

THE SCOUTER'S BOOKS NO. 17

TELLING THE PUBLIC

By

Edward G.W. Wood, M.I.P.R.

Press and Publicity Secretary

Of the Boy Scouts Association

1960

THE BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION

BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, S.W.1

Downloaded from:
"The Dump" at ScoutsCan.com
<http://www.thedump.scoutscan.com/>

Thanks to Dennis Trimble for providing this booklet.



Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or express sentiments which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21st century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

If you find them offensive, we ask you to please delete this file from your system.

This and other traditional Scouting texts may be downloaded from The Dump.

FOREWORD

During its first half century Scouting has gained a much envied reputation but there is every reason to believe that its greatest achievements are yet to come.

Scouting has a fine story to tell. So let's tell it!

This little book cannot possibly give all the ways and means by which this can be done. Neither has it the space to deal with such important matters as our relationships with local authorities, clergy, teachers, the police, the fire service, etc. But it goes some way towards showing Scouters how ALL members of the Movement can lend a hand in acquiring, maintaining and improving the Public's goodwill towards Scouting.

Here are the subjects it touches upon:

1. A word about Public Relations.
2. To See Ourselves.
3. Scouter-Parent Relationships.
4. Relations with the Press.
5. The Printed Word.
6. The Spoken Word,
7. Exhibitions.
8. Television and Radio.

Appendix A – Public Relations Services available from I.H.Q.

Appendix B – Bibliography.



1. A WORD ABOUT PUBLIC RELATIONS

Before we embark on the subject of Public Relations for Scouting it would be as well to pause for a while and get it clear in our minds just what the term really means.

According to the Institute of Public Relations it is defined thus: *“The deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its public.”* I would ask you to read this definition again phrase by phrase to allow the full meaning to sink in.

From almost the very day he triggered off the Scout Movement our Founder put into action a campaign which contained this very objective. In 1908 the practice of public relations as we know it today was virtually unknown but B. P. knew instinctively that if his scheme of training boys in citizenship was to succeed he must surely win the support of the general public. What a task he must have had in the initial stages to establish understanding and goodwill for what was virtually a revolutionary idea, for let it be remembered that in those Edwardian days children, boys in particular, were held down by a rigid code of discipline, to be seen and not heard. And here was B-P. advocating what many regarded as organised mischief!

Yes, the Founder was most certainly a “Public Relations Officer” of the highest order. His flair for showmanship (not in the narrow sense) coupled with his gifts of expression by the written and spoken word, and his ability to illustrate with pen and brush were exercised to the full.

He also possessed another quality essential in anyone undertaking the task of public relations and that was a profound belief in the “commodity” he was selling. And that goes for every Scouter whether consciously engaged in Public Relations or not, for we can never hope to influence people and win friends to Scouting unless we firmly believe we are labouring for a worthy cause.

Scouting has now become firmly established in our national life. We no longer have to battle against prejudice and misunderstanding, at least not to the same extent as our pioneer brethren. In a way this is a pity. It has caused not a few Scouters to become complacent. They assume that nowadays most people know Scout training is a good thing and that it is no longer necessary to “sell” or publicise it. What a false notion.

A man once invented an infallible mousetrap. It was strong, durable, cheap – a winner every time. So sure of its merits was he that he put it into full scale production. Thousands were put into stock. He said: “I know these mousetraps are good and so do all my friends . . . There’s no need to waste money and effort to publicise them. The word will get around.” He then sat back and waited for orders but none came in.

He’s now got thousands of these infallible mousetraps all going rusty!

The old adage “Good wine needs no bush” might have been true when it was first coined but it no longer holds good in these publicity-conscious days. And what goes for good wine and infallible mousetraps also goes for Scouting.

But Public Relations means more than just “making it known”. Scouting is already known throughout the land. Our task is really to see how we can keep it constantly before the public and to see to it that the same public understands our aims and methods. In the words of the Institute of Public Relations “*to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public*”.

2. TO SEE OURSELVES

Many are the profound pieces of wisdom left to posterity by Robert Burns, Scotland’s great poet. One of the most famous of his quotations (when translated into readily understandable English!) says “If only we had the gift to see ourselves as others see us”.

To my way of thinking this might well be our first lesson in Public Relations for until we realise this we won’t get very far. In fact, if this is not fully appreciated all our other efforts to win goodwill for the Movement may well come to nothing and could have even the exact opposite effect to the one we seek. Unless one’s house is in good order it were better that no attention be drawn to it.

As members of a uniformed organisation we automatically draw attention to ourselves. The very clothing we wear serves to put us in the spotlight.

When a Scout in uniform carries out a small act of service in public observers will say to themselves: “Good types, these Boy Scouts”. If another Scout were to throw his weight about, barge his way to the head of a bus queue, bag a seat and leave a lady standing, the rest of the passengers could not be blamed for thinking the worst about Scout training.

