



Feints and Foreshots



WELCOME TO

Feints and Foreshots #34

MEET THE COMMITTEE

Who is this year's crop of highly dedicated whisky tragics? -

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MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR

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SOUTHERN COAST DISTILLERS LAUNCH

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Help celebrate in your state -

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FEINTS AND FORESHOTS MEET THE COMMITTEE EDITION

Another year, another fine dram - or two... and for the Malt Whisky Society it's another chance to make some new plans - which is precisely what we did at our Annual Committee Meeting in February. At the meeting we injected some new blood into the board, and made some very exciting plans for 2011, based on the feedback you gave us last year in our survey. I'm sure Chairperson Craig Daniels, who was rightly re-elected to head up the society for 2011, will be only too excited to tell you about what's in store.

In the meantime, this edition is dedicated to putting some names, faces and a bit of up-close-and-personal to your committee members for 2011. These are the people you voted for, and we thought you'd be interested to hear their whisky journeys - what inspired them to become a part of our committee.

Without any further ado... I introduce your new committee:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
CRAIG DANIELS	CHAIRPERSON
GRANT PIGOT	SECRETARY
IAN SCHMIDT	TREASURER
MALCOLM O'FARRELL	VICE CHAIRPERSON
PETER JOHNSTON	COMMITTEE MEMBER
NIC LOWREY	COMMITTEE MEMBER
ROGER GILLARD	COMMITTEE MEMBER
AARON BAXTER	COMMITTEE MEMBER
JOHN DUNBAR	COMMITTEE MEMBER



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FEINTS AND FORESHOTS COMMITTEE 2011

Craig Daniels - Chairperson



Craig Daniels - Craig is the Foundation Chair of the Society from 2002 and was re-elected unopposed for the sixth time in January 2011. Craig has led all the Convention organising committees and has a special interest in event development and innovation in membership servicing. His working life mainly encompassed 28 years in public administration across various Federal labour market programs, industry and regional services portfolios. He currently manages an Australian Apprenticeship Centre in the Adelaide Hills. Craig has been involved in whisky connoisseurship since 1991 and is a successful competitor in the National Malt Tasting Competition. He has won the competition twice, most recently in Sydney in June 2008 and a long while ago (in 1995) and has placed second in 2000, 2001 and 2010. Craig is internationally recognised for his knowledge and palate, contributing to various whisky websites. He is a proud member of the international internet malt collective, "The Malt Maniacs", and a long standing member of the Earls of Zetland Malt Tasting Club (1991), the Streak Malt Tasters (1995), the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (2003) and the Macquarie Branch of the Gillies Club (2004). Craig has visited Scotland twice to pursue his personal passion and has photographic evidence of visits to over 80 distilleries. If pressed he will also acknowledge a growing appreciation of Australian and Japanese single malts and American rye whiskies. He hasn't found the perfect whisky yet; he's still hot on the trail.



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Grant Pigot - Secretary



Grant Pigot - Grant has been involved with the Malt whisky Society for three years, holding the post of Secretary, since 2009. Introduced to the joys of whisky late in life, Grant is a passionate supporter of the Australian Whisky Industry in particular. Grant has significant Board and Committee experience accumulated over more than 30 years and holds Degrees in Science and Business.



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FEINTS AND FORESHOTS COMMITTEE 2011

Ian Schmidt - Treasurer



Ian Schmidt – Treasurer - Ian carried out his first distillation at about 16 years of age when working with his father making cider. After a long break from distilling that had him serving, briefly, in the Navy, then fishing, sailing, mast making and flagpole making, the wheel has turned the full circle and Ian is back distilling in Adelaide at Southern Coast Distillers. The last few years has seen Ian serving with distinction as the main coordinator of the MWSOA's Malt Whisky Awards. Unfortunately a conflict of interests keeps him out of the judging panels but he finds the organizing and the event enjoyable and educational. In the last 5 years and in the process of educating himself in the finer points of distilling Ian has acquired a real passion for malts, of all types. Favourite drams: Southern Coast 002 (of course!) and Caol Ila 12.



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Mal O'Farrell - Vice Chairperson



Malcolm O'Farrell - Mal is an experienced publican with a long term interest in malt whisky. Since taking over the Rob Roy Hotel in 2006 his wife Stacey and he set out to create a venue and atmosphere for the true whisky lover. Building one of the country's best whisky collections, the Rob Roy Hotel has gained a reputation as the home of malt in Adelaide. From hosting private malt tastings, whisky and food matching degustation dinners and involvement with several malt clubs, Mal has strived to bring all of his 20 years hospitality industry experience to building and expanding malt whisky appreciation and knowledge. Mal looks forward to the opportunity to further develop and drive whisky appreciation through the Malt Whisky Society of Australia.



