Tech, less terror

JOURNALIST, EDITOR and writer Cassie Werber, co-founder and board member of Hacks/Hackers London, came to the September London Freelance Branch meeting to tell us about collaborations between journalists and techies in a world where these distinctions are, some say, increasingly blurred.

Cassie was formerly a theatre director and then an energy reporter for WSJ, among other journalism gigs. She now writes for Quartz online magazine.

Quartz is an example of the type of project presented by visiting speakers to the Hack/Hackers London monthly meet-ups. In contrast to WSJ, “a fairly traditional news room with a content management system”, in Quartz “there is not really any divide between the journalists” and the techies. The magazine has a “WordPress backend” platform: journalists write copy straight into this production system. They also “do their own tagging” (with keywords to help search engines find the story); do “chartbuilding” (making infographics, pie-charts and the like); do “search engine optimisation” tweaks; and “source and edit images… create a package” to send to their editor.

Journos at Quartz don’t do deep tech. There is a team of people who code and who do the “back end tech”. The publication is still a startup, the baby of the long-established US print magazine The Atlantic. Eventually Quartz will have its own advertising revenue stream. These and other projects or “pitches” for “digitally done differently” are the sort of thing that gets discussed at Hacks/Hackers London. The people who go to the meetings are not actual hackers in the sense of breaking into computer systems, but aim to embody the earlier sense of doing “at least one marriage.”

Hacks/Hacker’s London’s popularity, though, means you’ll have to be alert to get tickets to their gigs, which are released a few at a time in advance.

They have a network of “about 5000” and room for 200 at their events, which they don’t want to make any bigger. Watch their website for details www.meetup.com/HacksHackersLondon – the next one’s on 19 October at Twitter UK.

Cassie Werber of Hacks/Hackers London

Photo © Hazel Dunlop – see her prison pictures at http://inside.hazeldunlop.com

Brussels sprouted leaks

WHATSOEVER happens between the UK and the EU in the next few years, developments in EU policy are important here. It’s possible that the UK government will agree to comply with future EU rules in return for tariff-free access to the Single Market – the “Norwegian model”. We don’t know, and we don’t believe government has the faintest idea. Even if the hardcore Brexiteers win out, EU policy will set the main context for UK developments. And in September we were hit with a spate of leaks from the EU Commission – its civil service – on plans to change the law on authors’ rights and copyright. Then these seem to have brought on the official propsal – a Draft Directive – a little earlier than expected.

The proposals are quite modest, and parts of them may indeed provide a platform for opposition to the expected efforts by Google, Facebook and company to move UK law in the direction of US copyright law post-Brexit, whatever that may be.

As expected, the Draft Directive does not live up to the pleasing noises made by their bosses the Commissioners (see the July Freelance) on dealing with the unfair contracts imposed on us. The failure to directly address imposed contract terms and conditions is an example of doing “at least one marriage.”
The Rate for the Job

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 – 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 record rates paid in € 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: RTE Six-One News (TV) live correspondent two-way, in studio, from abroad £60 XXX.

Photography: Major news weekly, use of one photo from US museum in news weekly – note online use is much more $50 + $125; Vice, perpetual online usage, day – 7 hours, £150 + 0 XX and half-day – 4 hours, travel and accommodation paid, £150 + 0 X; One member’s going rates for video: commissioned news feature/report £720; commissioned filming and editing day £600; day shooting £400; one second of archive, per platform per second (1 minute broadcast once = €360) €6.

Shifts: BBC News website subbing or reporting day (10 hours) £204 XXX and shorter reporting day £192 X; Red Bulletin 7 hours (subbing or reporting?) £150; Daily Mail picture editing day, self-billing and PAYE £150.

Teaching: Federation of Entertainment Unions (FEU) teaching day £350 for 1st lesson, thereafter £400, plus exes; City Lit, London teaching day, no expenses £206 X.

Translation: unnamed Public Relations departments translations of PR texts and newspaper articles per 1000 words £80.

