

ROSTRUM

RECORDER



Rostrum — the way to better speaking and greater confidence.

December 2005

2005 – Here today, gone tomorrow

2005 has been a memorable year for Rostrum especially due to its 75th Anniversary at a national level and numerous activities at a local level. The next 12 months will provide members and their guests with more opportunities to enhance their collective communications skills. All Rostrum activities have the potential to attract interest within the community. Even if people opt not to join Rostrum the word of mouth is a powerful means of promotion.

75th Annual Dinner

This year the Boulevard Club organized the Annual Dinner in July. Special thanks to Spr Leigh Harkness for taking the lead to organise the event in conjunction with the Hellenic Club. Thanks also to the AFFA Club for organising the Arthur Phillips Trophy Speaking Competition finals and the previous heats. 60 attendees had an entertaining evening with many speakers delivering their thoughts and ideas. The winner of the speaking competition was Simon McAllister from the AFFA Club. Simon progressed to represent the ACT at the Sidney Wicks Speaking Competition at the Rostrum National Convention in Perth.

Toast to Rostrum - Proposed by Freeman Ernst Willheim, 23 July 2005

On 21 July 1923, Sidney Frederick Wicks formed a club called 'The Rostrum'. The first meeting was held under a yew tree at Greendale Farm near Manchester, England. Subsequent meetings were held on Wednesday evenings at the YMCA.

Sidney Wicks was the son of a blacksmith. He was brought up in modest circumstances and initially trained for the Congregational Ministry. Later he took up journalism, working for the Manchester Guardian.

Many of you will recognise the name. The Sidney Wicks competition honours his achievement. The ACT zone is proud that one of our members, Speaker Andrew Dickson, is the current holder of the trophy.

No doubt reflecting Mr Wick's personal background, the constitution of 'The Rostrum' provided that Rostrum members must be members of the Manchester Young Mens' Christian Association.

The Club soon included a young Australian engineer, Alan Crook, who became the fourth Freeman of Rostrum. Crook returned to Australia in 1925. It was not until 21 July 1930, seven years to the day that Rostrum was formed, that nine men met in the offices of the YMCA in Sydney and formed Australian Rostrum. The next meeting was held in the open air, at Middle Harbour, on 10 August 1930, and ten men took the Rostrum promise.

For current members, the first election of officers makes interesting reading

- Alan Crook was elected Chief Guardian of the Order
- Robert Swainson was elected Speaker of the last Word
- John Reaburn was elected Purseholder.

You will be familiar with our Alan Crook Award, named after the Australian Founder. Crook was awarded the MBE for services to Rostrum shortly before his death in 1965.

Let me move forward 23 years, to the inaugural meeting of the Canberra Rostrum Club on 3 March 1953. The Convenor was Laurie Burgess, who was elected the first critic. Burgess became a Freeman of Rostrum in 1958. He was the first President of the ACT DAIS and served as President of the Australian Rostrum Council 1960-1961. Curiously, our zone does not have any awards in his honour.

Many of you will recall our 50th anniversary celebrations, celebrating 50 years of Rostrum in the ACT. One of the founding members of Canberra Rostrum Club, Freeman Colin Johns, was able to be present. The Colin Johns Trophy, for the New Speaker of the Year, honours Colin.

Today the Canberra Rostrum Club, later Club 1, later again Foundation Club, continues in its new guise as Canberra City Evening Rostrum Club, the pre-eminent club in the ACT Zone.

The next club in the ACT Zone, Club 2, was formed in 1958, after membership of the Canberra Rostrum Club had reached a staggering 55. The first meeting was held in the Public Service Training Centre in Barton, the old woolsheds as many of you will remember them.

Club 3 was formed soon afterwards, in 1959. Its first President was Arthur Phillips. Our Speaker of the Year trophy is named in his honour. Some records credit Club 3 with being the 100th Rostrum Club in Australia, although this is disputed.

Yass Club initially met on 31 October 1960. Laurie Burgess attended. The Club was not formally constituted until 17 April 1961. The Founder, Alan Crook, carried out the induction.

Club 4 was established in 1961. One of its leading members, Tom Trebilco, was the Founder of the Voice of Youth competition, for which he was awarded the MBE. Trebilco served for 3 years as DAIS President and 2 years as President of the ARC.

Clubs 5 and 6 were formed together at a joint meeting at the Ainslie Rex Hotel on 20 July 1961 and Club 7 was formed on 5 February 1964.

Club 8 was formed on 23 June 1965, again at the Ainslie Rex Hotel. 42 people were present, including the Founder, Alan Crook.

This was clearly a period of dynamic growth.

On the other hand, Rostrum has also undergone massive changes since those early days. Many of us here today would not have been eligible to join the first Rostrum Club

- Some of us because they are not Christians – today Rostrum is both secular and apolitical
- Some of us because they are not men – remember that membership of Manchester YMCA was a condition of membership.

In fact Rostrum in Australia remained an exclusively male organisation until the 1970's. Women had been admitted much earlier in Britain.

In Australia a certain male orientation lingered. I understand Club 3 didn't open its membership to women until some years later. Of course its members now include leading women.

