

## £215,000 payout for unfair redundancies

# TRIPLE TRIUMPH

### Company even broke its own policies

THE law says that anyone selected for redundancy must be allowed to stay on the staff for a week or two to fight for their job.

No such civility for a 60-year-old member who had given distinguished service to his national newspaper for more than 25 years.

He was selected for redundancy and kicked out of the door within a day. His redundancy not only broke the law, but also his Company's own redundancy policies.

Our member subsequently sued the Company through BAJ. The case was actually heard in public at an employment tribunal and so the issues can be reported.

The Tribunal ruled unanimously that he had been unfairly dismissed, but it left the parties to agree compensation. In the event, an out-of-court settlement was reached which was subject to a confidentiality agreement.

The Tribunal's written judgement condemned the Company for not giving our member advance warning of his scores on the various categories in the selection criteria. He was only provided with them after being informed that he had been selected for redundancy.

The Tribunal said that a reasonable employer would have provided him

BAJ has won a total of nearly £215,000 for three members who were unfairly selected for redundancy on national newspapers.

The compensation in each case is in the region of £115,000, £70,000 and £30,000. The actual amount cannot be disclosed in the stories which follow because each member was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The differences in compensation relate to service, age, salary and circumstances.

Members were superbly represented in court and in negotiations by barrister Naomi Ling of Outer Temple Chambers, London.

with a copy of his scores and an explanation of them prior to dismissing him for redundancy. He was entitled to have time to seek to produce information that might correct or challenge the scores.

The Tribunal added: "If reasonable procedures had been adopted by the Company, the earliest period at which he could fairly have been dismissed would have been at least one or two weeks after he was in fact dismissed."

The Tribunal also condemned the Company for allowing our member's boss to score the selection criteria on his own contrary to the law and the Company's own redundancy policy



Naomi Ling: superb

which said that two or more executives should do it because the criteria was subjective.

The Tribunal said it was established in *Williams v Compair Maxam Ltd* [1982] that unless some objective criteria are included in the selection criteria, it is "extremely difficult to demonstrate that the choice was not determined by personal likes and dislikes alone."

Our member was selected out of two journalists in his section. The other person was a personal acquaintance of the executive doing the choosing.

**BAJ note: A great victory for our member, but compensation is no substitute for a job.**

### Trumped up reasons for her selection

OUR 50-year-old member was known to stick up for her team and for herself at a Fleet Street group. But her bosses obviously didn't like plain speaking.

She was in charge, but, having a small team, she mucked in with the rest to get the work done. When she went on holiday, one of her team took charge.

Redundancies came along and management decided to reduce our member's team by one. Guess who was chosen? That's right – our plain-fortright member.

HR said she was a manager on her own and therefore was not in a selection pool.

Our member pointed out that the person who had been, in effect, her deputy would inevitably become the manager. So that person at least should have been in a selection pool with her.

Disingenuously, management said her "deputy" wouldn't take charge. Another manager in the department who knew nothing about the job would supervise it.

### Appeal

Our member lost her appeal against selection for redundancy and decided to sue the Company through BAJ.

She couldn't have lost her job at a worse time. She had recently bought a flat and had a massive mortgage.

She couldn't find a staff job and had to take shifts. She was often working seven days a week and didn't take holidays to be able to cope with her bills.

She eventually settled for compensation which was substantial, but because of her earnings, it was less than she deserved.

**BAJ note: Oh, yes, the person who used to deputise for our member did replace her as manager. However, she found running the desk with less staff too stressful and left for a quieter life elsewhere.**

### Lavish praise – then sacked in the bar

OUR 30-year-old member was on his way to cover the funeral of a murder victim when he had a call on his mobile telling him to forget the assignment.

He was ordered to go instead to a local hotel to meet two executives on the national newspaper where he'd worked for nearly seven years.

He met the executives in the hotel bar and was immediately told that he had been selected for redundancy.

