

#SoAatHome | Industry Insider – Making a living as a writer in Wales

Tuesday 1 July 2025



1

00:00:01,000--> 00:00:02,500

Hello, good evening everyone

2

00:00:02,524--> 00:00:06,068

and welcome to today's
Society of Authors at Home

3

00:00:06,092--> 00:00:07,524

Industry Insider,

4

00:00:07,548--> 00:00:11,648

which is all about making
a living as a writer in Wales.

5

00:00:11,672--> 00:00:13,672

I'm Helen Docherty.

6

00:00:13,696--> 00:00:16,296

I am a children's author
based in Swansea.

7

00:00:16,320--> 00:00:18,320

Both my parents are Welsh,

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8

00:00:18,344--> 00:00:20,914

but I grew up in England, but
I've been living here in Wales

9

00:00:20,938--> 00:00:22,938

since 2012.

10

00:00:22,962--> 00:00:24,988

My rhyming picture
books have been translated

11

00:00:25,012--> 00:00:27,062

into 27 languages so far,

12

00:00:27,086--> 00:00:30,086

shortlisted for various
national awards,

13

00:00:30,110--> 00:00:34,076

and adapted for the stage in
the UK, Germany, and Canada.

14

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00:00:34,100--> 00:00:36,268

The Snatchabook and The
Knight Who Wouldn't Fight

15

00:00:36,292--> 00:00:39,476

have both won awards
voted for by children.

16

00:00:39,500--> 00:00:42,068

And Someone Just Like You was
selected as an outstanding book

17

00:00:42,092--> 00:00:44,000

for young people
with disabilities

18

00:00:44,000--> 00:00:46,348

by the International Board
on Books for Young People.

19

00:00:46,372--> 00:00:48,748

I often collaborate
with my husband,

20

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00:00:48,772--> 00:00:50,988

the illustrator and

author Thomas Docherty,

21

00:00:51,012--> 00:00:54,000

and our most recent

book together, Superwolf,

22

00:00:54,000--> 00:00:55,428

was published last September.

23

00:00:55,452--> 00:00:57,108

I also work with

many other illustrators,

24

00:00:57,132--> 00:01:01,068

including David Roberts, Steven

Lenton, Ali Pye, Gwen Millward.

25

00:01:01,092--> 00:01:03,108

My latest books include

26

00:01:03,132--> 00:01:06,000

The Green-Fingered Witch,

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All the Things We Carry,

27

00:01:06,000--> 00:01:08,148

and Kerfuffle Bird, which
was published last month.

28

00:01:08,172--> 00:01:11,188

So, this event is part of our

29

00:01:11,212--> 00:01:15,588

Society of Authors at Home
Spring/Summer 2025 programme,

30

00:01:15,612--> 00:01:19,868

and is in conjunction with the
Society of Authors Cymru Group.

31

00:01:19,892--> 00:01:22,268

This event's free for everyone,

32

00:01:22,292--> 00:01:24,148

but if you can afford to,

33

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00:01:24,172--> 00:01:27,908

please do consider donating to
the Society of Authors Access Fund

34

00:01:27,932--> 00:01:29,628

which provides grants to authors

35

00:01:29,652--> 00:01:32,548

so that travel,
subsistence, childcare costs,

36

00:01:32,572--> 00:01:35,148

and access needs aren't barriers

37

00:01:35,172--> 00:01:38,908

to authors taking part in
events, residencies, and retreats.

38

00:01:38,932--> 00:01:42,108

And we suggest a
minimum donation of £5.

39

00:01:42,132--> 00:01:45,828

You can help the Society

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of Authors Access Fund

40

00:01:45,852--> 00:01:47,651

by making a purchase

on our virtual bookstore

41

00:01:47,675--> 00:01:51,068

on Bookshop.org,

where you can find books

42

00:01:51,092--> 00:01:52,548

by the writers taking part

43

00:01:52,572--> 00:01:55,000

in the Society of Authors

at Home programme.

44

00:01:55,000--> 00:01:58,228

This session will

last 90 minutes

45

00:01:58,252--> 00:02:02,000

including a 20-minute

Q&A session at the end.

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46

00:02:02,000--> 00:02:04,748

And don't worry, there will
be a 5-minute comfort break

47

00:02:04,772--> 00:02:07,000

just before the Q&A.

48

00:02:07,000--> 00:02:09,788

Please do turn on the
closed captions option

49

00:02:09,812--> 00:02:14,000

if you would like live
subtitles during this event.

50

00:02:14,000--> 00:02:17,268

And the recording of
this event will be available

51

00:02:17,292--> 00:02:20,000

on the Society of Authors
website for members

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52

00:02:20,000--> 00:02:22,668

which can be accessed by
logging into the members area

53

00:02:22,692--> 00:02:24,000

and going to our resources page.

54

00:02:24,000--> 00:02:25,748

And for non-members,

55

00:02:25,772--> 00:02:31,000

the recording will be available on
the Society of Authors Vimeo channel.

56

00:02:31,000--> 00:02:35,000

If you have any questions,
do post them in the Q&A box.

57

00:02:35,000--> 00:02:38,068

And you can post them
anonymously if you prefer,

58

00:02:38,092--> 00:02:41,708

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but do post your general
comments in the chat box.

59

00:02:41,732--> 00:02:45,000

So specific questions
in the Q&A box, please.

60

00:02:45,000--> 00:02:49,000

And I would now like to introduce
you to today's panel of speakers,

61

00:02:49,000--> 00:02:52,188

Kathryn Tann and Julia Forster.

62

00:02:52,212--> 00:02:57,000

Hello, welcome, both of you.

63

00:02:57,000--> 00:02:58,000

-Hello!

64

00:02:58,000--> 00:03:02,228

Kathryn Tann is a writer,
editor, and creative producer

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65

00:03:02,252--> 00:03:03,828

from the south coast of Wales.

66

00:03:03,852--> 00:03:06,868

She has worked with independent publishers such as Parthian,

67

00:03:06,892--> 00:03:09,948

and most recently as the programme and content producer

68

00:03:09,972--> 00:03:11,000

for New Writing North.

69

00:03:11,000--> 00:03:14,268

She's the recipient of a Rising Star Award

70

00:03:14,292--> 00:03:17,000

from both The Bookseller and The Printing Charity.

71

00:03:17,000--> 00:03:20,508

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Kathryn's own work has been
widely commended and published,

72

00:03:20,532--> 00:03:23,000

including an essay
collection, Seaglass,

73

00:03:23,000--> 00:03:25,708

with Calon Books in May 2024,

74

00:03:25,732--> 00:03:30,776

and articles for the likes of The Guardian,
The Scotsman, and The Bookseller.

75

00:03:30,800--> 00:03:32,908

Her essay, Return to
Water, was a category winner

76

00:03:32,932--> 00:03:36,000

in the New Welsh
Writing Awards in 2021.

77

00:03:36,000--> 00:03:39,348

Kathryn is also the

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co-founder and editorial director

78

00:03:39,372--> 00:03:41,000

of Folding Rock magazine,

79

00:03:41,000--> 00:03:43,188

founded in 2024.

80

00:03:43,212--> 00:03:45,268

Folding Rock

showcases exciting work

81

00:03:45,292--> 00:03:48,000

from writers of all

kinds and stages,

82

00:03:48,000--> 00:03:51,308

and Kathryn takes the

lead on creative non-fiction

83

00:03:51,332--> 00:03:56,000

as well as focusing on publicity

events, partnerships, and fundraising.

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84

00:03:56,000--> 00:04:00,668

Julia Forster is an author coach,
book publicist, and author

85

00:04:00,692--> 00:04:02,468

who runs the Writers' Cabin,

86

00:04:02,492--> 00:04:07,000

a self-led writer's retreat just
outside Machynlleth, mid-Wales.

87

00:04:07,000--> 00:04:11,000

Her specialism and lifelong interest
is the field of writer development,

88

00:04:11,000--> 00:04:15,708

and since 2020 she has been
the co-director of Being a Writer

89

00:04:15,732--> 00:04:18,000

for The Literary Consultancy.

90

00:04:18,000--> 00:04:20,348

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She's worked in
publishing for 25 years

91

00:04:20,372--> 00:04:23,000

in a wide variety of roles,
including for publishers

92

00:04:23,000--> 00:04:27,228

Dorling Kindersley, Penguin,
Barefoot Books and Alastair Sawday.

93

00:04:27,252--> 00:04:29,868

As a freelance book publicist,

94

00:04:29,892--> 00:04:33,000

she's worked for Honno,
Parthian, Seren, Aderyn,

95

00:04:33,000--> 00:04:35,948

Little Toller, Nine Arches
Press and Ruth Killick.

96

00:04:35,972--> 00:04:38,668

Based in Wales since 2010,

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97

00:04:38,692--> 00:04:42,000

she co-conceived the New
Welsh Writing Awards in 2015

98

00:04:42,000--> 00:04:44,388

and more recently, she
devised and launched

99

00:04:44,412--> 00:04:48,000

the Write Within Residency
for marginalised writers.

100

00:04:48,000--> 00:04:52,348

Her published works include
What a Way to Go, Muses,

101

00:04:52,372--> 00:04:55,000

and she has a poetry collection
out on submission currently.

102

00:04:55,000--> 00:04:58,708

And, uh, she will be
commencing a fully funded PhD

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103

00:04:58,732--> 00:05:01,000

in Creative Writing at
Aberystwyth University

104

00:05:01,000--> 00:05:04,468

in September 2025
to write her memoir.

105

00:05:04,492--> 00:05:07,908

So, a very warm
welcome to you both.

106

00:05:07,932--> 00:05:09,000

Thank you for joining us.

107

00:05:09,000--> 00:05:14,000

Um, as you can see, our two panellists
tonight have a wealth of experience

108

00:05:14,000--> 00:05:16,828

and I'm really looking
forward to hearing about

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109

00:05:16,852--> 00:05:20,000

and learning from your
experiences of making a living

110

00:05:20,000--> 00:05:24,000

as a writer, and also through your
many other roles here in Wales.

111

00:05:24,000--> 00:05:27,788

And in the interest of
honesty and transparency here,

112

00:05:27,812--> 00:05:31,000

I just wanted to start
this session by saying that

113

00:05:31,000--> 00:05:32,748

my husband, Thomas
Docherty, and I

114

00:05:32,772--> 00:05:36,668

do actually find it difficult to make
a living and support our family.

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115

00:05:36,692--> 00:05:37,988

We have two children.

116

00:05:38,012--> 00:05:40,068

Um, as two children's authors,

117

00:05:40,092--> 00:05:43,000

and in Tom's case, an

illustrator, living in Wales

118

00:05:43,000--> 00:05:46,428

and that's been exacerbated

by the cost of living crisis.

119

00:05:46,452--> 00:05:49,788

So, schools' budgets

have been squeezed,

120

00:05:49,812--> 00:05:52,000

which means they

are now less likely

121

00:05:52,000--> 00:05:54,068

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to pay for author visits.

122

00:05:54,092--> 00:05:57,428

Even though there is funding
available, I have to say,

123

00:05:57,452--> 00:06:00,000

through the Literature Wales
Inspiring Communities Fund

124

00:06:00,000--> 00:06:05,000

which now covers up to 75%
of the cost of one-off events,

125

00:06:05,000--> 00:06:07,148

but speaking to
my author friends,

126

00:06:07,172--> 00:06:11,000

it seems it's increasingly hard
for people to sustain this career

127

00:06:11,000--> 00:06:13,108

without financial

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support from someone

128

00:06:13,132--> 00:06:15,000

with a different

job, usually salaried.

129

00:06:15,000--> 00:06:18,000

And Tom and I don't have

that because we're both

130

00:06:18,000--> 00:06:21,228

in the same boat as

writers, self-employed.

131

00:06:21,252--> 00:06:25,000

Julia and Kathryn,

would you agree?

132

00:06:25,000--> 00:06:26,988

-Yes.

-Yeah.

133

00:06:27,012--> 00:06:29,548

I very much identify with that

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134

00:06:29,572--> 00:06:31,500

and it's definitely

something that I've, I've...

135

00:06:31,524--> 00:06:33,716

grappled with, not just as

a writer and a freelancer,

136

00:06:33,740--> 00:06:36,028

but also as a woman as well.

137

00:06:36,052--> 00:06:37,052

-Yeah.

138

00:06:37,076--> 00:06:40,868

I very much... I'm very grateful

for the fact that my part...

139

00:06:40,892--> 00:06:44,000

my now-husband, um, has a

140

00:06:44,000--> 00:06:45,988

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very reliable income,

141

00:06:46,012--> 00:06:48,308

and so at times when

I've needed to take risks,

142

00:06:48,332--> 00:06:50,348

and also in general

143

00:06:50,372--> 00:06:52,508

because I earn so

much less than he does,

144

00:06:52,532--> 00:06:54,000

um, I am....

145

00:06:54,000--> 00:06:56,188

I do...

146

00:06:56,212--> 00:06:58,948

I have occasionally relied on

that and used it to my advantage,

147

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00:06:58,972--> 00:07:01,000

and unfortunately

148

00:07:01,000--> 00:07:03,388

that makes me very lucky,
um, and not everyone has that...

149

00:07:03,412--> 00:07:05,000

that opportunity.

150

00:07:05,000--> 00:07:06,000

-Yeah.

151

00:07:06,000--> 00:07:07,748

-Well, thank you for
sharing that, Kathryn.

152

00:07:07,772--> 00:07:10,168

I think it's very true, and
perhaps the elephant in the room

153

00:07:10,192--> 00:07:13,000

is that, as authors, it is
actually very hard for us to earn

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154

00:07:13,000--> 00:07:16,028

enough to sustain
ourselves individually,

155

00:07:16,052--> 00:07:19,300

without somebody else's help, which is
the point I was making, and it's, you know,

156

00:07:19,324--> 00:07:22,668

um, perhaps the whole
industry feeds off that in a way.

157

00:07:22,692--> 00:07:25,000

But Julia, sorry, you wanted
to say something as well?

158

00:07:25,000--> 00:07:28,188

-I was just gonna
chime in and say that,

159

00:07:28,212--> 00:07:31,828

um, I mean, my income
has gone up and down

160

00:07:31,852--> 00:07:34,000

a lot over the past 25 years.

161

00:07:34,000--> 00:07:35,000

-Yeah.

162

00:07:35,000--> 00:07:38,468

-But, you know, having
a career in publishing

163

00:07:38,492--> 00:07:44,000

complicates things further,
because publishing is also

164

00:07:44,000--> 00:07:47,148

traditionally a very poorly
paid industry as well.

165

00:07:47,172--> 00:07:50,000

So, from both ends,
it can be challenging,

166

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00:07:50,000--> 00:07:52,188

especially when
the kids were young.

