MEMBERS of London Freelance Branch attended a vigil for freelance journalist Lyra McKee at Saint Bride’s Church on 24 April, coinciding with her funeral in Belfast. Lyra was shot on the night of 18 April while covering rioting in Derry, Northern Ireland. She died of her injuries.

The National Union of Journalists issued a statement in which General Secretary Michelle Stanistreet said: “A young, vibrant life has been destroyed in a senseless act of violence. Our thoughts are with her partner, family and many friends and colleagues. A bright light has been quenched and that plunges all of us in to darkness.”

International Federation of Journalists President Philippe Leruth said: “We express our deep condolences to Lyra McKee’s family and relatives. Lyra’s death is a real loss for press freedom in Europe and for the young generation of journalists.”

European Federation of Journalists President Mogens Blicher Bjerregård added: “Lyra McKee was a very dedicated journalist. She has extensively covered the Northern Irish conflict, focusing on the victims of violence. She was killed on duty, while informing the public about last night’s police operations. We call on the authorities to shed light on this crime. Her case cannot become a new case of impunity [for those who attack journalists].”

The leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Fein, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Alliance Party and Green Party issued a rare joint statement condemning the “heinous crime”.

Lyra had worked for the Belfast Telegraph and was also known for her Letter to My 14-Year-Old Self, written in 2014 about what it would be like to come out to her mother as a lesbian.

“There is no comfort for us in knowing that her killing, unlike that of Martin O’Hagan or Veronica Guerin, was not targeted,” Ciarán Ó Maoláin, Secretary of Belfast and District Branch to which Lyra belonged, said. “It would be wrong to say that she was fearless – she was too intelligent for that,” he added.

“She was, however, brave enough to take calculated risks in pursuit of a story and before the shot was fired she may have felt safest in the lee of an armoured police vehicle.” RIP Lyra McKee.

© Mike Holderness • See www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1905lyra.html for details of a memorial fund.
How members can get Apple discounts
LONDON Freelance Branch Committee member Nicci Talbot has, with the NUJ Freelance Office, negotiated to reinstate discounts for NUJ members on Apple products. These range from 6 per cent to 10 per cent depending on what you’re buying. More details are at www.nuj.org.uk/about/membership-benefits/apple-store – you’ll need to get an NUJ member login.

THIS MONTH’S Rates for the Job is an eclectic mix of work – perhaps reflecting journalists’ need to supplement core income by breaking out into new fields.

Thinking about work for a company you’ve not dealt with before? Look at the Rate for the Job to find out what companies in similar niches have paid. Then aim higher. You can submit rates online at www.londonfreelance.org/rates – please give not only the basic rate (e.g. for First British Serial rights) but extra payments negotiated for extra uses, like the Web. These are shown as (eg) £400+100. Rates marked X are, in the editor’s fallible opinion, below par. Treat all rates as minima, even perhaps the happy ◦ few.

Broadcasting: LBC radio, presenting one-hour show – if you are Nigel Farage (according to Private Eye) £320,000 for 5 shows a week = £1230; BBC Radio 4, producer day, 8 hours £190; Voice of America Turkey, 5 minute live update on Brexit £100.

Photography: Southbank galleries, 10 silver bromide prints £12,000; Mentorn media, video footage, length unspecified £800; New Internationalist, one photo £65 and two photos, print use only £50 and two photos, print plus web £50; Belfast Telegraph, single news photograph for print edition only £25 and single news photograph for use online £15.

Shifts: subbing a magazine translated into English from French, 8,000 words in total £2300 X; Africa Confidential, unspecified day (writing/editing) £185; Money Saving Expert, writing/editing day £170; Mail on Sunday, unspecified day (writing/editing) £150 X; Self-published book, copy-editing – took 29 hours – per hour £35.

Teaching: A Cambridge University college, half-day teaching the business of freelancing, travel paid, lunch provided £300.

