



# health writer online

GUILD OF HEALTH WRITERS NEWSLETTER



## What a swell party it was!

This year's Guild's summer party at the October Gallery was a great success

SEPTEMBER  
2013

**W**ell, thankfully, summer didn't turn out too bad, did it? The sun finally appeared and, even better, it meant that we were able to make the most of the October Gallery's glorious courtyard for the Guild Summer Party. It really was a perfect evening – plenty of food, wine and such good company!

**Many thanks go to Boehringer Ingelheim** for their kind sponsorship – and for the second year running – and in particular to Duncan Cantor, Director of Communications at BI, and of course to Jatinder, who pulled everything together so effortlessly, helping to make the evening such a success.

**The Guild events are a great way to stay in contact** with other members but don't forget LinkedIn, our invitation-only group which enables you to raise issues, ideas – and irritations – with other members. Everyone I've spoken to about it feels it's a great benefit so, if you have something to say, do use it. The more we share our experience, knowledge and advice, the more effective we can be as The Guild – and as individual journalists.

**Michele**

**PS: Hope to see you at...**

the Broaden your Horizons workshop on the 17th September. And look out for future email alerts telling you about some of the other terrific events we have lined up for you.



*The balmy weather meant a great turnout at the Guild's summer party – and what a great venue*



*Barbara Rowlands and Marie-Claire Mason enjoy the art on show at the gallery*



*Dr Charles de Wet and Duncan Cantor from sponsors Boehringer Ingelheim*



*Liz Hodgkinson, Judy Hobson, Barbara Lantin, Marie-Claire Mason and Frances Ive*



*PR Lindsay Morgan and Tony and Liz Adlam*



*Jean Elgie, chair Michele Simmons and Jatinder Dua*



*Patsy Westcott and Chris McLaughlin*

PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP TULL

For further information on Members' News and forthcoming events visit [www.healthwriters.com](http://www.healthwriters.com)

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

## Karen Evennett

Each issue we'll be asking one of our members to tell us a little bit about their working day. Here, one long time freelancer shares her schedule



**I like my working day to be well structured and busy,** and I'm at my desk by 9.30 at the latest – after a 45 minute dog walk. This helps me think through any problems such as how to start a feature (the first line is always the hardest, but if I get it right everything else follows easily I find), or – increasingly in this climate – how best to pitch a new idea.

**I'm a messy worker** – years ago one of my editors had a dream that my desk was a skip (not far off the truth) – but my last task of the day is to write out a clean to-do list for the morning, so that's the first thing I see when I sit down, and I don't have to think about any of that stuff overnight, or risk forgetting to do something because I've got caught up with emails or phone calls first thing.

**I usually schedule interviews** for between 9.30 and 11.0, and then 2.30 to 6.0. During that mid-day break, if time allows, I will go to the gym or meet a friend for lunch. Or there may be a lovely press event

somewhere like the Ivy. All these things can be cancelled if work is too hectic, or I suddenly have to do a horrible lot of adds for a feature.

**There have been many years when most of my work has been regulars** – for example I can remember a time when I was writing monthly health pages for Cosmo, Prima, Family Circle and Marie Claire Health & Beauty, along with a weekly page for the Mirror. But all regular columns eventually come to an end – usually because of a change of editor – and I have recently lost the last of these: a spread I had been writing for Prima for 14 years... Obviously my first thought was, 'That's £500 less I'll be earning next month' – but the need to replace that money spurred me on to spend more time working on ideas that needed a lot of research before I could pitch them. The result was two big stories in the Mail in one day.

**Losing Prima also prompted me to think about how to change**

**the way I work.** So in quieter moments or between interviews, and when everything is written up, I've been gathering material I can use for a website, and thinking of possible new book ideas. I have written 12 books, but though publishing rates have dwindled, I am willing to go back into this area if a project looks fun and feasible.

