



Feints and Foreshots

Post-Convention Edition

August 2013

Issue 40

Inside this edition

2013 Convention report:
p. 6 - 12

2013 Convention photos:
p. 13 - 16

2013 Convention Lecture
- Geology: the Bedrock of
Malt Whisky p. 2 - 5

2013 Convention Bottling:
tasting notes p. 17

For more information, pictures
and order forms
go to:

<http://www.MWSoA.org.au>

To contribute an article or
review to Feints and
Foreshots, or to contact
the editor, email
fandfeditor@mwsoa.org.au

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Malt-Whisky-Society-of-Australia>



Welcome to the August 2013 Edition of Feints and Foreshots.

And what a fantastic Convention it was.

This month's Feints and Foreshots is all about the 2013 Convention: a brilliant few days worth of talks, tasting, experiences and catching up with old (and new) friends in the name of Malt Whisky.

The Convention team here at MWSoA are very proud of what we achieved with this Festival which ran smoothly and by all accounts was as entertaining and enjoyable as we hoped it would be for our members, exhibitors, speakers and of course new members-to-be.

For those for whom this is your first Feints and Foreshots - welcome! We encourage letters, contributions, photos, event listings and anything you'd like to send to us.

We hope you enjoy this post-conference edition, and if you couldn't make it to the convention, here's a slice of all the action. Here's hoping you can make it to the next one.

But don't forget you can still order the Convention Bottling Whisky and the glasses. Order forms are attached.

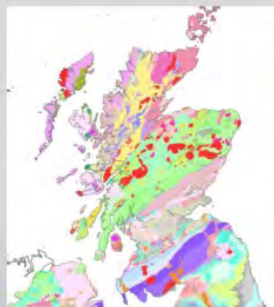


Feints and Foreshots

Convention notes: Geology - the Bedrock of of Malt Whisky by Paul Shand

Geology is a fundamental control on the landscape controlling:

Topography
Climate
Soil type
Vegetation
Water quality



www.bgs.ac.uk

Is there a direct link between geology and whisky ?
Is water quality important ?
Can we make a better classification than existing ones ?

Is geology important ?

"Even in these days of blended whisky there are distillers who claim that **the best malt whisky comes 'off granite through peat'**. What is certain is that 'off peat through granite' produces a different taste."

Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart

"The difference between a Speyside and an Islay peat is tremendous. ... ultimately, the flavour of the whisky that results from it's use."

1001 Whiskies to try before you die

"The distilleries that still malt themselves will tell you it makes a difference to the taste, but I don't think it really has a big impact. The **water**, the **stills** and the **casks** are far more important: 70 to 80 per cent of the flavour comes from the casks."

Douglas Campbell, Tomatin



www.bgs.ac.uk



Feints and Foreshots

Convention notes: Geology - the Bedrock of of Malt Whisky by Paul Shand

Is water important ?



"There are some who would have you believe that there exists a kind of divine secret, a miraculous ingredient or genius behind the manufacture of Scotch Whisky. I however, **acknowledge no miracle other than that which is worked when science and nature combine**. The principal ingredients are three, notably water, barley and yeast, with a measure of peat smoke or reek. **Of these there can be no doubt water is the foremost**.

Long John MacDonald, 14th June 1827



"So you Scots have been kidding the world on for all these years. Making whisky is actually really easy."

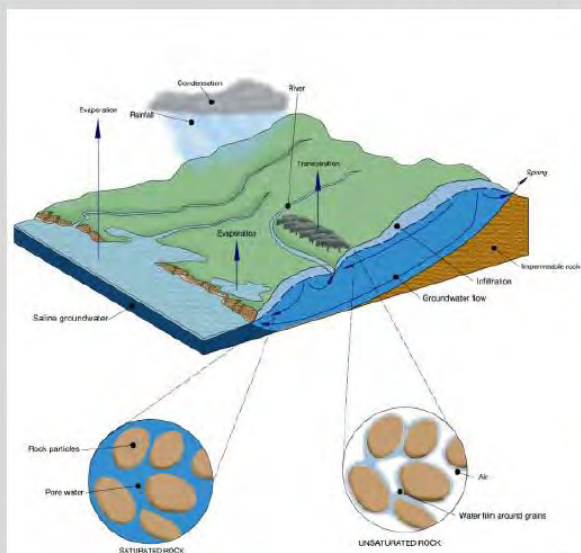
Short Ian Schmidt, 2012

"Snowmelt from the Southern Alps naturally filtered through the Great Moss Swamp provided the purest of water"

