

Displays



Scouting goes on mainly at local headquarters and camp sites, on expeditions or on the water and elsewhere away from the public view. As a result, people not in the Movement often have vague and sometimes quite wrong ideas as to what Scouting is all about.

Having a good static display featuring Scouting activities in words and pictures and putting it on show on all possible occasions is one way of helping the public to be better informed.

Locations

The easiest place to install a display is at a local Scout headquarters for an event such as the AGM when parents, supporters and other members of the community will be present. For a church sponsored Group, a display stand in the Church hall might be possible, at say a Bazaar. During a gang show, perhaps a display might be arranged in the hall or theatre foyer.

Apart from these, where you might have some right of usage, opportunities may be negotiable elsewhere. Some public libraries accept certain kinds of display, building and insurance societies with high street branches sometimes offer window space as a community service. Departmental stores have been known to allocate display space to local organisations. Look for sites where a display will be seen by a large number of the public and find out from the proprietor what the chances are of your being able to install one for a short spell.

Construction

The variety of possible locations means that a display unit must be adaptable to fit different sizes of space and portable for easy transfer from place to place. It must be strongly built and, because it is likely to be transported in Members' own cars or vans, it needs to be lightweight and in sections for easy handling and stowing.

With all these factors to consider, it is wise to seek specialist advice on design, materials and construction. Or you might purchase a purpose designed unit such as those made by Marler Hayley and others.

Aim for quality

A Scouting display serves as a visiting card advertisement and shop window for the Movement locally. Its quality should reflect the quality of the Scouting you provide.

A badly constructed, cluttered display amateurishly designed will reflect its shoddy appearance on local Scouting. If you succeed in obtaining display space on local authority or business premises, you owe it to your benefactors to ensure that the standards of the unit are a credit to them also.

Seek expert help in designing the display. A local school or art college might make it a project for students, or a department store with a design or publicity department might help as a gesture of goodwill.

You must be ready to spend some money for even if help is given free, good quality materials are essential and these will have to be paid for unless you are very lucky.

The theme

Displays must catch the eye and hold the interest of people on the move and must get the message across quickly. First impressions are important, information must be easily taken in.

Many Scouting displays ignore these principles. They try to do too much and so become cluttered and confusing through using too many bits and pieces with no linking theme.

Aim for simplicity. Base the display on a single theme - outdoor activities, for example. Concentrate on whatever single aspect of

Scouting you wish to promote and give it all you've got.

Display features

Photographs, posters and captions are the usual elements in a display. They should all be securely mounted on a firm backing and well secured to the display framework.

Nothing is more depressing than a display with posters and photographs failing off or curling at the edges because of careless fixing or atmospheric conditions.

It will help to prolong the life of display items if they are sprayed with a fixative which will enable smudges and finger marks to be wiped off.

Use an expert signwriter for any hand lettering and symbols, otherwise use Letraset or other transfer lettering for main headings. Captions and other text should be type set or, at least, typewritten and kept brief.

Word processors, home computers and desktop publishing software now enable us to produce good quality artwork. Find someone to help you if you do not have the technology yourself.

Variety can be achieved using one of the enlarging processes available commercially. Photographs must be first class, Members featured should be in correct uniform or activity wear.

Photograph size should be whole plate or larger for impact and visibility. Display colour shots against a neutral background, black and white shots against a stronger colour background.

Use of equipment

Use equipment in good condition if it will tie in with the theme and there is space. Tents, canoes, ropes, models of pioneering projects are all items which can add interest to a display.

Lighting

Lighting can be effective in attracting attention, especially if your display is in competition with others. There are several designs of lamp with adjustable brackets on the market.

Storage

When not in use, the display unit should be dismantled and storage can be helped by using hessian or other material to keep items clean and free from scraping and rubbing. Check on the condition periodically so that, if a sudden need comes for taking items out of store they can be used at once and not need emergency repairs or other attention first.

The time, effort and expense of producing and maintaining a high standard display unit all combine to make it a worthwhile investment.