



WHISKEY  
CLUB

# The History of Irish Whiskey Podcast

## Episode 6

### SPEAKERS

Fionnán O'Connor, Barry Chandler

#### **Barry Chandler 00:11**

In the last episode we got as far as the Royal Commission, the what is whiskey trial. And we left that episode at this point in history where Irish whiskey, all of the distilleries on the island of Ireland now had the opportunity to use an additional apparatus, many declined, the use of this Coffey still, this column still. And that ignoring and avoiding perhaps taking advantage of this new technology, together with some global events that were taking place, then and in the ensuing few years, started this precipitous decline of Irish whiskey, which led to almost Irish whiskey disappearing, going from its days of being the number one whiskey in the world down to having a minute, say on the world stage. Why did the distilleries despite being given an opportunity to adapt and adopt this new technology stay firmly in their place, even when global events started showing them that this gonna affect sales?

#### **Fionnan 01:17**

Yeah, I mean, I think the great irony of the 20th century industry is that the potstill purists managed to out survive the Belfast column distillers, and you wonder how the hell? What happened? And other the simple answer is industrial warfare, really. DCL came into Belfast. Wouldve been hard to enter the kind of economics that went into columns still, it was so big, that kind of scale that you're either all in or you're not. So you do see, like the pot still purists kind of dinking around a little bit with coal, especially toward the end, but not anything close to the kind of investment required.

#### **Fionnan 01:54**

Corn distillers had a column, but they converted to like yeast production at one point. But anyway, you're seeing an industry collapse on multiple fronts. So the column still industry is funnily enough,

largely still in the UK for most of the 20th century, but well, it doesn't last very long. But it's essentially taken over by the internal politics of column distilling itself in a kind of a fairly underhanded buy. And again, nobody really knows what happens to the stock, there's the official story is that it was all redistilled into industrial alcohol. The more likely story that you hear occasionally is that it ended up in bottles of Hague, that there was some Connswater, grain whiskey kicking around, blended Scotch for a good time to come.

**Fionnan 02:37**

And then yeah, that you end up there was already it's funny, there's always so many things happening at one time, the decline, even by 1908, had already kind of started. But then similarly, like, as we were talking about ourselves in 1912, Middleton renames, the whiskey to Paddy. A lot of these heritage brands Redbreast, the same Gilbey's Redbreast comes from out here, they're all out of the same period of decline. Green spot is like 1934 I think. So all that's in the background, all this stuff that was disappearing, the two last pot still brands were both products of the 20th century, and at the same time, you see Prohibition kick off in the United States, the Volstead Act of 1919.

**Fionnan 03:20**

And already before Prohibition, a myth that we tell ourselves is that Irish Whiskey was out selling scotch, and then prohibition happened and we got bootleg Irish whiskey and turn them off. And actually, if you read the material, Irish Whiskey was starting to trail Scotch in America already. And I remember a friend in Scotland who said you know, it's like you lot complaining that Roy Keane was sent off the pitch when you're already down three nails, you know. But anyway, it's always more complicated than one series. But they're, the seeds are already there. And really what they couldn't have joined in to the kind of big blended scene at this point. If they tried, perhaps maybe they could have but by this time, you've already seen big brands develop.

**Fionnan 04:04**

Scotch is starting to aggressively market itself in New York campaigns. For the Far East, all kinds of stuff and of course, Irish whiskey was sold abroad as well. But the whole 20th century is really the story commercially of brands and consistency. And a Johnnie Walker in New York tastes like a Johnnie Walker in London tastes like a Johnnie Walker in Hong Kong. This whole story and the Wheeler Dealer, blended industry is being crushed not by provenance,

**Fionnan 04:34**

but by big brands who don't have time for this kind of carry on and are so much bigger than the Wheeler Dealer blenders that they'll flush them out anyway. And so you start seeing these kinds of powerhouse operations. Again DCL is a poster child of this big company that via grand met and various incarnations eventually becomes Diageo and start seeing those kinds of companies emerge in the background of all of this.

**Barry Chandler 04:58**

In 1915 when minimum age statements were introduced to Irish Whiskey, was that in response to the fear that Irish whiskey might be considered inconsistent, or was there were there other forces at play?

