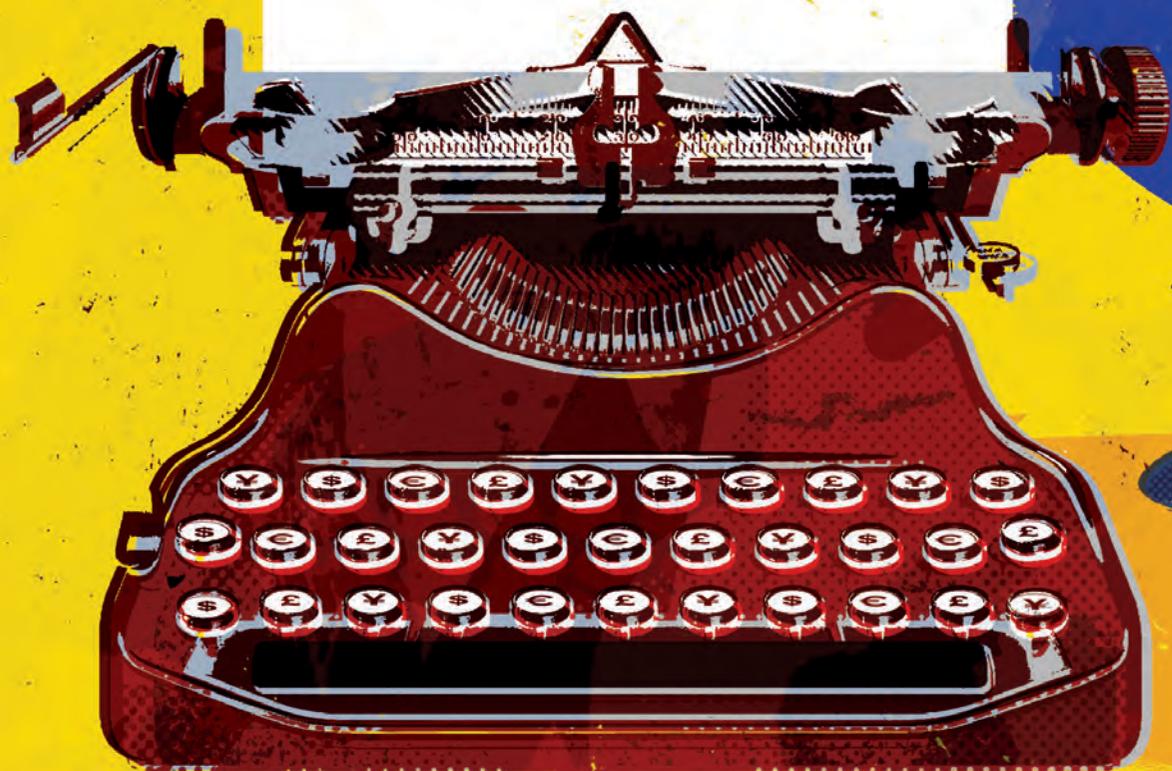


# the Journalist

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## A world of work

Freelances urged to think globally



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Summer time is here and many of us may be going overseas for a holiday. But if you're freelance, while you're abroad enjoying a break from work maybe you should consider sending your work overseas too. Our cover feature for this edition by Ruth Addicott looks at the opportunities, and also the pitfalls, of doing work for international news organisations.

Also, still in a leisure vein, we're used to tipping in restaurants, but as journalists, we're not used to getting tips ourselves. But that could be changing as tipping is starting to find its way into some forms of journalism with readers paying in cryptocurrencies if they like a piece. Rachael Revesz looks at this nascent payment system.

Our media anniversary feature by Jonathan Sale is a very evocative look at when there was a broadcast sound ban on Sinn Fein, a time that led to a voiceover boom for Northern Irish actors.

Our news section has an investigation by David Hencke into Sussex University's journalism degree and a piece by Anton McCabe on how thorough, local reporting in Enniskillen led to a police investigation.

I hope you find something of interest to read, maybe talking the magazine on holiday with you!

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Gary Neil



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# Victory for No Stone Unturned journalists

**THE NUJ** welcomed the move by police in England and Northern Ireland to finally drop their controversial investigation into two NUJ journalists who made a documentary about the murder of six Catholic men who had been watching a World Cup match in a pub during the Troubles.

There had been a public outcry about the arrests and investigation of Trevor Birney (pictured left) and Barry McCaffrey (pictured right) and continued pressure from the NUJ, Amnesty International and other campaigners.

The warrants for the arrest of the pair, who made the No Stone Unturned film about the Loughinisland massacre in 1994, were quashed by three appeal judges at the High Court in Belfast after the Lord Chief Justice Declan Morgan said that they were inappropriate.

The Durham constabulary and the Police Service of Northern Ireland then said that they would no longer investigate Trevor and Barry who were arrested and put on police bail in August 2018. They had to appear at police stations on a number of occasions to have their bail extended.

They have now collected their computers, phones and documents and other items which



had been seized by police in the investigation.

The two journalists said: "The police have dropped the case for one reason only – finally they accept that by arresting us and raiding our homes and offices, they were the ones that acted unlawfully. The PSNI put the cudgel in the hands of Durham constabulary and let them loose on us and on press freedom itself."

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, said: "The manner in which warrants were secured, the execution of those warrants, the severe bail restrictions imposed on Barry and Trevor and the damage done to their reputation cannot simply be brushed aside after a High Court judgement which could not have been more damning. There should be an independent investigation into the police handling of this case."



**There should be an independent investigation into the police handling of this case**

**Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary**

## inbrief...

### **JAILED TURKISH JOURNALIST FREED**

The jailed journalist 'adopted' by the NUJ has been released from Bakirkoy prison in Istanbul. Ayşe Düzkan started an 18-month sentence at the end of January. She was released on probation in June, but must sign in at a police station every three days, undertake unpaid work and cannot leave Istanbul.

### **ORWELL PRIZE GOES TO JOINT WINNERS**

Guardian columnist Suzanne Moore and the deputy editor of Prospect magazine Steve Bloomfield jointly won this year's Orwell prize for journalism. The prize is awarded for commentary or reporting which comes closest to George Orwell's ambition to make 'political writing into an art'.

### **FALL IN INFLUENCE OF PRIVATELY EDUCATED**

The percentage of top journalists who went to private school has fallen over the past five years. Social mobility charity The Sutton Trust said 43 per cent of the UK's 100 most influential journalists were privately educated, an 11 per cent drop from 2014.

### **EVENING STANDARD LOSES £11 MILLION**

London's Evening Standard made a loss of £11 million for the second year in a row. It made a pre-tax loss of £11.6 million in the year ending September 2018, compared with £11.8 million in 2017. Turnover rose two per cent to £65.4 million.

### **CHESTER CHRONICLE LEAVES CITY HOME**

The Chester Chronicle has shut its office in the city leaving it without a base in the community for the first time in its 244-year-history. Some 14 staff who worked for The Chronicle and the North Wales Daily Post in the Sealand Road office are now travelling to a regional office at Liverpool, Colwyn Bay or Manchester or working from home. No jobs have been put at direct risk by the move.

## Freelance wins £8,360 holiday pay

**A FREELANCE NUJ member** won £8,360 in holiday pay after an employment tribunal declared he should be classed as a 'worker'.

David Walsh worked for Scotsman Publications for several years and had had requests for holiday pay turned down because he was deemed self-employed.

The company had cited its standard freelance contract, which states that the freelance is self-employed and an independent contractor.

The employment tribunal ruled that Walsh met the legal definition of a worker, rather than an independent contractor.

This meant he was entitled to full holiday pay and received £8,360 in compensation.

David Hoey, the employment judge, said Walsh was an 'integral part' of a team he worked with and he didn't have an arm's length relationship with the newspaper group.

## Staff face 'intolerable' conditions

**NUJ MEMBERS** at the Scotsman Publications, which includes The Scotsman, the Edinburgh Evening News and Scotland on Sunday, have

said they don't know how they will manage to get titles out after fresh redundancies.

The NUJ chapel said: "Since Johnston Press was acquired by its new owners, there has been a constant process of cost-cutting – from closing offices to closing titles. This latest round of jobs cuts leaves

the remaining staff questioning how they can produce newspapers under what would reasonably be considered intolerable conditions. There has been little or no guidance from our managers – rather, there has been almost total silence on what our future holds."



inbrief...

RENNER WINS C4 FELLOWSHIP

Solape Renner, a Bloomberg journalist who began her working life as an analyst for the European Central Bank, has been awarded the inaugural Sarah Corp Fellowship with Channel 4 News. The fellowship is in memory of the respected foreign affairs producer who died in 2016.

PAUL FOOT AWARD GOES TO EMILY DUGAN

Emily Dugan, a reporter for BuzzFeed, has won the Private Eye Paul Foot Award for Investigative and Campaigning Journalism for her Access to Justice campaign. The judges praised her persistence in reporting the human cost of the degradation of England's justice and legal aid system.

RUSSIAN REPORTER FREED AFTER OUTCRY

Russian police have dropped all charges against journalist Ivan Golunov after an outcry in the media and among journalists' unions about his arrest for alleged drugs offences. Golunov is a reporter for the Meduza news website and has conducted investigations into corruption among Moscow city officials.

INDIAN ASSOCIATION ELECTS PRESIDENT

Naresh Kaushik has been elected as the new president of the Indian Journalists Association in the UK. Naresh has been an NUJ member for more than 30 years and is a former deputy FOC of the BBC World Service chapel.

SIGHT AND SOUND EDITOR TO DEPART

Nick James, editor of the British Film Institute's monthly magazine Sight and Sound is stepping down after 21 years. He started at Sight and Sound in 1995 as deputy editor, moving to editor just two years later. He said he would pursue wider ambitions as a writer, but will continue to contribute to the magazine.

BBC drops most free licences for over 75s

SOME 3.7 MILLION pensioners aged over 75 who receive a free TV licence will have to pay for it after the BBC, which was obliged to provide free licences by the government, scaled back its provision.

Households with one person receiving pension credit will still be eligible at a cost of £250 million per year.

The decision was made by the BBC board after the corporation agreed to take on the costs of the benefit as part of the last licence fee settlement.

In 2015, the government announced that the BBC would take over the cost of providing free licences for over-75s by 2020; this was expected to cost £745 million – a fifth of the BBC's budget by 2021-22. That works out as more than its spending on all radio services, or about the same as on the bulk of its channels aside from BBC One, or on all its TV sport, drama, entertainment and comedy.

About 1.5 million households could be eligible for free licences.

The BBC said: "The new scheme will cost around £250 million by 2021-22, depending on the take-up. The cost will require the BBC to divert some spending on programmes and services alongside continuing to find new



IMAGEROCKER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

savings while expanding its commercial revenue to cope. The decision does, however, prevent unprecedented closures of services which would have been required had we copied the government's scheme."

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "Dumping the BBC with the responsibility for a welfare benefit was a wrongheaded act of sabotage by a government that cared little about the impact on our public service broadcaster."

The BBC's annual report showed some progress over eliminating its gender pay gap. Last year the gap went down to 6.7 per cent from 7.6 per cent in the previous year. Also one in five of the BBC's top earners were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Dumping the BBC with the responsibility for a welfare benefit was a wrongheaded act of sabotage

Michelle Stanistreet NUJ general secretary

IFJ backs the NUJ over snooping and pay gap

NUJ MOTIONS about surveillance of journalists and ending the gender pay gap were passed by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) World Congress in Tunis in June.

The union highlighted the need for campaigning to close the gender pay gap and secure equal pay, and to improve employment rights.

It also highlighted the need to strengthen the International Labour Organisation.

Delegates voted to coordinate a global strategy and campaign to end discrimination in pay and opportunities for women journalists. They also supported a Palestinian Journalists Syndicate motion

calling for greater efforts to raise awareness about the kinds of threats women journalists encounter, online and offline.

Congress called on the new IFJ executive committee to raise awareness of and build a culture to resist the surveillance of journalists and to promote technological and organisational approaches to avoid it.

The NUJ's Jim Boumelha was reconfirmed as the IFJ's honorary treasurer.

Photographers blow whistle on basketball

THE BRITISH Basketball Federation has joined a growing list of organisations that insist photographers provide free images to gain access to cover events.

Photographers at the women's international friendly between Great Britain and Canada in Manchester in June were told they could have credentials only if they

gave the governing body free images.

Natasha Hirst, chair of the NUJ Photographers' Council, said: "The NUJ fully backs the Basketball Journalists'

Association and the AIPS [Association Internationale de la Presse Sportive] Basketball Commission in condemning the BBF for seeking to exploit photographers."

# Gannett petitioned over Newsquest at US AGM

**NUJ REPRESENTATIVES** took their campaign for better resources and conditions at Newsquest directly to the publisher's US owner, travelling to Virginia to call for Gannett and its shareholders to take into account the views of its 800 UK employees.

Amy Fenton (pictured), chief reporter at the Mail in Cumbria, and Chris Morley, NUJ Northern and Midlands senior organiser, went to Gannett's annual meeting in McLean, Virginia.

