

## *Abandon your comfort zone !*

Hello to all Great Britain Region ITC members

Spring is here again, with all the usual signs – snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils. How many of you also have the extra ones that greet me? To wit: weeds growing up between the flagstones and squads of men digging up every few yards of road. Never mind, plenty of sunshine here to compensate for it all.

And how many of you actually abandoned your comfort zone and tackled something new, whether in ITC or another aspect of your life? We won't ask you to confess all!

All members will now have received full details of Region Conference 16-18 June in the Holiday Inn, Lancaster. We chose the venue in response to feedback from last year's conference, but of course members themselves will have an opportunity to evaluate June 2017 and give opinions for the following year's conference. But you cannot evaluate it if you are not present! Our organisation is about communicating and while we have other means of doing so, the best and most productive way is to physically meet with fellow members and bounce ideas about. Members would not have joined and remained as members unless a perceived value was gained but what people get out of a body is connected to what they put into it and the organisation is the stronger depending on what support each member gets and gives. We look forward to conference this summer being a result of continuing support from everyone.

Good news - We have had some new members this year, congratulations to these clubs. It shows their activities are attractive, useful and supplying what is wanted. Keep up the good work!

Best wishes to all members for the rest of our ITC year, and I hope to see as many as possible of you in June.

*Nancy*

**Meet the Great Britain Region Board 2016/2017**

Nancy Sanderson	President
Margaret Robertson	Secretary
Colin Gray	Treasurer

Sadly, Marion Graham, Vice-President, died on 22 January 2017

Evelyn Flett	Parliamentarian
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**Other Appointed Officers and Committee Chairmen**

CLO	Yvonne Baker
Speech Contest	Iris Gibson
Accreditation	Liz Duncan
Nominations Committee	Louise Laing, Laurence Coates, Allan Venables
Talkback Editor	Diana Porterfield
Writing Contest	Colin Gray
Webpages	Laurence Coates



Marion joined Stirling International Toastmistress Club over 30 years ago and later was also a dual member of Rovers Club. Over the years she served in many posts, in club, President of Council 2, President of Caledonia Council, and President of Great Britain Region, when she held a most successful conference at Pitlochry and introduced a new type of debate. With her background of management in banks, she successfully steered us through our International Convention in Glasgow in 1996 as Convention Controller. She also was the second Distinguished Communicator in this region – no mean feat. She travelled often to region conferences and international conventions in Europe, Canada, America, and the Bahamas, from Skagway, Alaska, to San Francisco, to Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Quebec City and many points in

between. Although latterly she suffered from poor health, she was active in her church community, ITC and close family. She died on 22nd January 2017 after a short spell in hospital. She will be missed in our organisation and many members will have a host of "Marion memories".

**REGION CONFERENCE 2017 ~ 16 – 18 JUNE, 2017**

***Holiday Inn, Waterside Park, Caton Road, Lancaster, LA1 3RA  
Just off M6 - Junction 34 >> A683 to Lancaster ~ hotel ¼ mile on right  
Riverside hotel, full service, spa, indoor pool***

**Lancaster Station ~ 2 miles                      Lancaster Castle ~ 2 miles**

**Lancaster Cathedral ~ 1.9 miles**

**Local bus outside hotel ~ 3 miles route into Lancaster**

**Taxi ~ £6.00 into Lancaster**

**Check-in: from 1400 hours    Check-out:    by 1200 hours**

***PROGRAMME.***

Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> June		
4.00-4.30pm.	Region Board Meeting	Lunesdale
4.30-5.00pm	Rovers AGM	Lunesdale
5.00-5.45pm.	Registration	Lunesdale
7.00pm	<b>DINNER</b>	Gressingham
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> June		
8.15-8.45am	Registration	Ashton
8.45-9am.	Delegates' Briefing	Lunesdale
9.00-10.00am.	Business Meeting	Ashton
10.15-10.30am.	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	
10.30 -11.45am	Workshop –“ Linking Together “ Diana Porterfield.	Ashton
12.00-1.15pm.	<b>LUNCH</b>	Ashton
1.15-1.30pm.	Speech Contest Briefing.	Ashton
	Contestants	Ashton
	Judges	Lunesdale
1.30-3.30pm.	Speech Contest	Ashton
3.30-3.45	<i>Tea Coffee</i>	Ashton
3.45-4.55pm.	Workshop – “Do I Start Here” Yvonne Baker	Ashton
5.00-5.45pm.	Workshop – “Storytelling” Evelyn Flett.	Ashton
6.30pm.	President's Reception	Lunesdale
7.00 pm.	<b>DINNER</b>	Gressingham.
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June		
9.30 -10.30am.	Open Forum & Evaluation	Gressingham
10.30-10.45am.	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	
11.00am.	Region Board Meetings	Lunesdale
	Chairmen Evaluations	
12.00noon	LUNCH IF REQUIRED (own expense)	

ITC is a **crowning experience** equalled by none. Through the various club assignments and activities, council meetings, regional conferences and the ITC conventions, you will acquire new ideas, new hopes, new dreams, and new aspirations.