Let me illustrate the lingering attitudes by quoting from a Rostrum publication as recent as 1987, 'Excellence for Communicators', by Freeman Laurie Burgess, with a foreword by the Hon RJJ Hawke, Prime Minister of Australia.

Note that 'chairperson' has been avoided. If you look at the true meaning of chairman, you will see that it is an impersonal reference to an office. A parallel is midwife. Could one seriously suggest that a male midwife should be called a midperson or a midhusband?

I find that perspective rather quaint. We still debate the nomenclature but surely the argument would not be put quite that way to-day. I cite this passage to illustrate how Rostrum has been able to change with the times. Undoubtedly it is because of that capacity to change that Rostrum is the vibrant organisation we have today.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of Rostrum in Australia

I invite you to rise and to charge your glasses and to join me in a toast 'To Rostrum'

(sources: Alan Milston *Rostrum in Australia 1930-1965* and numerous discussions with members of the ACT zone)

ACT Rostrum awards for 2005:

Raja Ratnam - Club Leadership	Spr Ron Hibberson (Phillip)
Arthur Phillips Trophy - Speaker of the Year	Spr Simon McAlister (DAFF)
Colin Johns - New Speaker of the Year	Spr Peter Osborne (Club 6)
ACT Legislative Assembly Speaker's Trophy	Fmn Alan McCulloch (Boulevard)
Pamela Willoughby-Thomas Memorial Trophy	Spr Lorraine Mason (Boulevard)

Bronze Medallion - Awarded by the Australian
Rostrum Council for outstanding service

Fmn Hugh Anderson (Canberra City
Evening Club)

Alan Crook Award - Best Club

Yass

Certificates of Appreciation

Spr Ari Vennonen (Boulevard)
Fmn Russell Farran (Woden)

Spring Fling (aka Rostoberfest)

Great wine, great food, and great company, all part of the recipe for a wonderful day at the Schonegg Guest House at Murrumbateman for "Rostoberfest", organized, to celebrate Spring, by Yass Rostrum Club.

26 members and their guests met to enjoy each others company and to hear Rob Howell, of Jeir Creek Wines, speak on Cool Climate Wines. His wines, all from his Jeir Creek Winery, including his award-winning 2005 Riesling, were enjoyed as we sampled and ate. His others were the Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Merlot and delicious Botrytis Semillon Sauvignon Blanc which we sampled with our dessert.

We started with the 2005 Riesling as we arrived and worked our way through the others both before and after the meal.

The delicious food was Pumpkin and cracked pepper bread, Veal Zurich, Honey-roasted pork, Apple Strudel, Black Forest Cherry Cake, and brewed coffee to finish. All this was cooked by Richard Everson, son of the late Rostrum stalwart, Warwick Everson. He was ably assisted by his wife, Evelyn and their team.

Speeches were kept to a minimum, but Ian McGrath of Yass, gave us his wine-referenced version of the Rostrum promise and 5 speakers, Alf McCarthy, Ali Khan, Clare Pritchard, Sam Longley and Nick Ewbank spoke to the topic "I share this joke with you".

Rob Howell then spoke on his favourite topic - wine, and the making thereof. We learnt that screw caps (much better) are replacing corks, 2 glasses of red or white per day are beneficial to the health (phew!) and all about the vintage. There was a lot more information, all informative and well-presented. Questions followed afterwards and much was learnt.

All agreed it was a pleasant, friendly get-together with good company in beautiful surrounds.

Judy Trindall
President of Yass Rostrum Club



Rob Howell speaking to a captive audience



Rostrum Members and invited guests at the Rostoberfest



More contented people

Warwick Everson Award for debating

Rostrum has always included debating as part of its activities but on an ad hoc basis. While Rostrum is not a debating society as such, debating is a part of public speaking and has a number of attributes that can be applied in other situations such as preparing for participation in meetings. Also at the recent Future Directions conference there was considerable interest expressed in interclub debates.

As well it is evident that younger people enjoy debating. Most schools and universities have debating competitions and the ACT Debating Union appears to have more younger members than Rostrum. Therefore, a Rostrum debating competition could make Rostrum more attractive to younger people.

The debating rules are those set out by Warwick Everson and can be downloaded from www.pcug.org.au/~terryg/debate.htm. The Canberra City Evening Club has further information in relation to the Warwick Everson Award

Speech Delivery

Delivery is the essence
The material comes second

A good speech can be achieved with simplest of subject matter but a good delivery.

If you sound the goods, your audience will give you the benefit of the doubt.

Include in your subject matter:

A sprinkling of Facts	any facts usually do
Humour	always use humour
Personal Experience	personal stories will keep the audience attentive
Simplicity	audiences would prefer not to think
Repetition	not the detail but the theme

Know your audience and tailor the level of information to suit

Pensioners club
Probus club
Financial planners

Relate it to their circumstances. Ascertain and mention names, drop in a reference to club matters

Lastly when making points utilise the Rule of Three. With a good delivery and a bit of technique any talk can become interesting.

Spr Doug Gillespie
Deputy Public Trustee for the ACT,
Member of the Boulevard Club.

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