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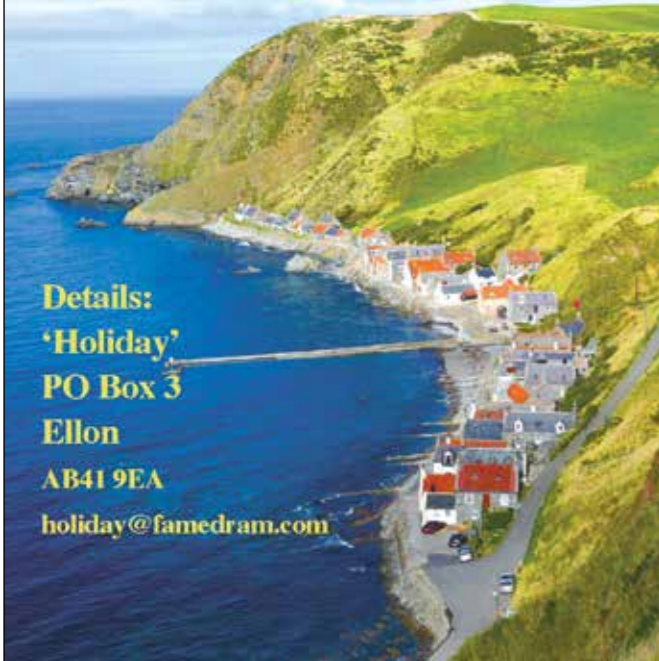
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from Haddo House - towards Oldmeldrum.
Use our GPS Coordinates to find us,
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In an age of advancing automation there are some activities that remain re-assuringly human. One of these is the craft of whisky distilling - particularly of single malts. Above - some of the signs of the times.

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IN THE HEYDAY of the railways there were branch lines everywhere – with most distilleries boasting their own branch and goods sidings.

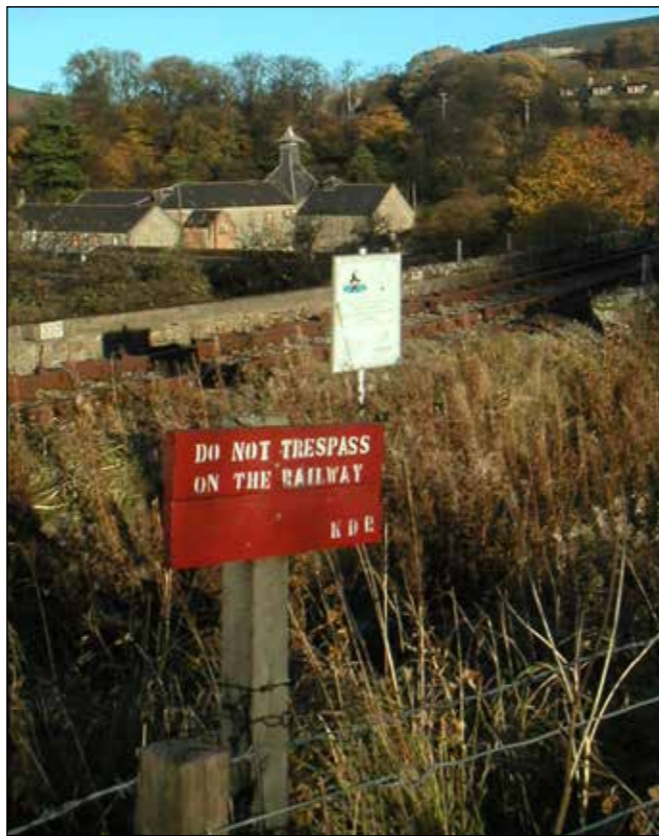
Aberfeldy was no exception, but come the 60s (and that nice Dr Beeching) and many distilleries lost their vital connection.

Thus it is that visitors to the Perthshire distillery are greeted with the sight above of a 'stranded' steam engine preserved on its own short stretch of track.

Not everywhere, however, has lost out. Thanks to the drive of a group of enthusiasts what was probably the classic whisky line has been restored, at least for passenger use.

The Keith & Dufftown Railway (www.keith-dufftown-railway.co.uk) does just what it says on the tin: it runs services between the classic centre of the whisky trade and a point close to the network at Keith.

Meanwhile, from Aviemore you can ride a restored steam engine on the Strathspey Railway tasting local drams as you progress through the lush countryside on this former celebrated Whisky Line.



Details:
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WELCOME – or not?

TIME WAS, not so long ago, when distilling was a dark art. All those mysterious rows of drab, windowless stores (the bonded warehouses), the trademark pagoda roofs, even the manicured lawns, all were out of bounds to the casual visitor.

