Eyewitnesses earn

SPEAKING at October’s LFB meeting, photographer John D. McHugh outlined the thinking behind Verifeye Media eyewitness news agency (www.verifeye.media), which he co-founded.

An LFB member, John spent years covering Afghanistan. In 2011, after years “dragging a huge amount of kit... up and down mountains”, he first used an iPhone to upload photos from Kandahar City, which he sold to Newsweek. In the same year, John was at the Arab Spring’s Bahrain protests. He only got in because he had “no gear; just an iPhone.” The Bahraini Shia protestors on the spot taught him how to mask where he was when connecting to the internet, by using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

All this led John to start his news agency. He “spent about a year researching” it. He and his wife had sold their flats, and “put all of our money into it; over £100k… eventually I will get paid. I hope.”

Verifeye Media built an app that “gathers a lot of info that I need.” As well as metadata including the date, who took the photo, when, which direction the photographer was facing and so on, “this includes a ‘veracity rating’ showing the contributor’s ‘digital profile for last ten years’ the stories they’ve worked on.”

In addition to the app, there’s what John calls “the human journalist algorithm”. He says: “Every story is approved by me. We reject far more than we publish… the machines can’t tell if it’s produced by Assad’s propaganda people.” Who are the eyewitnesses who provide the images? While 90 per cent of contributors are freelance journalists, “eyewitnesses produce a disproportional amount of content.”

The latter are “refugees, aid workers in NGOs, people living in Aleppo... anybody who has the ability to take out their smartphone and document it.” During March’s Calais “jungle” clearances, a Verifeye contributor, an aid worker living there, was up earlier than the journalists and shot “60 seconds of heavily armoured cops battering a pregnant woman... Only they could get it.”

Verifeye currently “work with someone we don’t know” from The Telegraph. “I saw a sealed-off strip of the Jordanian border with a refugee camp behind a vast sand wall. John was able to verify his footage and send it to Channel Four. "We anonymise all of our contributors—Channel Four know everything we do except who it’s from.”

Verifeye’s clients “have to pay for it there and then... before they download it.” One outlet first “wanted us to become a 'preferred supplier' and so on and so on...” When Verifeye declined, “they suddenly found a credit card in the office.”

Verifeye’s eyewitness journalists are always paid “within seven days, usually the same day.” Its contracts are in plain English, no “heretofore” or “whereas”. They “normally sell stuff for £200” of which Verifeye takes 50 per cent.

What’s going on with UK press regulation?

A SLOVENIAN colleague asks: “What’s going on with press regulation in the UK?” Deep breath! Here is an attempt at a condensed answer.

From Spring 2011, News International began publicly admitting liability and paying compensation to people whose phones the News of the World had tapped, including that of murdered Milly Dowler. This resulted in NotW being closed down.

Lord Leveson, a senior judge, was appointed in 2011 to conduct an inquiry into the “culture, practices and ethics of the press”. His 2012 report identified misdeeds. It recommended replacing the old Press Complaints Council (PCC) which the NUJ has long denounced as owner-controlled.

But how to carry out Leveson’s recommendations? State regulation of the press is scary. So a Royal Charter was concocted — formally set up by the Crown, not the government. Under the Charter an Independent Appointments Panel would select members of a Recognition Panel to decide whether to recognise one or more press regulation organisations.

The NUJ supported Leveson’s outline of independent regulation (it being the least bad visible idea). How to persuade publishers to take part? With a stick. Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 provides that when a publisher not registered with an “approved regulator” is sued for defamation, the court “must not” award costs against it (again, with some discretion). That’s a big stick, given the six- and seven-digit costs common in UK defamation cases. Under the Act Ministers can bring this into effect when they choose: they haven’t.

In October 2013 the Privy Council, formally a body of advisers to the Queen, granted a Royal Charter to govern a press regulation system — despite a last-minute court challenge by publishers including News International and the Barclay Brothers, owners of the Telegraph. In 2014 these objecting publishers set up

© Hazel Dunlop

What’s going on with UK press regulation? More likely to impose “exemplary damages” to deter others from malpractice. If a publisher is registered with an “approved regulator” then the court “must not” award costs against it (again, with some discretion). That’s a big stick, given the six- and seven-digit costs common in UK defamation cases. Under the Act Ministers can bring this into effect when they choose: they haven’t.