As Morley owns a small number of Gannett shares, they were both eligible to question the Gannett board and speak in front of shareholders, executives and employees.

Fenton made an impassioned plea to the audience and explained how she had crossed the Atlantic to ask shareholders to consider Gannett's "incredibly talented and dedicated reporters".

She said: "I've travelled all the way from England to be here today because, amid all the uncertainty and confusion facing our

industry, I wanted to act as a reminder that you have some incredibly talented and dedicated reporters, here and in the UK, who work their socks off, but ultimately we do that because we love the papers we work for and the communities we serve.

"I'm here to ask you to bear in mind those committed journalists when considering any changes to the company."

Morley highlighted the NUJ's concerns over a hostile takeover bid of Gannett by hedge fund-controlled newspaper company MNG Enterprises.

Gannett shareholders voted to reject MNG Enterprises' board nominees, which followed an unsolicited offer

to acquire Gannett for \$12 a share in January.

MNG's failure to secure seats on Gannett's board reflects a significant setback in its efforts.

Fenton warned shareholders against allowing MNG to make "reckless and savage cost-cutting simply for short-term profits" and highlighted the poor pay the company's UK journalists were enduring.



**I'm here to ask you to bear in mind those committed journalists when considering any changes to the company**

**Amy Fenton**  
Chief reporter at the  
The Mail, Cumbria

AMY FENTON

## inbrief...

### BREXIT PUTS PEOPLE OFF THE NEWS

More than a third (35 per cent) of UK people are actively avoiding the news with a majority (71 per cent) of them citing Brexit as the reason, according to this year's Reuters Digital News Report. The proportion of news avoiders this year is up 11 per cent on 2017 when the question was last asked.

### BULFORD JOINS REACH AS NON-EXECUTIVE

Anne Bulford, the BBC's former deputy director general, has joined Reach, publisher of the Mirror, Express and Star, as a non-executive director. Bulford, who left the BBC in the spring, is chair of Reach's audit and risk committee and a member of its remuneration and nomination committees.

### LIVERPOOL FC FANS TO GET NEWS SITES

Reach, which owns the Liverpool Echo, is launching two fan websites for Liverpool Football Club following the team's Champions League win against Tottenham Hotspur. Ten journalists will work for both Liverpool.com and LFC Stories.

### SCOTSMAN PUTS UP METERED PAYWALL

The Scotsman has gone behind a metered paywall after its owner JPI Media said that it would trial subscriptions because of falling ad sales. Readers can now access five articles for free each week or pay £3 for the first three months when they subscribe, rising to £8 a month thereafter or £72 annually.

### DEAN MOVES FROM ES TO GRAZIA MAGAZINE

Rosamund Dean, the acting deputy editor of ES Magazine, is moving to Grazia. She has been at the Evening Standard's weekly magazine since October. She was previously acting deputy editor at both Stylist magazine and Grazia, after six years as entertainment director at Red magazine.

## Relocation, relocation, relocation

**THE FINANCIAL TIMES** has moved back to its old home of Bracken House in the City of London 30 years after it left to relocate to Southwark Bridge.

The paper previously spent

30 years at Bracken House, a grade II listed building near St Paul's Cathedral, from 1959.

Meanwhile, the Press Association, which has been rebranded as PA Media,

completed its move from London's Victoria to new offices in Paddington Basin. PA was based at in Vauxhall Bridge Road, Victoria, since 1995 after moving there from Fleet Street.

Channel 4, which is to shift its base from London to Leeds, has said the majority of staff will take redundancy rather than leave London. No senior executives will move to the Leeds base.

## Cookson gold story stars at NUJ science award



TREVOR ASTON PHOTOGRAPHY

**THE WINNER OF** the 2019 NUJ Stephen White award for best communication and reporting of science in a non-science context was Clive Cookson, the FT's science editor (pictured right).

The winning entry by Clive, who has been a member of the union for 40 years was 'Scientists discover the origins of gold in space'.

The prize was presented by the NUJ's northern organiser Chris Morley (pictured left) at the Association of British Science Writers' annual awards.

NUJ member Stephen White was head of communications at the British Psychological Society for 25 years and died suddenly in 2010.

inbrief...

OBE FOR BBC ARTS CORRESPONDENT

Brenda Emmanus, BBC London News' arts correspondent, was one of five journalists to be recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list. Emmanus, who has worked for BBC London for 17 years, was awarded an OBE for services to broadcasting and diversity.

BUTE PAPER CLOSES AFTER 165 YEARS

A weekly newspaper covering the Scottish island of Bute has closed after 165 years. The Buteman, which was founded in 1854, published its final edition on 21 June. There were no redundancies as staff working on the paper had been moved to JPI Media's hub in Edinburgh last year.

DAILY STAR GOES BACK TO THE LOBBY

The Daily Star has returned to the lobby, the group of political journalists in parliament, after an absence of six years. Reporter Alex Brown, who joined the tabloid in August 2017, received his pass after a lengthy application. The paper's previous lobby journalist was not replaced after leaving.

LOCAL PAPER READ BY 76,000 ONLINE

The Bedford Independent news website says it is reaching 76,000 readers a month on average six months after its launch. The website went live last November after publisher Reach closed the Bedfordshire on Sunday newspaper and then its replacement the Bedfordshire Midweek.

PHOTOGRAPHER NEC MEMBER VOTED IN

Mark Pinder has been elected to the photographers' seat on the NUJ's national executive council. The election was conducted among the union's 1,597 photographer members using the single transferable vote system. On a 20.2 per cent turnout, he won 192 votes and Ronan Quinlan won 130.

Universal credit campaign is a 'gross injustice', say delegates

THE NUJ LED the way at the TUC's Disabled Workers' conference in condemning the Department for Work and Pensions' campaign to promote universal credit.

The union moved an emergency motion criticising the advertising campaign which was launched while the conference took place in May in Bournemouth.

Natasha Hirst, the disabled members' representative on the union's national executive council, moved the motion: "It is a gross injustice and an insult to all disabled people who have shared their stories and to the journalists who have ethically reported on them for the DWP to dismiss and misrepresent the appalling impact of their damaging system of universal credit."

The NUJ's code of conduct was highlighted and a message of support sent to members who face pressure to produce content on welfare benefits they consider unethical.

Also affected are journalists who rely on universal credit to top up a low income.

An NUJ motion on access to professional development for disabled workers was well supported. First-time delegate Lynn Degele spoke, highlighting that people with disabilities are not often expected in professional occupations such as journalism and are frequently overlooked for career

development opportunities.

She said that training courses are often not inclusive and providers lack understanding of reasonable adjustments which are required to help people to fulfil their potential. This has implications not only for

the those concerned but also for diversity in the industry.

The motion called on the TUC to lobby training providers and to promote good practice for employers to support disabled workers.

Pictured above the NUJ delegation comprised L-R Natasha Hirst, Guy Thornton (Netherlands branch), Lynn Degele (chair, Oxford branch) and Ann Galpin (chair, disabled members' council).



NATASHA HIRST



It is a an insult to disabled people and journalists who have reported on them for the DWP to misrepresent the appalling impact of universal credit

Natasha Hirst NEC

Nottingham journalists for hire

THE NOTTINGHAM branch of the NUJ has launched a dedicated website to promote freelance journalists to potential employers. Hire a Journalist in Nottingham was set up because of a rising number of members who are no longer working as staff.

Kevin Stanley, the Nottingham branch social media officer, said: "There's a wealth of local talent in our patch, and we're finding that a number of companies are seeking specialists for one off events or major projects. We felt that by promoting freelancers who are NUJ members, it gives organisations peace of mind, knowing that they're hiring someone with good, ethical credentials."

The website is a work in progress, and lists journalists under specialist headings, such as writers, photographers and multimedia. Listings on the site are free to NUJ members who live or work in the Nottinghamshire area.

Visit the site at <https://hireanottinghamjournalist.wordpress.com>.



Irish edition of The Times closes

THE IRISH edition of The Times has closed and the majority of the 20 staff in Dublin have been made redundant.

The Times' Irish edition

was launched in September 2015 as a digital service before a print version was added in 2017.

News Corp, The Times' publisher, said it would

resume selling its international edition in Ireland. The Irish edition of the Sunday Times is unaffected.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish

secretary, said: "The company does not recognise unions in Ireland but we have been contacted by NUJ members who work for the title and they are shocked by the redundancy terms being imposed."



# Students' hopes dashed

A top university failed to get its journalism course accredited. **David Hencke** reports

**ONE OF THE** country's leading universities has let down nearly 100 student journalists by suggesting they would achieve a professionally recognised qualification as part of a journalist degree course. This will now never materialise.

The University of Sussex has marketed its BA honours degree in journalism by saying it is "seeking accreditation" from the Broadcast Journalist Training Council – a professional body whose qualifications are recognised by the BBC, ITN, ITV, Channel 4 and BSkyB. The NUJ is also a member of the body.

Six years after Sussex first approached the BJTC, the university has abandoned its application to get accreditation – after the BJTC told it that its course did not meet industry standards.

A BJTC statement said: "The BJTC has never accredited the BA journalism course at the University of Sussex. For the past five years, the university has not met the criteria of our accreditation requirements as set out by our industry partners."

A confidential advisory report, written in 2017 by the BJTC and seen by *The Journalist*, reveals that the BJTC is highly critical of the standard of the course, which had been offered to students for the first three years, and the university's failure to provide proper facilities to train broadcast journalists.

The BJTC stated: "During the accreditation process, three different plans have been presents (sic) and none completed.



**Every year I was there, we had a new head of department and, each year, the course just seemed a little less cohesive than the last**

Delays have been caused by university bureaucracy, funding, lack of space and unforeseen building issues."

The report added that at that time students were using music production studios to double up as a news studio rather than having a proper news studio with 24-hour access.

It added: "Students are not using industry-standard, networked text-writing software for editing, timing and organising news output."

The report was particularly critical of the professional training given to students to speak to camera, industry placements, the standard of the law course and the way the university accepted some applicants without interviews.

It presented a picture of the university constantly changing its mind and employing different people. The report also implied there may not be enough lecturers with practical journalistic experience teaching the courses.

This picture is borne out by a former student. Ben Walker, who now runs his own photography business, said: "I graduated in 2018 and, during my entire duration of the three-year course, the staff were always saying 'This is the year we get accredited' etc. But, whenever any of the students asked about how things were coming along, it was very hush-hush.

"The main reason I believe we never gained accreditation was because there was no consistency in the course. Every year I was there, we had a new head of department and, each year, the course just seemed a little less cohesive than the last."

He added: "That being said, I cannot fault the staff at Sussex. The vast majority of the journalism team were caring, passionate and incredibly professional. A few names to mention in particular are Dr Monika Metykova, Judy Aslett, Ping Shum and Rachel Duncan. These staff always went above and beyond to help deal with any concerns I had and offered so much practical information whenever it was asked for."

The university has offered the disappointed students, who have spent £27,000 each on tuition fees, a free NCTJ correspondence course so they can get a professional qualification. Some have received £500 in compensation.

A University of Sussex spokesperson said "achievement of accreditation was never guaranteed".

"We informed all current students of our decision not to pursue BJTC accreditation in face-to-face meetings and via letter. Students have been told they can take the NCTJ correspondence course at any time, including several years after graduation should they choose to.

"The BJTC noted in the 2017 review that access to appropriate facilities held the course back from attaining accreditation. We advised the BJTC that we were looking to build a dedicated newsroom to meet accreditation requirements – this was not completed until autumn 2018."

The university denied that there were shortcomings in the quality of practical coursework and teaching, and said: "We employ practitioners, and we offer a placement year opportunity, as well as a wide number of work-based learning opportunities for our journalism students, which have included experience with regional and national media organisations including the BBC."



## Police action after abuse reports

Enniskillen's paper doggedly pursued an investigation into historic child abuse, reports **Anton McCabe**

**P**olice in Northern Ireland have appointed a special team of child sex abuse detectives to investigate historical cases after an NUJ member exposed historic abuse in Co Fermanagh in a series of articles over in the Spring. Rodney Edwards (pictured) wrote the articles for the Enniskillen-based weekly *The Impartial Reporter*, which sells round 9,500 copies per issue in Fermanagh.

The *Impartial* was able to do this by being local. People know who the journalists are, and can walk in off the street to meet them.

The paper is working closely with Nexus NI, which provides counselling to survivors of sexual abuse. Accompanying articles on abuse it provides contact details for Nexus' Enniskillen office. The articles have led to numbers of survivors of abuse

seeking help. Nexus has 25 people on its waiting list in Enniskillen.

The articles have had a huge reaction in the area. "I've got people contacting me every single day since this started," Edwards said. "The vast majority of feedback has been positive. People want us to keep going. They are stopping me in the street, in cafes and restaurants and sending supportive messages through social media. We have received a lot of phone calls and letters, too."