Words, per 1000: Major music label, 800-word musician biography @ £400 £500; Friese, art review, 700 words @ £180 = £257; Friese, art review outside UK, 2 edits £180; ARTnews, art review outside UK + 1 edit and a couple of emails – all rights to publisher £150.

Words, other: Telegraph, one story £60 XXXX.

The Troumeme
This month’s Troumeme Award, for “the worst terms since I was last chained to the oars,” in the words of one freelance., goes to the Belfast Telegraph, paying just £15 for use of a photo online.

Last-minute European Parliament elections!
As predicted in the April Freelance, the European Parliament (EP19) election – scheduled for Thursday 23 May in the UK – has indeed got more complicated. This print edition has missed the deadlines for voter registration: if you met them, we commend to you the EP19 manifesto by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ, of which the NUJ is a part) at www.londonfreelance.org/f/1903efj.html – it calls for a revival of a free and pluralistic media in Europe.

Work for local papers ‘as important as the nationals’, Dutch court to be told
TWO DUTCH freelance journalists – writer Britt van Uem and photographer Ruud Rogier – have taken their former client, regional news publisher Persgroep (“Press Group”) to court in Amsterdam over their €15-an-hour fees.

The plaintiffs, supported by the NUJ’s sister union the Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ), demand they receive a higher rate equivalent to those paid by national newspapers.

In the first case of its kind, they argue that their work for the locals has the same “importance to society” as work for national newspapers. Their contractual arrangements with Persgroep are complicated by a licence that now gives Persgroep rights to the resale of photos for the first week after publication.

Brett and Ruud say it is in practical terms not possible to negotiate with Persgroep, which has an effective monopoly. The submission notes that Persgroep’s most recent annual profit was 15 per cent, or €126 million – while they make 13 cents a word or €42 euros an hour.

Their case is based on the Autorencontractenwet (Authors’ Contracts Act), which states that remuneration for a commission must be “fair” and if necessary a judge can determine what is fair. Belgian journalists in the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders are also watching the case with interest, as Persgroep is a big player there as well. The judgement is expected on 17 May.

© Matt Salusbury

Photographers! Help!
Many thanks to those who submitted the rates here. We need more! The NUJ is updating the Freelance Fees Guide and we have to base this on reported rates. So please visit www.londonfreelance.org/rates/submit and let us know the rates you’ve received for five recent jobs – the good, the bad and the indifferent – in strict confidence.

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For existing help from this Branch on late payment and claiming compensation and interest on overdue bills see www.londonfreelance.org/interest.html

The Rate for the Job

Fair Pay for Freelancers
LFB’s APRIL meeting heard from Anna Codrea-Rado, who has been a freelance for two years after being made redundant from Vice. She’s been running The Professional Freelancer weekly newsletter – theprofessionalfreelancer.substack.com – “as I’m learning.”

Payment issues became apparent to Anna very quickly. At the beginning of this year, when The Pool website closed, freelancers were left thousands of pounds out of pocket. So Anna started a campaign around Fair Pay for Freelancers – www.bit.ly/fairpayforfreelancers – the campaign’s demands include an end to payment on publication, strengthened law on late payments, and the abolition of “bottlenecks” such as those around the timesetting bureaucracy of having to get a purchase order number before you can get paid.

The campaign has an open letter, which over 1000 have signed. This has been featured in Press Gazette, the Financial Times and elsewhere.

Anna (not yet an NUJ member at the time of writing) asked LFB how they could work with NUJ.

She is seeking to explore how its institutional support could be lent to engage media organisations to get them to adhere to the above “asks.” These, as Anna pointed out, are very basic rights, some of them set in law and just being ignored.

LFB’s joint Branch Secretary Phil Sutcliffe said of Anna’s The Professional Freelancer newsletter that “as a freelance for 40 years” he finds he can still learn from it and welcomed Anna “as an ally.”

