



Club Newsletter 2016/17



A Speakers Club in the Fair City
Presidents Distinguished Club 2016/17

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I feel truly privileged to be President of Perth Toastmasters in 2016-17; it has been a wonderful year for our club.

Already a successful and vibrant group, Perth “Toasties” has had an eventful, exciting and dynamic year. We have welcomed new members, enjoyed success in contests, moved to a great new venue, and worked closely with our neighbouring clubs. Every Toastmasters journey begins with a single speech: <https://www.perthtoastmasters.org/>

We are fortunate to have enjoyed the first speeches of several new members this year. The “ice-breaker” can be a daunting prospect but once that first speech is in the bag, we see our members grow in confidence and enthusiasm and as the case studies herein testify, they never look back!

On a personal level, I finally completed my Competent Communicator manual this year – thanks to all members for their fantastic feedback and support as always.

Our fortnightly meetings are fun and friendly but we never forget that we are part of a huge world-wide organisation of over 345,000 members attending one of 15,900 clubs in 142 counties! Our club falls into Area 43 – North Scotland, District 71 – UK and Ireland. It is great to be part of an organisation that exists solely to help people make the most of their own talents and abilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members who take on the roles (some for the first time) required to run a successful club. They have done sterling work this year, putting so much of their energy and enthusiasm into ensuring that the club doesn’t just tick along in the same old groove, but tries out new ideas and challenges for members and the club as a whole. As a result, our meetings are always fresh, our members engaged and our status in the wider national organization is enhanced.

I give my sincere thanks to all club members for their attendance, participation, and enthusiasm. The club is much more than the sum of its parts and with your continued support. Our club will go from strength to strength, which in turn, will have a positive impact on each and every member.

Dolores Garden, CC

June 2017

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Public speaking is not just for those with the '*gift of the gab*' but for everybody to learn and develop. Toastmasters provide an outlet for developing public speaking and presentation skills within a club in your local community.

Community is the key word; although Toastmasters is an international organisation, it's only as good as the grassroots clubs operating in local communities the world over. This trail of thought served as the catalyst for the idea of putting this newsletter together.

In spite of having great articles, I felt it important to diverge away from the '*gloss*' exhibited by the organisation's main magazine. Instead, I feel it's important to give our club and the organisation in Scotland it's own sense of identity, which I hope is more appealing to our guests and members alike.

This newsletter provides insight into the '*comings and goings*' within our club over 2016/17. As you will see throughout, all our members are from different walks of life and had different reasons for joining. As a result, they have seen benefits that have gone beyond their initial expectations.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter; I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I had putting it together!

Nick Mockler, ACB CL

JULY – NEW BEGINNINGS!

The new committee was elected for the Toastmasters year 2016/17. We had a lot of new people on the committee, most of who were taking up roles for the first time. Members attended the first round of Club Officer training in Perth on July 31st to get briefed on the roles they've taken, and network with people in equivalent positions across all of Scotland.

Members who were elected to the committee included: Dolores Garden, Phil Cooper, Nick Mockler, Caroline Cooper, Alison Douglas, Declan Mair, and Srinivasan Sankaran.

AUGUST – RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

Meetings continued as normal. Srini completed Project 9 on the Competent Communicator track entitled: *Run for your life*. This project requires the speaker to persuade the audience. Little did Srini know the impact his speech would have on his fellow club members!



Sam and Srini. Srini: *Lucky I didn't have to do a table topic, I would've run for my life!!*

Srini actively takes part in the local Perth parkrun and persuaded us all with a speech about the healthy impacts of running. Some of our members have now taken up parkrun as a result! More information can be found on <http://www.parkrun.org.uk/perth/> or do have a chat with one of our members!



Phil, Michael and Srini five days after Srini's speech!

Our August meetings also had special guest visits, including Isla Cruden from the Inverness club. Isla visited in her role as Area Director for clubs in North Scotland. Her job is to inspect the quality of the club's running and commended us highly. We also had a visit from Sam Forsberg from the newly formed Dunfermline club, who often cites Perth Toastmasters club as the inspiration for her to start up in Dunfermline. Inspiring stuff all round during our August meetings!



President Dolores and Area Director Isla Cruden.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #1 - SRINIVASAN SANKARAN, CC

Why Toastmasters?