Then everything changed. Someone realised that the dark art could become a prime tourist attraction and visitor centres, gift shops and restaurants all began to blossom within the confines of these once forbidden areas.

And yet – not all distilleries lend themselves to becoming visitor attractions. In

some cases it is the physical layout that militates against it. In others it is the scale and the precise nature of the activities – so signs like the one above, seen at the Auchroisk distillery, are necessary.

Serious whisky connoisseurs watch out for the rare opportunities when they might be able to legitimately sidestep the ban and 'bag' one of these secret places. What to look out for? Occasional 'Doors Open' days present an excellent opportunity. They tend to occur in the autumn. Watch out!

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Speyside memories relived

THERE CAN'T be many Hollywood stars who started out in life working in a distillery in Elgin.

Yet for Kevin McKidd his life went a kind of full circle, after shooting to fame in the original *Trainspotting* (he wasn't in the latest T2 movie as his character died the first time round) he has since starred in many blockbuster hits, from *Brave*, the animated film with Kelly McDonald to *Hannibal Rising*.

He was more recently photographed for the

Macallan Masters of Photography series by Annie Leibovitz.

It was his early days at the Macallan distillery in Speyside that persuaded McKidd to make an album of homage entitled the *Speyside Sessions*, with some of his original friends and connections from Elgin.

Most of the songs from the 24 track disk were recorded near the banks of the River Spey, included are a number of songs written by Robert Burns.

Also on the album are several 'bothy ballads,' a genre that shares a kind of kinship with the progenitors of American blues, a fact not overlooked by legendary American ethnomusicologist, folklorist and archivist Alan Lomax who, like a latter-day Burns, roamed the Highlands in search of its traditional songs.

What began as a gathering of a group of old

friends in an old house on the River Spey over the winter holidays quickly evolved into a project that spanned the history of Scottish music.

This labour of love is given voice in Kevin McKidd's rendition of 'For These Are My Mountains.' The lyrics recount the classic tale of a man eager to escape the confines of his small town to seek his fortune in the wider world.

After years of travel the protagonist returns to his childhood home with his hard-earned wealth to find, "They're less than the pleasures I first left behind." It is clear throughout his performance that the song holds special significance for Kevin and the final lines of the song may as well have been written for him and the *Speyside Sessions*: "At night by the fireside old songs will be sung./At last I'll be hearing in my own mother tongue."

McKidd, born in Elgin in 1973 and at the age of 17, he went to work at the Macallan distillery. He later went to work with the Lumsden family of coppersmiths, where he was apprentice to the famous Elgin coppersmith Alan Lumsden.

First theatrical foray was as a member of the Moray Youth Theatre. Planning to study engineering, he initially attended Edinburgh University before changing tack he decided to enroll at Edinburgh's Queen Margaret College to study drama. He then joined Edinburgh University's student theatre company, *Bedlam Theatre*.

Now aged 43, McKidd has had some years away from Speyside yet his passion for his homeland, and the distillery where he once worked, speaks volumes.

You can download the album from <http://thespeysidesessions.com>, with a donation to *Save the Children*.

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Yet more Galore...



Re-telling the tale: filming in progress

IF YOU haven't seen the new remake of *Whisky Galore*, sit back relax as the film is now going to be on general release in Scotland from the beginning of May, showing in Odeon Cinemas from Ayr to Aberdeen.

The new film, directed by Gillies Mackinnon and scripted by Peter McDougall, has a host of celebrated actors, from Gregor Fisher to Eddie Izzard.

It's a classic tale made even more lifelike by its new lease of life. The story follows the inhabitants of a Scottish island who try to plunder 50,000 cases of whisky from a nearby stranded ship.

The perennial story of a united community putting itself against officialdom and authority has

resonances the world over.

The original film, directed by Alexander Mackendrick for Ealing Studios, was based on the novel by Sir Compton Mackenzie. This was actually inspired by the real events of 1941, when the SS Politician went aground in the Outer Hebrides. The shipwreck led to a hilarious battle as the wily islanders on nearby Eriskay tried to salvage the huge cargo of whisky on board, all the while dodging the mainland authorities.

Should you miss the general release you can also apply for your own screening through the website www.whiskygalore.com [1] and <http://www.arrowfilms.co.uk/> screen-it! [2]



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Details: www.spiritofspeyside.com

Islay Malt and Music festival – May 26 - June 3

Details from: www.islayfestival.com

Whisky An' A' That – ‘Around first Saturday in June’ in Ayr Town Hall.

Details from: www.robbedsdrums.com

World Whisky Day – May 20

“Events are taking place all over the globe. If you can't find an event happening near you why not host your own World Whisky Day event? All you need is a bottle of whisky/whiskey to share with your friends”.

Details www.worldwhiskyday.com

The Spirit of Stirling Whisky Festival

Check details for 2017

www.spiritofstirlingwhiskyfestival.co.uk

The Whisky Fringe, Edinburgh

Check details for 2017

www.royalmilewhiskies.com

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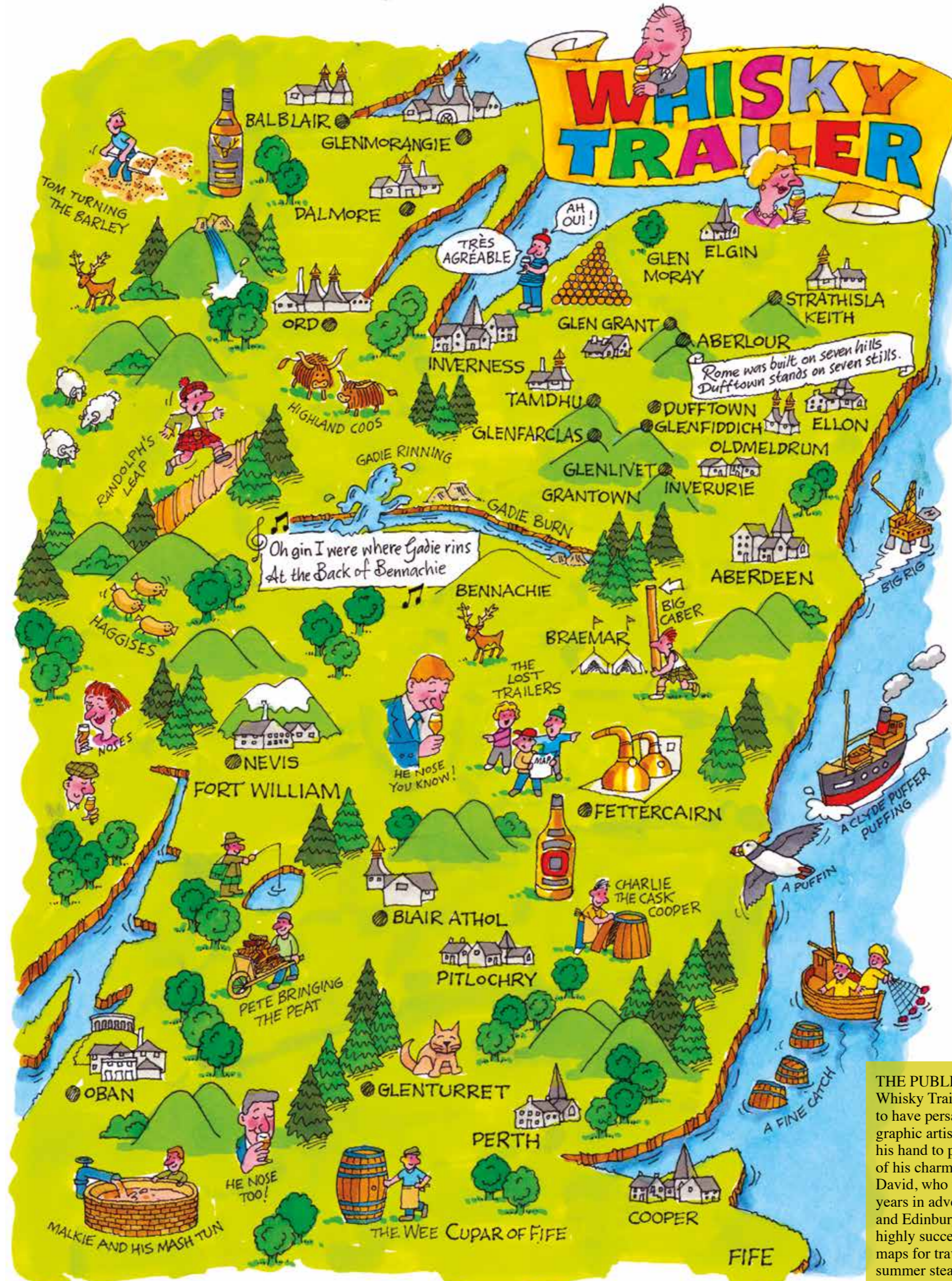
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THE PUBLISHERS of the Whisky Trailer are delighted to have persuaded the talented graphic artist David Gray to turn his hand to producing yet another of his charming feature maps. David, who worked for many years in advertising in Glasgow and Edinburgh, produced the highly successful companion maps for travellers on the Jacobite summer steam train from Fort

William to Mallaig as well as one for the equally exciting line from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh. Also in the series is a souvenir map of the West Highland Way. Plans are afoot to produce an enhanced, souvenir version of this Whisky Trailer map, will be for sale through local outlets.

Further details of all these maps: www.northernbooks.co.uk