

In the news

MREW PR consultant and media trainer, Sally Seed, looks at an aspect of media coverage from recent months and suggests ideas for the future.

This time: **Soft stories that still do the job**

After a few columns that have focused on the tougher aspects of working with the media, I thought something that looked at softer stories might make a change.

The idea came mainly from local experience. Patterdale and Cockermouth MRTs have had as much recent coverage in the monthly Cumbria Life magazine for duck races, Herdwick sheep attacks and comedian connections as for anything more incident-related. And the Penrith and Kirkby Stephen teams and their catering enterprises (bacon sarnie at Nan Bield Pass anyone?) and events have created media interest too.

Given that the coverage has been striking, usually accompanied by a photograph and just as likely to get a reader to look at each team's Facebook Page or website as the more conventional incident report, it's worth sharing some ideas.

Another way of working with magazines and more "lifestyle" media is to look at their regular columns and features and supply the editor or a writer with something that would easily fit into the existing space. This is often particularly appreciated in time for January and Summer issues of magazines when resources will be tight.

Examples might be:

- **One to watch** – if you have a younger new member (just passed probation) who is doing a grand job and pulling his or her weight in the team, think about introducing them to a local magazine. The journalist will probably need a bit of information on age, location, how MRT connection began, what they enjoy most, what they find hardest and their hopes for future.
- **Christmas supplement** – most local newspapers produce Christmas shopping supplements in late November or early December and they usually need editorial to fit in between all the adverts. If you have some good, snowy photographs from training or if you have an online shop raising funds for the team, let the editor know some details and ask if you could contribute an article. Lots of people consider charity donations at this time of year so it should be worth a try.
- **Walking magazines** – walking magazines are often on the lookout for route ideas and, with added safety advice and a website link, a couple of team members could share their favourites, include a few striking images and make the connection (again) to the team's website.
- **Unusual spots to read** – several of the outdoors media give a page to photographs of readers with the magazine in an unusual location or situation. If you're planning

training near a bothy or a casualty crag rescue or even if a search “body” would be happy to be photographed with the magazine while waiting to be found, why not take the picture and send it in?

These are just a few ideas – if you have others that are low on investment of time and effort but could be worthwhile, let me know via sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or The Editor and we’ll feature a few more in 2016.

Thanks.