Words, per 1000: Neddoctor.co.uk 970 words @ £200, all rights, elsewhere higher = £206 + 0; lonelyplanet.com £60 “expenses” for images, all rights £180 X; Huck magazine reporting, 840 words @ £50 + 10 photos £59 XXX; New Statesman (online for The Staggers) £75 XX; New Statesman CityMetric (down from £80 which was bad in 1991!) £50 XXXX; McGraw publications, news and features, all rights, no expenses £300; Wonderlust extensive research and photography, expenses £500 – work done unpaid but with view to securing paid work; submitted 2 articles, no paid work followed – £0 X.

Words, other: Unnamed digital magazine 4-6 pieces/month of 1000 words length each, monthly rate, travel costs paid £1500.

Go home on time!

Wednesday 5 October is this year’s Go Home On Time Day, organised by the Working Families Organization and others. The day seeks to raise awareness of work-life balance issues, and is open to all, regardless of whether or not they have families. It encourages people to, as its name suggests, go home on time from work. Details are at www.bit.ly/GHoT2016

Negotiation: always worth a whirl

THE FREELANCE presents some more small tales of freelancers fighting that good fight not to work for free… Freelance A, asked to appear on BBC1’s One Show as an “expert”, enquires about the fee and the director tells him “unfortunately we don’t pay”. Helpfully, he advises Freelance A that his “exposure would be more valuable than money”. Freelance A’s stout contribution to our war of counter-attrition was to just say “no”.

However, others pitched into discussing this in a freelance email group exchange. They’d had different experiences of different bits of the BBC. Freelance B was invited to comment:

EU COPYRIGHT from page 1 particularly prices is hard to reconcile with a Commission Impact Assessment. This repeatedly asserts that payments to authors (including journalists) would automatically rise if the scope of the licences being paid for broadcast use of our work was expanded to the whole EU. This does not match our experience of how broadcasters and (particularly) “independent” producers operate. The two pro-creator measures in the Directive could, however, be interesting. One demands transparent accounting for uses of work – particularly interesting for photographers. The other is a provision for authors and performers to request additional remuneration when what was first agreed “is disproportionately low compared to the subsequent relevant revenue” from the work. This allows at least for a share of “windfall” profits; could it do more? The European Federation of Journalists has welcomed these proposals, as has book author Philip Pullman for the Society of Authors.

There has been worry over the crucial question of income that journalists get through collecting societies for use of our works in education. The Draft Directive at least allows the current payments through collecting societies in the UK to continue. There is a controversial proposal for newspapers – not journalists – to claim money when snippets are used by search engines. There is also a draft Regulation designed to encourage the availability of television programmes across borders. It would, if passed, take immediate effect in all member states, and provide that use of authors’ and performers’ work online simultaneously and in “catch-up” can only be licensed through collecting societies. This may be all very well in practice, but it’ll never work in theory, as explained at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1610copy.html

The Trireme Award

This month’s Trireme Award, for “the worst terms since I was last chained to the oars...” goes to Wanderlust mag, for the old trick of holding out the promise of paid work just long enough to get free copy.

© Mike Holderness

© Phil Sutcliffe
Freelance fightback

MUCH IS happening in the field of rights for freelances, sometimes known as “precarious workers”. This includes developments around couriers and delivery drivers who have been coerced into accepting “self-employed” status on piecemeal rates, lacking the benefits employee status brings, when they are employees in all but name.

NUJ President and LFB member Tim Dawson notes in his “President’s Platform” the recent victory by “self-employed” bike, motorbike and moped couriers at Deliveroo London (www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1609prez.html).

The self-employed Deliveroo riders – organised as the couriers’ branch of the Independent Workers union of Great Britain (IWGB), fought off attempts by management to impose pay cuts and new zero-hours contracts. They successfully crowdfunded a strike fund to see them through the dispute. When management called in individual couriers to offer them each better terms, they stood their ground and held out for collective bargaining.

