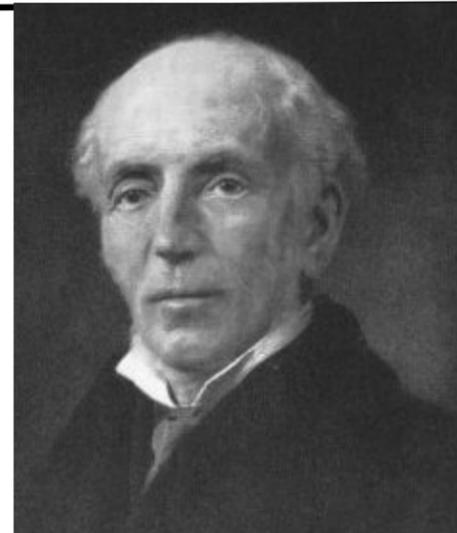


Andrew Usher 1826-1898

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Whisky distiller; Usher Hall benefactor

Born in the family home in what is now the Pear Tree House pub, third son of Andrew Usher (1782-1855) and Margaret Balmer (1785-1860), **Andrew Usher** (the son) is said to have perfected the blending of whisky, though others also lay claim to this. What is undisputed is that Andrew and his younger brother John (1828-1904) developed the whisky business inherited from their father into a worldwide export concern. They took advantage of the growing taste for whisky in the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially by improving the transport and storage of whisky from all over Scotland with a massive warehousing and bottling complex at St. Leonards, Edinburgh. Their most successful export was Usher's Old Vatted Glenlivet (OVG), though a failed two-year legal battle to have sole rights to the name "Glenlivet" ended in 1884 with a vast legal bill.



In 1885, Andrew founded the North British Distillery (now owned by Diageo and The Edrington Group) with William Sanderson and John Crabbie; and, with brother John, owned the Edinburgh Distillery (1859-1925), originally the Glen Sciennes Distillery. As recently as 2002, a unique blend of 16-year-old whiskies was created by 24 of Scotland's Master Blenders in his honour.

Both brothers were philanthropists with Andrew Usher best known for his generous improvements to St. Abbs in Berwickshire where he had a country manor. He funded the village hall, school, local church and an extension of the outer harbour wall. In Edinburgh, he will be best remembered for gifting £100,000 in 1896 to build a hall for performances of a musical nature. He did not live to see completion of the project. The Usher Hall was opened by his widow in March 1914.

Andrew's parents and six sisters are buried in East Preston Street Cemetery and his brothers Thomas and John are both in this cemetery. This memorial remembers Andrew Usher; both his wives - Elizabeth Langmuir Miller (1826-1876), with whom

he had six children after their marriage in 1850; and Marion Blackwood Murray (1847-1925), with whom he had two children after their marriage in 1879; and four of his children - Andrew, Margaret, Howard and Marion, three of whom died before the age of five.

