

Bigotry in Fife

06.06.05 - 14:47:22 from **petitioner**

Recent newspaper articles suggest that Fife's most controversial QC, Donald Findlay, may relinquish his post as Chairman of Faculty Services Ltd due to his latest antics in a Rangers Supporters Club in Larne, Northern Ireland. On the face of it at least, what Donald Findlay QC and Andy Goram do in Northern Ireland in their own time is nothing to do with us in Scotland—or is it?

Goram is well known for his admiration of Loyalist paramilitaries. He is not a public figure and no longer represents Scotland, but Findlay to some extent does. Last year Findlay came top in the earnings tables for QCs and more importantly, as far as we the public are concerned, top in receipts from the public purse by way of legal aid, £305,200 in 2003/2004. Sectarian behaviour pays apparently.

Given that we the public are subsidising Findlay's income to such an extent, are we not entitled to have a view on how he acts as an ambassador for Scotland when abroad, as well as how he, as a public figure, acts at home? I say we are, and in my view Findlay fails miserably in both roles.

Findlay's attempts to stoke up sectarianism in Larne are nothing new and similar shenanigans by Findlay have been going on in this country for some time.

My knowledge of this is second hand (what Findlay QC would no doubt object to as "hearsay") but accurate and telling nevertheless. I refer to an incident related to me by my late brother Joe, a lapsed Catholic of Irish ancestry who 40 years ago had married Faye, a Kelty lass of Scottish Protestant ancestry. As a couple they typified the diversity of Scottish life. Ironically, every Sunday morning while Faye attended mass at the RC church in Kelty, Joe would celebrate his belief in the scheme of things in a more pragmatic way by going to Kelty ex-servicemen's club for a drink with the many good friends he had made in Kelty--a village which Joe liked to boast of as "the best wee place in the world".

Joe's Sunday routine had gone on without fail for 40 years, until one Sunday morning last year—when he was told of a sportsmen's evening the previous evening in the club when Donald Findlay, QC and Jim Leishman had entertained a ticket-only, capacity crowd with all sort of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish patter. All harmless stuff you may think. Not as far as my brother was concerned. He confided in me that the club he loved and the community he lived in would never seem the same again. Joe was appalled to think that even a small minority of his community saw him and his ilk as figures to be mocked and ridiculed. He was not angry—he was hurt—and bemused that this was happening in the twenty first century.

Apologists of Findlay will say that he was attending a private function and people didn't have to attend etc. etc. I see it differently. On that Saturday in Kelty last year there had been a parade by the local Orange Order who had been joined by another Lodge from Glasgow. Both groups had made arrangements to have lunch in the ex-servicemen's club followed by the sportsmen's dinner. Entertainment <sic> at this dinner was provided by two local speakers, Findlay from Cowdenbeath, and Leishman, from Kelty. Would a passing papist be welcomed with open arms into Kelty ex-servicemen's club that day? Was such an event designed to entertain all sections of the community and promote inclusivity?

Of course not, Findlay and company know exactly what they are doing with their divisive agenda.

Tom Minogue, Address provided.

comments on this article: