 'double'). I countered that 'single' should be phased out, but not before 'vatted' (which half the whisky drinking world pronounces 'watted'); though 'vatted' could be permissible when describing the vatting of various casks (or 'singles'?) from a 'single' distillery prior to bottling (as a 'pure' or 'single' but not as a 'single-single').

I have no problem with 'a blend of pure malts'; it's a blend of pure malts—but it is time to work the whole thing out.

Bad Boys this edition? The usual suspects: Allied, Bacardi & Pernod—no malt activity; and the numpties at Macallan—too much too fast—again. They won't give us (the UK) the latest replica—sorry, you can be justifiably pissed-off.



photo—George Jackson

AMERICAN SPIES GO UNDERCOVER

After being rumbled by the world's press, inspectors for the United States Defence Threat Reduction Agency have taken to less obvious methods to monitor Scotland's illicit production of Weapons of Mass Destruction [as, we might add, was first revealed on the cover of SWR19].

GLENCADAM

Privately owned whisky company Angus Dundee has acquired the little known east coast Glencadam Distillery which was closed in 2000 as a result of Allied's surplus capacity in distilling. Glencadam, which has already restarted distilling, is the company's second distillery joining Tomintoul which they acquired in 2000. Angus Dundee are low profile players in the industry; they trade in own label and bulk whisky and are headed by Terrance Hillman, formerly of Burn Stewart (see this edition's interview feature).

TULLIBARDINE

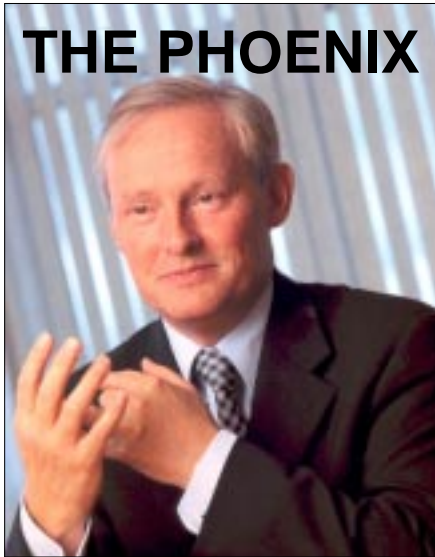
Edinburgh property developers have bought Tullibardine Distillery, closed since 1994, to develop an up-market retail park headed by Baxter's Foods. The new owners say they will finance whisky production from the sale of land...

THAT STORY

The WMD story made it into almost every national paper in the world including an editorial in the *Independent* and the whole of the (remaining) cover of the *Express*. France's *Figaro* also reported the story on its front page (with a telling nationalistic glee). Bruichladdich's press cutting service reported an unprecedented degree of coverage. The official response from the DTRA spies is that they have 'no official interest in Bruichladdich Distillery' (well which one then?). When quizzed by public relations agents eager to learn the trick, MD Mark Reynier said, "It's just an Islay thing, a Bruichladdich thing."



THE PHOENIX



Ian Bankier has tired of being in the spotlight recently but fortunately had just one interview left in him for the SWR.

LFW: What is your job?

I am chief executive of CL World Brands, a new company created at the beginning of 2003 to hold all of the drinks industry investments of CL Financial of Trinidad. This includes the best part of Angostura, a majority stake in Todhunter of Florida—a major producer of rum and other alcoholics, cooking wines and vinegars—the whole of Hine, two French distribution companies and Burn Stewart. There are four operating bases: France, the Caribbean, United States and Scotland. Each is a fully-fledged company with its own managing and sales directors and interfaces with a network within CL World Brands, now headquartered here in East Kilbride. We in turn report to CL Financial.

LFW: What is CL Financial?

A conglomerate with four prime interests: energy (oil & gas), financial services, real estate and now beverages. The group has turnover of billions of dollars and has thousands of employees.

It is basically the creation of Mr. Laurence Duprey, a visionary Trinidadian of French extraction who owns most of the stock and likes to create and build things and a better economy for Trinidad and Tobago; his enterprises represent a very substantial part of the gross national product. CL started in Life Insurance and then got into other financial services; it has a very substantial part of one of the island's biggest banks.

It's a family business; I think CL stands for Cyril Lucian, the grandfather. Now because Laurence has no successors, part of his logic in acquiring Burn Stewart is to find competent management capable of looking after his empire; he's past 'retirement' age.

The buy-out of Burn Stewart has been described as a 'Trojan Horse' deal, where we have sold ourselves but actually are

now inside the gates; a nice description. CL Financial have a lot of assets with exposure to the Caribbean and they wanted to get a global rating. Beverages are a way to get exposure to a number of markets around the world with a relatively low risk. I think there is going to be more consolidation in the drinks industry with many other opportunities—now we have quite a deep pocket behind us.

CL moved into drinks in 1998 with the acquisition of Angostura who, in addition to the famous bitters brand have a substantial rum distillery in Trinidad. They are a very significant supplier to Bacardi (who don't actually produce any rum themselves).

We also have a stake in Belvedere S.A. who own three Polish vodka distilleries and enjoy a big part of the domestic Polish vodka market.

LFW: What are Angostura bitters?

They won't give me the recipe! It's a mixture of spices, herbs, and botanicals on an alcohol base. It started as a medicinal compound by a German, Doctor Siegert, and by the turn of the century it became a part of cocktails. Soon the British aristocracy took it for their pink gins and so it travelled around the world. The UK is the third biggest market, mainly in cocktail bars. One of our tasks is to find new uses: cooking, coffee, ice cream, fruit, water... an 'Angostura Spring'—water with a couple of dashes in it—is very nice!

Angostura is a high profile company and one of the jewels in the Trinidad crown, it's very prestigious. At present I go to Trinidad every second month. Angostura is part of my charge.

LFW: Were you at the start of Burn Stewart?

No, I started in 1994. Originally Burn Stewart was a small whisky-broking company owned by the Hillman family who were well known in the industry. In 1988 Bill Thornton, formerly of Hiram Walker, bought Burn Stewart as he wanted a vehicle to create a fully vertically integrated Scotch Whisky company and then to buy some brands. He did very well—the only person since the war to create such a whisky company—but the brand-buying ambition was never fulfilled as events in the marketplace conspired against him.

He had narrowly missed buying Whyte & Mackay from Brent Walker. As he didn't want to be in the same position again whereby he was held up by speed of funds, in 1991 he listed Burn Stewart on the London Stock Exchange to get access to the capital market and started looking for another Whyte & Mackay.

At the time of the flotation Burn Stewart had the Scottish Leader blend and Deanston Distillery but the principal product was bulk blend and 'own label' supermarket bottlings. He was handicapped that he had no branded business. I joined as a troubleshooter a couple of

years after listing, when things were beginning to get sticky. My background is finance and law—and boy! Here I had to shoot some trouble! The Scotch private label market was going seriously negative in terms of pricing and we got to our worst position in 1997 but now have dug ourselves out of it.

LFW: What went wrong?

Pricing, pricing and pricing. Look at the airline industry today—never been fuller but making less and less money. Why do people do that? In the nineties the Scotch industry got into the same pickle (still is) by cutting prices. When we started there were margins of up to 45%, now we're down to almost nothing and still going down.

