

Annandale Speakers held their second meeting of the year on Thursday 17th October in the Lockerbie Bowling Club. President **Sandy Grant** welcomed members and introduced **George Gilhooly** as Mr Speaker for the evening. George put the speakers at ease with his most appropriate introductions and first to the rostrum was **Robert Jardine** who talked on "The Road Ahead" Robert has been driving for 48 years and his speech revealed that he is a bit of a car expert. He talked fondly of his first car a second hand mini which was less than waterproof! His love of these continued with two further minis but over the years Robert has owned a total of 18 vehicles Peugeot's, Vauxhalls, Fords, Toyotas and Mazdas. Robert told members of his hair raising experience in the Lake District towing a large caravan with a small Mazda up a very steep hill! This amusing speech was enjoyed by all.

"The Bells Are ringing" brought back memories of 1939 the year **Ronnie Callendar** started school and just as war with Germany was declared.

It was a time of rationing, clothing coupons and a lack of sweets; garden railings and gates being taken for the war effort and young men like Ronnie's two older brothers being called up. The arrival of a telegram brought the devastating news of the loss of one of them. More worry was to follow with the news that the St Davids Hotel in Palestine, where his other brother was staying was blown up and it was a few months until they learned that he was safe.

Now some eighty years on Ronnie is looking forward and seeing his grandchildren make their way in the world. This was a very poignant speech.

In "Free as a Bird" **Bobby Smith** talked about the decline in number of Greenfinch, Sparrows, Swallows and House Martins and explained the reasons for this. Loss of habitat, changes in farming methods and the shooting of sparrows on the continent. Sparrows are now on the list of endangered species. This was a really interesting and informative talk.

Topics Master **John Cannon** posed the questions to **Alan Collins, John Kerr, Geoffrey Newham, Brian Shaw, Sandy Scott and David Logan** on subjects as diverse as; Do you agree with the reintroduction of beavers lynx and brown bears?; with the fruit trees groaning with fruit is it going to be a hard winter? would you like to travel in a Tuk Tuk? The topics were all well answered.

In "Drawing the Line" **David Hudson** described an incident in the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 when Texas was fighting for independence from Mexico The Texans had an army of only 180 while the Mexicans had 6000 men. Their commander asked them all to cross the line in the sand if they were willing to fight and they all did. They managed to hold out for a few days before they were all wiped out. David pointed out that over the years many people have crossed the line in behaviour, decency and racial hatred. In his youth footballers were paid a maximum of £20 per week and now there doesn't seem to be any line that can't be crossed: the sky's the limit.

He finished his assignment with a wonderful poem he had composed.

Frank Farrell was in excellent form with his "Fake News"

He amused the company by telling us that we are not growing older but living longer. As an 80 year old, life is wonderful he said. In his teenage years he was bored but now having been retired for twenty years he has adopted the Spanish Definition of Retirement - what's the hurry?

When the Speakers programme comes in there seems to be plenty of time to prepare but we should all take care not to procrastinate.

As we get older we worry about dementia but Frank cheered up members by informing them that rates of incidence are dropping. (Fake news Frank?) He urged members to be cheerful to adopt a positive attitude to life and keep active.

Critic **Michael Dickie** had little to criticise and much to admire on another excellent evening at Annandale Speakers.

Timekeeper **Kenneth Morland** proposed a vote of thanks to the Speaker, Topics Master and the Critic.