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© Matt Salusbury

There’s a longer version online.
The Rate for the Job

ONCE AGAIN an appeal to those filling in the Rate for the Job form circulated at Branch meetings to write legibly, please!

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.

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 £ 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: BBC R4 expert interviews/punditry £120; BBC News GNS, 2 hours of 2-ways with local stations via Skype, terms “BBC all in” £150; RT news, 2-way 10 mins Skype interview, journalist says PBS £50; BBC Scotland Kay Adams ISDN punditry 10 to 30 mins terms “BBC all in” £50; RTE Six-One News (TV) live two-way £60 XXX; unnamed broadcaster, punditry – talked up to travel + £200.

Photography: Corporate video, shoot/production £300; NOISEY (Vice) music festival shoot, unlimited worldwide £150; Queen Mary University of London, shoot student union events, extra hour for editing, £150.

Note to self – do tax by 31 January 2017!

IT’S THAT time of year again. Already? Yes, already! You have already missed the deadline to do your tax return on paper.

If you’re doing your tax return online for the first time (or for example – you became self-employed and got a brand new Unique Tax Reference number between April 2016 and April 2017), register online and request a password for Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) online self-assessment thing. (www.gov.uk/topic/personal-tax/self-assessment). It’s actually a lot more user-friendly that the words “Government IT project” suggest.

For reasons of security, your HMRC online password has to arrive by post. HMRC recommend you allow up to a month after requesting such a password.

In the run up to the 31 January 2017 deadline for sending your tax return, callers to HMRC with enquiries can expect to wait on the phone for about 45 minutes, so request a password now, please. If you’ve used HMRC online to do your tax return before, your password will still work this tax year – if you can still find it. Check now, please.

You have until 31 January to submit your completed tax return online or face automatic fines for late filing – these start at £100. Don’t say we didn’t warn you.

If you’ve already submitted your self-assessment return a few days ahead of 31 January, you’ll have avoided time-consuming discussions with HMRC that inevitably follow HMRC’s website crashing under the volume of all those last-minute submitted self-assessment tax returns.

THE EVER-POPULAR Getting Started as a Freelance (GSFA) course, devised by London Freelance Branch, returns on Saturday 21 January, back at the NUJ’s newly re-opened HQ at Headland House. Moved to freelancing from a staff post or from something else entirely? It’s for you.

The following week sees another longstanding training course with its origins firmly in London Freelance Branch – Pitch and Deal (P&D, negotiating for freelancers). It’s at the same venue on Saturday 28 January.

Tutors for both courses will include Freelance Industrial Council’s own Louise Bolotin. Both courses cost £70 for NUJ members, with discounts for student members and unemployed members.

Details should soon be on the NUJ events calendar at www.nuj.org.uk/events

Please note that Headland House in its new configuration has a new entrance which has moved round the corner from the old one, to 72 Acton Road, London W3 1XN.

There are a couple of three-day NUJ courses in shooting and editing footage scheduled for the first half of 2017 – starting on Thursday 2 February and Monday 15 May at the same venue. These are priced at £550 for members and booking for them has already opened. See the link above for details.

As ever, there are free workshops held across the UK on dealing with the “business side” of working as a self-employed person, provided by the Federation of Entertainment Unions (FEU), of which the NUJ is a member. See www.feutraining.org for details.

Animator sought

The Institute of Employment Rights is looking for an animator to help translate its Manifesto for Labour Law into a short animated clip to help popularise the ideas. Explaining the concept of Sectoral Collective Bargaining is high on the agenda.

Money is short but the IER is happy to discuss possible terms and all offers of help. Contact Carolyn Jones at cad@ier.org.uk

Training alert – Pitch & Deal, Getting Started and others
President's round-up

NUJ PRESIDENT and LFB member Tim Dawson's column "President's Platform" is online at www.londonfreelance.org/president. His views are entirely his own — though he has been elected President of the organisation, so they hold a little weight. Recent articles include:

• Care about press freedom? Act now! We believe the opportunity to influence the Investigatory Powers Bill has passed, but there's still time to influence two more pieces of legislation "in many respects more deadly, and certainly more insidious than bully-boy secret policemen and arbitrary edicts shutting down newspapers". These are clauses of the Police and Crime Bill and the Digital Economy Bill.

• Local news photography is important — on the need for the "photographic databases of community life" to continue, with photos that remain properly captioned and "properly titled and archived".