He asked to see his scores in the selection process, but the bosses had not even bothered to bring them along to discuss with him.

Our member subsequently sued the paper, through BAJ.

for unfair selection for redundancy and failure to pay contractual redundancy terms and won substantial compensation in an out-of-court settlement.

The redundancy happened only eight months after he was given a massive £16,000 rise to stop him going to another national newspaper. An IIR note requesting senior management to approve his rise said: "He is one of our best young journalists and the Editor is desperate to keep him."

**BAJ note: Someone must have been jealous of our member's success to cause his selection for redundancy so soon after praise was heaped on him.**

Please use the enclosed form to sign up a member

# BAJ survey into working

*WHAT do you call people who suffered a substantial pay cut last year, took few holidays and worked long hours? You call them freelance journalists!*

*The findings of our sixth survey into working conditions and incomes, show that freelances typically had a 2.5 per cent drop in income in 2007 (ON TOP OF high inflation).*

*It's rarely mentioned, but when Fleet Street groups have redundancies, they also slash their contribution budgets. Freelances are a soft touch. There are no laws to protect them from suffering reduced fees or markets.*

*Freelance forms were sent to 477 members and 22 were returned.*

DESPITE the tough trading difficulties facing freelances, hardly any would swap places with their staff counterparts. Just one freelance among the 22 responses to our survey would prefer a staff job.

As a veteran journalist and former Fleet Street staffer commented: "You balance what you lose in salary and status with the delight of having more time at home and more time to meet your grown-up children and your grandchildren."

Freelance fee income showed a median, or midpoint, drop of 2.5% year on year. Staff salaries typically increased by 3%. Both figures are below the rate of RPI inflation, which was 4 per cent in the year to 31 December 2007.

The usual wait for payment of fees was six weeks, with several members reporting delays in terms of months.

The typical freelance is making a living, as the survey analysis below shows, but they are gloomy about the future. "Fees not increasing; still being paid rates of five years ago," said one.

"Freelancing is in a steady decline," said a journalist with 34 years' experience. "Fees are less than 15 years ago, in many cases. Expenses have been axed by many. In fact, few pay exes at all. We'll add it to the fee," they say. Ha, ha! I suspect [in the future] we will all have to do other things as well as journalism to make a living."

The internet casts a long shadow. "The internet has changed the job for both good and bad – and bad – forcing down payments." "The biggest challenge for freelances is getting newspapers to pay for internet publication of words and pictures. At present, all the major newspapers do not want to even discuss the issue."

It was noteworthy how few in our sample mentioned the internet at all, suggesting that publishers have managed to defuse it as an issue. Or in other words they are getting away with not paying for the extra usage of freelance material.

The pace of work in media offices has speeded up to an unacceptable degree for some. "Everyone wants everything now! When I first started freelancing I was given three weeks to file a feature; now commissioning editors give me anything from 24 hours to a week."

One member invoked the bulldog spirit: "Head down and plod on. But it's getting more and more difficult."

The respondents to the freelance survey are a seasoned group. Experience as a journalist ranged from six years to 54 years, with a median figure of 25½ years. Overwhelmingly they work in national newspapers and magazines, with a sprinkling in broadcasting, photography, books and internet.

*In the analysis that follows, please note that not everyone answered all questions.*

## Fee rises – or not

Earnings in 2007 presented a depressing picture when compared with the previous year. Excluding those who chose to work

fewer hours or who had changed jobs, three (20%) reported increased earnings, five (33%) were paid the same and seven (47%) suffered fee cuts. The median change in fees year on year was -2.5%.

## Earnings/hours

We defined earnings as the annual gross figure after taking off business expenses. This corresponds to the staffer's pre-tax income. The median earnings figure for the freelances was £36,000, with the two top earners pulling down £80,000 and £75,000 respectively. At an average 50-60 hours per week, the highest earner worked for the money. The runner-up had an easier ride at 40-45 hours per week.