The stories started by chance. "A very, very brave man walked into our office in March, and he spoke to my colleague Jessica Campbell," Edwards said. "He told Jessica of how he was the victim of a suspected paedophile ring in Enniskillen over 30 years ago.

"Off the back of that, another victim got in touch with me to tell me how he was abused as a schoolboy by an individual, again here in Enniskillen."

That quickly snowballed into stories on clusters of abuse on a significant level in towns and villages throughout Fermanagh, as well as major failings in the police response to reports of abuse.

Edwards has exposed shocking cases. One woman was abused by her brother. In adulthood, she found the same brother was abusing her son. In another case, a childminder sold another little girl to up to 15 abusers.

One of the most prolific paedophiles Edwards uncovered was a former bus driver named David Sullivan. Sullivan attacked countless young boys across Fermanagh. Sometimes he attacked victims on his bus. He was also known for driving round, looking for young men seeking lifts. Sullivan was murdered in 1998. He was never charged while alive, and no one has been charged with his killing.

The common factor in all the cases is there have been no prosecutions, despite complaints to police. "Nobody has been put before the court or has been put behind bars as a result of these brave people going to the police," Edwards said. "Now it's a difficult one for police when we get into historical matters. That doesn't escape the fact that these victims need answers and also need justice. Our paper will continue to provide a voice to victims."

He said that the credit for exposing the abuse must go to the survivors. "This is a huge issue and has come to light because of the bravery of individuals, brave men and women who have come forward to tell their story in the hope that it will help others," he said.

Edwards has been moved by the stories he heard. "This is my home, where I live and work," he said. "I love the people and the county. Unearthing its murky past is uncomfortable but vital. The most important resource to have in this business is the trust of your readers. It is humbling to know we have that, which is why we owe it to every single reader to always seek the truth. That's what journalism is all about.

Former Northern Ireland Assembly member for the area, Lord Maurice Morrow of the Democratic Unionist Party, has worked with one of the families affected. On the basis of Edwards' work, he is calling for an investigation into how the authorities handled allegations. "Rodney, with determination and compassion, has broken the seal on an era of silenced, abhorrent criminality," Morrow said. "A door to justice has been opened at last."

“**These victims need answers and also need justice. Our paper will continue to provide a voice to victims**”

# Out in the cold even with an exclusive



Freelances often shut out by news organisations, says **Rahila Gupta**

**W**hen the Shamima Begum story went viral after a front-page story in *The Times* in February, I was gutted. That story could have been mine. I had a scoop but, despite frantic scrambling around, was unable to place the piece. This is the curse of freelance life.

The story begins in 2016 when I travelled to Rojava in north-east Syria to research *Why Doesn't Patriarchy Die?* It's a book I am writing with Beatrix Campbell. To my amazement, a women's revolution was going on (a scoop in its own right) in the Kurdish-led self-administration of Rojava in the middle of a war with brutal thugs ISIS.

I have written about this for the CNN website, openDemocracy, New Humanist and others but unfortunately it has not become mainstream news. When television news carries stories about Kurdish-led victories with women soldiers in the forefront, it does not refer to the participatory democracy that gives space to women fighting patriarchy.

I went there, self-funded, without the backing of a news organisation. My trip was organised by London-based Peace in Kurdistan. I was grateful to be hosted but I was also worried about feeling compromised by my 'guest' status. I stayed in the homes of members of Kongreya Star, the women's umbrella organisation. I made contacts with some women leaders with whom I remained in touch on returning.

When I first approached the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) press office last year to interview British ISIS women, I was told that it was not their policy to give them media coverage.

However, as the SDF continued to

liberate all the areas of the vast 'caliphate', the Rojava administration's resources were stretched to breaking point. They began calling for jihadis to be repatriated to their countries of origin.

At this point, I asked again if I could interview some of the women, making the case that they needed to be seen as human beings to shift the public debate.

This time they agreed – but would not allow interviews by phone or Skype. I could send questions by email which they would put to the women, film the interviews and then send them back to me. The only alternative: I would have to visit. I asked if it would be an exclusive. They wanted to know this meant. When I explained, they agreed.

I was excited beyond words. I started working all my contacts.

In drafting my first email, I found myself conflicted about the angle of this scoop. I knew the primary focus should be the human interest angle. I proposed an article based on the fascinating backstories of these women, their dreams, their aspirations, their disappointments, their hopes for the future and perhaps their unrepentant adherence to fundamentalist Islam.

My real interest was to use their stories as a Trojan horse to give mainstream coverage to the Kurdish women's revolution. Their whole approach to justice is rehabilitative and non-punitive as opposed to the Kurdish administration across the border in Iraq where ISIS members are sentenced to execution after a 10-minute trial.

They had been carrying out gender equality training in the refugee camps and I wanted to find out whether the

ISIS women had been exposed to it.

Perhaps these add-ons had been off-putting to commissioning editors. Many did not even respond!

A senior commissioning editor at CNN said the channel would use a freelance to cover such stories only if there were no staff on the ground but that Syria was well covered.

The *Daily Telegraph* was interested. However, a few hours later, they pointed out that they had already carried out interviews; I felt embarrassed for hawking the story as an 'exclusive'.

When I checked with the SDF, they knew nothing about the *Telegraph* or the *Times*. Apparently, Western journalists find local fixers who, for a fee, bypass the rules and get them access to the camps without the permission of the SDF.

A friend with contacts at the *Financial Times* said that the lack of exclusivity was not a deal breaker. However, the newspaper itself responded: "We simply can't send a freelance into Syria." It was a health and safety issue.

Even with the shedding of staff journalists at many outlets, the odds remain stacked against freelances. Travelling to a war zone requires expensive insurance cover and a security minder. I had neither on my first visit and I was prepared to do this again but the increasingly risk-averse newsgathering environment made that unacceptable.

And stories can be bought and rules broken with corporations' resources.

Freelances have always been on the periphery but, today, even a potential scoop does not allow them access to the mainstream.

**“The lack of exclusivity was not a deal breaker. The FT said: ‘We simply can’t send a freelance into Syria.’ It was a health and safety issue”**

# Changing lives and attitudes

Former George Viner scholarship winner **Ann-Marie Abbasah** celebrates the George Viner bursaries as they turn 30

**S**hajan Miah's life was changed by an NUJ George Viner Memorial Fund (GVMF) scholarship. Now he is trying to ensure that the lives of other black and ethnic minority journalists are changed for the better too.

At the ceremony for the 30th anniversary of the awards, bestowed on talented aspiring black and ethnic minority journalists, Miah spoke about his work to tackle the inequality in our industry and how he helps young people learn journalism skills.

Employed as a BBC Sport digital journalist, Miah helps promote inclusion and diversity through the BBC Sport BAME Advisory Group which he co-chairs.

"A lot of the time I speak to new joiners, they feel how I did when I first joined. It's awkward – there are not many people like them," he said in his speech.

"So I created a space where they can come and talk. I managed to get some money out of my department so they [the new staff] can do some filming and bring back some of those stories that were not being covered by BBC Sport. We've managed to cover lots of great stories – the first black referee, for example."

During a career break, Miah went to Bangladesh and set up an organisation that has so far helped young people from 190 schools to learn journalism skills.

He added: "My sister died aged 12 and is buried in Bangladesh. It's always been something in my mind to help the young people of Bangladesh."

During the past two years, Miah's focus has been geared towards helping young people in England and he has been busy working with schools and colleges, writing scripts and developing bite-size lesson plans.

He thanked the GVMF for enabling him to help others.

"The George Viner scholarship changed my life," he explained. "It got my foot in the door."

Since 1986, the fund, which became a registered charity in 1989, has been helping others do that. It has enabled more than 170 students get their foot in the door of the media industry by providing financial assistance for them to study for a recognised journalism qualification.

Former scholars work as staff and freelancers in all parts of

the media, including newspapers, public relations, broadcasting, book publishing, magazines and online.

Jim Boumelha, who chairs the GVMF board of trustees and is a member of the NUJ's national executive council, explained how the initiative began.

"It has its deep roots in discrimination, lack of equal opportunity and plain racism over the years," Boumelha said. "The first pioneers of black journalists fought within the union for the kind of barriers that make it difficult for black students to come into journalism to be eliminated."

This sense of injustice that triggered the formation of the GVMF was further supported by Dr Beulah Ainley's research carried out in the mid to late 1990s. Dr Ainley observed that there were between 10 and 20 black journalists employed at any one time by national papers out of a then total workforce of 3,000.

In her study *Black Journalists, White Media*, Dr Ainley wrote: "The problem is even greater in provincial papers, a bastion of English racism. There are only 15 black journalists out of 7,000. This is less than one per cent, and black people in

## Help up a mountain

**LITTLE DID** I expect to be in the audience at this year's George Viner Memorial Awards fighting back tears.

It was the fault of The Observer's chief leader writer, Sonia Sodha, who tapped into my experience.

A 2014-15 George Viner scholar, I completed my NCTJ training, gained experience at the BBC and The Guardian, and got a job as a reporter on a regional paper.

But people didn't look or sound like me or come from a working-class background as I did.

"When you look at headline statistics for the proportion of BAME journalists, what they don't tell

you about is class background," said Sodha.

I am a cockney and I was ill prepared for being judged. Cockneys are stereotyped as being uneducated, poor and unintelligent. Add being a black woman, in her late 30s and new to the industry and you get the gist of the mountain I had to climb.

Perhaps if I had sounded more middle class and, as

Sodha said, had similar "cultural points of reference" as middle-class journalists, I might have got further.

Maybe I needed more talent, skill and experience. I am now press officer for the United Reformed Church and love it.

Gaining the scholarship felt like winning the lottery. I achieved a long-held dream to write stories people read because the George Viner trustees believed in me.

Five years on, NUJ people are still giving me chances. Back in 2015, The Journalist's editor, Christine Buckley, asked me to write a Starting Out column. Who did she ask four years on to write this feature? Moi.

Thanks to the George Viner Memorial Fund, I'll never stop being a journalist.





Britain make up six per cent of the total population. This gross under-representation makes a mockery of Britain as a multi-cultural society.”

Boumelha said: “We don’t even know if the statistics that we started with were correct. But, when Beulah Ainley wrote that book, it was at the time a revolution.”

Introducing herself as an Asian woman who ticks some diversity boxes but not others, one of the guest speakers, Sonia Sodha, The Observer’s chief leader writer, praised the scheme but added there was much more to be done.

“Diversity is a really complex issue. It’s not just about the visible characteristics,” she said. “When you look at headline statistics for the proportion of BAME journalists, what they don’t tell you about is class background. I think that’s really, really critical actually.

“Because, for me if I’m honest, even though I have faced barriers, the fact that I am middle class, the fact that I went to Oxford, mean that I have similar cultural points of reference to white journalists. It means I talk with a similar accent to other journalists. I’ve had a similar education, and actually that makes it much easier to overcome some of the race and gender barriers than it does for BAME journalists from a working-class background.”

Boumelha admits that sometimes people who do come from middle-class backgrounds, with life chances that already put them at an advantage, apply for the fund.

“Sometimes we have people that are from Oxford and Cambridge coming in,” explains Boumelha. “Therefore, you have this dilemma that these people have got the better chances and don’t even need our help. They can go straight into jobs with the main media, because that’s what the main media seem to go for. On the one hand, they’re strong and they will make it, on the other hand is it fair for them to compete with other people who have had a different life travel and perhaps are less strong? So, this is the kind of dilemma we grapple with. But we look out for whenever

**Award winners at the 30th anniversary event: Precious Adesina, Natasha Onwuemezi, Sharon Thiruchelvam and Yinka Oyetade**

**“We look out for an underdog, a person who didn’t have much luck until now and maybe they need that little push to do it”**

there’s an underdog, that person who didn’t have much luck until now and maybe they need that little push to do it.”

It is this that makes the GVMF so special. Its criteria for BAME students to apply is simple to encompass the complexity of diversity.

“You have to seek out, during the interview, something more than the qualification,” Jim continues. “The board is usually very scrupulous in the interview to be as fair as possible, so they ask the same questions of every single interviewee. And, out of the questions, they will try to get a picture of the ability of that person, which is very important as to whether they can make it and if they have everything they need to have the best chance but also what is a little bit behind [their ambition].”

Jim added: “[The GVMF is] a very, very important endeavour of the NUJ. It’s been one of the most important initiatives for the union over the past 30 years and it is producing results.”

We can turn to Ben Hunte, a 2016-17 scholar, who was announced as the BBC’s first LGBT correspondent in December 2018 as an example of such results.

Explaining how he felt at receiving a GVMF award, Ben said: “It was amazing. So, so amazing. It was wonderful ... Before George Viner, I found it impossible to break into journalism because I felt like I was being judged on the way I looked and the way I sounded. I wasn’t as polished as other students who come in to the industry. [My GVMF interview] was one of the only opportunities that was like a make-or-break situation. If I succeeded, I knew that I could go down this route and my life would change for the better.”

What would George Viner make of the long-standing success of such an important awards scheme set up in his name to honour his passion for the education and training of journalists?