**Fionnan 05:13**

Well, it did. There's the main forces is David Lloyd George, who was prime minister by then. And you still have, and again, the process has begun of the big brands coming into their form, but by 1950, and you still just have an awful lot of column distilled, not very old spirit out there. And that's a big, big problem, because there's no rule that prior to 1915 about how old it has to be correct. It's not even in the Royal Commission. And Lloyd George basically is stifling are stifling the mass production of column still, he's putting them into a process where they have to be slowed down a bit, because there's just so much booze.

**Fionnan 05:50**

Now, it's often been said that whiskey was coerced into being a prestige product, even at its lowest entry point. Even a base level blend is now at least three years old, in comparison to a lot of liquor at the time in the world. That's pretty good. It becomes a bottom line. And it's as true of Scotch as it is of Irish, the Dublin pot still distillers are delighted when this happens, because they have their whiskies already north of that anyway, versus some of the blenders. I've seen records from Dunville, saying, well, we need to wait for some of our grain whiskey to catch up because those components weren't as old and a lot of whiskey coming out of column distills wasn't very old, it wasn't seen as necessary, because the flavor and component and all of this was the added malt or pot still.

**Fionnan 06:35**

And so yeah, itself kind of shapes. And at the same time, you have the Irish war of independence goes on. And with the creation of the Irish Free State, Ireland actually drives up the minimum age to five years to in order to kind of frustrate blended Scotch imports to reposition Irish whiskey as a premium product. They're no longer particularly worried about Belfast is not part of the Free State. And of course, that's already been taken over by DCL. There's the whole story of that collapse, you know, you get again, the big assault from DCL. But then you also got Dunville, speaking of whom, in 1936, they're actually turning a profit. And they still just have this very somber board meeting, and say, Look there's no future in Irish whiskey. Let's just wind it up while we're still making money.

**Barry Chandler 07:20**

The some of the events that led to such a strange decision, and we sent all over today. So odd wasn't that a profit making distillery would just decide eh, let's get ahead of this. Let's just shut down. Prohibition is often discussed as being a very pivotal moment in the history of Irish whiskey. Because the United States by 1919 was such a large market for Irish whiskey. Was there a sudden change? Did something suddenly happen in 1919 with the introduction of the Volstead Act that led to prohibition, that all of a sudden we saw the impact of that in Ireland? Did Irish whiskey exports to the US stop overnight? Do we have any sense of that?

**Fionnan 07:59**

Yeah, I mean, you have, obviously there's the sudden market disappears for everybody. And there's a lot of anecdotal stuff about like Joe Kennedy, approaching various Irish distillers and being told to go away because they were too nervous about and you wonder how big the splash of these kinds of events really is. But certainly that process and again, Ireland, the Irish Free State, in its early years,

was a very protectionist economy in the first place. There's a lot of talk about self sufficiency, the first years of self governments,

**Fionnan 08:28**

it's all to do with looking after ourselves and this and that, and how do we, and a certain degree of isolationism, and that long after Prohibition, but they actually cap exports, they say, to preserve whiskey for the whole market in the 40s. You can't surpass you can't get bigger in the 1930s. There's the trade war with Britain, Tom called the economic war, where essentially the Free State refused to play, pay land annuities from before independence, I said, Look, we're, we're running this place now. You're not getting what you thought you're, you know, land payments are done. And then you know, there's a Cold War of tariffs going back and forth.

**Barry Chandler 09:04**

Is this where Irish whiskey or Irish goods generally could no longer be exported to the British Empire?

**Fionnan 09:10**

I mean, they can just faced with a wall of tariffs, and it's funny because there's some of them still are exporting at this point to Britain, but it's just diminishing. And of course, you know, just in terms of ethos, the British public as arent as charitable to the notion of Irish products, post a war and Scotch starts to take that place within the mentality. And you certainly get like up to Churchill with this snifter, the whole notion of Scotch as a part of industrial 20th century Britain. Definitely. And it loses its, it doesn't lose its Scottishness, but it becomes a very Brit, you know, there's the old adage, you can tell where America went because they left Coca Cola behind them. Right now, in the same way you could tell where the UK went because they left Johnnie Walker and you look at places like India, and so forth, it became so ingrained that this is the luxury blended scotch not malt scotch blends.