© Matt Salusbury
£6k payout for stolen work

OWEN Holdaway caught an ISIS sniper’s bullet hitting his friend’s chest on video, recorded at close quarters. Happily his friend survived and Holdaway thought his clip might be viral gold dust.

Before he profited, however, a news aggregator stole his shot and broadcast it to the world. He was initially offered just £50 for his work – but, after the NUJ intervened, he was paid £6500.

His is one of the cases highlighted in the freelance sector’s new recruitment video. You can watch it at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1904recr.html

Freelance organiser Pamela Morton explained the purpose of the film: “We know that there are thousands of freelances who do not benefit from NUJ membership. We hope this video will bring our work to wider attention and encourage more to join.” She asks you to share the package on social media.

Right: Owen Holdaway

© Tim Dawson

PROTESTS from page 1

video from 2015, and the guidelines agreed with the NUJ in 2007 – and are now asking the NUJ to help improve these.

We in the NUJ also have to educate the public, Natasha concluded, on the need for high-quality journalism – which means safety and security for photographers and others.

Nigel recounted covering a demo in Champs-Élysées in central Paris in December: almost immediately after arriving he was hit by a “flash ball” and wounded in the abdomen. He saw “10 or 20 injured” on that particular day. It was a typical day among the 22 consecutive Saturdays to date that had seen gilets jaunes protests.

As precautions, he wears a helmet, knee pads and a gas mask. As a journalist, “you’re targeted by police, targeted by gilets jaunes in an argumentative way” – then there’s a “third force,” the “casseurs” (literally people who break stuff) who are only there for the riot.

Photographers tend to go around in groups for protection. Some have the word “Press” visible on them; some don’t and “I choose not to.” Journalists “need to discern who is, to protect yourself.” Also, “let people know where you’re going”. Have a duplicate copy of your press card in case the original is lost or snatched from you in the confusion. Take lemon juice for tear gas, and food and water for when you’re “kettled” by police.

What support if any do freelancers covering such conflicts get from their clients? “I don’t think very much,” says Nigel, but “I’m getting a lot of good support form the NUJ… and sister unions in other countries.

He mentioned a group action by a lawyer representing 40 journalists who’ve been injured.

And it’s just photographers who are at risk. Nigel recounted one English speaking journalist who arrived late for a Marine Le Pen far-right rally and started taking shorthand. She was escorted away after the crowd thought she was writing in Arabic.

Guy has covered numerous demos and made 13 trips to Afghanistan, but it was in Switzerland covering the G8 demonstrations where he was badly injured by a “flash bang” grenade fired by police. It took a chunk out of his leg. Nine years later, with the NUJ’s help, he won a £39k payout from the police force that injured him, which he describes as his “best day rate” ever.

His tips: don’t block protesters when they need to escape the police. Don’t feel pressure to get “that picture” they’re all after, if the water cannon is coming. Demos are different from proper civil unrest, such as that which followed the shooting of Mark Duggan in 2011. The rules completely change – at least seven colleagues got turned over, luckily because police didn’t declare it a full-blown riot, their kit was insured.

The right “absolutely hate our guts”. UKIP rallies, are full of middle-aged football folk who are “well-tuned to public order law”: don’t hang around them at night time. In Dover in 2017 Kelvin Williams was beaten with a metal pole by neo-nazis and nearly killed. He now has three metal plates in his arm.

Pennie described the system of “marking” of journalists covering the weekly demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian Territories, whereby a reporter is shot in the same place with a rubber coated steel bullet on consecutive weeks. Her Palestinian colleagues take this as warning of worse to follow and stay away from the demonstrations until the army units are changed.

Pennie’s practical tips are always to reconnoitre ahead of a major event, and befriend staff in local bars or restaurants – who may be willing to offer shelter in an emergency. More recently when working around Parliament Square during the Brexit rallies she has observed that police seem quite frightened.