Private label supermarket supply became an interesting sector in the late eighties. Supermarkets led by Marks & Spencer got the notion that a non-branded value-for-money offering was what the consumer wanted. This business made Invergordon in particular lots of money and Burn Stewart was a player as well. But it became too interesting and other significant players moved in, creating turf wars while buying business; you can't get into that sort of low cost trade except on cut-throat pricing. They brought the price down and that's the way it's been going ever since.

Similarly with bulk whisky. In the good old days bulk to Japan made millionaires of some people. Today bulk is cut-throat, penny sensitive and not sustainable if you want to create equity in your business.

Our response has been to get out of it. Burn Stewart made spectacular losses between 1997 and 2002—our margins were sliced while we were dropping business. By shaking off the low-end business we lost 35% of volume in one year. Because of the investment process unique to Scotch whisky it took three or four years to change direction, but we generated enough cash to survive that process. By and large we are now out of it. These days Invergordon are the main providers of bulk, with Angus Dundee and Inver House heavily involved as well.

LFW: How do you get out of that sort of business?

You price yourself out, make a stand, and look critically at your returns on capital. The unique thing about Scotch is you can't make it today and sell it tomorrow, so it doesn't fit the text book model of marginal pricing, efficiencies and cost reductions—you have an ongoing investment process to consider. If you go deeply into the private label and bulk supply business then you will find that you have a very large investment in a business that is very fragile.

You have got to ask yourself 'is this a good return for the money I have invested or should I have put the money in the building society?' If you have a one or two million case sales volume with the supermarkets you have a very

substantial cash investment in Scotch—but it's all for them! It's a very poor investment for the risk involved—you take the risk, and they get the profit!

We looked at ourselves critically and took a view that we would not be persuaded to continue, so we haven't had the supply contracts renewed. We still maintain business with two grocers, M&S and Waitrose, but both are added-value accounts and looking for more than just a bottle with their label on it. There is a living to be had from that. We are in the process of handing Asda over to Glenmorangie who have an appetite for this sort of business.

LFW: Why?

Glenmorangie regard themselves as having a winning formula; they have a strong brand that makes a solid contribution, but which does not come close to filling what is an enormous bottling capacity (acquired from Bell's) so they marginally cost everything else with the view that if it fills surplus capacity then they can do it. It's their choice but personally I don't think it is a robust business model.

Burn Stewart's business is now very substantially branded. We have one bulk contract remaining for a brand called Scotch Blue, the no. 2 brand in Korea. We are the sole providers and it is 'bulk' but not in the marginal spot pricing sense. They look after us and we look after them.

LFW: And your new babies.

With our recent acquisitions Burn Stewart has strong brands, three distilleries, a bottling facility in East Kilbride and a blending and maturation warehouse complex in Airdrie. Bill Thornton's dream is reality.

Burn Stewart first bought Deanston Distillery from Invergordon with whom we had a good working relationship.

Deanston single malt is not setting the heather on fire but I like it. It's unchallenging and quite sweet and so favoured as a blending Scotch; it is a permanent constituent of a number of very high profile blends.

It's now ten years since we acquired Tobermory—hitherto not very glamorous either but we have plans. Tobermory was closed more years than it was open and previously the bottling was an unaged, vatted malt because there were insufficient stocks. A while ago it became 10 year old and a single and now on our 10th anniversary it is all our liquid; previously we had to scratch around, buy a cask wherever we could. Until now we have been able to do little with it but now plan to focus on it. It will become quite glamorous because it is unique. It's the only malt from Mull, the flavour is different—neither island nor mainland—somewhere in between. There are very few such malts and Tobermory has a unique selling point.

At Tobermory distillery we have two dif-

ferent styles of distillation; about 60% of production is 'Ledaig'. The peated variant is very popular with the blenders as an alternative to Islay. The unpeated production is what goes into the 'Tobermory' bottle.

LFW: How do you tell your new owners you want £5.5m to buy a distillery?

Not just Bunnahabhain, a brand as well. I told them it was absolutely pivotal; this gives us the step up we've been waiting for. Brands like this don't come round very often and we could be waiting a long time for the next. I think that by that time they had a lot of trust in my judgement. They just said 'go for it'.

We had to slow down the negotiations to get the sale of Burn Stewart to CL sorted out first. Ian Good of Edrington was very anxious to make an announcement to the distillery workers and appreciated that we would be a benevolent owner. He was very keen to say something to relieve their concerns. In the end it was settled in April; they were all very patient.

'a troubleshooter'

Some moaned that Edrington neglected Bunnahabhain and to an extent that's true—they were not on the letter paper. Small things like that are important to people, especially if they live on an island. The transfer has given them a real change. Now they're into something as a key and that's given them a great buzz. We're thrilled to have 'Bunna'—it's a fantastic whisky. In truth I didn't realise how fantastic it was until we bought it. Some of the special casks they've bottled are sensational.

LFW: And Black Bottle a well respected blend too.

I looked at Black Bottle the first time it was up for sale, but we were not sufficiently developed in our thinking about it. At that time Highland Distillers allegedly paid a strategic price in order to protect The Famous Grouse (Black Bottle might have threatened Grouse territory). The then boss, Brian Ivory, was especially fond of Bunnahabhain and took a personal interest in the marketing. He saw a link with Bunnahabhain and Black Bottle, as do we.

LFW: But they did very little with it.

They looked after the brand very well. I have a great regard for the Edrington Group, a real example to follow, and they lead the industry properly.

The Bunnahabhain brand has been largely untouched, that's part of its attraction. Nobody has been monkeying around with the labelling and there are things that can be done for it, like giving it a nickname of "Bunna". But speaking for everyone in Burn Stewart, we are very reluctant to do anything in a hurry. We are watching it, getting to know it. I saw the acquisition of the two Bs as pivotal to Burn Stewart. We had our two

brands, Tobermory and the budget-priced Scottish Leader, plus Deanston and Wallace liqueur, but it was all hard work. The two Bs bring us several things including real credibility as a brand owner. Now we have brands with a history to them and right at the top of the sector. It's a great opportunity for us.

LFW: Black Bottle 10yo is unusual and well regarded.

I think the 10yo should be seen as part of the single malt category. We are not looking to sell hundreds of thousands of cases, just to keep it growing and keep the margins and make an acceptable return on capital—end of story. Keep it steady, look after it, and don't break it. Since buying the two Bs we have gone on to buy Hine, once a great Cognac brand but neglected under Hennessy's ownership, like Black Bottle. We plan to nurture that too.

CL World brands are in a digestion phase; we have three new brands and need to get them properly organised and trading in a sensible way, then we'll go and see what else there is. I don't think we will go into wines—we'll stick with spirits. To have a rum brand would make sense. Something will come up.

LFW: Any gripes?

I have been unimpressed by the fad of cask finishing; I think that whole thing is worrying. It opens the door to rum producers making an Islay finish. We could do this with Angostura rum—we could really mix it if we were feeling mischievous. It's a dangerous territory. As an industry we ignore the blended sector at our peril and there is a danger we are ignoring it. All our attention is on malts—they are providing big margins but our bread-and-butter is the blends, don't let's forget that. Single malts in volume terms are still less than 10%—were they to be 50% we couldn't produce it!

A common but very real concern is the turnover of people in our industry. The danger of a high 'churn' factor is that very few people act in the long-term interests of the industry. Where are the likes of Turnbull Hutton now? He thought very hard about the capacity and stocking of his distilleries and of the industry. He knew that his decisions would not only have an effect on United Distillers but on the whole of the industry for a very long time. This is not just alarmist for old-fashioned "Scotch"; it's not a make it today and sell it tomorrow product and the industry always will have surplus capacity. That needs to be managed responsibly. The legal protection that Scotch enjoys is unparalleled and can be damaged by short-term marketing strategies such as the cask finishing fad.

