

July 2015

Crowdfund news!

CROWDFUNDING news was the theme of June's LFB meeting. Among the speakers was Peter Jukes (www.peterjukes.com), who crowdfunded his coverage of every day of last year's phone hacking trials, then two books on these trials. He's now a columnist on byline.com, already the world's biggest crowdfunded journalism site despite being only seven weeks old. Also speaking were Peter's colleagues on byline.com Martin Hickman and Byline.com's CEO Seung Yoon: see page 4.

Given the "parlous state of journalism," said Peter, crowdfunding might be able to "help you guys out." He described "how I ended up crowdfunding" after a career of writing screenplays, scriptwriting (*Waking the Dead* included), novels and only then journalism, helped by a "series of successful accidents."

British TV ten years ago was in a "similarly parlous state" to journalism – "top heavy management, revenues down." In 2009, Peter wrote a "Why can't we write *The Wire*?" piece for *Prospect*, about how "70 per cent of BBC drama was commissioned by one man", how it was more a baronial court than a marketplace. In TV scriptwriting, this was a "career suicide note".

But "when the phone-hacking story broke, I understood about media monopolies," he noted. Via his sideline blogging for the *Daily Kos* website, whose readers' recommendations floated him to the site's front page, a publisher approached Peter to write the book that became *The Fall of the House of Murdoch*. He'd become a correspondent covering "the problems of monopolies" from News International to Google.

Initially he went to the phone hacking pre-trial hearings only "to update my book," but Peter started live-tweeting from the trial, and very quickly had 2000 followers.

He later learned that "the police didn't bother to come in, they just followed my feed" from their offices. He broke the revelation of the Coulson-Wade affair 20 seconds before the *Guardian*'s Nick Davies. Near the trial's end, he could see "everyone in court watching my tweets."

The trial, which was "supposed to be over by Christmas... went on deep into summer". Peter told his followers, "Sorry, guys, I can't afford it"... and everyone said "so crowd-fund it". He initially asked for £4000 to continue covering every day of the phone hacking trial (having a video of him on CNN helped): within six days he had £6000.

You are "owned by your audience", says Peter, but they are "90 per cent of the time helpful: they will check and spell-check you". He developed some premium perks – £25 gets you an invite to the launch party, £200 and you could have dinner with him. But even the big donors just passionately "want you to get the story out there... it's not a market equation, there's a public good that people are willing to finance."

There is "a lot of trust involved, they're pre-paying", there's a "lot of schmoozing going on" with your crowdfunders: but then "you used to have to schmooze editors."

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Peter Jukes: photo © Hazel Dunlop

Making contracts fair

AS YOU MAY have heard, the European Union's civil service, the Commission, is considering changes to the law on authors' rights – the UK incarnation of which is the copyright that you have in your work. We expect proposals in November.

In April I was one of a delegation from the European Federation of Journalists – of which the NUJ is a member – to meet EU Commissioner Günther Oettinger. The Commissioner opened by explaining that he was committed to a sustainable economic environment for journalists and other creators. He understood the arguments over authors' rights as a three-way battle between creators (authors and performers); intermediaries (publishers and broadcasters) and "users".

That was refreshing: some in the Commission, like almost all journal-

ists, insist that every battle must be between precisely two armies.

Günther Oettinger's position, as stated to us, was at least as strong as that of his predecessor Michel Barnier, who was and is widely vilified by anti-copyright forces for "blocking" their ambitions.

We raised two main issues. Firstly, the need to rein in demands for more "exceptions" to authors' rights – the rules that say when someone can use your work without asking, or paying. We gave examples of how important income from copying is, including a quote from an NUJ member about their £1000 from the collecting society ALCS, mostly for use of their work in education, making the difference between solvency and its opposite.

Secondly but primarily, we spoke of the need for regulation of the

contracts under which authors and performers, including journalists, work. The Commission would be wasting its time, we said, if it puts more effort into amending the law for "rightsholders" but still does not address this question of contracts.

For example, we understand that when in 2001 it introduced a new right for authors to licence the right of "making available", the idea was that it would guarantee authors income from the then-new online exploitation of our work – and thus fulfil the purpose of authors' rights law in ensuring the supply of high-quality new work. But there is such an imbalance of power in contract-making that we know of no cases in which journalists have been able to negotiate extra pay for exploitation

See FAIR CONTRACTS on p 3

LFB meetings

13 July

Parliamentary meeting on what can be done about unfair contracts being imposed on journalists

See back page & www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB



A smartphone will convey you directly to the Rate for the Job page (www.londonfreelance.org/rates) by means of the above QR code.

The Rate for the Job

THIS time we have rather few rates that members and others have submitted – but some with which the recipients were quite ☺ happy. We do need more rates to help update www.londonfreelance.org/fees-guide – which we can produce only if we have regular survey results.