**Even after more than 25 years of freelancing, I'd still rather be writing** than doing any other job I can think of. And even though I now start most months wondering how I am ever going to attract the number of commissions I need to meet my target earnings, work usually turns up in the end – and sometimes from unexpected sources. But I do rather believe in karma, and I'm sure that it's by constantly knocking at doors that some of them – even those I haven't been trying – eventually open.  
**Karen Evenett**



## A word from our Head Twitter...

The piece about Twitter in our last newsletter prompted many members to get tweeting. We @HealthWritersUK now have well over 550 followers, and we are endeavouring to follow all 'tweeting' members. If by any chance we have missed someone, please let us know. Additionally, we keep an eye out for any tweets from you about your own articles, blogs or ideas, and we re-tweet them. Again, if we miss something of yours, get in touch and we'll put that right. Twitter is a great way of keeping in touch with other members, and can be used very effectively as a publicity tool for writers. So, if you haven't joined us yet, please do. *Christine Webber*

## Less work, lower pay, who'd be a health writer?

What do journalists really earn? We reveal the results of our recent survey...

**The latest news on the state of the nation** indicates that we may be coming out of recession. If only that were true for the state of journalism. Fifty-three Guild members completed our SurveyMonkey survey on what journalists earn earlier this year. The results certainly make interesting reading.

**Over 41% of respondents earned less than £25,000** over the course of the previous year, and of these 22.6% earned under £15,000. At the other end of the scale over 38% earned more than £30,000.

**More than 71% reported that their fees had decreased in the past year**, while the remaining 28% said they had stayed the same. One member commented that in some cases pay rates hadn't changed in 25 years while another said that their income has declined by around 45% in the last five years, yet the volume of work is the same or even higher. Not one respondent said that their fees had increased. However, 32% had noticed

an increase in kill fees over the previous five to 10 years.

**It also seems that there is less work around than there used to be.** 92.4% said that their clients were commissioning less and 77% of our respondents replied that they were expected to do more for the same fee. The overwhelming response was that print pays more than digital, and day rates on consumer publications are 'shockingly bad' at about £120-£130 a day.

**The comments left by those members who completed the survey were enlightening.** They showed that for too many, doing a job they love is becoming increasingly financially difficult and what we all need to be doing is working smarter.

**'I think for most of us things are definitely tougher,'** said one of our journalists. 'But the key seems to be using your skills, experience and the body of information you've built up for



different customers. We also need to spend less time researching and get better at applying the time-is-money approach..'

**With consistent comments about how rates haven't gone up in 10 or more years**, or have actually fallen, the NUJ's Rate for the Job pages might be a useful guide, showing how much different print and online publications, radio and TV broadcasters pay per 1,000 words, per page or item, and per shift.

● **For more information:**  
[www.londonfreelance.org/rates/](http://www.londonfreelance.org/rates/)  
**Lesley Dobson**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**17th September, 2013 at 6pm  
The Medical Society of London**

If you feel work is flagging and your income could do with a boost (and as far as we can see from our survey, that's most of us), book a place at our **'Broaden Your Horizons'** event which is all about freelancing in the recession. So come and discover how we can not only survive but actually thrive, despite the economic climate.

## MEMBERS' NEWS



**Hilary Freeman**  
- shortlisted  
as a finalist  
in the MS  
Media

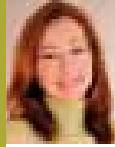
Coverage of the year Awards for an article she wrote about benign MS in You magazine. The winner will be named in October at a ceremony at the Dorchester.

The latest  
blog post  
from  
**Rosie  
Walker**



is related to the news that the Home Secretary has developed type 1 diabetes. The post is in the form of a letter to Mrs May.  
● <http://successfuldiabetes.blogspot.co.uk/>

## MEMBERS' BOOKS



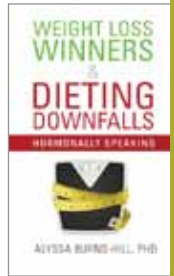
It may not be lack of willpower that can derail your weight loss plans. In **Weight Loss Winners & Dieting**

### **Downfalls, Alyssa Burns-Hill**

explains how different hormones will affect your willpower, encourage comfort eating, and slow your metabolism. She offers advice to men and women looking

to combat these problems and change their relationship with food forever.

