

## ROTARY CLUB OF ROMSEY TEST MEETING 30 OCTOBER 2019

This was a partners evening held at what was a new venue for many of the members, the freshly painted Timsbury Jubilee Hall.

The meeting was chaired by President Bill Gidley and was well attended.

It was generally agreed that the catering was significantly better than we have come to expect at meetings albeit at a higher price.

What at first sounded like a catastrophe with the heating system turned out to be our speaker, Rob Patterson making a splendid entrance in full Pipe Major outfit playing a selection of bagpipe tunes, including laments and reels and the Glendaruel Highlanders whilst marching slowly around the Hall. Ron later explained to us that a feature of the bagpipes is that there is only one sound level and that is loud.

After the meal the President proposed the Loyal Toast linked to the health of our guests.

After the break we were called back by another piping interlude starting with, of course, Scotland the Brave. Pipe Major Ron then told us how bagpipes had been around since 4000BC in Mesopotamia and were later spread around Europe by the usual suspects, the Romans. What makes the Scottish bagpipes so special, we learned, was that they have three drones (two tenors and a bass in case you wondered) to which the chanter (the bit that plays the "melody") has to be tuned. A feature of the chanter is that it has only nine notes in something that approximates to the scale of E flat. Ron demonstrated that this does not preclude playing Offenbach's Can Can.

We were told that the pipers' head-dress is not a bearskin but is known as a feather bonnet and is made of ostrich feathers, and shown various bits of cutlery that form an essential part of the regalia. In fact the only thing that was not vouchsafed was what a piper wears under their Cameron Highlanders kilt.

David Sutton gave the vote of thanks.

No committee chairman offered any urgent business and after the final toast Ron sent us home with our ears ringing to the echo of Highland Cathedral, knowing far more about bagpiping than we ever thought possible.

Notes by TMP 31/10/19