NZ Whisky Company



The Water Cycle



Water moves through a range of different environments during the water cycle –soils and rocks act as a natural filter

They add nutrients and other minerals

Link between rocks – soil - water





Feints and Foreshots

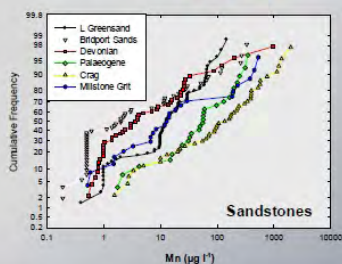
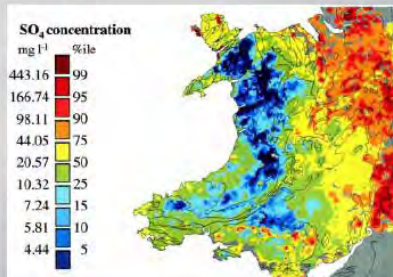
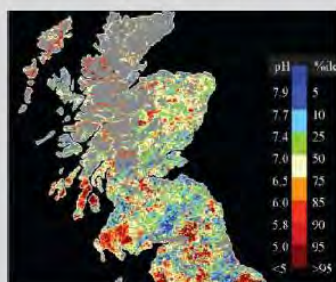
August 2013

Issue 40

Convention notes: Geology - the Bedrock of of Malt Whisky by Paul Shand

Does water chemistry vary regionally ?

Water chemistry varies with the geology of the region – limited data available in Scotland – but appears to be a strong control by rock type



Other regions show a good correlation between geology and surface water e.g. Wales

Huge variations in water softness/hardness, pH
Range of trace constituents: Cu, Fe, Mn –
catalysts in cask driven oxidation ?

Is water chemistry an important control across the geological regions?

- Waters likely to vary within regions e.g. soft in Grampian Group quartzites to hard in Appin Group limestones; big differences between Devonian and older rocks
- Water quality probably important in mashing
- Some of the differences we see I think do correlate with geology
- A water quality study of process waters would help test the hypothesis

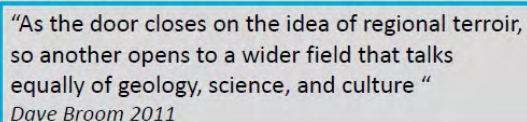


"When beer dies it's spirit goes to heaven and is reincarnated, coming back as malt whisky"

Ian Schmidt



A simple geological classification



- 



I'll drink to that – Slainte mhath



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August 2013

Musings from the Chair – August 2013

The Fourth Malt Whisky Convention – A Final Report by MWSOA Chairperson Craig Daniels
(clandrummond@bigpond.com)

Day 1 – Friday 31 May 2013

Your Chairman was one pumped yet relieved fellow when 7.00pm on Friday 31 May rolled around and I was piped in to officially open the proceedings.

The theme of our Fourth Convention; “Contemporary Profiles of Single Malts from Scotland and Australia” was duly reflected in the Friday welcome cocktail function which kicked off with the Benromach Double Matured 12 yo (4 years in bourbon and then 8 years in port pipes) which was well received; indeed many people thought it the pick of the first four whiskies presented. Next came the Balvenie Single Barrel 15yo which is a lovely 100% bourbon matured Speyside with lots of honey, marshmallow and meringue. I had the pleasure of presenting Talisker Storm which was only released worldwide in April, so it fitted the theme nicely and reflected a trend for more no age statement whiskies from Scottish producers. It’s more muscular with more boot polish and leather than the esteemed 10yo.

The formal part of the evening finished with the Octomore 10yo 50% from Bruichladdich. It’s a tamer version than its more high-octane predecessors but it’s still an extremely phenolic whisky with lots of complex hydrocarbons. As it turned out we were very lucky to be able to sample it as the rest of the Australian allocation was sold out.