A Senior Scout may be kind, helpful, trustworthy and all the rest but if he went around with unkempt hair, in a scruffy uniform with shorts turned three parts up his thighs, beret on the back of his head and shuffling along with hands in pockets (and I’m sorry to say I’ve seen a few such types knocking about the streets of London and at seaside resorts during the holiday season) members of the public would undoubtedly think: “Some Scout! The Movement isn’t what it was”. One shocker like him can lower Scouting in the eyes of hundreds of people and make them tend to forget those many smart-looking fellows we do have.

Whether we like it or not every man jack of us is a “public relations officer” for Scouting whenever we appear before the general public in uniform . . . and, to some extent, when we’re out of it too.

And take some of those places which we are pleased to call our Group Headquarters. A ramshackle hut with broken or dust-laden windows, peeling paintwork, with litter strewn around, might appeal to a few scruffy lads whose sole aim is to have a good lark around. It might be argued by a few well-meaning Scouters that some good Scouting has been carried out in such surroundings. Well, perhaps so but one cannot blame the public for forming the wrong opinion about such Groups.

Rightly or wrongly people judge by what they see. What else can the casual observer work on? Would YOU bother further about anything which did not attract you by its outward appearance in the first instance? It’s the wrapper that often sells the goods.

3. SCOUTER-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

An important side of the Scouter’s job is making contact with the parents of the boys in their respective Sections. Some are content with merely writing a stereotyped letter to the parents of each new recruit whilst others resort to the sending of a copy of the I.H.Q. pamphlet “Scouting – a Word to Parents” or its Cubbing counterpart. This is certainly better than nothing, but the one really satisfactory course is the personal visit. Only by so doing can one get to know the parents and the parents to know you.

It must never be assumed that everyone knows what Scouting can do for a boy, how it operates, what costs are involved, the obligations of parents as well as the boy’s. Then there are all those peculiar terms we use – particularly those odd-sounding names and terms so beloved of the Cub section – all requiring a certain amount of explanation.

Young Cubs are inclined to go home with queer stories about what goes on at a Pack meeting. Some of you may have heard of the case of the father who protested when he heard that his son was being “investigated”. His wrath soon subsided when it was explained that his son meant “invested”.

More can be accomplished during a half-hour’s visit to the parents early in a boy’s Scout life than the sending of numerous letters and explanatory pamphlets. The boy himself will quickly realise his Scouter and his parent are anxious to co-operate for his benefit and will feel happier for it.

No Group will get very far without lay help and that help will not be forthcoming unless solicited. Few will rush forward and ask if they can lend you a hand. In addition to keeping a record of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the parents a Scouter should try to find out their trades, professions, hobbies and interests. Fathers can act as badge examiners, instructors, give advice on and practical help with headquarters building and maintenance, judge at athletic meetings and swimming galas, put their cars at your disposal for the collection of jumble sale articles, help produce concerts and many other things. And the mothers, bless their hearts, can be even more helpful. What would we do without them?

Scouters get the co-operation they deserve. Meet parents in a spirit of friendly co-operation and most of them will be only too happy to lend a hand for the sake of their sons when called upon.

The following are but a few well-tried suggestions for the fostering of good Scouter-Parent relationships: –

i. Follow up the initial visit with some Scout literature such as *Cubbing – a Word to Parents*; *Scouting – a Word to Parents*; *Do you agree? What is Scouting?* or *Who Wants Adventure?* all of which are available from the Scout Shop.

ii. Make it known what are your plans for your Section or Group; the help that is needed to carry your plans into effect; the number of boys you have in your charge and how many leaders are required to handle the job properly; who sponsors the Group; who are the members of the Group Committee; the Group's connection with the Church, School or other sponsoring authority. If the Group has a Parents' and Supporters' Association bring it to their notice and get the Secretary of the Association to invite them to join.

iii. Keep parents constantly informed about the progress of their boys, the Group's activities, forthcoming events, etc. This can best be done by the publication of a monthly or quarterly news sheet. The production of such a publication might well be undertaken by one of the parents.

iv. Foster parent participation in the Group's life wherever possible – bazaars, concerts, sales of work, camp visits, sports and galas, etc.

v. Let parents see what goes on in the Pack and Troop. Encourage them to drop in occasionally at a Section meeting, particularly when badge awards are being made. Send definite invitations to parents to witness their son's Investiture as a Cub or a Scout. Hold a Parents' Night once or twice a year.

4. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS

Some of you may have long since written off the Press as being interested only in publishing accounts of local teenage gangs who make a thundering nuisance of themselves in the local dance halls and on the street corners. Of course they'll publish such accounts and it's only right they should.

