



The AHA-MK Guide to Working with the Media

Collated from the AHA-MK Forum Workshop
30th November 2011 to consider

Press and Media Relations

and

Making the Media Work for You

Presentations and advice from media professionals

‘The last thing you need is a press release!...’

‘Media people are the gamekeepers... you are the poachers!’

... Some advice from the professionals

How to attract attention in the media...

- Be focused: think what you want to say and who you want to target.
- Be interesting: media people have pressure of deadlines; they will not spend time on something bland.
- Be concise: 200 words should get your message through.
- Spoon-feed your media contact: write an 'oven-ready' story with the first 'hook' no more than 20 words.
- Be aware that local newspapers have limited space for 'news' – they fill in *after* advertisements.
- Make your introduction engaging: save information for later.
- Avoid generic mailshots – ring up a particular person and develop the relationship
- Make regular contact – every fortnight or month. Any longer than that, they will forget you.
- Send in a reader's letter – more chance of getting printed.
- Pictures are very important. They could even work for radio as they will communicate more readily to the 'gamekeeper'.
- Carry a camera with you everywhere... but don't take mobile pictures on 'draft'!
- Develop your own media and communicate via email lists. Include the professional media, and they might catch on!
- Make any press releases look like a newspaper – to make it seem authentic and believable! (People believe anything they read in the papers...)
- Never lie to the media!

The presenters:

Eleanor Turney

Eleanor is a freelance journalist, writer and editor, currently working at The Poetry Society. She draws on her experience as a commissioning editor, a pitching journalist and as an employee of an arts organisation.

She runs a writing and editing website (www.word-ninja.co.uk) and is the Web Editor of A Younger Theatre (www.ayoungertheatre.com).

She spent three years working on the editorial team of Arts Professional magazine, and has been published in The Guardian, INTO magazine and Ideas Tap.

Trevor Johnson

Trevor has been around the Milton Keynes media scene for a long time.

In his own words: 'Once a young man (trust me – I'm a spin doctor), I applied my engineer's logic to journalism, serving in most newspaper roles including muck-raking columnist – measuring success in the fear and loathing of politicians, officialdom and other ne'er do wells – editor and MD ... even helping launch Sunday Sport!

'With the late 80s recession I passed through press agency boss, broadcast media stringer and national hack incarnations until, gamekeeper turned poacher, I launched my own PR and corporate publishing business, Intermedia.' (www.intermediauk.com).

With thanks to the Bucks Oxfordshire & Berkshire Museums Forum for their support.

And to Bletchley Park for hosting the event and providing a delicious lunch.



The Arts and Heritage Alliance of Milton Keynes

is a unique voluntary representative forum and resource working collaboratively to position the Arts and Heritage sector as a strategic contributor to the community of Milton Keynes

We aim

- *to engage members with professionals in arts, heritage and business within and beyond the Milton Keynes community – of which this guide is evidence.*
- *to identify where arts and heritage can fit the planning objectives of statutory and other bodies - local, regional and national*
- *to promote members' considerable achievements and ensure they are acknowledged as valued contributors to community wellbeing and the economy.*
- *and further to develop member audiences:*

We have estimated that in 2009-10 around 2½ million visits were made to over 7,000 arts and heritage activities offered by AHA-MK members with £14.6m of turnover generated directly by AHA-MK members, thus helping to create employment and generate tax revenue.

*For subscriptions, list of current members and other further information please visit
www.aha-mk.org email: chair@aha-mk.org*

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