You can submit rates online, in confidence, at any time, at www.londonfreelance.org/rates – please give not only the basic rate (e.g. for PBS, 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 ☺ few.

Broadcasting: Major UK broadcaster, producing a series of programmes, per week, negotiated up from £1200 per week, plus expenses, £1400; BBC News Channel 5-min expert pundit TV interview £75.

Photography: *Health Service Journal* day, expenses paid £260; *Which?* half-day £220; *Nursing Standard* half-day, exes paid £160; *Health Service Journal* half-day, expenses paid £160.

Punditry: University in UK one-hour talk followed by Q&A, up to one hour, £60/day subsistence + £250 max travel expenses £150.

Shifts: European NGO per day, work not specified €300; *Nature* per day, work not specified £200; *The Times* subbing day £150; *Independent*

online reporting day £85 **XXXX**; HarperCollins copy-editing per hour – member quoted Fees Guide rate and got it – £24.

Teaching: A writers' association, day teaching £450 ☺; University in UK, two-hour group activity £60/day subsistence + £250 max travel expenses £250.

Tip-offs: *Private Eye* 20-word tip-off £10 **XX**.

Words, per 1000: *VICE* 1000 words kill fee (not sure what the £60 is for – Ed) £120 + 60 **XX**; *Mirror* feature £1000 ☺; *Good Housekeeping* feature, retained copyright £666 ☺; *The Humanist* feature £550 ☺; *Classic Pop* features paid £60 per page, approx 500 words, terms vary, sometimes 3 months exclusivity £120 **XXX**; *Catworld* £30 **XXX**;

Words, other: *Sun* feature spread £1500 ☺; *Pitchfork* op-ed with a little reporting, regardless of word count, Work For Hire (US-speak for "all rights" & worse) \$150; Choose. net Consumer news writing, per piece, no exes all rights £30 **XXX**.



The Trireme Award

This month's Trireme Award, for terms and conditions "worse than I was last chained to the oars" in the words of one freelance, goes to the BBC. Its "shadow scheme" (sounds like something from *The X-Files*!) pays would-be scriptwriters £1000 for a "trial script", estimated at an average of approximately £2.38 an hour. See page 3 for the full story.

Low budgets bringing out bad behaviour

WE HEAR via an email network used by freelance editors and authors, including NUJ members, that there is "some funny stuff going on out there." Low budgets are bringing out some dodgy behaviour so we need to be on our toes.

One incident involves a packager (sub-contracted by a publisher to deliver a book to a certain format) who one member of the network helped to do a chunk of "complicated" work on material last year, for which they were paid by the pack-

ager. The packager then invoiced the publisher for the complete material. Meanwhile, the publisher who commissioned the book "package" has had a change of personnel – the new incumbent has made it clear to the packager that a change of "direction" means they have no intention of paying for what their predecessor commissioned.

They made it clear they wouldn't be getting any more commissions if they made a fuss. (Packagers often have only a very few clients, and

can't afford to upset them.) This is of course a breach of contract.

In the same sector, a writer had earlier turned down an offer of appallingly-paid editing work. They were recently asked by the same publisher to "rescue" the appalling half-finished mess the writer they eventually commissioned had produced, adding the bits the writer had left out, re-organising the text and so on – but the money offered was still rubbish and they said no.

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Register now for book cash

THOSE of you who have signed up to the Public Lending Right (PLR) scheme – it makes micro-payments to authors whenever their books are borrowed from public libraries – have until **30 June** to register their recent books with the scheme to get money for them when they're lent over the next year. Do so via www.plr.uk.com. If you've got a book published, and you've not done so already, now might be a good time to register with PLR, in plenty of time to register your titles, also by 30 June. PLR now "synchronises" with its Irish equivalent, allowing you to register for micro-payments made whenever your books are lent in libraries in the Republic of Ireland as well.

Should positive discrimination be introduced at the BBC?

FREELANCE BRANCH member Colin Joseph, who worked on Community Affairs at the BBC, asks: should positive discrimination be introduced to ensure fair representation of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities?

WORKING at the BBC can be like living in a protective rose-tinted bubble and it can be difficult to objectively analyse the corporation's achievements and objectives in a clear and dispassionate manner.

The blinkers have now been removed and I often find myself disappointed with the lack of on-air BAME representation and lack of responsible BAME focused news stories and programmes.

Is it possible the BBC is going backwards? I find it hard to believe

as an ex-employee, after researching this issue, that there has been so few gains for BAME BBC employees on and off-air.

The census in 2011 put the BAME population in the UK at 1 in 7 and set to increase: roughly the same as that of Scotland and Wales combined. Why then, as a BBC consumer and ethnic minority, do I feel that the BBC doesn't represent me?

Surfing across BBC outlets there seems to be no BAME focused programmes on air. When there is coverage on bread and butter BAME issues it's often irresponsible and lacks sensitivity (take the UKIP-like rhetoric on immigration for example).