• Exposed photographers resist gloom — Tim notes NUJ photographers — nearly 2000 of them — have not taken the "cull of photojournalists' jobs" sitting down. On 11 February 2017 they will come together at a conference in London to consider industrial strategies to combat the assault on pictorial journalism and share effective new routes to making a living with a camera: see page 6.

• Self-exposure key to broadcast storytelling — journalists get to grips with the "narcissist's wand," aka the selfie stick, as a tool for broadcast journalism, at the Dublin Freelance Branch Autumn Freelance Forum.

• Newsquest desk jockeys revolt — Tim's report from the picket lines at Newsquest South London in Sutton, where local newspaper journalists are on strike over massive staff cuts. As a result of these, "no longer will they attend court hearings, local government meetings or speak with members of the public."

• Creative Commons warning! How a cartoonist supplying illustrations to a campaigning charity under a Creative Commons Licence left him powerless when his work ended up on a fascist leaflet.

Newsquest South London striker speaks

AN NUJ member on strike at Newsquest's South London offices in Sutton over staff cuts spoke to LFB in November. Since she started work with Newsquest in August 2015, "so much talent and experience" has gone from the South London hub.

Newsquest's Sutton hub is supposed to cover a huge swathe of South London, from Richmond and Kingston to Bexley. Management wants cuts at 12 newspapers. After a March recruitment freeze, a team of 8 editors and 22 reporters was reduced to 6 editors and 16 reporters.

In August members overwhelmingly voted for a strike, two days later all but two editorial staff were declared "redundant" under threat of redundancy. By the time she spoke to LFB, "we are now on nine reporters and one editor for South London" with no photographers.

Newsquest staff have "tried to speak to" management, calling off their strike for talks via the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. These lasted 20 minutes.

The estimated spend on producing a page of a Newsquest local newspaper, excluding rent, was £109 in August. Now it's down to £58, with fewer pages in each newspaper, so less advertising. She feels the business sense behind these cuts is flawed as the journalism behind it.

Staff — now back in on a work-to-rule — could stay out on strike for so long because "we got twice as many donations as we hoped for." Much staff time is now spent taking complaints from readers "about how bad the newspaper is." For updates, see www.nuj.org.uk/news

Any support from NUJ members is "really welcome." LFB's already voted £500 to Newsquest Sutton staff strike fund, and will put motions to donate the maximum amount it can at each Branch meeting until donations are no longer needed.

On 25 October 2016, the Press Recognition Panel agreed to recognise Impress.

Impress having become an "approved regulator" it is open to the government to bring Section 40 of the 2013 Act into force. The government announced on 1 November a further 10-week consultation on Section 40. And it is consulting on the promised Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry, looking at claims about phone hacking and relations between publishers and the police...

Campaign group Hacked Off is saying "just get on with it": the NUJ is working on a response.

Corporate boost to freelance bank balance

It's tough making a living from freelance journalism, but it often provides you with expertise, insights and informed opinions which, in many spheres, can yield fees beyond the dreams of your average newspaper or webzine. The Freelance chatted with Freelance X on how she regularly writes for specialist industry and science journals into reports for corporates and law firms.

“Sometimes they come to me because they’ve seen my byline” or from “networking at conferences… They maybe ask me to write a report or a memorandum… from your point of view – give them expert insights… you don’t get your name on these reports… but then they do pay well”. For a 100-page report you might work on over the course of several months, £20,000 to £60,000, for a memorandum, five or six pages, £5000 to £6000. There's more detail at www.londonfreelance.org/ff/1611corp.html.

Whistleblowers need protection

The European Federation of Journalists is campaigning in favor of European protection for whistleblowers. The Federation is now part of a coalition of NGOs, trade unions and MEPs which recently launched a petition calling on the European Union to initiate legislation. The EFJ is encouraging all journalists in Europe to sign the petition and to spread the word. As some of these investigative journalists, whistleblowers must be equally protected in every EU country. The petition’s at www.whistleblowerprotection.eu — go there now!
Post-truth ethical pressures

THE NUJ is already surveying members about whether pressure was put on them during the EU referendum to report on issues around it in a particular way. (An NUJ event reporting back on this is expected in early 2017.) The concept of “balance”, which has long driven broadcast journalism, took a particular beating. What happens to “balance” when practically everything said by at least one side in the debate was such obvious fibs?

Saddly, just because the vote’s happened, it seems the phenomenon of journalists being leant on to put a particular spin on Brexit hasn’t gone away. A much more complex phenomenon is the pull from both directions to report that everything is – or will be – hunk- dory in the economy post-Brexit (or not).