His daughter Carol Plaster, who continues the family’s involvement with the trust, said: “He was always interested in multicultural matters. He would be really chuffed.”

**Jonathan Sale** on the ban which led to a boom for Northern Irish actors

# Oxygen of publicity

**H**aving heard the sound of the Old Bailey bomb thudding across Fleet Street in March 1973, and having a colleague who nine years later escaped the force of the Hyde Park bombing by only a few car lengths, I appreciate that there are not many laughs in the IRA's terrorist campaign of the 1970s and 1980s. Even if we were both working on the jovial Punch magazine at the time.

To Margaret Thatcher, who narrowly escaped with her life in the Brighton bombing and had two of her closest colleagues assassinated, the virtual civil war in Northern Ireland was far less of a joke. And the peaceful protestors shot by British soldiers on Bloody Sunday did not feel their ribs tickled either, except by bullets.

Yet it was Thatcher who accidentally gave us the most darkly humorous moment of the Troubles: the 1988 broadcasting ban, which lasted until September 1994, a quarter of a century ago.

Her aim was to deny to terrorists 'the oxygen of publicity' but it soon became the hydrogen of hysterical laughter. This bizarre form of censorship prohibited broadcasting the words of spokesmen for Sinn Fein – except it didn't. The words could still hit the airwaves – as long as someone else uttered them.

Compared to the life-and-death decisions being made all the time, "it seemed almost farcical and funny", declares broadcaster Stephen Nolan, a teenager in Belfast in the late eighties and presenter of Radio 4 documentary Being Gerry Adams.

Thatcher's weapon was not new legislation but the employment of the innocent-sounding clause 13 of the BBC Licence and Agreement and section 29 the Broadcasting Act 1981. These allowed the relevant minister to require broadcasters "to refrain at any specified time or at all times from sending any matter or matters of any class". The home secretary just filled in

the matter he had in mind. On October 19, 1988, Douglas Hurd issued a notice prohibiting the broadcasting of "direct statements by representatives or supporters" of 11 Irish political and military organisations.

"The broadcasting ban is the first and, so far, the only use of this power in peacetime directly and overtly to rule out a whole class of political viewpoints," are the considered words of Professor David Miller, who wrote the exhaustive chapter on "the media and Northern Ireland" (Glasgow Media Group Reader, Volume II).

By contrast, "Get in here now!" were the first words uttered by the BBC staffer in Belfast on the phone to Danny Morrison in the hours before the notice actually kicked in, summoning Sinn Fein's publicity director in for what might have been a last, rapid interview.

The Home Office Broadcasting Department kindly spelt out the real meaning of clause 13 to

baffled broadcasters: "The Notice permits the showing of a film or still picture of the initiator [presumably the Sinn Fein spokesperson, to pluck a name out of the blue] speaking the words, together with a verbatim voice-over account of them." A case of seen not heard or indeed Hurd.

So who should voice the voice-overs? Clause 13 turned out to be lucky for some: "All of a sudden actors' phones started ringing," says Nolan.

"Fifty pounds a hit! If you were lucky, you'd get a couple a week," enthused one thespian. "I stumped up for an answering machine." One actor was doubly lucky, according to David Miller: he was the voice of both Sinn Fein and the anti-terrorism ads of the Northern Ireland Office.

Occasionally, actors were not called in as subtitles were used. More rarely, they were not needed because – demonstrating the full lunacy of the broadcasting ban – it was sometimes deemed permissible to use the actual recording of the politicians who had uttered the words in the first place. The BBC could broadcast a full half-minute of Gerry Adams speaking in his very own voice about jobs in West Belfast. This was permitted because he was 'initiating' the words as the MP for West Belfast rather than the Sinn Fein (heaven forbid!) MP for West Belfast.

There was an even more fiddly arrangement when the Media Show transmitted the genuine voice of Sinn Fein councillor Jim McAllister in which he discussed his part in the Ken Loach film Hidden Agenda; this was absolutely kosher because he was speaking as an actor – even though his acting role in the film is that of a Sinn Fein councillor.

## ITN pioneers Pogues as dub music

**OF ALL THE** grounds for banning a punk rock song, such as lack of musicianship or excess of obscenity, the oddest was that it breached the 1988 broadcasting ban aimed at the IRA.

Shane McGowan of Irish band The Pogues may not have been fully conscious of the finer points of clause 13 in the relevant legislation (he was not fully conscious of anything for much of the time, to judge by interviews he

gave during the group's heyday), when he wrote the haunting track Streets of Sorrow/ Birmingham Six.

Beginning uncontroversially by regretting the deaths in 'the Troubles', the song went on to denounce the framing and convicting of the (subsequently cleared) Birmingham Six for the crime of "being Irish in the wrong place".

The IBA declared the sorrowful song itself

could not be transmitted but it still allowed the words to be heard, if voiced by someone else.

ITN reported on the banning of the song from the airwaves; its cheeky solution was to show a clip of The Pogues in concert, accompanied by the lyrics spelt out as captions on the screen. Plus the ITN reporter read out the forbidden words at the same time.

On the album, the lyrics are as clear as a bell, apart from the

section denouncing the fit-up of six innocent men, which switches to a wild, rocking screech. These 'illegal' lines are incomprehensible – but not to ITN viewers, who could read and hear the words in the 'censored' broadcast.



Looking  
back to:  
1994



TRINITY MIRROR / MIRRORPIX / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Again, for the Enemies Within piece for the BBC's Inside Story strand, inmates were interviewed inside the Maze prison. Prisoners speaking in a purely personal capacity were heard au naturel, even if they were giving a political analysis from a Republican standpoint. By contrast, anyone speaking as an IRA representative was reduced to being subtitled, even if they were merely having a frank discussion with prison officers about the size of the prison's sausage rolls.

Despite all this fine-tooth-combing of interviews, one editorial policy meeting had a problem with a news report that included someone shouting in Irish. "The chanting had, infact, been an IRA battle cry," noted the minutes crossly and, as such, was covered by the notice. Anything as dodgy as this had to be run past an Irish translator, thus adding to the aggro of obeying extra legal requirements while under the dictatorship of the deadline.

Quotes of a Republican nature required approval from the BBC hierarchy anyway. After, say, an explosion and a statement by Sinn Fein, a hurriedly summoned actor would read such of his 'lines' as were agreed to be OK over the film clip, lips so close he could have bitten the mike. Preferably, the text was out of synch with the speaker's



mouth, to emphasise that it was dubbed.

"Don't be Sir Anthony Hopkins here," a harassed director would snap. "Mess it up." It was like the film of a rock concert in which the band are miming to their own lyrics which are being sung by a cover band. The whole process had a distancing effect, marginalising Sinn Fein further.

Adams remembers being occasionally dubbed by an actor with a Scottish accent but "was pleased that out-of-work actors were getting some work". As the peace process proceeded behind the scenes, it mattered less that the lip-synching became so spot-on that you couldn't tell it wasn't Adams himself.

He never had the services of Sir Anthony Hopkins but is said to have enjoyed the equally great accolade of his words being voiced by Stephen Rea, a powerful actor and prominent Republican.

"He doesn't want to talk about it," Rea's agent told me. Incidentally, I had in a sense already been in contact with Rea's late wife. Dolours Price was convicted for her part in the Old Bailey bomb that I had heard in 1973 outside the Punch offices and which kicked off the IRA's campaign in England.

DAVID FOWLER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

# Hello Tokyo

Syndicating stories and writing for publications overseas can be lucrative, but there are pitfalls. **Ruth Addicott** reports

**I**t's 4am and your phone is pinging with a message from a picture editor in Sydney. If this is your worst nightmare, working for clients abroad may not be for you but, for many UK freelancers, it is big business.

Karen Pasquali Jones specialises in the real-life market (she was founding editor of *Love It* and created *Pick Me Up* magazine). Since she started syndicating her stories abroad in 2016, she has seen her income multiply. Overseas work now makes up 50 per cent of her earnings.

"I hadn't thought about it until I went to the Middle East and was working at Gulf News doing Friday magazine," she says. "I was commissioning people from America, Australia, UK, Ireland, the Maldives – everywhere. When I came back, I thought: why am I not doing that? I set myself a target that for every good real-life story I had, I would try and sell it five times."

Jones will usually sell first to a big weekly such as *Take A Break*, *That's Life* or *Chat*, then sell second rights to a national newspaper, Sunday supplement or smaller magazine, before selling it again to one of the nationals online – giving them exclusivity for one week. She will then go international, syndicating to the Middle East, India and Australia, often rewriting the story to fit each style.

"It has got to be something amazing that will go everywhere – the sort of ideal coverline story," she says.

One example involved a 26-year-old case study in England who had a surrogate baby for her aunt in Australia who could not have children and, when she delivered the baby, it saved her life because doctors discovered she had cancer.

Although some titles require a local link, there is demand in Australia because a lot of people have English relatives.

British journalist Kerry Parnell worked in Australia for 15 years as head of lifestyle at the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* and executive editor of *Marie Claire*. Since returning to the UK two years ago, 80 per cent of her work has been for News Corp Australia, writing features, news, travel, celebrity stories and royal content.

According to Parnell, the biggest challenge is the time difference. "Conversations can take days over email, so you have to factor that in to deadlines. Also, interviewing people on the other side of the world is usually at antisocial times. But it's fabulous having a whole other market to work in. I was surprised to find myself writing more and more royal content for Australia – the appetite for it is increasing."

So how do rates compare?

As in the UK, they vary. For a real-life story, it could be anything from £200 up to over £1,000 depending on the story and the length. Jones always negotiates and has doubled fees in the past. She also pitches to a number of international titles at the same time to start a bidding war. If a story doesn't sell, she will rewrite it, add a new headline and pitch it again three weeks later.

Parnell says the rates of pay in Australia are similar to those here and, in her experience, publishers pay on submission rather than publication – another reason it appeals.

Rates also depend on the sector. Freelance journalist Tom Minney specialises in African business and most of his outlets are in Africa and Europe. The problem he has encountered is many African journalists with lower living costs are prepared to work for low rates and bad terms.

"At least one Africa-focused UK publisher thinks £150 per 1,000 words is reasonable and takes up to six months to pay," he says. "The best South African and other international publications pay better. Rates in other African countries are often too low to consider."

## Top tips for selling journalism abroad

### Do your research

Look for reliable, well-established titles, if possible recommended by other journalists and do thorough research of the market you want to work in.

Kerry Parnell says: "Find out what newspapers and magazines are there, what sections and supplements they have and what content they run. Then really target your pitch. It doesn't have to be about the country you reside in. If you make good contacts, then you can get a lot of regular commissions/sales from them."

### Copyright

Retain all the rights to your

work. Sell first British rights only so you are free to syndicate abroad.

### Fees

Always negotiate. Don't forget to take into account tax and extra bank transfer charges and be aware of different regulations.

### Contacts

The internet and social media have made it easier to find contacts. Facebook, Linked In and Twitter can all be useful in tracking down commissioning editors abroad.

### Build up trust

Having a good relationship

with the case study is key. Karen Pasquali Jones ensures her case studies receive a fee each time their story is sold and also asks them to sign an agreement to ensure they will stay with her.

### Style and language

Be aware of different styles, turns of phrase and spelling, especially if you are working for US outlets.

### Time zones

Take into account the time distance and be prepared for pings and texts going off if you keep your phone by your bed at night.

### Don't give up

If you don't sell a story first time then rewrite it, add a new headline and try pitching it again later.

# here

Another problem is chasing bad payers, when a legal claim is not worth the value of the invoice. Although Minney has found working for overseas clients a good source of income, he has twice had to enlist the help of the NUJ, once to get paid by a magazine in Johannesburg.

He advises freelancers to look for reliable, well-established titles that are recommended by other journalists, and to be aware of any political links or agenda. Minney did a news roundup for a newspaper in Africa before 1994, then discovered it was being funded by the apartheid National Intelligence Service. He stopped working for them.

Another freelance ran into problems when she supplied copy to Abu Dhabi newspaper The National, and was asked to submit a copy of her passport in order to get paid.

“I refused on principle and was never paid,” she says.

Despite a detailed commissioning brief, she was not told about the requirement until after she had filed and her work was published. She lost around £500.

“The feature was a lot of work and it was hard to lose that money. I chose to walk away because I object to any organisation, particularly any government-related one, holding journalists’ passport data,” she says.

One advantage of working for an overseas title is being able to cover stories you might not normally be able to do. One journalist writing for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong found it gave him access to high-profile interviewees that he would struggle to secure for a UK publication.

The only pay-related issue he has had is avoiding being taxed twice – something Laura Latham also had a problem with in the US.

“The accounts department of a US title I wrote for just couldn’t understand that I wasn’t liable for US tax,” she says. “It took numerous calls, emails and interventions from the editor over several months.”

Latham has written for business titles in the US and Ireland and glossies in Norway and the Middle East. She has also contributed regularly to the International New York Times. She found work via recommendations and editors who had seen her work, as well as pitching.

