

10 Years of Debating

THE STATS ARE CLEAR-ISH

On the 8th October two very well prepared teams took on the challenging question of what is worse: bad stats or no data?

After the improvised Table Topic session, where guest Raja Laxmi won the prize for best impromptu mini-debate speech, our Founding President Paul Carroll chaired the prepared debate on the motion: **This House Believes The Misuse of Statistics is MORE Damaging Than The Lack of Data.**

Before the debate 12 people voted in favour, 8 against with 6 abstainers. After the debate 12 voted in favour and 12 also voted against, with 4 abstaining, so we had a tie! As the Proposition has the burden of proof, and the swing clearly was in favour of the Opposition, the Debate Chair declared the motion as defeated.



The debaters: Phil Corless, Chris Walker, Swarajit Das, Chairman Paul Carroll, KB, Lucie Gavrilova, Kal Bashir



Both Swarajit (left) and Lucie (right) won the Audience Prize for Best Debate Speech, here presented by President KB

Average attendance up!

We've had 24 meetings at The Windsor Castle this calendar year, and the average attendance across the year is 30 per meeting, up from 27 the year before.

We are clearly building momentum, with more guests coming through Eventbrite and MeetUp, as well as the traditional Toastmasters channels.

At some meetings we've seen more guests than members! Do please remember that as a member, you take on a commitment to come and support your fellow members (and welcome the guests), even when you are not speaking.

104 at Sunday Papers Live



Sarah introducing the debaters, Paul and William

Through a contact made by our Immediate Past President David Sexton, the club was invited to The Sunday Papers Live on Sunday the 6th October, a one-day event that focusses on current issues and culture with live speakers, music, food and drink.

Our task was to present a very short debate on a current issue, and so we dived right in with **THB Hate Speech Laws Go Too Far.**

William argued in favour and Paul against, with Sarah masterfully chairing the turbo-speeded affair, as we had to do it all in about 35 minutes. The response was very positive, so who knows, we may even be invited back.

The event is arranged a few times a year, and is currently held at at the repurposed Holy Trinity Church in Marylebone, designed by John Soane and built in 1828 to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon.

EVEN MARRIED MAN HAS FREE WILL



On the 1st October the Online Club took on the age-old philosophical question of free will - do we have it, and if not, how do we choose how to vote?

Before the debate 6 voted in favour and 5 against with 12 abstaining, and so with everything to play for, the two teams presented compelling arguments for both determinism and free will.

In the end the Prop's line that although some things are determined, there is a core free-will ability, won the day, and the motion was carried with a swing to the Prop: 10 in favour, 5 opposed and 8 abstaining.

TRUMP GOT TRUMPED

A record 52 people crammed into the function room of The Windsor Castle on Tuesday 22nd October to debate an election in another country.

After a welcome by Club President KB, Raya Ahmed led the improvised Table Topic mini-debate session, with topics ranging from tax breaks for millionaires, seagulls on the pill (or should they just be shot?), British food, self-marriage, whether Halloween should be embraced or rejected (perhaps in favour of Bonfire Night, yay!), to where King Charles should reign and philosophy in schools.

Guest Saad won Best Table Topic for his philosophical opposition to philosophy in schools.



Raya leading the impromptu section with a packed house.

After a break for refreshments, Debate Chair Joann introduced the prepared debate on the motion **This House Would Support Donald Trump In The US Election**. The vote before the debate was 17 in favour, 25 opposed with 10 undecided.

And after a debate where there was passion as well as facts, the swing did go in the direction of the Opposition – but funnily enough even more for Undecided – with the final vote being 10 in favour, 27 opposed and 15 undecided.