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Roger Gillard - Committee Member



Roger Gillard - Retired Advertising/Public Relations Consultant. Born and bred in Adelaide of German and English parents. Qualified Mechanical Engineer, but never worked in the field. Roger worked in the photographic industry initially [family involvement] then progressed to senior management in a retail chain and then became State Manager of Advertising and Public Relations for that company. He then took up a position as senior representative of Amex then started an independent advertising/public relations consultancy in Adelaide. Roger's hobbies & interests include motor racing, malt whisky tasting, golf, gym and travel. He was introduced to scotch whisky by his father in 1961 and for many years he stuck to his formula, which was Haig's in the short black bottle, but in later years Roger discovered malt whisky. During the last 10 years his interest heightened and he joined several tasting clubs. Roger has also entered tasting competitions, recently reaching the taste offs at the SMWS' National Malt Tasting Championship in Sydney 2010.



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John Dunbar - Committee Member



John Dunbar

John has spent 32 years in tertiary education within the food and beverage sectors as well as travel and tourism. Over the last 8 years he was Educational Manager of the Applied Food Studies at Regency International Centre for Hospitality, Food and Recreation, responsible for programs in baking, meat and smallgoods and food technology. The latter included training students in the production of cheese, wine and brewing. John initiated and managed the construction of the cheesery and brewery at the Regency Campus in 2006. As well as an amateur wine maker and brewer John loves the odd malt and has ventured to Scotland and Ireland on more than one occasion to explore and discover new tastes. Having judged food, wine, beer, restaurants and hotels in his career, he has added malt whisky. Recently retired from education John is now pursuing his passions of good food and malts.



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FEINTS AND FORESHOTS

EDITOR: Nic Lowrey

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Craig Daniels

MWSOA Committee 2011

Photos: Craig Daniels, Glenfarclas, Southern Coast Distillers, MWSOA Committee 2011

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Southern Coast
Distillers Pty Ltd

Southern Coast Distillers International Launch

6.15 for 6.30pm Thursday 28 April 2011.

Rob Roy Hotel, 108 Halifax Street, Adelaide SA 5000.

The MWSOA has been involved with the local industry since the Society's inception and we've helped launch both local distilleries and products and we will continue to do so. On this occasion we're hosting the international launch of Southern Coast Distillers owned and operated by a consortium including our own committee member, Ian Schmidt who is also the distiller.

Come along and be a part of history; the launch of the first privately owned, licensed and dedicated pot still distillery in South Australia probably ever, but certainly in the last 60 years.

Ian makes single malt whisky and pot still rum using the same stills and they are both high quality drams. Two of his unreleased malts were entered into the Malt Whisky Awards 2010 and scored silver and Bronze, plus a trophy (the Pourer's Prize).

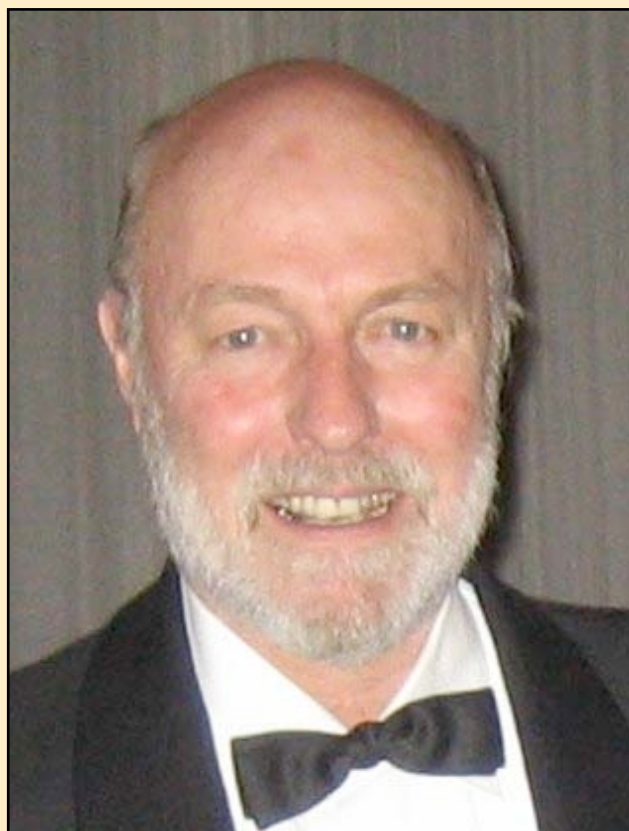
Member's Price \$25 – all bookings through Rob Roy Hotel on (08) 8223 5391



