



Suzanne Breen protects her sources – and herself

Sunday Tribune Northern Editor Suzanne Breen – centre, holding (we think) the flowers that London Freelance Branch sent – became the centre of media attention at her court hearing in Belfast on 11 June. On 18 June Judge Thomas Burgess ruled that she would not have to hand over notes, computer equipment and other material following publication of stories relating to the Real IRA. To grant the order sought by the Police Service of Northern Ireland would be a breach of her right to life under the European Convention, the judge ruled.

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Respect the Press Card!

THE CHIEF Constable of Kent has supplied a briefing to be given to police officers ahead of a planned protest on 4 July at Kingsnorth Power Station in the county. Crucially, it will remind them that “Each card has a unique serial number and, by using the phone hotline, anybody can verify the card is genuine and the holder is a bona fide newsgatherer.”

Further, it reminds officers that “the Home Office has recently confirmed that Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Legislation should not be used against media covering protests.” It will also be given to all officers when they join the force as part of their induction. Iain McBride, Media Services Manager for Kent Police, has asked us to clarify that he has only just joined Kent Police and

was not in post when Climate Camp happened last year. He is keen to assist further in the future.

If you are unsure about the identifying PIN number that goes with your NUJ Press Card, contact the NUJ's Membership Department (call 020 7278 7916 and ask for “Membership”) before you go to cover the Climate Camp or other “public order situations”.

It's freelance month in the NUJ

THE NUJ has announced that July is to be National Freelance Month, and branches around the UK and Ireland are being urged to get involved. There has been considerable focus on redundancies across the industry, but while staffers have been losing their jobs many freelances have also lost work – often to a devastating extent.

“Some freelances have seen their entire income wiped out overnight,” says Freelance Organiser John Toner. “Unlike employees, though, freelances have no statutory right to notice or a redundancy payment.”

The NUJ has been campaigning for improved rights for freelance

workers, and all NUJ branches are asked to lobby at local level on such issues as notice, redundancy, sick pay and maternity/paternity allowance. Equally important is the call for a statutory right for freelance workers to be represented by a trade union for collective bargaining purposes.

Said Toner: “To achieve these aims will be a mammoth task, and we will require the support of other unions and organisations that represent freelances.”

“But,” Toner notes, “the horrendous cutbacks over the past year have made more people aware of just how vulnerable freelances are.”

New models for the media business

WORRIED about the crisis in journalism – and whether, with reports of freelance rates tumbling and slots fast disappearing – you have a future in the industry?

London Freelance Branch is planning a conference for the autumn that could provide the makings of answers. The day will look at alternative business models for the media – new ways to earn a living through quality journalism in the face of falling advertising revenues, the rise of the internet and profiteering proprietors. Speakers will lift the lid on emerging practice and

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