I interviewed a number of BAME consumers of BBC services. Common responses to my questions were "the BBC doesn't represent me" and "we need to see more

BAME programmes on the BBC".

The BBC announced in June last year that a ring-fenced £2.1m Diversity Creative Talent Fund would be introduced to promote BAME employment. But how much difference will £2.1m really make? It's the cost of two episodes of *Downton Abbey*.

Simon Albury, Chair of the Campaign for Broadcasting Equality, believes the BBC will be under a lot of pressure to diversify its programme content and staff in the years ahead. "I don't think BAME communities will continue to allow themselves to be sidelined by the BBC," he said. "BAME communities are finding a voice and some are threatening not to pay the license fee because they don't see themselves represented."

● See the full piece online at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1506bame.html

The Freelance

The Freelance is covered in shame. To run a headline referring to “Stasi” – when we meant “Stasi”, for *Staatssicherheitsdienst*, the notorious security service of the former East Germany... let this this be a warning. Remember Muphry’s Law, expressed by John Bangsund thus: “if a mistake is as plain as the nose on your face, everyone can see it but you. Your readers will always notice errors in a title, in headings, in the first paragraph of anything, and in the top lines of a new page. These are the very places where authors, editors and proofreaders are most likely to make mistakes.”

Better Boost Contracts

THE NUJ organised a meeting in support of the concept of the BBC as a public service broadcaster on Wednesday 10 June at the House of Commons. Very necessary. But the BBC needs to clean up its act when it comes to dealing with contributors. It expects people to write complete scripts for free.

Bernie Corbett, late of this parish and now General Secretary of the Writers’ Guild of Great Britain, has written to (Lord) Tony Hall, Director-General of the BBC, expressing deep concern about the Corporation’s “shadow scheme” for would-

be scriptwriters. The WGGB is the trade union for scriptwriters and allied trades.

As Bernie explains: “Each writer engaged on a shadow scheme is expected to produce a trial script in the same way that an established writer creates a script for production. This involves producing up to three drafts over three months’ full-time work. The fee offered is £1000. The rate of pay works out at about £2.38 per hour – far below the national minimum wage of £6.70 per hour, let alone the London living wage of £9.15 per hour.”

After sending the letter, Bernie discovered that writers on the *East-Enders* shadow scheme don’t get paid £1000 – they get paid nothing at all. In a recent batch 12 people wrote scripts and three got commissioned. Perhaps worse still, a successful writer who has had scripts produced for, for example, hospital drama *Casualty* is expected to go through the “shadow scheme” before having a script produced for, for example, hospital drama *Holby City*. As Bernie concludes, “this is insulting to professional writers of proven ability.”

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Martin O’Hagan murder: secret terror deal claims

CLAIMS were made in the recent *Panorama* programme *Britain’s Secret Terror Deals* regarding the September 2001 murder of *Sunday World* journalist Martin O’Hagan, who was Secretary of NUJ Belfast and District Branch. He is believed to be the only journalist murdered in Northern Ireland. (See www.londonfreelance.org/ohagan1.html for the full story.)

Citing “extraordinary evidence,” *Panorama* alleged the murder of O’Hagan was “among the cases where state and paramilitary collusion is alleged to have been covered up” according to the *Independent*. The Police Ombudsman’s report

into Martin O’Hagan’s death was delayed because the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) refused to hand over “crucial” intelligence files, eventually released when Ombudsman Dr Michael Maguire threatened to take the PSNI to court. His eight-year investigation into Martin O’Hagan’s death is ongoing, noted the *Independent*.

George Hamilton, Chief Constable of the PSNI, said he “entirely refuted” *Panorama*’s suggestion that officers colluded with Mr O’Hagan’s killers. There’s a link to *Panorama: Britain’s Secret Terror Deals*, on the BBC iPlayer until 2016, from the online version of this article.



Martin O’Hagan attending the trade union event to mark May Day 2001.

Photo © Kevin Cooper

Finding out whether GCHQ spied on us gets harder

THE CAMPAIGN to find out whether we as individual journalists have been spied on by GCHQ continues, but things are now more complicated (see the April *Freelance*). Protection of sources – and our ability as journalists to continue to persuade sources to talk to us in confidence – is severely compromised once there’s blanket surveillance by intel-

ligence services of everybody’s back catalogue of phonecalls, emails and stuff they’ve ever looked up online. But Privacy International’s planned mass submission on behalf of all the signatories has been rejected by the Surveillance Commissioner. For now, all the petitioners will need to make submissions individually.

While the new Tory govern-

ment’s attempt to destroy the Human Rights Act seems stalled, the Queen’s Speech announced a new “snoopers’ charter” to make blanket surveillance of absolutely everybody legal. Looking up the longer version of this online at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1504gchq.html may expose you to state espionage.

