

Thinking of writing for Dowsing Today?

Here are some helpful guidelines for you to follow and to inspire you to get that idea on paper.

Contributors Guidelines

Unsolicited articles have always been welcome at Dowsing Today (DT) and many members and readers have already seen their work in print. However, there are some who might like to write for the magazine, but are not entirely sure how to go about it, so we have put together some guidelines.

The BSD is an eclectic group, so don't limit yourself to your latest dowsing trip! What within this vast topic gets your juices flowing? If there is a subject that interests you enough to write about it, there is every chance that others will be interested to read about it. Alternatively, if you are uncertain if your idea is on the right track, send in a short synopsis and we'll get back to you.

If you look back at recent editions you will see that we use articles from a third of a page up to about three pages long. To give you an idea about word count, 850 words plus pictures will fill a page. And, yes, we would be delighted to receive print quality photographs – think Mb not Kb!.

When it comes to Photographic material it must be copyright free or you must own the copyright in order for us to be able to print it. When it comes to the images themselves, we need them at a minimum of 300dpi as a jpg or tiff file. If that sounds like gobbledegook, then drop us an email and we will explain. When considering the composition of the picture always try to get as close to the action as possible - a detailed image makes a much better shot than a distant view of tiny, anonymous figures in a field.

All material published in the Journal becomes the ^[T]_[SEP]joint copyright property of the contributor and the Society. This means that while contributors retain their full rights to reproduce, in other publications or other forms, material they have submitted to the Journal, they at the same time allow the same right of use of their material to the Society. This has always been a condition of acceptance of material for the Journal.

When the moment arrives to put pen to paper, or perhaps fingers to the keyboard, here are some tried and tested tips to get you started:

1. Target Audience:

OK, so you know your article is for the dowsing fraternity but picture the reader in your mind, not just as a broad category but as a real, living, breathing person. Imagine that person is sitting down right in front of you.

2. Know your end goal:

When the person has read your article, what do you want them to feel? Do you want them to feel informed, inspired, perhaps shocked? Even more than feeling, what action do you want them to take? Know what you want to happen as a result of your article.

3. Explain why the reader should care:

Why should the reader bother with your article? What's in it for him/her? Don't make the article all about you. Make it relevant to the reader and stick to the point.

4. Share your information:

What information is important for you to share? What is important for the reader to know? If necessary, create a bulleted list of topics, or subheadings to get your message across.

5. Anticipate questions:

Imagine you're having a face-to-face conversation with your reader, what additional questions might come up? Anticipate and answer those questions.

6. Getting started:

Draft the whole piece in one go, don't agonise over every sentence as you are writing it. Get it down on paper or screen, read it a couple of times before leaving it to age for a day or two.

7. First edit:

When you go back to it, read it through in one go to get the overall impression before editing by adding, subtracting or rearranging the content.

8. The tricky stuff:

Ask yourself: does the introduction hook your target audience with an interesting anecdote, intriguing question, provocative quote or witty definition? Does the middle section develop your theme with carefully researched facts, convincing arguments, authoritative quotes, surprising statistics, or revealing case histories? Are the arguments and points arranged in a logical manner? And finally, are all the loose ends tied up neatly together? Do you end with a sharp summary, thoughtful quote or some other refreshing last thought?

9. Nearly there:

When you think you are happy with your endeavours try reading it out loud, it is surprising how awkward sentences reveal themselves in this way and be sure that the word count is what you were asked for.

10. Nailed it!

Leave it for one more day before reading it over for the last time and then send it to editor@britishdowers.org we are looking forward to hearing from you!