



Object of the Newsletter

To promote the appreciation of fine Scotch Whisky, the area from which it comes, the people that inhabit the land and it's history. By the way, I do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on the whiskies I am tasting.

In this issue I look at Signatory Bunnahabhain 1978 27-year-old Islay (Isla) whisky. Many thanks go to my good buddy Mark Jones for bringing a bottle with him from Nevada, when he and his lovely wife Sheryle came to stay for the weekend. This is a single cask bottling so there are only 469 bottles of this whisky. I found this whisky to be light and fruity, leaning more towards the lowlands than to Islay, but it also had a bit of a peppery kick. Strangely the pepper seemed to get more prominent when a little water was added. Signatory is an independent bottler of rare Single Malts offering flavors otherwise lost in blends. Signatory selects their casks from the highest-quality scotch distilled throughout Scotland. The result is a collection of tastes that represent the country's best and most distinct flavors.

You can buy Bunnahabhain 1978 27 year for around \$400.00.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Fruit sherry

Palate - Sherried fruits, raisins, some spice

Finish - Long slightly sweet

If you have a personal favorite and you would like it to feature in future "Slange" newsletters, please let me know. I can be contacted at my website www.scot-talks.com

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





How to wear the kilt www.tartansauthority.com

It's very easy for we rather straight-laced Scots to shudder at some of the sights we see at Highland games outside Scotland - kilted apparitions wearing everything they could find in the Hollywood wardrobes department and wearing it proudly, totally unaware that it may have reduced them to a figure of fun in some eyes. Now . . . it's not up to us to dictate how you should celebrate your roots, so please just look upon this basic advice from the old country as helping you to avoid provoking pitying looks or sniggers from any Highland forebears watching over you from that great Brigadoon in the sky!

The most important points to bear in mind before you even get measured up for a kilt are, that Highland dress is not a uniform (unless you're in a Scottish regiment or a pipe band) and neither is it fancy dress. You should look upon a kilt as an alternative to trousers and wear it accordingly. If you want to wear it with a summer T-shirt and bare legs ending in flip-flops, then feel free to do so. If you fancy it with a polo shirt and Nike trainers, then why not! Just as with trousers, how you wear it depends upon the circumstances; T-shirt and flip-flops won't go down too well at Granny's funeral and you would want to show appropriate respect by 'dressing up' somewhat: wearing long stockings (hose), smart shoes, sporran, collar and tie or open-necked shirt and - if the weather allows, a suitable kilt jacket. Similarly, when it comes to evening wear, you'll want to make an effort and look as smart as possible - both from a personal pride point of view and to do justice to your no doubt glamorously dressed companion. Here again, less is more. Festooning yourself with sword, dirk, targe, powder horn and - a cardinal sin - feathers in your bonnet, are not the way to go.

Now you will come across individuals in Scotland and the States who can be likened to barrack-room lawyers who seem to know everything about what you *should* and *shouldn't* wear and *how* you should do it. They want to preserve the old fashioned image of Highland dress and will regale you with their 'regulations' at the drop of a hat. Listen politely but don't be intimidated. Highland dress isn't preserved in aspic, it's a living, evolving fashion and adding one's own distinctive touches to it prevents us all becoming homogenized. . . . as long as the touches don't belittle the dress that you're wearing and cause offence to others who hold their heritage dear.

Space doesn't allow going into the finer details of each element of Highland dress so perhaps I can dip in here and there and mention some of the most frequent areas of confusion:

There shouldn't be any need to actually point out that a kilt is not a skirt, but having seen the embarrassing sight of a Canadian school pipe band visiting Scotland with the poor boys dressed in billowing TARTAN SKIRTS, perhaps it does need to be mentioned in passing.



Below is a simple guide to help you choose your single malt Whisky, and the flavor notes you should expect from it. Being Scottish I recommend you find a likely candidate and try it in a bar before buying the whole bottle. With each issue of the newsletter I will add in another Whisky to the flavor map. This Issue; [Signatory Bunnahabhain 1978 27-year-old](#).