Anyone wishing to deal with the Press must be clear in his mind as to the function of a newspaper. It is primarily to give news. This may appear a very obvious answer to most of you but it is astonishing how many people seem quite unaware of the facts. Some imagine the main purpose of a newspaper is to publish *views* – their views.

'Hard' news – big or small, dignified or flippant, of international significance or of ephemeral emotional appeal – news is the thing, first, last and all the time. Unless one grasps this fundamental one won't get very far.

I've frequently heard Scouters complain about the lack of Scout news in their local papers. The trouble is they've completely overlooked the fact that co-operation is necessary. Just wishing for publicity won't produce it. They will send in reports of minor happenings or lone lists of recent badge awards about which few people other than those concerned are particularly interested, but they'll sit tight-lipped and silent on a grand human-interest story involving one of their young Scouts.

"Is this news?" That is the question every newspaperman asks, and is asked, every working day. Anyone wishing to co-operate with them must learn to ask it too. The journalist, is, of course, interested in controversy, he is chiefly interested in *facts* and *events*. From hard experience he has learnt to be wary of mere propaganda. A newspaper office is a target for cranks or anyone with an axe to grind, all hoping to get past the editorial department's guard and to grab the ears of the great British public.

The next point to bear in mind is that the Press in Britain is free; free to print what it likes and how it likes, free to decide what is and what is not news. The final judges are the editors. They must be given the credit of knowing their jobs best.

Every day hundreds of individuals and organisations get worked up into a froth because an item which, to them, appeared to be of general public interest (if not of world-shattering importance) failed to appear. If you should ever find yourself in this position don't waste your time being indignant. Try to figure out why you failed to impress the news-desk so that you can do better next time. Maybe you put out your story at the wrong time – timing is all important. Was your form of presentation uninteresting and badly produced? Did you look at it a second time and say to yourself “Would this impress me if I were at the receiving end?”

When submitting ‘copy’ to a newspaper a number of rules should be observed:

i. Give your story an arresting heading. Make your opening paragraph interesting but to the point. Editors are busy people and haven't the time to wade through a lot of words before getting to the real meat of the story.

ii. Give the essential facts fairly early in your ‘copy’. The order of the five Ws – “who, what, when, where and why” – will, of course, depend on the story.

iii. Use simple, straightforward language. Keep your sentences short. It is a report that is wanted not an essay.

iv. Avoid cliches and Scout jargon. Few, if any, will be interested to learn that “an enjoyable and instructive evening was had by all”. And to report that an “Old Wolf weds a Brown Owl” will only bring forth scorn. Lay off using abbreviations such as A.D.C., S.M. (s) or Ak.L. Above all avoid ambiguity.

v. Quote opinions and statements if they help your story.

vi. If names are quoted give ages and addresses; show names in capital letters particularly if the report is handwritten. Nothing is more annoying than to see one's name wrongly spelt.

vii. Submit your copy in good readable form – typewritten for preference. Quarto size sheets of paper are ideal for fitting into the copyholder of a linotype machine. Leave wide side margins, type double spacing and use one side of the paper only.

viii. The source of information, i.e. your name, address and telephone number (if any) should appear either at the top of the first sheet or at the bottom of the last sheet so that the newspaper may know who to contact should it require further information.

ix. A weekly paper has a press day, generally towards the end of the week. Find out its ‘dead-line’ and avoid sending ‘copy’ at the last minute. An evening paper should receive ‘copy’ first thing in the morning.

x. If there are two newspapers covering your area don't send your story to just one. It is bad Press relations to single out one paper in preference to another. Give the facts to both and leave it to them to accept and to develop the story in their own way – or reject it if they think fit.

ix. If you value good relationships with your local editor never make any demands on him or dictate what section of the paper should carry your story. If in his wisdom he feels it should appear in the Junior Feature instead of a main news page you must accept it. And never take him to task if the story doesn't appear at all.

* * *

Feature stories as against hard news items make for good public relations. Your Group's history, a special anniversary, the growth of Scouting, the international aspect of the Movement or the educational value of Bob-a-Job Week are just a few examples.

Because of their special character and the fact that they are likely to occupy more space than an ordinary news item, feature articles have to be arranged well in advance. And it's advisable to sell the idea to the editor before you put pen to paper.

It isn't always necessary to write up your own reports. Depending on the nature of the event it is often more advantageous to bring it to the notice of the newspapers and leave it to the editor to decide whether it warrants sending a reporter and/or photographer to cover the occasion. Detail someone in possession of all the relevant information to look after the representatives of the press if they turn up and to see that they are properly accommodated and provided for. They should, within reason, be given complete freedom of movement to get their copy and pictures.

Photographers will usually welcome suggestions for pictures, preferably action pictures. Try to steer them away from taking those hackneyed pictures of a row of heads sticking out of a tent door or the smallest Cub talking to the tallest Rover. And for goodness sake make sure the Scouts are properly dressed before appearing before the camera. Draw particular attention to the activities of Senior Scouts. All too often one gets the impression from press pictures that Scouting is for the small boys.