I encountered this rather chillingly myself at a business-to-business niche market industry newspaper. Shortly after the referendum, a long-term advertiser in a regional centre of our industry called, telling us how terrible we were for suggesting that there was alarm and uncertainty post-Brexit. The advertiser proceeded to engage me in a long discussion about what he thought my job was. (It wasn’t much of a discussion really, it was mostly me politely saying no.)

Older hands working with the paper, who’d known the caller for over 40 years, were quickly able to call him back and bring him to his senses. Since then, not a day has passed without a major headline appearing along the lines of “Economy doing better than ever post-Brexit”, followed by “We’re screwed, we told you so!” schadenfreudig Brexit catastrophe predictions. “It’s still too early to tell!” headlines are notable by their absence.

What happens to the ethics of journalism in such an atmosphere? What should journalists do, and what can be done to support them in making the right ethical choices? We hope to cover the ethics of Brexit reporting (Brexethics?) in LFB’s March meeting. Speakers will include Professor Chris Frost, expert on journalistic ethics and witness before Leveson (see page 1).

Concerned about Brexit? We hope to help

LONDON FREELANCE Branch has many members who are not UK citizens, and many of these are citizens of other EU member states. Several have approached us with, unsurprisingly, concerns. Both the Branch and the NUJ’s Freelance Industrial Council are working to help the union’s staff provide advice and individual support – as soon as we know what the advice needs to be about.

On the status of EU citizens who are now working in the UK, the Freelance recently mentioned this to a rather senior UK official. The response was: “but of course under international law all those already resident in the UK would have their status ‘grandfathered’.” That means that – so long as the UK government respects international law – anyone now legally working in the country can stay.

There are, of course, many open questions such as those over benefits like Working Tax Credit; and how will freelances prove we are “working”. These questions are open because no-one in government has the faintest idea, either.

And there are equally questions for NUJ members working in the rest of the EU: not least, how to get management to maintain their earnings against the fall in the pound.

More generally, the NUJ has collaborated in a Federation of Entertainment Unions submission on concerns about the potential effect of Brexit on the creative industries. And of course concern is not restricted to legal matters. Any members who are threatened by “kick ‘em out” tendencies spinning off from Brexit (or perhaps particularly those from outside the EU – are invited to contact the Freelance.

Making tax digital not as easy as pie

The UK government recently consulted on proposals to switch all tax return filing for the self-employed to unspecified new online systems. Key points in the NUJ’s reply include the observation that “Journalists will be naturally suspicious of inscrutable software provided by the government.”

The NUJ is alarmed by the possibility that the proposed scheme would discourage freelances from using accountants, and suspects that the government “does not fully understand the nature of freelancing, which could involve a great number of third parties, who would find it burdensome” to have to supply information direct to Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs. The intended launch date of April 2018 does not give sufficient time to prepare. The full response is at www.bit.ly/NUJ-MTD.

Members report discrimination & anxieties

ANXIETY about how Brexit will affect EU nationals working in the freelance community is just one of the issues identified in a long-term survey examining equality in the sector. The London Freelance Branch equality officers launched the questionnaire earlier this year to define what equality means for journalists in the age of freelancing.

Responses so far have overwhelmingly identified two main areas in which members feel they have experienced discrimination: gender and age. Disability, race and sexuality have also been highlighted.

Almost 30 per cent of respondents revealed that gender affected their day-to-day work in some way, with one female freelance journalist reporting “a severe lack of women being promoted in my immediate workplace.”

Another noted she had “experienced sexism in many places”, with men being paid more and promoted more, and being patronising.

Although these are anecdotes, research found that men in the media are paid on average 6.6 per cent more than women, while a City University survey of 700 British journalists found a significant pay gap in the news industry with nearly half of female journalists earning £2400 or less a month compared with a third of men.

The government’s Gender Pay Gap report identifies part-time working around unpaid care as a contributor to the problem – a challenge reported in the LFB’s survey. “The high cost of childcare in London means that unless you are able to alter working patterns and hours, pay may not even cover the costs,” explained one respondent. Indeed, almost 53 per cent stated they worked part-time, with 41 per cent working from home.

The issue of “sidelining” was raised by a freelance who considered age to have an effect, while others reported ideas “being dismissed”, and a perception by editors of being “too old to need work”.

