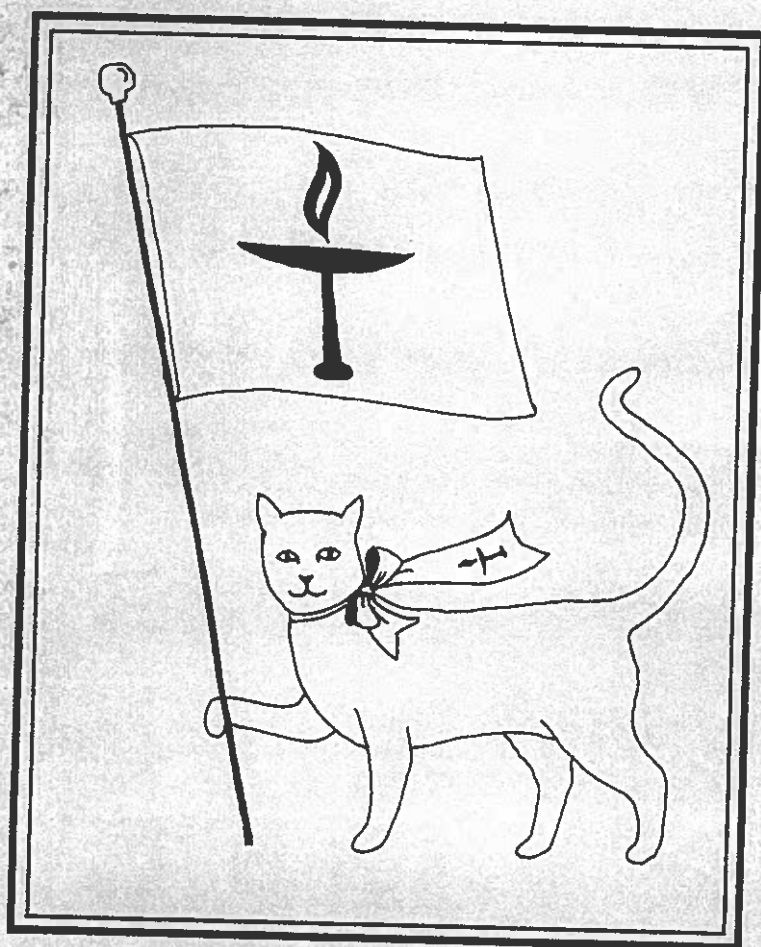


# Publicity Guide for Unitarians



## FOREWORD

by Carol Ann Yeaple  
General Assembly Publicity Officer 1979/80

This Publicity Guide is produced for use by Church and Fellowship Officers, Ministers, Publicity/Information Officers, District Association leaders, and, indeed, any individual Unitarian to consider in relation to his or her own group.

The suggestions and advice are gathered from many different sources and altered to suit the general situation of Unitarians in Britain. In the main, it is an updated version of the excellent material gathered by the former G.A. Publicity Officer, the Rev. Fred Ryde, for the previous Publicity Guide.

As Fred Ryde noted in the foreword to that publication, some of these suggestions will not apply to your particular situation; some perhaps contradict your experience; and some might seem too obvious to be worth stating. As Unitarian situations differ, please take what is useful for you and leave the rest. Some spaces are left for your own notes.

The intention is to improve, update and supplement this guide, so if you have ideas or comments please send them to:-

The Publicity Officer, Unitarian Headquarters, Essex Hall,  
1-6 Essex Street, Strand, London WC2R 3HY

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## **PUBLICITY — WHAT IS IT?**

Communication, creating awareness, public relations, informing, advertising, media, promotion, and education are all words expressing aspects of publicity. It is important to note that Unitarian churches and fellowships create publicity whether they want it or not. Our concern is to be certain that it is good publicity and that it is used appropriately and to advantage.

Whoever writes letters or answers the telephone for your group gives an image of the congregation. This is part of publicity. If the meeting place is neat and attractive, that is good publicity. If the paint is peeling and the flower beds are unkempt, the silent communication to the passer-by is poor publicity. The reception a visitor receives indicates whether or not the group cares. The building usage tells what the congregation thinks about its neighbours. Is it strictly for members or open to many community groups? Any news coverage profoundly affects what the public thinks a congregation is trying to do. These are just a few examples of the publicity *every* group emanates, whether it is aware of it or not. The Unitarian image is shaped by all these factors as well as many more.

Communication is one of our greatest needs. It's useful to remember that communication is about getting response. Without it we cannot be known to potential new members and we cannot survive without them. The need for a strong publicity programme that communicates to potential Unitarians has never been more imperative.

Publicity falls naturally into two categories. The first comprises all the silent communication aspects of our situation and how they can be improved. The second is using the available media to our best advantage.

