

April 2010

FREELANCE

Newsletter of
London Freelance
Branch, NUJ

LFB meetings
**Workies –
serial wage-killers?**
12 April
**Eric,
accountant
to the stars**
10 May
See back page

Missing: 5000 women

THE MARCH London Freelance Branch meeting fell on International Women's Day, so we marked the occasion with star speakers on the barriers women face in journalism – particularly broadcasting.

Dinah Caine is Chief Executive of training organisation Skillset – which, as Pennie Quinton said introducing her, is “doing amazing work documenting the conditions women face working in TV and film”. Her findings were not reassuring. The proportion of the “audiovisual” workforce who are women has fallen from 38 per cent in 2006 to 27 per cent in 2009. In television it fell from 45 per cent to 41 per cent

– which means 5000 women had left the industry, but only 750 men.

This is despite 79 per cent of women in the industry being graduates: 63 per cent of men are. Women in “audiovisual” work are more likely than men to be freelance; half the women in TV are under 35 years old. Women are over-represented in fields like costume, wardrobe and makeup but are only a quarter of those in “creative grades” in the media industry. More women than men have worked unpaid to get a foot in the door (47 per cent to 42 per cent) – as Dinah reported, this practice “is skewing the class profile, if not necessarily

the gender profile” of the industry.

Katharine Whitehorn reflected on her 52 years in the NUJ: though the numbers are alarming “there are ways in which things have got incomparably better for women.” When she joined “the papers had a women’s page; the rest of the paper was business and sport and news and foreign news – and sport.” Now, there’s a woman chief reporter at the *Observer*.

Everything is not, however, all right. “I think we’re on to a different sort of fight,” Katharine said, “which is how women are portrayed”. We “had Blair’s Babes... Can anyone imagine MPs like Barbara Castle feeling they have to wear high heels or no-one would respect them?”

Kate Kinninmont had just been interviewed by Jon Snow, as chief executive of Women in Film and TV (www.wftv.org.uk), about Kathryn Bigelow’s *The Hurt Locker*’s six Oscars – including the first “best director” to go to a woman in the award’s 82 years.

But, Kate reported, “it’s got worse” for women in film. Martha Lauzen of San Diego State University does a study of the 250 top-grossing films, looking all the way through the credits. Just seven per cent are women.

Kate doesn’t think people are consciously saying “let’s just cut another woman out” – rather, “people appoint young men and young women, then think ‘she’s around 30, she’ll be having a baby’...” As a woman, “You have to work harder to count.” Women, 51 per cent of the population, “cannot be satisfied with seven per cent telling the stories of human life and 13 per cent scriptwriting them”.

● There’s a longer report online.



See video of the speakers at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/I004iwd.html
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Copyright on the agenda

WE ARE “all creators now. I create when I post on my website: you create when you post a note on your Facebook wall, we create when we tweet to each other.” That was David Lammy, the government Minister responsible for intellectual property, speaking to a meeting called on 23 March by the Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property on the “moral rights” – the right to be identified as creator of your work and to defend its integrity.

“Any artist puts not just effort but quite a lot of themselves into their work,” he went on: “it’s clear that the value of that work is largely

because of the huge endeavour which that artist has put in and there is a powerful sense that it still remains theirs, their offering to the world, and that is why moral rights are important.” Sympathetic words indeed – though Lammy acknowledged that he won’t be a Minister for long, unless his party is re-elected.

And one of the questions Lammy posed was: “How do we grant access to libraries – while respecting the emotional tie which creators have to their work?” Half the government’s answer to that will – almost certainly – by the time this reaches you be winging its way into

law, in the shape of Clause 43 of the Digital Economy Bill, which was due to have its second reading in the House of Commons on 6 April.

The Bill gives future Ministers the power to authorise bodies – such as the collecting societies DACS and ALCS – to issue “extended collective licences”: in effect, blanket permissions for a user like a library, or the BBC archive, to use works, in return for a fee. A similar process will apply for authorising bodies to license use of “orphan works” – those whose creators cannot be found.

The promotion of moral rights
See COPYRIGHT on p 2