

Random 'zines enthrall you

NINE YEARS ago, when Steve Watson founded Stack magazines service (www.stackmagazines.com), "all the chat was about 'Print is dead.' And thank goodness, people have stopped talking about 'Print is dead' quite so much now." Stack sends subscribers an issue of a different indie magazine each month.

Steve was speaking at the November London Freelance Branch meeting alongside editors of independent women's magazines in print – Alice

Snape of *Oh Comely* and Elizabeth Krohl of *Sabat*; see page 1 for reports of their presentations.

At the mainstream "big end" of print magazines: if they're not dead they're not in very good health; but "Independents are flourishing when the mainstream is really struggling."

Why's that? Mostly, "technology". The creativity behind indie titles is "the same impulse" as YouTube videos or releasing music on Bandcamp. Most print magazines start life as

digital files, with collaborators – who may be in several countries – working in "the cloud". Print innovations make "smaller runs to really high quality" feasible.

Even though you're an indie title, you're still allowed to be a success, to earn a living from it and pay others for their contributions. Indy women's title *The Gentlewoman* is a big success story – a "professional magazine with a ton of advertising". More of the indies are making the transition into something that's more like a business that pays contributors.

The other secret of the indie renaissance is print itself. At a Professional Publishers Association meeting, senior "big publishing" people told Steve that today "we don't really talk about print... we're a brand." Steve replied that the independent magazines and their readers "love print". Steve described *Double Dagger*, a letterpress magazine done on 50-year-old Heidelberg printing press, "ancient technology" but "so crisp" in a way that only proper print can be. Its readers proudly share pictures of their copy of it on social media.

With the "content excess" of Sky, Vimeo, Amazon and others, people expect that if there's not something tailor-made for them, there should be. The internet means "these magazines are a global business... they sell around the world." Now shops all over the country (including Artwords, Ideas on Paper and Magazine Brighton) are selling these titles, we're seeing more indie magazines than ever before.

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• There's an information sheet on indie print magazine titles and who to pitch to linked from this article at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1712stac.html

• Discount code "NUJ" gets you 10 per cent off on the Stack website.



Steve Watson with a "big success story" among independent women's magazines, *The Gentlewoman*

Photo: © Hazel Dunlop

Public Lending Right changes

If you have had a book published – or had words or pictures in a book – you're entitled to Public Lending Right payments to compensate you for loss of sales that may result from libraries lending it out. Back in the last government's Bonfire of the Quangos – how innocent those times seem now! – the Public Lending Right organisation was taken over by the British Library. The website you need to visit to claim what's due to you – including, recently, payments for lending in Ireland – is now moving, to www.bl.uk/plr

Copyright debate trundles on in Geneva and Brussels

THERE ARE some encouraging signs on international policy on authors' rights. The World Intellectual Property Organization is the United Nations body responsible for these and twice a year 200-odd diplomats gather in Geneva for its Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights. The biggest item on its agenda in recent years has been a push to widen "exceptions" that permit use of works protected by authors' rights and copyright for the benefit of schools, colleges, libraries, museums and archives.

This has been promoted by Latin American countries, perhaps largely motivated by the huge cost in local terms of academic journals and law books. Brazil showed a change in emphasis on 15 November by saying that it makes no sense to improve access to knowledge if there are no incentives for the production of knowledge. It supports work on a treaty to put these exceptions into international law; but decisions can only be taken when all countries concur, and the US and the European Union do not support such a treaty.

The International Federation of

Journalists introduced its remarks on this by noting that it represents 600,000 journalists in 140 countries worldwide, North and South. It recognises the importance of libraries and archives and museums.

The IFJ notes, too, the number of delegations referring to the needs of the digital environment. One feature of that is that libraries and archives in effect act as publishers, making their holdings available off-site. As its representative I noted that "some countries whose citizens must pay higher prices in local terms are seeking to flood their own market with my works, distributed without payment to me – which causes rather more damage to authors working in their own culture and language than it does to me. Supporting a diversity of authorship is essential, and that means fair remuneration for authors when our works are made available to the public."

Back in 2015 Brazil proposed a strand of discussion in the Committee on copyright in the digital environment. At this meeting a significant portion of Brazil's introduction of the proposal called for trans-

parency over what money for use of copyright works ends up where. We had a presentation from Professor Jane Ginsburg on the "value chain" through which payment reaches authors and performers – or doesn't. There was a most interesting exchange between Brazil and the Professor, with both speaking warmly of the proposals on transparency in the European Union's draft Directive to amend the law on copyright.

The IFJ reminded delegates that exploiters of copyright frequently do not understand the contracts which they "offer" journalists and that when those that are agile and flexible are asked what rights they need, they frequently reconsider. Professor Ginsburg agreed, and that gives her optimism for the future.

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• For a full report of the Geneva event, including warmth toward artists' rights and hints of an exception to allow use of works for the "hard of thinking," see www.londonfreelance.org/fl1711wipo.html – and for more thoughts on the EU plans www.londonfreelance.org/fl1711copy.html

New members meet again

For members new to LFB or recently joined, or new to freelancing, there's a meeting on **Thursday 25 January 2018**. It's a chance to meet other new members, with some more experienced journalists on hand to offer advice, hear about the mission of the union, discover some of the resources on LFB's website www.londonfreelance.org and discuss work issues. It's at the Camera Museum, Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY on **Thursday 26 October**, from 6pm. The nearest Tube is Holborn. These regular meetings are on the last Thursday of every third month. For a report on a successful new members' meeting earlier this year, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1706newm.html