LFW: Favourite dram?

Bunnahabhain.

LFW: That's it?

Yes.

LFW: Thank you.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE



Turnbull Hutton

NUDGE-NUDGE!

Two years have passed since I gave up lucrative, full time work and threw in my lot with Inveraray's leading purveyor of quality Scotch. Generally speaking, this has been a harmonious relationship. Despite promises of long lunches and huge monetary rewards—neither of which ever quite materialise—I never have to have an annual review, set objectives for the year or discuss my personal development plan. In fact, apart from the odd e-mail, we can go for months without communicating. Pretty much like the last boss I had in Diageo!

To be fair to the Editor, he did send a fine case of wine last Christmas, even the odd bottle of locally produced beer has been delivered. In fact he outdid himself a month or two back just at the time Edrington had offloaded Bunnahabhain. In the post came the naffest bottle pourer ever produced anywhere, anytime in the Scotch Whisky Industry. A collector's item, he assured me. I was to keep it quiet, however, just in case the new owners wanted to claim it.

So there I was sitting quietly, post-zizz, contemplating whether or not to take the dog for a walk, read the papers, or even wash a car, when through comes the dreaded e-mail headed "Nudge, nudge", giving me his deadline and urging me to be provocative or thought provoking or even entertaining. It's at times like these, when the pressure is on, that one wonders whether or not I should retire again. Given the perks though this would be a tough call and so, I guess, I'll just have to buckle down and earn the (very) odd bottle pourer.

I'm pretty sure the Editor has no real idea of the power and influence this publication has. It is obviously read avidly by the opinion formers in Government and the Industry. Two years ago I commented on the management buy-out at Whyte & Mackay—or was it Kyndal by that time? The theme was Scottish ownership and the question was posed as to how long this would last. Slightly more than a year was the answer. The management team, practically to a man, have all left. The workers shares have all been bought back, a bottling plant

will close and we'll rename the company Whyte & Mackay. Morale is reported as being at rock-bottom. Jobs will disappear but there will be new investment at the remaining bottling plant where it is unlikely that white spirit will be bottled since there is no reason for that to be done in Scotland. Superb.

Regular readers will remember also that between writing the article and going to press, the Scottish owned Inver House "disappeared" also—new owners from the Orient taking over from the Airdrie based management. Chivas had, by that time, moved from Canadian ownership, or was it American, to French. In the intervening couple of years we've had new ownership of a former Allied distillery, two Edrington distilleries, the planned re-opening of a former Whyte & Mackay distillery, and the mothballing of God knows how many former Chivas distilleries.

'the power and influence this publication has'

These will be the Chivas distilleries which Richard Burrows categorically stated would be remaining open at the height of the Pernod take-over! They are presumably the same distilleries that have been the subject of recent enquiries as to whether they are up for sale. We are assured, however, that they are currently "mothballed" as it does not cost a lot to mothball a distillery. Rubbish. I know from bitter personal experience just how much it takes to get hitherto mothballed units back into production. So we have mothballed distilleries in traditional distilling territories. And what did we touch on in the last SWR? New distilleries seeking investors money in that traditional heartland of malt whisky distilling... the Shetland Islands! Or Ladybank, Fife. We really need to run a reality check. Not only is private investors money being sought, but public money also—yours and mine—by way of grants from Enterprise boards and the like. Do we need more malt distilleries in new areas when we can't keep those already built sustaining employment in traditional distilling areas? Let's get real.

Those of you who check into the website had an added bonus several editions back. Another rant from The Advocate—this time on litter. It is heartening to note that our beloved Scottish Executive has wakened up to the fact that the country is a midden. Would they have noticed this themselves without prompting from the SWR?

If we are therefore leading the opinion

formers, it probably behoves us to put down our wish list for the Industry—safe in the knowledge that someone will make it happen. So, in no particular order, what is it that we need or want?

I'd like those who make public pronouncements about the Industry to think before they speak. I'd like our politicians to get to grips with this industry and recognise that, as a major export earner, we get damn-all help from Government. Just look at the nonsense of duty rates, look at the grants given out to companies allegedly setting up in Scotland—only for them to disappear as quickly when a better deal is up for grabs elsewhere. Why not help the indigenous drinks producer and export earner? I'd like those individuals who are keen to develop new distilleries and the like with other people's money to put some of their own in the pot. And I'd like all those single-malt snobs to stop sniping at blended whisky—after all, without the blenders having carried the Industry for a century or more, the "new" malt drinkers would not have the opportunities they now have. And I'd really like those parasites and prostitutes that were the subject of a previous rant to think before waxing lyrical about traditional ways of distilling, that perhaps the traditions to which they refer have come about by a complete lack of investment in new equipment. Clapped out is not necessarily good.

And finally, to the Brussels-based bureaucrats and the new environmentalists... get a life. We are not polluters, we do not waste energy or need any more regulations.

There we are then. If they all read this—and act accordingly—we should be able to move forward successfully. And I can look forward, with some certainty, to future remuneration from the Editor. And not bottle pourers either!

[A bag of our new Loch Fyne fudge then.]



AN APPRECIATION

Charles MacLean

These Are a Few of My Favourite Things
from the pages of
THE SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW

First, of course, the title. **THE SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW**—weighty, authoritative, pretentious. Only those of us who receive the bulletin—this means you, Dear Reader—are aware of how flimsy is its format, how ephemeral. An example of the 1990s ‘New Brutalism’ school of amateur desk top design. All of which makes it highly collectable. Have you got a complete set, from Spring 1994? No? Too bad. You could—mine will be auctioned (complete with the envelopes the copies arrived in – an important consideration for true collectors) by Bonhams, sometime in the distant future for a very large sum.

And think how pleased we writers are to be able to style ourselves as contributors to **THE SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW**; how proud I was to be described as ‘Scotland’s foremost whisky writer’ by **THE SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW**—a citation I have used on several publications—*thanks Richard!*.

But while the format is flimsy, the contents of the SWR are the very opposite: reliable, engaging, good humoured, opinionated—even polemic at times. Fearless.

LAYOUT

The Editorial structure of the SWR has remained more or less constant:

- Editorial (of which more below);
- Interview of a leading figure in the whisky trade. The trade now regards an invitation to be interviewed as the equivalent of appearing on *Desert Island Discs* and interviewees are encouraged—indeed required—to be unusually candid in their comments. Where else have you read an industry executive claim “*We are up a tree with our bottoms showing?*”;
- Turnbull Hutton, former industry supremo and relative newcomer to the SWR but immediately part of the ethos “*Don’t say we’re not cutting edge. And don’t expect me to provide any answers. Hell, I’m The Advocate—I just pose the questions?*”;
- Contributions from a ‘Who’s Who’ of whisky writers and industry professionals covering a wide range of topics: the personal—Michael Jackson on what he does for his holidays—*Is that all you do?*; technical matters—Roger Jones the yeast manufacturer—*Speed and Violence - the magic of yeast*; historical—Robert Haydock—*Argyll’s forgotten Whisky Barons*; whimsical—Gavin Smith considering the proper use of the apostrophe in *The Angel’s Share*; or news-related matters—Dave Broom on wood finishes—*A chequered*

history. The subject matter is largely left up to the writer;

- Trade and Bottling News, where Loch Fyne Whiskies displays its current stock, special offers and recommendations—it’s easy to forget otherwise that this is a commercial publication—there’s stuff to buy, (including the quite excellent Loch Fyne blend);
- New Customer Pages—frequently asked questions with clear answers and a guide to independent bottlers, a section that reveals an ongoing recognition of the need to educate customers, both novice and experienced alike, of the fascinations of Scotch.