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Peter Johnston - Position



Peter Johnston - Peter, a retired Biologist from Brisbane, has been a member of MWSOA since 2003 and attended all three conventions. For the last three years he has been a MWSOA Committee Member, specifically Membership Officer. Peter is a whisky tragic, Chieftain of the Queensland Malt Whisky Society, Queensland Manager of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, Life Member of the Islay Whisky Society, a Companion of Aberlour, Member of the Ardbeg Committee, Friend of Bakery Hill distillery, owner of a square foot of Islay etc, etc! He has visited 64 distilleries in four countries and is still learning about whisky!



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Aaron Baxter - Committee member



Aaron Baxter - Aaron works for a software development company providing clinical software support to customers in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK. He has developed a lot of useful IT skills through his engagement and interest in technology and software. Aaron has a keen interest in fine food and drink which has over the last two years expanded into the area of whisky. Aaron has been keen to get involved with clubs and associations in areas of interest to him and he has a particular interest in whisky and food and will join fellow Committee members in developing and hosting whisky and food matching events. Aaron has been involved with the Adelaide University Science Association and Valhalla LAN Parties and was treasurer for both organisations. He was the president of the Adelaide University Stein Club in 2010 and enjoys exposing people to beers they have not previously tried through the club's regular tasting events. Aaron holds a degree in Economics from The University of Adelaide.



Feints and Foreshots

❧ MWSOA EVENTS 2011 ❧



Glenfarclas 175th Anniversary World Tour & Celebration

Our good friends at Angoves and Glenfarclas are bringing out Ian McWilliam (Marketing Director for Glenfarclas) to Australia to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of one of Scotland's and Speyside's indisputably greatest and enduring distilleries.

Public event dates for Australia are:

- ❧ Perth - Tuesday 31st May 2011 - Venue TBA
- ❧ Adelaide - Thursday 2nd June 2011 - Rob Roy Hotel - Themed dinner
- ❧ Sydney - Saturday 4th June 2011 - Tutored tasting at Oak Barrel
- ❧ Brisbane - Monday 6th June - Masterclass organized in conjunction with Queensland Malt Whisky Society
- ❧ Melbourne - Thursday 9th June 2011 - Venue TBA.

You'll get to try a whole stack of great whiskies, including the special one bottled for the 175th Anniversary. Please direct further enquiries to Angoves (08) 8264 2366 and book with the venue in your state.



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Nic Lowrey - Committee Member/F and F Editor



Nic Lowrey - is your humble editor of Feints and Foreshots. Her love of whisky here coincides happily with her background in journalism, editing and marketing, and a degree in Literature and Philosophy. Her interest in whisky has taken her from Adelaide to Glasgow, from the Orkneys to Berlin and everywhere in between where a good single malt can be found. There's always more whisky ahead, and Nic is always keen to learn - one fine dram at a time...



Feints and Foreshots

Musings From The Chair April 2011 with Chairperson Craig Daniels

Do Whiskies Change between batches and what's wrong with change?

The glib (as well as the rigorously rational) answer is yes, of course they do. If you just stop to think about it, while the distillers can keep some variables constant there are inputs and influences that they can't control and there are going to be changes in the barley, in varieties as well as seasonal influences where starch, protein and fat levels change over time. The wood is also going to change and anyone who's sampled sister casks from the same cooper, filled on the same day with the same spirit knows that the cask has a huge impact and there is plenty of evidence that oven dried wood and open air dried wood matters as well as whether the wood of the same species was fast growing or slow growing. Lets face it, there are plenty of possibilities for variance, but what's driving the original rhetorical flourish is does it matter; can anyone, however expert, tell the difference and what's wrong with change anyway?

I can lament lots of things about the scotch whisky industry, but one thing I can't whinge about is that the overall quality of commercial standard single malts are generally better whiskies than they were 20 years ago. Not only are they different, they are better. The concentration on wood regimes has made an impact as has computerisation in distilleries. It might lead to a standardised product with less stellar highs but the plus is that there are far less poor single malts around now than there were in the 1990s. The overall impression might be inflated because some of the poorer shelf fillers are long gone and some of the distilleries are defunct and deservedly so.