167

00:07:52,212--> 00:07:54,908

I mean, the... My
eldest is now 18,

168

00:07:54,932--> 00:07:56,988

so hopefully she'll
be supporting herself,

169

00:07:57,012--> 00:08:00,000

but it... yeah, there were very
definite pinch points in that

170

00:08:00,000--> 00:08:04,388

process of being the
primary carer as well to them.

171

00:08:04,412--> 00:08:08,148

Um, yeah, but we can talk more
about that, perhaps, and how...

172

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00:08:08,172--> 00:08:09,548

-Absolutely, absolutely.

173

00:08:09,572--> 00:08:12,028

I just wanted to say that
because I feel that sometimes

174

00:08:12,052--> 00:08:14,000

it's not always
widely acknowledged

175

00:08:14,000--> 00:08:16,308

quite how hard it is,
but this is a session

176

00:08:16,332--> 00:08:18,748

about making a
living as a writer,

177

00:08:18,772--> 00:08:20,588

and, you know, how
we earn that living.

178

00:08:20,612--> 00:08:22,588

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So I thought it's important
to just touch on that.

179

00:08:22,612--> 00:08:27,188

Um, but anyway, I would like to now
turn to some slightly more positive things

180

00:08:27,212--> 00:08:30,000

and learn from your
personal experiences.

181

00:08:30,000--> 00:08:32,508

Um, so Kathryn,
starting with you,

182

00:08:32,532--> 00:08:35,388

can you tell us a little bit
about Folding Rock magazine?

183

00:08:35,412--> 00:08:38,268

I know that many people listening
are keen to hear more about this,

184

00:08:38,292--> 00:08:41,108

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so could you tell us how
you gained your funding

185

00:08:41,132--> 00:08:43,000

for Folding Rock
Magazine, first of all?

186

00:08:43,000--> 00:08:47,188

-Yeah, so, um, I want
to start with the caveat

187

00:08:47,212--> 00:08:50,000

that the funding for this
magazine is a bit of an anomaly.

188

00:08:50,000--> 00:08:54,748

So whilst the Books
Council for Wales,

189

00:08:54,772--> 00:08:56,508

which is where we get
our core funding from,

190

00:08:56,532--> 00:09:00,388

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uh, whilst they do fund lots of
publishers and magazines regularly

191

00:09:00,412--> 00:09:01,468

every year,

192

00:09:01,492--> 00:09:06,000

this particular pot of funding was
for a new magazine to be published.

193

00:09:06,000--> 00:09:09,748

Some people online now might
know a bit of the backstory to all that.

194

00:09:09,772--> 00:09:11,828

It's been a bit of a
bittersweet few years

195

00:09:11,852--> 00:09:14,188

for English language
magazines in Wales,

196

00:09:14,212--> 00:09:16,000

but the...

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197

00:09:16,000--> 00:09:20,068

sort of outcome of that is something
that we're trying to make the most of,

198

00:09:20,092--> 00:09:22,348

which is in creating
a new magazine

199

00:09:22,372--> 00:09:24,948

that will hopefully benefit
as many writers in Wales

200

00:09:24,972--> 00:09:28,000

and connected to
Wales as possible.

201

00:09:28,000--> 00:09:32,988

So, we applied for an
open tender in 2024.

202

00:09:33,012--> 00:09:37,000

So it's actually this time last
year we were in the midst of

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203

00:09:37,000--> 00:09:43,388

putting together this, at the
time, uh, hypothetical magazine,

204

00:09:43,412--> 00:09:45,828

but we had... we really
poured a lot into it.

205

00:09:45,852--> 00:09:47,000

We did a sample issue, we...

206

00:09:47,000--> 00:09:51,348

Um, spoke to a huge
number of people

207

00:09:51,372--> 00:09:54,548

with far more experience
than Rob and I, my co-editor.

208

00:09:54,572--> 00:09:58,428

had and we really imagined

209

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00:09:58,452--> 00:10:00,348

what this magazine could be

210

00:10:00,372--> 00:10:01,868

and what impact it could have,

211

00:10:01,892--> 00:10:04,708

which is something, a

vision that we shared

212

00:10:04,732--> 00:10:06,948

and felt really strongly

about for many years.

213

00:10:06,972--> 00:10:08,000

So, um...

214

00:10:08,000--> 00:10:11,428

We... after all of that work,

215

00:10:11,452--> 00:10:14,000

many months of work, um, we

216

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00:10:14,000--> 00:10:17,468

won the funding and in October,

217

00:10:17,492--> 00:10:22,588

we became a

not-for-profit company,

218

00:10:22,612--> 00:10:25,228

company limited by guarantee,

219

00:10:25,252--> 00:10:28,908

and we launched our

first issue in March,

220

00:10:28,932--> 00:10:31,468

and our second issue

actually comes out next week,

221

00:10:31,492--> 00:10:33,000

on Thursday.

222

00:10:33,000--> 00:10:34,000

-Congratulations!

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223

00:10:34,000--> 00:10:35,708

-Thanks, yeah.

224

00:10:35,732--> 00:10:37,548

It's been a real whirlwind,

225

00:10:37,572--> 00:10:40,000

but, um, it's been...

226

00:10:40,000--> 00:10:41,308

It's been brilliant.

227

00:10:41,332--> 00:10:45,948

It's been really, really
already exciting and rewarding,

228

00:10:45,972--> 00:10:48,000

and there's been
so much positivity.

229

00:10:48,000--> 00:10:52,068

We've already worked with
some such brilliant writers

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230

00:10:52,092--> 00:10:54,388

and also read so many
great pieces of work

231

00:10:54,412--> 00:10:55,948

that have been submitted to us,

232

00:10:55,972--> 00:10:57,468

not all of which
will be published.

233

00:10:57,492--> 00:10:58,468

Um...

234

00:10:58,492--> 00:11:01,068

But it's... it's a magazine

235

00:11:01,092--> 00:11:04,000

that we really want
to, uh, do justice to

236

00:11:04,000--> 00:11:06,748

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the writers in and of Wales,

237

00:11:06,772--> 00:11:10,428

and to be really high quality

238

00:11:10,452--> 00:11:13,868

and to sort of encourage

some excitement

239

00:11:13,892--> 00:11:15,668

around Welsh

writing and English.

240

00:11:15,692--> 00:11:18,028

And also what we really want

241

00:11:18,052--> 00:11:21,228

is to hopefully help

set a good example

242

00:11:21,252--> 00:11:23,628

for things like

payment of authors

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243

00:11:23,652--> 00:11:27,588

and transparency of
submission processes.

244

00:11:27,612--> 00:11:31,388

Um... You know, good
rejections, which is a thing.

245

00:11:31,412--> 00:11:32,412

[laughs]

246

00:11:32,436--> 00:11:35,148

And all of those kinds of things
that we feel really strongly about

247

00:11:35,172--> 00:11:38,000

and I definitely do as a
writer myself as well.

248

00:11:38,000--> 00:11:41,428

Um, so I think
that's the sort of...

249

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00:11:41,452--> 00:11:43,648

Uh, whistle stop.

There's a lot more to it.

250

00:11:43,672--> 00:11:46,328

We've been doing lots of events,
you might have seen us popping up

251

00:11:46,352--> 00:11:48,708

here and there, and
we've also got lots of plans

252

00:11:48,732--> 00:11:51,508

in the future to expand beyond...

253

00:11:51,532--> 00:11:53,548

I mean, the magazine
is, like, at the heart of it,

254

00:11:53,572--> 00:11:58,000

but what we really want to do is
grow a community and create more

255

00:11:58,000--> 00:12:01,548

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development opportunities, which is something I feel passionately about,

256

00:12:01,572--> 00:12:05,976

especially following my work with New Writers North.

257

00:12:06,000--> 00:12:07,428

But yeah, what I...

258

00:12:07,452--> 00:12:09,508

So, as I said earlier, it was a bit of an anomaly.

259

00:12:09,532--> 00:12:12,748

That pot of funding that allowed us to really come out of the gate

260

00:12:12,772--> 00:12:16,000

straight away with enough money to make this happen properly.

261

00:12:16,000--> 00:12:20,388

Um, but it is...

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262

00:12:20,412--> 00:12:24,348

It's, I suppose, it doesn't
mean that other things like that

263

00:12:24,372--> 00:12:25,948

might not come up in the future.

264

00:12:25,972--> 00:12:28,468

Like, you just don't know when
these things are gonna come up.

265

00:12:28,492--> 00:12:31,108

And whilst they're not
always regular in Wales,

266

00:12:31,132--> 00:12:33,108

projects do... do happen

267

00:12:33,132--> 00:12:36,012

and it's just really good to keep an
eye out for them and be open-minded,

268

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00:12:36,012--> 00:12:38,828

because luckily this came
along at a time when I was...

269

00:12:38,852--> 00:12:41,148

I had taken a risk,
I'd gone freelance,

270

00:12:41,172--> 00:12:43,708

and so I actually had the
open-mindedness and flexibility

271

00:12:43,732--> 00:12:46,348

to think maybe... see
the opportunity and think,

272

00:12:46,372--> 00:12:49,188

maybe I could do that, maybe I
could be the person that goes for that.

273

00:12:49,212--> 00:12:52,348

So, it's been quite a
career-changing shift,

274

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00:12:52,372--> 00:12:55,908

but it was one that really...

275

00:12:55,932--> 00:12:59,288

I'd already been talking for years about
wanting to do something like this in Wales,

276

00:12:59,312--> 00:13:01,000

so yeah.

277

00:13:01,000--> 00:13:02,628

-Well, it just sounds
fantastic as well,

278

00:13:02,652--> 00:13:05,708

that you're, you know, you're
actually giving back to Wales too.

279

00:13:05,732--> 00:13:09,000

You know, you've created something that
many, many people here will benefit from.

280

00:13:09,000--> 00:13:12,428

Could you tell us a little bit about

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what you're offering for writers?

281

00:13:12,452--> 00:13:14,628

You mentioned the
transparency on your website,

282

00:13:14,652--> 00:13:16,308

which I think is fantastic.

283

00:13:16,332--> 00:13:20,000

Um, so yeah, can you
tell us a little bit about that?

284

00:13:20,000--> 00:13:25,748

-Yeah, so we publish around
14 writers per print issue,

285

00:13:25,772--> 00:13:27,108

and the issues come out ev--

286

00:13:27,132--> 00:13:30,508

Um, three times a year, in
March, July, and November.

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287

00:13:30,532--> 00:13:33,628

And everything we publish,
regardless of word length,

288

00:13:33,652--> 00:13:36,000

which is usually between
2,000 and 4,000 words,

289

00:13:36,000--> 00:13:41,428

is paid a sort of flat
fee of £360 per piece.

290

00:13:41,452--> 00:13:45,628

Um, so this is a rate that we
thought long and hard about,

291

00:13:45,652--> 00:13:48,428

and we looked at
some of the magazines

292

00:13:48,452--> 00:13:52,388

that we really respect like
Granta and Stinging Fly,

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293

00:13:52,412--> 00:13:54,668

um, and Gutter

Magazine in Scotland,

294

00:13:54,692--> 00:13:57,032

and those kinds of magazines

that we've learned a lot from.

295

00:13:57,056--> 00:14:00,188

Um, it's still not as

high as we'd like it to be

296

00:14:00,212--> 00:14:02,348

and we do hope

to be able to raise it,

297

00:14:02,372--> 00:14:04,628

sort of, incrementally as we go.

298

00:14:04,652--> 00:14:08,000

Um, but I'm aware that

it's higher than most

299

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00:14:08,000--> 00:14:10,948

writing opportunities available
at the moment in Wales

300

00:14:10,972--> 00:14:12,828

and it's something that
we're really proud of,

301

00:14:12,852--> 00:14:15,788

and we said right from the start
when we were applying for the funding

302

00:14:15,812--> 00:14:18,400

that if we couldn't structure it
from the beginning with good...

303

00:14:18,424--> 00:14:22,268

good fees for writers, then
we didn't want to do it, basically.

304

00:14:22,292--> 00:14:23,308

-Yeah.

305

00:14:23,332--> 00:14:25,400

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Well, I think that's great,
great that you had that

306

00:14:25,424--> 00:14:29,388

because, you know, otherwise,
what's the point, in a way?

307

00:14:29,412--> 00:14:32,628

Because, you know, you want
to be able to help other writers

308

00:14:32,652--> 00:14:34,668

and I think that's what's
particularly strong here,

309

00:14:34,692--> 00:14:36,628

that you're, you
know, you're not just...

310

00:14:36,652--> 00:14:39,508

You've created something that is
going to lift other writers up as well

311

00:14:39,532--> 00:14:41,268

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and give them an opportunity.

312

00:14:41,292--> 00:14:43,668

-Yeah, and I mean, for
us, like, it wasn't just about

313

00:14:43,692--> 00:14:48,000

the sort of... You know,
£360, it's... it's almost....

314

00:14:48,000--> 00:14:50,588

It doesn't... it's not gonna
pay a huge number of bills

315

00:14:50,612--> 00:14:52,000

for a writer, and it doesn't...

316

00:14:52,000--> 00:14:53,000

-No, obviously not, but...

317

00:14:53,024--> 00:14:55,748

-It almost never corresponds
to the amount of time and energy

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318

00:14:55,772--> 00:14:57,628

that goes into a
piece of good writing.

319

00:14:57,652--> 00:14:58,652

-Of course.

320

00:14:58,676--> 00:15:01,568

which is why, you know, one day
I'd love it to be... to be more than that.

321

00:15:01,592--> 00:15:04,468

But for us, it was also
about the statement of

322

00:15:04,492--> 00:15:08,000

um, you know, showing
that this writing has value.

323

00:15:08,000--> 00:15:10,828

And, um, and also,
on the other side of it,

324

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00:15:10,852--> 00:15:12,300

making sure that
we could approach

325

00:15:12,324--> 00:15:14,588

authors that we really admired,

326

00:15:14,612--> 00:15:16,348

knowing that we
can offer them a fee

327

00:15:16,372--> 00:15:18,000

that isn't embarrassing as well.

328

00:15:18,000--> 00:15:20,388

And that... that...
but yeah, really,

329

00:15:20,412--> 00:15:23,600

it was sort of making the statement to
writers that there was a value to their...

330

00:15:23,624--> 00:15:26,588

to their work, and... and

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also to try and, I guess,

331

00:15:26,612--> 00:15:29,600

sort of break a bit of a cycle,

because I think there is sometimes a bit...

332

00:15:29,624--> 00:15:33,028

Sometimes there's a

tendency to think, oh, well,

333

00:15:33,052--> 00:15:34,548

we don't have to pay as much,

334

00:15:34,572--> 00:15:36,268

because no one else

is paying that much.

335

00:15:36,292--> 00:15:39,000

-Yeah, yeah, exactly. It sort

of a race to the bottom.

336

00:15:39,000--> 00:15:42,000

-Exactly. So, we're trying to sort

of raise the benchmark a little bit.

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337

00:15:42,000--> 00:15:44,668

Even though it's not easy

338

00:15:44,692--> 00:15:48,000

because, you know, publishers
and magazines don't have

339

00:15:48,000--> 00:15:51,188

much money, and even
with our funding, we're still...

