

## BBC dispute

On 30 November, the day the *Freelance* went to press, the unions at the BBC were in meetings at ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) seeking an agreement over the pensions dispute. Strikes were therefore suspended. Watch [www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk) for updates.

# The Rate for the Job

THIS MONTH'S Rate for the Job includes two "kill fees" for work commissioned but then not used. Although many freelancers agree to settle for less to preserve a good relationship, a debt is a debt and you're legally entitled to the full amount. But make sure at the outset that you've got it in writing.

Thinking about work for a company you've not dealt with before? Simply look at the Rate for the Job to find out what companies in similar niches have paid. Then aim higher. You can submit rates online, in confidence, at any time, at

[www.londonfreelance.org/rates](http://www.londonfreelance.org/rates)

– please give not only the basic rate (e.g. for **FBS**, First British Serial rights) but extra payments negotiated for extra uses, like the Web – or for print if it's a Rate for the Online Job. These are shown as (eg) £400 + 100. We now record rates paid in Euro as well. Rates marked **X** are, in the editor's fallible opinion, below par. Treat all rates as minima, even perhaps the happy ☺.

**Broadcasting:** Sunrise (Sky News) newspaper review pundit appearance £150; BBC News ditto £150; Arts Extra BBC Northern Ireland 5-minute pundit interview £90.

**Photography:** Current Biology stock photo + 50 per cent for web publication for 2 weeks £50 + 25; Guardian Unlimited image sold by Rex Feature £5 **XXX**.

**Shifts:** Electronic press kits, interview musicians on or off camera, from £350 to top-rank musicians £1500 or if the musicians are your mates can be £5000; College text book commissioning cover, approx 100 hours £3000; *Gaz7etta* (men's mag with *Grazia*) writing day £200;

*Arise* editorial day in office £200; BBC World Service/Radio 4 unspecified activity, day £185; *Guardian* subbing Saturday £170; *Ski Resort* (guides) website editing day £150; *Grocer* subbing day £110 **XX**.

**Words, per 1000:** *Etapes International* (French design mag) 600 words, Euro 416 for 600 words = £587/thou Euros 693 **X**; Project Maverick (i-Pad app magazine) feature £500; *Radio Times* £500; *Gaz7etta* (*Grazia*) £500; *Guardian* £375; *Daily Telegraph* 400 words sidebar @ £140 = £350; *Dredging and Port Construction* 1000 words plus 5 photos £325; *Times* arts section £315 **X**; 24 *Housing* £288; *Health Care Risk Review* (syndication 50:50 split) £266; *Media Guardian* (NB below agreed rate) £233 **XXX**; *TNT* £114 **XX**.

**Words, other:** *Fortean Times* 7500 words + some pic research £760 **X**; *Mail on Sunday* kill fee for news story £350; *Sunday Times* kill fee for 1200 words commissioned £150; *New Internationalist* 150-word review £80; *Edinburgh Evening News* piece £30 **XX**.



## The Tirreme Award

This month's Tirreme Award – for "the worst terms since I was last chained to the oars" – goes to this: "Unfortunately we can't offer payment in actual money but we will help you out with guest lists and the like where possible and you will be rewarded with our gratitude," promises *Itchy Guides*, adding "You will also get a byline and link to your blog/twitter/facebook/page/other."

## Tax warnings

If you're thinking of buying expensive kit, do so if at all possible before VAT hike of two and a half per cent on **4 January 2011**. Your NUJ Press Card gets you a modest discount at the Apple Store. The deadline for your 2009/2010 tax return to arrive with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs – and thereby avoid a fine – is **31 January 2011**. It's now online only, via [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa)

## PAYWALLS from p 1

being iPad people. That's "not a bad start," says Dan, given historically low *Times* circulation of around half a million. Dan estimates *Times* paywall receipts were about £5.5 million gross up to November.

These numbers are not yet enough to nudge other newspaper companies into trying paywalls. Dan predicted Murdoch will give the *Times* paywall a trial of at least five years. There are obvious "bundling opportunities" for News Corp – why not offer *Times* online subs to ten million Sky-subscribing households (almost) for free?

News International's *News of the World* recently went behind a paywall too, offering "extra assets" like online video exclusives to match print and photo scoops. Dan said he couldn't see the point of a forthcoming paywall for *The Sun*.

While paywalls may yet save the industry, Dan is concerned about the "type of journalism" they bring.

Print newspapers used to have loyal relationships with their readers who bought the paper for years, showing disinterest or hostility towards the stance of other papers. Online is more like TV, where "viewers can watch C4, ITV, BBC

the same evening without seeming weird." Readers now consume stories from many different sources, caring less about provenance. Relationships with papers are now interactive, through comment facilities.

What troubles Dan is that paywalls cut readers off from that "conversation." That's why the paywall-locked *Financial Times* still lets non-paying readers have five stories a month for nothing, with political stories often free. It's easier for the *FT* to impose a paywall, as reading it is necessary "homework" for most subscribers.

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## Holding out against withholding

WHEN WORKING for foreign clients – as NUJ freelance members are everywhere, "foreign" just means not in the country where you're based – withholding tax can sometimes be a problem. It's a tax, often 10 per cent, deducted from your fee by the tax authorities in Whereverland before it arrives in your bank account and becomes subject to normal UK tax.

But an assertive member of LFB has come up with a solution that just might work for any of us – which I will call the Nothing To Do With Me Guv Gambit.

She did her first feature for a *Far East* magazine and agreed a fee of the equivalent of around £600. The fee arrived promptly in her bank account – except that, unannounced,

it came up short by something over £60. She emailed to complain and the magazine's accounts department advised that withholding tax had to be deducted. And currency exchange charges too.

Our member wasn't having any of that, if she could avoid it, and told the *Freelance*, "I went several rounds with their accounts people, explaining that none of the above interested me, that the agreed fee was the agreed fee, kindly cough up by return of post, etc. No dice."

She was starting to feel this was a put-it-down-to-experience lost cause when the morning e-post revealed a message from the editor, who'd heard about the problem and come up with a solution – coughing up. He apologised and said he would

add the tax and exchange rate deduction on to the fee for a second piece, while ensuring that for all future commissions the deductions would be dealt with by the magazine and the full agreed fee paid to the freelance.

Our member says it confirms her belief that "If you treat yourself like a professional worthy of professional respect, other people tend to treat you like one as well".

Do check up about withholding tax when working with clients in a country you haven't dealt with before. Negotiate a fee (and expenses) in terms of what you're actually going to be paid net, regardless of any deductions that have to be paid "over there".

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