● *To find out more about Alyssa and her work, visit: <http://dralysaburns-hill.com/> where you can also see a five-minute film about the book. Alyssa's book is also available on Kindle.*



Nutritionist and author **Maria Cross** has published her latest book: **Food, and How**

**to Make a Healthy Meal of it**, on Kindle. Divided into five chapters, this book offers detailed, evidence-based facts on making the best choices for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and

drinks. No Kindle? No problem! You can read this (and any Kindle book) on your PC, Mac, iPhone or iPad by downloading a free app from Amazon.

● *Just go to: [www.amazon.co.uk/gp/feature](http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/feature).*



**Dr Carol Cooper's** book, **General Practice at a Glance**, co-authored with academic colleagues, has been Highly Commended in the 2013 BMA Medical

Book Awards.

● *Check out Carol's new blog at: <http://pillsandpillowtalk.com/>*



## NEW MASTERS IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL EDUCATION

Ever thought of upgrading your health education knowledge and gaining a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or even a Masters degree? This new programme, led by GHW Member, **Jacqueline Young**, in the School of Postgraduate Medicine at the University of Hertfordshire, is perfect for busy health writers as much of it is delivered online so that it can be followed at your own pace. The programme introduces you to key aspects of educational theory and practice and provides unique opportunities for inter-professional exchange with a wide range of medical and health professionals. It also offers a huge choice of modules for developing specialist interest in fields such as dermatology, mental health and clinical simulation.

● *For more details please go to: [www.herts.ac.uk/courses/health-medical-education](http://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/health-medical-education)*



Freelance health journalist **Sally Brown** recently qualified as a psychotherapist after six years of

study and clinical practice. She is now combining client work with freelancing and is particularly interested in emotional health commissions. She is also available for expert comment.

● *Contact Sally on [sallybrown2@me.com](mailto:sallybrown2@me.com)*

## Exclusive for Guild members!

We've been busy sourcing some great offers for Guild members. Look out for others later in the year

**25%**  
off Weleda  
products

The original green company, **Weleda** was founded in 1921 in Switzerland. It has an extensive range of natural remedies and a multi-award winning collection of eco-friendly and skin-friendly bodycare products, made without synthetic ingredients or artificial additives of any kind. The range is NATRUE-certified genuinely natural.

**Weleda** are offering Guild members an exclusive 25% discount of their full range available from [www.weleda.co.uk](http://www.weleda.co.uk) from 1 September through to the end of 2013.

Their range of gift sets is ideal for Christmas shopping. Simply key in the code GUILD13 at the checkout and your 25% discount will be automatically deducted (limited to one order per customer). Purchases over £40 will qualify for free p&p, saving an additional £3.95.



**10%**  
off Green People's  
skin & suncare  
range

**Green People** offer high performance beauty products believing that nature and science go hand in hand. Their organic skin care products restore and balance the skin's natural moisture levels with amazing skin feel.

Over 100 multi award-winning skin and hair care formulations, with 90%+ natural and organic ingredients, 100% vegetarian and cruelty-free. Highly nutritive botanicals balance, strengthen, soothe and protect making them ideal for sensitive skin or those prone to eczema.

No 'nasties' such as SLS, parabens, propylene glycol, ethyl alcohol or PEGs. Tested on willing humans, suitable for vegetarians and 10% of net profit donated to charity.

Save 10% on skin and sun care ranges. Offer applies to products with a B, H, G or N code when you quote GUILDHW [www.greenpeople.co.uk](http://www.greenpeople.co.uk), email, [organic@greenpeople.co.uk](mailto:organic@greenpeople.co.uk) or 01403 740350 to order.



## THE GUILD OF HEALTH WRITERS

### MAIN COMMITTEE

#### Michele Simmons

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### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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#### Jan Fairfax

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#### Barbara Lantin

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### ADMINISTRATOR

#### Jatinder Dua

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## NEW MEMBER

Full member: **Jo Willey**,  
Health Editor, Daily  
Express