RANTS

Some of the best stuff in the mag is found in the editorial first column. Known in the trade as ‘Richard’s Rant’ it’s a splotic, but also supportive, comment on current movements in the whisky trade. Here are some of my favourite examples:

- [on the closure of Bell’s Cherrybank HQ in 1998] “*...leaves only those involved in production in Scotland, presumably a tiresome necessity rather akin to maintaining off-shore oil platforms... It fails to recognise the importance of the heritage required in promoting the world’s preferred spirit and smacks of commercial arrogance that wipes out carefully nurtured characters and flair for the sake of short-term efficiencies?*”.

- [on industry inertia: headline—‘The Brand and The Bland’] “*Let us hope that global recession and the subsequent poor trading results are the only reasons driving the whisky industry into mediocrity rather than the new brand managers who, from the outside, appear to have reached their coefficient of inefficiency?*”.
- [on brand managers, (again)] “*The smug new-breed brand manager must learn that it is the independents who have created the highly profitable niche market in malt whiskies – profits that he is in danger of destroying. Once the profits go, so does the excitement and, eventually, the interest: all branded toilet paper is the same?*”.

- [on Pernod Ricard] “*LFW has yet to be impressed by Pernod (to be at least polite): evidence is that of volume over style, growth over attention, failing particularly in understanding customer expectations for single malts?*”.

- [on management] “*Repeatedly the old guard bemoan the incidence of short-term appointments to key long-term, decision-making positions... many of them are moving on just as they realise that the whisky industry is unlike any other: a special, precious and delicate thing?*”.

- [on proprietors’ malt bottlings] “*Unfortunately there remains a middle-tier of distillery owners (Bacardi, Allied, Pernod) who are under the illusion that they actually own their distilleries. Eejits! This is Scotland! You don’t own things here – you are merely custodi-*



The Greatest Whisky Writer Humanity has ever produced—Charles MacLean.

Who was formerly...? Compare with the picture on page 11—see what you think...

ans! These distilleries are not just component manufacturers for your blends! They are proud, individual enterprises driven by intelligent and conscientious communities born of a heritage that produced the world’s great doctors, soldiers, inventors...”.

THANKS

Throughout, the publication bears the imprint of its creator, Richard Joynson and also that of his wife, Lyndsay, who makes good her husband’s dyslexia and limited education—according to a recent book, he was once a fish. They are to be heartily congratulated on a magazine whose modest appearance belies its big heart, its good humour, its well-informed comment.

Keep up the good work, guys!



“1990s ‘New Brutalism’ school of amateur desk top design”? - *Huh!*

You don’t have to wait for Charlie to flog off his sticky, crumpled pile of SWRs. A CD-ROM of the first 20 issues of the SWR should be available by the time you have finished reading this article, if we’ve put enough coal in the old Mac. £10 for 20 SWRs, Stock Lists since 1993 and a virtual visit to the shop; computer and batteries not included.



TROLLEY DASH TIME!

This year once more we offer more deals than ever. With every order of a 70cl bottle or more there is a **free copy of the Scottish Field Magazine** with its separate whisky feature **PLUS!** a bag of our **new Loch Fyne Fudge** (see back page).

There is also **FREE DELIVERY!**—if you buy any four (or more) malts from our Stock List and add two (or more) bottles of the **superb, award winning Loch Fyne** we'll deliver **FREE** to a UK address! (That's buy **FOUR** malts AND two Loch Fyne—yes?)

* SMALL PRINT *

These deals and freebies are while stocks last, one each, and not available in gift orders (those sent to another address).

OVERSEAS CUSTOMERS

Please check lfw.co.uk for delivery deadlines if important. Sorry, but weight may prohibit the inclusion of the free Scottish Field Magazine and/or the LF Fudge to overseas buyers.

DEALS & DELIVERIES DEADLINE

All deals offered at lfw.co.uk and on these pages are valid for mail order customers placing orders before **noon on Monday 15th December**. We can take orders up to Friday 19th and deliver after this date—but it may be too late for us to both replenish our stocks and deliver in time; deals may or may not be available.

Last year's most popular deal is repeated:

Buy any two from these 'Classic Malts', get a free bottle of Knockando - PLEASE NOTE Oban and Lagavulin are now excluded from this deal.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|-----|---------|-------------------|
| OB CRAGGANMORE — 3Δ | 12 | 40% | £ 23.90 | Buy any |
| OB DALWHINNIE — 2 | 15 | 43% | £ 23.90 | 2 for a |
| OB GLENKINCHIE | 10 | 43% | £ 23.90 | free 70cl |
| OB TALISKER — 5Δ | 10 | 46% | £ 25.90 | Knockando! |

TOP SHELF

| | | | DEAL PRICE | SAVING |
|------------------------------|--------|-----|------------|------------|
| OB AN CNOC (Knockdhu) | 12 | 40% | £ 17.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB ARDBEG — 5Δ | 10 | 46% | £ 20.50 | £ 3.00 |
| G&M ARDMORE | '87/14 | 40% | £ 23.50 | £ 3.00 |
| OB AUCHENTOSHAN — 1 | 10 | 40% | £ 17.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB AUCHENTOSHAN — 3 Wood | | 43% | £ 27.40 | £ 5.00 |
| OB-d AUCHROISK | 10 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB BALBLAIR | 16 | 40% | £ 21.50 | £ 2.00 |
| OB BALVENIE | 15 | 50% | £ 32.90 | £ 5.00 |
| OB BALVENIE — Double Wood | 12 | 40% | £ 21.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB BALVENIE | 10 | 40% | £ 20.50 | £ 2.00 |
| OB-d BENRINNES | 15 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB BENROMACH — 3Δ | 18 | 40% | £ 29.50 | £ 4.00 |
| OB-d BLADNOCH | 10 | 43% | £ 29.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB-d BLAIR ATHOL | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Legend | | 40% | £ 15.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB BOWMORE | 12 | 40% | £ 19.20 | £ 4.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Mariner — 5 | 15 | 43% | £ 22.90 | £ 5.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Δ | 17 | 43% | £ 28.60 | £ 7.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Darkest — Δ | | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 6.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Dawn (Port) | | 52% | £ 27.90 | £ 6.00 |
| OB BOWMORE — Dusk (Bordeaux) | | 50% | £ 27.90 | £ 6.00 |
| OB BRUICHLADDICH | 10 | 46% | £ 24.90 | Free glass |
| OB BRUICHLADDICH—Δ | 15 | 46% | £ 30.00 | £ 2.50 |