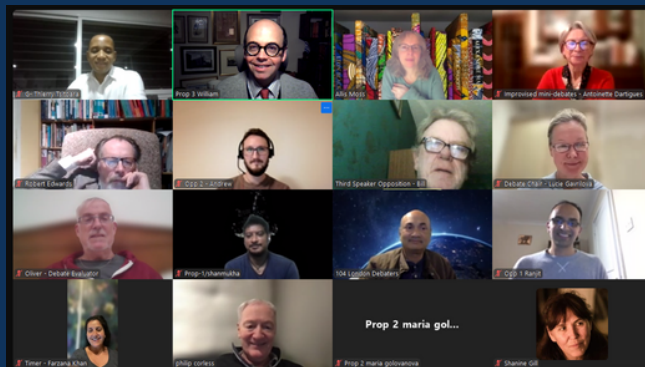
The motion was as such defeated with a swing away from the Proposition, so well done to the Opposition team and especially Laura McCracken for winning best Debate Speech and also Well Done to Hassan Raza for delivering his Maiden Speech at the club!



Above: The debaters (KB not present), Renata, Ranjit, Debate Chair Joann, Kanika, first-time debater Hassan and Laura. Left: Laura receiving her diploma for Best Debate Speaker

REMEMBER, REMEMBER

On Bonfire or Guy Fawkes Night itself, the 5th November, the Online Debaters met on Zoom to debate whether Donald Trump is in fact the new Guy Fawkes.



Online Club President Bill Moss opened the meeting and handed over to Antoinette to chair the Improvised mini-debates from France, touching on the power of ghosts, noisy fireworks, Halloween and Autumn as the best time of the year.

The main debate was on the motion **THB Trump Is The New Guy Fawkes**, and before the debate 6 voted in favour, 5 against and 14 abstained. After a debate filled with lessons from history and symbolism, the Proposition had gained 3 and got 9 votes, 5 were still opposed and the rest abstained.

The motion was as such carried with a swing to the Proposition, but Opposition speaker Andrew McDonald very deservedly won Best Debate Speaker for his excellent contribution, well done!



Left: Online Member Andrew McDonald won the Audience Prize for Best Debate Speaker on 5th November for his excellent Opposition speech

DOUBTS PLANTED

On Tuesday 12th November it was time to debate the dangers of vegetables – a good time to learn some good arguments against Brussels sprouts!

Club Founder Paul Carroll opened the meeting and handed over to Table Topic Chair William, whose topics touched on creativity in schools, the superiority of plastic bags, open borders, energy costs, video games, the menace of celebrities in politics and the big mistake of the US to break with the British Monarchy. Well done to Sarah who won Best TT for her take on Mansplaining.

After the break, debate chair Kanika introduced the main debate on the motion **THB Plants Are Trying To Kill Us**. Before the debate 7 voted in favour and 12 against, with 7 abstaining, so a hill for the Prop to climb. After a debate with many claims and some confusion as to what was actually being

We meet under the Chatham House Rule: “Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”.

.... argued, the Prop held on to its 7 votes, but the Opposition increased their vote count by 6 to 18, and so the motion was defeated with a big swing to the Opposition. Well done Opposition and especially to Stan Billington who won the Audience Prize for Best Debate Speaker of the evening. Also well done to Tom Meacher who delivered his maiden debate speech at the club!

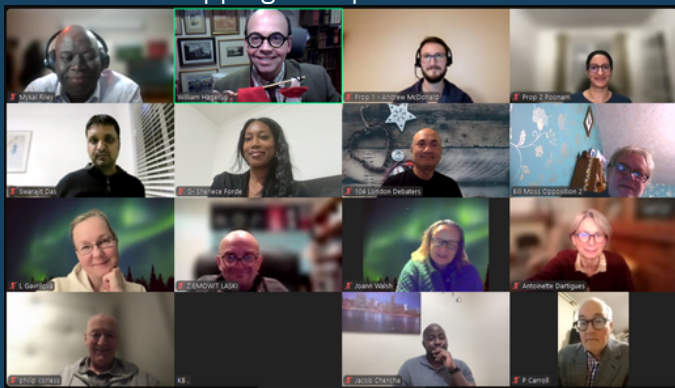


Above: The debaters Joann, Stan, Karen, Debate Chair Kanika, Tom, Lucie and Latifa. BOTTOM LEFT: Best Speaker Stan, finding Zen with his diploma and BOTTOM RIGHT Sarah won Best impromptu speech.

CHRISTMAS IS LOSING ITS RELIGION

As Advent descended, the Online Debaters met on Zoom on Tuesday the 3rd December to debate whether Christmas has lost its link to Christianity.