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FAIR CONTRACTS from p 1

of this right. So the most important things we seek are collective bargaining of minimum standards for the contracts under which authors, including journalists, work; and the right for trades unions themselves to bring cases to court, rather than forcing individual freelancers to stick our heads above the parapet.

Publishers and broadcasters are currently opposing any move to deal with the unfair contracts they oppose. That’s an expected knee-jerk; all management opposes any move to regulate it, from the 1833 Factory Act or before. Publishing managements, however, have always depend on the political argument that creators must be able to make a living to defend their business model –

from legal arguments over the 1710 Statute of Anne, at least.

In late September, Günther Oettinger told us, there will be a massive consultation event on the Commission’s draft proposals. They are due to be published in November; but he indicated that he’d hold them longer if that offered an opportunity to get them right.

There are, however, signs of an odd realignment. Julia Reda is now the only Pirate Party member of the European Parliament – instinctively opposed to large companies’ use of copyright. She got the job of writing a report for the Parliament on changes to authors’ rights (and copyright) law. The Legal Committee of the Parliament was due to vote on a draft on 16 June. Julia Reda is

frustrated about the level of lobbying against “exceptions” to authors’ rights. She set up a website at www.copywrongs.eu to complain: and one of the dozen points she invites supporters to root for is to “Protect authors from unfair contracts”. Specifically: “Artists don’t have lawyers. Publishers and labels have armies of them. Guess who has the upper hand in contract negotiations? Protect artists from exploitative total buy-out contracts Europe-wide and allow them to take back their rights if unused.”

It’s going to be a hard slog, but it’s getting interesting. London Freelance Branch is holding a meeting to discuss this in Parliament on 13 July – see page 6.

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More online

- Petitions and surveys for your consideration...
- And cash awards too!
- The robots’ long march... now into the newsroom...
- Do you have one or more shares in a media company? The NUJ wants to hear from you at campaigns@nuj.org.uk
- More of us work from home, the TUC finds
- You think freelancers have it hard in the UK? In Belarus freelancing is illegal
- Multiple battles rage over ebooks

See the website www.londonfreelance.org/fl

How to do crowdfunding

MARTIN Hickman – investigative journalist with Exaro News and founder of long-form journalism publishers Canbury Press – told LFB about models for crowdfunding journalism at June's LFB meeting. Martin arrived straight from the trail of the former *News of the World* executive editor Neil Wallis on conspiracy charges related to phone hacking, having raised £3000 in crowdfunding to cover it.

Unlike his colleague Peter Jukes (see page 1), Martin was “traditionally a newspaper journalist – the *Mail*, *Eastern Daily Press*... a steady traditional newspaper career like a tractor going up a long incline very slowly.” After taking voluntary redundancy from the *Indy* a couple of years ago, he “ended up reporting the phone hacking trial for *Hacked Off*”, turning to crowdfunding to extend that trial coverage.

Crowdfunding not only brings “support for those upfront costs: you can get a very good idea of the market” from donors “coming along to the launch party” and other interactions. Martin has since co-authored *Dial M for Murdoch* and his crowdfunded book on “Plebgate” police officer Keith Wallis's trial is out soon.

Seung Yoon, CEO of crowdfunded journalism site **byline.com**, says they currently have “7000 funders, many more readers.” While some of the funders reading Byline follow an individual journalist with an established name and “visibility”, Seung Yoon explained the site's a “deliberate mix of well-known and not well-known” contributors. A

“very obscure Iraqi photojournalism agency” was “counter-intuitively the first to get funded: people felt the need to fund it.” Then there's the feminist author writing for Byline on prostitution – she got a core following within a week... It can be a *subject*, not a *person*” that people will pay to follow.

Byline is like an agency, it “doesn't have a newsroom... We're taking a cut... 15 per cent commission” (about standard for crowdfunding platforms) but for the remaining four and a half months of their launch they're waiving the commission. Byline can provide advice and support on “the tricks... how to set up rewards... helping to tweet out and stuff, tools for how to raise your profile.” Crowdfunding doesn't take your copyright. A colleague who writes for Byline sold on his Coulson perjury trail piece to the *Spectator*.

Currently it's by invitation only, but once its “culture is established,” any freelance can pitch to Byline, says Seung Yoon. How? “Put your CV out there... display samples of work” says Martin, then come to

them with your proposal for a project that you “can't start... without this money.” Peter reminded us of income from crowdfunded sources, “it's taxable.”

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Crowdfunded journalism publisher Martin Hickman (top) and Byline.com CEO Seung Yoon explain how it works

Photos: © Hazel Dunlop

Counting the cost of bringing copyright action

HAITIAN photographer Daniel Morel was rightly praised for standing up for his rights and in the end winning \$1.2 million from Agence France Press and the Getty agency for massive abuse of eight of his pictures of the earthquake that devastated Port au Prince on 12 January 2010, as reported in the November 2013 *Freelance*. But now *Photo District News* has reported on the economics of bringing the case.