MIDDLE SHELF

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----|---------|--------|
| OB BRUICHLADDICH—20cl | 10 | 46% | £ 9.50 | £ 0.40 |
| OB BRUICHLADDICH—20cl | 15 | 46% | £ 10.90 | £ 1.00 |
| OB BRUICHLADDICH—20cl | 17 | 46% | £ 12.90 | £ 1.00 |
| OB BRUICHLADDICH—3 x 20cl pack | 10, 15, 17 | | £ 32.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB BUNNAHABHAIN — 4 | 12 | 40% | £ 20.40 | £ 3.50 |
| OB CAOL ILA | 12 | 43% | £ 23.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB CAOL ILA | 18 | 43% | £ 33.20 | £ 2.00 |
| OB CAOL ILA | | 55% | £ 29.50 | £ 2.00 |



| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| CC CAOL ILA | '90/13 | 40% | £ 23.70 | £ 4.00 | OB-d INCHGOWER | 14 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB CLYNELISH | 14 | 46% | £ 24.70 | £ 2.00 | OB INVERARITY — Ancestral— 3 | 14 | 40% | £ 23.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB-d DAILUAINE — 3 | 16 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 | OB INVERARITY — ISLAY — 5 | 10 | 40% | £ 20.90 | £ 3.00 |
| OB DALMORE — 3 | 12 | 40% | £ 20.60 | £ 5.00 | OB INVERARITY — 2 | 10 | 40% | £ 17.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB-d DUFFTOWN | 15 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 | OB ISLE OF JURA | 10 | 40% | £ 17.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB-d GLENDULLAN | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 | OB KNOCKANDO | '90/12 | 40% | £ 18.60 | £ 3.00 |
| OB GLEN ELGIN | 12 | 43% | £ 22.90 | £ 2.00 | OB-d LINKWOOD | 12 | 43% | £ 29.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENFIDDICH | 18 | 40% | £ 31.90 | £ 8.00 | OB LOCHNAGAR (Royal) — 3 | 12 | 40% | £ 21.30 | £ 3.00 |
| OB GLENFIDDICH — 2 | 12 | 40% | £ 19.90 | £ 2.00 | OB LONGMORN | 15 | 45% | £ 21.90 | £ 4.00 |
| OB GLENFIDDICH— Havana | 21 | 40% | £ 47.90 | £ 4.00 | OB MACALLAN — 3 | 10 | 40% | £ 21.90 | £ 3.00 |
| OB GLENFIDDICH — Solera — 3 | 15 | 40% | £ 23.90 | £ 5.00 | OB-d MANNOCHMORE | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENFIDDICH—Caoran | 12 | 40% | £ 21.60 | £ 4.00 | OB-d MORTLACH | 16 | 43% | £ 29.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLEN GARIOCH | 15 | 43% | £ 19.90 | £ 5.00 | OB OLD PULTENEY — 4 | 12 | 40% | £ 18.70 | £ 4.00 |
| OB GLENGOYNE — Δ | 17 | 43% | £ 30.30 | £ 6.00 | OB-d PITYVAICH | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENGOYNE — 1 | 10 | 40% | £ 19.90 | £ 3.00 | OB-d ROSEBANK | 12 | 43% | £ 29.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENLIVET (The) — Δ | 18 | 43% | £ 26.90 | £ 3.00 | G&M SCAPA — 2 | '89/12 | 40% | £ 22.50 | £ 3.00 |
| OB GLENLIVET (The) — 3 | 12 | 40% | £ 20.90 | £ 3.00 | OB SPEYBURN | 10 | 40% | £ 17.00 | £ 3.50 |
| OB-d GLENLOSSIE | 10 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 | OB SPRINGBANK | 10 | 46% | £ 22.50 | £ 2.00 |
| G&M GLEN MHOR | '79/21 | 40% | £ 36.30 | £ 5.00 | OB-d STRATHMILL | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — Δ | 15 | 43% | £ 26.50 | £ 4.50 | OB-d TEANINICH | 10 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — 2 | 10 | 40% | £ 21.90 | £ 2.00 | OB FAMOUS GROUSE MALT | 1991 | 40% | £ 19.50 | £ 4.00 |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — Burgundy | 43% | £ 22.50 | £ 4.00 | OB TOBERMORY | 10 | 40% | £ 16.90 | £ 3.00 | |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — Madeira | 43% | £ 22.50 | £ 4.00 | OB TOMATIN | 12 | 40% | £ 18.50 | £ 3.00 | |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — Port — 2Δ | 43% | £ 22.50 | £ 4.00 | BLENDS AND STICKIES | | | | | |
| OB GLENMORANGIE — Sherry | 43% | £ 22.50 | £ 4.00 | OB ANTIQUARY | 12 | 40% | £ 16.90 | £ 5.00 | |
| OB GLEN MORAY — Chardonnay | 40% | £ 14.90 | £ 2.00 | OB FAMOUS GROUSE — Islay Fin | 40% | £ 14.90 | £ 1.00 | | |
| OB GLEN MORAY — Wine — 2 | 12 | 40% | £ 17.70 | £ 3.00 | OB FAMOUS GROUSE — Port Fin | 40% | £ 14.90 | £ 1.00 | |
| OB GLEN ORD | 12 | 43% | £ 24.90 | £ 3.00 | OB GRANT'S — Sherry Cask Reserve | 40% | £ 11.40 | £ 1.50 | |
| OB-d GLEN SPEY | 12 | 43% | £ 27.90 | £ 2.00 | OB GRANT'S — Ale Cask Reserve | 40% | £ 11.40 | £ 1.50 | |
| LOWER SHELF | | | | | OB Johnnie Walker — BLACK | 12 | 40% | £ 18.40 | £ 1.50 |
| OB GLENROTHES | '89/12 | 43% | £ 30.20 | £ 5.00 | OB DUNKELD ATHOLL BROSE | 35% | £ 17.20 | £ 3.00 | |
| OB GLENROTHES | '84/17 | 43% | £ 39.90 | £ 10.00 | OB GLAYVA — 50cl | 35% | £ 11.90 | £ 3.00 | |
| OB GLENTURRET | 10 | 40% | £ 23.60 | £ 2.00 | OB HEATHER CREAM | 17% | £ 8.90 | £ 2.00 | |
| OB HIGHLAND PARK — 3Δ | 12 | 40% | £ 20.90 | £ 4.00 | OB OLD PULTENEY LIQUEUR 50cl | 30% | £ 11.90 | £ 1.60 | |

1993



2003

Here's to the next ten!

ANNIVERSARY OFFERINGS

While me-tooism may be an option for many producers, Loch Fyne Whiskies prefers to come up with unique ideas of a quality that our customers have come to rely upon. Our two anniversary offerings fit this requirement perfectly.

DECADENCE!

A few cases remain of Inverarity Decadence!—bottled for our decade (geddit?).



SWR regulars will recall the tears that flowed when the last two cases of Inverarity Ancestral from Aultmore was piped by the Argylls down Inveraray's imaginatively named Main Street.

However, Inverarity had a further three casks. BUT! They had been reduced to 40% in 1998—they surely must be under strength? True, two casks had fallen below 40%—and have been blended into oblivion—but one stayed above the legal minimum for bottling (at 40.2%) and Inverarity have been kind enough to let us have this remarkable whisky for our anniversary bottling.

[Malt whiskies are vulnerable to shock and need time to recover between changes. Andrew Symington told SWR18 that he returns malts to wood to settle after reduction with water. As did Richard Patterson in SWR17—"It's all part of the art... allowing whisky the time to settle." Check out the backnumber CD-ROM on page 5.]

Decadence! (£69) is a whisky that you could not set out to produce—a happy accident. Who would try to mature a whisky for five years at 40%; it would go under strength—surely? The lower strength a whisky matures at (I reckon) gives more maturation and Decadence! shows maturation by the bucketload.