“Meanwhile, challenges when working for international organisations included homophobia and in-built workplace prejudice.

The survey has pointed out the continued need to tackle barriers to finding work, progressing, or getting a pay rise in the media industry, with lobbying government and industry bodies, liaising with legal experts, and developing support networks suggested as next steps for LFB.

You can still share your views and experiences by completing the survey: see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1612surv.html

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Photographers who use Rex – get in touch!

Would any photographer who is a member of the National Union of Journalists and licenses images through Rex please contact the Freelance Office on 020 7843 3706 or freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk.
Hacks as co-operators?

HOW DO cooperatives operate, and could they work for journalists? November’s London Freelance Branch meeting looked at the possibilities. Our own Dan Davies, a documentary director and producer, chaired a panel of people involved in actual creative industry co-ops.

Seán Dagan Woods is editor-in-chief of “constructive journalism” magazine Positive News (www.positive.news). Founded 23 years ago, the paper was financially supported by a philanthropic friend, but her passing away posed the question, “how are we going to keep it going?”

So PN recently changed to a magazine format and turned itself into a cooperative of readers and journalists. It has a community benefit society ownership structure. Day-to-day, says Sean, PN “function like most editorial teams”. There are mechanisms in place to “protect your editorial independence,” a subsidiary company has a charter protecting editorial values, which needs a huge majority to change.

A recent “very successful” share issue raised almost £250,000 from readers in 30 days. While “still currently loss-making” PN is “working towards breaking even in a couple of years.” Any profit “goes back into the journalism.” Everyone with shares gets an equal vote on key editorial and business decisions, facilitated by an online voting platform. They elect the board of directors. A big readers’ survey was due to go out the week after the meeting. Some 20 per cent of the content pitched by reader co-owners.

There are five staff: the “bulk of our content is produced by freelances”, paid 20-25p a word. Some is from volunteers, who received training in constructive journalism.”

Freelance journalist James Andrew Smith, “not a student anymore,” described how University of London management shut down both its student union ULU and the successful London Student, the UK’s biggest student newspaper. In 2015, “me and a few friends helped restart” the paper online as a worker’s collective” (londonstudent.coop).

The “malleable” horizontal structure suited London Student’s revival because they have “new people each year”. It allowed those with “chaotic schedules to feel valued and empowered in the work they do” and it “spread the liberal risk around.”

Student organisations are often targeted for takeover by Trotskyists, which London Student’s “flat” organisation also protected against. Experienced people train new people as soon as they join: nothing is published unless checked by at least one other person. Facilitated by a lot of digital and online tools, says James, “it worked really well,” the “constant democratic process” ensured the editorial line was “more balanced.”

London Student has now been handed over to this year’s new editorial team. Last year it produced one issue in print, for which it was easy to sell advertising space. It is hoped everyone in the collective will be working for money eventually.

We also heard from actor David Whitney, who's with actor’s co-operative agency West Central – it’s been going since the 1970s, working on the basis of members doing three days a month in the office. It turned out there were a couple of actor-journalists in the audience too.

© Matt Salusbury

There’s a longer report online.

Interns’ struggle won’t go away – unusual source of support

A RECENT attempt to make unpaid internships illegal came from an unusual source – Tory MP Alec Shelbrooke. His Private Members’ Bill proposed a mandatory minimum wage for such internships, with a ban on work placements that “ask” students and “recent graduates” to work unpaid “for up to a year”.

Shelbrooke estimates the cost of such work placements to the intern at £926, with 40 per cent having to turn them down “because they just can’t afford them,” according to the Evening Standard. Such internships are rife in the media: see LFB’s Cashback for Interns campaign: www.londonfreelance.org/interns

In the event, the Bill was “talked out”, mostly by other Tory MPs asking spurious questions about whether it would mean people couldn’t legally choose to do genuine voluntary work for charities. This outcome may have had something to do with 22 MPs across parties having unpaid intern, a reported by Radio 4’s Today in Parliament. Shelbrooke reportedly pays interns a wage equivalent to a parliamentary junior secretary. Unpaid work is illegal under the National Minimum Wage Act, as then business secretary Vince Cable reminded broadcasters in 2013 (www.londonfreelance.org/fl/130intine.html). Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs take a dim view of unwaged labour, because of the money that’s not coming to them in income tax. They routinely raid employers, fine them, make them pay back income tax and National Insurance contributions – and pay the intern the minimum wage on which the deductions were due.

