

For immediate release

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## Classic IRN-BRU Label Returns

### IRN-BRU Celebrates Homecoming Year with a Limited Edition Heritage Can

To celebrate the year of Homecoming, Scotland's favourite soft drink, IRN-BRU, has today launched a limited edition heritage can.

Five million IRN-BRU heritage cans have been produced, enough for everyone in Scotland, so that the whole nation can celebrate this unique piece of the brand's history.

The heritage can features the IRN-BRU logo that was first introduced in 1947 when the spelling of BARRS IRON BREW was changed to BARRS IRN-BRU for the first time.

Former Barr's Chairman Robin Barr and original IRN-BRU delivery boy, Jimmy Allen, now 87, unveiled the can today in Callendar Park in Falkirk – a busy town for IRN-BRU deliveries in the early years. Jimmy started working for the company when he was 14 years old, firstly as a joiner and quickly progressing to delivering and selling IRN-BRU to the Alloa area on horse and cart, before retiring decades later in 1986.

*'I've got many fond memories of working for A G Barr over the years and I'm delighted to be asked to help launch the IRN-BRU heritage can. Things have changed a lot since I first started selling IRN-BRU but I still enjoy a wee glass of it every day.'*

Set to go on sale across Scotland, makers A G Barr are anticipating a phenomenal response from Scots to the temporary return of one of the brand's most classic and nostalgic can designs.

The design lasted for over 40 years from its introduction in 1947 until it was replaced with a contemporary look in 1988. During this time IRN-BRU captured the imagination of the Scottish public with the classic BA-BRU & SANDY cartoons in Scottish newspapers, the much loved landmark in Glasgow of the BA-BRU sign on top of Central Station and the IRN-BRU TV campaigns of the 1970's and 1980's: 'Your Other National Drink' and 'Made In Scotland From Girders'.

Since 1947 BARRS IRN-BRU has gone on to become the No1 grocery brand in Scotland, achieved national status as sales have now progressed throughout the UK and helped to make A.G.Barr one of the largest independent soft drinks manufacturers in Europe.

The IRN-BRU Heritage can launch will be supported by the re-screening of one of the brand's most iconic adverts. The IRN-BRU 'Steamroller' advert from the famous 'Made in Scotland from Girders' campaign of the 1980s will be screened on STV for one week from 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

Robin Barr, Former Chairman of AG Barr – who personally took part in the company's last horse and cart delivery in 1952 - said: *'IRN-BRU has always been proud to be Scotland's favourite soft drink and has achieved such success at home and around the world since 1947. In the year of Homecoming, we feel that there is no better time to celebrate IRN-BRU's heritage, and hopefully bring back some happy memories for people with the launch of this limited edition heritage can'.*

Marie Christie, Project Director, Homecoming Scotland 2009 added: *'This exciting pack is a fitting contribution to Scotland's Homecoming celebrations. This year we are celebrating Scotland's greatest achievements in culture and in its social and economic heritage. The IRN-BRU Heritage Can is a great addition to the celebrations for IRN-BRU fans in Scotland and around the world.'*

**For more information on IRN-BRU please contact Burt Greener Communications on 0141 248 6007 // 0131 220 8249 or [Lorna@burtgreener.co.uk](mailto:Lorna@burtgreener.co.uk) : 07792253818**

**[Janine@burtgreener.co.uk](mailto:Janine@burtgreener.co.uk) : 07970706071**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**



### **Working for IRN-BRU in 1947: a case study**

**Name** - Jimmy Allen

**Age** - 87 Years Old

**Hometown** – Lived in Bainsford near Falkirk while he worked at the factory at Burnfoot. Today Jimmy lives in Camelon still in the Falkirk area.

**Length of Employment** - Jimmy started working for Barr's aged 14, after applying for a position as a joiner. He continued to work for the company for 51 years until his retirement in 1986.

**Employment Details** – Jimmy started out as a joiner in 1936, however he quickly progressed to become a Driver Salesman as more and more older workers were called up to the army. Jimmy was responsible for delivering and selling IRN-BRU within his local area which included Carronshore, Larbert and Stenhousemuir covering a 14 mile radius of the factory by horse and cart.

The cart was pulled by two horses in the summer as the demand for IRN-BRU grew in the warm weather. Jimmy's main horse was Snowball although he remembers Carnera, the world's tallest working horse at the time. The working day was long starting at 6.30am and finishing around 5pm, but despite plenty of soft drinks manufactures being on the road, IRN-BRU sold well and Jimmy enjoyed the good wages.

Jimmy delivered IRN-BRU until 1941 when he was called up to the British Air Force to help with the war effort. When he returned from India in 1946, Jimmy went back to working life at Barr's and continued making deliveries by horse and cart until 1948 when he was one of the first employees to be given a truck for making his rounds, taking over the Alloa route.

**Today** – Jimmy is retired, but his love for IRN-BRU is still going strong he normally drinks a glass of it every evening!

### **Horse Drawn Transportation.**

A 14 year old Robin Barr went out on the last ever horse drawn delivery of Barr products traveling from Falkirk to Camelon in 1952. The principle reason that the motor vehicle finally took over from horse drawn transportation was not an economic one. It was still cheaper to use horse drawn delivery carts for short journeys in the early 1950's but there was a dearth of skilled horsemen able to drive and look after the animals.

### **The 'Man on the Can'**

BARRS IRON BREW was launched in 1901 and the trademark 'Iron Man' was originally based on one of Scotland's first super-sportsmen, Adam Brown, a famous Highland athlete from Shotts at the turn of the Century. However in 1922, the iconic 'Iron-Man' image was replaced by a more contemporary sporting image of the day, a Cambridge rower. It is this image that dominated the re-launch of the brand name to 'IRN-BRU' in 1947. The image lasted until 1988 when it was replaced with a more contemporary look.

### **1947: When 'Iron Brew' became IRN-BRU'**

In 1942, 'BARRS IRON BREW' as it was then known, was taken-off sale during the remainder of the Second World War as the Government rationalised soft drinks production. BA-BRU & SANDY kept the brand in the public eye during this period as the cartoons they featured in continued to appear in Scottish newspapers throughout the War Years (and beyond) and the BA-BRU sign on top of Central Station continued to be a much loved landmark in Glasgow.

In 1947 Robert Barr (father to Robin, the recently retired Chairman of A G Barr) returned from War Service and was appointed Chairman of A.G.Barr & Co Ltd. He immediately instigated the new spelling IRN-BRU as a result of proposed new food labeling regulations which stipulated that brand names should be 'literally true'. BARRS

IRON BREW was neither 'brewed' nor solely contained Iron, and so the decision was taken to change the name spelling to IRN-BRU even though the actual food labeling regulations did not come to fruition until 1964.