It should also be mentioned that the pleats go to the back! Insulting your intelligence you might think? You wouldn't say that if you'd seen Virgin Atlantic boss Richard Branson (a 'Brit') alighting from one of his trains in Edinburgh last year with his kilt on back to front! It got caught in a door handle, one of his aides claimed. As we scornfully say in Scotland: "That'll be right!"

When it comes to those long stockings we call hose, ignore the fact that Sean Connery and thousands of Scots don't know any better and wear sparkling white - don't *you* do it! How this predilection came about can probably be blamed on kilt hire companies who, like Henry Ford and his 'any color you like as long as it's black', offer you any color you like as long as it's white! For them it makes sense and cuts down enormously on the stock they must hold. Aesthetically however, gleaming white hose destroys the look of Highland dress. Hose should be colored and should blend in with the tartan being worn whether you're in day or evening wear. For the latter, black hose is probably the best since it's odds on that you'll be wearing a black jacket. Whitish hose is not taboo altogether - the off-white , creamy color of undyed yarn goes extremely well with some kilts.

We mentioned feathers in one's bonnet earlier and should emphasize that it's viewed as the worst possible taste to wear eagle feathers in your bonnet to which you're not entitled. They're not fancy dress and have a long established significance in Scotland that shouldn't be trampled on. Here's what the late Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk had to say on the subject:

"The convention has long been established that a chief wears three eagle feathers, the chieftains of cadet branches and Feudal Barons* wear two and the gentleman (armigers*) of the clan may wear one feather. The Sovereign, as Chief of Chiefs, wears four." Lecture over!!!!*

The subject of Highland dress can occupy a complete book - in fact the late Charles Thompson proved it by writing '*So you're going to wear the kilt?*' and one piece of advice that many of us on this side of the Atlantic would disagree with, is his assertion that 'At the very longest, the kilt should reach only to the top of the knee.' At that height it tends to lose its elegance *and* its admired swing and fills onlookers with trepidation in case the wearer should bend over too far. Which brings us to that well-worn music hall joke about what's worn under the kilt.

There are certainly Scottish regiments in which it is an offence to wear underpants or shorts unless special conditions apply - Highland dancing or hurricanes. In fact, the writer's father who was a drill sergeant in one such regiment had a car wing mirror fitted onto the end of his pace stick and would walk along the parade line to ensure that everyone was appropriately undressed!



However . . . we're skirting the main question here. Should male kilt wearers go breeched or unbreeched? Here's some advice from American Bob Martin, Kilt historian and kiltmaker of many decades experience.

Now, to the breeching of the kilt. The only good and sensible reason for the wearing of undies (and I do mean undies, NOT Bermuda shorts, basketball shorts, etc.) with the kilt is out of deference to someone or something. Many men may feel, and with good cause, that should their kilts fly up, exposing them to the world, it would be an embarrassment to their wives or children.

Many men may wear underwear out of consideration for the general public which, perhaps, might be embarrassed, especially here in the States. The deference may be for the man's church, Or his employer, or even for himself. Though a man may very well desire to wear his kilt unbreeched, he must be respected and not chided for putting his own wants second. Some men, on the other hand, must wear underwear with their kilts for medical or physical reasons. Whatever the reason, no explanation should be required.

Problems sometimes arise with kilt-wearers when people, mostly in fun, attempt to find out for themselves what there is beneath the kilt. I feel these attempts occur mostly with the younger set of kilted men. With older men, the tries would be far fewer, if at all. I've never had my kilt touched by strangers with the thought in mind of seeing what there was to see. If one is rather embarrassed to wear the kilt in public, and shows it, then that one had best be prepared for such onslaughts or leave the kilt at home. I believe one's self-assured bearing has very much to do with the public's reaction to seeing the kilt. Of course, the entire affair can be handled by ignoring the situation. After all, it's the other person's problem, not ours, isn't it?

HERE'S TO CHEATING, STEALING,
FIGHTING AND DRINKING,
IF YOU CHEAT, MAY YOU CHEAT DEATH,
IF YOU STEAL, MAY YOU STEAL A HEART,
IF YOU FIGHT, MAY YOU FIGHT FOR A BROTHER,
AND IF YOU DRINK, MAY YOU DRINK WITH ME.