

1 June
Defend Public Broadcasting
hear
Jim Corrigan
NUJ President



Book Branch Meets:
Tuesday 1 June
Tuesday 6 July
6.30 - 8p.m.
NUJ Headland House
(Corner of Grays Inn Road and Acton St.WC1)

Book Branch News

The NUJ Newsletter for Book Journos

NUJ

www.nujbook.org

June 2004



THE TAYLOR AND FRANCIS Books NUJ chapel are gearing up for what could be one of the largest ever strikes in the book sector.

A mass meeting of the chapel voted, with none against, to ballot for action over management's proposals to terminate the existing house agreement and replace it with one, which is inferior to T & F Journals. Journals only won recognition three years ago while the books chapel has held recognition for more than 20 years.

The books agreement is one of the best in the sector and under management's proposal the chapel would lose negotiating rights for everything other than pay hours and holidays. Management have offered to consult the unions on other matters but they would be forced to do

this in any case under the information and consultation directive which is to be introduced in March 2005.

The chapel voted to hold a ballot despite the fact that many of the members will leave the company because of the relocation to Milton Park near Didcot and those that remain will have their existing terms and conditions protected on an individual basis. The overwhelming feeling of the chapel was that they would not have got their enhanced redundancy terms if it was not for the fight put up by their predecessors and that they wanted to protect these terms for future generations.

Grass-roots

The decision to hold the ballot was a grass-roots one. It was proposed from the floor, despite the chapel being given the alternatives of continuing negotiations or seeking legally binding recognition under the provisions of the 1999 employment

relations act. A chapel spokesperson said that the mood was partly driven by management's refusal to negotiate on anything other than their proposed new agreement.

If this agreement was adopted new starters at the books company would have far worse redundancy and sickness benefits and there would be no childcare or eye test provision.

The decision to go ahead with terminating the house agreement is all the more surprising because the unions and management worked very closely together to negotiate the relocation deal for those going the Milton Park.

Implications

This move could have widespread ramifications for both the books and magazine sectors. Taylor and Francis has recently merged with Informa and the fear is that this dumbing down of the agreements could spread to that company and then onwards in books and magazines.

The NUJ is still trying to resolve the situation. It has accepted an invitation for talks at ACAS and is waiting to see whether management will do the same.

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Book Branch

Founded 1973

Branch Chair

Emma Wood
020 8960 1977
(4p.m.-8p.m. weekdays)

Branch Secretary

Dan Meredith
020 7400 2500
daniel.meredith@lexisnexis.co.uk

Treasurer

Andy Smith
01322 445551
andy@nujbook.org

Membership/Minutes

Cath Rasbash
cath@nujbook.org

Welfare/Equality

Kyran Connolly
020 8960 0625
kyran@union.org.za

Committee:

Sylvia Courtnage; Mitzi Bales;
Jason Carey; Nick Bardsley

MABIC delegates:

Kyran Connolly; Nick Bardsley;
Annie Pike

NEC Members:

Nick Bardsley (Book); Kyran Connolly (London); Andy Smith (South East)

Book Branch Website:

www.nujbook.org

Freelance Rates online

www.nujbook.org/freeln01.html

NUJ Freelance Directory

and the Rate for the Job
www.londonfreelance.org.uk

NUJ Head Office

www.nuj.org.uk

National Organiser Books, Magazines and

PR: Mike Sherrington

020 7843 3729

07764 290996 (mobile)

mikes@nuj.org.uk

Assistant Organiser: Fiona Swarbrick

020 7278 7916

fionas@nuj.org.uk

Freelance Organiser: John Toner

020 7843 3703

JohnT@nuj.org.uk

Change of Job/Address: John Eaton

020 7843 3732

john@nuj.org.uk

Book Branch News

The NUJ Newsletter for
Book Journos

Editor: Martin Spellman

07771 892 678

editor@nujbook.org

bookbranchnews@btopenworld.com

59 Courtenay Avenue, Harrow

Weald, Middlesex, HA3 6LJ

Deadline for the next issue (July)
is **Friday 25 June**

Printed by Wernham Printers
020 8808 1677

Editorial

Getting to it

By the time the next issue of BBN comes out the action at Taylor and Francis could be over. We will keep the branch email list updated with **BBN Extra** PDFs in the meantime.

