

## *Mike Wabe - Toastmaster*

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### **Toastmaster History**

There is no doubt that the Toastmaster is certainly one of the oldest of occupations in the UK, and it is quite uniquely British.

Centuries ago the quality of the drink that was served at grand occasions was poor and it had to be spiced with herbs and flavourings. A servant in every large household was given this duty of flavouring the wine, and he did it by mixing it with toast, which had been previously soaked in spices and herbs. To identify which servant had this onerous task, he was given a red jacket to wear.

He became known as the *Keeper of the Toast*, and his duties expanded into making announcements about the forthcoming toasts. The first recorded reference to a drink being called a toast dates back to 1649 in Bath, and thus the title evolved into Toastmaster.

Over the centuries, the red jacket has become a symbol of the profession, and continues to be worn with honour and pride by Toastmasters today.

### **Modern Day Toastmaster**

Today, a Toastmaster continues to play a vital role within the world of banquets, conferences dinners, luncheons, weddings and at many other kinds of social function. However, the more modern identity is often understood to be a Master of Ceremonies, and the role and duties of the modern day Toastmaster now involve strong organisational and event management skills.

Here are some examples of the types of function at which a modern day Toastmaster may officiate:

- Weddings - all faiths and denomination
- Civil Partnerships
- Annual Dinners
- Masonic Ladies Festivals
- Award Ceremonies
- Charity Balls
- Corporate Luncheons,
- Gala Dinners,
- Civic Functions,
- Cocktail Receptions,
- Bar mitzvahs
- VIP Banquets

The origins and meaning behind some of our most cherished wedding traditions may surprise you. Many of the traditions associated with modern day weddings can be found to have their roots in the customs and rituals of our ancestors.

### **Why does the bride stand on the left and groom on the right?**

It is believed the practice goes back to times when the man (groom) may have to defend his woman (bride) from attackers. In those days everyone was right-handed and so the woman stands on his left to free his sword arm for fighting.

### **Why are engagement and wedding rings placed on the third finger, left hand?**

The Romans believed that the vein in that finger runs directly to the heart. The wedding ring represents a never-ending circle, symbolising everlasting love.

### **Throwing confetti**

This originates from the ancient Pagan rite of showering the happy couple with grain to wish them a fruitful union.

### **Tossing the bouquet**

In days gone by, women would try to rip pieces of the bride's dress and flowers in order to obtain some of her good luck. To get away from the crowd the bride would toss her bouquet and run away. Nowadays the bouquet is tossed to single women with the belief that whoever catches it will be the next to marry.

### **Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and a silver sixpence in your shoe**

This was the original rhyme, but these days the "silver sixpence" part is mainly forgotten. Something old signifies the bride's link to her family and the past. The bride might, for example, wear a piece of family jewellery or her mother's/grandmother's wedding dress. Something new reflects hope for good fortune and success in the future. The bride often chooses the wedding gown as the new item. Something borrowed is borrowed by a bride from a friend, but not a family member. Something blue dates back to biblical times when the colour blue was considered to represent purity and fidelity. Over time this has evolved from wearing blue clothing to wearing a blue band around the bottom of the bride's dress and, in more modern times, a blue coloured garter. A silver sixpence in your shoe - the placing of a silver sixpence in the bride's left shoe is a symbol of wealth. Not simply to bring the bride financial wealth but also a wealth of happiness and joy throughout her marriage.