

Book Branch News

NUJ Book Branch

www.nujbook.org

July 2008

Diary Dates

1 July

Branch meeting
(These are held at
Headland House.)

5 August

Branch meeting

2 September

Branch meeting

Those on the email
list will receive
Agendas in advance.

Book Branch Chapels

A & C Black
Faber & Faber*
HarperCollins (London)
LexisNexis*
Lippincott Williams &
Wilkins
Macmillan (Oxford)*
Open University
(Milton Keynes)*
Orion*
Penguin/DK*
Random House*
Taylor & Francis*
Usborne*

*Recognized

Book Branch News

Editorial team
Sylvia Courtnage, editor
Sylvia Kwan, designer
Mitzi Bales, assistant

BBN Deadline

Please send chapel
news and other items
for the next issue to
editor@nujbook.org by
26th June 2008

First Time Delegates

Two First-time ADM delegates
tell us how it was...

Conference was absolutely amazing. So much talk, debate, and info that at times it was almost overwhelming, but also completely invigorating. This is the place where the NUJ decides policy and it was an action-packed three days hurtling through the 300 motions and amendments that were up for discussion. Along the way I got a glimpse into the inner workings of the union and the passion of the people who are most strongly involved.

Interspersed through the days were talks from people such as John McDonnell, Patricia McKeown, and Alan Johnston (my personal top three), but sometimes even more inspiring were the stories we heard from and about the grass roots members who are quietly getting on with helping others. The NUJ is a feisty and active union and I came away feeling so proud to be part of it.

MARIZA O'KEEFFE, PENGUIN/DK

As a first time delegate, I don't think I was quite prepared for such an intense experience. For three days your life is nothing but the Union. That said, it was an enjoyable experience. One of the great things about ADM is that you get to meet people from other parts of the Union. You get to put faces to the names of people you may have read about in The Journalist who have done important work on behalf of members.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MONTHLY BRANCH MEETING

Tuesday 1 July 2008, 6.30pm

Headland House
308 Gray's Inn Road WC1
(nearest tube Kings Cross)

Your chance to hear from
other chapels, express your
views and learn about things
of interest to all members.

P.S. Meet and support your
new branch chair!

A particular scary moment for me was having to speak to one of Book Branch's motions. Addressing an audience of a few hundred is not easy. However, it wasn't too bad. Announcing that you are a first time delegate gets you a round of applause from everyone.

The highlight of the ADM for me was Alan Johnston's speech on the Saturday afternoon. Hearing his account of his captivity was quite moving, particularly of how knowing that people in the outside world were campaigning for his release kept him going.

I definitely plan to stand as a delegate to the next ADM in Southport – and to go if elected.
HUW DAVIES, BOOK BRANCH CHAIR

BRANCH CONTACTS

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NEC Members

Kyran Connolly (Book)
Andy Smith (South East)

Book Branch Website

www.nujbook.org

Freelance Rates

www.nujbook.org/freelance/freeln01.shtml

NUJ Freelance Directory and Rate for the Job

www.londonfreelance.org.uk

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Book Branch Minutes

(Note: these are abbreviated to save space. It is taken as said that the previous minutes and membership reports are approved each time. The full version is available from the Secretary.)

1 April 2008

1) Workplace reports on Penguin DK pub quiz; Faber negotiations; LexisNexis dispute; Ofsted restructuring.

2) **Speaker:** Disabled Members Council chair unable to attend, but sent document outlining its work.

3) Meeting addressed by Eduardo Marquez Garcia, President of the Colombian Journalists Union, interpreted by Karen Cepeda Diaz told of dangers to journalists and work of the union. Meeting agreed "to donate £100 to help fund the visit of our Colombian colleagues".

4) Reports on Finance, NEC, MABIC, Freelance, No-One is Illegal Conference, TUC Women's Conference.

5) ADM: meeting passed a late notice motion against cuts in funding for Public Lending Rights.

6) Branch agreed to sponsor one member to attend the TUC Discussion Leaders Course and another as an observer to the TUC Black Workers Conference.

AGM, 6 May

Series of amendments to Standing Orders approved. Full version available from secretary.

1) Election of officers as follows.

Chair: Huw Davies;
vice-chair: Annie Pike;

secretary & minutes: Cath Rasbash;
treasurer, Andy Smith;
membership, Mitzi Bales;
Equality & Welfare, Kyran Connolly;
general, Sylvia Courtnage.

BBN editorial team:

Sylvia Courtnage and Mitzi Bales;
website editor: Andy Smith;
auditors: Jim Ryan and Annie Pike.

Two vacancies remain for general members of committee.

2) Affiliations approved:

Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom;
Labour Research Department;
Justice for Colombia;
Cuba Solidarity Campaign;
Amnesty International;
National Pensioners Convention.
Local TUCs (Trade Union Councils) with elected delegates: Battersea and Wandsworth, Annie Pike; Brent, Kyran Connolly; Camden, vacancy; Islington, Sheila Cohen; Waltham Forest, Cath Rasbash.

3) Regular meeting, 6 May

Due to shortage of time, agreed to deal with only four housekeeping items plus passing the motion "to donate £60 towards funding the next conference of the National Shop Stewards Network on 28 June, and to send up to two delegates at a cost of £5 each."

Chapel News

Usborne

Rachel Firth has stepped down as MoC after four years of hard and successful work. Leonie Price steps up from deputy to MoC and Alex Frith takes on the deputy role.

LexisNexis

Chapel has settled its pay claim – see article in next issue.

Protect yourself

NUJ organiser Sue Harris offers some important tips from on how to safeguard your interests at work when trouble brews.