The ballot result will be announced on Thursday 3 June and any action must be taken soon afterwards. The dispute is not about the transfer of work to Didcot but maintaining the hard-won house agreement. It is worth saying that the most important thing about any dispute, especially where strike action takes place, is **the return to work**—under what conditions and with what capability to continue the struggle. Pickets and placards outside offices, are only the visible signs, and what the media concentrate on. Once a dispute starts attention can be taken by resolve of the workforce to continue a course of action. But actions can change their form. It is not that action should be called off as soon as possible but recognition that all disputes must end sometime and that is what needs to be kept foremost in everyone's minds. *'As you go through life, whatever your goal: keep your eye on the doughnut not on the hole'*. The importance of this dispute and of winning it is in no doubt by the branch. We congratulate our T&F members for standing up and taking action and will do all we can to ensure their success.

Contribute with confidence

BBN is your opportunity to contribute and discuss the book industry. If book journalists don't do this, in the first instance, then other journalists in the NUJ are not going to do it in the second. No one need fear being embarrassed or made to look small. If we did this then no one would want to write again. We are not into trickery or devi-

ousness or playing both ends against the middle. All contributions will be taken seriously and debate handled fairly.

Editor's Pledge

I gave assurances in my last editorial that I would edit BBN for a maximum of five years and that I would not do it for my personal publicity or advancement. To this I can add that I do not have a political agenda for BBN or the branch. I am not in any political organisation and do not take guidance or direction from one. I say this because I feel there is sometimes paranoia in the NUJ, for historical reasons, about what are seen as *political* or *outside* influences. My final caveat is that I will continue as editor as long as I feel I am able to do a useful job. Enough of this but I think it important for members to know where I'm coming from and what I'm about. Influence?

Book Branch has already been quoted in the *Bookseller*, which presumably came from the *BBN* April issue. The *FT* finally realised the actual nature of Axel Springer's reactionary politics on 4 May. I doubt if this was down to us but at least we know we were right. Readers of the *Press Gazette* might have noted that they titled their recent freelance feature—'*Freelance Focus*' and used a medieval knight as a motif. I wonder where they could have possibly got that idea?

Deadlines

BBN deadlines for the rest of this year are: **25 June; 6 August; 17 September; 8 October; 12 November and 10 December**. This is the last date to file copy—please send it in before if possible. The PDF version will come out on the Monday after the deadline but the printed issue may not be in members' hands for about a month.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to Guy Smallman and Tim Gopsill for photos used in this issue. Sadly there was no room for them all.

Letters and Chapel Reports

Dear Martin

I found the tone (sorry) of John Toner's article irresponsible, since he seemed to be saying that authors should not bear responsibility for any libellous/obscene content or breaching the copyright of others in their work.

At least in academic publishing, it's unrealistic to expect publishers to hire a lawyer to read every page of every manuscript pre-press. This would mean many scholarly books would simply become unpublishable because of the extra costs. I don't think that's what our authors want.

The situation is no doubt different in e.g. trade publishing where I'm sure there are lawyers combing every sentence of the latest celebrity biog for potentially libellous statements – they are more likely to be present in such works, and they can afford to do it.

And re copyright – I'm surprised at the NUJ for encouraging people not to take responsibility for their use of the copyright material of others considering it's such a key issue for freelancers in particular.

While there is an obligation on publishers to read the material they are sent before they send it to press, surely the authors have to take some responsibility for their own work? We have to have these clauses to show what a serious matter breaches of these laws are, as a back up to the advice and instruction we give to all our authors as a matter of course.