The welcome function really showcased some wonderful whisky and food pairings; none better than the Italian pork balls with the Balvenie and the stunningly good West Coast oysters with the Talisker. Some of the assembled delegates and members decided to head off for a meal, but I retired as my most nerve wracking day was only 11 hours away.



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

Day 2 – Saturday 1 June 2013

Saturday morning was grey and drizzly (dreich) and probably pretty normal for the small contingent of delegates from Scotland. My adrenaline levels were up because we'd never before tried to have an excursion away from the main venue as it's much easier to have everyone in the same place and people who rock up late (or are late to rise) don't miss the bus. Quite a few people decided not to join us on the bus but I'm pretty certain we didn't leave anyone who wanted to be on the bus behind. Anyway, 59 of us clambered aboard the two Ardbeg busses and headed off to Lobethal in the Adelaide Hills. 1st June is Ardbeg day and Moët Hennessy were most gracious to sponsor our jaunt. It was misty once we hit the freeway, but for someone who did that trip 5 days a week for 14 months, the countryside was looking great; green and grey is much more heartening than brown and grey. We arrived at the Lobethal Bierhaus at 9.25am and we all piled inside.

I was making stuff up as we went along and on the spot we decided to break the delegates up into three groups and each group got to do a different activity on a rotation basis. A third got to taste the trio of Ardbegs, The Ardbog Committee bottling, the Ardbeg Corryvreckan and the Ardbeg 10, while a third got a tour of the brewery and the others were entertained by a spectacular coopering display by our good friends Roger, Ray and the coopers from SA Cooperage. I think the general consensus was that the venue and the food were great and that the Ardbog was the pick of the whiskies. Some of the more adventurous souls sampled the local brews, but knowing that Saturday was a long day I was circumspect and decided not to get stuck into the beer.

After a nice lunch we departed Lobethal and headed back to Adelaide for our date with Ian McWilliam and Jim Kelly from Glenfarclas. As an organiser I was gratified that our planning and timing was spot on and we arrived back in plenty of time for delegates to prepare for our afternoon Masterclasses.

Our numbers swelled for the afternoon sessions. We had about 70 people in the room for Ian McWilliam's presentation and the room were entertained by a fine story and even finer whiskies. I think everyone liked the 'headliners', the 40yo and the 1982 Family Cask, but my hero on the day was the 25yo. There's something 'sneaky good' about the 25yo (as there is about both the 12 and 15yo's).



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

Our numbers swelled for the afternoon sessions. We had about 70 people in the room for Ian McWilliam's presentation and the room were entertained by a fine story and even finer whiskies. I think everyone liked the 'headliners', the 40yo and the 1982 Family Cask, but my hero on the day was the 25yo. There's something 'sneaky good' about the 25yo (as there is about both the 12 and 15yo's).

We had a break for afternoon tea and reconvened for the "Australian Malt Whisky Showcase". This was another innovation for 2013 as we felt that we wanted to give delegates exposure to as many established and emerging Australian distilleries as we could in the Masterclass format and we wanted to canvas a range of whiskies and to show the blossoming of the local industry from the less than promising offerings before 2000 to the spectacular and massively improved offerings on the market now. I despaired of the local malts in the 1990s. I wanted to love them, but there were too many duds and consistency was lacking. My personal experience in the last three years is that Australian Malt Whiskies are world class and I wanted to show that to our delegates.

I left it up to the producers to choose their whiskies to present and I was incredibly gratified on the day that the first two whiskies were stunningly good; without blemish and stellar examples of the art. The final three were also excellent (with the Lark rum finish a standout) but my fondest malt memory goes back to those first two. Thanks to both Patrick Maguire and Casey Overeem for choosing and presenting such great whiskies. Thanks also to Hugh Johns and Sam Pendergast for presenting the brand new Starward and to the exuberant and entertaining Tim Duckett for presenting one of his extreme whiskies in the "Vat out of Hell". While Tim's whiskies are in variably excellent, they are always challenging.