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**You’ve got to push yourself out of your comfort zone because you can make thousands**  
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“I was writing for a good stable of UK titles, but felt I needed to broaden out,” she says. “Writing for a single market can be limiting as print publishing has declined and opportunities to place stories have reduced, along with fees. I also feel it gives editors confidence in your work if they see some heavyweight international names.”

Aside from tax issues, there are international bank transfer charges. Helen Roberts runs press agency Cover Asia Press and works between London and Delhi. One of the first things she learnt was to add a transfer fee onto invoices.

Roberts believes the best opportunities are in Germany, Australia, the US and Dubai, but the market has changed since she started in 2011.

“I think all journalists are feeling this. There’s less money in the pot, whether it’s UK or overseas titles, so fewer opportunities.”

Like other journalists, Roberts also has concerns about Brexit, which has already affected her in Delhi. “The moment the referendum results were announced, the Indian rupee to the pound dropped so there was a huge difference,” she says. “I’m anxious about the future, for sure.”

Back in the real-life sector, Jones is busy searching for her next big coverline, preferably with a link to several corners of the globe. She believes there are huge opportunities out there for the right story and urges freelancers to grab them. “You’ve got to push yourself out of your comfort zone because you can make thousands,” she says.



# Service not in

**Rachael Revesz** looks at the increase in tipping as a source of journalistic income

**A**cross the Atlantic, tipping is commonplace and expected, whether you're buying a beer or getting your hair cut. Now tipping culture is entering the world of journalism – and has little to do with customer service.

A pioneering example is Popula, a US website, which introduced a system of 'microtips'. Appreciative readers can pay writers via a form of digital currency called ETH into the writer's ETH wallet on the website. This exchange potentially allows staffers and freelancers to earn more for their published work, either at the time of publication or years down the line, for example if their content is used in a lecture or if the subject of an old interview becomes famous.

Popula editor Maria Bustillos explains that microtips are like a royalty system in the music industry. Blockchain technology, which facilitates microtips and ecurrency payments, also helps with archiving work.

"They [tips] provide the beginnings of a new kind of permanent revenue stream for journalists, protect their work, and defend press freedom and speech rights," Bustillos said, adding that, over time, this revenue stream could "supplement retirement income in a meaningful way".

Popula's ecurrency initiative, to some extent, mirrors Steem, a 'social blockchain' that allows people to be paid for posting content, instead of content distributors and publications having to rely on advertising or selling user data. Reddit also allows you to spend virtual coins on awards for the 'finest Reddit users', which gives awardees access to its premium service.

Bustillos insists that Popula is taking these ideas to a new level for journalists' benefit.

"We think we're the first publication staffed by working journalists to try crypto-microtipping," she said. "I'm pretty sure we're the first to design and optimise these techniques with a view to protecting journalists and press freedom."

Gaining money years after being paid a fee for a piece is welcome. An NUJ fees guide from 1991 shows how fees and day rates have remained stagnant for nearly 30 years. When this is combined with rising numbers of layoffs and closures – such as those at BuzzFeed and The Pool – and refusals to recognise unions, it is no surprise that a virtual sea of journalists are looking for alternative sources of income.

"These things [tipping] pop up when work is structurally under-compensated," said Ann Friedman, journalist and co-founder of the Call Your Girlfriend podcast in the US. "It's good to offer readers and listeners the opportunity to directly support the writers and podcasters they care about. I don't love the 'tipping' framework, though. I think support on an ongoing basis – like a Patreon or Substack model, with recurring payments – is more meaningful, because it allows

for planning and a modicum of financial security. In the olden days of print media, this was called a 'subscription'."

Friedman's newsletter has around 40,000 subscribers and her podcast has about 100,000 listeners per episode. She started them in 2013 and 2014 respectively and, together, they deliver about 50 per cent of her income, mostly through advertising.

However, Friedman adds that even creatives with thriving Patreon support can fall below the numbers required from advertisers, which is around 50,000 listeners per episode.

"A mix of funding models is what makes me feel best right now, because nothing feels particularly reliable," says Friedman.

Patreon – which became famous for raising \$80,000 a month for controversial Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson until he closed his account in January – allows writers to install a paywall for content, and offers deals depending how much you pay per month. In the UK, an increasing number of journalists are using Patreon, including Laurie Penny. "I'm asking for your help. Think of this as my tips jar," she writes on her page. She now earns more than \$3,200 a month.

When The Pool shut in February, Julia Kingford opened a GoFundMe account which raised over £31,000 for almost 70 freelancers. The amount owed to each journalist varied hugely – former columnist Marisa Bate wrote that she was owed £9,000. Robyn Wilder, the former parenting columnist, opened a Patreon account for a new parenting-focused newsletter.

Amy Jones, writer, podcast and author of The To-Do List and Other Debacles memoir, saw her bank account plunged into overdraft after The Pool's closure. She added a Ko-Fi account to her email newsletter, which allows readers

## Getting paid in cryptocurrency

**AT THE END** of each Popula article, readers can click a button and tip the writer using ether (ETH) currency.

ETH is sent and received on a peer-to-peer computer network – a public blockchain.

Tippers will need some ETH and MetaMask, a cryptowallet in their browser. An account is needed to buy ETH – you can use a debit card – at an exchange such as Coinbase.

Popula said: "Popula's authors have received hundreds of microtips through the microtipping feature since it was

launched in February."

Many people like the fact that cryptocurrencies have no central authority that can remove you from the ETH or other networks. Without sharing personal details, you can send or be sent money anywhere and to anyone. However, this means there is no central authority to

help you, for example, to get back lost funds.

Cryptocurrencies are also volatile – they tanked 80 per cent between January and September 2018.

How much can writers expect?

"Tips tend to be well under a dollar, and very few people own ETH or other cryptocurrencies as of yet," the Popula statement said.

Tips are held for writers for 60 days, and returned in full to the tipper if not claimed. Popula takes five per cent of the tip for 'system maintenance' if it does go to the writer.



# cluded

and subscribers to make one-off payments.

“The money that kind readers added to it paid for my food for a couple of weeks, so I do know how valuable readers who are prepared to tip their favourite writers can be and I’m fully in favour of writers setting up their own Ko-Fis,” said Jones.

“I truly believe a job – any job – should pay enough so that the person doing it doesn’t have to rely on what is essentially the generosity of strangers in order to earn a living wage, and I worry that publications could use ‘Oh, but you can earn tips from this’ as an excuse to not pay writers properly, if at all. We need to figure out how to make digital publishing work.”

One person trying to figure this out is Anna Codrea-Rado. Laid off from Vice in 2017, she has since set up a campaign to push editors to pay freelancers on time. She also founded FJ&Co, a business that teaches writers how to be successful freelancers.

“For the majority of freelancers and younger people coming in now, it’s really hard to make it work financially just through journalism,” she said. “Particularly for online publications, the rates are just not high enough.”

Codrea-Rado recently conducted a poll on Twitter, asking

followers how many features they could write a week. She applied the average rate of pay, and found this would bring in £20,000 a year – not far from the living wage in London.

“It’s smart business sense to have multiple income streams, no matter what business you’re in,” said Codrea-Rado.

Some journalists make newsletter writing a full-time career.

Sian Meades’ first newsletter, called the Friday Wish List, featured seven to 10 products she had seen that week. The affiliate marketing revenues paid for half of her university fees. It led to her to co-found the Domestic Slutttery newsletter, which won a PPA award in December. She also launched a weekly newsletter called Freelance Writing Jobs, which had hundreds of subscribers before it went live.

“What we worry about is writing a really great newsletter,” she said. “That has changed how much I use social media and what we’re chasing – it’s not about hits and traffic each day.”

Meades’ advice for budding entrepreneur hacks is to be clear in your intentions from the start and not to be ashamed of seeking compensation – if it’s done well.

“Knowing what you want from your newsletter is a good start,” she said. “It could get big and become something amazing, but that is hard. The average TinyLetter [newsletter distributor] readership is a few hundred.”

She added: “If it comes from a good place, selling isn’t bad. It’s making money from your work. We’ve glamorised working for free. We’ve been told money shouldn’t be your first aim. It doesn’t mean we should be fuelled by money, but we should want financial gain for our work. When you start seeing your time as money, that’s when you will start to value your time.”



MOVIESTORE COLLECTION LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

**Simon Creasey** on the ways to take the pain out of a tedious task

# Transcription tackled

**T**ranscribing interviews is painful. Most journalists hate doing it; it is time consuming and laborious. However, ‘intelligent’ audio-to-text transcription services, which claim they can take the pain out of transcribing, have been set up over the past couple of years.

The two most popular are Sonix and Temi. Jason Chicola, CEO and co-founder of Temi, which was launched in July 2017, describes it as an automated speech recognition engine that transcribes audio to text.

Users upload an audio or video file to the Temi website and, within minutes, receive access to a transcript of the interview. Temi also has a mobile app that allows you to record, store and submit audio for immediate transcription. Once the transcript is ready, you can use Temi’s ‘editor tool’ to “fine-tune the transcript, follow along with the original recording and highlight important parts”, explains Chicola.

He claims Temi saves journalists an “immense amount of time”.

“Journalists spend, on average, six hours a week transcribing audio,” says Chicola. “Over the course of a year, that adds up to two lost business months. Temi transcribes files in just minutes. With all the time Temi gives back to journalists, the reporting process becomes faster, and users gain a competitive advantage in being the first to report or break a story.”

Chicola says many journalists also use the app to record story ideas and ‘to do’ lists.

“One journalist uses Temi during his commute time to create first drafts of content,” he adds. “The average person speaks at a rate of 150 wpm [words per minute], whereas the average person types at 40 wpm. That means a

five-minute audio recording is around 750 words. The time savings are simply life-changing.”

Temi is relatively inexpensive. It charges \$0.10 per minute of audio and there is no an extra charge for additional voices, which many manual transcription companies impose.

Of course, transcription accuracy depends heavily on the quality of the audio or video file. Chicola reckons a file with little background noise can yield a transcript that is 90-95 per cent accurate, whereas one with heavy background noise and cross talking will be less so.

Sonix is similar to Temi. The company claims that, depending on audio quality, the accuracy of its transcriptions can be as high as 98%. Like Temi, it offers a wide range of editing tools that allow users to “polish” transcriptions – and uses a ‘thermometer icon’ to show how confident it is that words have been transcribed correctly. The speed of delivery is similar to Temi – the site can transcribe a 30-minute recording in three to four minutes. However, it has a different pricing structure.

“We have a variety of options depending on how many users need access,” explains the company’s co-founder Jamie Sutherland.

For individual users it costs \$6 per recorded hour (\$0.10 per minute) but, unlike Temi, charges a monthly subscription free of \$11.25. It also offers multi-user subscriptions.

Sutherland says Sonix was launched after its founders identified an opportunity to

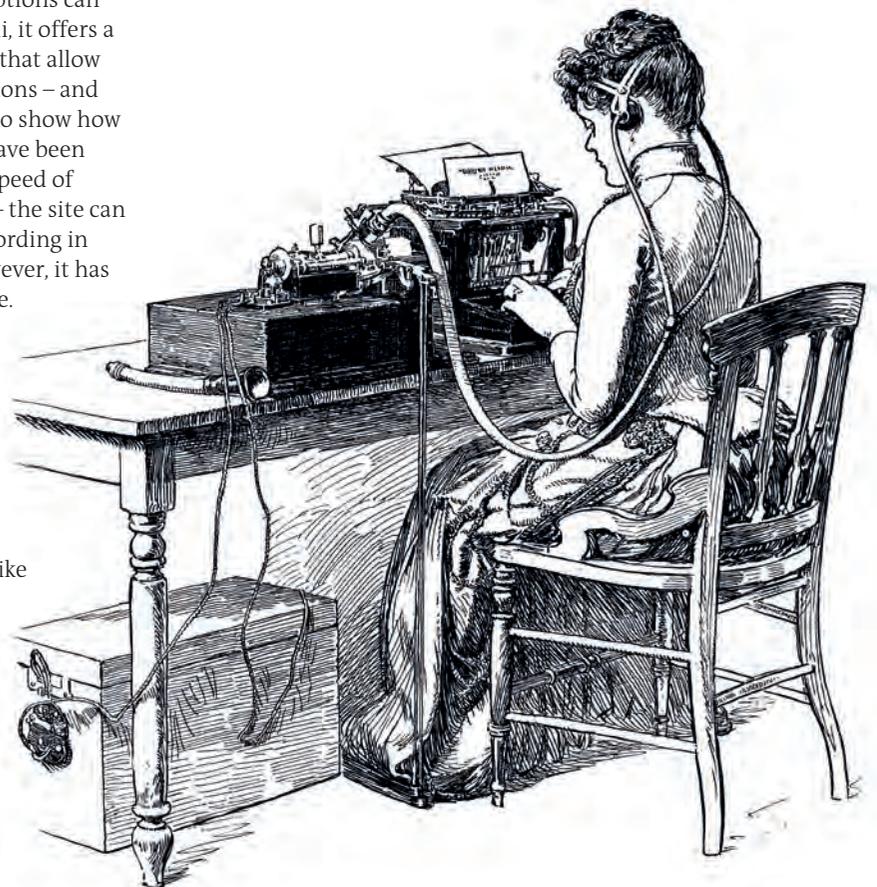
“reinvent the transcription industry”.

