

Toolkit: Making the most of the media

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Contents:

- 1 Overview and contacts
- 2 News stories – outline of our campaign
- 3 General media tips
- 4 Features
- 5 Listings release
- 6 Tips for making your listings release a success
- 7 Making the most of pictures
- 8 Photocall or broadcasting opportunity
- 9 Press cuttings and media monitoring
- 10 Standard paragraph and Notes to Editors

1 Overview and contacts

National Poetry Day (NPD) offers a license to be poetic for the day. Launched in 1994 by philanthropist and poetry enthusiast William Sieghart, of The Forward Arts Foundation, it is an annual celebration to fuel the nation's enthusiasm for verse and to provide a platform for poets and poetry of all kinds.

For 2007 we are aiming for a Bigger and Better NPD with more information about regional events widely available to all from the newly revamped NPD website, and greater media coverage than ever before.

NPD is an umbrella campaign on a low budget. It is funded by Arts Council England, through the Forward Arts Foundation. We cannot ourselves organise a huge programme of events, but we organise flagship events such as this year's Dream Tour, and have a poet in residence (Ian McMillan this year). However, we encourage people to run events both large and small, all over the country. NPD's success is reliant on each and all of the participants adding their voice to the overall umbrella campaign, and this will help achieve greater awareness across the media.

This PR toolkit has been designed to help you make the most of your National Poetry Day event.

How does National Poetry Day work?

National Poetry Day is run by The Forward Arts Foundation, who employ a co-ordinator, Jo Bell. The campaign is financially supported by Arts Council England, and supported by poetry organisations around the UK, including the Poetry Society, the Scottish Poetry Library and the Seamus Heaney Centre. The widely respected Colman Getty Consultancy, which also handles the Booker Prize and other arts accounts, manages the PR. Further information can be found at www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk .

The UK wide PR Campaign

Colman Getty Consultancy will be placing listings, features and news stories to raise awareness of NPD in national, broadcast and sector media. We are working to a timetable which will cascade the information to the media in the months leading up to October. The campaign has already started – see our timetable below and how you can link into this.

Keep the NPD website up-to-date and Colman Getty informed

In addition to entering your events on the NPD website by clicking through to the Registering Your Event (Live click through tbc), please keep Colman Getty informed of any interesting events or activities to be included in generic press materials where relevant.

As well as hearing about your news and NPD stories, Colman Getty will send you regular PR bulletins so that you are kept up-to-date with the latest NPD developments. Colman Getty would also like to set up a system for sharing and exchanging advice and ideas. Please send Colman Getty your email address if you would like to be included in this.

Please help NPD 2007 to be successful by making sure that we all communicate a consistent message. To ensure this please refer to the following fact sheet about NPD 2007 and include our STANDARD PARAGRAPH live link tbc in your release or NOTES TO EDITORS live link tbc (see below)

Colman Getty Contacts

Kate Wright-Morris, Sheerin Aswat and Truda Spruyt work on the NPD campaign. Tel: 020 7631 2666, or email: kate@colmangetty.co.uk

National Poetry Day Coordinator Contacts

Jo Bell – belljar@hotmail.co.uk
or info@nationalpoetryday.co.uk

2 Outline of campaign and news stories

National Poetry Day and SonyBMG collaboration – a national media launch targeting nationals, education and music to announce the online secondary schools lesson plans linked to Bob Dylan’s lyrics. The lesson plans can be found at www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk

National Poetry Day Dream Tour 2007 – there will be a national media launch arranged by Colman Getty and we expect partners in Scotland, Wales and NI to be organising their own media push for their Dream Tour event.

Tips for press coverage of your event:

- Do link your event to the NPD theme (*Dreams*). If you are stuck for ideas, anything that is creative or original, whether it’s a poetry readathon or a competition can make a news or photo story for local media. Be clear about what you are offering the media and why it is of relevance to their audience. They won’t do it just to help you with publicity!
- If you have details of your event planned six weeks in advance, set up a preview of what you plan to do in good time for the deadlines of your county or local magazine, as well as local newspaper
- Target a slow news day – offering your story as a Sunday for Monday or for publication over a bank holiday weekend will increase the chances of it being used
- Be clear. Think about whether your story is:
 - a news story it must say something new
 - a picture story - which tells a story through one striking image
 - a radio story – with a strong interviewee
 - a television story – exploring something visually

3 General media tips

Here are some general media tips. Even if you are an experienced media/ PR professional, we hope you will find them helpful. And you may have some of your own to add. Please email sheerin@colmangetty.co.uk

- Ensure all local press contacts are up to date - this is best done by phone. Ensure you have the right names and (email) addresses. You could also use a press directory such as Editors or Willings
- If you are sending your press release by post, make sure that it is addressed to the appropriate contact name and not just to, for example, 'news editor'. It should also be well presented, clean and easy to read
- Most journalists now prefer emailed information. Make sure you follow correct email etiquette and 'blind copy' (bcc) your list of contacts (it's against the data protection act to circulate lists of email addresses).
- Make sure that you are not emailing your press release with big attachments – even logos on press releases can increase the size of your email (see also 'making the most of your pictures' later in this toolkit)
- Be persistent. Don't take no for an answer from the media, try again with a different angle; but try not to pester as journalists are notoriously busy!
- Remember to check deadlines for information - some publications need information upwards of five weeks in advance - some just two or three days
- Try to tailor your press information to suit particular journalists, for example - if you are targeting parenting press, choose events that would interest the family
- Think topical - could you hook your story to anything else going on in your area - an event, personality or anniversary?
- Use your own website and the NPD website (and any other regional information networks such as the tourist board or similar)
- Think pictures – for local and regional papers there should be strong contrasts and not too many people, but a sense that something. Moving pictures work for TV (see below)
- Be efficient and available – make sure someone is available on the telephone number you give for further information and respond to requests as quickly as possible. They are more likely to approach you in the future if you are helpful and sensitive to their deadlines
- Be brave – NPD is about trying out new things, reaching new audiences and fun!