At the other end of the scale, four freelances struggled on earnings of £15,000 for a 48-hour-week, £20,000 for 25-30 hours a week, £21,000 for 35 hours a week and £25,000 for 40-45 hours a week.

In general, freelances are having to pile up the hours to maintain income in a difficult market. Almost half our sample (10) put in 40 hours per week or more. If we exclude the semi-retired in the sample, the proportion is even higher. Around a quarter of freelances (five) regularly put in 50 or more hours per week. This is a striking improvement from the picture in 2004, when almost half reported working these long hours.

Just two members were paid extra for syndication rights, although one reported receiving 50% of the syndication proceeds. The syndication position remains dire, and appears not to have improved since the time of the BAJ 2004 survey.

A member, who commented that "syndication never seem to come up with the goods", insists on selling material as first rights only (allowing the writer to syndicate the material).

## Expenses

Those receiving satisfactory expenses for their work (six) were well outnumbered by those who were not or for whom payment was hit and miss (nine). Typical of the second group was the member who reported excellent expenses from the *Mail on Sunday* with other outlets "less accommodating."

Freelance expenses are among the first casualties of management belt-tightening. The 29% who received satisfactory expenses were dwarfed by the 70% in 2004 who said expenses were satisfactory. Considering that they are often the same people, no wonder many freelances are unhappy!

## Late payments

The long-standing problem of late payments showed no signs of a solution, according to our survey. Just four people (19%) were paid in four weeks or less. These delays are well beyond what the

# FREELANCES More work and much less money

law allows under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998. This sets the credit period (unless otherwise agreed) at 30 days. Evidently publishers are daring freelances to sue them for arrears!

## Holidays

Freelances are giving themselves some holidays, although the median figure of three weeks is just half the usual amount for national media staff. A quarter (five) reported taking one week or nothing.

## Pensions

Amid the uncertainty of the self-employed sector, most freelances accept the need to put something aside for their old age. Excluding those already of retirement age and those not answering the question, 13 in our sample were putting something into a pension or another long-term investment like buy-to-let property, compared with just three who were not. Amounts were as low as 3% of net pre-tax earnings. They were rarely at a level seen as ample to provide security in old age.

## Sickness cover

Insurance against accident or sickness is another story. Barely more than a quarter (six) of freelances in the sample have a policy in this area. A bad experience deterred one member from continuing with insurance: "Made a claim 17 years into the policy, and then got blown away." Cost and over-optimism about continued good health doubtless are factors in other cases. A freelance who has insurance found that a broken ankle "made me realise accidents do occur."

## RSI

Repetitive strain injury continues to be a problem for freelances, as it is for staffers. More than a quarter (six) of members in the sample reported some recent symptoms. A newcomer to freelancing is starting under the added burden of RSI affecting shoulder, wrist and hand. All journalists should obviously take frequent screen breaks.

## Bullying

Bullying, another long-standing problem was reported by five freelances (23%). Sometimes, bullying is very subtle. A magazine editor constantly made the writer rewrite her material – because she didn't like the assistant editor, who had commissioned the work. Our member refused to join the editor's "coterie." "I was all too 'schoolgirl'," the member commented.

In another case, an editor threatened to withdraw the freelance's contract unless all rights were signed away. Payment was delayed for the same reason.

## Sexism/racism

No certain cases of sexism or racism were reported by respondents in our survey. It may be that such cases are genuinely rare now; alternatively, they may exist and we never know it. It may be impossible for freelances to know why they haven't been offered work.

A woman sub-editor admitted that she can't prove sex discrimination, but she was relieved of a regular shift in favour of a male sub who was friendly with the chief sub.

A freelance writer/sub in the regional press underlined how one person can ruin a working environment. A new editor was so intimidating and bullying that several staff left.

## Ageism

Two in the sample felt they had been victims of ageism since it was outlawed in October 2006. One noted the covert ageism of editors who prefer to commission younger writers: "too old" to interview 'young women' actual words."

