

Momentous Minutes



Issue 10 (coincidentally)

September 2009



A Perfect Ten

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

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

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



Ardbeg
COMMITTEE





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

The exciseman was a Bastard

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

Mary Reid	Head	76	285	285
Marion Do.	Head	77	285	285
William Bastard	Head	36	285	285
Patience Do.	Wife	37	285	285
Annie Do.	Daughter	38	285	285
Thomas Do.	Son	39	285	285
Martha Do.	Servant	40	285	285
William Bastard	Head	41	285	285

Heated debate

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

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

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

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

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



Count to ten (or more)

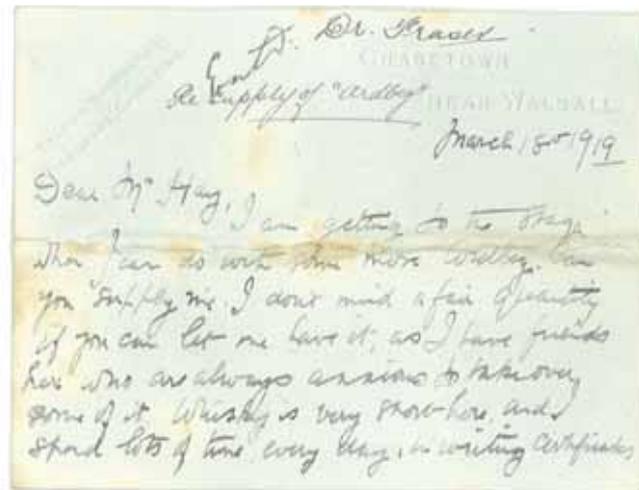
Are you paying attention? We've hidden a number of 'ten's in this edition of Momentous Minutes. When you think you've spotted them all (both alphabetic and numeric), email your answer to distillery@ardbeg.com and if yours is one of the first ten names pulled out of our hat, we'll send you a bottle of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



I Spy Ardbeg

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

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



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

Doctor's Orders

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

Re: Supply of 'Ardbeg'

Dr William Fraser,
Chasetown near Walsall,
18 March 1919

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

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