Don't take editors for granted or accept anything they publish as a right. Newspaper publicity is a gift. Like the rest of us editors are human and they enjoy being appreciated for any favours. It is courteous (and good press relations) to write and thank them occasionally for their valuable support to Scouting.

Attention is drawn to P.O.R. 53 which states that "no member of the Association may express *opinions* in the public press *on any matter of Scout policy or principle . . . without the previous approval of I.H.Q.*". . . Even with these limitations there still remains almost endless scope for the budding Scout reporter.

LOCAL ASSOCIATION PRESS SECRETARIES.

Many live Scout Districts have long since appointed someone to look after Press arrangements at big district events and all other occasions which are not at Group level, such as combined St. George's Day church parades, rallies, sports meetings, Bob-a-Job Week, the annual general meeting of the Local Association, or a visit by a V.I.P.

To many Districts it is also one of their functions to gather in Group reports and present them in a proper form to the local papers.

There are something like 500 persons registered at I.H.Q. as Local Association Press Secretaries who have undertaken to handle district publicity. This important job is best handled by someone with no affiliations with any particular Group, preferably a well-informed layman. Such a person should be regarded as the official spokesman for a District, on hand to answer important enquiries affecting Scouting generally within his territory. This important appointment should therefore be made by the District Commissioner, and in order that the man may carry out his duties effectively and be "in the know" about forthcoming events it would be a good thing for him to sit as an "invited member" on the Local Association Executive Committee.

But five hundred are nowhere near enough to tackle the job of press relations and publicity up and down the country. At least double this number is needed before it can be said that most Districts are being catered for.

Full details of the Local Association Press Secretaries Scheme are obtainable from the Publicity Department at Imperial Headquarters.

5. THE PRINTED WORD

“Give me twenty-five soldiers of lead and I will conquer the world!” This was not the murmuring of a toy-loving general but that of an 18th century printer. And when you come to think about it how right he was. In many ways the printed word is, or should be, one of our strongest weapons of public enlightenment. But in a movement such as ours we must take care that this instrument in our armoury isn’t a double-edged sword.

It is so easy to overplay one’s hand when it comes to print. A lavish production will certainly create attention but it should be borne in mind that expensive print matter must always be justified and only if circumstances demand it. One is just asking to be criticised if an appeal for funds is presented in three colours on top quality art paper . . . “Crying out for cash and chucking their money around like this!”

By this I am not advocating that a printed appeal must look cheap. Try to strike the happy medium between the overlavish and the cheap. It is not necessary to pay a lot for a piece of well planned print. The man who sets the type is paid no more for setting it up with good type than with out-of-date typefaces poorly laid out.

People are unconsciously attracted or repelled by the style of print matter they are invited to read. Even in these highly competitive days some commercial concerns of good standing appear to be quite oblivious to this fundamental fact. I can instance a firm trading in kitchenware whose goods are of the highest standard of craftsmanship but one would never believe so judging by their cheap, unattractive sales literature. Those of us in Scouting know that we belong to an important and progressive concern and our printed words should therefore always project that belief if we want others to believe it too.

Some of you may feel that the style of your Group or District letterheading is of little or no importance. Yet this small item of print matter may be the only means whereby many people can assess your standards. If their first contact with you is a cheap, messy looking letterheading turned out by an old fashioned printer round the corner you can’t blame them for thinking the worst of you. Just because your Group can boast of being founded in 1910, it does not follow its letterheading should look fifty years old. Yet many Groups persist in doing just this and will even display a printing block of a Scout figure very much in demand during the days of World War I on the top of their correspondence.

First impressions are very important. That’s why a good business house will see to it that the first member of its staff with whom a client comes into contact. . . more often than not the telephone operator . . . is polite, helpful and efficient.

What goes for letterheads also goes for other forms of printed matter. Whatever it is, be it a news-letter, circulars, tickets, posters, group magazine or annual report, the aim should be a modern, good quality job.



"First impressions are important."

Type can be made to talk. The tone of its voice, its inflections, diction and audibility, will depend on what you want to say and how you want to say it. Just as you get bored with a speaker whose voice is dull and monotonous so you can be bored with a piece of printed matter which looks dull and goes rambling on trying to say something in pages and pages which could be said in a few lines. As the *Guide to the Practice of Public Relations* puts it "The use of design, size and style of type, spacing, margins, choice of paper and the use of a second colour all go to make an eloquent orator out of print".

The style of layout and choice of typefaces should be related to the message and purpose of your piece of printing. As a general rule the more "classical" typefaces should be employed for such items as concert programmes, annual reports, official announcements, St. George's Day service sheets and the like, whilst the more modern "punchy" typefaces can be given their scope on such things as dance posters, jumble sale circulars and Christmas Bazaar notices. One would not treat an exhibition of paintings as they would an all-in wrestling meeting.