A veteran of 44 years in the industry commented: "We all are victims of ageism when we reach a certain age, ie 60 or thereabouts."

Ageism raises the same problem for freelances as sexism and racism: it is usually impossible to show why we haven't been offered work.

*Surveys analysed by  
Cedric Pulford*

# conditions and incomes

*STAFF and contract journalists are getting by, but the prevailing mood is one of edginess, in the face of persistent redundancies and declining wages in real terms and among newcomers.*

*Our sixth survey into the working conditions and incomes of staff and contract journalists confirms that the rewards and job satisfaction of journalism continue to be unacceptable.*

*Journalists are skilled, educated and committed, but we are being exploited by senior Management and big City investors who won't share round the handsome profits still being made by most media groups.*

*Survey forms were sent to 470 staff and contract members and 27 were returned.*

FOR almost all staff and contract journalists, pay failed to keep pace with RPI inflation in 2007. The typical rise was 3%, and some got nothing at all.

With some staffing levels increasingly "pared to the bone" – an expression used more than once in the survey returns – workers wondered who would be next.

A long-hours culture was taking root while the old problem of uncompensated overtime remained. Just 12.5% of those working overtime received regular time off in lieu.

The 27 replies to the survey made up in range what they lacked in scale. We heard from sub-editors, reporters, commentators, photographers, designers and editorial artists.

National media have no monopoly of problems as our meagre harvest of five replies from non-national media suggested. A staffer at *Northcliffe South East* caught the mood in much of the regional press: "I find it difficult to accept the younger editors' obsession with websites, internet etc at the expense of good, honest provincial weekly community newspapers, which contrary to their belief are still in demand."

A BBC member echoed this concern: "In the rush to introduce the latest technology, the journalist has less and less time to concentrate on the journalism."

*In the analysis that follows, please note that not everyone answered all questions.*

## Pay rises

More than two-thirds (70%) received a pay rise in the past year, typically around 3%. This is better than in the 2004 BAJ survey, where only 58% received similar rises. However, it trails the RPI inflation rate by at least one percentage point. And this time around there were still eight people (30%) who got nothing.

## Salaries

The staff and contract workers' experience in journalism ranged from four years to 45 years. Overall, they were a pretty seasoned bunch with a median (or midpoint) of 25 years.

Salaries ranged from £25,500 to £95,000. For the national group the median salary was £45,600; for non-nationals it was £28,000.

The survey also underlined shocking salaries after the advent of personal contracts on most national newspapers in the Nineties. For example, a feature writer recorded a salary of £25,500, a designer £30,000, a feature writer/reporter £32,500, an artist £35,500, a TV sub £35,000 and a sub-editor £37,000.

## Holidays

Most national staffers have six weeks' annual holiday with a lucky few able to

take seven weeks. But these benefits are often denied to contract workers and regular casuals. They are, of course, legally entitled to them pro-rata. Non-national media usually remain with one month.

Three people reported no holiday allowance and another takes a holiday "by agreement" – 15% of the sample. This shouldn't be happening because everyone is legally entitled to a minimum of 24 days a year, inclusive of public holidays.

## Hours

The impact of personal contracts is plainly seen in the wide range of contracted hours of work. Among full-timers, these ranged from 30+ to 45 – both extremes, interestingly, being within the *Mail* group. The median or midpoint was 37.75 hours per week. The widespread use of overtime, usually uncompensated (see below), makes the working week even longer.

A writer at the *Independent Group* has the unsatisfactory situation of no weekly hours specified in the contract.

## Overtime/lieu time

A third of respondents (nine) in our total sample reported doing overtime, from two hours to 10 hours weekly and more. Shockingly, just one person got regular time off in lieu. Two staffers who work 10 hours of overtime weekly both reported that they never get lieu time. For others, it's a matter of "yes and no" (*Associated Newspapers*) or, as a *Telegraph Group* journalist told us: "Have to work hard to remind office I need time off."

