

History of Tullibardine Distillery

Tullibardine Distillery is situated in the village of Blackford in Perthshire and lies on the site of Scotland's oldest brewery dating back to the twelfth century.



10th Century – A Nordic tragedy

The village of Blackford was given the name as far back as the 10th century when the wife of the Nordic King Magnus reputedly fell off her horse and drowned while crossing a 'ford' in the area. The tragedy was said to have deeply affected the king and the area was referred to hereafter as 'black ford' or as it is now known Blackford. A mound, which can be seen from the grounds of the distillery, reputedly depicts where Queen Helen was buried, and is known locally within the village as 'deaf knowe' due to the fact that if someone shouts from one side of the hill they cannot be heard on the other side.

12th Century – The brewing of beer begins

Fortunately for the village, its reputation was not blighted for ever more. As Queen Helen experienced, the village accessed a pure and plentiful supply of spring water which streamed off the nearby Ochil Hills. This water, recognised for its purity and quality, was to put Blackford on the map for a different reason. It was to become associated with the making of beer and was the site of the first public brewery in Scotland. The importance of this supply was widely recognised and was the principle reason that the village could boast of having no less than 3 breweries operating at one time, all drawing water from the same source.

15th Century – A Coronation beer

Yet more recognition was to be bestowed on the village when, in year 1488, King James IV purchased beer from the brewery which stood on the site of the now Tullibardine Distillery following his coronation at Scone. James IV was to become one of the best known late medieval Scottish rulers and ruled for 25 years eventually being slain at the battle of Flodden on the 9th September 1513.

20th Century – Tullibardine becomes first distillery in 20th century

During the early part of the 20th century, the brewery on site of the distillery fell upon hard times and was used for a



TULLIBARDINE

variety of purposes. What had not changed, and to this day remains the same, was the plentiful supply of crystal pure spring water which continually flowed past the brewery from the Ochil Hills above.

In 1947, a Welshman by the name of William Delme Evans purchased the brewery with a view to converting it to a distillery with the original capital being supplied by friends and relatives. Delme Evans was an engineer by trade and designed the distillery to maximise efficiency initially using nature, and latterly science, where necessary. The distillery was built under very difficult circumstances as material was under licence and building and construction work at that time was subject to severe building controls. However, in 1949, Tullibardine distillery produced spirit for the first time and ran under Delme Evans ownership until 1953



when failing health forced him to sell it to the company of Brodie Hepburn. Throughout his time at Tullibardine, he was assisted in the project by Mr C. I. Barrett, a retired Excise Officer who had considerable experience at Highland Malt Distilleries. Mr Barrett was subsequently manager of Tullibardine Distillery until 1958.

To this day, examples of Delme Evans' design are still in use at the distillery. Cooling water for the distillery still continues to flow over the top of the condensers using only gravitational force and the heat generated within the distillery is extracted using two condensers as opposed to the traditional one to maximise heat exchange and reduce unnecessary waste. Delme Evan was never really given the credit he deserved for his ground breaking and influential work at Tullibardine and, despite going on to help design Jura and Glenallachie distillery, his true passion till his death in 2003 remained Tullibardine.



21st Century

The distillery lay dormant until the June of 2003

when it was bought along with the existing stock of Tullibardine whisky. This was a long and difficult purchase involving many different parties all coming together to enable the distillery to be reopened. In the December of 2003, Tullibardine distillery once again fired up the boiler and spirit flowed from the stills for the first time in nearly nine years. Throughout the re-commissioning process, care was taken to maintain as many of the traditional methods of production as possible and utilise the skills of the distillery manager and operators in producing the Tullibardine spirit. The care, attention to detail and passion which is instilled by the team at Tullibardine has resulted in the production of a superb spirit which is laid to rest in the finest casks available. Now that we are up and running, we will produce enough spirit for our future needs and those of our customers. This is not an easy projection to make as we do not know how popular Tullibardine will be in years to come, but what we can ensure is that it is as good as we can make it.

In November 2004, Tullibardine opened the doors of the distillery and new visitor centre to the public. This is a small



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part of one of the best out-of-town retail locations in Scotland, and the other retail units are due to open throughout 2005 offering visitors a unique Scottish experience.

The new centre offers unforgettable tours of the distillery by experienced guides as well as connoisseur tours with the vastly experienced Distillery Manager.

The new retail shop has a distinctively Scottish influence, providing a range of unique gifts, accessories and seasonal products such as glassware, pottery, fabrics, hand-made wood products and luxurious soaps and cosmetics. The licensed restaurant, Cafe 1488, also has a strong Scottish influence, using only the freshest local ingredients to create a delicious range of traditional hot and cold meals with a contemporary twist. Home-made soup, sandwiches and bakery products are available along with a range of fine quality tea, coffee, wine and soft drinks.

The name 1488 was chosen in remembrance of the year King James IV celebrated his coronation and purchased beer from the brewery which was situated where the Tullibardine Distillery is today.



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