LOOKING to update the less-frequented corners of the Freelance Fees Guide, we tracked down some rates for compiling crosswords. Yes, that’s a branch of journalism. All we found are agreed rates at the Guardian – dated 2012.

Your mission this month is to peruse any crossword-compilers you know to supply going rates for these; and, somewhat more commonly, to remind photographer colleagues that we particularly want rates for use of photos online. Go to www.londonfreelance.org/rates/submit and tell us, 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.

You can submit rates online, in confidence, 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. 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.

Crosswords: Guardian – all rates in 2012 house agreement – Genius crossword £209; Prize crossword £177; Quipnic crossword £167.


Photography: Western Mail, day £150, booking minimum £75; Johnston Press NE England papers, day £100, so-called “half day” £50 XXX. Rex Features photo agency, use of single photo, probably re-licensing to other agencies £0.28 XXXX.

Shifts: Money Saving Expert, 7.5 hours £160; Pink News, 9 hours, £100 XXX; British Dental Association, editing lecture transcriptions for book, £200; Johnston Press NE England papers, reporting or subbing day £100 XX; NE England local freesheets, reporting or subbing day, £100 and up; NE England local paper, reporting day (cover for Local Democracy Reporter paid by BBC) £100 X.

Words, per 1000: Empire £300; Modern Railways, 2000-word feature talked up from £350 to £370, no terms agreed = £185 X; Planet Rock, author keeps copyright, £200.

Words, other: Daily Mail Max Hastings column, (according to Private Eye) £3000.

**The Rate for the Job**

**The Trireme Award**

THE TRIREME Award is for the “worst terms since I was last chained to the oars”, in the words of one freelance. This month’s Trireme Award goes to Rex Features photography agency, now owned by US stock photography, stock footage, stock music, and editing tools provider Shutterstock®. The Freelance has seen a quarterly statement received by one photographer including a payment for the re-use of a single photo, after a 50 per cent deduction for the agency’s cut, of an insulting £0.28 pence. We think it is likely that the photo was then probably re-licensed to another agency.

**Women doing less badly**

WOMEN have caught up with men in the rates they get paid for writing. That’s the good news: the bad news is that part of the reason is that the average rates reported in the Rates for the Job (above) by journalists who identify as men has fallen, and no-one’s doing very well once we take inflation into account.

Our aim here was to see whether we could detect discrimination between women and men in freelance rates actually paid – complementing the General Secretary’s presentation (see page 1). Examining the more recent rates in detail, we are able to suggest increases in the Freelance Fees Guide – see page 3. We processed data for the past 10 years – July 2008 to June 2018.

The trend line for rates achieved by women from national newspapers is from about £320 per 1000 words to about £400. In the same period the Consumer Price Index has gone roughly the same pattern: the trend a great deal.

For men, however, the linear trend line runs from £340 to £220 per thousand words. The trend for reported rates for which no sex or gender was specified is from £420 to £380. The “trend line” is the mathematical “best fit” to all the points.

As you can see from the chart, there is a huge scatter, with a few top-grade rates flying above a wretched of reasonable, indifferent and poor rates. There are not enough top-grade rates to affect the trend a great deal.

We have included all rates directly reported to the Rate for the Job, however they were rated, but excluded reports of journalists being offered no money at all for our work.

You can see a larger version of the chart at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1808rate.html – and also results for rates paid by magazines. For these we see roughly the same pattern: the trend of female, male and unknown rates has been from equality at £280 per 1000 to £360, £170 and flat at £280 respectively. By the time the ink is dry on this we hope to produce an equivalent chart for editorial shifts. This takes longer because we have to hand-convert each rate to a standard 7-hour day so that they are comparable with each other.

So: is there discrimination? Probably not, perhaps surprisingly, for the average working freelance. And the trends for “unknown” rates are compatible with there not being a massive reporting bias. Of course, our figures don’t include direct reports from “star” journalists, most of the best-paid of whom are men. The moral of the story for everyone is: always ask for more. We are working on further training courses in negotiation skills: see page 4 for some.

We aren’t even going to try to work out statistical significance for these figures. We can’t do similar exercises for other kinds of work – in most cases the rates simply aren’t comparable with each other and we don’t have enough reports for, for example, photography paid by the day. You can help by submitting the rates you’ve been paid to www.londonfreelance.org/rates/submit – in strict confidence.

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