As we go to press, the threat of imposed new Deliveroo contracts is off the table, in London at least, with industrial action suspended during a “trial” of new agreed arrangements. The dispute caused Her Majesty’s Government to “clarify” that self-employed workers can only be self-employed if HMRC says they can.

Delivery drivers at UberEats, also organised by the IWGB, held a one-day strike in August over changes to contract, piece-meal rates and “employment status.” And Business Secretary Margot James has now asked HMRC to investigate “arrangements” by Hermes, who engage “self-employed” couriers paid by the parcel for John Lewis deliveries. The Guardian reported that some Hermes couriers ended up earning less than minimum wage. Also, a crowdfunded Industrial Tribunal case brought by IWGB by bike couriers over their “false designation as self-employed” will be heard in November.

As also noted by Tim, the NUJ “has battled on behalf of precarious workers for over a century… The NUJ has been insisting on fair pay for freelances from the outset… that fight continues to this day… The NUJ’s approach recognises that the vast majority of the self-employed are neither entrepreneurs nor business, but workers. They need union protection as much, if not more, than those with permanent contracts.”

In September the NUJ and Equity took a motion to the Trades Union Congress calling on the labour movement to commit itself to creating a better statutory backdrop for freelances. It was passed. The NUJ is also asking the International Labour Organization to adopt a convention covering the rights of freelances.

A possible special LFB event on genuinely freelance workers (freelance by choice), precarious workers and “false freelances” coerced into self-employed contracts is planned for March 2017, possibly to include workers in the IWGB union couriers’ branch. Guy Standing, an economist specialising in precarity, has been invited. Watch this space.

Not working for free: precarity presentation

LONDON FREELANCE Branch members Richenda Power and David Wilkins attended the Fifth International Conference on Precarious Work and Vulnerable Workers at Middlesex University in June. Richenda presented, on behalf of LFB, “Freelance workers do not work ‘for free’.” She outlined the work of LFB, as we see an increasing proportion of freelances within the Union (more than 40 per cent of total NUJ new member applications). David, who chaired one of the sessions, highlighted the pressures on today’s journalists, who are expected to be able to do absolutely everything. He provided an example of disability discrimination: a training institution told him that he could no longer be a journalist if unable to create video or to use social media. (He is a journalist with visual and hearing difficulties.) The “Freelance workers do not work ‘for free’” slideshow will be linked from www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1609prec.html

We are an evil cartel, no?

“TO KNOW your enemy is to better your chances of eventual victory”, wrote Sun Tzu in The Art Of War. So an eyeball-to-eyeball encounter with one of the European Union’s competition tars provided a rare chance to understand the frustrations placed in the way of unions working on behalf of freelance journalists and other creators.

My encounter came at the concluding conference of “The future of work in the media, arts and entertainment sector”, a two-year project to consider the challenges faced by our sector and organised by the European Federation of Journalists, the International Federation of Actors, the International Federation of Musicians and UNI, the “international” for media technicians’ unions.

Several member states have used EU competition regulations to rule that freelances are micro-businesses whose unions’ attempts to regulate rates are anti-competitive and illegal. Tobias P Maas works for “DG Competition” in the European Commission. He came to the conference to persuade a hundred or more disputatious trades union officials that their worries were groundless. “If cases do arise,” he suggested, it is easiest to resolve them in court.

Irish senator, Ivana Bacik has introduced a Bill in the Dáil to make bargaining and information for freelances legal. She suggested that Maas was proposing a job creation scheme for lawyers. Was not DG Competition advising the Irish government on the amendments that they should insist on? And NUJ Assistant General Secretary Seamus Dooley told the conference that: “court is open to all just as the Ritz hotel is – deep pockets are required”.

Support Amy Goodman!