**Barry Chandler 10:00**

What were the visible manifestations of this? Of these events? Prohibition, economic war, export caps? Was it that all of the distilleries for the most part remained and just caught production? More? Did we see a mixture of that? And the disappearance of distilleries?

**Fionnan 10:17**

Both? Yeah, I mean, you see, like Power is devalued at stock by 50. But you should see this like war of attrition internally. Theyre trying to stay relevant. The names that continue to do okay are usually well known heritage brands like Powers that have a domestic market.

**Barry Chandler 10:33**

And that was one of the few publicly traded companies I believe Powers in the whiskey world.

**Fionnan 10:36**

And so if you had a name like Powers, you could survive. If you were Cassidy's or somebody small or maybe you want to have like a local attachment and became nearly impossible and they all start closing through the 20s and Cassie Cassidys closed in 1926 or seven. And you just see them one by one by

one drop off the first big sinking ship is at Dublin distillers company or well Roes distillery, closing in 1926. And then it takes a long time for the company to wind up that happens in the Second World War.

**Fionnan 11:05**

Dunnville is another big ship in the 30s and the Dublin distillers company is a good case study because they formed in the 1890s as a means of keeping Dublin pot still afloat by mixing Roe, Marrowbone Lane and DWT into one entity, but they remained three separate distilleries all producing upmarket style Irish potstill Whiskey indiscreet competition with each other. And certainly, they provided a lesson of how not to merge you know what I think IDL wittingly or not corrected those mistakes 50 years down the line, but you definitely see these mixes of like immediately effective ripples and some just big sinking battleships and then some just long term effects that were taking a while to play out.

**Fionnan 11:50**

And it just this constant storm of battering. And then on top of everything, the Free State was very unsympathetic toward the plight of the distillers, they didn't like a lot of them as individuals, there was a certain distrust, but also it's alcohol as well and the world's smallest violin for the booze industry. And wouldn't it all be a bit nicer if we got off the gargle and so all this kind of judgment and lack of confidence is there in the background. And definitely like if you go through the Irish pot still distillers Association files, copies of which are in the National Library manuscripts room, and they're just constantly on the backfoot the government keeps hammering them, keeps raising excise, keeps not being sympathetic, keeps

**Fionnan 12:31**

and they're just tired by this and that and there's no endorsement eventually. And similarly, who's left Tullamore, Lockes, Jameson, Powers and Cork distillers really, in the south. And a number of them again, are positioned by the there's an inquiry there from the industrial encouragements board that they're told you need to make blends. You need and when they even when they're sticking their toe in the water. There's a whole inquiry about, it's expected that they're not pushing blended whiskey in America that when they go off on their jaunty's, on branding things, they're just pushing pot still once they get away from us,

**Fionnan 13:07**

And Tullamore who you mentioned, a name familiar to us today. Predominantly today as a blend, we would know it. Back then, a pot still distillery being encouraged to produce blends, didn't perhaps heed the advice and in the early 1950s went in a direction that nobody wanted to go.

**Fionnan 13:07**

but they need to be paying attention to our analysis and our advice and this and that. And you know, there's a whole argument at one point and Senator Jack McQuillan argues the whole thing should be nationalized, and run by the government switch to blends. He says while these distillers live in cuckoo land, the Scotch have swept the decks with their rent blended products. And this idea of again, these people need to be coerced. And yes, Irish whiskey did not reject a column still when you're talking about all the shades of all history, but certainly who's left by the 20th century, you're seeing the eyes

that that did try and even if few of them had flirted with, you know, at one point or being worked around. Certainly the way they presented themselves was as pot still purists.