## **NOTICING OUR SITUATION**

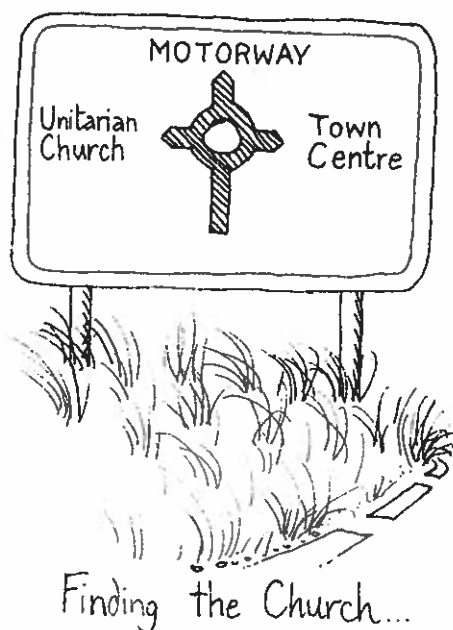
### **The Meeting Place**

Whether your building dominates the town square or is in a back alley, the front of the building is always important. Money and effort spent on its appearance are always well-spent. If some members are keen gardeners, the use of their services on a

regular basis will enhance the appearance. Well maintained and well kept property denotes to the whole community that the congregation cares about its neighbours and its image. This is always good publicity, for it indicates that the people belonging there are lively and active--that they are doers.

### Finding the Meeting Place

Some church buildings are themselves publicity sites. Others are obscurely sited and their very whereabouts needs to be publicised. If so, reproduce a map or diagram of the district showing the position of the place of meeting and distribute it wherever possible. Make sure your congregation is listed in any guide or town map that is published (fortunately, most hidden church buildings are of historical and architectural interest). See if the local authority will permit a direction sign in the nearest main street. If so, invest in a good one and see that it is installed where it will be seen. Obviously, if your meeting place is tucked away, other forms of publicity — in newspapers, public buildings, etc. — are even more essential. Local hotels, tourist information offices, holiday camps, halls of residence and students' unions often list congregations and service times. Be certain your group is on all these lists and that the information is accurate and easy to understand.



### **Telephone Directory Entry**

For the small sum involved, it is well worth inserting an entry in the local Telephone Directory. If your congregation is not already listed, do this *now*.

UNITARIANS, address and telephone number of Minister (or Church Officer).

You might consider advertising in the yellow pages as well as the entry in the white pages. Use of these is increasing all the time.

### **Notice Boards**

The importance of attractive, informative and up-to-date outdoor notice boards should hardly need to be emphasised. Many people tend to regard a church as a private club and anything that destroys that illusion is worthwhile. Try to have notices that relate to a wider community as well as to congregational functions.

### **Use of Premises**

Most churches let their premises for financial reasons. As far as publicity is concerned, the more people who enter the premises for meetings and other events, the better. It is, however, well to remember that you will be associated in the public mind with groups that use your property. It is sometimes worth giving up a little profit to put one's premises at the disposal of societies which reflect the values of your congregation.

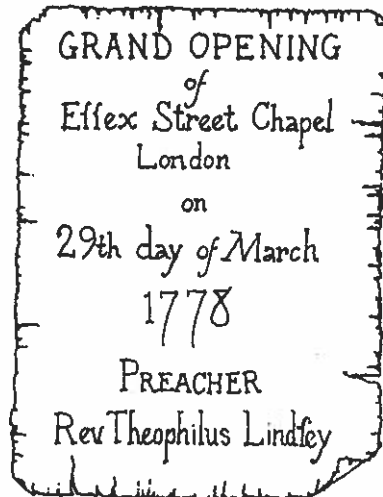
Don't forget the area for worship in your building is part of your premises and that it is important to open it, as well as the hall, to the public. Most are suitable for concerts, meetings, exhibitions, etc., and there is no reason why it should not be used for such purposes as are consistent with its dignity.

Some meeting places have fronts that are suitable for charitable collections, displays or even sales or coffee mornings. These demonstrate that the group is open and active. It is very well worthwhile to lend your front for such purposes for selected

organisations, particularly if you lack the number of people to run your own functions. Be certain a big attractive sign states that this is a Unitarian meeting place.

### Posters

These are especially useful for individual events or new ventures. Printed ones can be used when many are needed, but posters can also be done by hand without hours of painstaking work. Informal (not careless) posters done with a felt pen can be very effective. Shopkeepers' windows are one obvious place for them, and you might use your ingenuity for other places. Be certain to remove all posters as soon as possible after the event, especially those outside the meeting place for an event inside, which should be taken down as the event ends. Out-of-date posters left around are negative publicity. The Publicity Department offers free postcard-sized printed cards for local display notices.



### Leaflets

Each Unitarian congregation should have a leaflet, explaining the particular church or fellowship, to hand out to any enquirer. It is obvious that this should be attractively designed and much care should be taken so that it accurately describes your group and does not give false impressions. It is recommended that outsiders read and criticise before the leaflet is printed.

Explore uses of your local Instant Print Shop for reproduction. Costs may be cheaper than you think. Colour and good artwork can usually be included. Also, any local art colleges may have students who would be happy to do such work.

Leafleting door to door with general information handbills has not proved very valuable in the past. For a special event of general interest, however, such a distribution in the neighbourhood

has much merit. It does serve to remind the local residents that there is an alive, caring congregation just around the corner.

### Newsletter

The newsletter is one of the most vital publicity items each congregation produces, and perhaps it is wise to look at your newsletter (hopefully, it's more than a 'calendar') from the angle of good publicity. Certainly it would be hoped that all visitors would receive a free copy and that it would impress them enough to encourage them to participate in some future happening and/or worship service. For many people it will be their first introduction to the congregation. The newsletter, therefore, *must* indicate that people in the congregation *care*, that they welcome new people and are active. You might consider the publicity effect of your congregation's newsletter from two standpoints -- content and presentation.