Online Club President Bill Moss opened the meeting and handed over to Lucie to chair the improvised mini-debates, touching on issues of shopping as sport, Giftmas, beauty, the taste of freedom, Instagram selfie tax and discipline vs. freedom. Guest Sheriece won Best impromptu speech for her defence of shopping as a sport.



After a short comfort break, Phil Corless chaired the main debate on the motion **THB The Religious Significance of Christmas Is Being Lost**. Before the debate 9 voted in favour, 3 against and 11 abstained. After a debate with stats and claims and rhetorical flourishes on both sides, both the Prop and the Opp increased their vote by 2 to 11 and 5 respectively, with the rest abstaining. The motion was carried - well done to the Proposition. William Hagerup won the Audience Prize for Best Debate Speech for his summary for the Prop; well done William!

UNFILTERED DEBATE



The debaters: William, Simon, Kanika, Debate Chair Renata, Swarajit, Andy and David

On Tuesday 26th of November the club met for its usual combination of improvised and prepared debate, this time with question To baccho or not To baccho? as the main topic.

Opening the meeting was Club Founder Paul Carroll as President KB was away, and he promptly handed over to Ranjit who chaired the Table Topic Mini Debates, touching on such topics as train drivers, rugby, stamp duty, assisted suicide, drink spiking, bus lanes and court cases on TV.

Well done to Raya Ahmed who won Best TT speech!

After the break Renata chaired the main debate on the motion **THW Allow Smoking In Privately Owned Public Spaces**. Before the debate it became clear what the Proposing team had their job cut out: Out of the 27 people present, only 5 voted in favour, 12 opposed, with the rest abstaining.

When the vote was taken after the debate there had been a slight swing in favour of the Proposition, with 2 votes added, so 7 in all, but the Opposition still managed to defeat the motion with 13 votes opposed and the rest abstaining, so well done to the Opposition!

This was the first in-person debate for Simon Jacobs, so very well done for a beautifully delivered speech.

Swarajit from the Opposition and William from the Proposition both won Best Debate Speaker - congratulations to both!



ABOVE: William (L) and Swarajit (R) receive their Best Speaker diplomas from acting President Paul

RIGHT: Raya is congratulated for winning Best TT speech by Paul



104 Into Battle at Westminster



Some of the 104 members attending The Battle of Ideas, left to right: Andrew McDonald, Christopher Walker, William Hagerup, Swarajit Das, Sarah Beckwith, Joann Walsh. President KB was also there.

On the 19th and 20th of October, the club attended The Battle Of Ideas in Westminster, a 2-day current affairs event started and headed up by Baroness Claire Fox who visited the club last year.

The festival has a plethora of speakers from across the political divide discussing a wide range of issues.

At the club's stand we talked to dozens of people about Toastmasters and debating, signing them up for our mailing list and at the following 104 debate meeting, about half a dozen people we had spoken to attended, with several returning since and are considering membership.



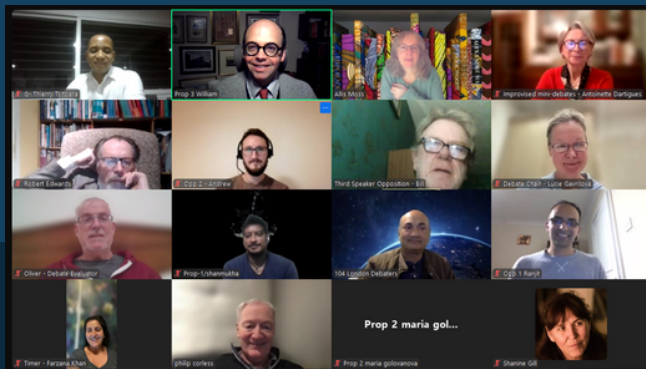
Advent Party With Fallacies



After welcome drinks the revellers sat down to a varied feast of starters, mains and dessert - Farzana Kahn and Steph Clarke joined after this picture was taken.

Two Workshops Held

Workshops on topics related to debating and public speaking are a key added value of membership of 104 London Debaters and Online Debaters.