On the whole Group and District print matter has improved tremendously during the past fifteen years. There is one field where a great deal remains to be done and that is in duplicated work. As most group magazines are produced in this way it would pay to study the developments which have taken place in recent years. For instance, it is not generally known that it is possible to introduce expertly produced illustrations on to one's own stencils. Gestetners are able to provide specially prepared Scout illustrations which can do a great deal in improving the appearance of duplicated Scout work.

And talking of illustrations, the Publicity Department at I.H.Q. possesses an extensive library of line and halftone blocks of numerous Scouting subjects which may be borrowed free of charge. See Appendix A.

6. THE SPOKEN WORD

When Scouter meets Scouter both can be guaranteed to talk the proverbial hind leg off a donkey. They are seldom, if ever, introverts. Working with boys would soon cure them of that. Countless are the occasions when a Scouter must resort to the spoken word ... at every Troop or Pack meeting, at camps, conducting camp-fires, telling yarns, meeting parents and so on. But this section is concerned with those more formal occasions when it is necessary to hold the attention of an adult audience for fifteen or twenty minutes at a stretch.

We make far too little use of the many captive audiences with which this country is endowed. There are innumerable adult voluntary organisations and societies crying out for visiting speakers and one doesn't have to look very far for them. Rotary and Round Table spring immediately to mind and there are women's organisations such as the Townswomen's Guild, Women's Institute, Inner Wheel, Mother's Union and societies like Toe H and the numerous Church Fellowships. All these bodies are well worth approaching if only to solicit their goodwill and to make known to them our aims and methods. It is no good assuming these good people are already aware of what we are and what we do.

It would be well worth while for every District to compile a list of suitable speakers and bring it to the notice of the secretaries of all local adult clubs and societies that speakers are available. These speakers need not necessarily be Scouters. Indeed, there is a lot to be said for encouraging laymen to undertake this form of public relations. They can often present facts that should be told which a working Scouter can only express under the penalty of being branded a conceited "do-gooder". A well-informed layman speaking as an observer of Scouting and, perhaps, as a parent can have a far greater impact on an audience than an obviously biased warrant-holder. If, however, it is a technical talk that is called for then quite obviously someone engaged with boys at the actual working-face is the proper choice.

It is also worth bearing in mind those other public occasions when the manner in which the spoken word is delivered is equally important. I refer now to the business side of Scouting. Imagine the impressions on a visitor to an Annual General Meeting if the business of the evening is carried out in a slipshod manner. One cannot blame the guest for going away with the idea that the concern whose meeting it is must be a pretty inefficient set-up to stand for such an unbusinesslike set of officials.

Considerable thought should be given to the compilation of the agenda and the conducting of any business meeting whether it be an A.G.M., an Executive Meeting or a meeting of the Group Committee, not to mention the Group Council or even the Court of Honour. Business meetings should never be treated as some irksome task to be got through as quickly as possible. And as for A.G.Ms, one should bear in mind that for many people these occasions may be the only opportunity of seeing something of Scouting at close quarters.

Realising the importance of the A.G.M. many Districts have made it a point of inviting a special speaker to provide the evening's high-spot. But why do so many expect to get "someone from I.H.Q." or from the County? What is against inviting a well-known local personality (a non-Scout) to give an address on "Scouting from the Outside, Looking In" or some similar subject? What about the D.C. or Secretary from a neighbouring District? Why not give a member of the B.-P. Guild or a G.S.M. an opportunity of showing what they can do? One of the best efforts I have ever listened to was given by a young man who was doing his National Service and who twelve months previously was a Queen's Scout. His simple but non-the-less effective talk entitled "What I Owe Skipper" was terrific and I shall remember it long after I have forgotten many of those carefully prepared and erudite addresses heard at National Conferences.

And why not have a complete change one year and round off an A.G.M. with an "Any Questions" session or a Brains Trust where the questions put up may promote the answers to the doubts and popular misconceptions about Scouting. And if all else fails you can always fall back on a Scout film. The film library in the Publicity Department has some excellent titles for showing at such meetings. Alternatively, how about getting Scouts to stage a carefully selected demonstration – that is if there is room.

7. EXHIBITIONS

What are your reactions upon entering a vast, crowded exhibition hall? Do you say as I frequently do, "Where do we start with this little lot?" When confronted with a welter of dazzling stands each loaded with exhibits, statistics, information and eager high-pressure salesmen I usually say to myself, "I have but a couple of hours to see everything worth seeing. Anything I have missed at the end of that time has just had it!"