### Content

*Events relating to the outside community and evidence of the congregation's wider interests should be given prominence.* Every newsletter should pass the test of having at least one feature item of interest to people outside the congregation. If the minister writes a letter (s)he can often help with this. This makes it worthwhile to distribute it to your local press, to other community organisations and anywhere else practicable. (Don't forget the Publicity Department at Essex Hall in order to keep us informed!)

Some newsletters use small "interest" articles and quotations very effectively.

Be certain important details for the outsider are *always* included, such as the name and address of the meeting place, times of services, list of minister and officers complete with their addresses and telephone numbers for contact, and a brief statement of what Unitarianism means. Perhaps a standard membership application form or at least a statement about membership (this tells outsiders a great deal) is well worth including and somebody might even sign and submit it! Include, of course, any forthcoming events - especially those which outsiders might attend.

Read other church newsletters as an outsider and see what content impresses you and what basic questions you are left with

as a new person being introduced to a congregation. Then, perhaps, these insights might be applied to your own more familiar newsletter. Perhaps a changing paragraph especially for the stranger/newcomer/visitor could be standard in each issue.

### *Presentation*

Care should be taken with the design arrangement and quality of reproduction. A blurred unappealing sheet of paper without an attractive heading will probably be thrown in the dustbin before it's ever read. It indicates that the congregation does not care.

A permanent well-designed cover (or at least heading) is always an advantage. Possibly a coloured printed cover with all the vital standard information mentioned above is a good way to begin. Supplies of these could be printed ahead and just the date, maybe a changing quotation or poem or drawing be inserted for each different issue. Quality drawings and simple sketches add interest. Spacing for eye-appeal and readability is important. Tiny print squashed together may mean more words on a single sheet of paper, but it also probably means people won't bother to read it even if they have good eyesight! Attractive layout is a sign of caring.

Explore the various duplicating processes available in your community. What facilities or talents for quality newsletter production do members of your congregation have at their disposal? Printing from photo-ready copy is quite reasonable and this allows for all sorts of creative artwork and design. Letraset is cheap and easy for amateurs to do and makes for attractive headings and highlights. Photocopying also allows for drawings, and modern machines can enlarge and reduce copy for spacing and effect.

Typing on stencils and running off on a duplicating machine is a popular method for newsletters because it's relatively inexpensive. New stencils are easy to use. Electric stencil makers also exist where an ordinary typewritten page is automatically copied onto a stencil. One congregation has found that their local umbrella organisation for voluntary services (to which they belong) does electric stencilling and duplicating free for their members. Do make certain, however, that your duplicating machine is in good order and produces well-printed copies.

Length might be a consideration. If someone receives one A-4 sheet of paper, it will probably be read immediately. If it is longer, it may be cast aside for 'future' reading when time permits, which may never happen, or timely sections be read too late.

Most congregations now produce their newsletter on a monthly basis. Some of the larger congregations might think of a shorter newsletter more often. Free distribution of a quality newsletter to a large area is a good investment.

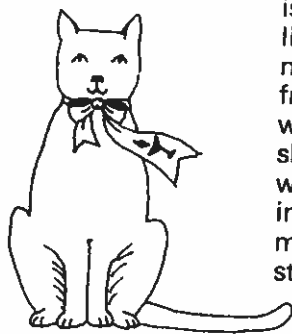


Free distribution to a large area...

#### Free Literature

Whoever enters the congregation's premises is likely to be curious about the beliefs and practices of the people who use them.

The best way to satisfy this curiosity is by a well-placed and well-run free literature stand. People should be left in no doubt that they are invited to take the free literature. The stand should be kept well supplied and up to date. The material should be clean and fresh and all dirty, wilting leaflets thrown away. It should include the newsletter and the leaflet mentioned previously which tells the stranger about the particular congregation. Other free material is available from the Publicity Department, such as a variety of pamphlets on Unitarianism, welcome cards,



... Church Kit

bookmarks, directories of Unitarian Congregations in Britain, etc. It has been established that people tend to take literature when it is packaged in 'kit' form, rather than displayed individually. This concept might be applied to individual groups by having literature packed together as a 'Welcome to this "Church" Kit for a Newcomer' or some other appropriate title.

The Free Literature Rack should preferably be separate from a bookstall selling merchandise in order that people be left in no doubt that they are invited to take free literature. No harm exists, however, in a discreet box for contributions as some people prefer to pay.

### **Book Stall**

A bookstall is very good publicity. It attracts strangers. It gives everyone something to do after the service. People will easily converse about some books they see on the stand - it gives them something else to talk about. And, it can be financially profitable for your group.

A wide range of recent books would be the best display. Lindsey Press books cater for Unitarianism and deserve to be included, but make your bookstall more enticing with titles from all fields that will interest your congregation. Don't overlook good children's books and those that people might give as gifts.

Besides books, your stall might have items for sale such as chalice jewellery (obtainable through the Publicity Department), stationery items such as cards with a picture of your meeting place, Christmas supplies - the list is endless. Within reason, all this is good publicity.

