

Meeting News...

LES Scotland Burns Supper
7th February 2012, Edinburgh

Burns Supper with a Difference

The LES Scotland's Burns Supper is a well established date in the licensing community's calendar north of the border. This year, it was chaired by Abbe Brown of the University of Edinburgh and organised by Amy Lam of Bioquarter, University of Edinburgh and Jennifer Kirkcaldy of Northern Networking. Over 50 LES member and guests met at the Barcelo Carlton Hotel in Edinburgh on 7 February (as ever the event takes place just after Burns Day itself!). Raymond Veitch piped the Haggis into dinner, Derek Brown of Heriot Watt University said the Selkirk Grace and Bernadine Nordman of McGrigors addressed the Haggis.

In this Diamond Jubilee year, our speakers focussed on opportunities, and challenges, which can be found in the image and celebrity field. Paul Carlyle, partner in intellectual property at Shepherd+ Wedderburn, explored the extent to which there are in fact image rights in the UK. He argued that although there are no such rights from the strict legal perspective, image contracts and the HRMC's approach mean that at a practical level they do exist, and may provide a fruitful area of interest for LES members in years to come. This entertaining talk was illustrated with appropriate snippets from Burns' work, from "The Deil's Awa' wi' th' Exciseman" to "A man's a man's for a' that".

The wider world of celebrity and issues which can arise for those working with well-known personalities in the field were then shared by Mary Ellen Field in an open and illuminating way. Mary Ellen, formerly of Chiltern and adviser to Elle Macpherson, has recently given evidence to the Leveson Inquiry. She shared her experience with us, including instances of her phone being hacked, her attempts to communicate with the police and politicians to establish what had occurred, their attitudes in response and the personal and professional consequences for her.

Dinner over, the evening closed with the important matter of our well known "interactive session". This involved the preparing of a piece in an investigative journalist's style, based on the contents of secret envelopes containing facts and assertions of "celebrities" ranging from Robert Burns to Marilyn Monroe to Diana Princess of Wales. Jimmy Savile was a favourite among those participating, but the winner was the Murgitroyd table for their piece on Robert the Bruce that included a carrier pigeon named Mary Ellen leaking secrets to King Edward's army. It was judged as the best entry by our speakers and Mark Wilson, Chair of LES B and I, whom we were delighted to welcome as a guest at the event.

Dr Abbe E.L. Brown

University of Edinburgh and LES Scotland Committee member