

LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Up your rate, get your money; party

UPPING your rate and getting your money is the topic of the London Freelance Branch meeting on **Monday 9 November**. The co-editors of the *Freelance*, Mike Holderness and Matt Salusbury, will demonstrate the London Freelance Branch website's Rates for the Job pages (see page 2) and other LFB web resources on chasing late payments, calculating interest and penalties on late payments owed to you, and how to navigate around these.

We'll look at other NUJ online resources, like the Freelance Fees Guide (www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide). We expect there will be some interactive practice in using this information to up your rates and to follow up with accounts departments on outstanding invoices, with LFB's own Phil Sutcliffe, tutor on

NUJ Training's Pitch and Deal course, and plenty of contributions, questions and discussion from you.

November's meeting is also the last chance to decide on how the branch wants the LFB delegation to vote on the various motions that will come up at the NUJ's ADM (Annual Delegate Meeting, the union's annual conference,) which is in Southport on 18-21 November.

The LFB meeting on **Monday 14 December** is provisionally a seasonal end-of-year networking party, venue to be confirmed.

Volunteer minute-takers are still needed for future meetings. Please

This issue went to press on **15 October**.

Deadline for the December online-only issue: **28 November**.

contact a committee member if you are willing.

And www.londonfreelance.org/fl/business.html has a guide to submitting motions to meetings.

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

With the exception of the December party, 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/flb/meetings.html

Branch contacts: www.londonfreelance.org/flb
Phone numbers are due to appear again soon

FREELANCE

Work beyond the media

LEEDS-BASED freelance Adam Christie's regular work with both the *Yorkshire Post* and the local BBC "disappeared in an evening". Adam, who wrote much of the NUJ's Freelance Fact Pack (see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0810fact.html) for the union's Freelance Industrial Council (FIC) told October's London Freelance Branch meeting how he found work using his journalism skills "outside the media industry".

Where is the work? Adam's carved out a niche in the health charity and Primary Care Trust sector, using a "very broad spectrum of skills". He designs and writes their websites, press releases and brochures, and advises on the target readership these should aim at.

Adam's FIC colleagues do similar work in other areas. One's a specialist in arts, doing small-scale PR. One is a sports writer getting work producing programmes for sports clubs. Others work for small or medium enterprises that need specific jobs and specific skills sets to do

them, like covering events for trade union magazines.

Word of mouth brings Adam of lot of non-traditional journalistic work: "When you speak to people at press conferences, you shouldn't have any qualms about picking up the phone later and asking whether they need a journalist for a particular job."

Making notes at a big Non-Governmental Organisation conference and writing it up "could earn you a couple of hundred pounds a day." The small charities Adam does PR for pay Freelance Fees Guide rates, are used to dealing with 30-day billing, (make sure you bill them on time) and understand expenses, in stark contrast to some media clients we're used to working for. LFB's own Phil Sutcliffe is amazed to find his non-media clients actually pay a decent rate you can live on.

"The only limit to the type of work you can do is your imagination," says Adam. Get paid for trying to line up local radio interviews with

an NGO when there's a parliamentary debate coming up, or arrange a day's media training with a board of trustees. In a recession, "when people are under pressure, they need to communicate better, to compete better: that is where they need our communication skills and our tight and concise prose." Don't forget the business and networking groups your local Chamber of Commerce runs: "they can be horrendous, but they can work for you." Adam recently got a call out of the blue leading to subbing work for someone he met at a Chamber of Commerce course years ago.

Former *Sunday Times* journalist Mark Watts told the meeting that many NGOs are commissioning investigative work, and their product is now better than the newspapers'. The story about Trafigura and waste dumping in the Ivory Coast, for example, originated with NGO research. NGOs "are constantly looking for journalists that have skills and specialist knowledge."

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Photo report

The European Federation of Journalists has released a report on the state of photojournalism in the continent. Not surprisingly, there's much gloomy news in it – and a commitment "to share and disseminate good practice, challenge restrictions on news reporting, and work against unfair contracts across a European – and, indeed, global – stage". You can download the full report from www.epuk.org/file_download/11/Photojournalists_ENG.pdf

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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

A PLACE ON THE WEB: Websites designed for freelance writers or photographers. A website that promotes your work can be designed by Dougie Firth, an expert in the freelance field. Email DougieFirth@aol.com or phone on 020 7735 4626. Competitive rates.

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