340

00:15:51,212--> 00:15:53,108

it's still going
to be a real trial.

341

00:15:53,132--> 00:15:55,868

This... this sort of period of
experimentation we're lucky to have,

342

00:15:55,892--> 00:15:57,828

but after that, who knows
what's going to happen

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343

00:15:57,852--> 00:15:59,708

when we have to

reapply for funding, so...

344

00:15:59,732--> 00:16:00,732

-Yeah. Of course.

-Yeah.

345

00:16:00,756--> 00:16:02,788

-I think that's always

the case, isn't it?

346

00:16:02,812--> 00:16:06,068

But it's, uh... It's a very

promising start anyway

347

00:16:06,092--> 00:16:08,028

and it will provide those

writers with a platform

348

00:16:08,052--> 00:16:10,000

and visibility as well,

which is very important.

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349

00:16:10,000--> 00:16:14,068

Can you talk a little bit
about the portfolio career

350

00:16:14,092--> 00:16:17,148

that you've built as well and
about ways of earning money.

351

00:16:17,172--> 00:16:19,668

Not by writing,

352

00:16:19,692--> 00:16:22,000

but other ways that are sort
of complementary, perhaps,

353

00:16:22,000--> 00:16:24,628

to the practice of writing.

354

00:16:24,652--> 00:16:27,108

Because I feel that, you know,

355

00:16:27,132--> 00:16:28,708

most of us as writers,

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356

00:16:28,732--> 00:16:30,100

we have to do
more than just write.

357

00:16:30,124--> 00:16:32,548

-Yeah.
-Obviously, if we're, you know,

358

00:16:32,572--> 00:16:35,308

meaning to earn a... Anything
like a decent living from it.

359

00:16:35,332--> 00:16:37,048

-Yeah, absolutely.

360

00:16:37,072--> 00:16:40,000

-So, for example, um, I've watched
a little bit of your podcast, well.

361

00:16:40,000--> 00:16:43,228

And I wonder whether
you'd like to chat about that

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362

00:16:43,252--> 00:16:46,000

or about some of
your other experiences?

363

00:16:46,000--> 00:16:48,708

-Yeah, so, um, I think,

364

00:16:48,732--> 00:16:51,428

and I bet Julia's gonna have
a lot to say about this as well,

365

00:16:51,452--> 00:16:54,988

because, uh, she's... she's
got a really interesting portfolio.

366

00:16:55,012--> 00:16:59,108

Um, but I suppose
for me, I have...

367

00:16:59,132--> 00:17:02,108

I very much feel as though I've
been pursuing two careers at once,

368

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00:17:02,132--> 00:17:05,000

sort of from

university, because I...

369

00:17:05,000--> 00:17:07,388

I wanted to be a writer

first and foremost,

370

00:17:07,412--> 00:17:10,228

but I also knew that it was

very unlikely for me to be able to,

371

00:17:10,252--> 00:17:13,468

especially early on,

make a living out of that.

372

00:17:13,492--> 00:17:17,508

And so, I have been sort of simultaneously

pursuing a career in publishing,

373

00:17:17,532--> 00:17:21,388

as well as in writing, which

felt, to me, very complimentary.

374

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00:17:21,412--> 00:17:22,708

I don't think it's for everyone.

375

00:17:22,732--> 00:17:25,208

For some people, they feel
really very much like their day job

376

00:17:25,232--> 00:17:27,200

needs to be something
unrelated to their writing.

377

00:17:27,224--> 00:17:29,068

Um, and that's
interesting as well.

378

00:17:29,092--> 00:17:31,628

But, for me, it's
been really useful.

379

00:17:31,652--> 00:17:33,000

And, um...

380

00:17:33,000--> 00:17:36,988

So, I have, in the past,

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381

00:17:37,012--> 00:17:39,588

worked freelance for
publishers like Parthian.

382

00:17:39,612--> 00:17:41,668

I've done lots of, um, editing

383

00:17:41,692--> 00:17:44,308

and I've also done...

384

00:17:44,332--> 00:17:45,708

I mean, bits...

385

00:17:45,732--> 00:17:48,068

I think, as most
writers will know,

386

00:17:48,092--> 00:17:49,988

bits and pieces here,
there, and everywhere,

387

00:17:50,012--> 00:17:52,000

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so now, sort of, what
my portfolio looks like

388

00:17:52,000--> 00:17:56,948

following a period
of... of a couple of years

389

00:17:56,972--> 00:18:00,000

when I was full-time at
New Writing North,

390

00:18:00,000--> 00:18:05,000

I work for the magazines,
I'm an editor 3 days a week.

391

00:18:05,000--> 00:18:08,388

And that, luckily, is
a salaried position,

392

00:18:08,412--> 00:18:10,000

but as part of our, sort of,

393

00:18:10,000--> 00:18:12,628

big picture bid

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for that magazine,

394

00:18:12,652--> 00:18:15,668

we set our own, um, positions,

395

00:18:15,692--> 00:18:19,068

and we sort of worked out the
budget for all of that, um, ourselves

396

00:18:19,092--> 00:18:21,308

in a way that hopefully
paid ourselves fairly,

397

00:18:21,332--> 00:18:23,508

but also left enough money
to pay all of our writers,

398

00:18:23,532--> 00:18:25,028

which was a priority.

399

00:18:25,052--> 00:18:27,028

But, um, so that's
three days a week.

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400

00:18:27,052--> 00:18:29,000

I also write,

401

00:18:29,000--> 00:18:31,428

which doesn't bring in a
huge amount of money.

402

00:18:31,452--> 00:18:33,748

Um, I published my
first book last year,

403

00:18:33,772--> 00:18:37,000

and we can... we'll probably get into
books and book deals in a little bit.

404

00:18:37,000--> 00:18:40,388

And, uh, I also...

405

00:18:40,412--> 00:18:42,628

I'm working on my next
essay collection now,

406

00:18:42,652--> 00:18:46,000

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following Seaglass, and, um...

407

00:18:46,000--> 00:18:48,548

I also...

408

00:18:48,572--> 00:18:50,188

I write a Substack, Dwell,

409

00:18:50,212--> 00:18:53,000

and part of that involves

This Place podcast, which

410

00:18:53,000--> 00:18:56,228

came out of funding

that I got from DYCP,

411

00:18:56,252--> 00:19:00,000

which brings me to a caveat

that I wanted to give, actually.

412

00:19:00,000--> 00:19:02,028

-Yeah. That's an

important caveat.

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413

00:19:02,052--> 00:19:03,788

-I don't... I don't

currently live in Wales.

414

00:19:03,812--> 00:19:07,508

Um, I am in York at the moment

415

00:19:07,532--> 00:19:09,000

and that...

416

00:19:09,000--> 00:19:12,588

The vast majority of my

work takes place in Wales

417

00:19:12,612--> 00:19:14,000

and the magazine

is based in Wales.

418

00:19:14,000--> 00:19:17,668

I'm in my home town,

Barry, at least once a month,

419

00:19:17,692--> 00:19:19,000

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which to anyone

420

00:19:19,000--> 00:19:20,468

who knows where York is,

421

00:19:20,492--> 00:19:22,000

It's quite a lot

of travelling, but...

422

00:19:22,000--> 00:19:24,828

Um, I... I'm... I'm...

423

00:19:24,852--> 00:19:27,428

I'm really enjoying how

things are going at the moment

424

00:19:27,452--> 00:19:30,000

, but yeah, for

various reasons, I'm...

425

00:19:30,000--> 00:19:32,628

I'm not in Wales

at the moment, um...

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426

00:19:32,652--> 00:19:37,468

But that has allowed me to kind of
straddle the two countries a little bit

427

00:19:37,492--> 00:19:39,000

when it comes to opportunities.

428

00:19:39,000--> 00:19:42,788

So I was able to apply
for DYCP funding,

429

00:19:42,812--> 00:19:44,668

which is Developing
Your Creative Practice

430

00:19:44,692--> 00:19:46,348

from Arts Council England

431

00:19:46,372--> 00:19:50,000

and that was, um,
to develop my audio...

432

00:19:50,000--> 00:19:53,428

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Um, and audio writing
skills to create this podcast,

433

00:19:53,452--> 00:19:57,908

which the most recent episode, um,
featured Julia and her Writers' Cabin.

434

00:19:57,932--> 00:20:01,188

So do check it out if you're

435

00:20:01,212--> 00:20:03,000

interested in hearing
more about that.

436

00:20:03,000--> 00:20:07,148

And, um...

437

00:20:07,172--> 00:20:09,788

Yeah, but what I was
going to say, just very briefly

438

00:20:09,812--> 00:20:12,388

about that straddling
of both places,

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439

00:20:12,412--> 00:20:15,388

is that, really, what I felt
strongly over all of the years

440

00:20:15,412--> 00:20:18,000

is the place I've benefited
most from is Wales

441

00:20:18,000--> 00:20:21,988

because there's a lot of talk about
all the opportunities in England

442

00:20:22,012--> 00:20:25,000

and about the benefits of
being in or near London,

443

00:20:25,000--> 00:20:28,548

but my experience,
like, to be totally honest,

444

00:20:28,572--> 00:20:33,000

is that Wales is a, um...

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445

00:20:33,000--> 00:20:37,068

smaller and more

friendly pool... Pond.

446

00:20:37,092--> 00:20:42,000

And I have gotten exposure

and experience and opportunities

447

00:20:42,000--> 00:20:43,000

because of that.

448

00:20:43,000--> 00:20:47,108

Um, so I think... That's...

449

00:20:47,132--> 00:20:49,308

I think that's something

positive to have from Wales

450

00:20:49,332--> 00:20:52,188

is that, like, you get a

real sense of being from

451

00:20:52,212--> 00:20:54,879

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a place that, number one, I'm
proud of and I've written a lot about

452

00:20:54,903--> 00:20:58,000

being a Welsh writer
and about Welsh writing.

453

00:20:58,000--> 00:21:01,388

But also,

454

00:21:01,412--> 00:21:04,000

I think there is something
to be said about

455

00:21:04,000--> 00:21:07,468

the smaller pond and the more
friendly, open, accessible pond

456

00:21:07,492--> 00:21:09,000

compared to the sort of

457

00:21:09,000--> 00:21:13,000

very competitive, seeing that there
is an England for those opportunities.

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458

00:21:13,000--> 00:21:15,348

-Yeah, absolutely, I
would second that.

459

00:21:15,372--> 00:21:18,188

And I'd say that it's through the
personal connections that we make

460

00:21:18,212--> 00:21:19,868

as writers here
in Wales as well,

461

00:21:19,892--> 00:21:21,300

that opportunities may arise.

462

00:21:21,324--> 00:21:23,988

Not just with other
writers, but, you know,

463

00:21:24,012--> 00:21:28,268

with booksellers,
publishers, festival organisers,

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464

00:21:28,292--> 00:21:31,528

there's... there are so many people, aren't
there, on the literary scene in Wales.

465

00:21:31,552--> 00:21:34,000

And once you're sort of... you
start to make those connections,

466

00:21:34,000--> 00:21:35,828

then things can
come out of that.

467

00:21:35,852--> 00:21:38,000

So, absolutely
agree with you there.

468

00:21:38,000--> 00:21:40,388

Yeah, well, thank you
very much, Kathryn.

469

00:21:40,412--> 00:21:42,400

It's really interesting,
and I can see people are

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470

00:21:42,424--> 00:21:45,068

putting up a few comments

471

00:21:45,092--> 00:21:47,548

including saying

that it is such a shame

472

00:21:47,572--> 00:21:50,000

that we don't have the

Developing Your Creative Practice

473

00:21:50,000--> 00:21:51,228

here in Wales,

474

00:21:51,252--> 00:21:53,200

but I think we'll probably

come onto that later.

475

00:21:53,224--> 00:21:55,988

But thank you very much.

476

00:21:56,012--> 00:21:57,868

Julia, I'd like to

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move on to you

477

00:21:57,892--> 00:22:01,000

before we move into our sort
of group discussion, first of all.

478

00:22:01,000--> 00:22:03,288

Um, so, for a while,

479

00:22:03,312--> 00:22:06,000

you worked on the
Literature Wales panel, Julia,

480

00:22:06,000--> 00:22:07,028

and I wondered...

481

00:22:07,052--> 00:22:09,988

I know that the bursary program

482

00:22:10,012--> 00:22:12,000

that you worked on has
ended now and it's been

483

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00:22:12,000--> 00:22:14,988

sort of replaced by the

Representing Wales scheme.

484

00:22:15,012--> 00:22:17,000

But maybe you could

just talk a little bit about

485

00:22:17,000--> 00:22:22,000

from that point of view, what you saw

as strengths when writers were applying

486

00:22:22,000--> 00:22:24,908

for funding and were

building their case for funding

487

00:22:24,932--> 00:22:27,200

because that might be of

use to some of the people here

488

00:22:27,224--> 00:22:29,948

who are considering

applying themselves,

489

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00:22:29,972--> 00:22:32,100

either to Literature Wales

or to other funding bodies.

490

00:22:32,124--> 00:22:34,468

-Yeah, absolutely.

491

00:22:34,492--> 00:22:35,908

I'd be delighted to talk to that

492

00:22:35,932--> 00:22:38,668

and maybe I should start

by saying that, similar to...

493

00:22:38,692--> 00:22:41,000

I feel very similar to

both of you, in fact, that

494

00:22:41,000--> 00:22:44,428

when I moved to Wales,

one of the first things that I did

495

00:22:44,452--> 00:22:46,000

was apply to what

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was then called,

496

00:22:46,000--> 00:22:49,268

I think, the Buying Time bursary

497

00:22:49,292--> 00:22:51,708

that Literature Wales

managed, and um...

498

00:22:51,732--> 00:22:56,428

was lucky enough to receive

£1,000 that paid for childcare

499

00:22:56,452--> 00:23:01,308

that we could then, um, send my two kids to

nursery for 6 months,

500

00:23:01,332--> 00:23:04,108

which meant I could

then start my novel,

501

00:23:04,132--> 00:23:08,028

and attending a Literature

of Wales Tŷ Newydd course

502

00:23:08,052--> 00:23:10,588

was instrumental

in that developing,

503

00:23:10,612--> 00:23:14,868

so I was able to kind

of incubate that piece,

504

00:23:14,892--> 00:23:18,788

thanks to a very... actually, a

relatively small amount of money

505

00:23:18,812--> 00:23:22,228

that I was able to kind

of spread over 6 months.

506

00:23:22,252--> 00:23:26,388

But then what happened

was, a couple of years later,

507

00:23:26,412--> 00:23:30,588

an opportunity came up

to sit on that bursary panel

508

00:23:30,612--> 00:23:34,000

which I applied to, and I think
because I had a background

509

00:23:34,000--> 00:23:36,188

in screening submissions.