“The fact that Sonix stitches the audio to the transcript so that you can play a word by clicking on the text is very helpful to journalists, especially when there is so much scrutiny of the press,” says Sutherland. “Being able to verify source information with one click is paramount.”

I tested both sites and found there was not a great deal to choose between them. In terms of accuracy, Temi performed slightly better but only marginally so. I also found Temi’s editing tools were slightly more user friendly but, again, there was not much of a difference.

Both sites seemed to struggle with how certain words were pronounced (thanks to my slight regional accent) and both failed to transcribe the names of people and companies accurately.

However, given that the 52-minute interview I submitted cost less than \$6 to process (both sites offer free trials), took less than eight minutes to be transcribed and needed only a little polishing, I’m prepared to overlook these drawbacks for the time savings.



# Journalism is a winner in the Tory race



But media unlikely to stop Boris Johnson, says **Raymond Snoddy**

**T**he president of the Ukraine is a comedian and then there is Trump. Now Boris Johnson is on the verge of joining the trio of the absurd.

The battle for the Tory leadership and prime minister could have been the perfect race designed for offshore national newspaper proprietors.

It looked like Michael Gove of the Times in the Murdoch colours would be competing against Johnson of the Daily Telegraph running for the Barclay Brothers.

Rothermere of the Daily Mail looked pretty much like an also-ran on the fringes, managing merely to have the wife of candidate Gove, columnist Sarah Vine, under contract.

Alas, the all-journalistic slate failed to make it over the class A drug hurdle. In the final gallop to the vote of the 160,000 members of the Conservative party, Johnson was joined by a total interloper who has never been a journalist, Jeremy Hunt.

The media nous of Hunt is best marked by the £40 million he forced the BBC to waste on his personal hobby-horse when culture secretary – the underwhelming and underperforming local television experiment.

At least in this most limited of all elections the media and journalists now have a central role – to the extent that they are allowed to – in interrogating the final two.

They are performing the role of opposition.

There is little doubt that the Daily Telegraph and the Barclays would very much like to have their man in 10 Downing Street.

If so, they will have got a bargain for the £270,000 a year that they pay him as a columnist.

Each Boris column is turned into an uncritical splash whether Johnson is talking nonsense or not.

And yet, out of an honourable adherence to news values or not wishing to be exposed as a tame Boris mouthpiece, the Daily Telegraph splashed on the late-night police visit to the Johnson-Carrie Symonds household along with everyone else.

Despite Johnson's reluctance to appear before the Today programme presenters or turn up for the Sky planned debate with Hunt, the media have already scored a few direct hits on Boris.

Not for the first time, the persistence of Nick Ferrari of LBC exposed hypocrisy by asking Boris 26 questions about the happy families picture of Johnson and Carrie that suddenly appeared in the papers.

Johnson refused to answer questions about his personal life but then appeared willing to exploit it by placing positive pictures in the media – a stunt tried years ago when the errant David Mellor lined up his family by a garden gate.

Through a nice piece of basic detective work, Ferrari nailed the fact that the pictures were old – because the Boris haircut was not the same as the one he was wearing on the day of the interview.

Sir Max Hastings, who used to employ Johnson on the Daily Telegraph, yielded the stiletto in an article for The Guardian.

There was room for debate, Sir Max said, about whether Johnson is a scoundrel or mere rogue “but not

much about his moral bankruptcy, rooted in a contempt for the truth”.

If the Conservative Party were to foist a tasteless joke on the British people, they would not find it funny for long, Sir Max believes.

The Financial Times seemed almost apologetic about having to expose the key Johnson strategy that the UK could continue EU trade without tariffs in an interim period while a new trade agreement was being negotiated.

The FT noted that invoking article 24 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade for such a purpose was a ‘fantasy’.

It was a rarely used provision, which applied only when a deal was nearly complete and could only happen if the EU agreed and no other members of the World Trade Organisation objected.

“There has been a lot of nonsense over the past three years, but this is a strong contender for the most absurd of all,” the FT argued.

The media has also done its job in expressing scepticism about the other main plank of the Johnson strategy – that his positive, enthusiastic, optimistic outlook would somehow persuade the EU to do something they have repeatedly warned they would not accept – reopen the withdrawal agreement or water down the Northern Ireland backstop.

Hunt suffers from the same delusion although he is banking on his supposed negotiating skills as an entrepreneur rather than his charisma.

Will all the excellent journalism that has already been produced – and the dozens of stories to come – make any difference at all to the coronation of Boris Johnson?

Possibly not. The only thing that can sink Boris is Boris.

**“**  
**In this most limited of all elections, journalists have a central role. They are performing the role of opposition**  
**”**

# arts with attitude

Some of the best things to see and do with a bit of political bite

For listings email: [arts@NUJ.org.uk](mailto:arts@NUJ.org.uk)

## Music

### Songs of fury aim to raise spirits



**Critics frequently complain there's no politics in music any more. They should listen to the Wood Burning Savages.**

The Derry rebel rousers, who have played alongside Skinny Lister, Billy Bragg and Snow Patrol this year, are looking forward to playing at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival (19-21 July).

"I'm proud to be heading over with the album we have and the set we have because I think it'll raise a lot of spirits in difficult times," says frontman Paul Connolly.

They'll raise a lot of eyebrows too, I reckon, with their raucous punk rock guitars and riotous live show opening the main stage on Sunday, booming across the Dorset countryside, stirring a few hangovers.

But if the band's music is a slight departure for the festival, their politics hit the right chord, with powerful songs about the devastating effects of austerity.

For example, single I Don't Know Why I Do It To Myself, addresses suicide rates in Derry, beginning with the line: "Queuing in the rain for the dole again, I hold up my hands, I hold up the begging bowl."

It is hard hitting and, as Paul explains, pulls no punches. "We're in the situation now of engineered poverty. Universal credit's been a compete balls-up, homelessness is on the rise in smaller and smaller towns and villages, and that's depressing.

"We're very quick as countries to say how modern we are, but there are people living with nothing, just the clothes on their back. Food banks - food poverty is a big thing.

"A couple of us in the band work in education and we've seen firsthand the effects of kids coming in on a day-to-day basis who haven't eaten breakfast. That's not their parents' fault. That's our government's fault."

"It wasn't a difficult decision to sing about politics," Paul says. "Coming from Northern Ireland, it's be political or languish away in a bar somewhere and say nothing and play to nobody and have songs that in 10 years' time we'd be deeply embarrassed by."

• The Woodburning Savages play at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival alongside Eddi Reader, Los de Abajo, Pete Dinklage, the Dinner Ladies and many more.

[www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival/](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival/)



by **Tim Lezard**

## Film

### Non-Fiction

**On national release**

Juliette Binoche stars as Selena, the actress wife of literary editor Alain, in this wry, slyly seductive tale of sex, lies and literature. In the Parisian publishing world, Alain and author Leonard try to cope with a midlife crisis and a changing industry.

<https://iffr.com/en/2019/films/doubles-vies>

### Transit

**Released on 3 August**

Based on Anna Segher's 1942 novel, this German drama tells of a Nazi concentration camp escapee attempting to flee occupied France.

In his quest, Georg assumes the identity of a dead author ... and then falls in love with the author's wife, who is unaware of her husband's suicide.

Christian Petzold's film has been described as a "brilliant and haunting modern-day adaptation".

[www.imdb.com/title/tt6675244/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6675244/)

### Blinded by the Light

**Released on 9 August**

Broadcaster and Guardian journalist Sarfraz Manzoor is the inspiration behind this Luton-based comedy recounting how an obsession with Bruce Springsteen helped a teenager cope with the racism and austerity of Tory Britain under Margaret Thatcher. *Blinded by the Light* is both a tribute to the power of music and a moving account of a generational and cultural divide between a father and a son.

<https://cornerstonefilm.com/films/blinded-by-the-light/>



## Comedy

### Rhod Gilbert

**The Book of John**

**On tour until 13 December**

A lot has happened to Rhod in the six years since he last toured. Almost all of it bad. And, just when he thought he'd hit rock bottom, he met a bloke called John.

Rhod's new show sees him as funny as ever, but like never before - raw, personal and brutally honest. No more lies, no more nonsense.

<http://rhodgilbertcomedian.com>



## Music

### Paddy Nash

**Gate Fever**

The new album by Derry singer-songwriter Paddy Nash takes its name from the anxiety experienced by prisoners when they are nearing the end of their sentences.

Artists of all sorts need to counter what is 'fake', especially as it "seems to be the new 'real'", he says.

"I hope I reflect what's good in the world too because I see it in the ordinary things, the people I meet and the things we do."

<https://paddynash.com>

## Theatre

### The Night of the Iguana

**Noel Coward Theatre, London, until 28 September**

Clive Owen, Lia Williams and Anna Gunn star in Tennessee Williams's last great play.

In a Mexico hotel during 1940, a group of lost souls - a defrocked priest, a grieving widow, a family of



jubilant Nazis and an itinerant artist with her 97-year-old grandfather – take part in an epic battle between flesh and spirit, captivity and freedom and art and faith.

[www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk/tickets/the-night-of-the-iguana/](http://www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk/tickets/the-night-of-the-iguana/)

**The Lehman Trilogy**  
Piccadilly Theatre, London,  
until 31 August

Fresh from its National Theatre sell-out, this depiction of the successes and failures of three generations of Lehmans lands in the West End starring Simon Russell Beale, Adam Godley and Ben Miles.

Starting with the family as immigrants from Bavaria, it give a glimpse into how the American dream can turn into a nightmare.  
<https://thepiccadillytheatre.com>

**Books**

**Shafted: the Media, the Miners' Strike and the Aftermath**  
Edited by Granville Williams

I'm told this (second) edition is "virtually a new book". NUJ stalwarts Nick Jones (BBC), Peter Lazenby (Yorkshire Evening Post) and Paul Routledge (The Times) are among those who contribute to a discussion on what pressures were put on journalists who reported the year-long miners' strike.

It also places the strike in its political and economic context, and highlights the devastating impact of the pit closure programme on mining communities. If it's half as good as the first edition, it's well worth a read.

<https://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk/view/3593/Shafted+The+Media+the+Miners+Strike+and+the+Aftermath>

**Don McCullin**

Following an exhibition at the Tate,

**Spotlight**

Harper Lee's tale of true crime

There was much excitement four years ago when *Go Set A Watchman*, Harper Lee's second novel, was published.

Now author and journalist Casey Cep has published *Furious Hours*, telling of her hunt for the manuscript of *The Reverend*, which is widely assumed to be Lee's third book, a true crime story.

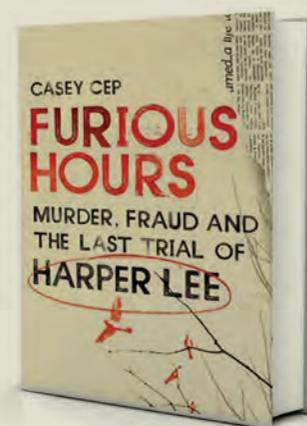
*The Reverend* is Willie Maxwell, a rural preacher accused of murdering five family members in the 1970s. With the help of a savvy lawyer, he escaped justice for years until a relative of his last victim - Maxwell's stepdaughter - shot him

dead at her funeral. Despite hundreds of witnesses, Maxwell's murderer was acquitted.

Harper Lee spent a year reporting on the case and many more years trying to finish the book.

Casey Cep brings this story to life, from the shocking murders to the courtroom drama to the racial politics of the Deep South, while painting a portrait of Lee and her struggle with fame, success, and the mystery of artistic creativity.

As the blurb says, "This is the story Harper Lee wanted to write. This is the story of why she couldn't."



<http://tinyurl.com/yx8pnuxj>

Don McCullin's new book looks back at his long career, celebrating the breadth of his work over decades.

It features iconic images from Vietnam, Cyprus, Lebanon, Biafra and, er, Somerset. The ultimate coffee table book for journalists?

<https://shop.tate.org.uk/don-mccullin-exhibition-book>

**Airhead – the Imperfect Art of Making News**

Emily Maitlis

BBC journalists are often criticised on social media for being too left or too right wing, or for being too soft or too hard on interviewees.

As anchor for *Newsnight*, Emily Maitlis knows what it's like to be in the line of fire and, in this book, she explores the moments when



interviews don't quite go to plan, despite meticulous preparation. We all know that feeling, right?

She takes us behind the scenes of the biggest news stories in recent years. Most people don't get such a ringside seat so here's is a chance to get close to the action.

<http://tinyurl.com/y5ghde8w>

**Exhibitions**

**Waterford Walls**

22-25 August

**Waterford**

Murals play a large role in Ireland's cultural history and the Waterford Walls international street art festival reflects this by transforming the city into the country's largest and most accessible outdoor gallery.

