

FROM BRIDGE HOUSE PUBLISHING

BRIDGE HOUSE GAZETTE

A GUIDE ON HOW TO SHARE YOUR SUCCESS WITH THE LOCAL MEDIA

GET YOUR SUCCESS IN THE PRESS!

THE easiest way to let people know you're published is to tell the local media.

This newsletter will show you how.

It will explain that there is nothing to fear about dealing with local newspapers and radio stations.

It'll also make you realise how easy it is to do - and that you can get a real buzz from the attention!

Bridge House Publishing encourages all its writers to join in the marketing effort.

We believe it's part and parcel of being a writer, and so what better way to learn how it works than to experience it first-hand?



We also know it can be really good fun. The feedback we received from "Making Changes" - our previous anthology - showed just how much the writers enjoyed promoting their work through press releases and launch events.

As with anything, you only get out of it what you put in.

But just putting a little bit of effort into saying who you are what you've done, and letting the press know about it, can bring rewards.

So get yourself a cup of tea (or coffee, or juice!) and spend a few moments reading this guide.

We're sure you'll find it very useful.

WHY TELL THE PRESS?

- *It'll help your work reach a wider audience*
- *It'll help raise your own profile - something agents and publishers look for*
- *It will build your confidence - not just in your work, but in your ability to promote it*
- *You'll become better known more rapidly - with readers and with journalists, who could help you promote work in the future...*

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WHY SHOULD THE MEDIA BE INTERESTED IN ME? I'M JUST A WRITER!

LOCAL media will be interested in you because you have something interesting to tell them!

It's still true that bad news sells, and good news is often pushed to one side.

But have a look at your local newspaper and you'll see it's full of "good news

stories". The common thread that runs through all of them is obvious - it's human interest.

Newspapers, especially local papers, love stories where people overcome odds, or are inspired through tragic or other "life changing" circum-

stances. People write for all different reasons, and the reason you write could be just what the journalist is looking for.

The very fact that you write at all might be a revelation - and inspiration - to others.

Whatever you do, do not underestimate or undervalue

what you have achieved.

Even if you think you have a "normal" life (we don't think there is such a thing!), tell the media your story anyway.

A journalist has a practiced eye and might see something you never thought of!

WHERE TO START?

Before you start writing your press release, have a look at your local media.

Buy copies of the newspapers and read them. Tune in to the local radio station and listen to the programmes and news bulletins.

All media will contain news, and your story could go here. But also look out for regular features - these could

be anything, from interviews with local people to job profiles within the jobs pages.

Think how you could use these features to your advantage. Could an interview with you be interesting? If your job involves writing (perhaps you're a freelance writer), why not offer your job profile - remembering to include your publishing success?

If there are no features that you can plug into, then think news. This is what the bulk of newspapers are made up of in terms of editorial.

Look at what's being written about, or talked about on the radio. Read or listen to the style in which they're presented.

The closer your press release copies the style of the media,

the better are your chances of it being used.

Journalists are lazy but they're also under a lot of pressure to fill space before deadline. If your style suits them, they can just pass it on to the news editor for inclusion with minimum delay.

WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

This is the bit you should be really good at!

Remember what is news: It's a development that is happening now, and it is interesting to others.

In your case, you're being published. That is the news.

When you write your release, summarise the story in the first sentence.

Use the next two sentences to add detail to the summary. You should answer as many of the questions as possible: Who is it about? What is it about? How did it happen? When did it happen? Why did it happen?

By the end of the third sentence, the reader should understand what the story is about, without having to

read to the end.

From the fourth sentence or so, tell the whole story in detail. Do it chronologically - here, it's ok to go back to the beginning, no matter how long ago.

In the detail you should include a direct quote from yourself - use speech marks. Use the quote to add emo-

tion. The rest of the story should avoid emotion.

See Do's and Don'ts on page 3, and the sample release on page 4

- **If you're really stuck, use the template press release sent to you as a separate word document**



No matter how good your press release is, if there's a blurred or tiny photo to go with it, you blow your chances of coverage.

Like it or not, you **MUST** send a good photo with your press release - because it'll improve your chances of publicity.

Because the press want human interest, print media

want pictures with people on them - in this case, you!

If you know an amateur photographer who owes you a favour, get them to photograph you.

For magazines, you can get away with more stylized shots - not looking at the camera, for example.

Most newspapers still prefer eyes on the camera (though it's not a rule), and you should look happy - no-one

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD PICTURE (PRINT MEDIA)



wants to read a story from someone looking miserable!

Have a look at the pictures here for some ideas. These photos were used in local newspapers.

Don't try too hard to sell the book. Surrounding yourself with copies might make for an inventive, colourful pic, but a reporter will almost certainly pass you through to the advertising department!

GIVE YOUR PRESS RELEASE A GREAT SEND-OFF

Here's how to send off your press release to the media.

Newspapers usually print an email address to which you can send news stories. Radio stations usually include a contact email on their website.

Unless you have an editorial contact on a newspaper or at a radio station, it's best to use this generic email address in the first instance.

Write a short summary of what the story is about in the email subject box. For ex-

ample, "Local writer makes print debut."

Cut and paste your story into the body of the email. DO NOT send it as an attachment.

It's ok to send your photo as an attachment, but send it as a jpeg. The file should not be more than 500kb in size - anything bigger and you're needlessly clogging-up the journalist's inbox.

If you're not comfortable with this technology, ask someone who can help.

At the end of your press release, add your contact details. Include a daytime telephone number if you can, and an email address.

Don't be frightened of a journalist getting in touch. For one thing, it means they're interested in your story, so it's good news!