510

00:23:36,212--> 00:23:38,000

So one of my jobs in
publishing had been,

511

00:23:38,000--> 00:23:42,000

for two and a half years, I worked
for a Soho-based literary agency.

512

00:23:42,000--> 00:23:46,476

So one of the things I was doing was
opening submissions every day and

513

00:23:46,500--> 00:23:48,708

that meant that I could
then sit on that panel.

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514

00:23:48,732--> 00:23:53,508

And really, at that
point, what I would say,

515

00:23:53,532--> 00:23:56,188

uh, for those writers
who are looking to apply

516

00:23:56,212--> 00:23:58,000

was that, in that
instance, actually,

517

00:23:58,000--> 00:24:01,748

I think there was an initial
sweep of submissions.

518

00:24:01,772--> 00:24:04,000

So I saw the kind of long list

519

00:24:04,000--> 00:24:09,868

of writers that the
chair had put forward.

520

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00:24:09,892--> 00:24:14,788

And what made applications
stand out was when...

521

00:24:14,812--> 00:24:18,428

It wasn't necessarily so much
about a wealth of experience

522

00:24:18,452--> 00:24:20,000

or publication track record,

523

00:24:20,000--> 00:24:25,188

but there was a narrative
to that writer's development.

524

00:24:25,212--> 00:24:27,000

You could see that they had

525

00:24:27,000--> 00:24:29,788

put themselves into the arena,

526

00:24:29,812--> 00:24:32,828

put themselves
forward for opportunities,

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527

00:24:32,852--> 00:24:35,388

even if they've been
long-listed or shortlisted,

528

00:24:35,412--> 00:24:38,000

that was something
that builds a case

529

00:24:38,000--> 00:24:40,948

for that writer
to be invested in.

530

00:24:40,972--> 00:24:43,068

And I think...

531

00:24:43,092--> 00:24:45,148

And I'm sure this is
probably still the case,

532

00:24:45,172--> 00:24:48,188

I don't know, but very
often in these panels,

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533

00:24:48,212--> 00:24:52,000

what you're looking for is
a kind of a broad range, so...

534

00:24:52,000--> 00:24:55,508

Very often you'll have both
emerging and established authors.

535

00:24:55,532--> 00:24:59,000

If you look at the Writers at
Work programme at Hay,

536

00:24:59,000--> 00:25:00,708

that's the case as well.

537

00:25:00,732--> 00:25:04,000

So, um, I think that it's
always worth applying.

538

00:25:04,000--> 00:25:10,000

And in fact, I was just writing to
an author today to encourage them

539

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00:25:10,000--> 00:25:13,068

to apply for an opportunity
which I had applied for,

540

00:25:13,092--> 00:25:16,000

a different one, um, the
Gladstone's Writers in Residence

541

00:25:16,000--> 00:25:20,148

where I wasn't shortlisted,
I didn't get that place,

542

00:25:20,172--> 00:25:22,468

but what I did get was
an invitation to a festival

543

00:25:22,492--> 00:25:24,000

um, and a [inaudible].

544

00:25:24,000--> 00:25:26,868

So you just never know.

545

00:25:26,892--> 00:25:29,788

Even if you don't get the opportunity

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that you put yourself forward for,

546

00:25:29,812--> 00:25:33,308

you might get other

opportunities as a result of that.

547

00:25:33,332--> 00:25:35,000

So it's always

worth applying

548

00:25:35,000--> 00:25:38,668

if you feel that that's something

that you want to have a go at.

549

00:25:38,692--> 00:25:41,708

And keep applying year on year is

the other piece I would say because...

550

00:25:41,732--> 00:25:44,428

Really, right? And

don't give up if you...

551

00:25:44,452--> 00:25:46,012

if you get rejected

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the first time, but...

552

00:25:46,036--> 00:25:51,000

Yeah, and I suppose keep building
your portfolio in the meantime, obviously.

553

00:25:51,000--> 00:25:54,000

Um, and keep
submitting your work, so...

554

00:25:54,000--> 00:25:56,748

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

555

00:25:56,772--> 00:25:59,548

Well, thank you, I think
that's... that's really useful.

556

00:25:59,572--> 00:26:04,028

Um, can you tell us a little bit
about the Write Within Residency

557

00:26:04,052--> 00:26:06,148

and the opportunities it offers?

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558

00:26:06,172--> 00:26:07,828

So this is something
you've established.

559

00:26:07,852--> 00:26:10,628

-I can. I would say that,
at the moment, I'm not

560

00:26:10,652--> 00:26:14,000

necessarily going to
run that again. I'm not...

561

00:26:14,000--> 00:26:16,068

It was a pilot,

562

00:26:16,092--> 00:26:18,268

so I'm still kind of
thinking that through,

563

00:26:18,292--> 00:26:20,000

but that was
something that I ran

564

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00:26:20,000--> 00:26:24,588

last year, when I launched the
entire, kind of, Write Within brand.

565

00:26:24,612--> 00:26:27,000

So that was the
coaching that I now offer,

566

00:26:27,000--> 00:26:29,108

the retreat and the residency,

567

00:26:29,132--> 00:26:32,108

and I'm looking for ways
to work in partnership

568

00:26:32,132--> 00:26:34,000

with writer
development agencies.

569

00:26:34,000--> 00:26:37,000

That's the route that I'll
likely go down in the future,

570

00:26:37,000--> 00:26:40,228

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partly because I'm

starting this full-time PhD,

571

00:26:40,252--> 00:26:42,588

and I'm just not

gonna have time,

572

00:26:42,612--> 00:26:44,508

because it took many, many days

573

00:26:44,532--> 00:26:47,908

to not only run that, but

also, you know, fund it as well,

574

00:26:47,932--> 00:26:49,908

because it was entirely

funded by myself.

575

00:26:49,932--> 00:26:51,428

So, um...

576

00:26:51,452--> 00:26:55,548

but that was, uh, for writers

who were under represented

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577

00:26:55,572--> 00:26:59,000

and we, um, hosted the winner

578

00:26:59,000--> 00:27:01,068

in February, um...

579

00:27:01,092--> 00:27:04,228

So, again, you know,

even if these opportunities

580

00:27:04,252--> 00:27:07,000

are not always consistent,

581

00:27:07,000--> 00:27:10,068

you... it's about having that...

582

00:27:10,092--> 00:27:13,148

Being on the list, or the email lists.

583

00:27:13,172--> 00:27:16,468

So there are various writers out there

who are very generous with their time

584

00:27:16,492--> 00:27:19,000

and will compile these
kind of opportunities.

585

00:27:19,000--> 00:27:23,828

Um, people, if you're in
poetry, like Robin Houghton.

586

00:27:23,852--> 00:27:27,108

So, yeah, there'll
be many others

587

00:27:27,132--> 00:27:29,788

and Kathryn's probably even
better apprised of them at the moment

588

00:27:29,812--> 00:27:31,000

than I am, but um...

589

00:27:31,000--> 00:27:33,668

There were certain
writers that I would follow

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590

00:27:33,692--> 00:27:35,411

to hear about these kind
of opportunities.

591

00:27:35,435--> 00:27:37,948

But in fact, important to...

592

00:27:37,972--> 00:27:42,068

and I still will continue to work in
that space of writer development,

593

00:27:42,092--> 00:27:46,000

but through partnership
and collaboration for--

594

00:27:46,000--> 00:27:47,388

-Yeah, absolutely.

595

00:27:47,412--> 00:27:49,268

Well, I was going to
ask you about that as well

596

00:27:49,292--> 00:27:51,000

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and ask what

advice you would give

597

00:27:51,000--> 00:27:53,708

about working in

partnership and collaboration

598

00:27:53,732--> 00:27:57,000

when looking to find funding

for projects that are, sort of,

599

00:27:57,000--> 00:28:00,148

writing related, or

within that realm of...

600

00:28:00,172--> 00:28:02,668

writing development.

601

00:28:02,692--> 00:28:04,828

Yeah. Well, it's a

really good question.

602

00:28:04,852--> 00:28:06,000

Um...

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603

00:28:06,000--> 00:28:10,588

And I would start by saying that

604

00:28:10,612--> 00:28:14,068

it's always good to

605

00:28:14,092--> 00:28:16,628

ask the question

and introduce yourself

606

00:28:16,652--> 00:28:21,000

to, uh, the person that

you might want to work with

607

00:28:21,000--> 00:28:26,028

or collaborate with on a

writer development scheme

608

00:28:26,052--> 00:28:28,200

or something that's going

to support your development.

609

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00:28:28,224--> 00:28:34,000

So just to give an anecdote

here, by way of advice,

610

00:28:34,000--> 00:28:37,428

I'm a member of the

Shrewsbury Stanza group,

611

00:28:37,452--> 00:28:42,000

so that's where I've been developing

my creative practice through poetry.

612

00:28:42,000--> 00:28:45,628

And after lockdown,

we moved online,

613

00:28:45,652--> 00:28:47,188

so there was a period of time

614

00:28:47,212--> 00:28:49,508

where I really wanted

to support that collection,

615

00:28:49,532--> 00:28:51,148

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but I wanted to
do it face-to-face.

616

00:28:51,172--> 00:28:53,000

So with another
writer, Si Griffiths,

617

00:28:53,000--> 00:28:56,348

we started up a
stanza in Machynlleth.

618

00:28:56,372--> 00:28:58,428

And that meant that we
brought people together

619

00:28:58,452--> 00:29:01,028

to workshop our poetry

620

00:29:01,052--> 00:29:03,428

and started something
from the ground up.

621

00:29:03,452--> 00:29:05,588

Again, it's something

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that you can say

622

00:29:05,612--> 00:29:08,108

that you've done in
your submission letters.

623

00:29:08,132--> 00:29:11,000

You can speak to that
community that you've built.

624

00:29:11,000--> 00:29:14,708

Um, and I mean, I could
give lots of examples here,

625

00:29:14,732--> 00:29:16,628

not least the New
Welsh Writing Awards,

626

00:29:16,652--> 00:29:21,308

where I kind of literally just called
up Tŷ Newydd, called up Gladstone's,

627

00:29:21,332--> 00:29:23,588

and the agent at

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Curtis Brown said,

628

00:29:23,612--> 00:29:26,000

do you want to partner with
us on this prize back in 2014.

629

00:29:26,000--> 00:29:29,388

And then, of course, you
know, Kathryn, you were

630

00:29:29,412--> 00:29:32,788

one of the writers who
kind of got picked up

631

00:29:32,812--> 00:29:35,000

through that writer
development initiative,

632

00:29:35,000--> 00:29:38,148

and very often these things
take many, many years

633

00:29:38,172--> 00:29:42,828

to, kind of, then cohere into a

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finished work, a full-length work.

634

00:29:42,852--> 00:29:45,000

So I would say also

play the long game

635

00:29:45,000--> 00:29:47,068

with your opportunities

636

00:29:47,092--> 00:29:49,168

and the way that you're

putting yourself out there,

637

00:29:49,192--> 00:29:52,000

because, um, yeah,

I would think in...

638

00:29:52,000--> 00:29:55,908

maybe not decades,

but certainly several years

639

00:29:55,932--> 00:29:58,000

at a time for a piece, a

full-length piece of work.

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640

00:29:58,000--> 00:30:01,948

Unless, perhaps, you're
a commercial author

641

00:30:01,972--> 00:30:05,708

who's, um, wanting
to publish annually

642

00:30:05,732--> 00:30:08,068

or... I don't know, Helen, for
children's authors, maybe...

643

00:30:08,092--> 00:30:10,212

-It's very different, it's
very different in my field.

644

00:30:10,232--> 00:30:12,000

Uh, we have to publish
a lot, and regularly.

645

00:30:12,000--> 00:30:14,468

Um, it's completely different.

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646

00:30:14,492--> 00:30:18,268

Um, and you know, that
there is a lot of pressure on us

647

00:30:18,292--> 00:30:19,292

to keep doing that.

648

00:30:19,316--> 00:30:21,038

I mean, I mean,
internal pressure as well,

649

00:30:21,062--> 00:30:23,548

from the point of
view of, you know,

650

00:30:23,572--> 00:30:25,508

being able to keep
the money coming in,

651

00:30:25,532--> 00:30:27,000

not just to please
the publishers.

652

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00:30:27,000--> 00:30:29,908

Um, but what I would say,

653

00:30:29,932--> 00:30:31,468

what I'm gleaning
from both of you

654

00:30:31,492--> 00:30:33,908

is that you seem to
be incredibly proactive.

655

00:30:33,932--> 00:30:36,892

You're both taking... you've both
shown that you've taken a lot of initiative

656

00:30:36,916--> 00:30:39,948

over the years to create
opportunities for yourselves,

657

00:30:39,972--> 00:30:41,548

but also for other writers.

658

00:30:41,572--> 00:30:43,500

I'm working in collaboration

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with other people

659

00:30:43,524--> 00:30:46,388

and promoting the work
of other writers as well.

660

00:30:46,412--> 00:30:48,331

And I feel that that's
a really virtuous circle

661

00:30:48,355--> 00:30:50,268

and that's something that, um,

662

00:30:50,292--> 00:30:51,948

that you've benefited
from as well,

663

00:30:51,972--> 00:30:53,000

so it's that thing of..

664

00:30:53,000--> 00:30:54,628

almost of paying it forward.

665

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00:30:54,652--> 00:30:57,428

So by helping to lift
and raise other writers

666

00:30:57,452--> 00:30:59,628

and giving them platforms,

667

00:30:59,652--> 00:31:02,308

you're also at the same time
developing your own careers.

668

00:31:02,332--> 00:31:05,200

So perhaps that's something that
everyone should be thinking about more

669

00:31:05,224--> 00:31:08,108

and something that
everyone can take from this.

670

00:31:08,132--> 00:31:13,000

And I think also the idea of just
making those connections with people

671

00:31:13,000--> 00:31:15,428

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and keeping up
those connections,

672

00:31:15,452--> 00:31:17,428

I think, is so important,
and I think that's...

673

00:31:17,452--> 00:31:18,888

you know, when
we work in isolation,

674

00:31:18,912--> 00:31:20,700

we don't really get
anywhere at all, do we?

675

00:31:20,724--> 00:31:22,928

Well, maybe we do, maybe
we're writing our masterpieces,

676

00:31:22,952--> 00:31:26,000

but I think in, you know,
collaboration is always good, isn't it?

677

00:31:26,000--> 00:31:29,948

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And certainly... and thinking of
new ideas, trying new things out.

678

00:31:29,972--> 00:31:32,188

So, you've both
had lots of new ideas

679

00:31:32,212--> 00:31:34,000

that you've managed
to bring to fruition

680

00:31:34,000--> 00:31:37,868

through collaborating and
finding funding opportunities.

681

00:31:37,892--> 00:31:40,668

Um, can I just, on that subject, Julia,

682

00:31:40,692--> 00:31:43,700

before we move on, I just wanted to
ask how you managed to get your funding

683

00:31:43,724--> 00:31:45,268

for your creative writing PhD,

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684

00:31:45,292--> 00:31:48,600

because that's something that some people
watching might be interested in pursuing.