Best wishes

Catherine Bousfield

Branch Member, T&F Books Chapel

Your Letters

John Toner replies:

Dear Martin,

Catherine Bousfield accuses me of being irresponsible, but backs up her statement only by attributing to me things I did not say!

Nowhere in my piece did I say that authors "should not bear any responsibility" for the things she lists. What I was objecting to, and I stated this very clearly, is the practice whereby the publisher transfer "the full liability" to the author. Nowhere in the article did I encourage people "not to take responsibility for their use of the copyright material of others". Quite the reverse! If Catherine will read the last paragraph of the article she will see that I advocate that authors should familiarise themselves with the law—precisely in order to ensure they do not breach copyright or libel someone. In fact, I asked the NUJ's Training Dept to launch a course on copyright law mainly to help members avoid infringing other people's work.

I have no problem with someone criticising me for what I write—I do, though, object to someone distorting what I wrote and then criticising me on the basis of that distortion.

John Toner

Freelance Organiser

If anyone would like to contribute further on this or other issues please write away

—Ed

Chapel Reports

Book Branch Chapels

A&C Black
Faber & Faber*
Freelance Group
HarperCollins (London)
LexisNexis UK*
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
Lonely Planet
Macmillan (Oxford)*
Open University* (Milton Keynes)
Orion*
Penguin/DK*
Random House*
Sage Publications
Taylor & Francis Books*
Usborne*
* recognised by the House

T&F

Existing house agreement terminates on 31 May. Company wants to replace it with a very basic version, excluding lots of negotiating rights that had lasted from the Routledge days. Random House and Penguin/DK are also looking at reducing house agreement terms; this is becoming a significant trend in the sector.