Mr. Trevor Jones, an authority on exhibitions writes. "The impact of an exhibit must be instantaneous. The visitor does not linger and ponder as he might at, say, a museum. It is more important to create a general impression than to provide detailed information which is unlikely to be assimilated. The purpose, scope and theme must therefore be clearly defined from the outset. People must be enticed by an initial visual impact that should act as a magnet, drawing the visitor in. His interest can be sustained, by changing visual impressions; it must be encouraged by the ease with which he can move around; where live or animated displays are used, he must be able to see them in reasonable comfort. The main message of the exhibit or exhibition must be conveyed simply. Provision can be made for those who wish to enquire deeper into the subjects featured in the display."

It is quite useless attempting to tell the whole scouting story within the compass of a single stand at an exhibition such as the Royal Agricultural Show or the Camping and Outdoor Life Exhibition. It would be an equally formidable task to say all there is to say even at a big comprehensive Scoutcraft exhibition staged by a large District. So don't try.

In either case all one should attempt to do is to create a desire among the visitors to want to learn more. The demand for further information can be partly met by the provision of suitable literature. For economy reasons it is advisable to restrict this to an inexpensive 'handout'. Those who show a deeper interest may be supplied with copies of the appropriate booklets and pamphlets obtainable at cost from I.H.Q. "What is Scouting" and "Do You Agree" are the two best publications of a general character, whilst there are over thirty others dealing with specific aspects of Scouting from which to chose.

NON-SCOUT EXHIBITIONS.

It sometimes happens that the organisers of a commercial exhibition or a trade fair will invite the Scout authorities to participate in their particular show making no charge for stand space. Even without this expense a stand can run up quite a formidable bill and, tempting though the offer might appear, it would be as well to weigh up the pros and cons before accepting the offer. If the main theme of the show has no apparent connection with any aspect of our work with boys then I would recommend the offer be politely declined.

The type of non-Scout exhibition, that cannot be ignored is that which, from time to time, is sponsored on behalf of Youth generally, where all young people's organisations are invited to take part. In these cases it is important to bear in mind that all bodies represented are working towards the same goal and with the same raw material. There is therefore the risk of repetition, everyone saying the same thing differing only in presentation. There are few things in Scouting today which can any longer be regarded as exclusive. All those healthy, adventurous pursuits like climbing, canoeing, pot-holing, hiking, underwater swimming or just plain ordinary camping which are catered for in scouting have their ardent followers outside of Scouting who prefer to belong to clubs and societies that specialise in such activities. In shows of this nature our task is to illustrate the visitor that Scouting has that something extra the others haven't got.

I hope one day to see a Group or District with courage enough to devote its stand at a show of this nature to the presentation of nothing more than the Scout Promise and Law. Here you have got something really exclusive to Scouting and something really worth while shouting about. In the right setting arranged in a dignified manner with effective lighting and perhaps suitably illustrated it would, I am certain, steal the show.

SCOUTCRAFT EXHIBITIONS.

Every now and again some enterprising and publicity conscious District or County sets out to stage an ambitious exhibition of Scoutcraft. This comprehensive type of show is very worth while if tackled with real enthusiasm and imagination. To be a success it has got to be really alive with activities going on more or less continuously. If the show is going to be more than preaching to the converted it has got to be made exciting and perhaps amusing. Yes, do for goodness sake bear in mind the value of a little humour.

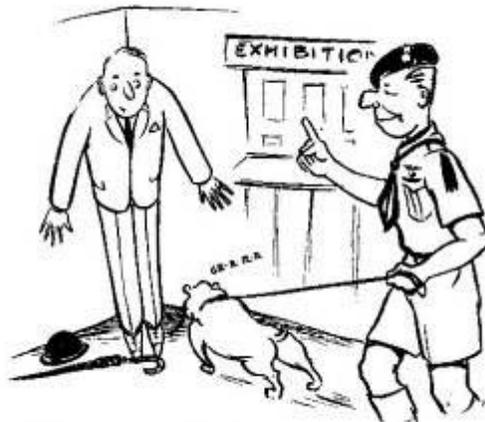
The choice of a hall is important. A local Scout hut down a side street may because it costs nothing to hire, appeal to some but it would be the last place I would go for. The show should be staged in the best and brightest hall near the town centre and well served by public transport. Of course if the best hall happens to be a Group H.Q. so well and good but I know of very few Groups whose property stands in a commanding position known to everyone in the community. There's a lot too, to be said in favour of a place smack in the middle of the shopping centre amidst the hustle and bustle and the bright lights.

Showmanship is an essential ingredient at any public event of this kind. Don't be put off by those who say it isn't "Scouty" whatever that might mean. I was once howled down for painting in bright colours, the tent pegs in a camping display. What a difference a little touch like that made to the overall effect. Come to think of it, brightly coloured pegs have a practical value even in camp which I am certain Gilwell would endorse. And another thing, let there be light, plenty of it. Light, properly used, gives life to an exhibition; gives emphasis to the third dimension. A poorly lit exhibition will just drive people away.

