

# Book Branch News

NUJ Book Branch

www.nujbook.org

August 2008

## Diary Dates

### 5 August

Branch meeting  
(These are held at  
Headland House.)

### 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  
11th August 2008

## IMPORTANT NOTICE MONTHLY BRANCH MEETING

Tuesday 5th August 2008,  
6.30pm at Headland House  
308 Gray's Inn Road WC1  
(nearest tube Kings Cross)

Guest Speaker from  
**BOOK AID INTERNATIONAL**  
Hear about the work of this charity  
that "opens the world to books".

**ALL MEMBERS WELCOME**

## LexisNexis chapel

A successful pay campaign in  
2007 helped the Chapel to recruit  
a lot of new members.

Most of the Chapel members  
received substantial pay rises last  
year, with those on the lowest pay  
grades receiving proportionally the  
biggest payments, as a result of a  
united campaign which almost ended  
in strike action. This year the chapel  
was determined to achieve an across-  
the-board percentage payment for  
all members, the aim  
being to ensure that no-  
one's salary would fall  
behind.

Numerous negotiating  
meetings produced slow  
progress and after  
putting the matter into  
dispute, the Chapel was  
eventually involved in  
talks at ACAS  
(Arbitration, Conciliation  
and Advisory Service).  
This involved yet more  
intensive negotiating,  
where the union team

sits in one room, the management  
team sits in another and the ACAS  
conciliator commutes between the  
two camps in an effort to broker a  
deal.

The meetings began at 10am in the  
morning and only finished after 8pm  
at night. Progress was slow – but  
eventually produced an offer which  
the team felt was good enough to be  
put to the chapel.

The settlement achieved was a pay  
rise in line with inflation.

The new offer was discussed at a  
chapel meeting which attracted a  
record attendance and members  
agreed to a consultative ballot on  
the offer. As part of the agreement  
with management, the committee  
members contacted any members  
who had been unable to attend the  
meeting to ensure that they were  
clear on the terms of the offer.

The ballot produced a very strong  
vote in favour of the offer – of 98%  
on a 91% turnout.

The chapel also recently held a  
successful lunchtime open meeting  
(snacks courtesy of Book Branch -  
many thanks!), where several non-  
members came along to hear about  
the latest success and join up.



Julian Gibson,  
Sue Harris, Sylvia  
Courtnage and  
Vanessa Higgins

### BRANCH CONTACTS

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#### NEC Members

Kyran Connolly (Book)  
Andy Smith (South East)

#### Book Branch Website

[www.nujbook.org](http://www.nujbook.org)

#### Freelance Rates

[www.nujbook.org/freelance/freeln01.shtml](http://www.nujbook.org/freelance/freeln01.shtml)

#### NUJ Freelance Directory and Rate for the Job

[www.londonfreelance.org.uk](http://www.londonfreelance.org.uk)

#### NUJ Head Office

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# Ethics are Important

## ETHICAL QUESTIONS WERE TO THE FORE IN A LIVELY DISCUSSION WHEN CHRIS FROST SPOKE AT THE BRANCH

Professor Chris Frost, chair of the union's Ethics Council, spoke about the council's work at the June Branch meeting. His talk provoked a lot of questions and a wide-ranging discussion of issues like privacy and press intrusiveness at sensitive times, and how the code could be applied in publishing.

### The Ethics Council and the Union Code of Conduct

Chris explained that the aim of the Ethics Council is to ensure that professional standards are upheld throughout the newspaper and publishing industry. This is best done by means of the union's code of conduct.

Chapels are encouraged to negotiate with their managements for recognition of the code and to include it in their house agreement, with special emphasis on the conscience clause.

Members who breach the code can, theoretically, be penalised by fines of up to £1,000 or even expulsion from the union, but this is hard to enforce and rarely happens. The council does investigate complaints about members who may have breached the code, following complaints from union members.

Complaints from the public about ethical standards in journalism would normally go to the Press Complaints Commission, a body which does not include any NUJ presence, but is run by the newspapers themselves, unlike the previous Press Council.

### Recent Developments

During 2006 and 2007 the Ethics Council reviewed and revamped the code of conduct and working practices after consultation with the whole membership. There was an encouraging level of consensus as to what the code should include.

The new version is now included in the union rule book, with the part of the code formerly known as 'working practices' now called 'membership responsibilities'.

Chris said that some parts of the code still need further discussion and agreement, in

particular the clause defining appropriate behaviour when photographing or interviewing under-16s and the privacy clause.

Most journalists today enter the profession by way of degree courses, which include ethics modules. The union code is a benchmark for discussion of ethical issues both within the union and beyond.

### Chris Frost's biography

Chris was union president in 1991-92 and, as well as chairing the council; he is currently chair of the NUJ Finance Committee and a member of the Appeals Tribunal. He has also been a long-term member of the National Executive Council (NEC). He began his union activity in 1973 as FOC of the Bedfordshire Journal chapel.

MITZI BALES AND SYLVIA COURTNAGE

## Call Bev first

If your query for NUJ HQ is more of an administrative one – whether it's to request recruitment materials or an updated chapel membership list – you can save time by going direct to Beverley Brown.

"Beverley will get these things moving straight away," says National Organiser, Sue Harris – "whereas Fiona and I are often out and about."

"It also means that we can concentrate on organising, helping with negotiations and the most complex personal cases," she said.

Beverley Brown, Magazine, Book and Press & PR Secretary, is based at Headland House on 020 7843 3714 or email [beverleyb@nuj.org.uk](mailto:beverleyb@nuj.org.uk)