From the audience Julio Etchart confirmed that covering the right is getting worse: it’s quite a scary environment and their stews are part and parcel of it, declaring “you’re fake news mate.” When he was trying to get out of a demo after being pushed around, police told him “You shouldn’t be there in the first place.”

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with reporting by Matt Salusbury

NUJ Informed

NUJ Informed is the newsletter of the NUJ’s National Executive Council (NEC). April’s issue includes media literacy, the Union’s response to the Cairncross review, the gender pay gap, the role of Union reps and attacks on the Press by far right. Members can download it at www.nuj.org.uk/documents/nuj-informed-issue-27-april-2019

Natasha Hirst, Pennie Quinton, Guy Smallman and Nigel Dickinson on the panel

© Matt Salusbury
Brexit? Brexisn’t yet!

AS WE write, the UK is still in the EU. The scheduled Brexit date of 29 March has come and gone. The UK government now plans to leave the EU on 31 October at the latest.

There was widespread anger when new UK passports arrived after 29 March – still in EU burgundy red, but with the words “European Union” already missing from the front cover. UK driving licences are still being issued, for the moment, with the gold-stars-on-blue EU flag in the corner.

The threat of a disorderly no-deal Brexit on or after 31 October seems, however, to be receding. The UK not having left yet means there is almost certainly an imminent European Parliament election in the UK on 23 May – see page 2.

Our members who are EU nationals in the UK still have to complete EU Settlement Scheme formalities by 30 June 2021. See our report online of the April LFB meeting – our “Dr Brexit” session – at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1903brex.html we offer advice from leading immigration lawyer Alison Stanley to members who are EU nationals in the UK.

This includes “settled status” – for those who’ve been in the UK for five years; pre-settled status for those who haven’t yet; “continuous residence” requirements and the gaps you are allowed in this; pre-settled status for those who’ve been in the UK less than five years; bringing over family members to join you in the UK; applying for settled status via an Android phone and in person; Permanent Residence and why it’s a good idea to apply for it if you plan to later naturalise as a British citizen or if you’re a citizen of a European Economic Area country.

The later Brexit date means EU nationals now have just over six months to bring over family members so they’re resident when the UK leaves the EU.

The most problematic aspect of the EU Settlement Scheme application seems to be that it only works on Android phones – not iPhones and not Windows phones. The Mayor of London’s Office is running advice sessions around London: see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1905sett.html for links to its EU Londoners Hub, which promises to have advice on access to phones for EU Settlement scheme applications shortly.

Our UK national members in the EU still have to fulfil the requirements to register for post-Brexit permanent residence in the EU Member State where they live – although there is no more time for the Member State governments to come up with detailed plans for this and to carry out registration. We’ve not heard of any deadlines for registration being extended as a result of the UK not leaving yet.

The end of the “transition period” after Brexit – in which it’s pretty much business as usual between the EU and the UK, including Freedom of Movement still being in place – is still 31 December 2020 for now. UK Prime Minister Theresa May has admitted that it could be extended. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, feels that this is likely.

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International Journalism Festival 2019

In April, Branch member Federica Tedeschi went to Perugia, in Italy, to attend the International Journalism Festival (IJF19). She says it’s “a global and inspiring event worth travelling for every year”.

LONG distance does not seem to be an issue, with some of the (over 650) IJF19 speakers coming from as far as Philippines and Australia. The organisers were proud to announce that 49 per cent of this year’s speakers were women.

There was the usual abundance of social media technologies events, as well as talks and panels on different aspects of human rights. The festival also focused on the far-right movements currently making gains across Europe.

Each session was live-streamed, with video available on demand on the festival website immediately afterward.

Those who haven’t been able to attend the festival in Perugia – don’t despair! You can still pick and choose among almost 300 sessions and enjoy whatever event they might like by checking on www.journalismfestival.com/programme/2019

While in Perugia, I met one of the Festival’s directors, and I am planning to bring the LFB to the IJF20 next April, to present a project involving Afghanistan, which the branch is currently working on.