My main reason in joining Toastmasters was to beat the devil inside me that kept me from opening my mouth to express my opinion in any group. I am a natural introvert and not speaking was not helping my confidence or my growth in my company.

Even if I had a good idea and knew what I had to say, I was too shy and never voiced it out. I had to get over this, and I found out about the Perth Toastmasters club from Pallavi. I joined the club at the very next meeting. This has been the best step I have ever taken for my personal and professional growth.

How has Toastmasters benefitted you?

With finishing my CC, taking up a committee role, and having taken part in humorous speech contests, I don't feel tongue-tied in front of any group – known or unknown.

Toastmasters have also helped me in real-life situations. During our Diwali celebration in Perth, the music system failed and was waiting to be replaced. I was suddenly called up to give a speech and keep the audience entertained for about 10 minutes – in front of about 150 people.

While I felt the initial nervousness, I quickly overcame it and gave a humorous speech. I could have never done this if not for Toastmasters.

I can say with confidence that if anyone wants to overcome their fear of public speaking, join Toastmasters!

What would you like to get out of Toastmasters in the future?

Be more confident in evaluating and take part in Table Topic competitions.

What advice would you give to people starting out?

Come out of your shell, shed your fear, make the best use of the friendly atmosphere at the Perth club and participate in every role that Toastmasters has to offer. If I can do it, anybody can!

SEPTEMBER – FUNNY BUSINESS!

September was the first round of contests! We had our club humorous and impromptu speech contest. Both contests ran very smoothly with great organisation by Phil Cooper who served as contest chair. Srini continued on his successes from last year by winning the humorous speech contest. He put us all into stitches of laughter about the consequences of forgetting important dates.... including his wife's birthday!!

Jo won the impromptu speech contest, where she had two minutes to answer the question: *'What would you place into a time capsule for future generations to discover?'* We also had special guest visits from our friends and nearest neighbours in Dundee to help with running the contest.



Srini and Jo the winners!

OCTOBER – MORE FUNNY BUSINESS!

The next step of the contest season took place in Perth where members competed with the winners from the neighbouring clubs. Perth, Inverness and Dundee were well represented on the day. Again Srimi came out on top winning the Area contest! Unfortunately Jo could not make it so runner up Michael took part in the impromptu speech contest. He came in at a very respectable third; a wonderful achievement considering he was a member for only six months at this point!



Michael, Lorraine, Subbra, Laura, and Srimi.

The winners and runner ups for the humourous contest included Srimi 1st place, and Lorraine Chisholm (Inverness) as runner up. The winners and runners up from the impromptu speech contest included Subbra Palaniappan (Dundee) 1st place, Laura Bruce (Inverness) 2nd place, and Michael Sheldon (Perth) 3rd place.

Unfortunately Srimi went on a holiday and couldn't attend the next step to compete for the humourous speech champion of Scotland. Having come runner up last year, there was no doubt he would have been a favourite heading into the competition!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #2 – MICHAEL SHELDON

Why Toastmasters?

I've always liked the idea of being a good public speaker but like a lot of people I was scared to give it a go. However, having met a few Toastmasters mainly through groups I attended with Dyslexia Scotland, it started to seem more and more like a no brainer. When I visited my first meeting I quietly hid in the corner; now they can't shut me up!

How has Toastmasters benefitted you?

Far too much to list! But in a nut shell; it has increased my confidence, continually build on my communication and leadership skills, helped me push my creativity, and also allowed me to meet some amazing, inspirational and funny people.

It has also greatly helped me learn how to express who I really am as a person, and it's an amazing vehicle for self-development. As someone who is dyslexic, it is also a great practical way for working with words and grammar.

What would you like to get out of Toastmasters in the future?

Continue to develop my speaking, communication skills, leadership skills, and build upon what I am already learning. I have one eye on doing competitions as well. I'd also like to get further involved in the running of the club and mentoring of other Toastmasters as I gain more experience. My ultimate goal would be to become a Distinguished Toastmaster, but that is a long way off yet!

What advice would you give to people starting out?

See it as a process or a journey, not a singular act. Appreciate the feedback of all kinds as the emphasis is on development, not criticism and go at your own pace. Accept you will be nervous and see this as an opportunity to work with it and not against it, "feel the fear, and do it anyway". Also be aware that pretty much everyone started in the same place. Appreciate that the happy atmosphere about the place is genuine – we are not some kind of cult! And finally, table topics are not as scary as they seem!

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER – SEEKING CLOSURE

November saw Srimi and Nick complete their competent communicator manuals. This is the initial course of 10 speeches members undertake which cover the fundamentals of public speaking. Speech 10 requires for members to bring all their skills together in order to tell a compelling story that appeals to all the audience.



Nick and Srimi.

Srimi's speech *Live life now* was about embracing new things in spite of what stage we're at in our lives. Nick's speech *Sparks* was about inspirational cues from the past and the impact they have on the present and future.

There were no meetings in December, but we had a wonderful Christmas party to end the year, and we had the pleasure of members from Dundee Toastmasters as company. Nick visited Dundee as part of the Travelling Toastie Programme (<http://d71toastmasters.org/travelling-toastie-programme/>) an incentive for members to travel to other clubs.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #3 – NICK MOCKLER, ACB CL

Why Toastmasters?

After relocating to Scotland I lost my confidence that came from a previous job I had in Ireland when I had a lot more opportunities to speak and give presentations. When I had more speaking opportunities, I discovered the benefits of what public speaking can do for my confidence independent of Toastmasters.

How has Toastmasters benefitted you?

I saw Toastmasters as an opportunity to improve my speaking on the spot in a job that requires quick thinking, assertiveness, and snappy decision making. I can happily say I have now achieved everything I had wanted to get out of Toastmasters and more!

What would you like to get out of Toastmasters in the future?

At present I'm very much enjoying the storytelling and entertaining speaker manuals. In the future I will use Toastmasters as an outlet for professional development as I will be seeking chartered status in my line of work over the next few years.

I find it very satisfying to help new members discover the benefits of public speaking, and to assume more leadership within the club as a result of this want to help others.

What advice would you give to people starting out?

Public speaking is an acquired skill; the notion of '*You either have it or you don't*' is nonsense. Furthermore, the phrase: '*You get what you put into it*' is absolutely true; the beauty of Toastmasters is that there are no barriers to your progress as you're in full control and can work to your own pace.

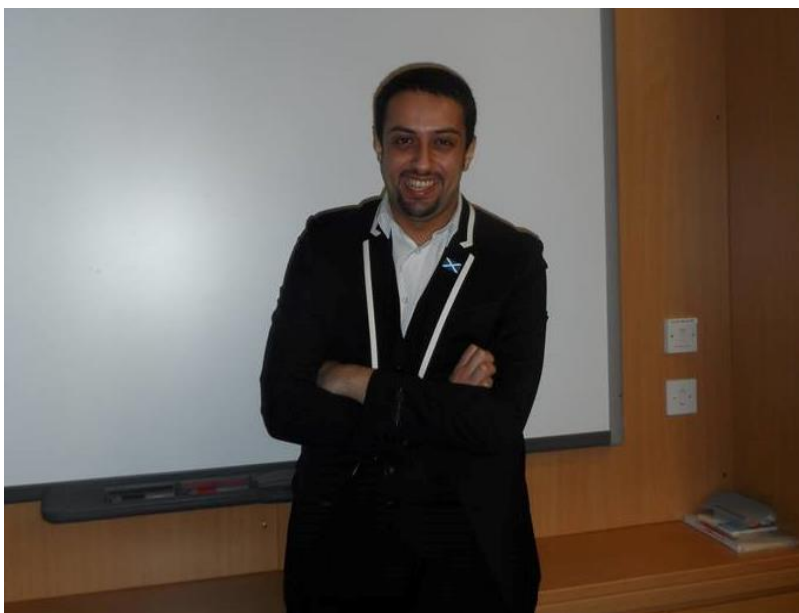
JANUARY – NEW BEGINNINGS PART 2!

Our first meeting of 2017 continued as we meant to go on. We witnessed the beginning and the end of a journey. Our newest member Stuart delivered his first ever speech with aplomb. Our President Dolores achieved her competent communicator award by completing her 10th speech! This was also the beginning of a new era as we had moved venue into the North Inch Community Campus.



Srini, Dolores, Phil, and Declan.

We also had Anas Hassan from the Dunfermline club as our guest speaker. He held a mock video press conference as the new Prime Minister of Scotland followed by a Q&A session. Needless to say he got a grilling but handled his questions like any good politician!



Anas Hassan our guest speaker during January

FEBRUARY – BUSINESS AS USUAL!

Members attended to second round of club officer training for all the clubs in Scotland. Despite uncertainties back in July with the appointment of a committee consisting of members who never served on one before, we now found ourselves in a position where we're one of the best performing clubs in Scotland (i.e. The Distinguished Club Programme). This is a measure of the club's quality in terms of providing the best service for members.



Alan Palmer and Norma Whyley (Dundee Toastmasters), and Nick.

To help out Isla Cruden, Nick volunteered to be Assistant Area Director for the North Scotland clubs, visiting Dundee and St. Andrews. Nick lead by example and gave two new speeches and general evaluations at both clubs which were well received.



Chris Leung (St. Andrews Toastmasters) and Nick.

Some of our members also carried out a membership campaign. Spear headed by chairman Phil Cooper, a campaign was undertaken in Aviva along with workmates and fellow club members Pallavi and Srini. The day was an overall success and a generated a lot of interest in our club!



Pallavi and Srini at the Aviva campaign.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #4 – PALLAVI PALLISHREE, CC

1. Why Toastmasters?

Communication plays an important role in my day to day work as a Business Analyst. Although I do not have stage fright while giving a prepared speech, I do get nervous when it comes to impromptu speeches. I joined Toastmasters to develop my confidence for impromptu speaking situations.

2. How has toastmasters benefitted you?

Through table topics, Toastmasters helped me get over nervousness in situations where I have to speak impromptu. Not only has it made me a more confident and better public speaker than what I used to be before I joined the club, but it has also provided a good platform to network with people from different backgrounds who are members of the club.

3. What would you like to get out of Toastmasters in the future?

By taking up various meetings roles, I want to develop my leadership skills that will help me advance in my career. Inspired by the experienced Toastmasters, I want to be confident and skilful enough to be able to deliver a stunning speech anytime anywhere.

4. What advice would you give to people starting out?

No matter what position, profession or age we are, there is always scope to improve. If you are keen on bettering yourself; the friendly, positive, and disciplined approach of Toastmasters is tried and tested. The sky's the limit!

MARCH – SERIOUS SPEECH CONTEST SEASON

Our club contest was held in March. Once again Srimi and Nick grabbed the headlines with Srimi winning the International Speech Contest, and Nick winning the Evaluation Contest. Many thanks were extended again to our friends from Dundee especially Norma Whyley who gave a wonderful evaluation test speech. Special mention must also go to contest chair and founding member of Perth Toastmasters Jim Davidson DTM, who steered things along smoothly.



The dynamic duo strikes again!



All the competitors from the club contest. Pallavi, Srimi, and Phil (International Speech Contest), and Nick and Kim (Evaluation Contest).

Members also helped out with Dundee's contest, which held an evaluation competition. Caroline gave the test speech, and Nick was contest chairman. Phil and Pallavi were also in attendance as part of the judging panel. Big congrats to Subbra for winning the evaluation contest!



Great night in Dundee for our team of Travelling Toasties!



Area 33 Director Jacek Lasota (Waverley Communicators), Sudha Mani (Linlithgow Speakers), and Pallavi.

APRIL – MORE SERIOUS STUFF!

April 2nd was the Area 43 (North Scotland) contest held in Dundee. Srini and Nick represented Perth and faced stiff competition from Dundee, Aberdeen, and Inverness. Srini came 1st place in the International Speech contest! Nick got a respectable 3rd place in the evaluation contest. The next week, Pallavi visited Waverley Communicators for the Area 33 contest as a “Travelling Toastie” and took up a role as timekeeper.



Srini and Nick with their awards at the Area 43 contest.

Nick made it to the Scottish finals as a wildcard evaluation contestant due to a drop out from the Area 43 runner up. Both Srini and Nick gave it their all in the Scottish Parliament and did their club proud. Nick was fortunate to get third place in the evaluation contest!