There are, of course, other types of exhibitions by which we present ourselves to the public. For instance a Handicraft Exhibition can be of great interest – and value.

WINDOW DISPLAYS.

One can occasionally borrow a shop window for a specific display. The secret of an effective window is simplicity and directness. A quick study of the better class shops in your town will confirm this. It isn't a bit of good trying to say a lot for few, if any, will stay long enough to take it in. Hit on something to arrest the attention and then get over what you want to say quickly. Pick on a theme and stick to it. Don't wander from the subject. The theme may be International Scouting (always a good subject, this) or Scouting in the Common-wealth. Others which lend themselves to good display treatment are public service by Scouts, from Tenderfoot to Queen's Scout, handicapped Scouting, the great Out-of-Doors and most certainly Bob-a-Job. It is a good thing to arrange window displays in shops and stores where the chosen theme will have a definite link. For instance, a display illustrating International Scouting would be appropriate in a travel agency window, the Out-of-Doors in a departmental store with a camping and sports department. I once saw a most effective window show spotlighting Bob-a-Job in a hardware store in which the various gardening and household tools likely to be used by Scouts during Bob-a-Job Week were displayed alongside the theme material.



"Hit on something to arrest the attention."

When photographs are used in a thematic window display do not overcrowd the available space with a lot of small prints. Keep to a few and make them large. Nothing smaller than 15" x 20". Except where an amplifying description is essential, the photographs should speak for themselves. Captions should be short and understandable in a single reading. Each should carry the story on in a logical progression.

If you are fortunate enough to have an art school in your town do not be afraid to solicit the support of the Head. He may welcome your display problem and use it as a practical exercise for his students. The value of this has been proved in scores of places.

8. TELEVISION AND RADIO

"No member of the Association may . . . be concerned in any sound or television broadcast referring or relating to the Scout Movement without the previous approval of I.H.Q."

At first glance the foregoing extract from POR. 53 would appear to make it nigh impossible for local Scouts to be featured in any regional programme let alone one of a national character. But a moment's thought will reveal that such a rule is as much a safeguard to the individual Group or District as it is to the Movement as a whole.

The Publicity Department at I.H.Q. can give evidence as to how frequently are Scouts in demand by radio and television production teams for certain types of programmes. Especially is this true of T.V. Commercials. It is all too easy for a Group to become involved. Says the cameraman to the producer "I can get my son's crowd to supply some Scouts". And so keen is the G.S.M. to see his boys on the screen and for his Group to benefit from a fee of a few guineas that he falls for the invitation without reference to anyone. Only when he discovers too late that his lads are committed to a doubtful item likely to discredit Scouting or subject it to ridicule, does he think that maybe he ought to have first consulted the D.C. or I.H.Q.

In all cases where members of the Association are invited as such to give a talk or be involved in a discussion broadcast, or where Scouts are asked to figure in either a live or telerecorded programme it is imperative that full details as to the nature of the item and the manner in which it is proposed to use the Scouts be forwarded at once to I.H.Q. If the producer is not prepared to wait whilst this procedure is carried out then it's best left well alone. There's nothing to stop him using young professional actors dressed in hired uniforms (which,

incidentally should never carry the protected Scout badge) to play the parts. Then if there are any complaints at least no member of the Movement will have stuck his neck out for trouble.

Unless anything extremely dubious is involved it is unlikely that I.H.Q. will refuse its approval. Apart from a few rare exceptions Scout folk are not afraid of a little kindly humour. In fact most of the gags that are enjoyed on radio and television every year at Bob-a-Job time are prompted by the Publicity Department as are most of those excellent newspaper cartoons seen about the same periods. We prefer to have people laugh, *with* us rather than *at* us. And people are more likely to do the latter if we take ourselves too seriously.

Scouting has enjoyed considerable support from the various broadcasting concerns for many years. It has in one way or another figured in many of the popular radio and television features and it may not now be generally known that Scouting is still the only youth organisation ever to have been given the privilege of a regular weekly radio programme extended over long periods both on the B.B.C and Radio Luxembourg.

I.H.Q. is at the receiving end of a lot of requests for Scout talent usually at short notice. In order to meet them promptly it is necessary to know where the required talent is to be found. It would therefore be of great help for the Publicity Department to be kept posted with the necessary up-to-date information. And the field of talent is no longer restricted to singing dancing and the playing of musical instruments. Practically anything which can be presented visually is worth considering, from beekeeping to film making, swimming to skiing. If any Group in your district specialises in any out-of-the-ordinary activity please let I.H.Q. know.

