

FREELANCE CONTACTS

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LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Workies and taxes

WORK experience placements will be the subject of the London Freelance Branch meeting on **Monday 12 April**. Are they “serial wagekillers”? At a time when media work experience placements are in some cases being sold at charity auctions, we look at exploitation of “workies” and how the proliferation of work placements affects waged labour in the industry.

What can practical efforts can be made to ensure work placements provide genuinely meaningful work experience for the “workies”, what influence can freelancers have in this area?

Speakers include – provisionally – Victoria Neumark Jones, lecturer in journalism at London Metropolitan University, and someone from NUJ Training.

Following the recent Budget, self-employment and tax issues will be in the spotlight at the LFB meeting on **Monday 10 May**. Our speaker will be accountant to the stars – and to some LFB members – Eric Longley, who in his ever-engaging style will lead us through taxation conundrums like the pros and cons of becoming a limited company, what you can claim on expenses, whether it's worth registering for VAT and

the vagaries of National Insurance contributions. On his last appearance before LFB in 2008, for example, Eric said that registering as a limited company is increasingly worthwhile on an income over £20,000. For a flavour of what this meeting might look like, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0808tax.html.

We welcome suggestions for meeting topics: see those suggested by members at the January Annual General meeting: www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1003meet.html and send us your ideas, please.

Volunteer minute-takers are needed for future LFB meetings.

This issue went to press on **30 March**. Deadline for the online-only *May Freelance* is **26 April**

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

Slave sourcing stopped

FREE labour is appealing to editors who face Men in Suits pressing for random budget cuts – but internships and so forth hardly count as “jobs”, let alone professional journalism – as LFB will discuss at its April meeting. Josephine Baker reports an exchange that ended up making a difference...

PLUGS FOR a website that claims to advertise journalism jobs, entitled SourceThatJob, produced by Daryl Willcox Publishing, landed in my inbox. It advertised bona fide journalism jobs at first, but suddenly started advertising for “trainees”, “interns” and various other unpaid journalism slaves. Call them what you will but don't call them jobs!

I wrote to Daryl Willcox publishing and received a reply from an employee, saying “I understand your frustration at unpaid jobs being advertised alongside paid ones... There

are however many young journalists who are willing to work for free to get a foot on the ladder and SourceThatJob tries to cater for them too...”

I replied that “The definition of work is ‘being paid for what you do’; anything else is volunteering at best and slave labour at worst.”

A few weeks later, I got a message from Daryl Wilcox to “apologise for the way your comments were handled by one of my colleagues” and announcing: “I have decided to remove all unpaid positions from the www.sourcethatjob.com site and will not accept further unpaid posts in future.”

We all know there is crisis in journalism and everyone thinks that creative people are exploitable and expendable. This just goes to show that a protest of this kind can actually work!

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UNION MATTERS

NUJ Councils need members

The NUJ's Industrial Councils – in which elected lay members formulate union policy on different sectors of the industry – have vacancies. Freelance Industrial Council (see www.londonfreelance.org/fic for what it does) needs members to represent the North East, Northern Ireland with the Isle of Man, Black Members and disabled members. If standing for the last two, first check that the NUJ's membership department has you recorded as belonging to the demographic you wish to represent. The Scottish and Welsh Executive Councils have vacancies too. Candidates need to be nominated by

their NUJ Branch by **26 April**: see www.londonfreelance.org/nujlinks.html#Councils

Photographers' branch

Photographers who work mostly in London now have the option of joining (or transferring their membership to) the new London Photographers' Branch (LPB) if they so wish. Details of LPB meetings – on the last Tuesday of the month at NUJ HQ Headland House – and Branch contacts are at www.londonphotographers.org.