© Federica Tedeschi

Don’t parlay in other people’s misery

English PEN offers writers a guide to the ethics of attending literary festivals in dictatorships – at www.englishpen.org/campaigns/guidelines-attending-literary-festivals-and-international-events/
THE UNCERTAINTY of Brexit and its impact on workers’ rights may have been an immediate concern at this year’s TUC Women’s conference, but these could not overshadow the ongoing issues of sexual harassment, the gender pay gap and societal inequalities.

“While I pay tribute to the work of our unions in campaigning against Theresa May’s awful Brexit deal, austerity has carried on space and that disproportionately affects our women workers,” said Mark Serwotka, TUC general secretary. “We still live in one of the most gender-inequal societies in the world.”

The gender pay gap and equal pay were the subject of around a quarter of the 43 motions proposed at the 89th TUC Women’s conference, held in London on 6-8 March.

Meanwhile, the NUJ delegation proposed a motion on addressing the gender imbalance among those working in photography.

Natasha Hirst, chair of both the NUJ Equality Council and Photographers’ Council, noted that only 15 per cent of photojournalists are women and called on the TUC Women’s Committee to work with the NUJ Women’s Network to support the development of opportunities for women in photography. The motion also called for the TUC Women’s Committee to promote mentoring, grants and scholarships and address gender imbalance.

“The stories being told are framed largely by men,” said Natasha. “It is crucial that we have a diversity of voices in photojournalism. We need opportunities for a wide range of women, from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with lived experience of disability, poverty and oppression in a variety of forms.”

Dawn Butler, shadow secretary of state for women and equalities, added her support, committing to “laying the foundations for an escalator of success”, with more women “rising to the top”. “The burden of cuts has fallen on women,” she said. “But if society is more fair and equal, it is more fair for everyone. It is not about us and them.”

London Freelance Branch chair Pennie Quinton seconded a motion from the Musicians’ Union that called on the TUC to lobby to extend shared parental pay to self-employed workers. Currently shared parental pay of up to 39 weeks can be split between parents, allowing them to share the paid leave, but the right does not apply to self-employed people. A private member’s bill introduced to Parliament by Tracy Brabin MP proposes an extension for the self-employed. “Self-employed people have children the same as those who are employed,” Pennie pointed out.

Meanwhile, the NUJ delegation – which also included Ann Galpin, chair of the Disabled Members’ Council, Ann Coltart, equality council member, and Magda Ibrahim, co-equality officer for London Freelance Branch – supported a further seven motions on Universal Credit, mental health, sexual harassment, dignity in the workplace and an inclusive national education service.

Supporting a motion on benefits, Pennie Quinton said: “Our members are reporting serious problems with so-called Universal Credit. Many in the UK who have had variable income have relied on Working Tax Credit in lean months. When government moves them onto Universal Credit they miss out, sometimes massively. The problem our members are facing is that Universal Credit assumes an income floor reassessed every month so doesn’t take consideration of the huge fluctuations in freelances’ incomes.”

The conference was a chance for more than 260 delegates from 33 unions – as well as representatives from trades councils and the media – to debate issues including part-time and insecure working, period poverty, the menopause at work, global gender equality, non-disclosure agreements, maternity, pregnancy and shared parental pay.

THE EU DIRECTIVE on copyright in the Digital Single Market was passed by the EU Parliament unamended, by 348 votes to 274, on 25 March 2019 and was formally signed off by the Council, representing the member states, on 15 April 2019. There is hope that it can redress some of the financial wrongs that journalists have suffered in the digital age.

Most contentiously, it offers a stick and a carrot to the big online service providers to seek licences for works uploaded. The Freelance Presumes that these will be collective licences, much as supermarkets licence music. If the likes of Google do not have a licence, they will be liable for unauthorised uses.