**Fionnan 14:09**

Yeah, shattered. I mean, it sounds they put in a column still, like a year or two before they closed, it was just so that's the most not even, yeah, exact. It's not even like Lockes were just went under with the pot still purism from start to finish, it was a bid. And then again, yeah, there was no money in whiskey or an Irish whiskey at all. And so when the DW limited comes up with Irish mist, this lacouture, that becomes instantly more more lucrative, and eventually they closed the distillery for a period and then rather than reopen it when stocks are low,

**Fionnan 14:41**

they do deal with Powers whereby if the Powers distillery will continue to provide the base alcohol for Irish mist, they can have the Tullamore Dew brand themselves. You get Tullamore Dew from the 1960s you'll notice it says Dublin on the bottom and Tullamore Dew Dublin and it's all being made of Powers. Might have a little bit of B dailies stock trickling around. But similarly like the be daily for so long Knapogue 1951 was kind of the Old Testament, Irish whiskey. Everybody knew that's the most expensive it gets the oldest kind of Hallmark. And of course that was old be daily stock. Lockes, I mean, Lockes is very hard to find these days.

**Barry Chandler 15:19**

It's Kilbeggan distillery today.

**Fionnan 15:21**

Kilbeggan distillery. So at that point, Lockes would have been making a pot still product. Most of them by this point, were making a mash of about 40% malt, 40% barley, 15% oats, 5% wheat, maybe again, some of them are still lingering 1% rye. But you know, a lot of the diversity had bottomed out. And then you get a few like Comber and Cork distillery who are just malt, barley and oats. In Corks case, a little lower than Comber. But again, not a whole lot of diversity there. Malt Bushmills had eaten Coleraine, and was now producing something like a vatted malt, but it was triple distilled and not unpeated. There's even references into the 60s, but the peating would have been very light and seemingly, as far as I can tell, it drops out when they stopped doing their own malt and when they were acquired by Bass Charrington and slowly, this turns into triple distilled unpeated and pure pot still.

**Fionnan 16:14**

And then we get to the point of history where we might have tried some of this stuff and enough whiskey societies have had a crack at an old Redbreast or an old Bow Streeter. Yeah, they do taste different to our modern whiskey. And they have, Bow Street has that wonderful kind of waxy tangerine, something barley sugar. And that's so odd Powers is like drinking and all you know, the only satisfactory definition I've ever come up with for the taste of Powers is it's like the joy that a retriever has carrying a shoe on its mouth you know, it's like leathery, just wonderful, mouthfilling satisfying thing, object. But again, very, very, very, very dense. And then the old Cork distilleries have that wonderful kind of like clover, again, like candle wax, it's so dry. And all of that is where history unless

we get lucky and drink something from like 1910 and break the bank. That's the part of history that's available to us in terms of anything tangible.

**Barry Chandler** 17:12

So in the early 1960s, then we're left on the island of Ireland with four operating distilleries Bushmills in what's then becomes Northern Ireland, Jameson powers and Dublin, and then the core distilleries company, which itself was a merger of number of distilleries in Cork. In the 1800s. In the 1860s, as well, we're left with these four. We hear anecdotally that these distilleries, and I'm curious to get your thoughts on Bush mills and its opportunities versus those that were in the Republic of Ireland. What we're hearing that these distilleries, certainly the Republic of Ireland are only operating certain weeks of the year, they were barely keeping the pace going. Was Bushmills as affected because it was part of the United Kingdom as the Republic of Ireland distilleries?

**Fionnan** 18:00

I mean, I suppose it lumbers on in a very productive way in comparison, but of course, it was also very small. It's under the same legislation that small malt distilleries in Scotland are under at the same time the North was independently hit hard again. You have the big column still bottoming out. Combers still closed down in the 50s. And then yeah, Bushmills and it's really we say four distilleries, there was still Coleraine there, but by that time, the original Coleraine distillery was more or less gone.

**Fionnan** 18:26

And it was essentially a blending lab for Bushmills. There was a column still little small column setup. So Bushmills was going into a blended direction itself, and it's a discrete change. Yeah, Bushmills moving toward a blended product and it doesn't it's hard to pinpoint when exactly it moves from malt to blend. It hadn't been a single malt and what we would call a single malt since it took over Coleraine because it absorbed Coleraines stocks, but it was a malt product, and then becomes discretely a blended products, but of a certain age. You got the old Bushmills nine, Bushmills special a cure whiskey, this and that, but it lumbers on quietly.

**Barry Chandler** 19:02

Exports at this time in the early 1960s to the United States would have been barely anything to record.