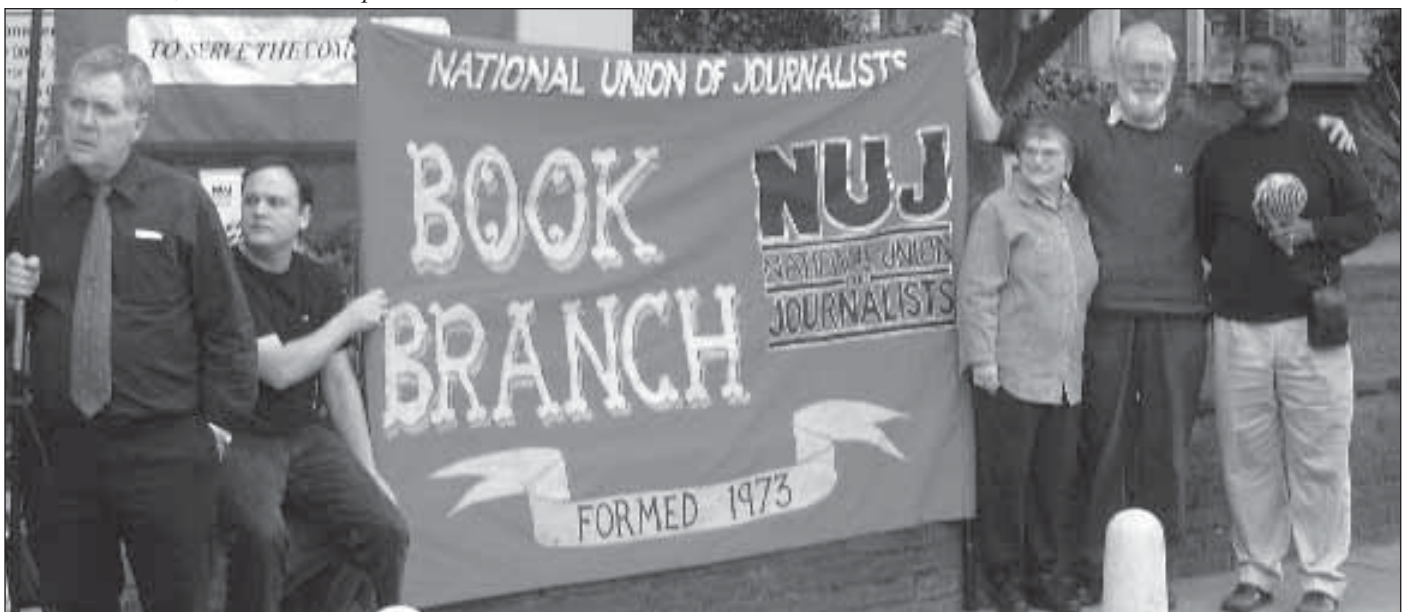
HarperCollins

A recruitment drive is planned for late May. Recent recruits are proving very active.

Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

A recruitment drive is under way.

continued on next page



Book Branch supporting the Haringey Press Officers: L-R Assistant General Secretary, John Fray; Ian Howarth, Press & PR branch; Mitzi Bales, Vice-Chair; Kyran Connolly NEC and Alex Pascal (with percussion instrument), Black Members Council

Your new branch officers

I wondered why attendance at this year's Book Branch AGM was fairly low. Now I know. All those who turn up get nominated to serve on the branch committee for the forthcoming year.

Book Branch Secretary Dan Meredith

So that's how I got here. I'd like to thank my colleagues for suggesting the idea and then voting me in.

Joking aside, the future of the book-publishing sector is under threat. Several of the large publishing houses want to devalue terms and conditions that the union has built up by robust negotiation over many years. The numerous attacks on union house agreements are of particular concern. I hope to work with the committee to support our chapels as they face up to the challenges ahead.

I am currently a book editor in the tax-publishing department at LexisNexis (formerly known as Butterworths), and joint FoC of the workplace chapel.

Sylvia set us a good example as Chair but due to heavy demands on her time she has resigned and I have been elected.

From the Chair Emma Wood

We are going through a period of change in the book industry, again, as a number of employers are challenging us with strategies designed to cut-back on standards embodied in our house agreements. The years since the return of recognition, as a limited legal right, have produced neither sufficient active membership nor strong enough terms and conditions for us to feel content that we are in any way ready for the forthcoming attack. However, the branch is strong on commitment and I am confident that, provided we work together, members in Book Branch will see real benefits in their working lives from participation in the union.

Better material circumstances should come from union membership but there is no way to quantify the benefit to the individual from the

experience of solidarity.

For myself participation in the branch is a welcome contrast to the isolation of writing. After 20 years as a freelance picture researcher and editor I am making use of factual research I carried out during that period and writing at last. I still do a little photography from time-to-time too.

If you want to put anything on the agenda for the branch meeting or ask anything, feel free to phone me between 4-8p.m. weekdays or at any time in an emergency. Do try and attend branch meetings from time-to-time, if you can. All members are welcome to come and get the news and meet colleagues from the whole book sector in London.

Do you work for Hodder?

It is expected that WHS will sell its Hodder Headline group, that includes John Murray, Hodder & Stoughton and Hodder Arnold to Hachette Livre, itself part of the French, Lagardere publishing empire and owner of Orion, Octopus, Cassells, Weidenfield and Nicholson (JM Dent and Everyman).

If you work for, or do work for, Hodder please email the editor at the address on page 2.

Chapel (continued) and NEC Report

...Chapel Reports continued from page 3

A&C Black

The Blue Guides travel list has been sold to a small Hungarian publisher, who will make the three specialist editors redundant.

Lexis Nexis

Sylvia Courtnege and Dan Meredith are the new joint F/MoCs. People with less than three months' service as at the end of April are not being given the recent pay rise. Negotiations are ongoing and hopefully the new salaries will eventually be implemented and backdated.

BCA

Chapel is holding an open meeting at the end of May inviting all eligible staff.

This only covers the Friday NEC meeting. If there's anything you want more details on e-mail me at andy@nujbook.org.

