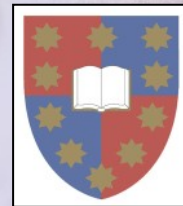




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The monthly
• newsletter •
of the Public
Schools' Club



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Black Tot Day rum tasting surprise

Members and guests were pleasantly surprised when they sampled four premium rums at the Club's commemoration of "Black Tot day", held on Monday 31st July, 2017.

"I don't usually like honey in drinks, but this is really good," said Club Secretary Max Bruce as he sampled a honey rum.

"This five year old has a lovely finish," one of the tasters said.

"With flavours of burnt toffee," another taster remarked.

Guests found the samples of Beenleigh Rum to be complex, soft, perfumed and very impressive, as they received tasting advice from Beenleigh's rum ambassador Shaun Pattinson.

"Beenleigh is aged in bourbon and brandy barrels," he said.

"Bourbon barrels are made from virgin American oak, and are recycled for use in making whisky and rum.

"But when you age a spirit, depending on what barrel you age it in, you can age it for too long. You get tannin from the wood and that can impart some nasty flavours," Shaun explained.



"Depending on the spirit, there is an optimum age.

"Sometimes we re-char the barrel. The flavour it imparts is the most crucial thing."

Australia's original rum, Beenleigh commenced distillation in 1884 at its original stone building on the banks of the Albert River at Eagleby, Queensland - roughly half-way between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

It utilises Australia's finest molasses from the country's last remaining family-owned sugar mill. The distillery uses the pot still method using the original copper equipment.

The Club looks forward to further tasting experiences guided by Shaun Pattinson, including a forthcoming cocktail evening.



Shaun Pattinson (at right) guides the rum tasting



And all I ask is a glass of rum ...

At the rum-tasting evening, Members and guests enjoyed hearing about the origins of Black Tot Day - the last day the British Navy issued rum to its sailors.

The story goes back to the 17th Century when the Navy daily issued a gallon of beer for each sailor. That is a remarkable 3.7 litres. Difficulties of storing such volumes led to the substitution of beer with a half pint (284 ml) of rum (roughly nine standard drinks).

In 1824 the ration was reduced to a quarter of a pint, that eventually shrank to an eighth, and on 31st July 1970 the ration was scrapped in the British Navy. The Australian Navy ceased giving rum to sailors in 1921.

Recollecting rum's maritime connections, the tasting was accompanied by a stirring recitation of *Sea Fever* - published in 1902 by John Masefield (1878-1967).

*I must go down to the seas again,
to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song
and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face,
and a grey dawn breaking.*

*I must go down to the seas again,
for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.*

*I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.*

- A recording of Masefield reading his poem may be heard on-line:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCYsLqV2CyU>



John Masefield

Connections with Tanzania



The Tanzanian Honorary Consul to South Australia, Mr Sossy Msomi, addressed a Salvation Army fellowship dinner held at the Club on the evening of Thursday 31st August 2017.

No stranger to the Club, Sossy described his activity to provide consular assistance across Australia, while he also enlightened the audience as to South Australian connections to the nation of Tanzania.

After 1995, Tanzania's government moved away from state ownership to private enterprise, Sossy explained.

"The first company to take over one of the diamond mines was a South Australian venture - Tanganika Gold. Others followed. And now Australia is the largest foreign investor in mining in Tanzania," he said with pride.

Sossy also said that the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in South Australia (including some Public Schools' Club members) is funding a clinic that is being built at his island home of Ukerewe in Lake Victoria.



Honorary Tanzanian Consul
Sossy Msomi at the Club



Secretary Max Bruce, President Chris Ashton, Committee Member Nick Charles and Deputy Chairman Mark Angus

A renewed Club focus

Members and guests are greatly enjoying a new focal point at the Club, consisting of a fireplace in what was the sitting room of the house. The area is now replete with a cheery open fire, a period lamp, superb leather wing-backed armchairs, a hearth-set and fire-side screen. This has required opening the chimney connection which had been unwisely bricked-up for many a long decade.

The Committee is delighted that Club Members and guests may now occupy the same fireside sitting space in the house which the Bragg family doubtless enjoyed more than a century ago.