I belong to a couple of clubs where we occasionally put 'old' bottlings of common malts up against 'newer' releases. We've done it for Aberlour 10, Balvenie 10, Macallan 12 and Bowmore 12 and we've done it blind. Usually the older version scores higher, but not universally and the other thing to consider is that the biggest commercial single malt releases such as Glenfiddich 12 and Glenlivet 12 are much better whiskies than they were in the 1990s. Of course some big sellers went the other way but it might not have been the result of a deliberate decision in the wood regime. Massive demand may have meant barrels that were meant for blending might have got vatted for single releases.

Of course with most commercial releases it is almost impossible to tell changes from batch to batch, although I would argue that over time (say 6 to 8 years) the profile of the whisky shifts, sometimes for the better and sometimes not. I would also argue that the quality of whisky on the shelves is most often determined by both the quality of wood and the buying decisions with regard to wood made at least 8-12 years before those whiskies hit the shelves. The good news is that the very poor wood that prevailed in the early 1980s that influenced the singles well into the 1990s are largely gone.

While a single malt is the product of one distillery, unless they are single cask bottlings then they are a mix of barrels from that distillery and that batch could include malts from different woods (first fill, second fill, refill, re-toasted and from sherry from Spanish oak, sherry from American oak and bourbon wood). There are probably other exotics and combinations but I think I've covered over 90% of the spectrum. Often the percentage of certain types of barrel will shift over time and this contributes to the profile shift alluded to earlier.



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Musings From The Chair cont.

Let's turn to a specific example. One reason I like Glenfarclas, amongst many others is that they are not so big that they can always even out the wood in their vatting and this means that you can spot marked differences between releases. There have been a few new releases of Glenfarclas 8 in the last few years. The latest one to hit the shelves was bottled in May 2010 and the previous issue was in 2009. I tried both of them and noticed a major shift in the sherry profile between batches.

The earlier malt was much more in line with the usual commercial offerings from the quality Speyside distilleries like Aberlour and Glenlivet (amongst others). They have a little bit of sherry character, but are usually quite sweet and smooth and the wood rarely provides much definition or structure and often the malt and vanilla from the oak are the primary characteristics.

The one currently on the shelves is a very different beast. It is chock full of dry sherry influences and the malt hardly gets a look in. It's a sherry lesson in a bottle. I liked the new one quite a bit more and yet every so often I wished that there might have been some of that malty, butterscotch character to balance the dryness out a bit.

Tasting Notes

78 **Glenfarclas 8yo (40%, OB, 2009)** Nose: golden syrup, honey, pastry, vanilla, huge malty notes with bananas which get stronger. Palate is oily and slippery with butterscotch and syrup. Finish is also slightly oily, sweet and then slightly bitter. No obvious first fill sherry and very little sherry character at all. Has reminiscences of the 105 and 15's bottled in the late 1990's, where the first fill sherry barrels were also thin in the vatting.

83 **Glenfarclas 8yo (40%, OB, May 2010)** – Nose: dried fruit, fruit leather, some spirit prickle, dry sherry, autumn leaves, tobacco leaf, polished leather, walnuts, toffee and milk chocolate. Palate: Sour plums, syrup, leather astringency, more dry leaves and a little bit of spirit bite. Finish: leathery, dry sherry, tobacco leaf, some wood bitters, drying wood. It's reminiscent of the Earls of Zetland 1985 19yo Glenfarclas in lots of ways. While showing some of the rough edges of youth, unfortunately this one is also a little unbalanced on the dry side as it lacks anything sweet or creamy to soften the tannins. Still this is an excellent and affordable sherry malt lesson in a bottle.

I guess I'll have to try and find one of the 2009 bottles and one of the new and vat them 2 parts new to 1 part old. I figure that might give me an 88 point dram.

I suppose the point of the above is that all is not doom and gloom for the malt enthusiast. It is all too easy to fall into a reactionary trap and moan that the malts aren't as good as they used to be, and while this might be generally true there are exceptions and gems amongst the current retail shelves and the Glenfarclas 8 is one good reason to revisit some of the standards on the shelves and see for yourself.

Do you have any similar experiences to share? Have you found any standard commercial release malts that have improved in the last decade? If so feel free to drop me a line at chair@mwsa.org.au.