Judge Alison J. Nathan of the US District Court in New York City has rejected a motion by Morel and his attorneys to recover \$2.5 million in legal fees and costs incurred during his five-year court battle. Willkie Farr & Gallagher, the law firm that tried Morel's case on a “contingency” basis, must be content with 15 percent of the jury award – \$180,000. The judge also ruled that Morel must pay \$164,583 in legal fees and expenses

to Barbara Hoffman, the attorney who originally represented him in the case. He was in early June still waiting for the \$1.2 million.

The judge ruled that the defences put by AFP and Getty “raised a relatively novel issue” and “helped define the contours of copyright law in the digital age” by testing the application of copyright law to social media. So Morel's lawyers bear the costs of entering new legal territory.

The law of England and Wales is that the losing party generally bears all the costs of a case. Joseph Baio, one of Morel's lawyers described this principle as “alien to” US law. But “I had a gas trying the case... we do enough other business at this firm so it won't break the bank.” Future victories in US law will depend on a sufficient supply of lawyers willing to work on that basis.

On a much more modest scale,

we have a reminder that even the Small Claims track in the English and Welsh courts is not without its risks. It should cost just £70 to file a claim for amounts between £500.01 and £1000 and you should get that, and the £80 hearing fee and certain expenses such as for travel, back from the defendant – if the court finds in your favour.

Recently an NUJ member went to court, and the judge didn't think the infringement was worth what the member did, and awarded less than a previous offer made by the defendant. So the member didn't get their costs. They were fortunate that the defendant – who was represented by a lawyer – did not ask for their costs, otherwise the member would have had to pay those as well. So think very hard if the other side makes an offer before the hearing.

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Shifts on offer

A regional newspaper group is looking for freelancers to work shifts throughout the year, in the London/Essex area, when staffers are on leave. On offer would be: 60-100 days subbing cover @£110 per day; 60-100 days reporter cover @£100 per day; and 5-10 days photographic cover @£100 per day plus mileage. The group would like to have a list of several freelancers in each category. Any member who is interested should contact the NUJ Freelance Office at freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk

Demystify medical data

EVER WANTED to report medical trials but were too worried about the numbers to know where to start? Medical journalist Dr Susan Mayor addressed LFB's May meeting to demystify the discipline and show members how to interpret press releases from drugs companies.

Susan was a post-doctoral researcher before retraining as a journalist. She's a former *British Medical Journal* news editor and managing editor of the *British Journal of Primary Care Nursing*. Her book *Finding the Right Molecule*, tracing the development of the drug Pradaxa, won the Communiqué award.

What hope is there for freelancers who have no scientific training? Quite a lot, Mayor insists. The first known work of medical research was not a high-powered jargon-infested affair. Written up in the Old Testament's *Book of Daniel*, it was a comparative trial of the performance-enhancing properties of the vegetable diet of the prophet Daniel and his students against the rich food eaten by King Nebuchadnezzar II's servants.

Dr Mayor elucidated key terminology for types of trials: controls; placebos; non-inferiority trials (ensuring a new treatment is no worse than existing treatment); randomised trials; blinded trials (participants don't know what they're receiving); double-blinded trials (neither the participants nor the researchers know which is the new treatment and which is the placebo or existing drug); and open label studies (subjects know which treatment they are testing, with the risk of expectations changing the outcome).

When making sense of the numbers, there are three key figures to check. First: how big is the sample? This can be low for trials involving rare diseases – 150 subjects may be acceptable for a study of a rare cancer; 4000 might be expected for a cardiovascular study. Second: how



Dr Susan Mayor explains statistics Photo © Hazel Dunlop

long was the trial run for? Follow-up research may be necessary. Third: the completeness of follow-up and how many subjects dropped out.

There are several key concepts in how the results are calculated.

There's the mean – the normal average value (add all figures and divide by the number of figures). And there's the median: the middle value of an ascending range of numbers. There's also the hazard ratio. This is the chance of the hazard (for example, the recurrence of cancer) in the treatment group, divided by the chance in the control group. A hazard ratio of 0.66 equals a 34 per cent reduction of hazard.

And there's the confidence ratio, to assess how reliable the treatment would be for people outside the trial. How reliable the results of the study are is more typically reflected in the "p-value". This assesses the probability of an observed effect having happened by chance. A result with a p-value of 0.5 is no use: there is a 1 in 2 chance it is just randomness. The p-value must be 0.05 (1 in 20) or lower for the result to be significant.

Absolute risk reduction is the inci-

dence of hazard (for example death) in treated subjects against regular treatment, expressed as the difference between the percentage risks.

Relative risk reduction is the proportion by which an event rate is reduced (a ratio).

To summarise: check the mean and median, hazard ratio, confidence interval and p-value of any study on which you're basing a story.

