

## Annandale Speakers Club--1 November 2018

Annandale Speakers Club held their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the season in Lockerbie Bowling Club on the 1<sup>st</sup> November when there was a good attendance of members.

President **John Kerr** demonstrated his versatility by also acting as Mr Speaker for the evening.

**Ronnie Callander** got the meeting off to a good start with "Light the blue touch paper". He tackled the explosive subject of Brexit which has been stirred up by both the press and politicians and is so complicated for both Britain and Europe. Ronnie went on to discuss the Gunpowder Plot and how Guy Fawkes had been caught.

"It's all going up in smoke" was **David Bell's** subject. He told the story of Joachim Ronnebergh, a Norwegian who, during the war, came to Britain with ten others of the Norwegian Resistance, to have military training prior to being parachuted into Norway to attack the Telemark Norsk Hydro Heavy Water Plant. This daring raid successfully destroyed the plant and foiled Hitler's plans to have a nuclear bomb. They then made their escape to Sweden. Joachim died last week aged 99 years. Members found the speech most interesting.

Next to the rostrum was **Frank Farrell** who posed the question "What has happened to Hallowe'en?"

In a very amusing speech Frank related his experiences as a youngster dressing up in an old jacket worn back to front and covered with a sheet. They went guising with their turnip lanterns calling at many houses and delivering their party pieces of poetry and song before receiving their rewards of monkey nuts, tablet and toffee apples. How things have changed: the turnip has been replaced by the pumpkin; costumes are readily and cheaply available at the supermarket and the youngsters just have to tell a joke before being rewarded. In Frank's opinion the magic of Hallowe'en has been lost.

Topics were in the capable hands of **Brian Shaw** who posed the questions to **John Reid, Sandy Grant, Alan Collins, George Gilhooly and Bruce Edinsor**. Subjects ranged from hair styles, the budget, village halls and crowd funding in Moffat. All were well answered.

In the second half **Bobby Smith's** subject was "Look after the pennies". Members were treated to the tale of farming before and during the Second World War when even some hill ground was used to produce food and the sheep's wool was in demand to produce uniforms for the troops. Bobby explained that when sheep are being out - wintered it is important to give them some food in the troughs or else they will lose condition and cast their wool. He explained that the loose wool can be harmful to oyster catchers and other birds. He illustrated his speech with photographs. Bobby was critical of the fat cats of industry today who are paid far too much while the rest of us have to look after the pennies.

"A fool and his money" was tackled by **Phil Kenyon**. He told the fascinating story of a fraud carried out in 1820 by Gregor McGregor who invented a new country called "Poyais" extending to some 1800 acres.

McGregor produced maps and brochures about the country and invited people to invest. This was so successful that in 1822 two ships set sail for Poyais only to

discover they had been duped and McGregor had absconded to France with £200,000.

Phil then outlined some of the cyber scams and frauds that we all encounter today and warned members to be on their guard. This was an excellent speech.

The last speech of the evening, from **Alistair Stevenson**, was entitled "All that glisters is not gold". Alistair agreed with the statement and felt that the youngsters of today should listen to their elders: standards are slipping and there is a lack of morality in the modern world. He went on to describe the properties of gold including Fool's Gold. He quoted from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice where the suitors of Portia had to choose one of the three caskets- gold, silver or lead to win her hand in marriage. This was a very good speech to conclude the meeting.

Critic **Michael Dickie** had little to criticise and much to praise. Timekeeper **Kenneth Morland** proposed a vote of thanks. Members agreed that it had been another outstanding night at Annandale Speakers.