



ROCKVALE REBOUND TALKING NEWSPAPER

BOBBY'S FAREWELL SPEECH

I have an announcement to make and that is that I'm standing down as Chairman of the Rockvale Rebound TN. I have held the position and, it has been an honour to do so, for the past 35 years. 35 years is a long time and that, in itself, would suggest that it is time to stand down and hand the reins over to somebody else.

But, there is another reason and it is probably more emphatic. Over the past few years I have developed a hearing problem that makes it very very difficult for me to follow the discussion of each item on the agenda as it comes up. On one occasion I had to say 'I didn't quite catch that bit', 'I didn't quite hear that other bit' and 'I missed that other bit' and that just cannot go on. In fact, there was one occasion when I had misheard an item. I had, in fact, totally misinterpreted it and, as a result of that, it was as if I was marching down Bank Street and the rest of the committee were striding along Main Street. It was an unusual situation and that just cannot go on, it is just not the way to do things.

A Chairman should be able to conduct the meetings and enter into the discussions of each item of the agenda that comes up and should be able to do so in a spontaneous way and the truth of the matter is that I am no longer able to do that. So, I have taken the 'bull by the horns' and doing what needs to be done. After this AGM I will no longer be the Chairman and I will not be putting myself forward for any post on the committee, there would be no point in that – I am not going to hear any better. 35 years is a long time, it has been a wonderful wonderful 35 years and I wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world, it has really been great. I have been able to attend occasions and been able to go to places and have been able to meet some wonderful wonder people over these years within the Rockvale Rebound – volunteers, listeners and outwith the Rebound as well.

In 1996 it was, there was an open day on the Maid of the Loch and, at the invitation of Pat O'Neil who was the provost of Dumbarton District Council for many many years. I went along to that open day accompanied by Pat and Margaret. It was a wonderful occasion and we had a super tour of the Maid, she is a beautiful ship. The reason for the open day was that she had just had a steel deck fitted and members of the public were invited to go along and have a look though – it was a great occasion altogether.

Whilst we were on the vessel, I was introduced to and had a wonderful conversation with three very well known people. Prunella Scales was one of them. Now Prunella, probably much noted for her role as Sybil in Fawlty Towers although she has appeared in other and many many stage productions as well and a very personable lady she is.

Jimmy McGregor was there too and he has probably marched and strode out over more miles in Scotland than I've had plates of Stovies. A great guy he is as well and I had a good conversation with him.

The other one was Ian Bannen. Again noted for his film and television roles and some of you may remember that he played the part of Doctor Cameron in the STV version of Doctor Findlay's Casebook series, the book of course being written by a local author A J Cronin. It was really great and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

In the late 90s and even in to the 21st Century, Pat and I had the opportunity to go to the Queen's garden party at the Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh. We went there not once, not twice but three times and these are spectacular occasions, they really are and are very well orchestrated. There are a lot of 'noteworthy' people there and on one occasion Lord Willie Whitelaw was there, Tam Dalzeil was there and a whole lot more and we were there among them all and yes, we were able to sit down at a table and enjoy a cup of tea, strawberry tarts and very neatly prepared cucumber sandwiches which you have to eat with your pinkie sticking up in the air. It was a wonderful occasion and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

In 2001 I was invited by the then provost of West Dunbartonshire Council, Alistair McDonald to a civic reception that was being held in the Municipal Buildings here in Dumbarton. It was a very special occasion and I was delighted because I was able to invite so many people – my family obviously and I was able to invite everyone of the six team leaders of the Rockvale Rebound. I was also able to invited three other people, special people because they were people who were with the Rockvale Rebound since its' inauguration back in 1981.

They were Agnes Braidwood, Retta Ferguson and Marion McDougall and I'm am delighted to say that Marion is still with us and she is here today. How are you Marion? Are you keeping well, great that you are here, absolutely great. It was a great occasion and the reason was that I was having conferred on me the honour of being Dumbarton's Citizen of the Year for the year 2000.