Dr Mayor offered a checklist for analysing research papers:

- What question is the research asking? Is it useful?
- What were the main findings?
- How meaningful are these findings? (look at the confidence interval and p-value)
- Are the findings credible?
- Who carried out the research? Are they reputable?
- Who funded the research? This is typically disclosed at the end of a study
- Where was the research published? Was it peer-reviewed?

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• The much longer version at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1506stat.html has more detail.

New members meet – 30/07/15

There's a meeting for new and recently-joined members of NUJ London Freelance Branch on Thursday 30 July. It's a chance to meet other people new to the Branch, and there will also be some more experienced working journalist Branch members on hand with advice and tips. The meeting's from 6pm at the Camera Café, Museum Street, London WC1 (nearest Tube Holborn). These meetings take place on the last Thursday of every third month.



I prefer not to cross picket lines

FREELANCE journalist and NUJ member Martin Lewis of moneysavingexpert.com (he spoke to LFB in 2013, pictured above, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1305lewi.html) declined to turn up to do his regular Deals of the Week spot on ITV's *Good Morning Britain* on 14 May, the day of the one-day strike by NUJ and technicians' union Bectu over a two per cent pay offer. Martin tweeted that "As [an] NUJ member I prefer not to cross picket lines."

Photo: Richard Lipman www.lipmanfilms.com

Strikes at Newsquest South London

AS THE *Freelance* was in pageproof on 17 June, National Union of Journalists members at titles in South London owned by Newsquest were about to start a twelve-day strike.

This was due to go on – barring concessions – until midnight on Tuesday 30 June and to be followed by a period of work-to-rule. (See www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1305rule.html for what a work-to-rule is.)

Titles affected include the *Croydon Guardian*, *Sutton Guardian*, *Epsom Guardian*, *Wimbledon Guardian*, *Wand-*

sworth Guardian, *Balham and Tooting Guardian*, *Mitcham and Morden Guardian*, *Kingston Guardian*, *Surrey Comet*, *Elmbridge Comet*, *the Richmond & Twickenham Times* and the *News Shopper* series, which has editions in Dartford, Lewisham, Greenwich, Gravesend, Bexley and Bromley.

London Freelance Branch will, if necessary, consider making a donation to the strike fund at its July meeting (check www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html).

As always, in the event that industrial action at Newsquest South con-

tinues, NUJ members at the affected titles would very much appreciate it if any freelancers who are asked to work at these titles on strike days discovered that you were unavailable on those days. Please watch this space and www.nuj.org.uk/news for updates.

Also, on 8 June members took to the streets against Phil Turner, chair of the office union group (known as the Father of Chapel) at the Newsquest *Rotherham Advertiser* being singled out for redundancy. See bit.ly/SupportPhilT for a report.

LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Making contracts fair – in Parliament

THE IMPOSITION of unfair contracts on journalists and other creators is gathering pace as a political issue – see page 1. London Freelance Branch is holding a meeting to discuss this in Parliament on **Monday 13 July**. What can be done to protect journalists (and other authors and performers) from unfair contracts, ranging from those that force us to give up all rights to those that demand we fund any court cases?

Our speakers are Chris Bryant, Labour MP for Rhondda and Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport; and Tim Clement-Jones, the LibDem Lord to whom all members of both Houses of Parliament turn when anything comes up about copyright. We have invited Members from the Conservative and Scottish National Parties.

You will need to arrive at the top of the ramp down to the tourists' entrance to the Houses of Parliament in good time for security checks. Tell the official at the top you are attending the NUJ meeting (currently scheduled to be in Com-

mittee Room 4a). ID is not required. How early you need to be depends on what else is on in the Palace of Westminster. We currently recommend getting there before 18:15.

There is, as usual, no Branch meeting in August.

On **Monday 14 September** we will back at Friends' House, hearing from Dorothy Byrne, head of C4 News and Current Affairs. The *Freelance* hopes for tips on how we can get commissioned by C4.

And on **Monday 9 October** our speaker will be Graham Hayday, who is head of studio at Guardian Labs. We hope he will be speaking about the ethical and journalistic issues raised by "sponsored content". It was of course the *Guardian* that parodied its own "Wonderful Ruritania" supplements with a special pull-out from the government of San Seriffe on 1 April 1977. How things have changed since then! How?

This went to press on **16 June**. Your deadline for the September print edition is **14 August**

LFB meetings are from 7pm to 9pm and (except in July and December) at Friends House, Euston Road, NW1 2BJ (opposite Euston Station), which is accessible to people who use wheelchairs. Please exercise discretion if Tweeting or streaming from meetings: see this page, below. If you need the Branch to pay for care for a child or dependent so you can attend an LFB meeting, call a Branch officer. If you have difficulty reading the agenda on paper, please contact agenda@londonfreelance.org to get it in electronic form.

For updates on meetings and confirmation of the speakers at meetings throughout 2015, see www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html and LFB's Twitter feed [www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB](https://twitter.com/NUJ_LFB).

