

Speaking of Hamwic

The Hamwic Speakers Newsletter



A few words from our President...

Hello Hamwic!

Welcome to the first edition of our new style newsletter, designed to keep you up-to-date with all of the latest happenings in the club and to give every member a voice to air their views on everything 'Hamwic'.

I'd like to kick-off the newsletter with a few words on what we are trying to achieve as a group at Hamwic Speakers. We all have our individual goals and targets for public speaking, but what should our goals be as a club?

Hamwic Speakers exists to provide all of its members with a supportive and encouraging environment in which to develop their public speaking skills. Positive energy, constructive feedback and an environment that makes members want to come back again and again are our goals.

So who has the responsibility for generating this supportive and encouraging environment? It's not just one person, it's not even a committee of people. Generating a supportive and encouraging environment is the responsibility of every member of Hamwic Speakers. Just have a think about how a Hamwic meeting might feel without anyone doing any of the following:

- Making conversation with other members in the break
- Laughing at speakers' humour
- Applauding each speaker
- Providing constructive feedback to speakers
- Smiling



It would be pretty dull and extremely intimidating, right?

So please do think next time you're in a Hamwic meeting: 'what can I be doing to make this room a more supporting and encouraging environment?'. If there are thirty people in the room all thinking this thought, we could potentially make Hamwic meetings 30 times better than they are now (maths was never my strong point!!!!).

Until next time, have fun reading this newsletter – I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Rich Watts

President, Hamwic Speakers, 2011-12

Voices from the floor...

This is your chance to air any views you have on everything 'Hamwic'. Pete Steele starts us off this month – over to you Pete...



Recently, I have been involved in a rather unattractive issue at work whereby someone had made an innocent comment about something which caused me to become..... rather annoyed!

My question to myself was **'Why am I annoyed'**?

This caused me to think long and hard about how we say things and how they are perceived by others.

What do we say in our speeches and conversations that can inadvertently cause concern to our audience, friends and colleagues?

Hamwic speakers, prides itself in diversity and as the club diversity officer I feel it is an appropriate time for all of us to understand exactly what that means.

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

I believe that Hamwic speakers, is and always will be environment where we can come to feel safe and comfortable in the presence of our friends and colleagues. After all, we are all here for the same reason, to achieve our goals in public speaking.

I want to strongly urge everyone to consider our audience and the message we are trying to deliver. It is my belief that all current members and visitors want to hear exciting tales and envisage beautiful scenes, leaving them inspired and thrilled about joining Toastmasters.

I fear that an unfortunate slip of the tongue with reference to personal jobs, issues or sexual innuendos leaves a rather sour taste in our member's mouths which will ultimately result in people leaving.

Let us all pride ourselves in a club environment where everyone, from junior to senior feel safe, comfortable and eager to return.

Pete Steele

If you have something to say about our club, to our club, please email your 'voice' to stratospad@hotmail.com.

Nerve watch

"A smile can go a long way in dealing with nerves – start your speech with a smile and not only will your audience see you as a confident, composed speaker, but your endorphins will start flowing too, putting you in a more positive, confident frame of mind when speaking!"



Padraig meets...

This month Padraig interviews David Collins, Vice President of Leadership at Hamwic Speakers about his thoughts on the future of Hamwic Speakers. David is a previous winner of the Hamwic Humorous Speech Contest and famed for his light-hearted Table Topics!

Padraig: David, I know you hold passionate views about Hamwic speakers. What does Hamwic mean to you?

David: Since joining Hamwic speakers some two years ago, I have made some fantastic friends and made some great contacts for the future. I have also been able to build my confidence and expertise in public speaking. Because I am a very determined and tenacious person I have used some of these skills to gain from my experiences. I am aware that other people may not have the same personality and may have felt intimidated at the thought of attending a public speaking group.

The group have been very successful over the last two years and we have created a winning formula so any changes should not fundamentally change the spirit of the group.

Have you any thoughts about improvement?

I propose we subtly change the emphasis and focus of how the groups are run to fully embrace new members and to encourage active participation by those during their development.

What would you recommend?

As a starter I suggest that we concentrate more on why people come to Hamwic in the first place.

Key questions to be asked are:

What attracted you to attend the group?

What did you feel you would gain from attending?

What were the goals of attending for you?

Were your goals around professional or purely social aspects of public speaking?

Are there any aspects of the group that people don't like or find difficult?

What could be done differently that would encourage you to attend more frequently?

Once we have some of this information, we could hold extra classes in small groups to boost self-esteem and confidence and encouraging people to step outside their "comfort zone".

These groups could focus on using humour in groups, being more creative around speech formulation and emphasising individual improvements that will maintain membership.

I'm in full agreement with that. Anything else?

We could also focus on specific concerns that members will have such as "what do others think of me?" and "what happens if I make a mistake or freeze?" etc. There are many more. I am happy to take a speech slot to discuss these in more detail at a forthcoming group.

That's very helpful and encouraging David. Many thanks.



What Hamwic means to me... by Olga

They say that the best improvisation is that which has been rehearsed, or in other words, that improvisation is not as common as previously thought.

One day I read a short article on the staff notice board at my workplace (Solent University), which described how successfully Hamwic Speakers were helping improve the public speaking skills of their members and invited anyone who might be interested in becoming a competent speaker.

Having dreaded public speaking throughout my life (regardless whether it was in English or in my native Spanish), I decided to embark on this exciting learning experience at Hamwic Speakers. I did so initially by attending several meetings as a guest in order to familiarise myself with what was involved. I was impressed by the encouragement I received from all the group members, the quality and variety of speeches and how noticeable the improvement of group members was from one meeting to another. The opportunities to develop oneself seemed endless. They included, but were not limited to, taking part in the different roles available at each meeting and progressing through the Competent Communication Manual by delivering speeches focused on varied skills such as vocal variety and body language.

After attending several meetings as a guest, I decided to become a member. Not being a native English speaker, I find it even more important to master public speaking, as my accent may sometimes interfere and distract listeners from the content of the message.

Public speaking skills are nowadays essential for many aspects of our lives, such as work progression and personal development, and I have found Hamwic Speakers to be the ideal environment in which to develop them.

Dates for the diary...

Our next Hamwic meetings:

10th January, from 7.30pm at Taunton's College

24th January, from 7.30pm at Taunton's College

31st January, from 7.30pm at Taunton's College