



A SPIRIT OF THE FUTURE AND OF THE PAST



Bruichladdich working in partnership with the Agronomy Institute, UHI Millennium Institute Orkney College

An Islay company in partnership with the Agronomy Institute, Orkney College UHI, is looking to develop a specialist whisky from Bere barley, an old variety that was brought to the Hebrides by the Vikings in the ninth century and has been grown in Orkney and other parts of northern Scotland for hundreds of years. This unique collaboration has been brought together by an innovative project called HI Links led by the UHI Millennium Institute.

Bruichladdich Distillery produces Scotland's purest single malt whisky from an unlikely marriage of manual 19th century equipment, pre-industrial techniques, wine trade influences and state-of-the-art telecommunications. In 2005, the distillery produced its first whisky from Bere that is particularly appropriate for the equipment they use, and as a result of the quality of the distillate is convinced of the market potential for producing specialist whiskies from this old variety. One of Bruichladdich's interests is "Terroir", the production of whisky from barley grown in specific geographic areas.

UHI HI Links provide companies in the Highlands and Islands with a unique service by linking them to Scottish academic expertise. Specifically they provide one-to-one free consultancy and financial support and guidance to help develop new business ideas (www.hilinks.uhi.ac.uk). Bruichladdich Distillery received a grant from UHI HI Links to

conduct a feasibility study in collaboration with the Agronomy Institute, a key member of the UHI Millennium Institute, based at Orkney College, to produce Bere whiskies using Bere malt originating from two different Highlands & Islands locations – Orkney and Islay. The study will involve the Agronomy Institute facilitating the establishment of Bere supply chains in the two islands, providing seed and Best Practice Guidelines to growers and supplying malting quality grain to Bruichladdich from Orkney and Islay. Dunlossit Estate will supply the grain from Islay who aim to match Orkney's projected production of 30 hectares. The yield is less than for conventional malting barley but it should make around 25 casks or 10,000 bottles when mature in 2016.

The purpose of the programme is to find new markets for Bere which will increase the demand for this traditional crop and hence allow more farmers to grow it and at the same time develop new commercial products for the benefit of consumers and Highlands and Islands food and drink companies.

Most whiskies produced by Scottish distilleries use malt from grain which was not grown in the H&I. Bruichladdich's Bere whiskies will be unusual, not only because they will be made from Bere but because the Bere will have been grown and malted in the H&I. The final whiskies will therefore be genuine products of the H&I and will be an excellent example of the revival of a traditional local product, where commercial success is anticipated through the niche whisky market.

Bere growers will also benefit from the project by being given the opportunity to grow a new cash crop for a market which will last for several years with the added value of its straw by-product. The heritage and culture of bringing back Bere into cultivation on both Orkney and Islay will also be of value to both residents and visitors and the conservation value attached to growing a greater area of cereal crops, can provide a useful feeding resource for over-wintering birds.

Mark Reynier, Managing Director of Bruichladdich commented:

"It's been great fun developing this project with HI Links and we look forward to toasting the success of the whisky with them - a spirit as much of the future as it is of the past."

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