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FREE

Freelancing's future

NUJ FREELANCES showcased an innovative range of strategies to survive and prosper at "New Ways to Make Journalism Pay", a one-day conference in November. More than twenty speakers described initiatives including instant-video documentary making, selling into new foreign markets and self-publishing via Kindle. In excess of 200 people – more than half of them women – attended the event organised by the London Freelance Branch, aided by the NUJ's Freelance Office.

Photographer Guy Smallman has had numerous assignments in Af-

ghani- nels when I wasn't bragging about myself. I showed some humility... loads of people came to my aid."

"Freelancing has been a rollercoaster – but it suits me", said Hina Pandya. Relentless networking and going with the flow of work have been her watchwords. She has published her own travel guide e-book, sales of which have, to date, exceeded her expectations. A "significant following" of her Tweets also got Pandya a paid gig blogging for a science fiction channel.

Huma Yusuf spoke about breaking into emerging markets including In-

cialist Max Glaskin faxed his details to 150 US magazines 20 years ago. Six months later, one of them, *Biophotonics International*, faxed him seeking a European contributor. With credibility established at one journal, he picked up work from publications in the same stable – and was then able to use those contacts to leverage work on other US titles.

Mark Watts is editor-in-chief of investigative news service, Exaro News. He said that although the traditional media model is breaking down, "real journalism enterprises are springing up to meet real news needs – so freelances should keep their eyes open, and if you can't see what you are looking for, maybe do it yourself".

David Boyle, author of *The Case For Media Co-ops*, described several successful publications that adopted a co-operative model. The *West Highland Free Press* was bought by its 13 employees in 2009, while *Ethical Consumer* magazine is now owned by its readers. There's also *Marlborough News Online*, serving a town without a newspaper. It employs all four members of the worker's co-op that set it up, so far for one day a week each. It's on track to support full-time jobs within five years, said Boyle. Examples like these "are proving that local readers do want local content", he added. Alex Klaushofer, co-author of *Help Yourself – new ways to make copyright pay*, predicted that hyper-local news services, such as *Filton Voice*, would be an increasingly important element of the landscape.

Closing the conference, NUJ general secretary Michelle Stansistreet committed the NUJ to extending its services for freelance members. "It is really clear to me that that this has been a fantastically useful day and as our industry is increasingly freelance it is important to keep your skills up to date," she said.

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• Much more, including video: www.londonfreelance.org/NewWays



Tim Dawson, NUJ Freelance Industrial Council chair (seated) spoke on "the freelance future". LFB vice-chair Fiona O'Cleirigh (standing) introduced him

Photo © Tony Rizzo: motjgur@yahoo.com

ghanistan, most self-funded. By entering the country as a non-embedded journalist he has been able to cover stories not accessible to colleagues who worked more closely with the military. The reputation he built as a result has enabled him to source crowd-funding for larger projects.

After a career as a photographer, Christian Payne of **documentally.com** now blogs and makes video documentaries, some as commercial assignments. Payne's total engagement with Twitter started when, after a car crash, he used it to ask, "what do I do now?" It was, he said, "the first point of using social chan-

nel, where "media are booming". She says that "in India, newspaper sales are growing at a rate of 1.5 per cent a year" and its media have a desperate thirst for content – particularly news about how India and its people are perceived abroad.

Yusuf suggested initially offering material to smaller Indian titles. With your reputation established, approaches can then be credibly made to larger titles such as *The Times of India* – it "has a circulation of 4.3 million" says Yusuf. Pay rates vary between \$50 and \$1000 US for 600 words.

Engineering and technology spe-

Leveson – myth and petition

AT THE time of writing, Prime Minister David Cameron looked set to ignore the key recommendations of Lord Leveson's inquiry into the culture, practice and ethics of the press. The NUJ, following policy set at successive Delegate Meetings, welcomed Leveson's support for conscience clauses in journalists' contracts, specifying that we will not be penalised for upholding the Code of

Conduct. The union "welcomes Lord Justice Leveson's support for a free press" and calls for "independent regulation of the press – independent of both government and of the industry".

Members may wish to look at the Hacked Off petition calling for Cameron, Clegg and Milliband to "implement, as soon as possible, the recommendations of the Leveson

Report in full" at www.hackinginquiry.org – and consider signing it. The proposal is far from government control, the *Freelance* observes. Over 100,000 had already signed as we went to press, less than three days after the report came out. And check www.londonfreelance.org for details of a possible special meeting on Leveson organised by NUJ London branches early in 2013.

LFB meetings
14 January 2013
Our Annual General Meeting: elect your Committee etc
11 February
Check online!
See back page &
www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB