



## ***The AHA-MK Guide to Working with the Media***

Collated from the AHA-MK Forum Workshop  
30<sup>th</sup> 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 boring ('Dog bites man' is not news).
- Be concise: 200 words should get your message through.
- Be clear: do not make assumptions about your contact's knowledge of your work – they don't know what you do!
- Be enthusiastic: make sure that you are communicating the ethos/uniqueness of your organisation.
- 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.
- Personalise your approach, providing different angles or details according to who you are sending to, and who their audience will be.
- Make regular contact – every fortnight or month. Any longer than that, they will forget you.
- Send in a reader's letter – often 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 everywhere... but don't take mobile pictures on 'draft' quality!
- Develop your own media/publication and send it DIRECT (email/post) on a REGULAR basis to all those you wish to influence. Include the professional media, and they might catch on!
- Make press releases look like a newspaper. Generally people are more inclined to believe what they read in (most) newspapers than what they see in brochures, magazines or on websites...
- Never lie to the media! It will come back to haunt you!

## ***The presenters:***

### ***Eleanor Turney***

Eleanor is a freelance journalist, writer and editor, currently working part-time 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](http://www.word-ninja.co.uk)) and is the Web Editor of A Younger Theatre ([www.ayoungertheatre.com](http://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. At present, he regularly works nationally and regionally as well as locally.

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.impr.co.uk](http://www.impr.co.uk)).

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**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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