Plenty of scope exists for someone from the congregation to enjoy managing your bookstall. Attractively displaying the items and choosing the selection of books to offer can be a rewarding job for anyone interested. And all the profits can aid your group. The work can be reduced by using a folding display stand which cuts out the labour of setting out and packing up, as well as preventing the books from getting grubby.

As regards finance, it should be noted that the Essex Hall Bookshop gives discounts of 15% on Lindsey Press publications

and 10% on other publications: Orders over £10 are sent post free except for HYMNS FOR LIVING. Thus, it would be advisable to group small orders into one larger one to save postage. The Bookshop regrets that no "for sale or return" orders can be accepted. Invoices must be paid in 30 days. Instructions and order forms for bookstall managers are available from Essex Hall Bookshop, 1-6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY.

The Amy Howarth Bowl is presented annually to the congregation whose bookstall sells the largest amount of publications through orders from the Essex Hall Bookshop.

#### **Public Libraries**

Public Libraries will usually accept notices about cultural and other events of general interest, though they often demand that they should be printed. Ask the Librarian to place *The Inquirer* in the reading room and, if necessary, offer to provide it free. Look at the shelves and make sure that Unitarianism is adequately represented by recent works. The best way to get books introduced is for one or two people to request them on the usual card. If that fails, a word with the Librarian pointing out the lack of books on Unitarianism and the abundance of works on Christian Science, etc., might be helpful.

*Notes*

## **THE MEDIA**

The Media offer what congregations lack - ways to put information before large numbers of non-members. We must learn to take advantage of these excellent communication methods.

### **Minister's Rôle**

It is vital that the minister (or lay leader) has a good relationship with local press people. The minister must take the lead in improving communication between him or herself and the people who gather and spread news. The minister will be quoted as the leader, will represent the congregation at numerous functions worthy of note by the press, and will be the spokesperson for concerns of the congregation.

### **Lay Press Officer**

It is important that there is someone whose responsibility it is to act as "Information Officer", "Publicity Officer", "Press Officer", or "Contact Person" for each congregation -- someone who has, or will seek to gain, the necessary experience to be responsible for local publicity and for co-ordinating the work of the congregation for publicity. She or he may be glad of the help of a committee, but the appointment of a committee is of little value unless it has an executive officer to direct it and to take immediate action when it is needed.

### **Importance of letters to the Editor**

One feature in the paper most people read is Letters to the Editor. As Unitarians we must take opportunities to respond to news items of a controversial religious nature or those in which Unitarians might make a response on the grounds of social responsibility or any other situation in which a reply by a Unitarian might be appropriate. It's free publicity. It is always worth writing when there is anything of general interest to be said which will draw favourable attention to the congregation, and, if possible, will emphasise the caring or liberal nature of the congregation.

It would be ideal if every individual Unitarian would assume this responsibility of writing letters to the Editors of local and national papers and journals whenever appropriate. This is not just for the minister or the officers - the whole congregation

can join in. Opportunities should be seized for approving and positive comments as well as criticisms. Whenever this can be done in the name of a group of Unitarians or the word "Unitarian" mentioned, it makes more people aware of our existence. If a newspaper receives one letter with a Unitarian response to an issue, it may be thrown out, but if three are received, one may very likely be printed.

Most papers ask you to keep your letters short. It is good advice. If, however, you must spread yourself, have a look at a few back numbers and check the maximum length of the letters published. And beware - if you are too long-winded, the Editor will have to cut your letter. Get your contribution in promptly.



Keep your letters short...

The value of consistently appearing in the papers as being concerned, informed on issues, and a responsive group is impossible to calculate. The Publicity Department does plead for much more of this from our local congregations. Please send copies of anything printed to Essex Hall, so that we can be aware of all the good publicity work that is happening. Cost effectiveness of this effort is very high.

#### Newspaper News Stories

What is news? Very simply it is an item that is *timely, interesting and important*. Has it ever happened before? Is anyone famous involved? Would it be interesting to you if it were about someone else's congregation? Newspapers are big business. Their job is to sell newspapers and advertising - not to provide free publicity however worthy the cause. Study your local paper. See what

kind of items they publish and the style they use, and try to write your story accordingly. Gone are the days when an Editor sent a reporter to find what was going on in the community. You must do the work.

Remember in many cases the evening paper and the weekly have different ways of treating news. Generally speaking the evenings like it short and succinct; the weekly will take more details - in many weeklies the old adage that 'names make news' still applies. They'll never print the summary of a sermon but a telling phrase from one may strike a responsive chord! Reports on unusual addresses are possible. Never give up when your contribution fails to appear. Don't be downhearted - keep on trying.

In most places, newspapers will publish events only if they are of interest to a wider public than the congregation itself. This covers however, a wide spectrum of events: interfaith happenings, anniversaries, special services, well-known (national or local) speakers, presentations, new ventures, resignations and appointments of ministers, plays, etc. It is worth taking the trouble to find some 'angle' that will make the event more interesting. Don't 'manufacture' news in order to get publicity: experienced journalists will automatically reject subsequent contributions.

A good quality black and white interesting photograph accompanying the story may help to 'sell' it. Identify the picture with a caption taped to the print. When posting a photograph, always pack it with stiff cardboard.

