

IDEAS FOR CREATING A PARISH DISPLAY

(additional contributions are welcome)

An anniversary celebration is a time to bring out our treasures of the past and place them on show. Photographs, the old pedal organ, a fashion display or even a fashion show through the decades, communion ware and tokens, bibles and hymn books and music, offering plates, Sunday school material and equipment, awards, competition cups, banners, cushions.

Displays and exhibits are wonderful but the layout is essential to make the most of the material available.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

- View all material held in your Parish Archives.
- Locate and read previous Parish Histories.
- Attempt to obtain suitable photos, ephemera and objects from parishioners and ask everyone to "put the word around". Also use advertising for the event as a means of gathering additional resources.
- Obtain accounts of past parish life and activities from older parishioners and previous Ministers and their wives.

WHAT THEME WILL I USE?

- Classic Timeline
- Comparison of past Parish life and activities with current activities – in other words, show how Parish life, activities and worship have evolved over the years to suit current needs and worship styles.



WHAT RESOURCES WILL I NEED?

- Display boards (or loan of) – try a local school or library if you hold none.
- Large sheets of heavy white card which are available from commercial stationers. This is only if you wish to prepare the display in advance.
- Clear cellophane or plastic to cover over photos and ephemera (this is to avoid the inevitable fingerprints and marks – remember that all damage, however small, is cumulative). People, however well meaning, will unfortunately *touch everything!* For some older or fragile items you could consider having them laser printed and mount the copy instead of the original.

WHAT WRITTEN INFORMATION SHOULD I INCLUDE IN THE DISPLAY?

- Keep factual details brief.
- Use names wherever possible with photos, or leave room for names to be entered if they can be identified.
- Use small and relevant quotes from previous Parish histories, reminiscences from Parishioners and from other resources such as Management Committee minutes. These help to add 'depth' to your display.
- People generally prefer reading interesting edited reminiscences, observations and accounts of Parish activities rather than simply dry factual statements. Humorous anecdotes or light hearted quotes are also popular.
- Do not forget to document the work of those 'behind the scenes' over the years, eg : women's groups, and not only the work of the Session etc.

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- Use a readable size of font, no smaller than size 14 and bold any headings.

WHAT WILL I PUT ON THE DISPLAY?

- Photos (with names if possible)
- Ephemera (always popular and adds colour and historical authenticity). Try photocopying and enlarging smaller pieces of ephemera onto larger pieces of suitably coloured paper to fill up spaces on your display.
- Place written information (but not too much!) strategically through the display. Using your word processor, try and place a border around such printed material, this will improve its visual presentation.
- Photos and original ephemera should be placed loose on pieces of card or heavy paper and always covered with cellophane or film. The edges may be judiciously taped over at the back with adhesive tape as long as the tape does not adhere to any part of the photo or item. Attach to the display boards or display panels using drawing pins or pins placed through the edges of the card (only) without going through the original item. These should be removed from their temporary mounts once the display is over. Please do not use blue tack, an oily residue can leech through to the object very quickly, even in a matter of days.
- Larger objects such as board mounted photos should be covered with clear film and held onto the display boards with the edges of drawing pins, but not *through* the object itself.
- Original objects, artefacts and items of textile should be placed behind barriers. Is security adequate for historic objects? Are historic items of textile and photos on display away from direct light?



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HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF THIS OPPORTUNITY?

- Try and obtain the permanent loan of or gifting of any photos or ephemera which are lent for your event and not held in your Parish archives. At the very least, photos or ephemera should be copied. These items usually disappear into permanent obscurity over the years and are never seen again. As a test, have you still got all the images which appear in your previous Parish histories in your collections?
- Ask for written accounts of Parish life from any previous Parishioners attending the event. These should be added to your Archives collection. You can do your bit to make it easier for someone to create a future display.
- Have photos taken at the event – and do not forget to obtain names. Ensure such photos are added to your Parish archives. You may also wish to take photos of your display.
- We would appreciate any feedback from this guide sheet. How it may have assisted you, what suggestions you may wish to make, what you would do differently next time, any cost effective methods you thought of for displaying material, what others found most interesting and satisfying in your display etc. We will use any comments to update this guide sheet (the contributor will not be identified!).