## Meal/screen breaks

Matters were brighter with meal breaks. Practically everyone is able to take an adequate break. As in previous years, screen breaks of at least 10 minutes every hour are widely ignored. Fewer than a quarter (six) take frequent breaks away from the computer. Pressure of work was often given as the reason for ignoring this important health requirement. Consequently, repetitive strain injury remains a problem in the industry, with almost a quarter of the sample (six) reporting recent symptoms. Not all were current, however, suggesting that they had been overcome to the extent of being able to continue functioning.

## Staffing levels

Our sample was pretty evenly divided over whether their offices were adequately staffed. Of those who expressed a firm view, 13 (59%) were satisfied with staff levels and eight (41%) were not. The same split result occurred with both national and non-national media.

A *Sun* sub-editor summed up what is

# STAFF Gloomy now and fearful of the future

perhaps a fact of life for many: "Poor rotas. Some days a cast of thousands, others far too few people."

Staffers at *Associated Newspapers* and *MGN* both found their sections "pared to the bone" while an *MGN* colleague noted what can happen with the fluctuating demands of Press work: "Not enough subs on busy nights."

## Workload

Two-thirds of our respondents (18) reported that their workload was fair. The satisfaction extended to four out of the five from non-national media, often seen as especially understaffed.

People have different perceptions of what is a fair workload. Thus a *Telegraph* reporter found the load "reasonable" but added "it's not unusual to have to work on days off", which is some people's idea of unreasonable.

Depending on the day, workloads may be both fair and unfair. An art desk staffer at *MGN*: "When the workflow is smooth and things are well organised, it is busy but manageable. However, with so few staff, things rapidly become chaotic when anything goes wrong. Sometimes it feels like an ongoing crisis."

## Labour relations

Our question about labour relations in the office produced eloquent responses, which were almost entirely negative. Comments ranged from "very poor management steamroller staff" (*MGN*) to "union membership must be kept secret" (*Associated Newspapers*). However, the *Independent Group* was praised for union recognition.

At *Associated Newspapers* "there is a definite hierarchy which cannot be broken."

A regular photographer with the *Sunday Mirror* sounded a rare positive note. Relations were "generally very good" on the picture desk.

A BBC journalist lamented: "Person management is generally poor."

At *Northcliffe South East*, a member found labour relations are "poor simply because there is no human resources/personnel person like 20/25 years ago. Editors are far younger, and totally inexperienced in such matters"

The groups tended to emerge better from the general comments section of our questionnaire. A designer at *Associated Newspapers* said: "I like where I work. Management are okay. Quite a nice atmosphere. Well paid and looked after – for now!" A colleague agreed: "Overall the *Mail* has treated the staff in our department well."

*News International* also scored as "a stable environment to work in."

## Bullying

Bullying, which earlier BAJ surveys had recorded as being on the wane, seems to be back in media offices. Almost a third (eight) had experienced bullying recently. Sometimes this was seen as mild, or part of an unfair "blame culture." At *Express Newspapers*, bullying led to a panic attack with the member having to be signed off as medically unfit.

## Sexism/racism

Media offices are relatively free of overt sexism or racism, from the evidence of this survey. Two respondents had experienced sexism and none reported racism. One case was at *News International*, which was described as "very hostile to anyone with children. One woman left because of hostility and unhelpfulness over her situation."

*MGN* caught it again for discrimination, although covert. A sub found "an insidious element of sexual discrimination where male colleagues are regarded as of higher calibre than women colleagues regardless of journalistic experience." A BBC journalist said there was no flexibility for working mothers because everyone had to stay late for the programme and the post-programme debrief.

## Ageism

Ageism was alleged against *MGN* with this comment: "Young men given greater opportunities for career advancement and offered greater variety of work and better quality." Another *MGN* respondent reported mild ageism. He found that younger people joked about him not being able to stand the pace.