APPENDIX "A"

PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FROM I.H.Q. PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY INFORMATION BULLETIN – This is published at the beginning of each month. It is primarily intended, for officially appointed Local Association Press Secretaries to whom it is mailed free, but is also available to all engaged in Public Relations at Group and other levels on payment of a small annual subscription. Generally speaking, the Bulletin contains news affecting Scouting as a whole, major gallantry awards, international events, etc. Principal national events are covered and regional and local events are frequently included where it is considered they have a wider field of interest.

The purpose of the Bulletin is to *supplement* local news. It can often provide a "hook" for a local story. For example, news of a forthcoming Queen's Scout Reception will provide the background to a story of a local Queen's Scout who may be attending the event. A local newspaper wants *local* news but with a little ingenuity and imagination many national news items lifted from the Bulletin can be given a local slant with excellent results. The publication can also provide speakers with current talking points.

If your Group displays a perpetual Notice Board either outside its H.Q. or in a public place the Information Bulletin can provide a useful source of fresh information. The Bulletin can, of course, be displayed but two copies would be needed for the purpose.

FEATURE ARTICLE MATERIAL – Specially prepared write-ups on a variety of subjects suitable for the basis of feature articles, or for use by public speakers, are obtainable on application. Samples: *How Scouting Began; The Growth of Scouting; The Life of B-P.*

Scouting in the Commonwealth; The Milestones of Scouting; The Gang Show Story; The Bob-a-Job Scheme; and famous Old Scouts. Biographical notes on the Chief Scout and many other notable Scouting personalities are to be had on request. These are very useful when such people are engaged to attend a local public event.

PHOTOGRAPHS – The Publicity Department maintains a very comprehensive library of many thousands of photo prints covering every aspect of Scouting. A large number of them are of great historical value. They may be borrowed for the purposes of making blocks for illustrating special features on specific subjects.

The great majority of these prints are the copyright of various Photo News Agencies to whom a reproduction fee is payable by the newspaper or magazine publishing them but a large selection are from official I.H.Q. sources for which a fee is seldom asked although a credit line is usually expected.

Photographs are not available on loan for exhibition purposes, but reproductions of a wide variety of historical Scouting pictures will be supplied if the Local Association concerned is prepared to pay the cost of the prints.

PRINTING BLOCKS – Line and half-tone blocks may be borrowed free of charge from the large selection held in the Publicity Department for illustrating every type of Scout print matter. Illustrated leaflets displaying a wide variety of line blocks may be had on application. Badge blocks cannot be borrowed by printers except on behalf of a Scout Group or District who must be answerable for the manner in which they are used. Badge blocks may also be purchased outright from the Scout Shop through local Badge Secretaries. The wide range of half tone blocks can be examined by callers at I.H.Q.

FILMS – THE I.H.Q. Film Library carries a fair selection of Scouting titles in 16 mm. black and white and colour, sound and silent. At certain times of the year the demand is heavy and early application is advisable. The hiring of full-length 16 mm. features of every description from outside sources may also be arranged through the Publicity Department. A catalogue of Scout films, price 3d., plus postage, on application.

DISPLAY MATERIAL – A limited number of self-contained display units, particularly suitable for combined youth exhibitions, are available for hire. They may also be used with great effect as information desks at conferences and large indoor Scout events. When opened out the large floor units measure 14' wide x 8' high; the table top type 9' wide x 4' 6" high from table level. These units are costly to produce and danger of damage in transit is a constant problem. Owing to their rather bulky nature (230 lbs. and 90 lbs) hirers are expected to make their own transport arrangements, preferably *direct* from I.H.Q. to the exhibition site and not through the public services.

Effective table-top and window displays can be easily rigged with the aid of specially designed "Do It Yourself" display kits, available on purchase from the Publicity Department. An illustrated descriptive leaflet will be sent on application.

As has already been stated photographs cannot be loaned out for exhibition purposes but a selected set of 12 pictures depicting every section and branch of Scouting may be purchased as part of the "Do It Yourself" kits or they can be bought separately.

POSTERS – These are not obtainable from the Publicity Department but may be purchased from the Scout Shop. Most of these are poster blanks for local overprinting and the designs available are suitable for the Cub and Scout Sections and the Air and Sea branches each having its own design. The designs of the posters for Bob-a-Job Week are constantly changed or added to each year.

APPENDIX B.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Here are but a few recommended books. Some cannot now be purchased but the majority are available on loan from public libraries.

A Book of Lettering, Reynold Stone

Pen and Brush Lettering, Reeves

Public Speaking (Teach Yourself Books), Peter Westland

Manual of Poster Craft, Will Clemence

The Practical Display Instructor, Jay Dick

Art Applied to Window Display, G. H. Downing

A Guide to the Practice of Public Relations, Institute of Public Relations

Printing Today, John C. Tarr

Kemsley Manual of Journalism,

Exhibition Design, Mischa Black