**Fionnan** 19:08

Were they minimal? Yeah, again, and as a small distillery, Bushmills didn't have the same when a big distillery goes down and it falls like a giant when Dunvilles'was doing, well, I suppose they were still making money but when they were feeling precarious, there's a lot more at stake and there's a bigger crash, whereas a smaller distillery is dealing with different economics.

**Barry Chandler** 19:25

And would the market in the early 1960s Then have gone back to being mostly domestic, as opposed to that wonderful export market that had existed in the late 1800s.

**Fionnan** 19:35

Yeah, you see it again, contract and contract and contract and they're sent on these and you again, you have this Irish pot still distillers association, which is largely a fraternal organization and doesn't have a lot of it's not like the IWA today or anything, really, with some sort of regulatory capabilities. It's just kind of a boys club that get together and reminisce about the good old days, you know, and once in a while they go on these trips to New York or this, that you see them getting off the helicopter and trying to push this stuff and they probably had a good time what results are coming and there is the like writing on the wall.

**Fionnan** 20:08

And then yeah, in the beginnings of the talks that lead to probably happened as a result of the IPDA. The sort of communication between firms that would otherwise have been one point very unwilling to talk to each other, but you get Cork distillers, Powers and Jameson and finally sitting down and forming what was originally called Irish Distillers Group, IDG, and then in 1966, and then quickly changes its name to IDL.

**Barry Chandler** 20:33

This must have been a huge change to stomach for all three participant distilleries, former competitors, Cork, certainly even a bigger outsider than Powers, Jameson were to each other. But for the Powers family to have proposed this idea that look, in order to save Irish whiskey, we must all stand together and discuss ways to perhaps collaborate and are maybe even further in that merge and would have been an astonishing idea I'm sure at the time.

**Fionnan** 21:03

Yeah, I mean, it's strange, because it seems all the strange because Scott was already divvied up between again, we were talking about the emergence of the big multinationals. And so it's the order that Irish distillers, or distillers in Ireland hadn't started forming something like this kind of cluster and had the little attempt with EDC or UDC in the north of the columns. But that got flushed out. And yeah, it does become a seismic moment and one that seemingly didn't have very tangible, original results financially. But you know, long term certainly is a seismic moments like any big moment in history, and you wake up the next day and world hasn't changed yet. But you know, it takes a while for it to take shape, but certainly as a decision that it closed one door and opened another.

**Barry Chandler** 21:49

What were the decisions that were made by the formation of the Irish Distillers Group?

**Fionnan** 21:55

Well, some of the earliest ones they bring in a guy named Kevin McCourt, who's ex RTE from outside the whisky industry

**Barry Chandler** 22:02

Outside the families

**Fionnan** 22:03

Yeah, from broadcasting from said nobody feels hard done by, you know, and



**Barry Chandler 22:08**

To run the group?

**Fionnan 22:08**

Yeah, exactly. And McCourt makes some very strong decisions almost immediately. So all right, we're gonna switch to blends. That's it, no complaints, hush you at the back. In 1967, literally Powers becomes a blend, Jameson becomes a blend there, it becomes this just immediate turnout. Originally, the blends would have had a high pot still content presuming Power still as high pot still content. But anyway, there is this shift. And then the other thing that happens very fast is we need the slashing of the bonders relationships. We need to focus on our brands on developing ourselves. Gilbeys gets the pipeline cut off for Red Breast and told, look, you can last as long as you can on your own result on the stalks

**Barry Chandler 22:49**

On the red breast currently.

**Fionnan 22:50**

Yeah. And the weird exception is Mitchell and Sons. And again, it was still 60s Ireland I'm sure somebody had a chat at a pub and said you know, no, would you

**Barry Chandler 23:02**

Explain that a little bit more to us why

**Fionnan 23:03**

So Mitchell's does not get its bondage relations slash, you know, Green Spot is allowed to continue. And, and that's a bit of a mystery in and of itself. But for the most part it becomes, we're gonna blend we're going to develop brands. We're going to stratify brands and you look at them and they are picked out on purpose. Jemison is chosen for the international market powers as the home favorite and how all of this process begins. And that's the beginning of finally you get the building of new Midleton the decision that we need to close down the heritage sites. Another thing, possibly even a bigger shock than merging the companies was taking these ancient sites and turning them cold and say we're all going to Cork now. How do you how do you explain that?