## Freelance forum



By Jane Furnival

LIKE the little girl with a curl on her forehead, when editors are good, they are very, very good and when they are bad, they are horrid.

The Sun shines in this respect. "I wrote a piece, had notification of processing from accounts the next day and payment was in my account a week later," writes one member.

"In contrast, I spent a week working on a news piece for the Sunday Express plus half a Saturday doing legals, which they dropped because of breaking news.

"I'll be lucky to see a £150 kill fee (lucky because the Express don't usually do kill fees) - half of which went on overseas calls for research and comment anyway."

"Enap and Baener continue to be fast payers," observes a member whose £500 invoice was paid by Enap in seven days.

However, another writer complains that "Five, Prima, Baby and Red take ages to get back about pitches." She adds: "River's Accounts Department refuses to acknowledge receipt of invoices, nor when they'll be paid, 'as it would be too time-consuming if we had to do that for all freelancers.' Funny how none of the other publishing companies have a problem with that!"

### Chase

"Women's magazines contrive to get the freelancer to chase up collect (photographs) which is time-consuming," says a member. "Often, interviewees don't know about DPI and high resolution for printing, spending an hour on the phone with someone talking them through how to send a digital photo, and it coming through corrupted etc. I vowed not to do this again. The picture desk should source, chase and book photographs."

I agree. I once did a story for Ideal Home involving finding lots of shopping photos which made me vow, "Never again." However, recently My Weekly offered me an extra £100 to take a mugshot of someone I had used as a case study, which I snapped on a poor digital camera and it looked fine in the magazine.

Finally, beware start-ups. They commission freely and don't tend to pay. I was approached last summer to write for a new 'lavishly upmarket' men's magazine, money no object, and am glad I ignored it. I have never seen it in the shops.

### FEEWATCH

Mail on Sunday, court report, 700 words, £250. Daily Mail offered £800 for 1200 words editorial if used and £200 if unused.

London Evening Standard, 800-word property feature, £350.

Times, 1200-word health feature, £300. A daily morning tabloid, 1400-word health feature, £600. Weekly magazine, 1300-word health report with case study, £1000. Healthy, 1500-word feature, £500.

Weekly magazine, first person real life feature, 1200 words, £700.

Real People, £500 for 500 words.

# Members thank BAJ for help

MEMBERS in trouble at work or freelancing obviously get priority attention from BAJ. In turn, members are very generous in their appreciation of Steve Turner's support.

One said: "My sincere thanks and gratitude for all your help and support in achieving a satisfactory conclusion to my recent employment problem."

"I was so impressed by the way you willingly gave your time in order to gain a full understanding of the nature of the issues involved."

"From my perspective, my short length of membership certainly didn't influence the very high standard of care, concern

and professionalism I received. You not only made me feel like I'd been a member for life, you made me feel like I was the only member."

Another said: "Thank you very much for finding me an agent to help with my book deal. I got on very well with Jane Furnival's agent and she secured me a good deal with the publisher."

A member who had to leave her job because of ill health wrote: "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your hard work and dedication in recent months."

"You have made a very difficult time for me so much easier to deal with. Please continue with all of your wonderful work."

A member who was wrongly accused of sexually harassing subordinates at work said: "Thank you for all your help and support during a very difficult time. I wouldn't have got through the ordeal on my own."

Another said: "As a result of your intervention and the help from BAJ's 24-

hour Legal Helpline, I have just received a cheque for nearly £3,000 most of which I would not have got without you."

"Left by myself, I would have had no idea what my position was, how to go about pursuing my grievance and would have been forced into a compromise with my employers."

A kind letter said: "Thank you for all your help and advice when I was trying to sort out inflexible working at work after my maternity leave. We have agreed a reasonable compromise."

## NEW AWARDS

IN unfair dismissal cases, as of 1 February, 2008, the new maximum basic award is £9,900 and the new maximum compensatory award is £63,000. Both sums can be awarded to a claimant, depending on circumstances, age, service and loss of income and pension. There is no ceiling on compensatory awards in discrimination cases.