The 'Showcase' was wound up by the "Pentangle Australis Raffle"; where our Australian Malt Whisky Showcase presenters provided 1 litre each of new make spirit from their stills which was added by me on the day to a bespoke 5 litre barrel, provided by SA Cooperage and signed by all the distillers. Second prize was a beautiful handcrafted whisky/jewellery box of Queensland Maple accented by WA Jarrah and lined with silk, containing a whisky cradle and one of our famed 1980 Glenfarclas 2005 24yo Convention malts. Third prize was a bottle of our 2012 bespoke bottling of Overeem Single Cask Single Malt OHD-004 and thanks to Starward, the fourth prize was 2 x 200ml bottles of Starward. I suppose we were lucky that an Adelaide resident won the first prize as there were thoughts entering my head that life could get difficult if our winner lived overseas.

Everyone had a chance to take a breather as we didn't need to gather again until 7.15 for the Gala Dinner.

To see all the official photos from the Convention please visit www.boxflat.net.



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

Day 2 – Saturday 1 June 2013

After the Australian Malt Whisky Showcase and Pentangle Australis Raffle, delegates and guests had a chance to adjourn and freshen up before the Gala Dinner.

We always put a big effort into the Gala Dinner as we really want to show what whisky and food matching is all about. John Dunbar, I and Derrick Casey (From Cordon Bleu International) worked with various chefs from the Hilton to come up with three matches to our selected Convention whiskies.

We decided to showcase two of our own bespoke whiskies (malts commissioned by and/or selected by us and bottled by the distillery owners). We also approached Beam to supply the Laphroaig 18 as it was (a) a contemporary whisky and (b) extremely well regarded around the malt connoisseur traps. The only whisky that didn't comply with our overall theme was our Convention Glenfarclas from 2005, but it's such a superb whisky and there are so few bottles left on the planet, that we decided that the people who came to the Convention should get a chance to try it again or for the first time.

Our little selection panel also found it the easiest to match. There's something about slow roasted pork and Speyside whiskies or maybe it's just that pork and apple goes well with many malts. The other two whiskies presented bigger challenges. You'd think that heavily peated whiskies would be a breeze to match to food, but it often depends on the secondary characteristics in the whisky to hang the dominant food flavours on. If you try to 'out-smoke' the whisky, you often end up with crashing discordance. Interestingly, the Laphroaig 18 is actually more pungent and confronting than the standard 10yo. I think the higher ABV might account for some of that, but it actually displays more of the uncompromising coal tar phenols than maybe even the Quartercask, let alone the 10yo. The crispy skinned chicken breast was a nod to the underlying meaty sweetness while the roasted Japanese pumpkin and red rice risotto just upped the vegetal and creamy characters and along with the smoked mushrooms worked well.

With the dessert, it was both the high level and youthful exuberance of the alcohol in the 4yo Overeem Sherry Cask matured (ABV 61.5%) that presented the challenge of trying to tame that fire to reveal the lovely fruity and nutty aspects that define the underlying character. The chocolate mud cake provided a solid, chewy and sweet base while the whisky glazed cherries and especially the preserved date really zoned in on and lifted the genuinely attractive primary congeners in the Overeem. We really thought long and hard on how to tame the alcohol (we didn't want to water it down) as we loved it as a cask strength so we decided to chill the whisky prior to serving and with hindsight I would've swapped the double cream for vanilla icecream. Hint: if you want to match a very good young and unpeated Australian malt whisky to a dessert then chill the whisky and serve it with good quality icecream.



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

During the Gala Dinner we were treated to background on the food and whisky matching from John Dunbar and music from a talented duo Mark and Suzie from the band Ashbury who [in between announcements and interruptions (mainly by me)] delivered a pleasant and thoughtful mix of pop, folk and jazz influenced music, mainly from the 60's and 70's.

We were also educated and entertained by the doyen and deservedly nominated 'Godfather of Australian Malt' in Bill Lark with a speech on the previous decade in the Australian malt whisky distilling industry with a view to the future. Bill is the most qualified person in Australia (and probably in the universe) to comment on the renaissance of the local industry as he kicked it off in 1993 and he was one of our guest speakers at our Inaugural Convention in 2003 when he presented a speech on the first decade of the Industry. He was also the boss of the Australian Distillers Association for a long stretch in the early days.