685

00:31:48,624--> 00:31:52,028

-Yeah, so, um,

686

00:31:52,052--> 00:31:54,308

had the idea to
apply two years ago.

687

00:31:54,332--> 00:31:57,588

There was an advert
in my local paper.

688

00:31:57,612--> 00:31:59,000

-Oh, really?

689

00:31:59,000--> 00:32:02,228

-Yeah, I was at the [inaudible]

690

00:32:02,252--> 00:32:06,000

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and I saw an advert for a postgraduate open day in Aberystwyth University.

691

00:32:06,000--> 00:32:08,148

I was like, hang on a minute, I've got a Master's.

692

00:32:08,172--> 00:32:10,988

Why.... Why would I not consider that route?

693

00:32:11,012--> 00:32:12,012

So...

694

00:32:12,036--> 00:32:14,908

I then contacted the

695

00:32:14,932--> 00:32:18,148

ex-chair of the Society of Author's Aberystwyth Group,

696

00:32:18,172--> 00:32:21,000

Matthew Jarvis, who's an academic,

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697

00:32:21,000--> 00:32:25,000

had a meeting with him
and then that set in train

698

00:32:25,000--> 00:32:27,268

about a year-long process

699

00:32:27,292--> 00:32:28,988

of putting together
an application.

700

00:32:29,012--> 00:32:33,108

So at the time, uh, there were
two pots that I could apply to

701

00:32:33,132--> 00:32:35,000

and this probably
will shift a little bit.

702

00:32:35,000--> 00:32:39,000

Um, one of them was called
the... it's a very long title,

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703

00:32:39,000--> 00:32:40,068

so bear with me.

704

00:32:40,092--> 00:32:44,748

The South, West and Wales

Doctoral Training Partnership 2.

705

00:32:44,772--> 00:32:47,788

So, SWWDTP2.

706

00:32:47,812--> 00:32:50,708

-Wow. Yeah, maybe you can put
that in the comment box for us later,

707

00:32:50,732--> 00:32:52,868

just for anyone
who wants to see it.

708

00:32:52,892--> 00:32:56,508

-Um, I think it's changing, um...
-Oh, well it would be, yeah.

709

00:32:56,532--> 00:33:00,388

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-This will be, um, this

kind of consortium of

710

00:33:00,412--> 00:33:02,348

universities, I believe.

711

00:33:02,372--> 00:33:04,748

There will be some kind of
partnership program there.

712

00:33:04,772--> 00:33:08,788

And then I also applied
to the institution directly,

713

00:33:08,812--> 00:33:11,000

so was lucky to get that

714

00:33:11,000--> 00:33:14,268

from Aberystwyth
University itself.

715

00:33:14,292--> 00:33:17,748

So, often, I think these
institutions have those,

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716

00:33:17,772--> 00:33:20,000

um, pots themselves

that they can,

717

00:33:20,000--> 00:33:25,000

through a panel of quite a

rigorous three-stage panel process,

718

00:33:25,000--> 00:33:28,308

put that together, but this was

a project that actually began

719

00:33:28,332--> 00:33:31,000

in 2002, when I was

720

00:33:31,000--> 00:33:33,788

researching my novel,

which I never wrote,

721

00:33:33,812--> 00:33:36,428

set in New York and so I

went back to that research

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722

00:33:36,452--> 00:33:38,000

and essentially have

723

00:33:38,000--> 00:33:42,708

kind of way to be resourceful
with that research that I did.

724

00:33:42,732--> 00:33:46,208

So, as we know, we
never throw anything away.

725

00:33:46,232--> 00:33:47,232

-No.

726

00:33:47,256--> 00:33:51,788

-You know, it's... you just never
know when that experience

727

00:33:51,812--> 00:33:54,000

can support your creative
practice down the line.

728

00:33:54,000--> 00:33:57,868

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-Yeah, absolutely. I

would firmly second that.

729

00:33:57,892--> 00:34:00,000

You never know when
something can be of use, and...

730

00:34:00,000--> 00:34:02,508

And also, things change
over time, don't they?

731

00:34:02,532--> 00:34:05,508

So... Um, new
opportunities might arise

732

00:34:05,532--> 00:34:08,000

and yeah, so always
worth hanging on to your...

733

00:34:08,000--> 00:34:11,708

Your ideas, your work, or
anything you've been working on.

734

00:34:11,732--> 00:34:13,988

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-Do you mind...

-Yeah, Kathryn.

735

00:34:14,012--> 00:34:15,388

-Sorry, do you mind if I just...

736

00:34:15,412--> 00:34:18,208

I just wanted to pick up on something

Julia said there, because it's...

737

00:34:18,232--> 00:34:20,548

It reminded me of what I

say all the time, which is,

738

00:34:20,572--> 00:34:23,868

I think you said, too, that you

were lucky to get that funding,

739

00:34:23,892--> 00:34:26,508

but I get told off quite

regularly by my partner

740

00:34:26,532--> 00:34:28,628

about saying that I'm

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lucky to get something,

741

00:34:28,652--> 00:34:29,652

because it almost always,

742

00:34:29,676--> 00:34:32,088

and this is linked

to what you were saying just now, Helen,

743

00:34:32,112--> 00:34:34,228

about creating opportunities

and being proactive,

744

00:34:34,252--> 00:34:37,051

but it almost always comes out

of really, really, really hard work.

745

00:34:37,075--> 00:34:38,075

-Yeah.

746

00:34:38,099--> 00:34:40,988

-I think what's really important

for everyone to remember

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747

00:34:41,012--> 00:34:43,508

is that even things that
seem lucky, so for me,

748

00:34:43,532--> 00:34:46,388

when I was approached
by Calon after the, um,

749

00:34:46,412--> 00:34:49,508

being highly commended for the
Northern Writers Awards for my first book,

750

00:34:49,532--> 00:34:53,468

I said, I'm so lucky.

751

00:34:53,492--> 00:34:55,748

But I've been putting
myself out there

752

00:34:55,772--> 00:34:57,708

and my work out there
for a really long time,

753

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00:34:57,732--> 00:35:00,588

and really sort of
not slowing down.

754

00:35:00,612--> 00:35:03,508

And I think, um,
there's something...

755

00:35:03,532--> 00:35:06,108

I think that's what's important
to remember, is that it all...

756

00:35:06,132--> 00:35:08,748

it all helps, it all...
and it all builds up

757

00:35:08,772--> 00:35:10,508

and, like, again,
like Julia was saying,

758

00:35:10,532--> 00:35:13,468

it can take years for things to really
gestate and come out in the wash,

759

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00:35:13,492--> 00:35:15,068

but it is... it is...

760

00:35:15,092--> 00:35:17,248

Sometimes it feels like
you're shouting into the void.

761

00:35:17,272--> 00:35:19,288

-Yeah, someone's saying,
how long is a long time?

762

00:35:19,312--> 00:35:21,188

I mean, I...

763

00:35:21,212--> 00:35:25,000

I don't know. I think it's... it's a case
of keeping at it, isn't it, as you say.

764

00:35:25,000--> 00:35:30,348

And it's true that, I mean, luck does
play a factor, let's be real as well.

765

00:35:30,372--> 00:35:32,000

Obviously, luck

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plays a factor, but...

766

00:35:32,000--> 00:35:37,000

As you say, through your
hard work over the years,

767

00:35:37,000--> 00:35:40,988

you do create a certain amount
of luck for yourself as well

768

00:35:41,012--> 00:35:43,428

and I think, importantly,

769

00:35:43,452--> 00:35:45,988

what I'm sensing is that by
giving to other people as well

770

00:35:46,012--> 00:35:47,428

and supporting other people,

771

00:35:47,452--> 00:35:49,000

you're also creating
your own luck.

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772

00:35:49,000--> 00:35:52,000

So, I don't know, I

feel that that's the case.

773

00:35:52,000--> 00:35:55,788

-I would say, actually,

that to be really,

774

00:35:55,812--> 00:35:58,428

like, transparent about the

amount of time it took me

775

00:35:58,452--> 00:36:00,000

to put that

application together,

776

00:36:00,000--> 00:36:03,148

I did account for it, but looking

back through my calendar,

777

00:36:03,172--> 00:36:07,508

I reckon that was 20 to 25 days

778

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00:36:07,532--> 00:36:09,988

to put those
applications together.

779

00:36:10,012--> 00:36:12,000

So what's that? A month of work

780

00:36:12,000--> 00:36:15,068

committedly, without knowing
whether I was going to get it or not.

781

00:36:15,092--> 00:36:17,000

Obviously, to get it
is worth a lot, but...

782

00:36:17,000--> 00:36:19,948

that kind of, um...

783

00:36:19,972--> 00:36:23,108

Yeah, there's... for that
amount, I think that was...

784

00:36:23,132--> 00:36:25,000

I took the approach

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that it was worth

785

00:36:25,000--> 00:36:28,788

really putting in

that kind of time.

786

00:36:28,812--> 00:36:30,628

And I'm sure it was

the same for Kathryn

787

00:36:30,652--> 00:36:33,000

with the application to

Books Council Wales

788

00:36:33,000--> 00:36:35,428

that it has to be

commensurate, often, with the...

789

00:36:35,452--> 00:36:37,000

with the opportunity, I think.

790

00:36:37,000--> 00:36:39,628

-Yes. Yes.

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791

00:36:39,652--> 00:36:41,508

You're not going to
get that opportunity

792

00:36:41,532--> 00:36:45,000

if you don't put the work
in beforehand, but then...

793

00:36:45,000--> 00:36:46,000

I think what...

794

00:36:46,000--> 00:36:48,668

-Yeah, and you... often, when
you speak to PhD candidates

795

00:36:48,692--> 00:36:51,300

in Creative Writing, they've
applied more than once again, like...

796

00:36:51,324--> 00:36:53,508

-Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

797

00:36:53,532--> 00:36:55,200

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So it's having that
perseverance as well.

798

00:36:55,224--> 00:36:57,908

Um, and persistence, isn't it?

799

00:36:57,932--> 00:37:01,000

And... Um, I mean, obviously,

800

00:37:01,000--> 00:37:03,188

having the time to put...

801

00:37:03,212--> 00:37:06,028

to put into doing a funding
application of that size is,

802

00:37:06,052--> 00:37:07,808

in some ways, as you
said earlier, Kathryn,

803

00:37:07,832--> 00:37:09,000

it can be a bit of a luxury

804

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00:37:09,000--> 00:37:11,668

because if you are obviously
having to earn a living

805

00:37:11,692--> 00:37:14,000

from doing something else
at the same time and juggling

806

00:37:14,000--> 00:37:18,148

with, um, an application process,
that's... that's obviously tricky.

807

00:37:18,172--> 00:37:21,548

Um, I just wanted
to briefly mention,

808

00:37:21,572--> 00:37:24,068

a quick aside here,
although it is relevant.

809

00:37:24,092--> 00:37:26,308

I wanted to encourage
everyone here,

810

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00:37:26,332--> 00:37:28,300

if you haven't already
watched the Funding Week,

811

00:37:28,324--> 00:37:31,588

this is the Society of Authors
Funding Week Industry Insider

812

00:37:31,612--> 00:37:33,000

on funding opportunities

813

00:37:33,000--> 00:37:35,788

in England, Scotland, and Wales,

814

00:37:35,812--> 00:37:40,068

so Leusa Llewelyn,
who's the artistic director

815

00:37:40,092--> 00:37:42,188

of Llenyddiaeth
Cymru/Literature Wales,

816

00:37:42,212--> 00:37:43,708

based at Tŷ Newydd.

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817

00:37:43,732--> 00:37:46,308

She talks about all the
funding opportunities

818

00:37:46,332--> 00:37:47,788

available through
Literature Wales,

819

00:37:47,812--> 00:37:50,708

so, for example, Inspiring
Communities Fund,

820

00:37:50,732--> 00:37:52,000

which I mentioned earlier.

821

00:37:52,000--> 00:37:54,188

So, you can, um...

822

00:37:54,212--> 00:37:55,588

You don't apply for it yourself.

823

00:37:55,612--> 00:37:58,000

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But if you want to, for example,

824

00:37:58,000--> 00:38:01,388

in my case, to

encourage a school

825

00:38:01,412--> 00:38:02,908

to invite me in to

do an author visit,

826

00:38:02,932--> 00:38:04,100

I will tell them about the--

827

00:38:04,124--> 00:38:06,868

Signpost the fund to

them, they apply to it,

828

00:38:06,892--> 00:38:08,948

and they can get 75%

829

00:38:08,972--> 00:38:10,386

of the cost of my

author fees back,

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830

00:38:10,410--> 00:38:11,410

recouped to them.

831

00:38:11,434--> 00:38:14,508

So, it's a very good

incentive for them.

832

00:38:14,532--> 00:38:18,228

Um, and then also the

Wales Book of the Year Award,

833

00:38:18,252--> 00:38:21,000

the Representing Wales programme,

which you mentioned earlier,

834

00:38:21,000--> 00:38:23,788

and the Writing Well program.

835

00:38:23,812--> 00:38:26,000

She also talks about the

Writers of Wales Directory

836

00:38:26,000--> 00:38:28,948

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which you can use as a platform.

837

00:38:28,972--> 00:38:31,908

So that's... it's worth watching.

838

00:38:31,932--> 00:38:34,200

I mean, obviously, there
isn't a huge amount of funding

839

00:38:34,224--> 00:38:36,228

available here in Wales,

840

00:38:36,252--> 00:38:38,428

um, through Llenyddiaeth Cymru,

841

00:38:38,452--> 00:38:39,948

through Literature Wales,

842

00:38:39,972--> 00:38:42,068

or indeed through any
other funding source.

843

00:38:42,092--> 00:38:44,148

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But it's worth watching that,

844

00:38:44,172--> 00:38:47,000

that separate Industry

Insider, just to get a little insight

845

00:38:47,000--> 00:38:49,388

into what is available.

846

00:38:49,412--> 00:38:50,748

Um...

847

00:38:50,772--> 00:38:54,748

And, of course, have a look as

well at the Arts Council Wales funding

848

00:38:54,772--> 00:38:56,788

to see what's

available through them,

849

00:38:56,812--> 00:38:58,868

because it is

evolving and changing,

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850

00:38:58,892--> 00:39:00,668

and new funding

opportunities do come up,

851

00:39:00,692--> 00:39:02,500

so I'd say it's worth

keeping an eye on that.

852

00:39:02,524--> 00:39:06,708

And so a question

for you both here.

853

00:39:06,732--> 00:39:08,000

What do you see as the...

854

00:39:08,000--> 00:39:12,000

the main challenges of

making a living as a writer here

855

00:39:12,000--> 00:39:14,308

in Wales, specifically.