<https://waterfordwalls.ie>



**Television**

**Dublin Murders**

The BBC is later this year to screen a psychological crime thriller, *Dublin Murders*, based on Tana French's bestselling novels.

Starring Killian Scott (*Strike*) and Sarah Greene (*Penny Dreadful*) as detectives Rob Reilly and Cassie Maddox, the series is set during the height of the Celtic Tiger financial boom and delves into Ireland's past, bringing insight to its present.

The novels highlight an intense emotional connection between cop and crime, underpinned by a darker influence.

<https://eustonfilms.tv/productions/dublin-murders/>



**Outdoor events**

From epic history to a riot of journalism

"It's lovely sunny day, but you hide yourself away ... get up and get down and get outside," sings Frank Turner in *Reasons Not To Be An Idiot*, and it's good advice.

There's plenty of al fresco entertainment this summer.

Probably - in fact, definitely - the most spectacular will be Kynren, in County Durham, where you can watch 1,000 people recreating the history of England on a seven-and-a-half acre stage. With dance, stunts, equestrianism, special

effects and pyrotechnics, it sounds awesome.

But, if historical epics aren't your thing, try the more sedate option of theatre in the grounds of a National Trust property, Regent's Park or

Shakespeare's Globe. Or Cardiff ... or anywhere.

Or how about the all-encompassing Edinburgh International Festival or the "riot of independent journalism" that is the NUJ-backed Byline Festival with Pussy Riot and John Cleese, among others?

[www.kynren.com](http://www.kynren.com)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)  
[www.shakespearesglobe.com](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com)  
<https://openairtheatre.com>  
<https://cardiffopenairtheatrefestival.co.uk>  
[www.chapterhouse.org](http://www.chapterhouse.org)  
[www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk)





# Your Say...

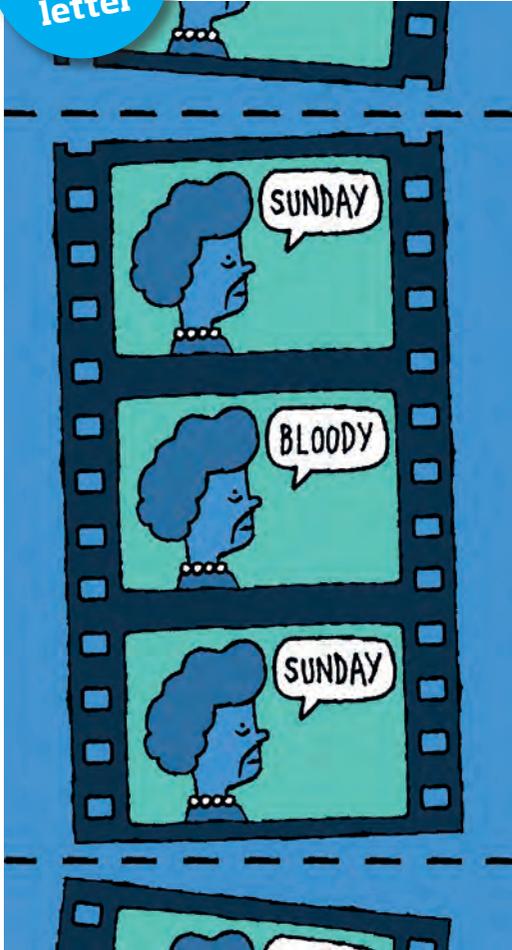
inviting letters, comments, tweets



Please keep comments to 200 words maximum

Email to: [journalist@nuj.org.uk](mailto:journalist@nuj.org.uk)  
Post to: The Journalist, 72 Acton Street, London WC1X 9NB  
Tweet to: @mschrisbuckley

£30 prize letter



## BBC showed a very non-Irish revolution

BBC TV series, Thatcher: A Very British Revolution, offered so much but delivered nothing - on Ireland that is.

Northern Ireland dominated almost every single news report during Margaret Thatcher's premiership but the series didn't refer to one single incident in Northern Ireland that further strained relations between the UK and Irish governments during her time in Number 10.

No mention about the IRA killing of Lord Louis Mountbatten in 1979 or her poor handling of the 1981 IRA hunger strikes, which resulted in a major global PR coup for Irish republicans.

Her stubborn attitude single-handedly contributed to a growth in IRA membership but this wasn't covered. There was no mention of the fact that she betrayed Ulster Unionists by doing a behind-the-scenes deal with Dublin to sign the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, which was angrily viewed as treason.

No mention that pro-union MPs Robert Bradford, Airey Neave and Ian Gow were murdered during her time in office. The tone of the series was one of 'Margaret the brave, Margaret the heroine!'

One would think from watching this series that the Troubles actually happened in a place other than the United Kingdom.

**Ken Murray**  
Irish Eastern branch

playground style, May/June). You could almost say that both politics and the media rely on doublethink untruthing.

A lying politician gets lots of airtime – no publicity is bad publicity, right? As a journalist, once the original lies have been reported, you can write an opinion piece about the shameful publishing of lies. And so on.

**Nick Inman**  
Occitanie  
France

## Everyone has their favourite headlines

Thanks to Jonathan Sale for his piece on the history of the headline (The Journalist, May-June 2019).

I'm sure you'll be inundated with readers' faves, but surely one of the classics must be Variety's 'Sticks nix hick pix' from the summer of 1935? It referred to the reaction of rural audiences to films about rural life. The Wikipedia entry for this headline cites other headlines (from fact and fiction) that riff on it.

In terms of errors, my favourite was a decimal point in the wrong place on the front page of Contract Journal circa 2002, turning a £64bn spend to £6.4bn or vice versa (details lost in the fog of time, I'm afraid).

**Justin Stanton**  
Croydon



## Ipsos contract could give conscience protection

It's good to see Raymond Snoddy backing the NUJ's longstanding call for a 'conscience clause' to be added to codes of conduct to protect journalists from being victimised for disobeying unethical instructions (Keeping the rubbish out of Brexit coverage, May/June).

Members may be interested to know that we now appear to have the chair of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipsos) on our side too.

During a Q&A at an Ipsos roadshow in Sheffield on May 21, I asked Sir Alan Moses for his thoughts on adding a conscience clause to the Editors' Code of

Practice – a call that has been rejected by the Editors' Code of Practice committee. He replied that, although there is no explicit clause, the nature of Ipsos's contracts with its member companies would in effect offer similar protection to any employee in such a situation.

Moses explained that Ipsos could not compel the editors' committee to make changes, but added: "I agree with you – I think it would be a very good idea if there was such a clause in the Editors' Code. Why the editors haven't done it is not at all clear to me."

**Tony Harcup**  
NUJ life member  
Leeds & Wakefield branch

## All truth and no sauce makes for dull news

Raymond Snoddy creates a wonderful image of NUJ-affiliated Telegraph journalists wrestling with their consciences as they sub the distortions the paper relies on to feed its readers in the shires (Keeping the rubbish out of Brexit coverage, May/June). Do these saintly journalists really exist, just waiting for armies of the righteous to free them from their chains?

Meanwhile, Chris Proctor unwittingly proves the fact that Snoddy and himself seem not to see: the truth makes shockingly dull journalism but lies make great headlines (Playing politics,

## We want more varied, quality photographs

The NUJ's Photographers' Council has discussed the recent criticism by a correspondent of the quality and scope of pictures used recently in The Journalist.

While not necessarily agreeing with all the points raised by Paul Jacobs (Letters, March/April), council members did express their disappointment that, in the house magazine of the union representing a large number of photographers in the media and public relations, the variety and quality of images in the magazine fail to live up to members' expectations.

The preponderance of headshots and stock images is a poor reflection of a union whose members produce some

of the most striking and interesting images regularly in their working lives.

While the council appreciates the budget constraints the NUJ is operating under, it believes that, by making better use of the union's own photographer members, not only could picture quality be improved but also the NUJ would be seen to be actively supporting its photographers at a financially difficult time.

The Photographers' Council has raised these points with The Journalist editorial advisory board and is seeking to jointly resolve these issues.

**Natasha Hirst**  
Chair, Photographers' Council

*The magazine's budget is ultimately set by the union's national executive council when it approves the total budget. This year The Journalist's allocation was cut by 15.6 per cent. The amount available for content, after production costs, is about £6,200 per issue. That doesn't go far.*

*The magazine uses stock photos for practical reasons. Our freelance designer doesn't have the time to contact a range of photographers to see if they have the shot we want, then wait for the replies etc. There is also the question of who to approach. To be totally fair, all 1,600 photographer members should be contacted for each shot. Obviously that is totally impractical. No publication works this way.*

*Some time ago, I attended a meeting*

*of the Photographers' Council and we discussed the NUJ setting up a photo library with photographers contributing images that our designer and the communications team could use. It could be just a simple repository. I'm very keen to pursue this idea.*

*I understand the photographers' concern but unfortunately it can't be resolved within The Journalist's current budget.*

**Christine Buckley**  
Editor

**Freelance team saved me from harassment**

Thanks very much to the NUJ Freelance team for saving me from being harassed by HMRC and TWO debt collection agencies they hired over a Working Tax Credit over-payment which I'd paid back four years ago, prior to retiring.

I'd spent many hours on the telephone and writing letters to HMRC to try and sort the matter out myself. It was causing me great stress, particularly as I am suffering from terminal cancer.

Fortunately, I had opted to join the NUJ retired members branch and as soon as I contacted the union, the freelance team contacted HMRC on my behalf and provided me with a contact address there and a model letter for me to send.

I have now received a letter of apology from HMRC, together with a promise that they will stop harassing



## twitter feed

Tweet us your feedback: [@mschrisbuckley](https://twitter.com/mschrisbuckley)

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 **helenjerome** @helenjerome  
WELL DONE Fine cover and coverage in new issue of #TheJournalist from @NUJofficial with 3pp on #LyraMcKee including heartfelt obituary from @CiaranOMAolain (@mschrisbuckley)

9:01 AM – 14 May 2019



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 **Centre for Community Journalism** @C4CJ  
Brilliant article on how a decline in local news brings about a democratic deficit – @raehowells writes in the @NUJofficial magazine

6:07 AM – 14 May 2019

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 **Kath Burton** @KathburtonKath  
May/June issue of #TheJournalist includes fascinating insight into (hyper)local journalism from @Routledge\_MandC author (Hyperlocal Journalism: the Decline of Local Newspapers and the Rise of Online Community News) – fancy a chat @raehowells? (c @ProfBobFranklin)

9:45 AM-14 May 2019

me. They even sent me a modest payment by way of compensation.

I can now concentrate on staying alive and enjoying my retirement.

**Tony Birtill**  
Liverpool

**Grateful to NUJ for their help in going to court**

I'd like to say a big thank you to Pamela Morton in the NUJ Freelance Office. Pamela helped me with a long-running claim against a publisher.

We'd tried to settle with the publisher out of court but, in the end, the only option to bring it to a conclusion was

to take it to the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court. This wasn't straightforward but the NUJ stuck by me, for which I will always be grateful.

Pamela and the NUJ's solicitor at Thompsons were endlessly patient, calm, helpful and on the ball. I succeeded and the judge awarded me damages for breach of contract and costs (court fees and expenses).

It is well worth being a member of the NUJ for practical and moral support and feeling that you don't have to fight all your battles on your own.

**Celia Woolfrey**  
London Freelance Branch

**STEVE BELL**

**THE OWNERS**





## Peggie Robinson

**A journalist, mountaineer and yachtswoman - and bagpipe player - who worked for the Daily Express for some 45 years, has died, aged 97. Peggie Robinson, who was based in Sheffield, reported on everything from the Yorkshire Ripper to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.**

Peggie was a lifetime member of the NUJ and was discussing union and media news activities almost to the end. Among her souvenirs was a delegate's pass to the national conference in April 1944, from when she was a 22-year-old reporter on the Shields Gazette in her home town of South Shields. This was only about two months before her father, a Merchant Marine captain, was killed when his ship was attacked after action supporting the D-Day landings.

It may have been that personal tragedy that drove her in later life to work tirelessly every year organising collecting teams for the Poppy Appeal - raising scores of thousands of pounds through her efforts.

She was also a stalwart of the Labour Party and attended both NUJ and party conferences.

Peggie joined the Daily Express around the end of the war and, in 1946, transferred to Sheffield to cover Yorkshire.

In her early working life, she was one of the few women reporters on national newspapers and was particularly proud of her part in the fight for equal pay. Apart from covering the Ripper for several years - frustratingly missing his arrest because she was away on holiday - and the Troubles, she also reported on Britain's Cod War with Iceland, pit tragedies and miners' strikes, and was well known throughout Yorkshire.

She was still contributing articles in the 1980s, and, for many years, she played the bagpipes in pipe bands in and around Sheffield.

She died on May 4 in a city nursing home after a long spell of poor health.

