

FREELANCE CONTACTS

Headland House / freelance office

John Toner / Pamela Morton020 7843 3735
 emailfreelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk
 fax020 7278 1812
 ☒308 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP
 ☎www.nuj.org.uk

Legal emergency only:

England & Wales.....0800 587 7530
 Scotland.....0800 085 3425

Dublin office / Liberty Hall

Seamus Dooley +353 087 2236364
 email:seamusd@nuj.ie

Branch contacts for members only

Hence the creative use of pink space.

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LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Clinch book deal, go non-traditional!

WE HOPE you all remembered to take some kind of holiday, and that you enjoyed it. The new autumn season of London Freelance Branch meetings opens on **Monday 14 September** and the subject is, provisionally, getting your book published.

At a time when journalists increasingly have to diversify into as many areas as possible, writing books is one sideline we could consider, and we've certainly got the necessary "transferable skills". Our speakers are Matthew Hamilton of literary agent Aitken Alexander Associates, whose clients include LFB members who've recently managed a successful diversification into books, and (provisionally) Rebecca Swift or Solvej Todd of agency The Literary Consultants

We aim to cover the dos and don'ts of structuring a book; framing and pitching it to agents and publishers; finding gaps in the market and devising a book you're prepared to write to fit; where to get advice about an idea; and mistakes to watch out for.

We will also be amending motions for the union's Annual Delegate Meeting.

Details of the LFB meeting on **Monday 12 October** have yet to be finalised. The topic is provisionally how to respond to disappearing work – non-traditional avenues where journalists can look to market their editorial and imaging services outside the

usual media outlets we're accustomed to work in. We may also have a spot on "carry on, up your rate!" – how to use information that already out there on the LFB website and the Freelance Fees Guide as a tool to drive up your rates, chase late payers, etc.

Watch for updates at **www.londonfreelance.org/meetings**. Volunteer minute-takers are still needed for the October meeting and beyond. Please contact a committee member if you are interested. A guide to submitting motions to Branch meetings is at **www.londonfreelance.org/fl/business.html**.

● To make sure you get email alerts of meetings and the electronic *Freelance* – just one message a month – visit **www.londonfreelance.org/linkup**

This issue went to press on **23 August**. Deadline for the online-only October issue: **25 September**.

LFB meetings are 7pm to 9pm at **Friends' House, Euston Road**, which is accessible to people who use wheelchairs. If you need the Branch to pay for care for a child or dependent so you can attend a meeting, call a Branch officer. For updates on meetings see the Branch calendar web page **www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings**

SAFETY MATTERS

Did French spooks pose as journos?

The already very dangerous work of journalists in conflict zones has probably been made still more hazardous by two French "security agents" (spooks, for short) being kidnapped in Somalia after apparently impersonating journalists.

The accusation was made by a Somali government official, after the two French nationals were seized by militants from an Islamist faction within President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed's security forces.

The French government denied the that the two men had been passing themselves off as journalists, insisting they were openly on "official business". The Brussels-based International News Safety Institute – **www.newssafety.org** – condemned the "subterfuge" as putting journalists' lives at risk by compromising their neutrality.

The Institute is seeking assurances from the French government that it would forbid this practice among its agents.

LETTER

Gong muffled

I was a little surprised to see River Publishing getting the Gong for late payment to our freelance writers and editors since no-one had contacted us to establish whether it is in fact correct. Our payment terms are comparable to all other magazine publishers and we make a particular effort to make sure our regular freelances get paid promptly.

Usually when there is an issue with late

payment it is because the person submitting the invoice has not done so correctly. Or as in a recent situation where we were in dispute with the person concerned.

Jane Wynn
 Editorial Director

The editors write: Pleased to hear it. We're in a bind, because contacting publishers could so easily lead to identifying the member, and our rate reporting services have to be anonymous for obvious reasons.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

FREELANCE UNCLASSIFIEDS are FREE to members for non-commercial purposes. To non-members and for commercial purposes, £10 for this much text, roughly. Acceptance is at the editors' whim; appearance does not imply endorsement. If you have any comments on an advertiser, tell us. Submit your ads by email to **unclassified@londonfreelance.org**

WEBSITES FOR JOURNALISTS Websites and blogs designed to fit your needs and budget. Simple, stylish design and advice on how to promote your work on the web. Email **contact@peterk2web.com**

or Peter Keighron on call 020 7730 9641; **www.peterk2web.com**

TAX NIGHTMARE - The good people at HMRC are getting tougher on freelancers like you. I spent four years going through a gruelling investigation, which was grim and extremely stressful. I've now written the e-book that I wish I could have read four years ago, it's called *Tax Investigation for Dummies: Everything you wanted to know about a tax investigation but were too afraid (or skint) to ask*. More information: **www.tax-hell.co.uk**