

G100RSGB - A Publicity Perspective

When, as project manager for G100RSGB, Chris G0EYO insisted that we needed someone to co-ordinate the Public Relations side of the operation, I guessed that it was only a matter of time before the job landed in my lap! Despite the good intentions of my friend Colin M0GJM to take some of it on board, it quickly became obvious that my background as a radio journalist for some years would be of real use in the role and so indeed it was that the job landed on my lap!

Those who know me well know I like to do a job efficiently and see it through to completion, but I knew from past experience that this aspect of G100RSGB would not be plain sailing. Trying to get any kind of publicity for what is essentially a hobby activity can easily become a thankless task.

For example, press releases have to be written in a certain style and manner if they are to tempt pressurised news editors to take them on board and then there is never any guarantee that they will feature you in their publication. Put simply, you can end up doing a lot of work and see little, if no, reward!

When it comes to inviting VIP guests, as Bromsgrove club and many others found out, this can be tantamount to a waste of time! The fact that our local MP, Sajid Javid had just been promoted to a senior governmental role just under the Chancellor George Osborne meant the demands on his time would be all the more great and would weaken any chance we had of getting such a high profile visitor to our event.

But luckily, I teach Mr Javid's niece piano on a private basis and am also on very friendly terms with her father Basit Javid, who happens to be one notch down from Chief Constable of West Midlands Police!! (He was also on my hit list of VIP guests as a reserve, though he doesn't know it!) His daughter having just scored 98% in her Grade 3 piano meant that when it came to asking a favour from the family, I was likely to be in a strong position. It's not what you know, as the saying goes...

There was still a lot to do to make sure we had such a high profile VIP guest but, thanks to the family link and a stroke of luck in that the RSGB Regional Manager had offered us a Friday (when



MPs tend to be in their constituencies) rather than a weekend which we had originally gone for, and we eventually got our man! By virtue of getting the high profile guest, it was no surprise that a subsequent phone call to the RSGB meant that the General Manager Graham Coomber G0NBI was also interested in visiting us. Add in a few local councillors, who are usually around when the MP is in town and we had ourselves a real treat in store!

I lost count of the number of emails, press releases and press packs that were sent out. Yes the BBC, ITV, Local radio and press were all invited with before and after packs compiled and sent out. However in these days of fast internet, it is simply cheaper if someone who knows what to do writes the story for them and they just publish it!

It was this approach that got us some great publicity in the Red-ditch Advertiser just prior to the event. They effectively printed my press release verbatim, (including the bit about Ed-dystone Radio, Mr President!) There is much I could tell about the ups and downs of the job, especially when it came to the late time change of the MP's visit from morning to afternoon, which necessitated complete re-writes of press packs and more sending out of alterations. Apparently we have Mr Osborne to blame for that!

However I am so very pleased and satisfied that the visit of Sajid Javid made such a splash.

We got internet publicity all over the world on Ham Radio sites and in many languages too. The fact that Mr Javid elected to put a very positive tweet on Twitter only helped! At the time of writing we are also expecting some very positive coverage in both RadCom and Practical Wireless in their January issues due out in December.

The net effect of all of this is that more people now know the name of Wythall Radio Club and let's hope this is a trend that continues.

Our best advert is our website – keeping it up to date and fresh & appealing. It was no surprise that on the first morning of operation for example, there were messages coming in from the West Coast of the US praising our operation almost before we had started. These were people who found us through the website and we cannot underestimate its importance in the role of the Club. We are in 2013 and we have to use 2013 technology to give ourselves the public profile our great club deserves.

Many years ago the IRA were denied the "Oxygen of Publicity" as it was named – well as of just now, Wythall Radio Club is breathing very deeply in that O2 rich atmosphere!

Chris G7DDN

