



NATIONAL
TRUST *for*
SCOTLAND

21 April 2023

JOIN THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND AND THE GLENLIVET TO UNCOVER TALES OF HISTORIC WHISKY PRODUCTION

- Follow in the footsteps of The Glenlivet founder, George Smith, to discover secrets of Scotland's whisky distilling past
- Tours of the 1824 Glenlivet old distillery site will take place on 27–28 April, during the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival
- Members of the public are invited to attend an open day on Saturday 29 April



The National Trust for Scotland, in partnership with The Glenlivet, is offering members of the public the chance to join an exclusive tour of an archaeological dig taking place near The Glenlivet Distillery in Speyside on 27 and 28 April.

Tours of the dig site are part of the Trust and The Glenlivet's *Pioneering Spirit* project to uncover the history and archaeology of early whisky production in Scotland, giving members of the public the opportunity to discover secrets of the country's whisky distilling past.

As part of the ticketed event, *A Journey In George Smith's Footsteps*, on 27 and 28 April, visitors will go to the original 1824 site of The Glenlivet Distillery where the origins of The Glenlivet will be uncovered. There, they can enjoy a limited-edition dram, followed by a behind-the-scenes visit to the rarely accessible 1859 Minmore still house. Returning to the Visitor Experience, they will then be able to view artefacts uncovered during the recent digs, whilst sampling one of The Glenlivet's distillery exclusive, single cask

expressions. These two tours are being undertaken as part of the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival and can be booked online [here](#).

Free tours of the dig site will also be available on Wednesday 26 April at 11am and 3pm, Thursday 27 April at 11am and Friday 28 April at 3pm. In addition to the tours, there will be a general open day held on Saturday 29 April, 10am – 3.30pm, to give members of the public an insight into the excavations and learn about the findings from the conservation charity's expert archaeologists.

Led by the National Trust for Scotland's Head of Archaeology Derek Alexander, and the Trust's archaeologist, Dr Daniel Rhodes, the dig will take place over the course of six days, with the assistance of local volunteers and staff from the National Trust for Scotland, The Glenlivet and the Crown Estate Scotland.

Derek said: "We can't wait to show what we have uncovered through our exploration into the history and archaeology of early whisky production in Scotland in partnership with The Glenlivet, a distillery steeped in history which saw its founder George Smith become the first legal distiller in the Parish of Glenlivet.

"With the help of our team and volunteers over the years, our digs have helped us discover more about how people went about the clandestine production of Scotland's most famous drink and we're excited to share our findings. Working in partnership with The Glenlivet aligns with our vision to share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage with everyone, to enrich our protected heritage and speak up for our heritage that doesn't have a voice."

Chivas Brothers Archivist Robert Athol commented: "The Spirit of Speyside Festival is the perfect time to visit Speyside and learn more about the history of whisky-making in Scotland including The Glenlivet's roots at our old distillery. I can't wait to see the finds from previous digs from our ongoing partnership with The National Trust for Scotland displayed at The Glenlivet brand home."

The *Pioneering Spirit* project, the first partnership of its kind between the National Trust for Scotland and The Glenlivet, began in 2020. The core aim was to uncover stills and forgotten bothies that were used to produce and smuggle whisky across the Highlands in the 1700s and 1800s, and the project brings together the history of an industry steeped in stories, secrets and traditions. The partnership allows Scotland's largest conservation charity to shed light on a fascinating era in Scottish history which has shaped and been shaped by Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage.

This year's dig follows the success of similar events held at the site of the former The Glenlivet Distillery, and bothy sites at Torridon and Mar Lodge Estate, using archive and landscape research to reveal the scale of production during a time when whisky making was forbidden. Last year's fortnight-long dig at the site of the old Glenlivet Distillery

uncovered part of the footprint of the old building, including the still house, alongside a whole range of artefacts and features connected to whisky-making. The team found a range of fascinating whisky artefacts – from part of an exciseman’s padlock to small personal items like clay tobacco pipes. Most recently, the team discovered a forgotten bothy above the Linn of Dee, near Mar Lodge Estate, which was well hidden from the rest of the main glen.

The National Trust for Scotland estimates there are at least 30 stills which were used to make whisky when it was prohibited across its 129 sites, including at Torridon, Kintail, Ben Lawers, Ben Lomond, Glencoe and the Mar Lodge Estate. Projects are currently ongoing across a number of these sites to delve more deeply into the stories the land holds and to identify how people went about the clandestine production of Scotch whisky in years gone by.

This year’s dig, *A Journey into George Smith’s Footsteps*, takes place at The Glenlivet distillery, on Thursday 27 April between 3 – 4:30pm and 28 April between 11 am – 12:30pm. Those interested in joining the exclusive tour of the dig can purchase tickets [here](#). Members of the public can also sign up to become a volunteer during the two-week dig by contacting Mark Johnston, the local Crown Estate Ranger: mark.johnston@crownstatescotland.com

Members of the public are invited to attend the open day on Saturday 29 April between 10am – 3.30pm and should park at The Glenlivet Distillery car park on the day and walk up to the dig site following signage.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland and the *Pioneering Spirit* campaign, visit www.nts.org.uk.

ENDS

Notes to editors

For more information, imagery or interview requests please contact Muckle Media on nts@mucklemedia.co.uk or call 0131 228 9713.

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland’s largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland’s magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.

About The Glenlivet www.theglenlivet.com @TheGlenlivet

Created by George Smith in 1824, The Glenlivet is renowned for its heritage as a visionary within the single malt category. With its smooth and fruity flavour profile, The Glenlivet has contributed the biggest volume growth of the single malt category worldwide, adding more than any other single malt whisky brand over the past ten years (IWSR, 2020). With a commitment to outstanding quality and craftsmanship within single malts, The Glenlivet is dedicated to continuing this legacy and has led innovation within single malt in recent years. Standout initiatives include the release of The Glenlivet Code, a mystery single malt, and the creation of The Glenlivet Founder's Reserve, a great representation of the distillery's signature style. The Glenlivet has also recently launched its newly renovated brand home to open up Speyside to the world. Using innovative technology combined with exclusive bottlings, immersive tours, and whisky tastings, The Glenlivet Brand Home brings visitors an experience like no other. From exploring the art of whisky making and showcasing rare editions, to reflecting The Glenlivet's heritage throughout the interiors, the visitor experience pays homage to being the original mark of quality for Speyside single malt.