If you experience difficulties at work, your M/FoC, Book Branch Committee members and/or NUJ head office are there to provide support and help you resolve things. However, by adopting the following basic tips, you can do much to help yourself when you encounter problems or if the situation turns nasty.



SAFEGUARD DOCUMENTS

Don't lose your contract of employment; keep a spare copy at home. It contains important information about your terms and conditions, which may be crucial when arguing for your rights. Similarly, keep copies of union agreements, company policies or a staff handbook covering subjects such as discipline, grievances, capability, sickness and redundancy, at home.

RECORD RESPONSES

If you are concerned about something, ask questions sooner rather than later. Record any answers (or lack of them) in writing by sending a friendly note or email to confirm your question or request and any response you received.

LOG EVENTS

Keep a diary of events, especially if you are being bullied or subjected to racial, sexual or other forms of harassment. It's important to keep a diary too where you have raised an ongoing issue verbally with management for some time, but which seems to be ignored. To make it easy to keep a diary, a computer tip for those who use Windows is to .LOG on the first line of a Notepad document in the left margin making sure you only use uppercase letters and click Save on the File menu. Subsequently, every time you open the document and add new information, Notepad will automatically time and date it.

SHARE PROBLEMS

Share your problem with trusted colleagues, who can provide invaluable support and you may discover that others have encountered the same problem, or are willing to act as witnesses for you. Approaching a problem collectively can add weight to persuading management to resolve the issue.

DON'T BE PRESSURED

Do not allow yourself to be pressured into making an important decision instantly. Never give a snap answer: you have the right to get independent advice and time to think things over. Similarly if a meeting with your manager starts to look as if you may be in serious trouble, or you are being asked to make major changes to the way you work, be brave enough to stop the meeting. Ask for it to be reconvened, but

with your union rep alongside you: you have a legal right to such representation in disciplinary and grievance hearings and are entitled to five days notice to organise such a meeting.

GET IT IN WRITING

When things are going wrong at work, whatever the situation, send memos or emails to put the issue in writing. This could provide critical evidence later on in support of your case. Cover your back by responding to any written criticism in writing – do not rely on a verbal explanation.

ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT

You can request improvements from your employer, for instance if you are facing redundancy – the worst that can happen is that you are told "no". If your request is to regularise an ongoing situation, make sure that you record your request at least once in writing.

SAVE EMAILS

Computer tips: print and save important exchanges of correspondence or email them to yourself at home. For those with Windows, it's essential to be aware that the "auto archive" function in Microsoft Outlook periodically deletes emails you've sent. You could lose a crucial piece of evidence because of this.

RECORDINGS

Clandestinely recorded conversations are not permissible evidence, but messages left on your voicemail or answering machine are. For a recording to be considered as valid evidence you must have the consent of all concerned.

KEEP SUBS UP TO DATE

Finally and most importantly, make sure that your NUJ membership is up to date. Finding that you have to pay a large sum for subscription arrears or that you're not entitled to legal assistance from the union – you have to be a fully paid up member for 13 weeks – is not what you want to discover when you have problems at work.

If you have any other tips, which can help others in a tight situation, email the editor.

Your Branch Committee Needs Two of You...

Only two more members are needed to bring the branch committee up to full strength. This will give the new chair – bred to leadership through activity in a vibrant chapel – the support he should have to carry out a progressive programme.

Here's what you would do if you took on the job.

Each committee member has a responsibility to liaise with one or more chapels assigned after discussion at the first committee meeting of the year. This means being the first point of contact when chapels have questions or problems. Just as important, it means keeping in regular contact with the chapel M/FoCs to check how things are going and to inform them of branch and national union policies and activities.

This practice was established in the first year of the branch's existence (1973) as a way to serve chapels and individuals effectively, as well as reducing the demands on the busy national organiser by freeing them from dealing with relatively simple matters.

Committee members may be called upon for other assignments that arise from resolutions and policies passed by the branch, for example, arranging for speakers or writing leaflets. These are usually handled by volunteers.

Committee members are also expected to attend both the monthly branch meeting and the monthly committee meeting.

MITZI BALES

NUJ Training Event Demystifies Recruitment

by Alison Hennessey and Briony Overroad
Random House

With the recent growth within our company as a whole, it became increasingly clear to us at the Random House chapel that we needed a corresponding growth in members, especially in sections that were new to the company and might not be familiar with the work of the NUJ. The question was – where to start with recruitment? It all seemed a bit daunting...

Luckily, though, National Organisers Sue Harris and Fiona Swarbrick were there to show us the way at a recruitment training night, held at union headquarters. Crucially, so were members from other chapels who could offer advice on how they worked. Probably the greatest motivator for Briony and myself was brainstorming the most common reasons people gave for not joining the union. The minute we realised one of our biggest issues was that so many people simply weren't being asked to join was the minute we realised that increasing our numbers might not be as difficult as we'd thought. Listing the reasons people gave for not wanting to join, and then working through suggestions to counteract these reasons, was also a huge boost. It's a lot easier and more effective asking people to join if you know you've got a number of arguments ready in case they say no.

So far, we've managed to tempt another three people into joining since that session and, if we can persuade each of these people to recruit another three, and then if those nine were to recruit...

Helen Ibotson's baby: Future Book Branch activist?

In case you've been wondering what former Book Branch chair and BBN editor Helen Ibbotson has been up to lately, the news is that she had a baby daughter, Martha, on 19 January.

We send belated congratulations to Helen and her husband James Clark. We look forward to seeing Helen back at branch meetings whenever baby Martha permits her to resume union activity.