Customer Gardner: "*Nose: Eh!!!! ripe figs and Aqua Libra melon juice with sweet heaven following—candyfloss, rhubarb & custard sweeties, banoffee pie and even yoghurt covered raisins.*

Taste: sweet dry sherry, Lyons syrup, dark chocolate, dried apricots & roasted almonds with oak spice, leather, and a little butter-cream.

Wonderfully balanced body, dances around your mouth, chewy, satisfying and long. Score – 9.25

final comment (optional) – I pity the fool who misses out on RJ's bottlin'!!!!"



The Living Cask™ - Anniversary Offering

For five years we have been keeping our acclaimed Living Cask following Professor George Saintsbury's advice from 1920 to keep a cask in your cellar, topping it up, never letting it get below half empty. In this 'solera' system the whiskies old and new complement each other.

Saintsbury also comments that the best mix is one of 'Clyne Lish and Glenlivet'. Thinking of the peaty Brora (formerly called Clynelish) and a fine sherry cask matured Glenlivet, we have long had a hankering to try this. Now for our tenth anniversary and with the assistance of Andrew Symington of Signatory we have achieved our ambition.

In November 2002 a half hogshead of each were introduced to an ex-Rosebank cask and a sample of the Living Cask from the shop added. The cask yielded 300 bottles after ten months marrying in the wood and the results are every bit as good as we had dared hope for.

This Anniversary Offering of the Living Cask has a very bold nose but no prickle; there are some sherry notes with associated strong ester elements, and there is a deep complexity with large elements of intrigue, a whiff of peat—no more; it's thick, even in the aroma—there's plenty of entertainment just sniffing it.

In the mouth she goes; she's hot, there's salt, sweetness and also a little bitter—it's mercury on the tongue, motile blobs of flavour (he-he-he!) all over the place and some fruit at the start of the finish. Then! There's a blipvert of peat at the swallow, a momentary promise of pleasures to come, and halfway through the finish Brora's peat erupts, forcible yet languidly, like an undersea lava fissure. Brilliant whisky, just what we wanted—something different and exceptional.

Customer Mangus: "*Now I can go to my*

grave in peace for I have truly tasted the nectar of the gods—the Anniversary Living Cask. Magnificent!"

In contrast to our first anniversary offering, the bottling of Inverarity Decadence! which has no packaging at all—quite properly in environmental terms—we have gone a tad ballistic in the presentation of the Anniversary Offering of the Living Cask—but it's all reusable. The bottle is splendid, unusual, (it's 75cl but don't tell the Brussels bureaucrats! And it has a big 'punt' in it so it seems particularly big). A tall, elegant flared and rounded form, topped by Topsy, the Living Cask boy. The back label quotes the recommendation from Saintsbury and gives details of the whiskies and dates involved and confirms that each is 'one of 300 bottles'.

The bottle is in a protective wrap of tweed, woven on Islay. In days gone by every Highland estate had its own pattern of tweed, and until this year the Inveraray Tweed had not been made since 1872. The wrap is secured by deer-skin lacing. All delivered to you in a simple cardboard tube, featuring a specially engineered cap to protect Topsy in transit, with Saintsbury's original quote and the individual number (of your choice if available) on the package.

It's not difficult to sell it! Like the first hearing of the Sgt. Pepper album—we imagine the delight of a recipient opening one for the first time on Christmas Day, unravelling its labels and explanatory notes, some of which have not been described here. For ten years we have been studying whisky packaging, and here's our offering!

Anyone buying a bottle (£139) has the option of buying a 20cl sample as a taster (bottle + 20cl taster £164).

BRORA — SILENT STILL?

Robert Lennox ©

[If Saintsbury recommends 'Clyne Lish' then how come we used Brora for our Anniversary Living Cask? Long time LFW customer and Brora-nut Robert Lennox hiked to Brora and the Mitchell Library to unravel the confusion.]

In 1819 the Marquis of Stafford, later the 1st Duke of Sutherland, founded the Clynelish Distillery at Brora in Sutherland for the princely sum of £750.

The distillery itself is situated roughly one mile from the North sea, sixty miles north of Inverness by road and adjacent to Clynelish Farm.

It was built for three main reasons: firstly, to provide a ready market for grain that farmers produced locally; secondly, to give employment to some people that had been cleared from the glens and straths of Sutherland to make way for sheep during the Highland Clearances and lastly, to try to discourage illicit distilling which was rife in that area during the 19th century.

The distillery was first leased to James Harper and with two stills managed to produce about 10,000 gallons of whisky per annum. He was succeeded in 1827, for a year or so, by James Matheson, before he again took over the lease until 1834 when the lease was acquired by Andrew Ross until 1846. Then George Lawson and his sons held the lease for the next fifty years. They made considerable improvements to the distillery, building a new malt kiln and replacing the old stills.

Such was the fame of Clynelish at this time that, not only was the distillery accepting private orders from all over Britain, but also from abroad as well. It had to turn orders from the whisky trade away!

George Lawson and his sons seem not only to have been distillers of note but farmers of distinction as well. Their sheep and cattle won prizes at the Smithfield show—fed no doubt on some of the by-products of the distillery.

In 1896 the blenders James Ainslie and Co. from Leith bought over the distillery and expanded both the warehousing and production facilities to cope with the demand from trade and private customers.

Unfortunately during a large part of the 20th century Clynelish, like the rest of the whisky industry, suffered from the vagaries of economic and world conditions.

In 1912 Ainslie and Co. went down the tube and John Risk, who already owned

50% of the company, bought the other 50% and formed the Clynelish Distillery Co. Ltd. John Walker (of Johnnie Walker fame) from Kilmarnock bought into the distillery in 1916 only to sell this on to Scottish Malt Distillers in 1930.

Due to the slump the distillery closed from 1931 to 1938 and again from 1941 to 1945 because of restrictions on the use of grain during the war.

In the late 1950s and '60s expansion took place in the whisky industry as a whole. It was decided to do away with the floor malting around 1965, connect the distillery to the mains electricity and have the stills heated by steam instead of being direct coal fired.

A new distillery was built on adjacent land in 1967-68 to increase production and make it more efficient. Again, like the original, it was the very latest design of the time with six stills instead of two.

Customs and Excise would not allow the same name for both the old and the new plants, so the old Clynelish was renamed the Brora Distillery—although the whiskies were referred to as 'Clynelish A' (new distillery) and 'Clynelish B' (old) for quite some time in the trade.

From April 1969 to May 1983, when Brora finally ceased production, its stills were leased to Ainslie and Heilbron Distillers Ltd.

For much of its life Brora has been heavily peated to suit its owner's demand for Islay-style whisky for blending. The peating level for most of the years 1969-83 was about the same as Talisker, 40 ppm. The old Clynelish, now called Brora, was never intended to be marketed as a single malt; it was designed for blending only. The malt market was to be served by the new Clynelish, peated to standard levels.

However, around the early nineties, someone in UDV (now Diageo) decided to release 5 butts of Brora as part of the Rare Malts series. These were very strong and heavily peated. They were not watered down to maturing strength, to save casks. At 22yo, distilled in 1972, they were 57.8%, 60.02% and 61.1% abv (104–107° proof).

The peat-heads loved these bottlings and buoyed by their success UDV released a 20yo in 1995 which was a vat of a large number of hogsheads and came in at 54.9% abv. This wasn't so heavily peated and allowed the true nuances of the whisky to come out.