**Fionnan 23:04**

Whos not happy when we say we're all going to cork now?

**Fionnan 23:50**

And a big greenfield site state of the art distillery and stratified with, stratified with the kind of kit that you see developing a little earlier. So when we're talking about the history of grain whiskey, you look at the early years of IDL and the grain whiskey they're running and it does seem to be basically potstill run through a column they don't have the grain mash bill culture that Belfast had that is much more in tune with how grain whiskey evolved in Scotland. And anyway that stuff looks and again Bushmills grain was at the time look a bit odd as well, because they're running it out of their own resources.

**Fionnan 24:24**

And so anyway, you get nevertheless maize columns. Anything Scotland can do we can do better in new Middleton. Yeah, in new Middleton, you have again, the system of redirected spirits had already been kind of going around in Powers, in Jemison, but it certainly gives birth to the infamous Middleton styles, heavy pot mod pot light pots that you graph those and then you have the columns and then you end up with a portfolio of liquids. And then as they age at different casks, you can create different combinations. They originally made malt in Middletown, or how much they make anymore, but they did have a pipeline and so you get like Paddy which is grain, my little bit of malt, a little bit of pot still, Powers, a lot of potstill small amount of grain Bush, Jemison, grain, pot still additive, and they create this system of differently tasting products and different at different price points, pushing them out and aggressively trying to create.

**Fionnan 25:17**

They are a monopoly by this point by the 70s. They start the process of absorbing Bushmills in 1972, which eventually turns into a rationalization of malt coming from Bushmills as a specific component and that's what ends up in the Midleton requirements. Yeah, and that process culminates in 1979 with the closure of Bushmills own columns, the ones that they put into Coleraine, because they're surplus to requirements. And if you read through that closure, it's interesting to say a parallel barley grain whiskey was found to be producible, in Midleton. And I mean to this day, there's the infamous barley grain whiskey made for black Bush.

**Fionnan 25:56**

And it's a big part of black Bush's inheritance. And it seems to be a direct, if accidental descendant of how Bushmills had tried to set up a column still on their own resources, and how all of these flavors result. But and then the grain I mean, to this day, Bush, Midleton make a small amount of that, you know, of that type of other grain whiskey. And they play around, there's a little bit where they switch to wheat through the column stills, and then in 1994, they switch back to maize. And they, in that kind of early 70s, and 80s period, they were trying out different things to see how they would kind of settle into themselves.

**Barry Chandler 26:30**

Looking at the landscape for Irish whiskey at that time. So new Midleton opens in 1975, to a great fanfare within a very small whiskey industry that is in Ireland, a fanfare of its own perhaps, and the world wasn't interested in Irish whiskey at the time. Massive investment was just put in within the hopes of perhaps being able to save money on production, bringing everything together, and perhaps having this united front to eventually turn to exports. But the building of new Midleton didn't solve everything for them because markets needed to be reopened up and the distribution needed to be to be gained in markets that hadn't really seen Irish whiskey in any meaningful quantity and 50 years or more.

**Fionnan 27:15**

Yeah. And it's odd that you see the like, intermediary, 30 years. And when we talk about kind of the history of an industry, we're talking about big events forming of IDL. And this and that, and there is that silent kind of foot soldier work that happens. From the 70s onwards, you know, that the John Quinn's of

the world will be able to remember, you know, the, the enormous unglamorous groundwork of just marching Irish whiskey back to relevance by whatever means possible and treading the floorboards as it were to get it out there. And that takes a long time. In 1996 Jemison breaks the million case mark.

**Fionnan 27:53**

And so there's a whole unwritten history there of the people and the work that went into trying to reverse this seemingly irreversible tide. And the blends play a big part of that, and the new image that gets put out and trying to make, it's hilarious, we think of Irish whiskey sells itself as a lighter version of scotch. And you look before the 1950s. It's the other way around, where the Irish pot still purists are always accused of hanging on to something heavy and dense and a little bit oily. And the perception of Irish whiskey gives it a very heavy drinking old man's drink will give you a headache. And a Scotch was the lighter, slightly more synthetic, dependable modern product, and certainly reversing that took time and a generation itself.