The September meeting of London Freelance Branch passed a motion that “notes that an arrest warrant has been issued in North Dakota for Democracy Now! host… Amy Goodman… charged with criminal trespassing while covering the Native American-led protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline.” More: www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1610amy.html

Work for older journos in India

The Indian newspaper Hindustan Times is planning to invite recently retired or senior journalists between jobs to work in New Delhi as desk journalists. Applicants should have online experience. The paper is seeking expressions of interest and CVs: Anyone interested should email its London-based editor, Prasun.Sonwalkar@hindustantimes.com
A win at Newsquest Wales, strikes in London

FIRST, THE GOOD news: the NUJ now has a recognition agreement with the South Wales Argus, a Newsquest title. And the challenging news: on 9 September 71.4 per cent of staff at Newsquest titles in South London voted for strike action over company plans to put nearly all of the newsroom at risk of redundancy.

Watch www.nuj.org.uk for strike dates, on which you may find yourself unavailable, to the approbation of striking staff. Freelances who suffer hardship as a result of being unavailable should contact the striking Chapel.

While the benefits of Union recognition at the Argus will mostly be felt by staff members, there is good news for freelances too. Freelances who regularly do shifts at the newspaper may possibly now be able to get paid time off for NUJ Chapel activities (A “Chapel” in NUJ-speak is the unit of Union organisation based around a particular workplace.) Management are now legally required to allow an NUJ representative access to the premises to meet with members, including individual freelances.

Meeting on diversity hears of fears

REPORTING OF THE EU referendum campaign raised real fears of racial hatred, LFB members were told by Kiri Kankhwende, guest speaker at the July branch meeting. She is a journalist who specialises in politics and immigration and writes for the Media Diversified blog. She told the branch: “As a migrant, a black woman and a millennial, I didn’t feel the branch: “As a migrant, a black woman and a millennial, I didn’t feel the same way to put it.

There has been a rise in xenophobia and racist attacks;” she noted: “There are families that don’t speak to each other. There is a lot of casual racism.”

She said that the referendum campaign had left her “with a sense of betrayal. It has frightened a lot of people, including me. Everyone is now expected to be a border guard… teachers, doctors, lawyers, all have to ask people about their migration status,” she said. “It does not all sit on the shoulders of the media – we are an easy whipping horse – but the campaigners were not challenged enough on the things they said.” And, she added, “Some of the things they said were just lies.”

Kiri Kankhwende became a UK citizen a few years ago. “I did it because it is my home,” she said. She lives in northwest London, in one of only five London boroughs that voted to leave the EU, and she gave the meeting examples of the casual racism she had seen in everyday life in her borough.

“When I became a UK citizen, I was welcome here. It certainly clashes with the hostile environment around me now, and media coverage has colluded with that.”

A welcome for new members

LFB members new to freelance journalism are invited to meet other people new to the Branch, and members with more experience of freelance journalism, at the Camera Café, Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY on Thursday 27 October from 6pm. These meetings happen there on the last Thursday of every third month.

The Branch is inviting new members who come to their first Branch meeting to have their photo taken and give a few words about themselves: see them at www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/intros.html

Among those joining in September were Dee Semple (right) and Yunnus Dalic (further right).

Photos © Hazel Dunlop

How LFB gets and spends its money

ALL BRANCHES in the union receive, as funding from Head Office, a percentage of the subscriptions paid by members.

As a large branch, LFB receives around £2000 per month, to be used for membership-led activities.

To this end, members can suggest projects that require funding.

The request for funds is put to a branch meeting via a motion, which is passed or not passed by the members present. (You will need to be a full member of the union to vote.) Any member can present a motion. Often, suggestions come via the committee, which takes a practical interest in branch activities, but these do not carry any extra weight.

The rules regarding Branch money include: “No motion shall be moved at any Branch meeting unless it has been submitted in writing and received by the Branch before the start of the Branch meeting. The notice is placed on the website: see www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html#motions and the monthly email to members. If you want these and don’t get them, visit www.londonfreelance.org/link-up and note that all motions to spend money must reach the Committee 10 days before the meeting.