On Tuesday 29th October William Hagerup presented a workshop on Zoom on the topic of research called **Research to Win**. In the theory part, William suggested using ChatGPT to get a general overview before the team meets, and agreeing an angle before you get on to the specific research. He shared some key questions to ask in order to be more efficient in your research.

You can read more about that on the club's blog Disagreeing Agreeably.

Thank you to Sasha Kovyazina for help with the technical side of the Zoom workshop.

Then on Tuesday 19th November, Online President Bill Moss presented a workshop on rhetorical devices and humour in debate, called **Make 'Em Laugh**. He suggested 3 elements that can elevate your speech; head to the same club blog to read more about Bill's tips.

Thank you to Kamal Khan for helping with the technical side of this Zoom workshop.



The club's annual wintertide social was held at The Last Judgment [sic] in Chancery Lane on Saturday 7th December. President KB presided elegantly, William (above) spoke on how to use fallacies and Swarajit (right) impressed with his Simpsons Christmas jumper.



Christmas Balloon Won By Toastmaster Cultist

Tuesday 10th December the club met for the last debate meeting of the calendar year, and as per tradition it was a **Balloon Debate**.

6 eccentric club personalities tried to remain in the balloon basket by convincing the audience they they could create a Fair and Equitable world of tomorrow, with proceedings elegantly chaired by Lucie.

We started with: The Centrist Extremist, The Free Speech Fanatic, The DEI Preacher, The Vegan Nut Cruncher, The Toastmaster Cultist, and The Yoga Master.

After several rounds 3 remained: the Vegan Nut Cruncher, The Yoga Master and the Toastmaster Cultist. As befitting a Toastmasters Club, the TM Cultist won the final vote to remain in the basket and create a Fair and Equitable world of tomorrow!



Congratulations to William for winning the most votes and to Andy Mahlia and KB for making it to the final round. During the break and after the meeting we had mince pies and drinks in a room decked with jolly tinsel.

Swarajit and David representing the club at TM Competitions



By Sarah Beckwith, VP Pathways

Every year, Toastmasters runs four speaking contests, enabling members to show off their speaking skills in a competitive environment.

Participants progress through different levels of competition, with the winners advancing each round. The Autumn contests are Humorous Speech and Table Topics.

On 26 October, two of our club members competed at the area level of these contests. Against strong competition with three other clubs in our area taking part, Swarajit Das took part in the Humorous Speech competition, delivering a 7 minute speech translating social media behaviours to real life interactions.

David Sexton competed in the Table Topics contest, giving his impromptu answer to a question about responding to a knock on the door in the middle of the night. David placed second in the Table Topics contest. **Congratulations to Swarajit and David for great performances in a challenging competition.**



David (above left) and Swarajit (below left) representing the club at the TM competition



Taking part in contests enables members to push themselves, proudly representing their club and meeting other Toastmasters. The Spring contests will be Evaluation (evaluate a Toastmasters speech in 2-3 minutes) and International Speech (7 minute speech on any subject). If you are interested in representing 104 London Debaters, please speak to Club Secretary/VP Pathways Sarah Beckwith. All four contests culminate at our District (UK South) annual conference which will taking place on 2-4 May 2025 in West London.

All positions, for or against any motion, are assigned to the debaters, so people may not be expressing their own opinions.

NEXT YEAR'S DEBATE MEETINGS:

Tues 7th JAN:

OPEN MIC DEBATING: The Online Club will hold an evening of Cogers' style free speech. Online President Bill Moss will give the opener, a speech touching on the current affairs of the last month or so, and then each attendee will have up to 5 minutes each to speak, either in response to what Bill said, someone else said or on anything.

Tues 14th JAN:

TH Regrets Elon Musk's Purchase of Twitter. Two teams, one supporting and one opposing, will present a prepared debate, but you can give YOUR opinion during Floor contributions. Talk to Lucie to take a role in this meeting.