856

00:39:14,332--> 00:39:16,300

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I mean, Kathryn, you've
admitted that you've got

857

00:39:16,324--> 00:39:19,268

a shoe in both
camps, so you are in...

858

00:39:19,292--> 00:39:21,988

you divide your time
between York and Barry,

859

00:39:22,012--> 00:39:24,708

but it, you know, you
know from the experience of

860

00:39:24,732--> 00:39:26,428

living and working
here in Wales as well,

861

00:39:26,452--> 00:39:30,000

what are the.... the main current
challenges, would you say?

862

00:39:30,000--> 00:39:33,028

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-Um, well, I think

that also that I...

863

00:39:33,052--> 00:39:35,168

I think the challenges of
making a living as a writer

864

00:39:35,192--> 00:39:37,700

are a little bit universal
as well, in that it's...

865

00:39:37,724--> 00:39:40,028

I think there's a few
more challenges in Wales,

866

00:39:40,052--> 00:39:42,508

in the sense that there's
a little bit less funding,

867

00:39:42,532--> 00:39:44,428

there's less...
there's fewer options.

868

00:39:44,452--> 00:39:48,668

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But I think the same

869

00:39:48,692--> 00:39:50,788

thing applies in

England because of the...

870

00:39:50,812--> 00:39:52,652

how competitive a lot

of the opportunities are,

871

00:39:52,676--> 00:39:55,276

in that you do have to think

creatively and think outside the box,

872

00:39:55,300--> 00:39:58,400

and as we've already said, sometimes create

your own opportunities, and, um...

873

00:39:58,424--> 00:40:01,348

Sort of, yeah, think

differently sometimes.

874

00:40:01,372--> 00:40:02,708

Um...

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875

00:40:02,732--> 00:40:06,000

But I would say

876

00:40:06,000--> 00:40:09,628

some of the challenges

in Wales include

877

00:40:09,652--> 00:40:11,948

the geography of Wales.

878

00:40:11,972--> 00:40:13,148

So, like, there's not...

879

00:40:13,172--> 00:40:14,568

I know this is

talked about a lot,

880

00:40:14,592--> 00:40:17,000

but there's not as much of...

881

00:40:17,000--> 00:40:21,588

Like, activities are often

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quite spread out geographically

882

00:40:21,612--> 00:40:24,000

and so there's not a
sort of critical mass of

883

00:40:24,000--> 00:40:27,148

publishing activity in
a certain part of Wales,

884

00:40:27,172--> 00:40:30,000

but that is also linked to
the fact that, and this is

885

00:40:30,000--> 00:40:33,068

I think to some people in
independent publishing in Wales,

886

00:40:33,092--> 00:40:35,000

slightly controversial, but I...

887

00:40:35,000--> 00:40:36,788

have a certain
opinion on it that,

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888

00:40:36,812--> 00:40:39,788

um, I think there should be

889

00:40:39,812--> 00:40:41,228

publishing as an ecosystem

890

00:40:41,252--> 00:40:43,000

and there should be

891

00:40:43,000--> 00:40:46,788

big publishing happening

in Wales as well

892

00:40:46,812--> 00:40:49,000

as in all the other UK

nations, which it happens.

893

00:40:49,000--> 00:40:50,000

-Yep.

894

00:40:50,000--> 00:40:52,028

-There's been a lot of

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talk over the last 10 years

895

00:40:52,052--> 00:40:55,108

about, uh, regional

diversity in publishing

896

00:40:55,132--> 00:40:57,000

and all these satellite

offices opening up.

897

00:40:57,000--> 00:40:59,508

And has that come

across the border? No.

898

00:40:59,532--> 00:41:02,588

Um, and, you know,

complex reasons for that,

899

00:41:02,612--> 00:41:07,748

but I think that it's all part of a

healthy ecosystem that we have.

900

00:41:07,772--> 00:41:09,628

You know, we need small

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independent publishers,

901

00:41:09,652--> 00:41:11,908

but we also need

bigger presses as well.

902

00:41:11,932--> 00:41:14,428

We need career development,

we don't want talent drain.

903

00:41:14,452--> 00:41:18,000

We need opportunities,

we need internships.

904

00:41:18,000--> 00:41:21,708

And... and we need more

Welsh stories being published.

905

00:41:21,732--> 00:41:24,068

So, I think, um...

906

00:41:24,092--> 00:41:27,000

That's a bit of a

challenge, I think.

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907

00:41:27,000--> 00:41:28,748

-How would we tempt
them over the border?

908

00:41:28,772--> 00:41:30,708

How do... how could
this be achieved?

909

00:41:30,732--> 00:41:33,468

-It's a good... I mean, that's one
of the things I'm hoping to do

910

00:41:33,492--> 00:41:36,000

with Folding Rock.

It's a shop window.

911

00:41:36,000--> 00:41:37,668

Um... [laughs]

912

00:41:37,692--> 00:41:40,828

But yeah, so that's one thing,

913

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00:41:40,852--> 00:41:42,108

but I also think there's...

914

00:41:42,132--> 00:41:46,000

and this isn't just Wales,

but I think it is quite

915

00:41:46,000--> 00:41:49,508

embedded in this

creative industries here

916

00:41:49,532--> 00:41:52,000

is that there's a

real normalization of

917

00:41:52,000--> 00:41:54,548

free or very low-paid labour,

918

00:41:54,572--> 00:41:56,000

which we've talked

about already.

919

00:41:56,000--> 00:41:58,468

So I think that's a

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challenge as well,

920

00:41:58,492--> 00:42:00,748

because there's a lot of

having to say yes to things

921

00:42:00,772--> 00:42:02,308

and I've done plenty of it,

922

00:42:02,332--> 00:42:04,468

and I'm sure Julia

has too in the past,

923

00:42:04,492--> 00:42:07,000

of saying yes to things that

924

00:42:07,000--> 00:42:09,028

aren't gonna pay you anything

925

00:42:09,052--> 00:42:10,508

or at least very little.

926

00:42:10,532--> 00:42:12,868

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And you're still...

you're building a career,

927

00:42:12,892--> 00:42:16,000

so you do it, you know, it's still
beneficial, but it shouldn't be

928

00:42:16,000--> 00:42:18,268

that that's the case so often.

929

00:42:18,292--> 00:42:21,000

So I think that's one
challenge as well.

930

00:42:21,000--> 00:42:24,748

Um, and then also, I
think from my perspective,

931

00:42:24,772--> 00:42:26,708

you know, and
again, universally,

932

00:42:26,732--> 00:42:28,748

it is hard to make a

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full-time living as a writer.

933

00:42:28,772--> 00:42:32,668

And actually, also, I personally
wouldn't want to be a full-time writer.

934

00:42:32,692--> 00:42:35,000

I think it would
be really difficult.

935

00:42:35,000--> 00:42:36,788

Um, and... and I kind of...

936

00:42:36,812--> 00:42:39,788

I need other projects
to do as well as writing

937

00:42:39,812--> 00:42:42,028

and also, I need
to see other people.

938

00:42:42,052--> 00:42:43,052

[laughs]

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939

00:42:43,076--> 00:42:46,308

And work with other
people, so I think...

940

00:42:46,332--> 00:42:49,000

Um, what I'd love
to see is more

941

00:42:49,000--> 00:42:50,828

part-time positions.

942

00:42:50,852--> 00:42:54,548

So, like, for instance,
with the magazine,

943

00:42:54,572--> 00:42:56,388

I think, you know,
hopefully we'll grow.

944

00:42:56,412--> 00:42:58,000

I really hope that we'll
be able to have

945

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00:42:58,000--> 00:43:01,348

a bigger team and that we
were able to open up positions,

946

00:43:01,372--> 00:43:02,988

but I want all of
them to be part-time,

947

00:43:03,012--> 00:43:04,100

-Part-time staff, yeah.

948

00:43:04,124--> 00:43:06,708

-Because I want them to... I
want them to be filled by creatives

949

00:43:06,732--> 00:43:08,132

and I think it's
really important.

950

00:43:08,156--> 00:43:10,188

Having been a writer
with a full-time job,

951

00:43:10,212--> 00:43:11,548

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and I'm sure there's plenty on

952

00:43:11,572--> 00:43:13,000

who are joining

us today as well.

953

00:43:13,000--> 00:43:14,000

-I'm sure.

954

00:43:14,024--> 00:43:16,548

-It's, uh, the dream

for a long time

955

00:43:16,572--> 00:43:18,988

was to have at

least one day a week

956

00:43:19,012--> 00:43:21,268

when I could focus

on my creative work,

957

00:43:21,292--> 00:43:24,000

but have still the stability of

at least a part-time income.

958

00:43:24,000--> 00:43:26,348

Um, and I think that's
really, for the majority of us,

959

00:43:26,372--> 00:43:27,428

how we make it work.

960

00:43:27,452--> 00:43:29,468

-Yeah. Absolutely.

961

00:43:29,492--> 00:43:32,388

Um, and I think that's... it's
great that you're thinking like that.

962

00:43:32,412--> 00:43:34,808

I think... I can see all the
comments coming through as well.

963

00:43:34,832--> 00:43:36,200

I think a lot of
people are saying

964

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00:43:36,224--> 00:43:38,068

part-time and remote, as well.

965

00:43:38,092--> 00:43:41,548

Um, and that might work for
people living in areas of Wales,

966

00:43:41,572--> 00:43:43,300

perhaps, where it's,
you know, it's not so...

967

00:43:43,324--> 00:43:47,468

easy to... to join a team
like yours, for example.

968

00:43:47,492--> 00:43:51,000

Um, and uh, Julia, what...

969

00:43:51,000--> 00:43:54,068

I'd like to hear from you as well. What
do you think the main challenges are?

970

00:43:54,092--> 00:43:56,988

Thank you, Kathryn, I think that

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was... that was a really good answer.

971

00:43:57,012--> 00:43:59,028

And, uh, I can see from
all the comments coming in

972

00:43:59,052--> 00:44:00,500

how much people
appreciate it as well

973

00:44:00,524--> 00:44:02,608

and I think there was a
publisher somewhere in Wales,

974

00:44:02,632--> 00:44:05,000

a comment popped up, and
she was saying, thank you.

975

00:44:05,000--> 00:44:07,028

Um...

976

00:44:07,052--> 00:44:09,308

And I'm sure many
people would like to see

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977

00:44:09,332--> 00:44:11,000

the publishing

industry here grow.

978

00:44:11,000--> 00:44:14,348

Um, and along with it, more

opportunities coming up,

979

00:44:14,372--> 00:44:16,208

and I think it all feeds

in, doesn't it, then?

980

00:44:16,232--> 00:44:19,348

That you get a positive feedback

loop of more people joining

981

00:44:19,372--> 00:44:22,000

and more creative

talent being fostered.

982

00:44:22,000--> 00:44:26,000

So Julia, could you tell us what

you think the main challenges are?

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983

00:44:26,000--> 00:44:28,828

-To writers?

984

00:44:28,852--> 00:44:31,428

Yeah, in Wales.

It's interesting,

985

00:44:31,452--> 00:44:34,468

because in a way, you've

got two perspectives

986

00:44:34,492--> 00:44:36,000

from people who

work in publishing.

987

00:44:36,000--> 00:44:37,000

so my answer

988

00:44:37,000--> 00:44:39,228

is pretty similar

to Kathryn's in that

989

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00:44:39,252--> 00:44:42,948

what I think is a real issue,

990

00:44:42,972--> 00:44:45,348

and I see this because

one of my other jobs...

991

00:44:45,372--> 00:44:48,000

I mean, I do about 5

different jobs at the moment.

992

00:44:48,000--> 00:44:50,908

I'm gonna have to give

some up in order to...

993

00:44:50,932--> 00:44:53,508

But one of the

issues that I have

994

00:44:53,532--> 00:44:55,788

at the very end of the

publication process,

995

00:44:55,812--> 00:44:57,200

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which is when

I'm doing publicity,

996

00:44:57,224--> 00:45:01,868

NPR for authors, often

published by Welsh presses,

997

00:45:01,892--> 00:45:08,000

is the, uh, lack of spots

998

00:45:08,000--> 00:45:10,708

whether that's review inches,

999

00:45:10,732--> 00:45:14,468

your sink pieces, features.

1000

00:45:14,492--> 00:45:16,708

So I'm pitching authors

1001

00:45:16,732--> 00:45:19,468

and I know that

this is going to be,

1002

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00:45:19,492--> 00:45:21,868

perhaps, the, I don't

know, 50th email

1003

00:45:21,892--> 00:45:24,148

that this editor will have

got probably that day,

1004

00:45:24,172--> 00:45:26,000

let alone that week

1005

00:45:26,000--> 00:45:28,588

from a publicist

trying to get that author

1006

00:45:28,612--> 00:45:30,000

in front of that readership.

1007

00:45:30,000--> 00:45:33,000

-It's so hard, isn't it? It's

so ridiculously competitive.

1008

00:45:33,000--> 00:45:35,268

-It really is, but I'm seeing

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1009

00:45:35,292--> 00:45:38,000

more and more coming

1010

00:45:38,000--> 00:45:40,828

to the point of there

being less and less spots

1011

00:45:40,852--> 00:45:44,000

for authors to be published,

1012

00:45:44,000--> 00:45:45,468

just period.

1013

00:45:45,492--> 00:45:48,868

So, um, you know,

we're seeing lists shrink,

1014

00:45:48,892--> 00:45:53,000

and I think that that's a

problem, um, especially for

1015

00:45:53,000--> 00:45:56,268

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when authors are
kind of starting out

1016

00:45:56,292--> 00:45:59,000

and they... they need someone
to take a punt, you know.

1017

00:45:59,000--> 00:46:00,908

Often emerging authors

1018

00:46:00,932--> 00:46:04,000

or authors who are, uh, at that

1019

00:46:04,000--> 00:46:07,388

earlier stage of their
career, regardless of age,

1020

00:46:07,412--> 00:46:09,200

because of course, we
can emerge much later.

1021

00:46:09,224--> 00:46:10,264

-At any point. Absolutely.

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1022

00:46:10,288--> 00:46:12,828

-Well, you know, that, um...

1023

00:46:12,852--> 00:46:15,268

that there is an
element of risk,

1024

00:46:15,292--> 00:46:16,788

there is an element of risk.

1025

00:46:16,812--> 00:46:19,148

And publishing,
yes, it is a business,

1026

00:46:19,172--> 00:46:21,148

it is an industry,
and of course,

1027

00:46:21,172--> 00:46:24,000

in many ways in Wales,
we have that state-funded

1028

00:46:24,000--> 00:46:26,628

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publishing arm, uh...

1029

00:46:26,652--> 00:46:29,000

So it is complex, um...

1030

00:46:29,000--> 00:46:32,948

And, you know, I speak as

someone who's been published both...

1031

00:46:32,972--> 00:46:36,988

in both cases by independent

publishers, one but both based out...

1032

00:46:37,012--> 00:46:39,000

weirdly, funny

enough, in England

1033

00:46:40,000--> 00:46:41,588

and I've had very

different experiences.