I won't try and summarize his speech as I didn't take notes, yet I received three very strong impressions:

- 1 The local industry is going from strength to strength, expanding in both capacity and reputation; and
- 2 The relationship with all aspects of the industry in Scotland is cordial and supportive and while the Scottish industry has been at times bemused and intrigued by the Aussies, never antipathetic; and
- 3 The local industry is characterised by a spirit of cooperation which reflects the boutique nature of most of the producers in Australia.

I suspect the latter can be attributed in large part to the genial and generous personality of Bill Lark himself.

Day 3 – Sunday 2 June 2013

While our industry friends set up for the Great Whisky Exposition in the Grand Ballroom, the rest of the Convention delegates were entertained by two presentations by our guest speakers, Bernard Lloyd and Paul Shand.

Bernard is an author, resident in Tasmania who has written a book on Australian whisky and he was good enough to share his research and lots of his photos of whisky distilling in Australia. I knew very little about the industry before 1970 and was fascinated to learn about quite big operations in Australia that are now mere historical footnotes. Bernard's book "Bushfire: Australian Whisky" is due out this September and the publisher is Tas Food Books, www.tasfoodbooks.com.

To see all the official photos from the Convention please visit www.boxflat.net.



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

Our second presentation “Geology: The Bedrock of Malt Whisky” focussed on the proposition that geology may be a legitimate way of classifying whiskies. There have always been problems with the historical classification based on the traditional regions (Lowlands, Highlands (including Speyside), Campbeltown and Islay. Professor Paul Shand set out to convince the audience that similarities in spirit from geographically distant distilleries may be explicable at least in part by the geology on which they sit and through which the water they use passes. I’m not sure whether the case is all that strong, but it was fascinating to get a better geology lesson at a Malt Whisky Convention than from ancient episodes of Doctor Who. Paul’s presentation is available on our website. I encourage everyone to read it.

At midday it was time for lunch and then all delegates headed into the Great Whisky Exposition. The GWE was divided into three sections. From 11.00am entry was available to accredited media and trade staff from all relevant liquor and hospitality premises, then the Convention delegates were admitted from 12.30pm and the general admission section commenced at 1.30pm.

The room looked great with all the banners and the bottles and even better when the room started to fill up. There are some great panoramas of the GWE at www.boxflat.net.*

I admit that I didn’t get to try many of the whiskies and I can’t say I seriously analysed any of them as I think adrenaline deficit was kicking in around 3.00pm but I will note the whiskies (of those I tried) that impressed me and in no particular order – Scapa 14, Springbank Rundlets and Kilderkins, Kavalan Soloist and the SMWS Cask # 21.27. I was also lucky enough to be sitting near the Suntory stand and sampled the Bowmore 12 and 18’s with the freshly shucked oysters. The 12 provided the best combination and the West Coast oysters were just superb.

I hung around long enough for the room to be cleared and then headed home around 5.15pm to put my head down. I was really happy with the way everything went and the feedback has been universally positive.

I’d like to thank my fellow committee members for their contributions across various activities but my main thanks have to go to our sponsors (please visit www.mwsoa.org.au and click on the link to the Convention and then scroll down) and our guest speakers, Bill Lark, Bernard Lloyd and Paul Shand.

To see all the official photos from the Convention please visit www.boxflat.net.



Feints and Foreshots

August 2013

Issue 40

Musings from the Chair August cont.

And my most heartfelt thanks go to the members who have been previous delegates and especially those who'd never come before; I hope all the new members who loved the event will let their whisky loving friends know.

The Convention in Short – some numbers

Total number of sponsors and exhibitors	- 18
Total number of exhibitors at GWE	- 16
Total number of Private Delegates -	- 53
Total number of Industry delegates	- 22
Total number of Gala Dinner attendees	- 79
Total number of Trade/Media at the GWE	- 92
Total number of General Public @ GWE	- 93
Grand total of attendees at the GWE	- 260

* This website belongs to Peter Hayward who was our official photographer for the whole event so you can access all of the photos he took from Friday through Sunday.

Craig Daniels, MWSoA Chairperson clandrummond@bigpond.com

UPCOMING EVENT:

Whisky Awards 2013 Gala Dinner Saturday 12 October 2013

Rob Roy Hotel 7.00 for 7.15pm.

Bookings through the Hotel - ph. (08) 8223 5391

Website: <http://www.RobRoyHotel.com.au>