Tues 28th JAN:

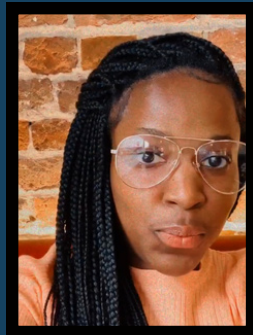
WORKSHOP WITH PAUL CARROLL: Paul will cover the basics of debating - how to put together a strong case and how to oppose it. A must for new debaters and a great refresher for experienced debaters. This will be held in person at The Windsor Castle.

Q4 members welcome!



Mykal Riley

Mykal was allegedly involved in heated debates before he could walk properly and has not stopped arguing since. He's glad to have found a community which can help him share more light than heat.



Vicky Nakamatte

I wanted to join the club to sharpen my critical thinking, improve my public speaking, and engage in thought-provoking discussions on important issues.



Simon Jacobs

A former Vice President of Mentoring at Holborn Speakers Toastmasters Club, Simon has a strong affection for all things public speaking. He is fond of a good debate, and in particular has a penchant for Table Topics.

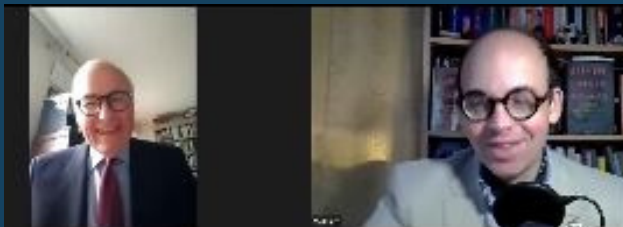
We also welcome Alex Fulger!

At the **104 Online Club**, we can additionally welcome:

Andrew McDonald, Jacob Chench, Poonam Ahluwalia, Shanine Gill, Zem Laski, Carinder Malhi and Allis Moss.

We hope to hear more from them in the new year!

Our Club Podcast Has 2600 listens!



Tune in to our club podcast, **The Debating Toastcast**, available on YouTube as well as Spotify, to hear short episodes related to debating and public speaking. We have episodes on building a strong case, rebuttal, fallacies and various aspects of rhetoric.

A Christmas Message From Online Club President, Bill Moss



Pastor, prophet, poet – and debater – Bill Moss

Dear Fellow Debaters, I am Bill, President of 104 Online Debating Club. Our planet is now entering the year 2025. Numerologically it is the Nine Year.

Nine is the number of completion and excellence. Next year we will be increasing to two meetings per month. You will have twice the chance to practise, hone and improve your debating and public speaking online skills. To achieve excellence, one must first complete the task.

Your speeches cannot be good if you do not perform them. I invite you all to take part in our debates. There are many tasks that need to be done at each meeting. Taking part in any of these roles will help 104 and you.

Roles needed for each meeting include Master of Ceremonies, Mini-Debate Chair, Three Proposition Speakers, Three Opposition Speakers, Main Debate Chair, Debate Evaluators, Zoom Person, Plus we could add a grammarian. At least 11 people per meeting.

Public speaking and debating are arts that take a lifetime and longer to learn. It is a long journey.

104 will help you along the way. Look, I know lots (all ?) of you do not “believe” in Numerology. However, just listen to the numbers and they will show you the way. Come along, put yourself forward, volunteer! If you help 104, 104 will help you. Look at Numerology as a metaphor if that helps.

See you all in 2025 Merry Christmas, Superb Solstice, and a Happy New Year to all present and future debaters

Coger's Style Open Mic Debate Night



Join the Online Debaters on Tuesday 7th January for Open Mic debating

The Debating Year 2024 at 104

In person and Online

Improvised mini-debates

2 mins to defend or oppose any motion
An evening of impromptu debates on a range of issues - serious and humorous

On Zoom
Free guest tickets on Eventbrite

104 London Debaters
Tuesday 12th March at 6.45pm on Zoom

THE DUEL DEBATES

Tuesday 23rd Jan 6.45pm
The Windsor Castle Pub, Victoria

This house would **BAN ANIMAL FARMING**
This house would **ABOLISH HATE CRIME LAWS**
Questions & Answers