Rules that apply across the union include a restriction to spending on “purposes connected with journalism or trade unionism”. Any member proposing a donation should be prepared to argue that it falls within the rules and is a worthwhile cause.

A longer version giving chapter and verse for the rules is at www.londonfreelance.org/ fl/1609cash.html

NUJ Brexit survey

Were you under pressure to cover the EU referendum – or the campaigns leading up to it – in a particular way? The NUJ is doing a survey on this, and would like to hear of your experiences. You can fill in the survey in confidence at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/nujeuref – and the NUJ is interested to hear about examples of pressure after the referendum – we’ve heard of advertisers demanding that journalists talk up “business confidence” in the UK.

Cuts to London newsrooms?

Do you work in the newsroom of a London local newspaper? If so, how have cuts affected the quality of news that your outlet produces? The NUJ is seeking testimony to present in a briefing to the London Assembly. Do tell, in confidence, by email to campaigns@nuj.org.uk

Encryption training alert

Liberty are planning two sessions of encryption training for journalists. The focus is on encrypting emails to keep correspondence with sources secure, using anonymous internet browsers such as Tor or secure, encrypted operating systems such as Tails. The training is delivered by Silkie Carlo, Liberty’s Policy Officer (Technology and Surveillance) and co-author of Information Security for Journalists. Register your interest via www.bit.ly/2cKS15p and when they have enough demand, Liberty will presumably get back to you with course dates and more details.
There’s a clear pattern here. Alarms – previously known as an agency less hostile to photographers – issued a similar change to terms and conditions in July, demanding a 50 per cent cut (see the August Freelance). The pattern is the plan by BA-PLA, the British Association of Picture Libraries and Agencies, to form a collecting society in competition with DACS, the Design and Artists Collecting Society, to which many photographers belong. The difference is that only libraries and agencies would be members of the new beast (and Getty would be massively dominant among those).

The immediate practical advice remains: anyone receiving a new contract, or being asked to agree to varying a contract, must seek advice from your Union before signing anything. Which means being in the Union. Tell your colleagues who may not yet have joined.

© Mike Holderness

Comedian and “serving copper” Alfie Moore compères the NUJ Public Order Press and Police training video for police officers. Still © NUJ

Press Freedom: Domestic Extremist – trailer out

A TWO-MINUTE trailer has been released for Press Freedom: Domestic Extremist, the third in a trilogy of documentaries by NUJ videographers and photographers on the problematic policing that journalists can encounter while going about their work.

Domestic Extremist looks in particular at the discovery by six NUJ members that police from the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPIOU) had systematically been gathering intelligence on reporters who cover protest and environmental issues. The trailer is at www.bit.ly/DomExt2 and the full-length movie is expected to be released relatively soon, (“no deadline yet,” filmmaker Jason N. Parkinson told the Freelance in September). The documentary was part-funded with a modest donation voted by London Freelance Branch, for which Jason says “a massive thanks to the Freelance Branch”. © Matt Salusbury

Getty sued for $1bn over giveaway photos

If you want to give your work away, you’d want it to stay given away and not be gobbled up by corporates. That means having, and enforcing, strong copyright. The point is made in a lawsuit by Carol M. Highsmith against Getty Images. Carol donated photographs to the US Library of Congress. Getty, however, is charging for access. She’s suing. For $1 billion. Getty reportedly wrote to Highsmith asking for $120, saying her website had an unlicensed photo from Getty’s portfolio. That would be one of her photos, donated to the Library. In 1981 Highsmith “conveyed title” in 230 of these to the Library of Congress. She continued to add to the collection under terms which included, “credit be given as follows: ‘The Library of Congress, Carol M. Highsmith Archive’.” The US Digital Millennium Copyright Act has “statutory damages” of “not less than $2,500 or more than $25,000” for those who “remove or alter any copyright management information.” With the option of treble damages. For the full story – there’s much more to it! – see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1609cc.html

Keep Access to Work

LFB MEMBER David Wilkins has launched a Parliamentary petition against planned cuts to the Access to Work programme, which he describes as “the only way to help employers to employ disabled people.” Access to Work grants pay up to £40,000 a year for disabled people in work, entering jobs or self-employment – a figure likely to drop if cuts go ahead. The grants cover adaptations to work equipment, taxi fares, wages for support workers in the workplace or job coaches, disability awareness training for colleagues and moving costs to change jobs. The petition’s at https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/138508

Watch out, photographers!