They'll only get in touch if they need more info - and only because they want to print YOUR story.

If no-one has been in touch, call the newspaper or radio station the following day and

ask if they've received the email. If they recognise it and say yes, ask if they're interested in using it.

If they haven't received it, request to re-send it. Then call again the following day.

If they say they won't or can't use it, ask why. Be polite but don't be frightened - say you want to know for future. Journalists don't mind giving advice anyway - it makes them feel good!

Don't be upset if they won't use it - they can't use everything that is sent to them for lack of space.

Good luck!

DO'S AND DON'TS - FOLLOW THESE TIPS FOR BETTER SUCCESS

DO:

- Write in the style of the media. For news, it's third-person, past tense.
- Keep it simple. Start quotes with 'said' - no need for the likes of 'commented', 'explained', 'pontificated' or 'eulogised'! You're not writing your novel now!
- Keep it short. Between 200 and 300 words is ideal.
- Write down the facts of your story first - the ones that answer: Who? What? Why? When? Where? and How? Then write the story to include all these facts.
- Get a photo of yourself. If you can't take a new one, perhaps a favourite portrait of yourself. Think about how you want to come across, though. Drinking in Ibiza might not be the ideal image!
- Say how old you are (this includes you, ladies), what your profession is (or was) and where you live (street and town, or just the village).
- Include the name of the book and the publisher! Put the web address www.bridgehousepublishing.co.uk at the end of the story.

DON'T:

- Try to write a headline. Only the sub-editors know how much space there'll be on the page - so why waste time trying to be clever? Write a heading that you can put in the email subject box - all your heading needs to do is grab the attention of the journalist. No puns, please!
- Pester. Often you'll be told that they like your story but that "it didn't make it". This means they ran out of space. Papers can sit on stories for weeks before printing it. It can be frustrating, but nagging will only make them spike it. Be patient!
- Write like a sales pitch. The book is brilliant, and your story is easily the best in it, but that's not for you or the media to say in a news story! A direct quote is the place for emotion - elsewhere, write a straight report of what's happened.
- Expect miracles! Getting your name in the paper is only the start!





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Remember - if you are struggling to write your press release, we do have a template release available.

Email
home@debznlee.wanadoo.co.uk
for a copy.

Good luck!

THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE AIMING FOR!

ER 5, 2008

Ex-journalist's short story published in anthology

By RACHEL OWEN

A NEW book called *Making Changes* features the work of an Anglesey writer. And author Phil Thomas, from Dwyran, has been making changes of his own - by launching his own copywriting and public relations business.

His short story, called *Dancing Man*, is among 20 stories from international authors included in the new anthology, out this month.

Its publication coincides with Phil's decision to become self-employed with his new business, Wordcreative, which provides words for websites, promotional material and press releases.

Phil, 36, said: "The title *Making Changes* couldn't be more appropriate for me.

"Setting up your own business can be a bit daunting, so when I got the letter to say that my story had been included it was a real confidence booster."

Formerly a journalist working in Wigan, Phil had a factual book published in 1999 about the history of Central Park, the ancestral ground of Wigan Rugby League club.

While factual writing has made up his professional career, Phil admits he enjoys creating fictional works much more and hopes to one day write a novel.

Phil has recently joined the Bangor Cellar Writing Group, where two other members, Jean Lyon of Vaynal Park, Bangor, and Debz Hobbs-Wyatt, of Clwt Y Bont, also have short stories published in the same anthology.

Phil said: "For three of the writers to be from this area of North Wales shows how strong the writing talent is here.

"We must be inspired by living in such a beautiful part of the world!"

■ A launch and book signing with readings from the three authors is being held at Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery, Bangor, on Friday, November 14, from 7pm. To attend, email Debz Hobbs-Wyatt at home@debznlee.wanadoo.co.uk

■ *Making Changes*, published by Bridge House Publishing, is out on November 13, priced £8.99.



CHANGES: Phil Thomas of Dwyran who features in a forthcoming book.

Budding scribe's changing times

THIS IS THE ORIGINAL PRESS RELEASE THAT WAS EMAILED TO THE PAPER...

Author's publishing success inspires business launch

"MAKING Changes" is the title of a new book in which an Anglesey writer will be published this autumn.

And the author, Phil Thomas from Dwyran, has been making changes of his own - by launching his own copywriting and public relations business.

The 36-year-old's short story, called "Dancing Man", is among 20 stories from international authors included in the new anthology, out in November.

Its publication coincides with Phil's decision to become self-employed. His new business, Wordcreative, provides words for websites, promotional material and press releases.

He said: "The title "Making Changes" couldn't be more appropriate for me.

"Setting up your own business can be a

bit daunting, so when I got the letter to say that my story had been included it was a real confidence-booster.

"I'm quite proud, really. There are some terrific stories in there, and the authors come from all over the world. They're all obviously very talented."

Formerly a journalist working in Wigan, he had a factual book published in 1999 about the history of Central Park, the ancestral ground of Wigan Rugby League club.

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Phil added: "For three of the writers to be from this area of North Wales shows how strong the writing talent is here. We must be inspired by living in such a beautiful part of the world!"

A launch and book signing with readings from the three authors is being held at Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery, Bangor, on Friday November 14, from 7pm. If you'd like to attend email Debz Hobbs-Wyatt at (email address here)

"Making Changes", published by Bridge House Publishing, is out on November 13, price £8.99.

www.bridgehousepublishing.co.uk

Ends

The picture attached is of Phil Thomas

For more information contact Phil on 01248 430606, 07932 157471 or email phillip-thomas@tiscali.co.uk