*Timing* is all important. What is news today may not be news tomorrow. Get your contribution in promptly. Gone are the days of 'hold the front page'. Newspaper production is a continuing process and work starts on a new edition sometimes even before the current one is off the presses. Send your story as soon as it happens.

For planned events, warn the city news editor that it is coming (*sometimes* they'll send a reporter) and release advance news as far ahead as possible - weeks rather than days. Months ahead might be overdoing it! This can be posted to the media. When the event occurs, hand carry, if at all practicable, the copy to the media. Posting takes too long.

Many news events will happen quickly without advance notice. Tune yourself to watch for these and then act in time for local deadlines.

If timing is very tight, jot down the basic facts without writing it out and deliver by hand.. Such a fact sheet may be useful on other occasions as well, since it allows a professional reporter to write "church" news from the needed secular viewpoint.

If time and preference allow for writing the story or press release, crucial details should be in the first paragraph. Who, what, where, when, why and how (5 W's and an H) are questions to ask yourself. Is all this information in the beginning of the story? Do take note of the following "rules" if news story writing is new to you.

1. Always type. Start part way down the page leaving room for a headline to be inserted. Use double spacing and wide margins (about 1 ½ inches). Type on one side only of the paper. Never carry a sentence or paragraph from the foot of one page to the top of the next. Number the pages. Type "more follows" in the bottom right-hand corner of each continuation page and at the end of the story type "ends".
2. Always send original copies. If it is being sent to several outlets, photocopy or duplicate the story - never send carbons.
3. Be certain your name, address and telephone number are included as a contact for further information. Identify every page. Simply state "Further Information from" and provide an out-of-office-hours number too. If you issue information to the press, you must be reachable.
4. Date the material.
5. Be brief. Use simple natural straightforward language - avoid 'churchy' words, obscure words and complex sentences. Try not to exceed two pages.
6. Use the 'inverted pyramid' style of writing (i.e. important facts in first few paragraphs and continue in order of decreasing importance). This provides for easy cutting. Again check that the 5 W's and H are in the lead paragraph.
7. Do not draw conclusions or state opinions. That can

be done in letters to the Editor. News should be unbiased reporting.

8. Quotations add interest, especially when they are strong statements. Do not use bland ones.

9. Deliver the release personally if possible. Questions can then be asked.

10. Be prepared to accept that your material may not get printed, or be cut drastically. Never argue about this; it is the editor's right.

Remember that events which are held on your premises could be reported. It is worth asking yourselves when you let your premises whether the event is such that you wish to be associated with it in the public mind.

It is worthwhile to send a copy of your congregation's newsletter to the local newspaper offices as soon as it is available if it contains some information for the broader community and if well-produced.

#### **Newspaper Advertising**

On the whole, it is difficult to think of any better or cheaper alternative for making an impact on the public at large, particularly in a large town. If one sees it as part of a continuous and wide-ranging publicity policy and looks for the cumulative effect of a whole programme rather than the immediate effect of any single advertisement, one will get a truer estimate of its value. Cost effectiveness goals and how to judge effects realistically should be considered in advance by congregations.

Continuous advertisements week after week have proved the best approach. Because of the uniqueness of Unitarianism, it is wise to advertise on a different page from other churches.

Advertisement of individual events has a value beyond the number of people it attracts to them. If one is advertising with any regularity the chalice symbol identifies the advertisement as yours. Blocks or art work can be obtained from the Publicity Department. Photographs should be black and white and identified with a caption taped to the print. Most local papers use a kind of printing now which allows for art work.

Another form of advertisement that can be undertaken profitably by groups and District Associations as well as congregations is the 'propaganda' or, perhaps one should say, educational kind. Its purpose is to encourage the reader to send for literature or to get information by personal contact rather than to encapsulate the whole Unitarian faith in a dozen words. A continuous series of small advertisements is likely to be more effective than one large one, however eye-catching. It is, of course, essential that enquiries should be answered promptly, preferably by personal letter, and that it should be somebody's business to do this.

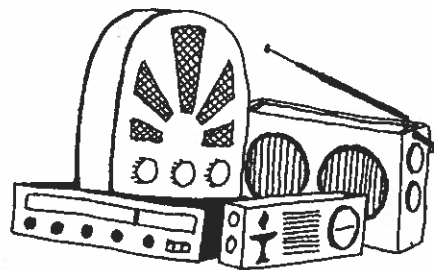
The word Unitarian should be prominent in the advertisement. If it is felt that people might prefer to write to Essex Hall rather than a local address, it is acceptable to use the Unitarian Information Department's name and address. Please advise us beforehand. It is possible to code the address in order to tally enquiries.

National advertising is carried on by the General Assembly from time to time. The Publicity Department will inform district associations and congregations in advance in case you wish to tie in local advertising.