Peggie faced her failing health with the same feisty, indomitable spirit that she showed throughout her life, whether she was chasing a story, skipping her off-shore racing yacht or climbing Alpine peaks, including the Matterhorn.

**Clark Herron**



## Jack Abel

**Jack Abel, a former photographer and picture editor of the Manchester Evening News (MEN), died on April 17. He would have been 95 on May 21.**

Jack's career with the newspaper began shortly after his demob from the RAF in 1946 when he was given a month's trial by editor Tom Henry. He was issued with an old Palmos plate camera that had pinholes in the bellows, resulting in fogged plates from almost every job he was sent on. His first job was a disaster and a somewhat shaky start for Jack. Things could only get better.

After Jack completed the first month - with a different camera without pinholes in its bellows - Tom Henry called him into his office and told him that the first month had not been too bad and offered him another month's trial. That was the beginning of Jack's career with the newspaper. In 1969, the MEN asked Jack to set up a new company called Colour 061 of which he became director until he retired in the 1980s.

Before he was made picture editor, he was a photographer and covered Manchester United games. He should have travelled with the team when they played Red Star Belgrade in 1958 but there weren't enough seats on the plane so sports reporter Tom Jackson went alone.

On the afternoon of February 6, Jack was in the office when news of the Munich plane crash disaster came through. Tom Jackson and eight of the Manchester United team and other journalists had been killed when their return flight crashed on take-off because of snow on the tarmac. Hours later, Jack and reporter Doug Slight were both on a flight to Munich to record the tragedy.

Jack knew most of the players and officials and his contacts proved useful to himself and the reporter. On the Sunday, they visited the crash site with two uninjured players, Harry Gregg and Bill Foulkes. They searched the wreckage of the plane and picked up belongings that lay scattered about.

Jack would later play a big part in the MEN's football coverage and the build-up of the Manchester United team and the Busby Babes.

Jack's long life might have been cut tragically short but for the want of a seat on a plane.

**Bill Batchelor**



## George Dowson

**Northern sports journalism lost one of its best-known names when former Manchester Evening News and Sunday Mirror staffer George Dowson died aged 81 at his home in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, on March 18.**

George was born in the City of Salford and maintained a love of his native city all his life. A product of the city's De La Salle College, George joined the weekly Salford City Reporter. After proving his ability as an enterprising sports journalist and a gifted headline writer, he joined the sports desk of the Manchester Evening News, rising to become deputy sports editor.

George was recruited by the northern office of the Sunday Mirror, where he took over the rugby league column from Eddie Waring, and was part of the sports desk sub-editing team. In 1977, he was promoted to deputy northern sports editor.

The closure of the Mirror Group's production centre in Manchester in 1988 saw George return to the Manchester Evening News, where he became the chief rugby league columnist. He then joined Salford Reds Rugby League Club as media manager, a position he held until he retired in 2000.

George played soccer for Salford City Boys as well as cricket and rugby union to a creditable standard. He loved golf and, when his health prevented him from swinging a club, he took up bowls. He was uncompromisingly competitive: he didn't give any quarter and expected none in return.

There was far more to George than his sporting prowess. An accomplished guitar player, he would belt out standards made popular by Frank Sinatra and others, and was a keen fan of jazz. He also enjoyed tackling the Daily Telegraph crossword.

George and his wife Margaret moved to Tetbury in 2000. He was surrounded by his family. His three sons, grandchildren and great grandchildren were a major part of his and Margaret's life. He was diagnosed with vascular dementia in 2014.

At his funeral at in Bristol on April 11, he had a Manchester United-branded coffin, and wore a Salford Rugby League Club jersey and the tie of his beloved Honourable Order of Bass Drinkers.

**John Huxley**

**More obituaries on the NUJ website:  
[www.nuj.org.uk/about/nuj-obituaries](http://www.nuj.org.uk/about/nuj-obituaries)**



# Story behind the picture

Victim of an oil spill  
*By Paul Glendell*

**In 1996, I was commissioned by WWF in Switzerland to photograph the Sea Empress oil spill off the west Wales coast**

Arriving too late in the evening to do any photography, I retired to the pub. Leaning on the bar with my first pint, I got in to conversation with the person leading the clean-up for the port authority. He had just dropped in for a drink on his way home.

“The oil is coming ashore at Manorbier beach right now,” he told me. “There will be a big clean up there first thing tomorrow morning”

I arrived at the beach at first light with the intention of getting shots both of the beach before the clean-up and of the workers removing the sludge covering the bay.

Scanning the black mess strewn before me, I could see a struggling bird. I approached carefully but the guillemot was incapable of going anywhere. I spent half an hour photographing it, hoping to get a shot with its wings outspread.

Not only did the photo appear in Life magazine as a double-page spread but it also received an award of excellence in a ‘pictures of the year’ competition in the US after Life entered it for me.

I felt I could not leave the bird on the beach to its fate, so I caught it and handed it over to the RSPCA rescue unit. Whether it survived or not, I have no idea.

and finally...

# Great Brexit buffet proves to be a feast



Exiting Europe has led to a job creation scheme, says **Chris Proctor**

**W**hat an unqualified success Brexit has turned out to be! It might bankrupt the country, tear the populace asunder and leave us the laughing stock of the cosmos, but it's provided more work opportunities for our trade than anything since Katie Price.

I shall certainly vote Remain in any future referendum in the hope that a victory for that faction will mean the declaration of a formal draw and the announcement of a further 'best-of-three' vote. This can't keep going long enough in my view.

Yes, much news copy has reported misleading and unsubstantiated balderdash, and most of the opinion pieces have been absurdly prejudiced and uninformed. But, mixed metaphors aside, the resultant nonsense has kept the food on the table safe from the wolves at many a newshound's door.

What would have happened over the past couple of years without this media epic? Without Brexit, pages and screens would have looked like a photo of Frisco on a foggy Friday. Magazines would have shed pages, thinned like vegans in Argentinian bistros. Twitter feeds would have starved.

All praise to Brexit, then! It's made Fleet Street a boom town. Demand for our services has been overwhelming: not just in news-gathering but also in pamphlets, cartoons, opinion pieces, snaps and Hansard.

In a Brexitless Britain, our political pages would have plodded along, chronicling the usual petty party political squabbles, resignations of people we'd never heard of and

accounts of past misdemeanours. But, thanks to the Big B, politics has livened up no end. Instead of the 'same old', we've been treated to tottering governments, hounded premiers, imploding parties and emerging if unconvincing Machiavellis.

We've been offered the practically unique opportunity of reporting, photographing and commenting upon the transformation of a nation from a respected international mover-and-shaker into a sideshow of eccentricity – a metamorphosis from Cool Britannia to global song-and-dance performer. What luck.

And how manfully we journalists have faced up to a new set of challenges. Pre-Brexit, the source of our stories was action. It was the reporter's first, second and final interrogation: "What are you going to do about it?", "What will you do next?" or "What will change?" All, you will note, 'doing words'. Verbs.

To our credit, we moved seamlessly into the era of the dispensable verb. We didn't need action! Faced with weeks and months of total inertia, we revised our criteria for a story. We made the news 'Nothing is happening!' and carried on interviewing people, attributing quotes, issuing releases and snapping images of mass indolence. Our coverage became even more frantic during seasons of slothful stagnation.

It's been also been a shot in the arm, or at least a Gove up the nose, for our Westminster correspondents. For years, they have noted parliament's amiable and ritual shambles: side A of the House baying at side B; honourable members delivering rebukes in

sentences longer than the US would like to give Assange; and order papers waved like enthusiasts welcoming the Trump visit.

For years, Lobby hacks have had to watch while chamber proceedings moved at a snail's pace. Stale and tired, they were shadows of the fresh-faced youths who first crossed Central Lobby.

Then – thanks to Brexit – new vistas shone forth! The left-right, government-opposition yeas-and-nays became small beer compared with the carnage members of the same side wrought upon each other. In place of the gentlefolk scoring debating points, we had back-stabbings of Shakespearean proportions. We had full-blown traitors forming fringe parties, some chucking in their lot with three parties in as many months, leaders for whom every fresh day was the Ides of March and even the occasional seething interfamily rivalry. Indeed, times were good.

Without Brexit, senior reporters would have been despatched to beef up stories about Diane Abbott being pictured sipping a can of shandy on a train; cover scandals like the Brighton Half Marathon being 146 metres short; or thrilling at the tracing of the remains of the Elephant Man.

Instead, Brexit has: given us tales of the dwindling darling buddies of May; seen Tory leadership elections starting with a cast of thousands; led to horror stories about bacon smuggling over a new Irish border; raised the prospect of a revamping of Hadrian's Wall; and forecast a wine-less Albion.

All gist to the bedlam, I say. Onward Brexit! In our trade, you can't get enough of a bad thing.

**//**  
**The left-right yeas-and-nays were small beer compared with the carnage members of the same side wrought on each other**  
**//**

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## Upcoming Election for the *NUJ* Editor of *The Journalist*

The National Union of Journalists will shortly be holding an election for the Editor of the NUJ's union magazine, *The Journalist*.

This opportunity is for a part-time role, covering 2-3 days a week (to be confirmed), will be on a five year contracted basis spanning 2019 to 2024. The election will be conducted in November 2019 in a ballot of all NUJ members.

Information packs, with full details of how eligible members can put themselves forward, will be available from the NUJ from 18th July 2019.

More information will be available from that time on the NUJ website [www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk).

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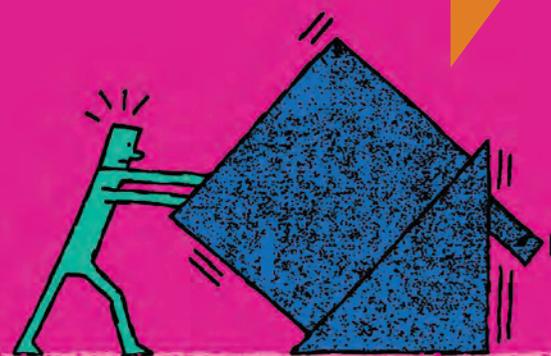


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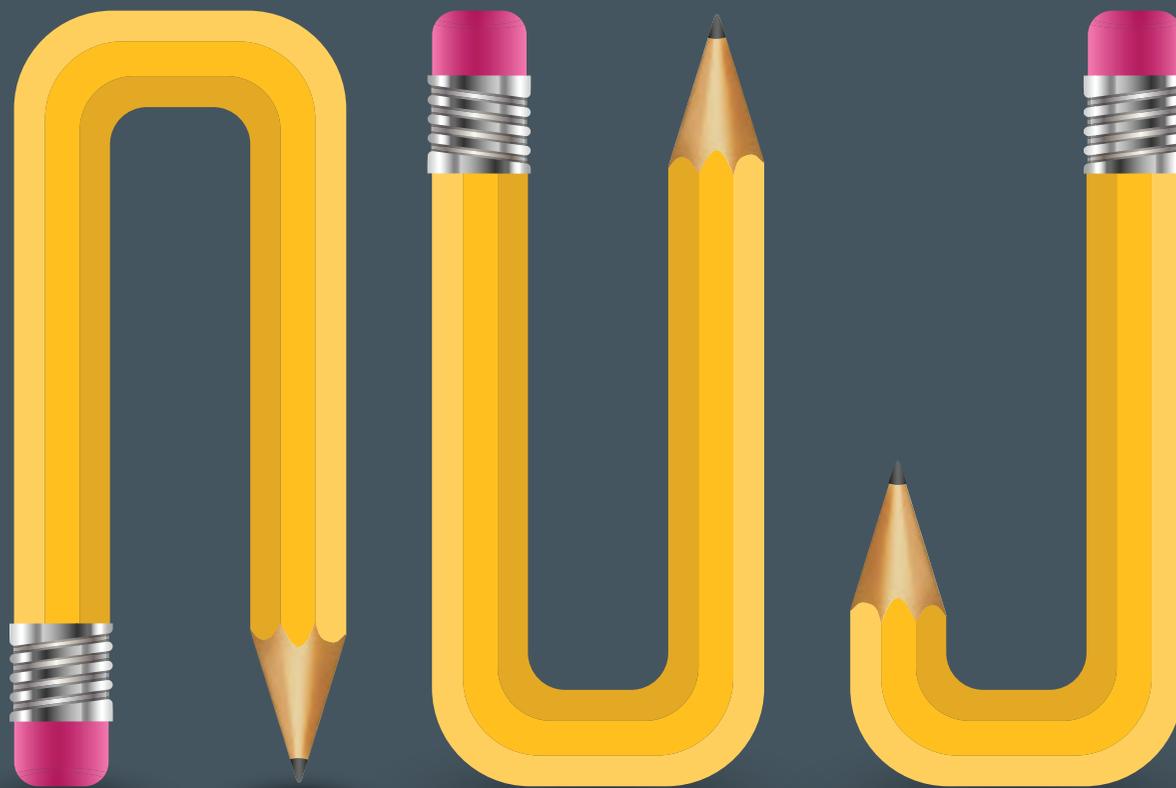


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