



NORTHERN IRELAND
Information Service

12 June 1995

"TIME FOR THE BRIGHT SIDE" ADVERTISING FEATURES CHILDREN'S HUMOUR

Do you know:

What frogs drink in Omagh?

Or

What you call a leprechaun covered in cement?

Or

How many Cherryvalley teenagers it takes to change a lightbulb?

You don't? Well all you have to do is tune into UTV at 1856 tonight to hear the answers to some of these "wee crackers".

Tonight will see the first screening in a series of Northern Irish humour television advertisements which will be running throughout the summer on UTV and Channel 4.

"Wee Crackers" are the best of the jokes and riddles told by children from throughout Northern Ireland. They continue the "Time for the Bright Side" advertising - which started at Easter with "Citizens" as a development of the NIO's "Time to Build" film commercials.

"Wee crackers" will be changing on a weekly basis, so if you want to be in step with Northern Ireland playground humour, these are the ads to watch out for.

And if you want to know the difference between a Derry woman and a 'wheelie bin' or the difference between a soldier and a Shankill Road man, stay tuned.

And there's more

Nearly 400 children were auditioned in six centres (Ballymena, Belfast, Downpatrick, Londonderry, Omagh, Enniskillen). Out of that process emerged more than 60 jokes which will be featured in the TV series.

Each of the films ends with the "Time for the Bright Side" logo and the catchline "wouldn't it be great if it was like this all the time" (Van Morrison - Coney Island) as did "Citizens", which also featured Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl".

An NIO spokesman said: "There is a richness of humour in and about Northern Ireland and a wealth of experience in laughing at each other and with each other. That has often been a safety valve over the last 25 years and as the peace develops we believe it's right that humour should play its part in the healing process - hence "Time for the Bright Side".

"We've also put all the advertisements through an exhaustive testing and evaluation process, both before and after transmission. The ads have consistently scored highly in terms of public favourability and interest. The clear conclusion is that they are very directly matching and building on the new mood of optimism in Northern Ireland, so playing a valuable part in underpinning and encouraging the positive developments and attitudes seen here over the last 9 months."

In the most recent research, relating to the "Citizens" advertisement, 82% of those who had seen the ad were favourable, with only 6% unfavourable. There was no favourability differential as between religious groups, nor was there any significant difference in social class response.

Among the verbatim comments recorded during the research were:

"Young people seeing these ads may think there is more to life than fighting."

"Yes, some of the current ads on TV make you realise that peace is so much better for everyone in the country - they make you feel good."

"Yes, I think in the long run people will take more heed of these ads and not be as bitter towards the other religion."

"I liked the one about the babies because there is really no difference between Protestant and Catholic people."

"Hopefully people may look more on the bright side and remember we are not really different at all."