1034

00:46:41,612--> 00:46:45,188

But, you know, it is a matter

of someone taking a punt,

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1035

00:46:45,212--> 00:46:48,628

and I think, sadly, that
those spots are shrinking.

1036

00:46:48,652--> 00:46:50,428

So I'd like to see more support

1037

00:46:50,452--> 00:46:53,628

from the government
in, uh, for the industry.

1038

00:46:53,652--> 00:46:55,268

As you've said, Helen,

1039

00:46:55,292--> 00:46:57,000

I think, um, before
we began, you know,

1040

00:46:57,000--> 00:47:00,148

or maybe it was our...

1041

00:47:00,172--> 00:47:03,000

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Our lovely host, Emma,
the amount that we get

1042

00:47:03,000--> 00:47:05,468

in the creative
industries in Wales

1043

00:47:05,492--> 00:47:07,628

for publishing is
very small indeed

1044

00:47:07,652--> 00:47:10,000

and I'd like to see
more money at that level

1045

00:47:10,000--> 00:47:13,588

to really facilitate the
kind of opportunities

1046

00:47:13,612--> 00:47:14,828

that Kathryn's talking about.

1047

00:47:14,852--> 00:47:17,100

But you're hearing from two,

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kind of, published authors,

1048

00:47:17,124--> 00:47:18,124

so...

1049

00:47:18,148--> 00:47:19,568

-Yeah, yeah, yeah.

1050

00:47:19,592--> 00:47:22,268

I mean, I certainly

feel that, um...

1051

00:47:22,292--> 00:47:26,000

So, as I think most people know

1052

00:47:26,000--> 00:47:29,308

the Welsh Government

has been starved of funding

1053

00:47:29,332--> 00:47:32,000

from Westminster for

so many years now.

1054

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00:47:32,000--> 00:47:35,508

Um, but as... as I believe...

1055

00:47:35,532--> 00:47:37,000

I believe this is true.

1056

00:47:37,000--> 00:47:40,508

They've recently been
given a new injection

1057

00:47:40,532--> 00:47:42,308

of cash from Westminster,

1058

00:47:42,332--> 00:47:44,468

I think probably because
of the Senedd election...

1059

00:47:44,492--> 00:47:46,422

Well, undoubtedly because
of the Senedd elections

1060

00:47:46,446--> 00:47:49,908

coming up next May,
and the threat of Reform

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1061

00:47:49,932--> 00:47:51,000

which is...

1062

00:47:51,000--> 00:47:53,988

um, boosted the...

it's going to boost

1063

00:47:54,012--> 00:47:55,548

the Welsh economy,

1064

00:47:55,572--> 00:47:58,000

but it's where they decide

to distribute that money.

1065

00:47:58,000--> 00:48:00,468

So, I feel that perhaps...

1066

00:48:00,492--> 00:48:02,188

perhaps as authors,

1067

00:48:02,212--> 00:48:05,000

we all have a duty, in

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a way, to start lobbying

1068

00:48:05,000--> 00:48:10,000

and, you know, to get organized
as well, and try to lobby together.

1069

00:48:10,000--> 00:48:12,908

Our Senedd members are...

1070

00:48:12,932--> 00:48:17,000

Um, our local
representatives as well

1071

00:48:17,000--> 00:48:18,628

to try and get some
of that funding,

1072

00:48:18,652--> 00:48:20,268

the new funding
that's coming in,

1073

00:48:20,292--> 00:48:23,000

diverted into the arts, because

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1074

00:48:23,000--> 00:48:27,000

I think Emma mentioned that
Wales has got one of the lowest...

1075

00:48:27,000--> 00:48:29,948

Sadly, one of the lowest
percentages of investment

1076

00:48:29,972--> 00:48:32,948

in the arts of any
country in Europe.

1077

00:48:32,972--> 00:48:35,100

I think it was third from the
bottom or something, so...

1078

00:48:35,124--> 00:48:37,308

It's a really dismal reading.

1079

00:48:37,332--> 00:48:39,228

I suspect that might
be partly because,

1080

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00:48:39,252--> 00:48:41,000

you know, it's as a very

1081

00:48:41,000--> 00:48:44,000

poor and quite underfunded
nation, a lot of that money gets

1082

00:48:44,000--> 00:48:48,668

diverted to social care,
healthcare, education,

1083

00:48:48,692--> 00:48:51,000

and there's just not enough
left over for the arts

1084

00:48:51,000--> 00:48:56,000

but if that's going to change, then let's
hope some of that money comes through

1085

00:48:56,000--> 00:49:00,000

to support the arts and writers and
create a healthier ecosystem for us all.

1086

00:49:00,000--> 00:49:06,000

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Is there anything else you feel
that we could talk about in terms of,

1087

00:49:06,000--> 00:49:09,028

you know, positive
stories, or, um,

1088

00:49:09,052--> 00:49:10,488

things that we
would like to change?

1089

00:49:10,512--> 00:49:14,000

Models, perhaps, from other countries
that you feel should be adopted?

1090

00:49:14,000--> 00:49:15,388

I mean, I'm
certainly... I've been...

1091

00:49:15,412--> 00:49:18,000

I'm sure you've been
keeping an eye on...

1092

00:49:18,000--> 00:49:21,028

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on Ireland, where
they've been piloting their

1093

00:49:21,052--> 00:49:23,000

Basic Income for
the Arts scheme now,

1094

00:49:23,000--> 00:49:26,188

since 2022, and I think
they've just recently extended it

1095

00:49:26,212--> 00:49:28,000

to February next year.

1096

00:49:28,000--> 00:49:31,228

So obviously it's
a pilot scheme,

1097

00:49:31,252--> 00:49:33,788

but I think they've already
got a lot of the results in

1098

00:49:33,812--> 00:49:36,000

to show the positive

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benefit it's had

1099

00:49:36,000--> 00:49:39,108

providing that... that safety net,

1100

00:49:39,132--> 00:49:42,000

that basic income

for all sorts of artists,

1101

00:49:42,000--> 00:49:43,908

including writers,

1102

00:49:43,932--> 00:49:45,708

which would enable

people, perhaps,

1103

00:49:45,732--> 00:49:48,000

from less financially

stable backgrounds

1104

00:49:48,000--> 00:49:52,000

to actually take those risks that

you were talking about earlier,

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1105

00:49:52,000--> 00:49:56,000

um, and, you know, invest
their time in their writing careers.

1106

00:49:56,000--> 00:49:58,308

And perhaps also in doing
things like applications,

1107

00:49:58,332--> 00:50:00,000

which, as you mentioned, can be

1108

00:50:00,000--> 00:50:04,548

very time-consuming, and just,
you know, have that time to invest

1109

00:50:04,572--> 00:50:08,000

while they're not also
having to earn a living.

1110

00:50:08,000--> 00:50:09,588

What do you think?

1111

00:50:11,892--> 00:50:14,948

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Um, yeah, I think

just very briefly

1112

00:50:14,972--> 00:50:18,428

before we talk about the,
um, sort of individual support,

1113

00:50:18,452--> 00:50:19,988

which is something
I do want to discuss

1114

00:50:20,012--> 00:50:22,988

and I think relates to, I think, what
people have already said in the chat

1115

00:50:23,012--> 00:50:26,000

about, you know, DYCP funding
and seeing something similar to that.

1116

00:50:26,000--> 00:50:28,428

But, uh, in terms of...

1117

00:50:28,452--> 00:50:31,000

I just wanted to

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mention as well, briefly,

1118

00:50:31,000--> 00:50:34,708

the work... what I

found very informative

1119

00:50:34,732--> 00:50:37,668

is the work over the last 30 years

that New Writing North have done

1120

00:50:37,692--> 00:50:39,000

for the north of England.

1121

00:50:39,000--> 00:50:41,908

Um, and what's obvious to me

1122

00:50:41,932--> 00:50:43,988

is that when, sort of, lobbying,

1123

00:50:44,012--> 00:50:47,000

as we're saying, lobbying

for more money for the

1124

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00:50:47,000--> 00:50:49,988

book industry and for
writing and publishing,

1125

00:50:50,012--> 00:50:51,148

you...

1126

00:50:51,172--> 00:50:53,628

it's so much, then, is about...

1127

00:50:53,652--> 00:50:57,000

What's so crucial, is about how
that money is then injected, because

1128

00:50:57,024--> 00:51:01,988

if you fund the, sort of,
existing publishers in Wales

1129

00:51:02,012--> 00:51:03,508

to publish more books,

1130

00:51:03,532--> 00:51:06,328

we're still going to have the
challenges that Julia was talking about

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1131

00:51:06,352--> 00:51:08,952

in not being able to get publicity
for them, because, for example,

1132

00:51:08,976--> 00:51:12,268

there's not enough review space,
there's not enough news outlets,

1133

00:51:12,292--> 00:51:14,108

and there's not enough, um, for...

1134

00:51:14,132--> 00:51:16,668

And this isn't a
perennial problem.

1135

00:51:16,692--> 00:51:20,068

There's not enough, um,
people, sort of, across the border

1136

00:51:20,092--> 00:51:22,588

in the media paying
attention to Welsh writing.

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1137

00:51:22,612--> 00:51:24,000

Um, and...

1138

00:51:24,000--> 00:51:26,268

Then you've also...

1139

00:51:26,292--> 00:51:29,668

So when money comes in, it needs
to kind of come in from all directions.

1140

00:51:29,692--> 00:51:33,468

It's got... It's got to
fund writer development

1141

00:51:33,492--> 00:51:36,000

so that our writers are sort of

1142

00:51:36,000--> 00:51:38,348

given the space and time

1143

00:51:38,372--> 00:51:41,868

to create top quality work
that we can be really proud of,

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1144

00:51:41,892--> 00:51:44,000

but also, you know,

1145

00:51:44,000--> 00:51:45,948

career development,

so that we've got

1146

00:51:45,972--> 00:51:48,000

excellent professionals

publishing that work.

1147

00:51:48,000--> 00:51:50,664

Um, and then... and then

industry infrastructure,

1148

00:51:50,688--> 00:51:53,948

so that we've... we've got,

1149

00:51:53,972--> 00:51:57,000

um, the businesses doing...

1150

00:51:57,000--> 00:51:58,508

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doing the heavy lifting.

1151

00:51:58,532--> 00:52:01,868

And then, you know, we've seen it
happen in Wales with the TV industry

1152

00:52:01,892--> 00:52:04,000

and it's really been
booming in South Wales.

1153

00:52:04,000--> 00:52:07,348

And, you know,
that can happen in...

1154

00:52:07,372--> 00:52:09,148

I think I see it, and I think...

1155

00:52:09,172--> 00:52:11,108

I guess this is a more
positive view of it.

1156

00:52:11,132--> 00:52:13,388

I see it as a real opportunity.

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1157

00:52:13,412--> 00:52:15,743

We've seen lots of progress
made in the north of England.

1158

00:52:15,767--> 00:52:17,372

We've seen it in Scotland,

1159

00:52:17,396--> 00:52:19,000

we've seen it in Ireland.

1160

00:52:19,000--> 00:52:22,348

And so my feeling, very much,

1161

00:52:22,372--> 00:52:25,000

is that it's Wales'
turn next, so I'm...

1162

00:52:25,000--> 00:52:27,788

What's important to think
is that this is all in our future.

1163

00:52:27,812--> 00:52:28,976

We just need to sort of

1164

00:52:29,000--> 00:52:31,148

think about it really carefully

1165

00:52:31,172--> 00:52:33,508

and approach it in a way

that's going to make sense,

1166

00:52:33,532--> 00:52:38,000

rather than a sort of, um,

ad hoc or isolated approach.

1167

00:52:38,000--> 00:52:40,428

But yeah, I just wanted to...

that... I was thinking about that

1168

00:52:40,452--> 00:52:42,648

as you were talking, and I

just wanted to mention that.

1169

00:52:42,672--> 00:52:44,348

But, um, I think also, yes,

1170

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00:52:44,372--> 00:52:48,000

what's really, really important

is, like, we see in Ireland,

1171

00:52:48,000--> 00:52:50,988

this individual

support for creatives

1172

00:52:51,012--> 00:52:52,988

to have the space and

time to create the work,

1173

00:52:53,012--> 00:52:55,388

because what's the point in

the rest of it if we don't have

1174

00:52:55,412--> 00:52:58,268

that brilliant,

um, artistic work.

1175

00:52:58,292--> 00:53:00,648

And I think that really comes

down to seeing it as valuable

1176

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00:53:00,672--> 00:53:02,428

and the government

seeing it as valuable,

1177

00:53:02,452--> 00:53:04,428

which we all know it is.

1178

00:53:04,452--> 00:53:08,000

But that's quite a seismic

shift for some people.

1179

00:53:08,000--> 00:53:11,908

Um, and... and I think

Ireland are really lucky,

1180

00:53:11,932--> 00:53:13,268

and that's also why there's...

1181

00:53:13,292--> 00:53:15,508

So we were there with

the magazine in the spring

1182

00:53:15,532--> 00:53:18,108

and we were invited to

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Cúirt Literature Festival,

1183

00:53:18,132--> 00:53:20,788

a literature festival that
has been funded for 40 years

1184

00:53:20,812--> 00:53:23,748

and successful, and is full...

1185

00:53:23,772--> 00:53:25,948

was full of people with,
you know, poetry events,

1186

00:53:25,972--> 00:53:28,000

with people spilling
out the doors.

1187

00:53:28,000--> 00:53:31,548

So, and every other
conversation seemed to be with

1188

00:53:31,572--> 00:53:33,488

someone who also
edits a magazine.

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1189

00:53:33,512--> 00:53:35,968

You know, there's all these
brilliant... it's a whole ecosystem

1190

00:53:35,992--> 00:53:39,000

of literary magazines that I
would dream of seeing in Wales.

1191

00:53:39,000--> 00:53:42,508

But they're lucky in that they have a
different approach there to funding,

1192

00:53:42,532--> 00:53:44,300

in that there's just
more of it for the arts.

1193

00:53:44,324--> 00:53:47,388

-Yeah, yeah, and
it shows, doesn't it?

1194

00:53:47,412--> 00:53:49,428

Um, you know, but I love...

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1195

00:53:49,452--> 00:53:52,000

I like that. I'm going to
take from that, Wales is next.

1196

00:53:52,000--> 00:53:54,388

I think that sounds very
hopeful and positive,

1197

00:53:54,412--> 00:53:56,000

and let's hope that's the case.

1198

00:53:56,000--> 00:53:58,548

Um, but as you say,
we do need a sort of, um,

1199

00:53:58,572--> 00:54:00,668

a unified approach
to that, in a way,

1200

00:54:00,692--> 00:54:02,148

and we need people
to get organized.

1201

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00:54:02,172--> 00:54:03,748

People like you,

Kathryn, we need your...

1202

00:54:03,772--> 00:54:06,708

Your help and support,

and you, Julia, as well.