A good to welcome to George Macintyre and Adam Marray to the NEC as job-shares for the North East of England seat. Seamus Dooley's report from Ireland was dominated by disputes at major newspaper chapels, including a well-supported 48-hour stoppage at the Belfast Telegraph over a 3% pay offer and threats of large-scale redundancies at the Irish Independent. Paul Holleran, the Scottish organiser reported good news with, thanks to union intervention, redundancies averted at both Newsquest Strathclyde and the Daily Record & Sunday Mail. HarperCollins Glasgow have elected

NEC Report

By Andy Smith



a new FoC to replace long-standing MoC Val McNulty. They have recently accepted a pay offer worth 2.6%.

A very successful lobby of Parliament was held as part of the 'Hands off the BBC' campaign, despite it coinciding with the attack of the purple condoms. Twenty-one MPs of all shades gathered in a committee room to hear what we had to say but the number of us that made it could have been better. The BBC's charter renewal is going to be a major campaign issue for us so go to the NUJ's website and find out what you can do to get involved.

Talking Union

Book Branch—what is it?

Do you want to meet your counterparts in other book houses and learn how they are faring in today's publishing world?

- Do you want a democratic say in who will represent you to set policy at the Union's Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM)?
- Do you want to spend Branch funds to support the Union's three important charities?
- Do you want to know more about what is going on in other sectors of our union and in the wider Labour Movement?

These are just some of the things that can enlighten and sometimes entertain you at the Book Branch's monthly meetings. They indicate the difference between the branch and your chapel. For the branch, like the ADM, is a policy setting body with distinct responsibilities while your chapel is the bedrock collective dealing with day-to-day matters at your workplace.

Here is the first point that the NUJ Rules tell us about branches:

Explanations

By Mitzi Bales



"The union shall be divided into branches and each member shall normally be attached to an active branch in whose geographical or industrial sector his/her employment is situated."

The Book Branch is singularly placed within the union as both an industrial and a geographical sector. That is, all of us work in the book publishing industry (the industrial sector), in or near London (the geographical sector). Some of us are in recognised chapels, which negotiate with the House management, some in non-recognised chapels and others yet are in unorganised workplaces or freelance.

Not all branches are like this. For example, members working at Heinemann in Oxford will belong to the Oxford Branch. This geographical

branch comprises members working in newspapers, magazines, radio and television as well as books.

The union rules go on to set out what Branches must do such as meeting regularly, making financial reports to the national organisation, electing designated officers and sending delegates to the ADM. The rules also say what branches can do by choice such as affiliating to or supporting other organisations. Importantly, the rules establish an income for the branch through a monthly management allowance based on membership numbers.

So, reading the dry rules gives us the role of branches as part of the union structure. Reading the dry agenda makes the monthly meeting look less than interesting. But, get past the necessary organisational items, which take up very little time, and there is much of interest and importance for every member. And it is the members you and you and you who put life into the Book Branch.

This article was prompted by a member's question. If anyone has other questions we will try and answer them —Ed

...NEC Report continued from page 4

The freelance organiser's report included details of slow but encouraging progress to improve the lot of Express freelancers. John Toner also had news of some rather uncomradely goings on at Red Pepper magazine, where they appear to be having problems grasping the concept of agreed minimum rates for their freelance photographers.

Mike Sherrington reported on Taylor & Francis Books. He stressed that this attempt at trashing one of the best house agreements in the sector has to be seen as potentially as important an issue to the sector as the raft of de-recognitions in the 80s and 90s. And with T&F and Informa now one, it could affect the magazine sector as well. Both at Random House and Penguin/DK management are also trying to weaken long fought for house agreements.

Barry Fitzpatrick, national newspaper organiser, went to an AGM to

challenge the pay of a Chief Executive. What made this special was that it was the Gannett AGM in Washington D.C. Newsquest Chief Executive, Paul Davidson probably wasn't best pleased to see them there. Dave Toomer, who also went, enjoyed it more: Newsquest sacked him in 1998.

Sweet & Maxwell in Mytholmroyd were mentioned in the Northern Organiser's report, where we've been making efforts to recruit. The assistant organiser, Jenny Lennox, has been working hard in the region trying to recruit in new media.