Details on website: <https://104londondebaters.club/>

104 London Debaters

Guests are welcome and can ask questions or comment

Alcohol is Good for Society

This house believes

104 London Debaters
Tuesday 13th Feb. at 6.45pm on Zoom

104 London Debaters

Debate: This house **REJECTS**
First Past the Post
For General Elections

Tuesday 27th Feb. at 6.45pm

Psychology Is Pseudoscience

This House Believes
You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

THE DUEL DEBATES
Tuesday 23rd April 6.45pm
The Windsor Castle Pub, Victoria

Duel 1: AI Will Make Us Happier
Duel 2: Legalise Assisted Suicide
Questions & Answers

Details on website: <https://104londondebaters.club/>

104 London Debaters

Guests are welcome and can ask questions or comment

Pay Reparations For Slavery

This House Would

Debate - Tuesday 26th March at 6.45pm
The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria

104 London Debaters
An evening of Cogers' format

Open Mic Debating
Paul Carroll, DTM, will give an opening speech on current affairs and then the floor is YOURS*

Ticket includes FREE DRINK

for 5 mins each

Debating Masterclass

With debate expert and founder of 104 London Debaters
Paul Carroll, DTM

What to look out for when defending a motion
What to look out for when opposing a motion
Practical exercises

Tuesday 9th April 6.45pm
Tickets on the club website

In person at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria

104 London Debaters
Tuesday 14th May at 6.45pm

This House Would Provide

Puberty Blockers
For Trans People On the NHS

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

At The Windsor Castle pub Victoria

Globalism Renders National Democracy Meaningless

This House Believes

Wednesday 10th April 6.30PM BST

Improvised mini-debates

2 mins to defend or oppose any motion
An evening of impromptu debates on a range of issues - serious and humorous

104 London Debaters
Tuesday 28th May 6.45pm

Religion Is Necessary

2 Opening Speakers and then the floor is YOURS* - take the challenge!

104 London Debaters
Debate: Tuesday 11th June - 6.45pm
at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria/Westminster

This House Would

Bring Back National Service
You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

Our Current Democracy Is Not Working

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

104 Online Debaters
Tuesday 2nd July 6.45 PM BST on Zoom

104 London Debaters

Debate: Tuesday 9th July - 6.45pm
at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria/Westminster

Is The British Civil Service Fit For Purpose?

Free Speech or Truth?

Managing The Marketplace of Ideas in a Polarised World

Yair Zivan Anna Loutfi

Political adviser and editor of The Centre Must Hold Barrister & Free Speech Activist

Wednesday 10th July - 6.30 PM
£6 per ticket (£1 for full-time students - code: student)
The Windsor Castle Pub, Westminster/Victoria (close to Westminster Cathedral)

104 London Debaters
Debate: Tuesday 27th Aug. - 6.45pm
at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria/Westminster

This House Would

ABOLISH The Public Order Act 2023

YOU can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

Ban Smartphones For Under-16s

This House Would

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

Join the Online Debate on Zoom:
This House Would

Tax The Rich!

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

104 Online Debaters
Tuesday 3rd September 6.45 PM BST on Zoom

Freedom Is More Important Than Safety

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

104 Online Debaters
Tuesday 6th August 6.45 PM BST on Zoom

Welcome you to join us for

The Presidential Debate 2024

On the motion: This House Believes
Social Media Renders Debate, Online & Offline, Futile

6 of the 10 Club Presidents since 2014 will debate the state of debate in 2024.

104 London Debaters

Debate: Tuesday 13th Aug. - 6.45pm
at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria/Westminster

This House Would Curb Tourism

I'd rather be an accountant

You can give your opinion during Floor Contributions

104 London Debaters
Tuesday 24th Sept. - 6.45pm
at The Windsor Castle pub, Victoria/Westminster

Panel Discussion with Q&A
Are Today's Conspiracy Theories Tomorrow's Facts?

Panel will discuss and answer YOUR questions from different perspectives



Thank you all for a great
10-year anniversary debating year!
Wishing all members and friends of
104 London Debaters a very Merry Christmas
and a
most happy New Debating Year 2025!

From Club President KB and the whole Club Committee



Paul's argument cutting through



Paul about to make a point to Bill