### Radio

There are many different kinds of radio which can be used, from national and regional broadcasting and local radio to hospital and University closed circuit radio and Talking Newspapers for the blind. Production of radio programmes is a specialised field and therefore this work is usually carried out by the radio organisation. Most, especially the local and specialised services,

are in need of interesting material. It pays to keep them informed about interesting people who have something to say and who can say things well. Advance warnings of events which may produce



...Many different kinds of radio...

some interesting sounds, speeches by well-known figures, and controversial discussions may lead them to send out a recording team. Some ideas to help the recording team: —

1. Don't attempt to produce the programme! The recording team are experts in deciding what is interesting to their listeners. Start interfering and you might find it's your first and last visit from them.
2. Seek out interesting, lively people who have something to say on the topic, and can put their point concisely. Provide one or two alternatives in each case. Provide names and addresses and telephone numbers. Make sure the people are available at the time of the recording.
3. Search for sounds of an event. It's much more interesting hearing the sounds of a protest march than someone talking about it.
4. Find a quiet place for recording, preferably well-furnished. A bare church hall or room usually sounds hollow. Curtains and carpets help. Make sure you can turn off the noisy ventilators, that the phone is off the hook and that you're on the other side of the building from the traffic noises.
5. Know where power outlets are and arrange any seating etc. to be close to these points or else provide mains extension cables.
6. Answer questions informatively, not merely yes or no.
7. Allow plenty of time.

If you are asked to present a talk there are a few basic points to remember.

Imagine that you are talking to one or two people only. Conversational style, warmth in the voice, speaking not reading, talking with the audience (not at them) all help communicate ideas via radio. Have someone in mind, a specific individual, when writing the talk. Speak each sentence out loud before writing it down.

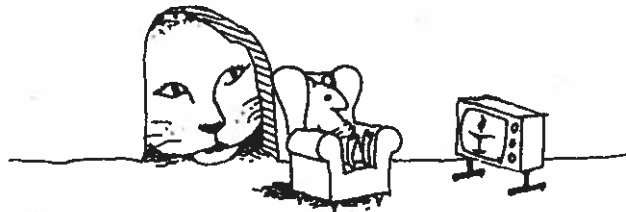
Avoid literary construction, complicated sentence structure, and jargon. Keep vocabulary simple. Think in groups of words, not sentences.

When recording approach the microphone as if it were a person, using the script only as a reminder of what you wanted to say.

When being interviewed find out what the interviewer is going to ask you or at least determine the direction of the interview before recording. Remember that in this case you are the important person. The interviewer wants your expertise and comments.

## TV

Access to television is very restricted, particularly because there is only national and regional broadcasting. As in Radio, let the professionals do the job. Be as helpful as possible in providing people and props. Some points may be helpful.



Access to television is very restricted..

1. Seek out visual items since that's what TV is all about. Pictures, objects and buildings which illustrate a story are more interesting than people talking about them.
2. Allow enough time for film shooting. People are continually amazed that it takes a TV crew (producer/director, camera person, lighting person, audio operator and presenter) a half a day to film only a minute's worth of interview. The crew may not shoot the film in the order it will appear. They often film the interviewer repeating the questions after the interview is over.
3. As in radio have lively people who can speak

coherently under pressure. Either have them waiting or on-call at short notice during the filming.

4. Find a quiet place for filming with plenty of electrical outlets. Check with your electrician before they arrive as to the total load the wiring system will take. The film lights are usually 1000w or 2000w.

5. For general purposes it is wise to supply your regional TV services with slides or pictures of your church and of people who are likely to be newsmakers.

### **Publicity Campaigns**

Continuity of publicity is the keynote, so we cannot recommend short-term campaigns except as an intensification of a continuing programme (or perhaps as a blast-off for one). With this qualification, they can be commended both for their potential impact and for their involvement of the congregation.

Considerable thought will have to be given to the best form and content of the programme to meet your congregation's situation, whether it be a university town or a housing estate. If one is planning a programme of lectures on the principles of Unitarianism, one will have to reconcile oneself to a small, but not necessarily fruitless response. It is probably better to plan a series of events of more general interest, designed to project the image of an open-minded, liberal, responsible group, and appealing to similar people. In doing so, one should make use of whatever activities the church possesses in the way of dramatic society, youth club, meditation group, etc., and whatever contact, such as Amnesty International, dancing classes, etc., that the church has with the community.

Interest so aroused can be focused by means of a special service, as well as by literature and personal contact.

The campaign will need to be carefully planned beforehand, and other matters dealt with in this Guide - church premises inside and out, the bookstall, newsletter, advertising, newspaper and radio reports, etc., will become doubly important. The meetings, too, will have to be carefully arranged and adequate time provided for visitors to meet the minister and members of the congregation and to look at the literature table.

Every effort should be made to enlist the enthusiasm and co-operation of the congregation. Indeed, it would be unwise to attempt such a campaign without it - or without adequate workers and money. The department will give advice and may be able to offer financial help. It may be that neighbouring Unitarian congregations or the District Association would help with workers and ideas.

*Notes*

## INFORMATION OFFICERS

### Congregations

The appointment of a congregational Information Officer is of vital importance. If there is not somebody whose responsibility it is to do the job and to gain the necessary experience, it will not be done. The title might be 'Information Officer' or 'Publicity Officer' or 'Press Officer' or 'Contact Person' or whatever suits the particular situation. This person would be responsible for local publicity for her/his own group as outlined in this Guide. This need has already been mentioned in relation to the Media.

