

LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Stop, search, libel or investigate

HOW TO deal with stop and search (and with luck still file the story) – that's the subject of the London Freelance Branch meeting on **Monday 14 June**. We'll be getting tips from solicitor Shamik Dutta (www.shamikdutta.notlong.com) of law firm Fisher Meredith, who among other things represented comedian Mark Thomas in a case that led to a £1200 settlement for a 12-minute detention by the Metropolitan Police, with an apology.

Shamik is a civil rights lawyer who specialises in taking legal action against the state on behalf of the victims of police, Home Office and Prison Service misconduct – young people, refugees, protestors, photographers and activists. These cases usually involve claims for un-

lawful detention, assault, malicious prosecution and breach of the state's obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998. He regularly provides training sessions around London on individual rights, and is active with the Police Action Lawyers Group and Liberty.

On **Monday 12 July** we will hear from Gavin McFadyen, co-founder of the Bureau for Investigative Journalism (see below) about its funding for investigations. Watch www.londonfreelance.org for more details.

There is *no* LFB meeting in August. If you are entitled to holiday pay, remember that it's on the understanding that you do take some holiday.

We plan to have a meeting on libel reform in the autumn, depending on how the surprise ConDem government commitment pans out.

This issue went to press on **18 May**. The deadline for the (online only) July issue is **1 July**

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 dependent so you can attend a meeting, call a Branch officer. For updates on meetings see the Branch calendar: www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings and for London Photographers' Branch meetings, see www.londonphotographers.org

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

FREELANCE

Phone recording appeal

THE *FREELANCE* editorial team get one enquiry a month – usually at the end of the Branch meeting when everyone's packing up – about the best devices for recording phone calls. Can any members enlighten us? There seems to be a problem recording both sides of a phone call on some 3G phones, so advice on any apps that do it properly on the various formats is appreciated.

Several LFB members recommended a very low-tech double-ended earplug/mike gadget (Olympus make one). While the earplug end of the gadget goes into your ear, the other end of the mike sticks against the phone's earpiece and picks up the call, carrying sound to whatever recording device you have it plugged into. Simplicity itself, you would think, but one freelance

reports experiencing problems with mikes of this type picking up the noise of electronic interference from mobiles.

Is there any single user-friendly device or app you know of that does trouble-free recordings of mobile, 3G and old-style landline phones? And does face-to-face voice recordings as well, while we're at it? Let us know, please, by sending your *brief* suggestions & comments to **editor@londonfreelance.org** with a relevant subject line. The inclusion of a manufacturer's name here should not be taken as endorsement.

On the subject of kit, if you were thinking of purchasing any expensive items of kit soon, you might like to bear in mind the **22 June** budget, which is "widely predicted" to include a big VAT increase.

Toddle to Tolpuddle

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were the first heroes of trade unionism in these islands from the moment in 1834 when the six were deported to Australia for daring to form an agricultural workers' union. Remember them at the annual Toppuddle Festival in the eponymous Dorset village on **16-18 July**. Former NUJ president Tim Lezard will host a session on Saturday 17 July; other speakers include Tony Benn. See www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk

LETTER

River Publishing

I was not the person who originally told you about River Publishing being a late payer, but, having seen Jane Wynn's denial in the *Freelance*, I want to back that person up (whoever it was).

River often pays anything up to three months after a freelance has worked there, and every now and then, payments seem to get forgotten and you have to remind them.

Name & address supplied

- The NUJ's Freelance Office confirms that it has had to take cases to Small Claims Court.

Investigative story pitch

THE BUREAU for Investigative Journalism (BIJ) has now opened for business, based at City University, with an initial grant of £2 million over five years to fund investigative stories that would otherwise not see the light of day. The BIJ's website invites journalists "with a story you think the Bureau should be investigating" to get in touch with them via www.thebureauinvestigates.com/contact. For more on the BIJ, and similar non-profit "foundation models" of financing journalism, see our report on a talk by Gavin McFadyen, BIJ's co-founder, at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1002ways.html

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

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SAINT BENOIT: stay in a restored coach house in the heart of a medieval village in central France. Very restful. The perfect place to write, forget about perfidious commissioners and escape from remorseless PRs. Cheap rates out of high season. www.stbenoitdusault.com

FREE WEEKEND BREAK FOR PHOTOGRAPHER! In exchange for photos I can use for marketing purposes. Please email me with an example at thebeach.house@virgin.net

BRILLIANTLY LOCATED, pleasant West End office for someone to share on St. Martin's Lane. Separate work space, lots of daylight, with use of meeting room, tea

kitchen and toilet. £175 per week includes all taxes, electricity, cleaning and central heating. Call 020 7240-3040.

WANT TO TRY YOUR HAND at writing fiction? The Complete Creative Writing Course at the Groucho Club offers courses for beginners, intermediate and advanced students and also in screenwriting and writing for children. Courses start in May/June. Cost: £275-£295 including VAT for six three-hour sessions. For full details go to www.writingcourses.org.uk or ring Maggie on 0207 503 6285.

MY LOVELY one-bedroom flat three minutes walk from the Angel tube will be available from the end of March. Suitable for a single person or a couple, it's furnished, centrally heated, on the top (third) floor of a Victorian block and has a gorgeous roof terrace. Rent is £1250 per month excluding bills. Email me for more info or to arrange a viewing: pamelanowicka38@hotmail.com. A proportion of the rent is funding social and environmental justice filmmaking in India.

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