## Your finances

BAJ's expenditure in 2007 exceeded income by £2,189.02 due to high legal bills for helping members, as the accounts below show. Fortunately, we have reserves to cover the deficit. This is the end of our financial year. Our books will now be audited.

Our accounts from 1 January until 31 December 2007 are:

INCOME		March		9,533.50
Advance/arrears subs	5,985.00	April	9,458.50	
Donations	10,072.26	May	9,621.00	
Bank interest	383.67	June	9,653.50	
Legal fees for compromise agreements	850.00	July	9,626.00	
Dividends	0.79	August	9,771.00	
Sale of mobile phones	81.93	September	9,736.00	
Monthly subs received		October	9,788.50	
January	9,591.50	November	10,100.50	
February	9,583.50	December	10,258.50	
		TOTAL	134,637.03	

EXPENDITURE		Computer support		344.99
Legal expenses/Helpline premium	18,773.04	Website	149.96	
Legal advisers' retainers	24,675.30	Equipment Fund	1,072.99	
Legal adviser's, NEC's and FOC's insurance	1,358.44	Photocopying	499.55	
Other legal bills/court charges	17,717.07	Postage	950.15	
Books	18.99	Stationery/printing	1,930.11	
Tax Helpline	1,214.20	Secretarial	6,196.10	
BAJ Press Cards	169.56	Bookkeeping	1,075.00	
UK Press Cards	573.39	Audit fees	2,085.62	
Student Press Cards	30.00	Bank and BACS charges	445.00	
Company search fees	106.35	Office rent	4,548.75	
BAJ NEWS	2,583.36	Office rates	1,586.40	
Bounty payments	600.00	Office water rates	373.02	
Conference	197.50	Office Insurance	589.23	
MPA/LRD affiliation fees	421.75	Sundry expenses	2,564.76	
Pay/NIC (S. Turner)	19,870.18	TOTAL	136,826.05	
Pay/NIC (D. Thomas)	19,011.82	TOTAL INCOME	134,637.03	
Keyman insurance	672.50	TOTAL EXP	136,826.05	
Telephones (4)	2,934.70	IN HAND	-£2,189.02	
Facsimiles (2)	636.00	Reserves:	£15,668.48	
Mobile telephones (2)	850.27	Savings:	£250.00	

## GREEDY BOSSES

MORE influential voices are being raised against the media's suicidal cost-cutting to please greedy City investors.

Press Gazette reports that Peter Preston, former Editor of The Guardian, told a Conference in Cardiff on the Future of Newspapers that newspapers should be meeting internet challenges head on with more investment.

Mr Preston said groups should be putting resources into employing quality journalists and managers, not cutting costs.

Robert Picard, director of a Swedish media research centre, told the same Conference that British Editors should start killing off sections to counter reduced advertising revenue.

He said declining profits would cause the City to lose interest in newspapers. This will enable newspapers to return to their real job of reporting news.

Bill Keller, Executive Editor of the New York Times, said in his Hugo Young Lecture in London that newspapers must stay true to their mission of honest, reliable reporting. They must invest and adapt. That way, they will flourish.

## Key Facts

● RPI INFLATION: January 1987 - 100. January 2008 - 209.8. Rise in past year 4.1 per cent.

● AVERAGE EARNINGS: 2000 - 100. December 2007 - 133.0. Private sector rise in the past year, including bonuses, 4.0 per cent.

● UNEMPLOYMENT: At 31 December was 1,610,000. Down 86,000 on the year.

● HOUSES: Halifax national house price index: 1983 - 100. January 2008 - 638.4. Annual change 4.5 per cent.

● MOTORING: AA's system for mileage rates for cars averaging 10,000 miles a year. Car cost new up to £10,000 - 36.44p a mile. Car cost new £10,000 - £13,000 - 44.01p a mile. Car cost new £13,000 - £20,000 - 56.84p a mile.