### District Associations

Each District Association *must* have a contact person for communication. This Information Officer receives all communications from Essex Hall concerning denominational publicity, notification about new pamphlets and leaflets, facts or ideas that committees wish all churches to be aware of, publications of interest, guides to obtaining good local publicity, grant application possibilities, etc. (S)he is expected to pass this material and information on to the individual churches in the District and to communicate to Essex Hall anything that congregations in that District want or feel about our information material, publicity, or indeed anything else. This person hopefully communicates with the local press and media about activities of local interest concerning Unitarianism or Unitarians. Help in doing this is offered by the Publicity/Information Office at Essex Hall. The contact person is the communicator in the middle between churches and fellowships in the District, the local media and Essex Hall.

In some Districts, such as compact urban areas, advertising might be more economically conducted by the Association than by the individual congregations.

In more scattered Associations, it would be more practical to concentrate advertising on particular towns, either in support of local causes or with a view to exploring the potential for new groups and fellowships.

All District Associations can give encouragement to their constituent groups when they are engaging in publicity campaigns, particularly in providing workers. An active Association could explore the possibility of forming a team of people willing to help in this way.

### **General Assembly**

A Public Relations and Publicity Officer working at Essex Hall in London co-ordinates all Publicity Department activity and acts as Secretary to the Publicity and Publications Committee of the General Assembly. Secretarial assistance is also available to the Department on a part-time basis.

Since the General Assembly Council and its Committees meet regularly, District Association Council representatives and other representatives at these times save postage on bulky packages.

### **PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION DEPARTMENT AT ESSEX HALL**

The Department exists to publicise the name of the denomination as a whole and to help churches, fellowships, district associations, the Unitarian Young People's League, the National Unitarian Fellowship, and indeed all organisations affiliated to the General Assembly with publicity, materials, advice and, possibly with grants. Please do not hesitate to contact us. The effectiveness of the Department (and thereby the impact of our movement) depends on local publicity efforts all across Britain. The Department depends on information it receives from congregations, other bodies and individuals about publicity efforts - their successes *and* failures. We need to know through which publicity channels new members are attracted to your group. We need *your* helpful hints in order to pass them on to other Unitarians.

The Department constantly strives to improve our internal communication system. To this end material is consistently fed to denominational press and the following services are offered:-

1. Organisation of a network of 'Contact People' for channelling information. (The Department distributes national press releases, news items, and anything else of publicity interest; it receives feedback from individuals across Britain as well as congregations and District Associations).

2. Advice on any local publicity questions.
3. Grants and advice for special publicity schemes and publications.
4. Free literature (pamphlets on many aspects of Unitarianism, Welcome Cards, mini directories of British Unitarian congregations, bookmarks, car stickers, etc.).
5. Items to sell (chalice goods: jewellery, ties, tea towels and more).
6. Posters (Wayside Pulpit series and blank ones with imprinted chalice).
7. Information Department to handle all enquiries about Unitarianism.
8. National press service (press releases, co-ordinating response to national press items relating to Unitarianism, national advertising campaigns, etc.).
9. Concerted publicity effort at GA Annual Meetings.
10. Publicity conferences.
11. This Publicity Guide. (If more copies would be useful for your group, please let us know. Copies are free, but repayment of postage is always appreciated).

We aim to educate, promote Unitarianism, inform, advertise and create awareness within and outside the movement. Your ideas are always welcome.

## TRY THIS QUICK QUIZ

- Have you a committee or person whose job it is to deal with publicity?
- Do you send an account of events to the local newspaper?
- Have you a personal contact with someone on the local newspaper?
- Have you tried to use your local radio (and/or TV) stations?
- Could strangers find their way to your meeting place and recognise it when they got there?
- Is it clearly indicated on the front of your building that it is 'open' and that all people are welcome to attend the services?
- Do you make the best use of the position of your meeting place?
- Are you proud of the front of your building and particularly of the noticeboards?
- Have you a table near the door with new clean free literature well displayed and a clear invitation to visitors to take it?
- Do you have a bookstall? If not, would someone like to take on this interesting job?
- Are you proud of the neatness and cleanliness of the inside of your meeting place?
- Does your local undertaker know about Unitarian services? Your local crematorium? Do they have copies of the Birth, Marriage, Death pamphlet?
- Is there a good pamphlet available describing your church or fellowship?
- Can you improve the look of your congregation's newsletter?
- Have you any Unitarian books in your town library? Have you any modern ones? Can you get Yr Ymofynnydd, The Inquirer, Faith and Freedom, or The Unitarian into the Reading Room?
- Do your local libraries, Information Centres, Citizen's Advice Bureaus or other information places have a Unitarian name and telephone number for referring anyone calling and expressing an interest?
- Have you a telephone number in the directory under 'UNITARIANS', using the number of the minister or one of the



congregation's officers?

- Are there hotels, holiday camps, halls of residence or students' unions with notice board listing church services in your area? If so, are your services listed and are the times and material given accurate?

- Finally, are new people really welcome at your worship services (try to think of being a stranger and what kind of reception you would receive)? Does your congregation reflect the image of Unitarianism projected on your noticeboard, in your literature and in your advertising?

## WHAT TO DO WITH THE RESULTS OF GOOD PUBLICITY

So you have followed all the tips in this Guide that apply to your situation and added a few ideas of your own. Results are occurring. People are coming to visit your meeting place on Sundays or your meeting day! The congregation itself has perked up in enthusiasm because of improvements in communication. What happens now?