ITC gives you the opportunity to develop, cultivate, and share these ideas, and helps you to become a more active participant in the crowning experience of life.

ITC is a **resource station**. It is a refuelling opportunity for those who want to go places and do something new. ITC enables you to gather a wide range of information on many things. You can learn to plan a simple party for your leisure time or the correct way to conduct a large public meeting.

**Inez Arrendell, Blue Ridge Region**

Extract from Powerlines Jan 2017

### **Parliamentary Procedure Examinations**

How many times have you sat through a meeting that dragged on too long, where discussion didn't stick to the point and where there was no progress on any actions? What a waste of time! You probably blamed the Chairman – perhaps with some justification. But what did **YOU** do to try to expedite matters? Did you propose a motion to give the discussion a focus; and did you insist on a vote being taken so that there was a specific outcome to the discussion? It isn't just the Chairman who's responsible for the success of a meeting, it's everyone who's at the meeting.



If everybody understands what's happening and makes their contribution, the meeting will run smoothly and will cover the necessary business speedily and effectively. It follows, therefore, that we should **ALL** be familiar with the procedures that govern the meeting and should know how to play our part. That's the aim of 'Parliamentary Procedure' – whether inside or outside ITC.

In Great Britain Region we have a specially-developed examination syllabus covering: the knowledge required by all members (Part 1); and the more advanced knowledge required to prepare members for elected or appointed office (Part 2).

If you haven't already, please make this the year that you learn how a well-run meeting should be convened and conducted. Then take the Parliamentary Procedure exams in May (date still to be finalised).

I'm sending copies of the syllabus to clubs and I have some copies of previous exam papers for anyone who is interested.

**Evelyn Flett**

## The Region Treasurer

Being elected to serve as treasurer may be your first Region board position. The main thing to remember is that you're a member of a board; you're not on your own. So, if you become Region Treasurer, at the first opportunity, sit down with your new Region colleagues to find out what needs to be done and when. In particular, find what support the Region President will want from you over the coming year.



### **Duty calls**

Usually, you will be expected to produce a budget for the year, collect Region dues from clubs, attend board meetings and, finally, to produce the annual accounts for your year in office. The best thing is to begin by drawing up a timetable of the dates by which these tasks must be done. Secondly, contact all club treasurers and collect the club and any other dues from them as soon as possible. This sounds like a statement of the obvious, but they will be busy people, and if it is not done quickly it can be easily overlooked.

### **Prepare a budget**

As far as preparing a budget goes, the best thing is to liaise with the outgoing treasurer. Was last year's budget sufficient? Are there any items which are no longer required? Are there any items which were not needed last year but which will be this year? I recommend using last year's figures as a starting point rather than starting completely from scratch. Once the budget is completed, remember that it is a tool to help Region, not an end in itself. In the past, I remember long discussions at board level about things that were good ideas but would cost a few pounds more than we had in the budget. Dare we risk a £50 overspend on the printing budget? Luckily, this misguided, penny wise, pound foolish approach seems to have disappeared now.

### **Remind clubs to provide a list of members**

The hardest part of the job is, I am sorry to say, getting clubs to provide a list of members along with contact information such as email addresses, postal addresses and phone numbers. This seems to be regarded as unnecessary by all too many clubs, but without it Region is operating in the dark.

### **Stock up with receipt books and pens**

A visit to your local stationers is always a good idea. Stock up with receipt books, analysis books, red pens, green pens, anything that will make your life easier. This is money well spent, because the basis of being a successful Treasurer is to write down immediately any money you receive and any money you pay out. Provided this is done promptly, you will be on a good foundation. Get plenty of file folders, too, so that you can keep your invoices and bank statements where they can be easily found. Today there are plenty of computer based accounting packages available. Being something of a dinosaur, I never really warmed to them, but the consensus is that they are a useful tool for the busy treasurer.

### **Back in the day an accountant would stand at his desk**

When I first started out, there were people not much older than myself who remembered when an accountant did not sit at a desk, he stood at one. If his back began to ache, he would have a high legged stool on which to sit for a few minutes! Exactly as in "A Christmas Carol". Amazing! Yet, today, research is suggesting that it's better for your health to stand at your computer and desk. Well, that's a discussion for another time!

