



TRAQUAIR

In 1107 AD, Alexander I of Scotland signed a royal charter at Traquair, a hunting lodge located along the Tweed River. No one knows what Traquair House looked like at the time, and in fact the family of Catherine Maxwell Stuart, 21st Lady of Traquair, didn't acquire Traquair House until a bit later.

That was in 1491, and since that time the house has been continually occupied by the same family - it's Scotland's oldest inhabited house. More of a fortified estate than a castle, the oldest part of Traquair is the round tower, dating to about 1500 AD. Additions were completed over the years until about 1695, and since that time the layout of the main house has not changed.

Beer has a long history at Traquair. At the end of the Middle Ages, many estates had a house brewery and Traquair was no exception. There's even documentation: after Mary Queen of Scots visited Traquair in 1566, she noted that she had excellent ale brewed there. (With her was her infant son James VI - later King James I of England - and the crib he slept in can still be viewed at Traquair.)

The house brewery became dormant some time after 1800, but in 1965 Catherine's father Peter Maxwell Stuart, the 20th Laird of Traquair, rediscovered the brewing vessels and equipment. Following his heart and his family heritage, he decided to re-establish the brewery, and began to brew ale in as traditional a manner as possible. The copper brewkettle still in use today was purchased in 1738 (!), although its heat source has been converted from wood to gas.

The small Traquair House Brewery is known today for their excellent Traquair House Ale and Jacobite Ale - despite a tiny production of less than 1000 barrels annually, the beers win accolades ranging from the late Michael Jackson - "a touch of oaky earthiness to balance its dark-malt nuttiness" - to five stars at BevX in 2010 to many medals in the World Beer Championships over the years. Traquair ales are made from spring water, Suffolk malt, and East Kent hops; Traquair is the only UK brewery to complete primary fermentation in oak vessels.

Catherine Maxwell Stuart was born at Traquair and grew up there. At age 12, she began to help her father at the brewery, then went on to study history at the London School of Economics and later gained an MBA at Edinburgh University. On graduating Catherine began a career of working in arts administration and worked for theatre companies both in Scotland and England. She also founded a London-based touring theatre company.

In 1990, Catherine returned to her family home and took over the management and responsibility of running Traquair House and the Traquair Brewery. In the mid-90s she took on an expansion of the brewery, and has been an active member of the Society of Independent Brewers; a previous judge of the Champion Beer of Britain; and an early member of the Pink Boots Society, a US-based organization for women in the brewing industry. Catherine currently lives at Traquair House with her husband and three children.

With brewers Ian Cameron and Frank Smith, Catherine is continuing a rich, deep history of beer and brewing at Traquair, a history that makes up an unforgettable part of the unmatched flavor of Traquair ales.



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