ANOTHER photo agency issued a new contract to photographers last month. Photoshoot gave contributors only until 15 September to opt out of a clause which would allow it to take a 70 per cent cut of money distributed by any collecting society from “secondary uses” such as photocopying newspapers and magazines in libraries. Sorry the printed copy of newspapers and magazines is dominant among those.

In NUJ Public Order Press and Police, the five-minute video commissioned by the NUJ and made by Rob Whitehouse, police officer Alfie Moore asks, “How should we get on with interviews of the distressed and violent at the discovery by six NUJ members that police from the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPIOU) had systematically been gathering intelligence on reporters who cover protest and environmental issues. The trailer is at www.bit.ly/DomExt2 and the full-length movie is expected to be released relatively soon, (“no deadline yet,” filmmaker Jason N. Parkinson told the Freelance in September). The documentary was part-funded with a modest donation voted by London Freelance Branch, for which Jason

© Jason N. Parkinson and the Press Freedom: Domestic Extremist filmmakers

Examples of NUJ Press Cards are clearly displayed on screen. Particularly eye-opening are the answers given by police taking a decision about whether journalists “need a permit” to photograph or film in a public place (we don’t) and whether coppers can confiscate or delete material (in limited circumstances), should the police help the media “obtain a good vantage point at the scene?” (“dialogue is important”), can police intervene to stop “interviews of the distressed and bereaved?” The answer given to the last one is, no, the police can “pass the NUJ’s own Code of Conduct. They (journalists) have to justify in “intrusion of privacy”, as Alfie reminds us.

Justine Curran, National Policing Lead, Public Order stresses in the video that reporting on what happens in riots is part of “how democracy works.” The video will be played at all College of Policing command courses and become part of the police service database. It’s also funny! The video’s at www.bit.ly/PressPolice © Matt Salusbury

Comic copper teaches colleagues journo rights

A VIDEO to be played to police officers in training on the rights of journalists covering “public order” situations – presented by a stand-up comedian and “serving copper” – is now online.

He emphasises that all his advice is based on “official guidelines set out by police chiefs” and that “journalists and photographers have legal rights to report events like this.” Examples of NUJ Press Cards are clearly displayed on screen. Particularly eye-opening are the answers given by police taking a break from riot training on exactly what rights journalists do have, and what powers police have (or don’t have) to restrict them. Several times the officers get it wrong they’re quickly corrected. Using humour, Alfie dispels some “urban myths” about whether journalists “need a permit” to photograph or film in a public place (we don’t) and whether coppers can confiscate or delete material (in limited circumstances), should the police help the media “obtain a good vantage point at the scene?” (“dialogue is important”), can police intervene to stop “interviews of the distressed and bereaved?” The answer given to the last one is, no, the police can “pass on requests”, with viewers alerted to the NUJ’s own Code of Conduct. They (journalists) have to justify in “intrusion of privacy”, as Alfie reminds us.

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It’s also funny! The video’s at www.bit.ly/PressPolice © Matt Salusbury
LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

New ways to sell photos, journalists’ co-ops

THE LFB meeting on Monday 10 October will definitely feature John D. McHugh speaking about new ways of selling photos online. John, a conflict photographer whose work includes Afghanistan, recently founded Verifying Media. VerifyingMedia is a Mobile Journalism (MoJo) photo agency. It engages “eyewitnesses” and paid-for freelances, selling licences for uses of your images on to news outlets. The agency employs technology for mobiles and web-enabled cameras that tags images with metadata verifying where images were made, who the creator is and specifying the licences under which they are seeking to sell a re-use of that image.

