

Annandale Speakers

Meeting 21st March 2019

Annandale Speakers held the tenth meeting of their season at Lockerbie Bowls Club on March 21st 2019. Mr Speaker was **Phil Kenyon**, who gave an assured performance for his first time in the role, first listing the many changes to the original programme and then introducing each speaker with an easy confidence.

First to the rostrum was **Bobby Smith**, taking over his subject 'The Pipes Are Calling' from Donald Martin who sadly passed away a few weeks ago. Bobby took us back to the days when he spent Hogmanay in Harrogate, dancing to a lone piper, then recalled spending a week at a Dance School in St Andrews where the students studied dance in the morning, danced on the beach in the afternoon and then went dancing in the evening. Bobby kept his audience smiling with his gentle humour and fond memories of whitewash brush sporrans, collapsing floorboards and accidental forays into the wrong bedrooms by his fellow students.

Godfrey Newham, making his maiden speech had the theme of 'Sticky Wicket'. This could have been a sticky wicket for Godfrey as he confessed a lifelong aversion to cricket brought on by early exposure to fast bowling when at school. With no real demand for underarm bowling and a batting average of zero Godfrey did well to keep us entertained without straying from his subject. An excellent first speech and hopefully the first of many more to come.

Next was **Alan Collins** continuing the sporting theme with 'Game, Set and Match'. Alan worked through a series of scenarios to which his title applied from recently retired sporting personalities such as Andy Murray, Sir Chris Hoy and Nico Rosberg to his own earlier profession as a draughtsman - something now entirely taken over by computers. Alan then looked forward to other things for which it may soon be 'Game, Set and Match' including newspapers, town centre shopping and cash. A well thought out and confidently delivered speech that brought us the interval.

Ken Morland was in charge of the Topics Session with a series of testing questions that somehow brought out the darker side of his victims. **George Gilhooley**, asked his opinion of children skipping school to protest about climate change confessed to being questioned on suspicion of subversive activities by MI5. **Ronnie Callander** told us that the most exciting thing he remembered other than the recent Calcutta Cup match was being suspected of receiving stolen property by the Tokyo police.

Brian Shaw, asked his opinion of a Chinese fancier paying a million pounds for a pigeon was somehow reminded of the time when the police suspected him – wrongly of course – of being a serial killer. **David Bell** clearly knew nothing about square potatoes despite being the third biggest potato grower in south-west Scotland but managed to speak on the subject for a full two minutes, while **John Reid**, asked about his fondest memories of school, opted for being stopped by the police late at night while driving home after watching the 1968 Olympics. Finally **Frank Farrell**, thinking of ways to improve tourism in Lockerbie, opted for something sheep themed, perhaps promoting the town as the Sheep Centre of the World.

Ian Sloan stepped in a short notice to talk about the Irish poet and songwriter W. Percy French. Ian had fond memories of a trip to County Clare fifty years ago with parties at the Golf Club, singing Pubs in Lahinch and a trip to the marriage-broking fair at Lisdoonvarna. Percy French was a prolific

songwriter whose works included 'Mountains of Mourne', 'Abdul the Bulbul Emir' and 'Are Ye Right There Michael Are Ye Right?' and Ian treated us to a few lines from the latter.

Joe Glass used his subject of 'Par for the Course' to talk about the founding of the Metropolitan Police by Robert Peel back in 1820. Joe was well qualified to cover this theme having joined the Met himself – albeit a few years later – and he covered his theme with his usual dry humour. Times have changed radically since a constable was paid three shillings a day but it was clear that Joe doesn't think that all the changes are for the better. Finally **Robert Jardine** took us on 'A Trip Down Under' recalling his recent visit to Australia for a family wedding. Robert ran well over his allotted time with a fascinating speech that kept us all riveted to our seats as we wondered how so many natural disasters could follow one man around the continent from heatwaves in Melbourne, flooding in Cairns, thunderstorms in Sydney and a drought in New South Wales. Robert clearly had a wonderful visit, made a great speech about and brought back greetings from old friends Alastair and Alison Lockhart.

Altogether an excellent meeting enjoyed by the eighteen members present and concluded by **Sandy Grant** proposing a vote of thanks to Mr Speaker, Mr Topics Master and Mr Critic.