Those in the trade and connoisseurs have long rated Brora (Old Clynelish) one of the top malts. There have been other good bottlings. Gordon & Macphail

bottled some at 25yo which was very smoky and peaty. Unfortunately, like Cadenhead, they mature most of their whiskies themselves (at Speyside and Campbeltown) and in the case of Brora the end product is not so good as if it had been matured at the distillery. Signatory have also brought out some very good bottlings of Brora which have not had caramel added and are unchillfiltered.

Douglas Laing had some stoaters of casks but initially watered them down to 50% using distilled or de-ionised water which imparted a taste to these bottlings. However, recently they bottled a 32yo, which was distilled in 1971, at cask strength which was quite simply superb!

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society has obtained about a dozen casks since starting in 1984; some have been excellent but some mediocre.

On nosing Brora you can immediately smell the sea and the medicinal notes along with a whiff of peat smoke. The taste confirms this and there can be a touch of iodine present, like some Islays. It is the most fully flavoured malt distilled on the mainland. The body and hence the quality are very smooth—provided it is over 14 years old. In the after-taste heather, chocolate and mustard are all present. The whisky can also be slightly oily. The finish is very satisfying and long. If you can get hold of some I strongly recommend you do so before it's all gone.

Brora's future? Well the owners closed it in 1983 along with many others and currently have no plans to reopen.

The distillery itself is a listed building and is in relatively good condition. Most of the plant remains and the stills are currently being cleaned. The last I heard was that visitors might be shown round the old distillery at some point in the future.

As of 2002, there were about 50 casks left in the distillery plus some elsewhere. When Allied Distillers closed Scapa for a time they came to an arrangement with the owners of neighbouring Highland Park whereby their workers would run Scapa enough to meet demand. It takes only a few days a year to distil all the present Clynelish to meet the market for bottling. Perhaps the owners could follow the example of Scapa, producing enough Brora to meet the bottling and blending needs for what is surely one of Scotland's great whiskies.

[Robert's picture shows the pipeline connecting new Clynelish to old Brora's filling store].



ALFRED BARNARD

An introduction by Richard Joynson

We got a little amusement out of our fellow travellers—one of them a gentleman in clerical attire, catching some fragments of our conversation on spirits, evidently mistook us for important officers of the Salvation Army. Seeing this we puzzled him, and in answer to his enquiries, informed him that we had just started on a long and tedious pilgrimage to the spirit land, and that ours was a mission of investigation into the creation, development and perfection of crude spirits into “spirits made perfect.” One of our party here produced his flask and explained to our reverend friend what kind of missionaries we were, when, to our surprise after taking a “wee drappie,” and like *Oliver Twist*, asking for more, the pious-looking brother offered to join us in our excursions, that he might do the tasting, and we the writing. This generous offer we declined.”

The opening story of Alfred Barnard’s *Whisky Distilleries of The United Kingdom* which was first published in 1887 indicates a man of humour, observation, passionate interest and gaiety, yet still so little is known of the enigmatic creator of this magnificent tome that when I was invited to write the introduction to a new reprint I thought I would speculate on Barnard; a sort of psychological profile in the style of a television police thriller, interpretation of the clues scattered within.

My previous dippings into ‘Barnard’ as this work is usually referred to, suggested to me that he was a gentleman-toff, a self-financing, fun-loving Victorian waster, on a bit of a skive with his chums travelling the kingdom’s most breathtakingly dramatic regions—all in search of a good dram.

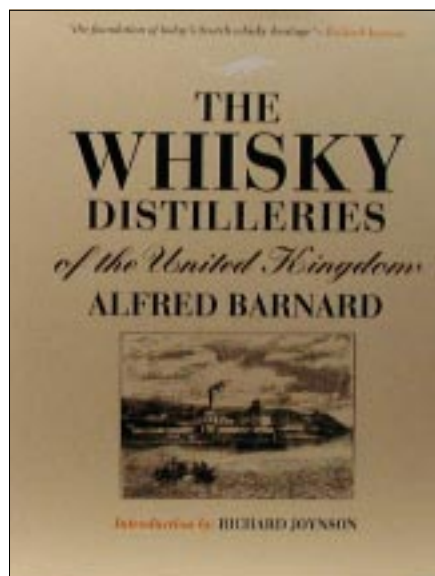
The 1987 reprint carries an authoritative introduction by the acclaimed archivist Michael Moss who detailed that by the age of thirty Barnard was married and living in London, describing himself as a ‘gentleman’ but noted his address also housed tradesmen and cleaners. Moss also revealed that prior to joining Harper’s to write this work Barnard’s business was an advertising agency, probably aligned to the Wine & Spirit Trade. Thereafter he described himself as either a journalist or author—though his subsequent books are few, most notably a similar exercise on beer filling four large volumes. Records show he died in Croydon, South London in 1918, aged 81.

A plea for help to Charles MacLean led me to correspond with Barnard’s great-great nephew, Andrew Barnard. According to Andrew’s brief family records, Alfred was born in 1835, the son of a

draper and grocer of Thaxstead, a rural village some 30 miles north-east of central London.

And that’s all the truth I can tell you about him. Not much I’m afraid.

However, Andrew has also lent us all a picture of the great man. In this reprint, for the first time, students of Scotch (in particular) can gaze on our first and most celebrated whisky-anorak, the pioneer distillery-bagger, and the portrait reveals as enigmatic a character as I had expected. Barnard was about 50 years old when he undertook his journey, about the same age as pictured (interestingly embossed by Edinburgh photographers). I see an eccentric or maverick personality. The hat is jaunty or it just doesn’t fit—probably the latter but he doesn’t care, after all his jacket doesn’t fit either and his beard and head is hurriedly trimmed, almost certainly by himself. The moustache is paraded as an expression of character and the pince-nez and pocket-square reveal a gentleman of studies (stop me if I’m going too far). Most revealing from the image are the



laughter lines around the eyes and his debonair refusal to face the camera, atypical of portraits at the time. Not necessarily a work-shy waster but definitely a fun-loving, gentleman-toff, maverick and bon-viveur. His writing reveals little of himself but it is joyous to read how he is welcomed at each distillery and seems to ingratiate himself immediately. All his intercourses are jolly—even the most crabbit of cart-drivers fails to dent his cheery outlook.

The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom is the foundation of today’s Scotch whisky heritage. This is the first and most important study dedicated to whisky, a timely publication at the turning point of the industry’s fortunes when circumstances conspired to favour Scotch. This is the period when Scotch whisky was at the beginning of a rise and Irish whiskey was beginning an unfortunate decline in the face of the blender-entrepreneurs later personified

by Tommy Dewar. When Barnard conducted this survey there was an exciting Empire-wide acceptance of the more-palatable blended whiskies with a subsequent rapid expansion of production and also the fortuitous devastation of the previous spirit of choice—brandy, which had catastrophically suffered a fungal blight, reducing production to a minimum. Barnard reported that the majority of the distilleries he surveyed had been extended and new construction was plentiful; the industry was expanding and the newly formed Distillers Company Limited was beginning its dominance of the trade in grain distilling utilising the new and highly efficient Coffey still. An exciting time for Scotch yet, as Barnard records, Irish whiskey, which peaked at this time producing one third of the total, had been ‘reducing considerably over the past few seasons’. The optimism of Irish is evident; it’s only when he gets to Ireland that there is any reference to a bottling facility on-site. In Scotland all was sold in large containers to blenders or merchants for tailoring to requirements. The Scots got lucky; the Irish jumped the wrong way in refusing to blend.

