

Minutes of the 2014 Annual Dinner Debrief held at the Kensington Legion on Saturday February 8th, 2014 at noon. The meeting was chaired by Paul Armstrong, who had prepared a list of items he wished to cover.

The Meal

- Best food in several years
- Beef was generally good but there were some exceptions
- Haggis was good but too many had burst and the size was questioned (too big?)
- A reminder to serve the haggis with the meat and not treat them as separate courses
- Ian has apparently spoken to McEwan Meats about some of the concerns (Ian?)

The Liquor

- The bar sales were much better than last year –ticket sales were better handled and there were plenty of bar staff.
- There was some confusion with the bar staff over which tickets was for ordinary Scotch and for Single Malt Scotch, resulting in people paying premium prices for ordinary Scotch.
- The choice of Single Malt Scotches needs to be improved.
- The selection of wines by the Club was fine, but there were some concerns over the way some staff “pushed” of the bar wines.
- Regarding the Club Scotch (always a point of debate), it was suggested that 3 oz. pours were too large as there was a lot of Scotch left on the tables. It was suggested that we should consider reducing the size of each pour – 2&1/2 – 2 oz. pours, and place three bottles of wine on each table instead of the current two.
- Scotch purchase by the Club should take into account the size of the pour (when that is decided), as well as the fact that about 100 people leave at the intermission and do not drink it.

Commemorative Glasses

- Still a subject for debate – should we or shouldn't we?
- To reduce costs, should the Club buy “generic” glasses – possibly several years supply at one time? Competitive quotes could be obtained to ensure the best deal.
- The Club logo could be added using a decal as at present – who would put these on?
- Could the Club logo decal include the year of the function?
- The possibility of sponsorship for supplying the glasses was raised.

Venue

- Is the venue – and the number of people present – too big?
- The room layout may be changed by the Fire Marshall, in which case we will have to review the table layout.
- Even if the Fire Marshall makes no changes, do we possibly want to change the layout of the room – including but not limited to reverting to two stages?

- The possibility of paying for “premium” tables was raised.
- There was little support for moving away from the Convention Centre.

Audio-Visual

- The new slide show was appreciated.
- It was suggested that noise from the back rows might be reduced if the sound at the back of the hall could be improved – extra speakers should be pursued.
- Use of lighting – darken hall at times, flashing lights, etc. – to encourage people to pay more attention to whatever is going on on stage.

Program

- The program this year was too long – especially the first half.
- More emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring the various speakers, entertainment etc., are ready to go on immediately following their announcement. This might require the use of a “stage manager.”
- Assigned times for the speakers, toasters etc. (Immortal Memory excepted) must be adhered to, even if it means a rehearsal to actually time the duration of the various pieces.
- Acts like the Pipe and the Fiddlers need to understand the time allocated to them and to adhere to them strictly.
- Should aim to conclude the evening at 1100pm and perhaps this time should be put on the tickets (and the application form?), so people know when the event will be over.

The Speaker

- First class – one of the best ever, if not the best.
- Whilst not limiting the Speaker to a set time, we need to understand and agree on how long he will be speaking.

The Event, Disruptions

- Ian did a great job and was thanked and congratulated by the Club
- Whilst the disruption that occurred was unfortunate, it only seemed to affect the tables immediately adjacent to where it happened, and the Club Executive is following up with the parties concerned.
- With that number of people present, it is essential that the noise of any background chatter be controlled and that has to be done by the person(s) at the mic at that time. Also by allowing no

gaps between the various acts, the evening will go more smoothly and slicker and not let any noise build up as it will during periods of no activity.

- A warning about sponsorship was given in that the more sponsorship plays a part, the more the Club will lose some control over “their” event.
- When all is said and done, and one looks at the list of concerns expressed above, we need to remember that for well over 90% of the attendees the evening was a roaring success, and we should be careful with any changes we make in that we don’t reduce the quality of the evening or spoil it in some way for the vast majority who attend every year.
- In keeping with the last point above, any changes for the 2015 Dinner should be aimed at improving the event as it is currently configured. Any more significant changes should be aimed at later years so that they can be thoroughly debated and thought through before implementation.