

Glens and Dalriada u3a

March Monthly Meeting

13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The March meeting of the Glens and Dalriada u3a was held in Sheskburn Hall on Wednesday 13th March.

Our guest speaker Andrew Walsh, travelled from Donaghadee to deliver a fascinating talk, to more than 60 members.

His illustrated talk, entitled 'The Day the World nearly Ended, a Countdown to Armageddon', covered a day by day account of the two breathtaking weeks leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962.

As background to the crisis, we learned the History of Cuba through the ages; the discovery of Cuba when Christopher Columbus landed on the island, the colonisation of Diego Velasquez, the occupation of Cuba by US forces, the Coup d'Etat and corruption of President Batista and the eventual revolt of Fidel and Ernesto Castro, who together with Che Guavara from Argentina succeeded in taking over the government of Cuba, which led to a Treaty of Cooperation between The USSR and Cuba.

We then learned how, as a result of American missiles being placed in Turkey in 1961, the Soviets retaliated by placing Soviet Missiles in Cuba in 1962 and lied about their purpose and capability.

There followed two weeks of military and political stand off, which at any moment could have escalated into nuclear war. Whilst the world held its breath. However, disaster was eventually averted when Khrushchev offered to remove the missiles if the US promised not to invade Cuba.

President Kennedy also secretly promised to remove his missiles from Turkey. The world breathed a collective sigh of relief.

As a result, the US and Soviets agreed to install a hotline between each other for immediate negotiations, so that never again would there be a nuclear war, because of misunderstandings and lack of communication.

Many of our members remembered the fear of those two tense weeks in 1962 and the feeling of relief when the crisis was over.



Vice Chair Mark Gavin presents Andrew Walsh with a cheque