**Colin Gray**



## Using humour in presentations

Humour is an extremely powerful tool. It can make or break a presentation. Many people fear that it will break their presentation so they play safe and avoid it.

Why use it? Why take the risk?

### 1. Reasons to use humour

- It helps:
  - keep the atmosphere light and open people's minds
  - to engage your audience
  - to communicate your message
- It's useful for:
  - reinforcing particular points
  - making points more memorable
  - making ideas more persuasive
- Laughing promotes mental and physical well-being



### 2. What are the fears?

- You'll forget the punch line of a joke.
  - You don't need jokes to be entertaining. Do people laugh when you talk to them? That's what you need.
- Nobody will laugh.
  - As long as it's relevant to the rest of what you're saying, it doesn't matter too much – especially if it's **not** a joke.
- You'll offend somebody.
  - You can avoid this with careful preparation.
- You'll lose credibility.
  - No. Humour of itself won't undermine you.

### 3. Do:

- Focus your humour. Use a joke or a story related to the point you're making – not just to the general subject
- Personalise a story as if it happened to you or somebody close to you. Your audience will relate to it more.

### 4. Don't:

- Use something you think is funny but that doesn't have any relevance to what you're talking about. You'll bemuse your audience and will probably lose them
- Use hackneyed stories and jokes that everybody has heard or has seen on the internet. (But do use them as a basis to construct your own variant.)
- Use offensive, sarcastic humour

**5. Humour you can use without needing to be a comedian**

- Light bulbs – How many \_ \_ \_ \_ s does it take to change a light bulb?
  - Invent one that’s appropriate to your audience.
- Laws – eg Murphy’s Law.
  - Write your own law.
  - Euphemisms – eg One sandwich short of a picnic.
  - Be creative
- Self-mocking humour
- Quotes

**6. Be prepared**

- Collect and file material
  - Write it on a card and number it – file numerically
  - Have subject cards – filed alphabetically with the numbers of all the related story/joke cards
- Keep a set of cards for topics you speak about
- Keep a notebook and write down anything that appeals to you – don’t rely on memory

**7. Remember:**

- It isn’t about being ‘funny’ it’s about communicating a sense of fun
- Make a conscious effort to add humour – even if your subject matter is serious
- Keep it short
- Use the pause effectively

**Evelyn Flett  
The Rovers Club**

**DOs and DON'Ts of Evaluation**

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Prepare carefully</li><li>○ Use tact</li><li>○ Convey honesty</li><li>○ Approach the assignment seriously</li><li>○ Compliment the good</li><li>○ Suggest methods for improvement</li><li>○ Be concise</li><li>○ Be constructive</li><li>○ Use compassion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ridicule or embarrass</li><li>○ Upstage the performer</li><li>○ Show partiality to any member</li><li>○ Pretend to superior knowledge</li><li>○ Be dogmatic</li><li>○ Evaluate handicaps that cannot be remedied</li><li>○ Repeat the content of the assignment</li></ul>

## **View From a New Member**

I decided to join BISC a year ago after a difficult situation where my Managing Director asked me (at zero notice) to deliver a speech to a room of fifty people. I managed to survive the situation, but it was sickeningly uncomfortable, I did not perform well, and it brought home the reality that I needed to improve my public speaking skills so that I would be comfortable talking in any situation.

My experience made me reflect on all of the people I believed to be most successful and impressive, and it dawned on me that the one thing that they all had in common was that they all had excellent public speaking skills. I then thought about my colleagues and what struck me was that the people who got promoted the fastest and were most valued were all good speakers. Even if they were not the most competent in their fields, the common link between all of these people was their ability to speak to large groups of people with supreme confidence. It appeared to me that speaking with confidence was the key, and by having the confidence in speaking, you could convince anyone of anything... you could achieve any position or goal... you would live a life of abundance!. To me that seemed to be such a valuable commodity that I needed to get ASAP! Why did I not think of this years ago???

As soon as I got home that evening went straight on to Google, and that led me to BISC. I sent a few emails and was invited to attend one of their fortnightly meetings at the MAC centre in Birmingham. A week later I attended the meeting and I found all of the members to be very friendly and welcoming. Initially I was worried that I would be surrounded by superior speakers and I would feel alienated, but everyone was very encouraging and I was reminded that we were all there for the same reason... and that was to improve public speaking skills. Everyone had to start somewhere and great speakers were made and not born. After inquiring with some of the members I found that most members had stories of nervous and difficult situations speaking in public (like my experience with my Managing Director). However, I noted the positive and encouraging atmosphere that pushed everyone to drive past their fears. There were also some great role models in the group who in terms of public speaking had metamorphosed from shy church mice into courageous lions. The night inspired me to attend more sessions and sign up to become a member.