The October meeting will also see the election of LFB’s first Branch Social Media Officer, responsible for maintaining its @NUJ_LFB Twitter account and other LFB social media presences. See below.

As well as that month’s Branch meeting, there’s a gathering for new and recently-joined members of LFB on Thursday 27 October at the at the Camera Café, Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY from 6pm. Veteran journo’s will be there too, able to give friendly advice.

At the Branch meeting on Monday 14 November, LFB’s own Dan Davies, journalist and playwright, will host a panel on the opportunities for new models of working offered by journalist cooperatives.

New LFB who have chosen to do so introduce themselves at www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/intros.

The meeting on Monday 5 December is a seasonal party, at the London Welsh Centre, 157-163 Gray’s Inn Rd, WC1X 8JE.

This issue went to press on 21 September; your deadline for the November online-only issue is 1 November

ELECTION – LFB SOCIAL MEDIA OFFICER

LFB is electing a Social Media Officer to run and develop the Branch social media presence.

Until now the role has been filled on a voluntary basis by Janet Awe. The Branch thanks Janet for her excellent work, which she is regrettably no longer able to continue.

LFB’s September meeting voted to create an elected Branch Social Media Officer post to carry on and develop this work.

The Officer, a full LFB member, should ideally already be “doing” social media in a professional capacity (as their predecessor was.) The post involves tweeting suitably-timed announcements and reminders of forthcoming meetings and events, including freelance-relevant ones organised by the NUJ nationally.

LFB’s Twitter feed @NUJ_LFB quickly became the go-to-place for job alerts: we hope its valuable role in providing job alerts can continue.

There will always be breaking developments requiring a quick and appropriate response via LFB on Twitter. The Charlie Hebdo massacre was a recent example. There’s also a need for coordination (by email) with LFB Committee and the Freelance editors in particular.

Money? The Social Media Officer’s rate is £150 per day; it is anticipated that the post requires two days per month. There’s also an LFB Facebook page to curate, and the possibility of developing other platforms.

To stand for election, come along to the Monday 10 October LFB meeting (see above) or email the Branch Secretary timgo@btinternet.com. More detail on the role will be on the LFB website in time for that meeting.

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. Comments on an advert? Tell us. Submit by email to unclassified@londonfreelance.org

LEGAL EDITING/PROOFREADING. At sea with legal material and jargon? Wondering when the ECJ became the CJEU or which ‘European Court’ is featured? Freelance legal editor with 20 years’ experience of copy-editing, proofreading and researching legal texts and law reports is here to help. Reasonable rates and fast-turnaround. Contact David dnh@sef.net

WANT TO TRY YOUR HAND at writing fiction? Courses at The Groucho Club in Soho will inspire you, teach you the tricks of the trade and help you develop and polish your work. Our tutors are mainstream published authors. Our next term starts in October – for details go to www.writingcourses.org.uk

PHOTOGRAPHER and NUJ member Colin McPherson is offering short residential photography courses on the unique Scottish island of Easdale from September 2016. For further details, contact colinmcperson@mac.com.

RESOURCES

LONDON Freelance Branch has a vast amount of information and advice available for NUJ members (and others).

• The Freelance Directory is the first and best listing of actual freelance journalists – rather than wannabes – entries in it are free to NUJ members: www.freelancedirectory.org

• The Freelance Fees Guide suggests rates for numerous categories of work, and provides a mass of advice on your working life as a freelance: see www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide

• The Branch’s Frequently Asked Questions page is at www.londonfreelance.org/FAQ

• Members who join as freelances, or move to freelancing, can download the Freelance Fact Pack – www.nuj.org.uk/work/freelance/ freelance-fact-pack.

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