4 Features

- 1 Your National Poetry Day event offers the ideal opportunity to raise your profile, make a new audience aware of your venue and celebrate the day through a dedicated feature in a specialist magazine or local newspaper.
- 2 Have a brainstorm with your colleagues to consider ideas for features – perhaps tying in with a regional poet laureate, a local school or football club. For example, you could put forward a local hero's favourite poem and encourage people to submit their favourite poem. The theme of 'Dreams' could also be used to inspire ideas.
- 3 Remember that features require longer lead times than news stories. Allow enough time for the journalist to research and write the feature.
- 4 Have a look at the publication you want to target, to see what type of features they might be interested in running and tailor it accordingly
- 5 Ensure that you use the NPD hook – but you can also add depth to the event or feature idea with a celebrity presence and well known poet from your area. Another possibility is running a competition with a publication – the prize could be a range of poetry books or even free coffee at a local café.
- 6 It sometimes helps to offer a feature exclusively to a particular publication – some journalists may be more enthusiastic about running a story if they will be the only publication to feature it.
- 7 Look in your local paper for profile-raising opportunities for your spokesperson or poet – these could range from an in-depth interview to slots such as 'My Perfect Weekend' or 'My Best Books'. These are a good way to raise profile, but always make sure the journalist links the interview with your event and with NPD 2007

5 Listings release

Ensuring all relevant publications have details of your events is an effective way of gaining press coverage in the correct places. We will be liaising directly with the Press Association who compile most of the national listings, but it helps if you contact them as well. Email art@pa-entertainment.co.uk . Also make sure the information is sent to local events magazines, radio programmes and websites (tourist information) and local newspapers.

6 Tips for making your listings release a success

- Ensure the listings release is sent to the Listings Editor or person who looks after the 'What's On' pages
- Listings releases should be short, but make sure your release mentions National Poetry Day and also includes key information i.e. What, Where, When and Ticket cost
- Indicate in the release that images are available (where relevant) with clear contact details of how to obtain them (see below for more information on images)
- Visitor information should be included, either in the body of the release or in a 'notes to editors' section at the end of the release. This should include information such as opening times, ticket prices and a general information number
- Include your contact details at the end of the press release (telephone number and email address) so that interested journalists can get in touch with you easily

7 Making the most of pictures

- Most editorial departments do not accept email attachments. So copy your press release into main body of text and mention at the end that there are images available (you could specify what they are)
- You may also be able to make thumbnails of best images and include them in your email copy
- Some news desks will ask you to send pictures direct to the picture editor at a different email address
- Most listings pages will highlight one or two events, usually the one with the best image
- Images for standard newsprint should be at least 300 dpi, A5 (portrait or landscape) and in colour. Magazines may request higher resolution images
- Do not send lots of large files in one email. As a general rule, attachments should not be more than 3MB. A solution is to reduce the file size of your image or to email a selection to the journalist one by one. You could also offer to send a disc, if you can get this to them quickly
- Include people, children etc. in pictures, if possible and relevant, to make the image more interesting – but make sure the images are good quality and professional-looking. If you are sending images of objects, make sure they are clear and, wherever possible, photographed against a neutral background so that they can be easily used as 'cut outs'
- All photographs should be captioned – emailed photographs may need a separate longer caption with a short title and reference number embedded with the picture. Include title, gallery/ museum name, name of photographer and date and any copyright restrictions
- Don't forget to send pictures of your events to Colman Getty or Jo Bell so we can use them on the NPD website.

8 Photocall or broadcasting opportunity

Tell the editors what exactly they can expect from the photocall; if it's for television it should be moving "a happening" and you should be able to put someone up for an interview.

Give definite times and location but don't expect them to stick to it! Between 10 am and 11 am will cover most deadlines

9 Press Cuttings and Media monitoring

Colman Getty Consultancy will be retaining a press cutting service from September onwards. However, they can't always pick up all regional and local stories. Please do keep your cuttings and send a copy of them to us in October. It will help in our overall evaluation of National Poetry Day 2007.

10 Standard Paragraphs and Notes to Editors

In all press information, please use the following copy for your 'notes to editors' section. This will ensure consistency of message and will also give journalists the correct generic information about NPD 2007

- The 'your event title' is part of the UK-wide celebration of National Poetry Day, the largest annual celebration of poets and poetry in the UK.
- The 14th National Poetry Day is celebrated on Thursday, 4th October with the theme, *Dreams*. National Poetry Day was launched in 1994 by William Sieghart of The Forward Arts Foundation to fuel the nation's enthusiasm for verse and to provide a platform for poets and poetry of all kinds.
- More information about National Poetry Day can be found at www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk

Good luck with your event – and don't forget to enjoy the day!

Colman Getty Consultancy
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