The NUJ is a sponsor of the European Social Forum, to be held in London from 14-17 October, and looking to organise some of the sessions that will keep the thousands of activists busy.

Motions were passed condemning Israel's actions in Raffa, the killing of another Al Jazeera journalist and the arrest of oil industry trade unionists

in Colombia. We decided to support the demos against BNP election broadcasts. Finally, we considered a report into the fantastic work being done by our parliamentary group of MPs.

EXPERT ADVICE

If you hang around in Usenet groups (click the Groups tab in Google, and your favourite subject in the window) you can learn a lot of keen stuff. Some recent dialogue in a photographer's forum:

Q. — Did someone read the 'Associated Press Guide to Photojournalism?' What do you think of it?"

A. — "That a lot of photo-editors and managers at the AP, should sit down and read it themselves."

Q. — "I read an article that touched me about making a difference to the environment or to mankind through ones photography. How does a non-professional photographer do that?"

A. — "By not leaving the film wrapper in the woods?"

From Charley Stough's Burned Out Newspaper Guild Bulletin

Politics and Words of Wisdom

A Political Compass for the NUJ

As we go to press, the union's National Executive is considering what lessons the NUJ should learn from the debate and ballot on a Political Fund. Members voted narrowly to reject the proposal. Of course the union as a whole respects that decision, but we should do more than simply note the vote, and move on to next business.

Having spoken to hundreds of members at meetings all over the country during the months before the ballot, it's clear to me that there

**By Peter Murray
NEC**

was no one reason why members voted the way they did. Sure, a wish to remain impartial and non-aligned on one side was matched on the other by the wish to take up a campaigning stance in a politicised industry. But it was more complicated than that, too. And not just that. For every member who took part in one of the biggest ballot turn-outs the union's had, there were two more who didn't.

So the next stage is to try to find out more about members' reasons for voting, and most important, why so many didn't vote at all. The purpose is to increase the union's activist base, and encourage more members

to take part in the union's democracy. I hope the NEC will select a small number of branches or larger chapels to take part in a detailed, confidential breakdown of how their members voted, and what impact the union's targetted information and publicity material had on their decision.

The union has no option but to campaign hard on behalf of members. Like it or not, that campaigning takes us into a political world. If we learn how to reach beyond the seasoned activists, and involve more members in the day-to-day work of the NUJ, that can only make us stronger, and prepare us better for the days when our campaigns call for us all to act, and act together.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom

How to stay involved and remain seemingly happy and adjusted to this awful world, where the efforts of caring people pale in comparison to those who have power. It's easy...

First, don't let 'those who have power' intimidate you. No matter how much power they have they cannot prevent you from living your life, speaking your mind, thinking independently, and having relationships with people as you like.

Second, find people to be with who have your values, your commitments, but who also have a sense of humour. This combination is a necessity!

Third, understand that the major media will not tell you all the acts of resistance taking place everyday in society: the strikes, the protests, and the individual acts of courage in the face of authority. Look around (and you will certainly find it) for the evidence of these unreported facts. For the little you find, extrapolate

from that and assume there must be a thousand times as much as that which you've found.

Fourth, note that throughout history people have felt powerless before authority, but that at certain times these powerless people, by organising, acting, risking and persisting, have created enough power to change the world around them, even if only a little. That is the history of the labour movement, of the women's movement, the disabled persons' movement, the gay and lesbian movement.

Fifth, Remember that those who have power and who seem invulnerable are in fact quite vulnerable, that their power depends on the obedience of others, and when those others begin withholding their obedience, begin defying authority, that power at the top turns out to be very fragile. Generals become powerless when their soldiers refuse to fight, industrialists become powerless when their workers leave their jobs or occupy factories.

Sixth, when we forget the fragility of that power we become astounded when it crumbles in the face of rebellion. We have had many such surprises in our time.