NOTE that the Branch rules now allow notice of meetings and motions to be sent by email. If you are not getting such notices, go to www.londonfreelance.org/linkup now.

For details of NUJ London Photographers' Branch meetings, see www.londonphotographers.org

FREELANCE

Branch contacts: www.londonfreelance.org/lfb
Online Freelance contents: www.londonfreelance.org/fl

BRANCH MATTERS

Recording or live-tweeting LFB meetings

THE BRANCH reminds its members that the "work matters" discussion at London Freelance Branch meetings is confidential: no recording or tweeting of this section of the meeting is allowed. LFB Standing Order 10 refers to the NUJ's "Rule 18(1) concerning unauthorised disclosure of confidential Union or Branch Business, which also provides that in anything members may publish on Branch or Union affairs they shall

not imply that they are giving anything but their own individual views." See www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/rules.html for the full whack.

Speakers who agree to come to talk at LFB – for free – do so in the spirit of talking to colleagues and (usually) fellow trade unionists, to whom they may make comments not intended for a wider public. When speakers are invited to speak at LFB they are informed that the *Freelance*

will be running a report of their talk online and in print, and inviting them to flag up any parts of their talk that may not be for publication.

Speakers at LFB meetings have from time to time prefaced comments by saying they're off the record, at which point you will see the *Freelance* team temporarily cease typing. We otherwise welcome live tweeting of meetings mentioning the Branch identity [@NUJ_LFB](https://twitter.com/NUJ_LFB).

Vacancy – LFB Welfare Officer

THERE'S still a vacancy on the London Freelance Branch Committee for a second Welfare Officer to support Arjum Wajid, who is currently flying solo in the Branch's Welfare Officer post. Where possible, LFB has always tried to have two welfare officers – ideally one female and one male. For what the post entails, see www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/jobs.html and contact a member of the Branch Committee (see above) if you are interested in standing.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

FREELANCE UNCLASSIFIEDS are FREE to members for non-commercial purposes. To non-members and for commercial purposes, £10 for this much. Acceptance is at the editors' whim; appearance does not imply endorsement. If you have any comments on an advertiser, tell us. Submit ads by email to unclassified@londonfreelance.org

WANT TO TRY YOUR HAND at fiction? Creative writing courses at The Groucho Club and other central London venues will help inspire you and develop your craft. Details, dates and prices at www.writingcourses.org.uk

I AM SEEKING to diversify so have stated trading in vinyl records. So, fair prices paid for good condition records – in particular, rock, pop, soul, jazz, blues, folk, ska/reggae, Latin, Samba/bossa, African, contemporary beats. Also avant-garde. Collections mainly limited to the

London area at present. And if you're looking for a particular record, try me. Mike: at info@vinylvanguard.com.

WRITER REQUIRED to write monthly newsletter. Neutrado! send out a monthly newsletter to subscribers and are looking for a freelance writer to compile this and send out via Mail Chimp. Please email: mark.davis@msg.co.uk

GALLOWAY COTTAGE. Wood-burning stove and games room. One mile from Scotland's book town, two minutes walk to good village pub and distillery. Beautiful countryside and unspoiled beaches. woodpeckercottage@btinternet.com or see our website at woodpecker-cottage.co.uk

SPORTS REPORTER or voiceover artist? Portable ISDN broadcast units for hire with carry case, ISDN lead and headphones/mic. Short or long term hire availability: nickr80@hotmail.co.uk

TRAINING TIME

CHECK OUT the courses offered by the NUJ, at reasonable rates to members: Getting Started as a Freelance – tips that are useful whether you are moving from staff or new to journalism – **16 October**; Pitch & Deal – getting what you're due for your work – **30 October**, both in London. See www.nuj.org.uk/events

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The robots' long march

THIS SPRING saw a spate of books worrying us about the potential for artificial intelligence to take over "white-collar" work. In particular, in *Rise of the Robots* software entrepreneur Martin Ford asserts that websites such as **Forbes.com** are making more use than they admit of software like Quill, which generates news reports from raw data.

The book appeared at the same time as *Culture Crash* by Scott Timberg, who was an arts reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* before the paper cut its culture coverage, and *The Internet is Not the Answer* by CNN columnist Andrew Keen.

Interestingly, all three acknowl-

edge their intellectual debt to *Who Owns the Future?*, a 2013 book by Jaron Lanier, the researcher who coined the term "virtual reality" (see the *March Freelance*). Once again, Lanier has started a trend.

And in George Gissing's *New Grub Street* we find this:

"A few days ago her startled eye had caught an advertisement in the newspaper, headed 'Literary Machine'; had it then been invented at last, some automaton to supply the place of such poor creatures as herself, to turn out books and articles?"

"Alas! The machine was only for holding volumes conveniently, that the work of literary manufacture

might be physically lightened. But surely before long some Edison would make the true automaton; the problem must be comparatively such a simple one.