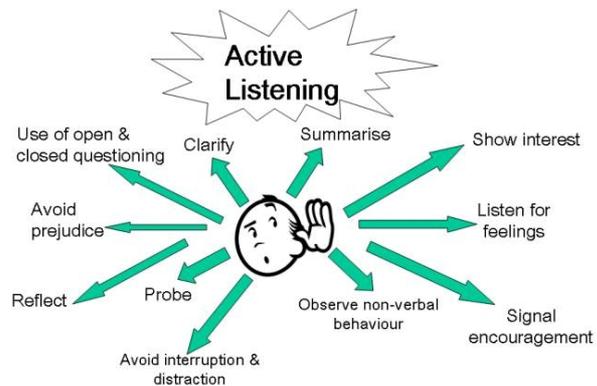
A year later my life has changed immeasurably. I am now a lot more confident and comfortable with public speaking. One of my achievements off the back of BISC is a career change. At the time I joined BISC I was studying part time on a Masters Course with the ambition to become a Company Secretary. Half way through the course I thought I would apply to a few jobs (despite not being qualified), and as luck would have it I managed to get an interview for quite a senior position. Part of the interview involved a presentation, and I knew that I would be up against experienced Company Secretaries, and best way for me to outshine them was to pull off the perfect presentation, and... I was successful. It was the first application, the first interview, and I aced it! I put this all down to BISC, and I urge everyone who reads this to join *PowerTalk* International and help yourself change your life for the better.

**Tim Pratt, Birmingham International Speakers Club**

Have **you** considered helping your Region by standing for office? As this edition gives details of our conference when we hold our annual business meeting, perhaps you might think about widening your experience. Region, and International, level committee work gives you a broader perspective on our organisation .

Our Nominating Committee members will soon be in touch with your club asking them to nominate members to serve on the Region Board. Don't knock it back without giving serious consideration to that new experience.

What about printing out your copy of *TALKBACK* and taking it to your next meeting, so that you can give a copy to any visitors you have. The magazine is not just for members but can be a useful recruitment tool.



Extract from our International President's piece in the latest edition of *POWERtalking*.

Christine Endo, International President writes

**Listening** is a fascinating process, and a skill everybody can practice and master. As ITC-ers or POWERtalk-ers, we enjoy having someone who listens to us, who simply attends to us while suspending judgment and activities. It is always such an uplifting experience when you feel you've been listened to, heard and understood.

**"Empathic listening** involves much more than registering, reflecting, or even understanding the words that are said. Communication experts estimate that 10% of our communication is represented by the words we say, 30% by our sounds, and 60% by our body language. In empathic listening, you listen with your ears...with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behaviour. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel."

Stephen R Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*



## Fighting Tumbleweed



What should we do about **publicity**? This is the question that we keep on asking but perhaps we have tried it all before. May I suggest that the real problem is fighting tumbleweed? With any publicity initiative the danger is that you forget about it after a time.

If you put a poster in your local library is it still there? Is the information about meeting dates, venue, etc. up-to-date? Out-of-date information can be worse than no information at all. If

someone turns up at the wrong venue on the wrong day what impression will they have?

When you use technology the problems don't go away. So you have a twitter account? You are only as up-to-date as your last tweet. If it is left to one person, what happens when he or she leaves or they simply find that they are too busy to keep it up?

A resource that every club has is the region website. Each club has a sub-domain on the region website of the form *club.powerwalk.org.uk* and if you do not use it, anyone who finds your portion of the website finds tumbleweed and might well question whether the club is still active.

So how does your club make use of the website?

1. Appoint more than one person to the task. They do not need to be web experts but if one has a heavy workload, falls ill, or goes to Timbuktu there needs to be someone to take up the slack.
2. Let me know who the appointees are and I shall give them access to Google Calendar and Blogger.
3. The appointees keep Google Calendar up-to-date with information about club meetings. This will be displayed on the website.
4. Blog about club activities on Blogger. Blogger is a little like a word processor except that as well as the title and content you specify labels to say what the entry is about and you can specify a location that, in turn, enables anyone reading the blog to find the location on Google Maps. Blog entries will also be echoed on the website.
5. EVERYBODY should look at the website. If you see something that needs updating let me know. Send me material to share with the general public or the region membership (tell me which).

Together we can make the website a resource to publicise the organisation and your club.

Without your help the tumbleweed will take over.

<http://powertalk.org.uk/>

**Laurence Coates**, Web Editor

laurence.coates@gmail.com

### Contact list for Region officers

[board@powertalk.org.uk](mailto:board@powertalk.org.uk)

(for all board members)

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