

Refer to central accounts!

THE *FREELANCE* presents more small tales of freelancers fighting that good fight not to work for free... These have lately joined our set of necessarily-anonymous stories.

Freelance A is asked to appear on BBC1's *One Show* as an "expert". He inquires of the director about the fee and gets this response: "unfortunately we don't pay contributors... exposure would be more valuable than money".

Freelance A's stout contribution to our war of attrition against such claims was to just say no.

Others, however, pitched into the freelance email group exchange that followed, to say they'd had different experiences of different bits of the

Beeb – one size does not fit all in the sprawling Corporation.

Freelance B, for example, was invited to do an expert pundit spot on Radio 6 Live. "The initial offer of nothing did not attract," says she. Immediately an offer of 50 quid came back. The not inexperienced Freelance B "then referred them to central accounts to see the level of fees I had been paid for a variety of BBC national and regional transmissions over the years".

This is a wheeze new to all on-lookers in terms of the reference to "central accounts" – very Beeb. A few days later, the proffered £50 became £100 and Freelance B accepted, plus an already established

45p per mile for her transactions with the Corporation.

Most freelancers who occasionally chat on the radio agreed £50 or £100 can generally be squeezed out via negotiation. However, Freelance C pitched in with a recent personal best he'd achieved for talking headery, namely £200 plus travel.

Also via an NUJ network we get news of a colleague asked to do a *Newsnight* pundit spot. He asks for a fee and they say "we don't pay – but we can offer you a disturbance fee". It's £75, he takes it, though guffawing about the terminology.

Just anecdotes *pour encourager les autres* and to encourage you.

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Drone dosh!

The *Freelance* congratulates photographer Eddie Mitchell for his successful challenging of Alamy over its unlicensed use of his aerial drone image of a fire at a school that made national headlines in August. He took the company to Worthing County Court in December. What's scary is that, as Mitchell told *Press Gazette*, it emerged in court that Alamy receives over 2 million images a day and is not able to verify the source of supplied pictures. This one was supplied to Alamy by a contributor who had downloaded it from a news website. The agency – traditionally one of those less hostile to photographers – settled for £750 before the case went any further. Mitchell settles separately with *The Times* and with the *Daily Express*.

Public Lending Right to cover ebooks

A EUROPEAN Court of Justice ruling in November removed obstacles to Public Lending Right (PLR) payments to authors for library lending of their ebooks. Culture Minister Matt Hancock then announced that the ruling would "inform the wording" of a clause on ebook lending and PLR to be inserted by the UK Government in the Digital Economy Bill, currently in the House of Lords

and expected to get royal assent this Spring. Watch this space.

Meanwhile, authors who've signed up to PLR (for both the UK and the Republic of Ireland) can soon expect micropayments for each time their book's lent at a public library. These already cover a limited amount of ebook lending – occasions on which borrow-

ers bring their laptops in to a public library and have ebooks on loan downloaded onto them. If you have a book (or a chapter of an anthology) out, details of the PLR scheme and the "free money" it pays to authors are at www.plr.uk.com

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Why you should hang on to your rights

THERE SEEMS little doubt that the value of syndication has gone down with the general decline of print media and the availability of our work online. Time was, writers in some fields could regularly do a piece for the *Bugle* in London and sell it on to the *Echo* in Melbourne. If the *Bugle*

sells it on they should pay the writer half what they get. It's not dead, though. One member reports in the past three months getting £550 from a Japanese mag for a Pink Floyd piece that appeared in *Mojo* about 10 years ago; and £80 from a small US mag for a piece on AC/DC for *Sounds*

back in 1976. Both of these were sold on through the rocksbackages.com online music journalism library, which took 50 per cent of the fee it got. This member is definitely pleased they didn't sign away their copyright – if they had, the UK mags would have kept the lot.

The Freelance on the go: how is it for you?

We've updated the *Freelance* newsletter and *Freelance Fees Guide* online to work better on more handheld devices – see www.londonfreelance.org/fl and www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide. Initial responses have been positive; but there are hundreds of different configurations of device and software to cater for. We know that if you use the web browser program Microsoft Internet Explorer, version 8 or earlier, it will look strange. You'd want to upgrade that anyway, to avoid viruses and other malware. Apologies, then, if you find anything broken. If you do, please email debug@londonfreelance.org telling us what page you were visiting and the name and version number of the browser program you used to try to visit it. (As above, "Microsoft Internet Explorer version 8" is a well-formed answer to that question; "Safari version 10.0" is another). With your feedback, we'll work through the rest of the site.

Their Paid Appearances

THE OXFORD Literary Festival saw its patron, Philip Pullman, resign in protest at plans to ask authors to appear for free. Following this and a campaign by the Society of Authors (SoA) it has agreed henceforth to pay its authors a fee of £150 (plus VAT where applicable).

As Pullman noted, a festival "pays the people who supply the mar-

quees, it pays the printers who print the brochure" – as well as paying for venue hire, for people to do admin and PR, for electricity, for the food and drink laid on. So why can't they the people the punters come for, the authors? He told *The Author* he was "extremely pleased" at the outcome.

An SoA survey of literary festival organisers back in 2015 found that

of the 17 who replied, 12 paid fees to authors, ranging from £100 to £1000, mostly within the still rather modest £150-£200 range.

For recent examples of how NUJ freelancers have talked up offers of zero for punditry and being on a panel at festivals into meaningful fees, often through quick thinking on the spot, see the top of this page.

Understanding & surviving precarious work – event details

PRECARITY from page 1

- Nicola Hawkins – an executive council member for young members in Equity (the actors' union). Nicola notes that "I find myself working in all kinds of industries and doing all kinds of jobs between acting work."
- John Toner – Freelance Organiser for the NUJ. He has seen has seen the thorny problem of employment

status growing from an occasional query to something the Freelance Office advises on every other day. "It is a boil that needs lancing," he says.

Book now!

The event is from 5-9pm on **Saturday 11 March** in the Brockway Room at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. The

event is free but, because of the costs involved in hiring the venue and ordering food/drink, we ask you to pay a £10 deposit, which will be returned after attendance (or on giving at least 5 days' notice of your not coming).

To get a ticket please go to www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1702prec.html