Seventh, don't look for a moment of total triumph. See it as an ongoing struggle, with victories and defeats,

but in the long run the consciousness of people growing. So you need patience, persistence, and the need to understand that even when you don't 'win' there is fun and fulfillment in the fact that you have been involved, with other good people, in something worthwhile.

That's it—seven pieces of profound advice should be enough for a lifetime. Or one issue of this newsletter anyway!

By Louis Smyth, Unison Steward in education in Barnet. From Barnet Unison magazine.

PAY UP FOR PENSIONS

TUC MARCH AND RALLY

NPC TUC

London, Saturday 19 June
Assemble from 12 noon
Temple Tube, Embankment
March 1pm
Rally 2pm Trafalgar Square

Show your support for a better pensions deal for all!

Details of route and transport arrangements:
www.tuc.org.uk/pensionsrally

Pay Notes

From RPI to CPI

The Chancellor announced last December that he is changing the measure of inflation from RPIX (retail prices minus mortgage interest payments) to the 'Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices' (HICP) aka the CPI.

HSBC reckons that the HICP has been about one percent lower than RPIX for the past five years. HICP excludes council tax, housing depreciation and dwellings insurance. HICP also uses the geometric mean rather than the arithmetic mean of the RPIX. This is supposed to allow for changes in the weights, used in the index, due to changes in price. You can learn more of this on the Incomes Data Services website www.incomesdata.co.uk which has many useful resources and pointers for pay negotiators.

The futures market is predicting a rise in interest rates to 5.25% by the end of the year. A problem with these indexes always has been that they are a grand average that is supposed to serve everyone when there is massive pay disparity. Also they are detached from the real world and do not take into account what members actually need.

Top Pay

Independent Remuneration Solutions has found that chief executive pay has risen by 168% over the past five years. Average remuneration, excluding pension for top chief executives was £2.6m last year.

This is the equivalent of almost 278 people working on the minimum wage of £4.50 an hour (assuming a 40 hour week). But the basic salary of CEOs of the largest companies is only a third of their total pay. It makes up three-quarters of pay in the smallest companies. The minimum wage goes up to £4.85 an hour in October.

Freelance Focus



Who are these 'crap' freelancers?

Tucked in the back of the April Journalist, Chris Wheal's 'gripe' about so-called 'crap' freelancers is little short of disgraceful. It reminds you of one of those tabloid pieces calling for drastic action against ill-defined, problems.

We are accused of not being able to earn a living from our trade because our output is unwanted and often unprintable. I know he was an editor but how can he know this? Those on low income who claim reduced fees are accused of being subsidised to the tune of £30. This is from a union activist (member of the union's professional training and charity committees) in the main NUJ magazine.

One response has been printed in the latest Journalist. Ged Nelson asks "I wonder what parallel world Chris Wheal inhabits. One where the playing field of editors and contributors is perfectly level, I suspect, where no freelance suddenly loses a contract, no publications go bust, no fat cat executives call for budget cuts and no advertising recessions kick in."

There is great encouragement given to people to become journalists—freelancers in particular. 'Earnings of £40,000 possible' one ad used to promise. Maybe if your name is Pilger or even Wheal. This view is echoed by what I term the 'entrepreneurial tendency' within the union, sometimes wrongly called 'freelance fundamentalists' who consider themselves special and have a sectional outlook that believes they should be separate and apart from staff journalists with whom they not only share no interests but are opposed.

Insolvency Fund?

Which brings me to, National Freelance Organiser, John Toner's question 'Do we need an insolvency fund?' This would be paid into by freelancers with a monthly sum to be eligible for payment when a client goes bust owing them money (Freelance April 2004). This is ridiculous: it would be untenable but even it did exist hard-pressed freelancers would be trying to make up for the failings of the system. I used to do a report for a business newsletter for start-up local businesses. Many of these seemed to be unviable, looking for government or other help to get them out of a hole. Some courses in how really capitalism really works might be a better idea.