We hope to see a benefit from this for photojournalists who authorise their work on platforms such as Getty Images and GettyAlamy and in their personal work. The Directive includes Article 15(5): “Member States shall provide that authors of works incorporated in a press publication receive an appropriate share of the revenues that press publishers receive for the use of their press publications by information society service providers.”

Somewhat under the radar during the debate, a trio of measures are intended to improve the bargaining position of authors and performers and will probably be the most constructive for journalists, in particular freelance writers and photographers. New rules will mandate transparency of reporting uses made of our work. There will be provision to “adjust” contracts in the case of windfall income to the exploiter of the work – and perhaps more generally. And there will be voluntary alternative dispute resolution procedures throughout the European Union – though we suspect the copyright small claims court will continue to be preferred in the UK.

These measures are a direct response to EFJ and IFJ discussions with the European Commission, the EU civil service, over many years. Over the next two years the IFJ and EFJ will advise member unions on what is perhaps the harder task: ensuring that the “transposition” of the Directive into national laws fulfils the promise set out by the EU. It is almost certain that these will be reflected in some way in the UK.
Ethics of fixers in Afghanistan and elsewhere

FIXERS – especially in Afghanistan and in the Middle East – are on the agenda for the Branch meeting on Monday 10 June. What ethical questions arise – considering that these people may have to live with the consequences of journalists’ reporting long after those who hire them have left their country?

Our speakers will include Dr Da-wood Azami – an award-winning broadcast journalist, BBC World Service Multi-Media Editor and former BBC World Service Editor and Bureau Chief in Kabul (where he survived an attack on his hotel).

Dr Azami has reported from Waziristan, Helmand, Kandahar, Toral Bora and Guantanamo. He is also a trainer of journalists.

We also hope to have a speaker from Latin America on issues faced by fixers in that continent as well.

The topic and speakers for the LFB gathering on Monday July 8 have yet to be confirmed: we hope to have speakers on making money out of fiction alongside your journalism. Watch the LFB meetings page and its Twitter feed – see below.

And see below too for details of a meeting for members new to the Branch or recently joined.

There is no LFB meeting in August. Older readers may remember “holidays”, or their nearest freelance equivalent.

This went to press on 1 May.

Your deadline for the June online only issue is 31 May.

| LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS |

LONDON Freelance Branch Committee member Nicci Talbot has, with the NUJ Freelance Office, negotiated to reinstate discounts for NUJ members on Apple products. These range from 6 per cent to 10 per cent depending on what you’re buying.

It covers purchases made online and we understand it also includes stuff you buy off the shelf at the physical Macstores in London, including the ones at Regent Street, Covent Garden, Stratford and White City.

More details are at www.nuj.org.uk/about/membership-benefits/apple-store/ – you’ll need to get yourself a NUJ member password to log in.

The NUJ discount page on the Apple Store UK page should also be working by now. It’s at www.apple.com/uk/shop/go/epp-store/nuj

NEW MEMBERS MEET

THERE was a successful New Members meeting in April for members who join London Freelance Branch or recently joined.

A total of 11 new members attended, along with four experienced LFB Committee members to offer support, information and advice to new freelances – these were Phil Sutcliffe, Jenny Vaughan, Larry Herman & Francesca Marchese.

The next LFB meeting for members new to the Branch is at 6pm on April’s new members’ meeting at the Camera Museum. London WC1A 1LY – the nearest Tube is Holborn.

Byline Festival reduction for NUJ members

As well as enjoying 6 to 10 per cent reduction on the cost of Apple products (see the article on the left of this page), NUJ members can also avail themselves of a substantial discount for Byline Festival 2019. This event invites you to dance, discuss, laugh and change the world on 23-26 August at Pippingsford Park, Nutley, East Sussex, TN22 3HW. The link for tickets at the NUJ discount rate, starting at £75, is at www.bylinefestival.com/nuj18 and London Freelance Branch plans to have a stall or tent at Bylinefest this year, as it did in 2018.

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Byline Festival this year, as it did