**Fionnan 28:38**

Of course, in the 70s in the US, people had already moved away from Brown spirits to white spirits. Bourbon was on the backfoot, and so forth. And so you have that in the on the stage as well. There's less people just drinking whiskey full stop. And even Scotch was worried about this. And against that tide, you slowly see this kind of march happen. And you know, 90 and for the first years of idealists, it seems to be a lot of worry about being broken up and taken over in some sort of a hostile bid and pieced out. And in 1988, Pernod Ricard in this kind of white horse movement comes in, buys all of IDL as one coherent entity, and intends to continue promoting it as one coherent thing and really puts its weight behind Irish distillers and behind Irish whiskey.

**Barry Chandler 29:24**

Just prior to that in 1980, the government made some efforts at codifying even further protections and definitions around Irish whiskey, didn't they?

**Fionnan 29:32**

Yeah, I mean, the 1980 before the recent GI of the 1980 Irish whiskey Act was really all there was in terms of legislation, and it's very general. Again, there was one in 1950 that wasn't very strong either. But there wasn't a lot to write about. There wasn't a lot of detail to go in. And certainly and it's funny a lot of the terminology we get comes from the 20th century the term single malt, for example, is invented seemingly in the 1960s by Glenlivet and Glenfiddich, and a few brands in malt scotch, which had hitted to been called Old Highland whiskey or malt whiskey or pure malt, any of this stuff, the single a single malt.

**Fionnan 30:13**

And they're starting to get a market in the 1980s, that kind of malt diversification. And in 1984 Bushmills comes out with Bushmills single malt is the first whiskey in Irish history ever labeled with the term single malt. And that start and again, it's responding to the labelling terms of scotch, because there wasn't any legend, there wasn't any of this stuff. And even into the 90s. When you see pure pot still single malt over the Cooley products, no, this stuff is regulated and someone might get fussy about it, or single grain comes in with green or you know, in the again in the 90s, rather.

**Barry Chandler 30:49**

At the same time, as the Irish whiskey industry was trying to reorganize itself, we started to see overseas, then the marketing and advertising of Irish whiskey in a new way, very conscious of the onslaught of scotch, and very keen not to be scotch. And some interesting phrases and words come out smooth. And we're not scotch. No, we're something else, something we might laugh at today. But in a world, a whiskey world at the time, it was dominated by scotch, the Irish seemed to know they couldn't compete against it. There had to be something different.

**Fionnan 31:23**

Yeah, absolutely. And it becomes the start of Irish whiskey defining itself by contrast to scotch. Yeah, we can look back now and especially from, I'm guilty of this myself, kind of bemoan the old pure pot still kind of classics, and then oh, what was the stuff in the 70s. And this is all a pitch, but it was an incredibly effective and incredibly necessary and in that world, how was Irish whiskey going to position itself?

**Fionnan 31:47**

I mean, there's this grim survey in the 50s, where, you know, 50% of Americans surveyed weren't aware that Ireland made whiskey. That again, it had disappeared. And you do see, I mean, that's, to this day, I've been asked before within my own lifetime, what's the difference? What is Irish scotch, like, you see it, shelled in odd places, scotch, by this time on the back of a massive, massive, massive blending industry starts to fetishize its own single malt heritage, come up with a name for it that can be consistent. And you see that happening in the background. But Ireland isn't even close to that it's almost miraculous, the Bush Mills was able to get out a single malt and call it that.

**Barry Chandler 32:28**

So we're now seeing by the mid 1980s. Leading up to the 1990s. There is certainly the foundation is being laid for. Everyone's crossing their fingers, a new renaissance of Irish whiskey, but it will be many years away yet. But I wish distillers are getting close to perhaps no longer being a monopoly on the island of Ireland. And so on the next episode, our final episode we're going to wrap up with talking about the most recent 30-40 years of Irish whiskies seven, 800 year journey and examine what happened that led to the place we find ourselves today with 40 plus distilleries compared to when I was growing up in Ireland in the early 1980s. Only one distillery in the Republic of Ireland being Midleton itself. So on the next episode of the history of Irish whiskey, we're going to dive into the past 30, 40 years and see how different landscape of Irish whiskey we have today, thanks to a few key developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s.