LOOKING BACK

An old editor and an old designer were chatting. The editor said, "I was just thinking about that day in 1994 when you came out of the committee meeting with the new newspaper makeover handbook."

"I remember that day," the designer said, smiling.

"And I looked at the handbook and said 'If we do this horrible thing, our paper will look like a circus poster, we will be overrun with vapid columnists, numbnuts middle managers, yuppie designers and project committees, we will lose readers, and the profession will make us a laughing stock.'"

"Ah yes," the designer said.

"And I furthermore said, 'If you do this, I will throw you down two

flights of stairs and drop a typewriter on your head."

"How well I recall," the designer said.

"But you talked me out of it," the old editor said, "by saying that I would be fired, lose my pension and be put in prison for 10 years."

"I remember," the designer reminisced.

"Well, here we are, and I've just seen the Sunday proofs, and I have to admit that I lost that argument."

"But we're friends again," the designer smiled.

"Yes," the old editor said, "but I was just thinking ..."

"Thinking what?" the designer said.

"I was just thinking," the old editor said, "that this is the day I would be getting out of prison."

From Charley Stough's 'Burned Out Newspaper Guild Bulletin'

June Branch Meeting Agenda

Time: 6.30 - 8.30p.m
Venue: Headland House

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of May Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. Membership
5. Finance
6. Defend Public Broadcasting. Speaker: **Jim Corrigan, NUJ President**
7. Book Branch News
8. Workplace Reports
9. Reports:
NEC (National Executive Council)
MABIC (Magazine and Book Industrial Council)
Freelance
Other
10. Motions
11. Correspondence
12. AOB (Any Other Business)
13. Date of Next Meeting:
6th July

Please inform the Chair if you have any motions or AOB. A more specific agenda is sent out as an email PDF the Friday before the meeting.

(Other branch meetings follow this form, except for the speaker)

The branch meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except for January, when it is the second Tuesday. Dates for the rest of the year are: **6 July; 3 August; 7 September; 5 October; 2 November and 7 December**

Branch Affiliations

Book Branch affiliated to the following at its AGM:
Battersea and Wandsworth TUC;
Brent TUC; Waltham Forest TUC; Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom; Reclaim Our Rights; Labour Research Department; Justice for Colombia; Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

Book Branch on the march!



Emma Wood and Dan Meredith with the branch banner on the May Day demonstration. NUJ Research Officer, David Ayrton, supports the other end.

Photo © Guy Smallman 2004

New Chair and Sec for Book

Dan Meredith replaced Nick Bardley as Branch Secretary and Emma Wood took over from Sylvia Courtnage at the Book Branch AGM in May. (You can read their reports on page 4).

Outgoing Chair, Sylvia Courtnage reported a successful 30th anniversary year with increased membership and a new chapel at BCA. Support was given both to NUJ (BBC, Haringey, T&F) and international issues (Iraq, Justice for Colombia, Venezuela). The branch focussed on recruitment and training.

The Branch heard a report of the Labour Research Department conference. Companies with more than 50 employees will have to have 'meaningful negotiations' with employees on any major changes within the company. Where unions are recognised they will play a big part in these negotiations but must be careful not to sign away rights they already have in house agreements.

On this year's NEC: Nick Bardley and Kyran Connolly are on the Finance Sub-Committee, whilst Andy Smith is on the Policy Committee.

The branch sent greetings to Doris and Bernard Crewe, activists in Blidworth, Nottinghamshire, in the 1983-4 Miners' Strike, wishing Doris a good recovery from her operation.

Branch M&FoCs meet

A very useful meeting of branch M&FoCs took place at the beginning of May, under the auspices of Mike Sher-rington.

Reports from chapels and an exchange of views took place but the attendance could have been

better with some travelling down from Leamington Spa. Among the questions: Is the union role taken for granted? Should there be open union meetings on an annual basis? Is stress an issue and can the union help? How to deal with unpaid and expected overtime? People feel intimidated and need to have achievable goals. Don't miss the next one.

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