I was presented with a West Dunbartonshire Council tie and a bottle of Auchentoshan malt whisky, it was a 'right nice dram' let me tell you, it was great. It really was a great occasion but other people associated with the Rockvale Rebound have been citizens of the year as well – Barbara, you were Citizen of the Year for the Vale of Leven a couple of years ago weren't you? June Galloway, she was Citizen of the Year for Dumbarton and it was awarded last year for her services in 2014.

When I was having mine conferred on me, Lily Kennedy was also Citizen of the Year for the Vale of Leven. Lily and her friends had made up a reading team for the Rockvale Rebound, they had operated for about 3 years I think it was but, as I say, it was a great occasion, we thoroughly enjoyed it.

But, I think the highlight of my Chairman career, if I can call it that, was in 2004 and in October of that year Pat and I accompanied by our daughter Kirsty and our son Robert made a trip to London, the 'big smoke'. We flew down on the 13th October, it was a Wednesday and checked in to a lovely hotel in a very respectable part of London, just round the corner from where Lord Lucan stayed and committed murder there. No really, it was a lovely hotel and in a respectable part of the city.

On the evening of the Wednesday we went to the Lyceum Theatre and caught a performance of the Lion King. It was a great show, wonderful wonderful show and thoroughly enjoyed it even though I wasn't able to see what was happening on the stage, I was able to get the 'jist' of the story via the dialogue and the songs but I did miss out on the amazing work of the make up artists turning human beings into animals but I did have a good description of it. We then managed to catch a restaurant that was open late to have a late supper then back to the hotel to retire for the night.

On the following day we went to Buckingham Palace, yes we did, by invitation I might add, we didn't just wander up and ask if they wanted bags of coal delivered every week. I remember clearly, I was sitting along with quite a number of other people in an anti room beside the state room in Buckingham Palace and I was thinking to myself 'this is incredible', here I am, an ordinary guy with humble beginnings from a small town in the North East of Scotland sitting outside the state room of Buckingham Palace waiting for my name to be called. When my name was called I was escorted in to the state room by one of the Queen's household equerry and there I was standing in front of Her Majesty the Queen, the highest in the

land and she presented me with a medal which confers that I am a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire – what a mouthful but oh what an occasion it was, absolutely superb.

The state room of Buckingham Palace is sizeable, I think the dimensions are something like 70 feet long and about 35 feet wide. After the proceedings were done, there must have been somewhere between 300 and 400 people there. During the Investiture at the back end of the state room there was a military band and it was playing pieces from very well known musical shows and up at the top end, there was Her Majesty the Queen standing on a dais and behind that there were five members of the Yeomen of the Guard resplendent in their immaculately tailored uniforms and the design, I think, goes back to somewhere around the 11th century and behind them there were two members of the Gurka Regiment again immaculate in their uniforms as well. The whole occasion was an absolutely glittering spectacular never to be forgotten occasion and we haven't forgotten it either, it was absolutely wonderful.

There is another occasion that springs to mind and it wasn't a glittering Buckingham Palace event. It was, to tell you the truth, well it was a very cold, snowing Saturday afternoon one November. I was positioned in Dumbarton High Street just at the entrance to College Way. I had a collecting can in one hand and sheets of thank you stickers because it was one of our many flag days, successful I might add as well. What I remember is that there was an elderly lady who approached me and she put some coins in the collecting can. I don't know what the value of the coins were but she said, there you are son, it's not much but every little helps doesn't it and I thought that was wonderful as I say, I don't know the value of the coins but there she was, she put the coins in the collecting can for the benefit of the Rockvale Rebound. What really caught me was that she called me son, there you are son she said – I was 55 years old, already married with a grown up daughter and a grown up son but I've never forgotten that day either.

There are so many other memories that I can draw to mind over the past 35 years.

At this point I would like to say not just a very big but a huge thank you to an awful lot of people.

A thank you to everybody here obviously and a multitude of people who I have met over the years.

A big thank you for the continued and unstinting support that I have received, it is something that I value greatly, it is something that I am very very grateful for and it has been, and still is, something which I appreciate very very much.

So, once again, thank you very much indeed and God Bless everybody.

THANK YOU.