A casual leaf-through ‘Barnard’ reveals a man with mission—and a tape measure. His apparent obsession with the dimensions of all things irrelevant is tedious in the extreme. In Edinburgh he reports accurate measurements of a bridge en-route to a distillery! You can ignore these bits with a clear conscience but strangely for today’s enthusiast, not once does he describe the shape or size of a pot still. It is only in the last twenty years that the boffins have started to understand what makes malt whisky malt whisky; now we can all understand that the majority of flavour comes from the design of the copper still and the wood used in maturation but never does Barnard record a distiller discussing the casks used for maturation. On a handful of occasions he describes his departing taster (‘to clear the dust from our throats’) declaring it to be: ‘fine’, ‘like liqueur brandy’ or ‘fat and creamy’. On one occasion he gets carried away with ‘delicate in flavour, and smooth on the palate’. Hardly the descriptors of today’s adjective-encumbered presentation tubes. Perhaps it would have been worthwhile if he had taken the pious-looking brother as his taster after all. Barnard’s preface explains his objectives clearly and it is evident that his understanding of the production process is limited at the beginning of his travels. By halfway he is beginning to report on more relevant matters, a purifier here or an innovative flat-bottomed worm is noted; later still he’s advising all distillers to install some new-fangled safety device. By the time he gets to Irish, where he clearly has affection for that product and is impressed by the modernness of the

industry, he shows a clear understanding of the whisky production process even dipping into the chemistry on occasion. His obsession of the degree of sophistication of production reflects the excitement of a fast-moving technological age; some distilleries have electric light, a telephone to the nearby station or ‘an ingeniously contrived apparatus’. Bear in mind that by now the Victorians had picked out the world in Empire-pink, building railways, factories and inventing all manner of useful kit. Now it was the time of implementation of this achievement and Barnard was as excited as a writer for *Boy’s Own* or *Look and Learn*. At one stop he is clearly dismayed that they only have the one pump!

It is the development of his reportage and understanding that makes this book a joy to read. Whisky enthusiast or not, there are little gems of information which create a fellowship with today’s lifelong student. The merry travelogues which introduce each visit are a delight, worth reading in themselves if you share a passion for Scotland or Ireland. Stories soused with gory massacres of the past (‘drew his sword and cut off their heads. Such playful conduct would hardly be tolerated these days’), social comment (‘although the station had been open more than twenty years, we were the only persons who had ever booked first class’), companionship (‘Fortunately we were a large party and a merry one’) or high drama (‘we collided with other vehicles, almost ran over one old woman and three street urchins’), always with unassuming wry humour. Towards the end of his journey the descriptions of the area and history occupy more space than the distillery visit, presumably at a request from his editor in London who was publishing his reports each week and realised that Harper’s readers—sissy London wine professionals—were more enthusiastic about the flowery reports from the bare-kneed, hairy’n’scary wilds of North Britain than the capacity of a fire extinguisher or wotnot. Although Queen Victoria was an advocate of Scotland, most contemporary travel-writers were very disparaging of the areas Barnard celebrated with obvious passion.

Today’s distillery visitor is one of a million every year; many producers consider the visitor-centre-and-brand-home to be an essential part of the success of their products. Bookshelves groan with repetitive guff describing the single malts available while some discuss the cleanliness of the toilets and the yumminess of the baguettes on offer. Specialist travel companies and a circuit of whisky hotels, bars and shops service a visitor on the whisky trail. I can imagine Barnard visiting my shop, to be delighted in the first instance by the range on offer, astonished by the range of ages presented (he described eight years as ‘very old’), appalled



by the collapse of Campbeltown as a producing region (he enjoyed his stay) and as confused as everyone else by the new manipulated or wood-finished whiskies. He would be vastly entertained by my collection of ‘whiskies’ from other parts of the world and distressed to hear that some people actually collect whiskies with a view to never drinking them. One thing is for sure, he would light up the shop with his presence. He’s on my make-believe anyone for dinner list.

I wish I could persuade him that Irish still has potential for the future and that the decision makers in the Scotch industry are conscious of the past and respectful of the future. I would ask him to evangelise to today’s Irish producers the method of Scotch’s success and hammer into the Scotch single malt people the reasons for Ireland’s near collapse. These are very special products, they have survived this far but if the profit-driven lunatics gain control of the asylum we will be left with only enough heritage to fill

a weekend supplement. These guys have the potential to spoil the special nature of this fascinating product and it is all our job to educate and cajole.

Let me draw your attention to the closing paragraph of the opening piece, entitled ‘Distillation’, written by Barnard’s unnamed ‘dear friend, who will not let me “prent him”’. The whole article is worthy of study but on page 12 is a comment that reflects a depth of vision that has survived for 120 years:

“We shall be treading on delicate grounds when we refer to the fact that there are those who hold that the future of the Whisky trade lies with malt whisky.”

Now, with sales of malt approaching 10% of all Scotch can the wisdom of this comment be appreciated. If all goes well, then this is still only the beginning.

book title & price?

If you would like a signed copy (£25) (signed by me – not Alf!) please advise us when you order and let us know of any special dedication you may require.



THE MARMALADE'S BACK!

It's a long story, but after a two year search, we now have fresh stocks of our two Loch Fyne marmalades, exactly how they were before, made by Camille the same lady as before, same prices:

Single—fine cut, pale £2.50
 Double Scotch—dark with spices £2.90



THE GREAT HIGHLAND

GLUG-GLUG JUG'S BACK!

Make whisky drinking fun with our recreation of the GHG-GJ of old, our 'Hooked on Loch Fyne' blue jug is made for us by Arra Fletcher on Islay and produces a mirth inducing glug-glug when poured. [Arra, you promised it would say 'drink-Loch-Fyne-drink-Loch-Fyne'].

THE FUDGE IS HERE!



Every parcel going out during this Christmas deal period will include a sample of our new Loch Fyne Fudge as a wee extra thank you; but be sure to buy some when you visit—how else am I going to become a fudge magnate?



photo—Jon Rogers

A CURE FOR DECADENCE!

It's a myth that these sailing trips are for pleasure you know; where else can we find the correct conditions for the scientific development of a new toddy? The stores on Grampus yielded a fine new hot beverage worthy of LFW's highest recommendation: 1 Oxo cube, 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar, a grind of black pepper, hot water and a measure of Decadence! The perfect mid-morning pick-me-up!

Pictured are skipper and world-famous inventor Stewart Robertson, James Hardie, mixologist (well, he's always stirring things up) and Charles MacLean who is Scotland's foremost whisky. [There! Got you back Charlie!]

FARMER MISSING

You may be amused to know of a quote from Charlie's new book *Scotch Whisky—A Liquid History* published by Cassell, £25. A very authoritative book revealing a huge amount of research and perfect in every respect except one on page 270: "Loch Fyne Whiskies was founded in the picturesque and historic town of Inveraray in 1992 by Richard Joynson, who until then had been a fish. It trades mainly..."

THE LIQUEUR'S COMING!



PLEASE NOTE

All deals offered at lfw.co.uk and on pages 6 & 7 are valid for mail order customers placing orders before **noon** on

Monday 15th December.

We can take orders up to Friday 19th and deliver after this date but it may be too late for us to both replenish our stocks and deliver in time; deals may or may not be available.

Ordering from lfw.co.uk

On-line 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. Once again, thank you for your business.

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.

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