"Only to throw in a given number of old books and have them reduced, blended, modernised into a single one for today's consumption."

Others who have until now failed to read Gissing's wonderful documentary fiction of publishing toil should know that it was published in 1891. He thus raises the image, lovely to some, of a coal-fired artificial journalist crafted from black iron and polished brass...

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Freelancing? That were luxury!

You think freelances have it hard in the UK? In Belarus freelancing is illegal. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) is extremely concerned by the increasing numbers of fines imposed on Belarusian freelance journalists for "illegal creation of mass media production" since April 2014. On 1 June Ina Shayko, judge of the Dziarzhynsk district court, ruled against journalists Volha Chaychyts and Siarhei Krauchuk and demanded them to pay 5,400,000 rubles each (€310 or £220). For more see: www.europeanjournalists.org/blog/2015/06/08/belarus-imposes-more-fines-on-freelance-journalists

More of us work from home

PEOPLE working from home – which would include many of the NUJ's freelances for at least some of the time – made up 13.7 of the UK's workforce as of early June, up from 12 per cent in 2005.

That's according to the *Independent*, which quotes Office for National Statistics data and a recent TUC analysis of "government figures". This has 800,000 people becoming "home workers" over the last decade, with a total working-from-home workforce of 4.2 million.

The figure includes staff who are

allowed to work for their bosses from home at least some of time, as well as the self-employed. The more senior your position if you are an employee, the more likely you are to be able to negotiate some kind of working-from-home arrangement – one in five managers surveyed seem to have pulled this off.

The remainder are the self-employed – with four fifths of workers from home being male, reflecting the fact that a majority of the total UK self-employed workforce (two thirds) are male.

See Andrew Bibby's ready reckoner for the amount you save your clients in overheads by working from home: it's at www.andrewbibby.com/reckoner.html

This factors in the "costs of providing premises" to the employee, coming up with a figure of £7750 per "workstation" per year. Andrew admits this is an average for the UK, which considerably underestimates how much it would cost the client to run a workstation in London. It's worth mentioning when negotiating rates for work done at home.

Bad books blocked and contracts queried

THE PUBLISHERS' Association has obtained an order in the High Court requiring internet service providers BT, Virgin Media, Sky, TalkTalk and EE to block access to seven sites that offer unauthorised copies of ebooks. These purport to hold around 10,000,000 ebook titles and have been making substantial sums of money, primarily through referral fees and advertising. None of this money has been going back to either the publishers or the authors of the works. See the Society of Authors' report at bit.ly/BadBooks-Blocked

Meanwhile in Brussels, the Eu-

ropean Commission on 11 June launched an inquiry into "certain business practices by Amazon in the distribution of electronic books". It says this is particularly to do with clauses that "require publishers to inform Amazon about more favourable or alternative terms offered to Amazon's competitors and/or offer Amazon similar terms and conditions than to its competitors, or through other means ensure that Amazon is offered terms at least as good as those for its competitors." This "may make it more difficult for other e-book distributors to compete with Amazon".

And, though perhaps few *Freelance* readers are directly affected by the working conditions of artistes with 24 platinum discs to display in the toilet (for just 5 titles)... it may be of significance for the future of online creativity that one Taylor Swift forced the Apple corporation to backtrack on a plan to force musicians to give work away for three months to promote, er, Apple's new online music venture. The corporation announced on 22 June that it would pay for downloads from day one of the service: which incidentally received rather a lot of publicity.

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Award alert! Sound science prize

You have until **20 August** to submit your entry for the John Maddox prize for "sound" science journalism. Unusually among awards we've recently come across, rather than just covering you in glory it offers some actual money! Two thousand quid's-worth of money, in fact. (The winner was also be covered in glory, getting their own spot in *Nature*.) To enter: www.senseaboutscience.org/pages/maddox-prize-2015.html and see page 5 for the report on a recent LFB meeting on reporting on medical science.

Petition, consultation, survey

PLEASE consider signing the following petition and completing the following survey and submitting to the following consultation:

● **Petition:** call on Minister for Culture John Whittingdale MP to protect the BBC and ensure it has the necessary resources to remain as a strong impartial voice both in the UK and globally. It's at https://secure.avaaz.org/en/uk_

media_33/?v=58368 - Whittingdale, former Chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has hosted LFB and Society of Authors gigs at the House of Commons (see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1106hoc.html in 2011) and made intelligent observations on the need for enforcement of copyright and on related subjects, so he is not entirely unsympathetic.

● **Survey:** The NUJ is gathering evidence of editorial pressures being applied on journalists by proprietors and advertisers. Please respond (in confidence) at www.surveymonkey.com/s/WPFsurvey

● **Consultation:** ACLS members respond to their consultation on proposals for Extended Collective Licensing. Details: www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1503alcs.html