Are the people coming back again? Are they pleased with what they find? If so, results will continue and your publicity work is well done. Enthusiasm breeds more enthusiasm; good relations with your local media breed more good publicity. All bring life, new ideas and excitement to your group. Use it all. Expand the publicity committee. Keep up the good work.

Or, do new people come only once? If this is true, examine what is being offered against what is advertised. Is advertising honest? Should you change the advertising or the "church"? Do something about it and get the results of good publicity for your community and your group.

Good luck.

## MEANS OF PUBLICITY — IDEAS

This list of possibilities is merely a starter for your imagination. Some are frivolous, some are (to put it mildly) informal, some are for lighthearted occasions, some have good potential for serious messages, some are costly and some are free. etc. All are ways to communicate and get attention.

### **newspapers**

news stories  
letters-to-the-editor  
editorial ideas

features  
advertisement  
photograph  
columnists  
Sunday supplements  
suburban papers  
weeklies  
shoppers' guides  
tourist guides  
What's On  
internal news publications of various organisations

**radio**

typed news story  
call-in news information  
newsfeed with tape  
live coverage of programme  
talk shows  
public service announcement  
advertisements: talking newspapers  
phone-ins  
offer of an expert for interviews  
hospital radio services : college radio services  
audio cassettes  
records

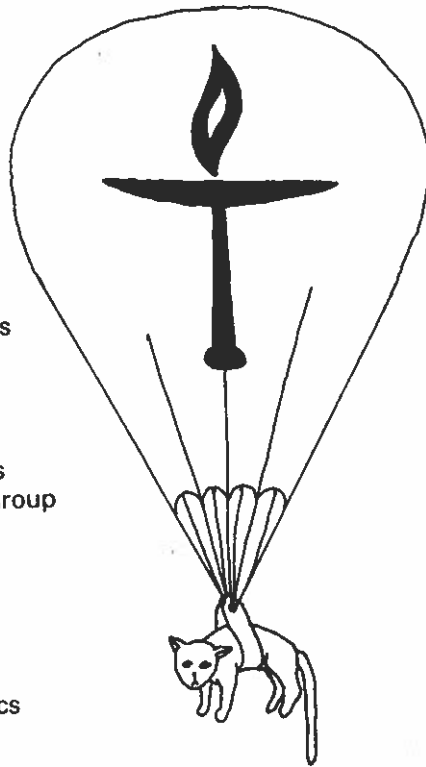
**television**

mail-in news  
call news editor  
provide film (and sound)  
public service announcement  
advertisement  
telethon  
talk shows  
slides or still photographs  
video cassettes  
offer of an expert for interviewing

**miscellaneous**

direct mail

telephone  
     directory entries  
 word of mouth  
 announcement  
 billboards  
 signs  
 posters  
 banners  
 balloons  
     small give-aways  
     big display balloons  
     passenger carrying balloons  
 skywriting  
 tourist bulletin boards  
 student bulletin boards  
 cards handed out  
 leaflets in doorways, on cars  
 host a meeting for visiting group  
 conduct a tour  
 badges  
 stick-on labels  
 costumes  
 lights  
 slogans /mottos  
 songs with home-made lyrics  
 cartoons  
 paintings  
 sculpture (papier mache, plaster of paris)  
 maps for finding Unitarian meeting places  
 car /van with loud speaker  
 animals involved in action  
 games - VIP tennis, sportsday events, etc.  
 bazaars/sales  
 stunts  
 church calendars  
 visits  
 telegrams, telex or cable  
 books  
 pamphlets  
 leaflets  
 brochures  
 rally on special meeting  
 souvenirs  
 note pads



imprinted pens and pencils  
carnivals parades/floats/flags  
drama/skits/plays  
teas  
recipe books  
bumper stickers  
sweat shirts  
match books  
exhibits - art, antiques, handcraft  
receptions  
open house  
luncheons, special menus  
sponsored walks/swims  
a march  
a demonstration  
    protest against something  
    attest to something  
prizes  
    keyrings  
    rulers  
    blotters  
    bookmarks  
    etc  
organisation programmes  
contests  
fetes  
fairs  
festivals  
entertainment  
special events  
newsletters  
audiovisuals  
    rearscreen projectors  
    multi-media presentations  
    film-strip and slide use  
et cetera ad infinitum

#### UNITARIAN INFORMATION

The Publicity Department of the  
General Assembly of Unitarian  
and Free Christian Churches

Essex Hall  
1-6 Essex Street,  
Strand, London, WC2R 3HY.  
Telephone: 01-240 2384/5

To: Congregational Secretaries, Ministers and District Officers

#### THE NEW PUBLICITY GUIDE

After much hard work by many people, the Headquarters Publicity & Publications Department is proud to present to you its revised guide to matters of publicity. We feel that the entertaining but comprehensive information and advice it offers will stimulate many to take a more active interest in promoting their Unitarian cause. We certainly hope that Unitarians will not only read our text, but prove its suggestions in local publicity drives.

You will appreciate, of course, that such a production is not cheap. Indeed, every copy of this booklet cost the Department some 50 pence to produce. It comes to you free of charge, but should you or your congregation feel you would like to help us defray costs by a donation, we will be more than grateful.

Enjoy your publicity.

*Frank R. Clabburn*

Frank R. Clabburn  
Publicity and Information Officer