Capacity crowd in the Scottish Parliament!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #5 – CAROLINE COOPER, CC

Why Toastmasters?

I joined a Toastmasters club when I was living in the South East of England, it was a company club called “Swan Speakers”, the company being Buckinghamshire County Council. I joined to improve my public speaking skills particularly to large groups because at the time I was running significant change and transformation programmes and I did not want my nervousness in presenting to detract from the actual message.

How has Toastmasters benefitted you?

I pretty soon learned some of the “rookie errors” I was commonly making when doing presentations from the feedback I got at the club. This was done in a very constructive and supportive manner and I was also really encouraged by the positive feedback I got. I don’t regard myself as a natural orator but now I am not the nervous wreck absentmindedly turning my back to an audience and delivering “death by power point”. The unexpected bonus was that I have heard so many interesting speeches about all sorts of subjects and some very funny stories.

What would you like to get out of Toastmasters in the future?

Toastmasters has a series of mini courses, soon to be called Pathways, they’re different challenges to the type of communication you want to develop. At the moment I am working through the *Speaking to Inform* manual which covers things like a demonstration talk or the use of visual aids and I want to use these different courses to improve my communication skills further.

What a lot of people don’t realise is that Toastmasters is also a good way to get opportunities to develop leadership skills, such as running a meeting, mentoring others or organising an event. These skills also improve with practice so I intend to keep working on those too.

What advice would you give to people starting out?

You can only improve your swimming if you get into the water! It’s the same with communication skills; it is very hard to take the first step of getting up in front of a bunch of people and saying something. At the Perth Toastmasters club everyone has been in that situation, so it’s a really supportive environment to give speaking in public a shot. Like swimming you do get better and gain confidence with practice, so why not give it a try.

MAY – THE BUSINESS END

May was a busy month! Nick attended the District Conference in Manchester held over the weekend of May 12-14th. The event involved amazing speech contests, workshops, and the election of Division (i.e. Scotland) and District Officers. Scotland was well represented and very active in the Travelling Toastie incentive run by District 71 PR Manager Karen O'Donnell. Pallavi and Nick both received awards, with Nick being awarded 'The Most Travelled in Scotland'!



Team Scotland at the conference! Including members from Edinburgh, Inverness, Glasgow, Linlithgow, Livingston, and Perth.



Pallavi and Nick with their Travelling Toastie Awards.

We also had the very emotional occasion of Srini's leaving do. A surprise party was held in Phil and Caroline's house including fellow club members and some of the gang from Dundee to make sure Srini got a good send off!



All the gang at Srini's leaving party!



A nice memento for the occasion!

JUNE – WHITTILING DOWN

We had two guest speakers from Linlithgow Speakers in Sheila Fraser and Jim Boyd who came along to give educational speeches combining over 30 years of experience! We also had Pallavi reach a milestone and complete her CC. Phil and Nick also achieved their Competent Leader awards meaning that our club achieved President's Distinguished, the highest accolade that a Toastmasters club can achieve. A remarkable achievement for our club to reign in on a successful year!



Sheila Fraser, DTM from Linlithgow Speakers, belatedly receiving her Travelling Toastie award!



Jim Boyd (Linlithgow Speakers), Phil, Srini, Nick, and Pallavi

EDUCATIONAL AWARDS AND CONTEST ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2016/17

Alison Douglas

Advanced Communicator Bronze

Dolores Garden

Competent Communicator

Jo Middlemiss

Club Table Topics contest winner

Michael Sheldon

Area 43 (North Scotland) Table Topics contest 3rd place

Nick Mockler

Triple Crown Award (Competent Communicator, Competent Leader, Advanced Communicator Bronze)

Scotland's most Travelled Toastmaster award

Club evaluation contest winner

Area 43 (North Scotland) Evaluation Contest 3rd place

Division S (Scotland) Evaluation Contest 3rd place

Phil Cooper

Competent Leader

Pallavi Pallishree

Competent Communicator

Travelling Toastie award for visiting three different clubs

Srinivasan Sankaran

Competent Communicator

Club Humorous Speech Contest Winner and Club International Speech Contest winner

Area 43 (North Scotland) Humorous Speech Contest and Area 43 International Speech Contest winner

Division S (Scotland) International Speech Contest finalist