The Guinness story

LEIXLIP & GUINNESS: THE BREWING LEGEND BEGINS!

Arthur Guinness

Arthur Guinness was born in 1725, near Celbridge in County Kildare, though there is some speculation about the exact date and place of his birth. What we can say with confidence is that in 1752, aged 27, his godfather the Archbishop of Cashel, Arthur Price, left Arthur and his brother Richard £100 each in his will. Arthur used the money to set up a brewery in Leixlip, as shown on the map. The lease for this brewery dates from 13th September, 1756 and a copy of the original lease is displayed on the nearby Courtyard Hotel.

In 1759, Arthur left the brewery to his brother Richard, and acquired the lease to the now famous site at St. James’s Gate in Dublin. The Archdeacon, Arthur Price is interred in St. Mary’s Church beside Arthur’s Square.

At the age of 54, he signed a 9,000 year lease on a disused brewery site at St. James’s Gate in Dublin. The annual rent was £45. A decade later, the company’s first export was a modest six and a half barrels, bound for England.

By the time Arthur passed away, aged 78, his son, Arthur Guinness II was able to take over the running of the business, and the dynasty began. It was, by 1833, the largest brewery in Ireland, and in 1838, it was a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange, and had an annual output of 1.2 million barrels. By 1929, 2 million parts of Guinness were sold a day, and in the same year, the company launched the hugely successful and landmark advertising campaign with the “Guinness is good for you,” slogan, and the cartoon series featuring the famous line: “My Goodness, my Guinness.”

In 1759, Arthur Guinness II was able to take over the brewery site by the river, and also the terrace houses around what is known as Ralph’s Square.

In the following year, he also bought the lease of the site where today we find the Mall along the Main Street. He dropped in to be tree-hung and set back from the road, similar to the northern part of what is Dublin’s O’Connell Street, and he was known there as the Old Hill. He was a companion of Captain William Brady who built what is today the Leixlip House Hotel. The road was named Captain’s Hill after him.

He died in 1829, leaving to his son, Arthur Guinness III, the task of keeping Guinness going. Though the brewery site in Leixlip is disused, Arthur Guinness II moved his operation eastwards into the capital city of Dublin.

Arthur Guinness was born near Celbridge in County Kildare. In 1752, he was left £100 in a will. He used the money to set up a brewery in Leixlip with his brother, Richard. It took several years for the brewery to establish itself, but it gave Arthur the confidence to move his operation eastwards into the capital city of Dublin.

The brewery at Leixlip has remained in the family until the 1970s. Prior to that, in 1918, the Hon. Desmond Guinness bought Leixlip Castle, perhaps Ireland’s oldest continuously inhabited house. Desmond, Diamond was 27 when he acquired the castle.

Arthur Guinness was responsible for developing the brewery site by the river, and also the terrace houses around what is known as Ralph’s Square.

The Guinness success story is well known to all Leixlip locals. But beyond the borders of the town, with the exception of a few historians, few people realise that you are standing now is only a hundred yards away from where the brewing legend began.

A BRIEF HISTORY TIMELINE OF IRELAND... AND A WEE DROP OF GUINNESS!

 THE COMPANY, THE BRAND

The Guinness brand is not just an Irish success story. It is one of the world’s most recognised brands. Like many companies, it had family beginnings, though it is fair to say with Arthur Guinness at the helm, the brewing company had a more successful start from the start.

A FEW HISTORIANS, FEW PEOPLE REALISE THAT WHERE YOU ARE...