The world needs authors’ rights

FREELANCE editor Mike Holderness called on a UN body “to focus on supporting creativity” – the key part of its mission statement – in Geneva on 17 November. He was representing the International Federation of Journalists at the World Intellectual Property Organization’s Standing Committee on Copyright and Related rights. “Despite the failings of newspapers in some countries recently,” he told representatives of over 100 countries, “the work of individual, independent journalists remains the best bulwark against arbitrary power and the gaining of that power through a mixture of falsehood and rumour amplified by the echo-chambers of electronic gossip.”

He stressed the need for professional authorship. The promise held out by some that the internet era would usher in a golden era of democracy has proved hollow. A vast exchange of prejudices and lies through anti-social media is not... true or useful ‘free expression’.

He appealed to the Committee “not to be swayed by the promise that opening up creative works to use without remuneration offers some kind of golden era of free information. The risk is that free information ends up being worth every penny” Full text: www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1611wipo.html

Tackling rotten contracts in the Big Apple

Freelances in New York City (partly an island off the coast of the US) have won action against some unfair working practices. City government passed the local Freelance Isn’t Free Act on 16 November. Anyone who hires a freelance for work over $800 must have a contract outlining the scope of work, rate, method of payment, and the payment due date. Clients must not say “We can pay you faster, but only if you accept less” and must pay within 30 days. Freelancers will be able to make complaints to the city Department of Consumer Affairs or file court actions – and there is an anti-retaliation clause. See www.freelanceisntfree.org for more.

Attention!

Any NUJ member who is contemplating work for PW Media should first telephone the Freelance Office on 020 7843 3706
Elect at AGM, crime reporting, Brexethics

THE LFB meeting on Monday 9 January is our Annual General Meeting (AGM), when members elect a new Branch Committee. Posts up for election are Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Membership secretary & new members’ reps; Welfare officers (preferably two – ideally one male and one female); Treasurer, Editor of the Freelance (a paid post); Assistant Editor of the Freelance (also remunerated); Training officer; Equality officer; Chapel liaison officer; Negotiations officer; Social Media Officer (a paid post for details see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/16/twit.html); and Members of the Committee without portfolio.

Some of the current occupants are stepping down, so the Branch seeks new blood! Jobshares are possible. For the roles and responsibilities, as well as support available for career development, see www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/faq.html.

Call for members new to freelancing and ask questions about our privileges – seminars are free to NUJ members.

Opportunity to meet other members every third month. They offer an opportunity to meet other members new to freelance journalism, at the Camera Café, Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY on the last Thursday of September, from 6pm.

The Branch invites new members to freelance journalism and is interested 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 26 January from 6pm.

These meetings happen at the Camera Café on the last Thursday of every third month. They offer an opportunity to meet other members new to freelancing and ask questions of more experienced members.

The Branch invites 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.

New members meet with experienced members at the Camera Café on Thursday 27 October, Photo © Phil Sutcliffe.

LFB meetings are from 7pm to 9pm at Friends’ House, Euston Road NW1 (opposite Euston Station), which is accessible to people who use wheelchairs.

If you need the Branch to pay for care for a child or dependent so you can attend a meeting, call a Branch officer.

For updates on meetings (including new members’ meetings) and guidelines on Tweeting meetings see the Branch calendar web page www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html and LFB’s Twitter feed http://twitter.com/NUJ_LFB.

Can members who have difficulty reading the agenda on paper please contact us to get the agenda in electronic form ahead of the meeting.

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

MORE GATHERINGS FOR YOU

LONDON FREELANCE Branch 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 26 January from 6pm.

These meetings happen at the Camera Café on the last Thursday of every third month. They offer an opportunity to meet other members new to freelancing and ask questions of more experienced members.

The Branch invites 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.

Watch www.londonfreelance.org for details of our conference on Saturday 11 February. Notes crime reporter Duncan Campbell will be talking about his experiences as Chief Crime Reporter at the Guardian.

Journalistic ethics in times of Brexit are on the agenda for the LFB meeting on Monday 13 March. Professor Chris Frost will speak, not least to issues mentioned on page 4.

This issue went to press on 23 November. Deadline for the January online-only issue: 31 December.

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.

And we ask you to visit www.londonfreelance.org/rates and say – in confidence – what’s being paid.

LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

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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 January – for details go to www.writingcourses.org.uk.

PHOTOGRAFER 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: colinmcpherson@mac.com.

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