1203

00:54:06,732--> 00:54:09,588

We need to draw on the

experience of people like you,

1204

00:54:09,612--> 00:54:11,100

so that we, you

know, we can perhaps

1205

00:54:11,124--> 00:54:13,748

lobby for the, you

know, the right kind of

1206

00:54:13,772--> 00:54:15,308

funding opportunities,

1207

00:54:15,332--> 00:54:17,732

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and to build that infrastructure
that you were talking about,

1208

00:54:17,756--> 00:54:20,000

and create that really
healthy ecosystem here,

1209

00:54:20,000--> 00:54:23,228

if indeed the funding is
going to be forthcoming, so...

1210

00:54:23,252--> 00:54:26,000

I'll have to wait and see,
but part of it is just trying to,

1211

00:54:26,000--> 00:54:31,000

I suppose, create those
opportunities, or, you know, so that

1212

00:54:31,000--> 00:54:35,000

if the funding did become available,
then there would be people ready to

1213

00:54:35,000--> 00:54:38,748

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take that opportunity and make
things happen here in Wales,

1214

00:54:38,772--> 00:54:40,500

and that's what we
need very much, isn't it?

1215

00:54:40,524--> 00:54:42,948

Um, you talked about
brain drain earlier.

1216

00:54:42,972--> 00:54:47,000

And that, perhaps, is another
of our challenges that so many

1217

00:54:47,000--> 00:54:50,000

very talented young writers maybe
grow up in Wales and then leave

1218

00:54:50,000--> 00:54:53,228

or people with other experience
within the publishing career,

1219

00:54:53,252--> 00:54:55,000

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perhaps leave and
move elsewhere, and it's...

1220

00:54:55,000--> 00:54:56,668

How would we bring people back

1221

00:54:56,692--> 00:54:58,948

or keep people here
in the first place?

1222

00:54:58,972--> 00:55:01,000

I think that's another
challenge in itself.

1223

00:55:01,000--> 00:55:03,668

Julia, is there anything
else, or anything else

1224

00:55:03,692--> 00:55:04,808

that you'd like to mention

1225

00:55:04,832--> 00:55:08,000

that perhaps we
could do to improve

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1226

00:55:08,000--> 00:55:11,000

the situation for
writers here in Wales?

1227

00:55:11,000--> 00:55:13,028

-Well, I think in...

1228

00:55:13,052--> 00:55:17,000

It's interesting to
think about the...

1229

00:55:17,000--> 00:55:19,628

I suppose, as Kathryn said,

1230

00:55:19,652--> 00:55:23,228

the opportunities
within the challenges

1231

00:55:23,252--> 00:55:26,308

and if I'm thinking about
something upbeat and positive

1232

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00:55:26,332--> 00:55:30,000

and what I'm extracting
from this as well is

1233

00:55:30,000--> 00:55:31,868

that as individuals,

1234

00:55:31,892--> 00:55:34,428

for those of you who are
in the room who are writers,

1235

00:55:34,452--> 00:55:36,000

who are thinking about

1236

00:55:36,000--> 00:55:39,908

continuing your career,
about starting out, maybe,

1237

00:55:39,932--> 00:55:41,028

um...

1238

00:55:41,052--> 00:55:44,388

It's about looking for those
models of best practice,

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1239

00:55:44,412--> 00:55:45,868

as Kathryn's talked about,

1240

00:55:45,892--> 00:55:50,000

and perhaps what I'm

thinking is how we can look to

1241

00:55:50,000--> 00:55:53,988

those authors that we

know in our community

1242

00:55:54,012--> 00:55:58,108

and look to them as models

1243

00:55:58,132--> 00:56:02,348

of how they've sustained

a career of sorts.

1244

00:56:02,372--> 00:56:05,668

And of course, very

personal choices,

1245

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00:56:05,692--> 00:56:07,388

like what we choose...

1246

00:56:07,412--> 00:56:09,548

Um, how we choose

to spend our time

1247

00:56:09,572--> 00:56:12,268

and it can be very difficult

to kind of copy and paste,

1248

00:56:12,292--> 00:56:14,000

but I think, um,

1249

00:56:14,000--> 00:56:19,000

really what I'm

feeling is that, um...

1250

00:56:19,000--> 00:56:22,868

There is a lot of hope,

because actually, if...

1251

00:56:22,892--> 00:56:25,308

If we think back

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to the [inaudible]

1252

00:56:25,332--> 00:56:28,000

what we need, really,

is time and space.

1253

00:56:28,000--> 00:56:31,868

And, uh, very often

the seed of that

1254

00:56:31,892--> 00:56:34,628

can grow into

something quite profound.

1255

00:56:34,652--> 00:56:37,388

Often, when we're thinking

about non-fiction as well,

1256

00:56:37,412--> 00:56:38,828

you know, we're selling things

1257

00:56:38,852--> 00:56:42,000

sometimes just on the basis

of a proposal and some sample.

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1258

00:56:42,000--> 00:56:44,348

So they're not having to
write the entire manuscript.

1259

00:56:44,372--> 00:56:47,948

And I think that's something
that is also good to think about

1260

00:56:47,972--> 00:56:51,000

if you're, um,
considering genre, is

1261

00:56:51,000--> 00:56:54,828

that often with fiction
and certainly with poetry,

1262

00:56:54,852--> 00:56:58,000

you know, you've got to
produce an entire full-length work.

1263

00:56:58,000--> 00:57:00,628

And we haven't really talked
about the role of agents,

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1264

00:57:00,652--> 00:57:02,388

but, um, you know, I...

1265

00:57:02,412--> 00:57:04,092

-No, there's so much

to cover, isn't there?

1266

00:57:04,116--> 00:57:05,908

-I mean, there's many,

way, way too much,

1267

00:57:05,932--> 00:57:08,068

but, you know, having

worked in an agency,

1268

00:57:08,092--> 00:57:11,000

but also been an author

who has had representation

1269

00:57:11,000--> 00:57:13,428

and has representation,

that's great,

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1270

00:57:13,452--> 00:57:15,000

but, you know,
they take a cut. So...

1271

00:57:15,000--> 00:57:17,000

-Oh, they do, yeah.

1272

00:57:17,000--> 00:57:19,788

-Because they have
the address book, right?

1273

00:57:19,812--> 00:57:21,600

And they're the people
who get you that deal.

1274

00:57:21,624--> 00:57:22,624

-They're the gatekeepers.

1275

00:57:22,648--> 00:57:23,988

Yeah, in many ways,

1276

00:57:24,012--> 00:57:27,068

-but I think there are more

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and more authors who are...

1277

00:57:27,092--> 00:57:29,828

I'm off to The Book Party

on Saturday, in fact, in Bristol,

1278

00:57:29,852--> 00:57:31,000

which is predominantly...

1279

00:57:31,000--> 00:57:35,388

Not exclusively, but there will be a lot
of independently published authors there

1280

00:57:35,412--> 00:57:36,412

in the room, I'm sure.

1281

00:57:36,436--> 00:57:40,148

And there is a huge,
kind of, industry

1282

00:57:40,172--> 00:57:44,908

of authors who are
choosing to self-publish.

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1283

00:57:44,932--> 00:57:47,548

Um, so it's not always the case

1284

00:57:47,572--> 00:57:50,868

that that is what we have to do,

1285

00:57:50,892--> 00:57:53,000

to look to those traditional
routes of publishing.

1286

00:57:53,000--> 00:57:54,000

-That's true.

1287

00:57:54,000--> 00:57:56,948

-And in fact, you

know, I did also want to...

1288

00:57:56,972--> 00:57:58,788

Maybe this is for later on,

1289

00:57:58,812--> 00:58:00,228

but in terms of resources,

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1290

00:58:00,252--> 00:58:03,000

I just wanted to flag the
Myslexia Guide to Indie Presses.

1291

00:58:03,000--> 00:58:06,068

Many of you will know the
Writers' & Artists' Yearbook,

1292

00:58:06,092--> 00:58:08,868

but this is coming into
its fifth edition soon.

1293

00:58:08,892--> 00:58:11,748

I just saw they were looking for
someone to work on that, in fact.

1294

00:58:11,772--> 00:58:13,000

But I would really, um...

1295

00:58:13,000--> 00:58:17,868

say that often the opportunities
are in the grassroots.

1296

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00:58:17,892--> 00:58:20,042

I mean, Folding Rock's a
really great example of that.

1297

00:58:20,066--> 00:58:22,188

You know, they're only
on issue two, Kathryn?

1298

00:58:22,212--> 00:58:24,988

It's amazing what
you're doing, uh, already

1299

00:58:25,012--> 00:58:28,588

and you're setting the bar
as well, um, for transparency.

1300

00:58:28,612--> 00:58:30,308

I know that you did
your submissions,

1301

00:58:30,332--> 00:58:32,000

which I couldn't
make, but you did your

1302

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00:58:32,000--> 00:58:35,148

submissions video

session recently,

1303

00:58:35,172--> 00:58:38,000

but you're kind of

leading the way.

1304

00:58:38,000--> 00:58:40,668

And I think that there's

a lot of hope, but, um,

1305

00:58:40,692--> 00:58:42,988

I think the more that

we can communicate

1306

00:58:43,012--> 00:58:44,502

and talk together

in events like this,

1307

00:58:44,526--> 00:58:50,000

and I'm looking forward to questions,

to support one another then the better.

1308

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00:58:50,000--> 00:58:51,788

-Absolutely.

1309

00:58:51,812--> 00:58:55,028

And I think, well, that's a fantastic
note to finish there on, Julia,

1310

00:58:55,052--> 00:58:56,508

while we take a comfort break.

1311

00:58:56,532--> 00:58:58,300

So, we're going to do
that for 5 minutes now

1312

00:58:58,324--> 00:59:01,268

and then we're going
to come back and, um,

1313

00:59:01,292--> 00:59:04,000

have a look at some of your
questions and address those.

1314

00:59:04,000--> 00:59:07,828

Thank you, everyone, and we're

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going to take a 5-minute comfort break.

1315

00:59:14,000--> 00:59:18,000

Hi there, we're just waiting for

Kathryn to come back and join us again.

1316

00:59:18,000--> 00:59:21,308

Um... I think we're...

1317

00:59:21,332--> 00:59:23,108

I think we're back live now, um,

1318

00:59:23,132--> 00:59:25,028

so welcome back to everybody

1319

00:59:25,052--> 00:59:26,348

and thanks for sticking with us.

1320

00:59:26,372--> 00:59:27,908

I think it's been

a really fruitful

1321

00:59:27,932--> 00:59:30,000

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and hopefully positive

discussion so far.

1322

00:59:30,000--> 00:59:32,268

We've got so many questions,

1323

00:59:32,292--> 00:59:34,292

so I'm just going to fire

them at you quite quickly

1324

00:59:34,316--> 00:59:36,000

and see whether we

can get through them

1325

00:59:36,000--> 00:59:38,188

in our time, and um...

1326

00:59:38,212--> 00:59:42,000

And I do apologize in advance

if we don't get to your question.

1327

00:59:42,000--> 00:59:46,988

Quick one here from, um, actually

a member of our steering committee.

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1328

00:59:47,012--> 00:59:51,000

"What's your personal tips for resilience
in the face of the disappointments

1329

00:59:51,000--> 00:59:53,628

and frustrations in
the publishing world?"

1330

00:59:53,652--> 00:59:56,228

And somebody else is
asking, Kaja's asking,

1331

00:59:56,252--> 00:59:57,908

"how do you deal
with rejection?"

1332

00:59:57,932--> 01:00:00,087

So I think we could, sort
of, over those two together.

1333

01:00:00,111--> 01:00:03,388

Resilience and
dealing with rejection.

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1334

01:00:03,412--> 01:00:07,468

-Great. Yeah, I'm really, really
happy to go first on that one.

1335

01:00:07,492--> 01:00:08,788

I feel like I've got...

1336

01:00:08,812--> 01:00:11,348

Yeah, I've had a
lot of experience

1337

01:00:11,372--> 01:00:14,228

and also been the one
writing the rejection letters.

1338

01:00:14,252--> 01:00:20,000

But, uh, there is an absolutely
brilliant essay in a book that,

1339

01:00:20,000--> 01:00:23,668

um, full disclosure,
I help to promote,

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1340

01:00:23,692--> 01:00:25,788

but it's called How to Be a Poet

1341

01:00:25,812--> 01:00:28,000

and it's by Jo Bell, Jane

Commane, they edited it.

1342

01:00:28,000--> 01:00:30,748

It's 9 Arches Press, and in...

1343

01:00:30,772--> 01:00:34,000

It was Jo Bell's painteded--

patented method

1344

01:00:34,000--> 01:00:37,788

for putting your work

into the world, and it takes

1345

01:00:37,812--> 01:00:42,668

the, um, the kind of

subjective horror out of it

1346

01:00:42,692--> 01:00:45,000

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and turns it into a spreadsheet.

1347

01:00:45,000--> 01:00:47,668

I would always
say externalize it,

1348

01:00:47,692--> 01:00:49,068

put it into a spreadsheet,

1349

01:00:49,092--> 01:00:51,000

think of it as a numbers game.

1350

01:00:51,000--> 01:00:52,788

And, um...

1351

01:00:52,812--> 01:00:54,988

She's super strategic

1352

01:00:55,012--> 01:00:57,668

about how she submits her work

1353

01:00:57,692--> 01:01:00,000

and it's an absolutely, uh,

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1354

01:01:00,000--> 01:01:02,908

brilliant piece, because

it's got loads of humour in it.

1355

01:01:02,932--> 01:01:04,433

Um, so I recommend that essay.

1356

01:01:04,457--> 01:01:09,268

And I think... feel the feels

when you get the rejection.

1357

01:01:09,292--> 01:01:12,000

Don't kind of, um...

but don't dwell.

1358

01:01:12,000--> 01:01:15,268

-Yeah, feel it in the

moment, process it quickly,

1359

01:01:15,292--> 01:01:16,348

rather than...

1360

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01:01:16,372--> 01:01:19,828

Don't let it becomes something
that grows inside you.

1361

01:01:19,852--> 01:01:22,908

So that would be
my very quick...

1362

01:01:22,932--> 01:01:25,412

-Thank you, and maybe, Julia,
you could just put a link to that

1363

01:01:25,436--> 01:01:27,908

in the chat for
everyone, thanks.

1364

01:01:27,932--> 01:01:31,000

-Beat us to it.
-Oh, there we go.

1365

01:01:31,000--> 01:01:34,548

I just wanted to just,
um, say about the

1366

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01:01:34,572--> 01:01:36,228

question of resilience as well,

1367

01:01:36,252--> 01:01:37,428

because I think there's...

1368

01:01:37,452--> 01:01:39,308

Beyond just the sort of
rejection which happens

1369

01:01:39,332--> 01:01:41,948

for every writer
throughout their career,

1370

01:01:41,972--> 01:01:45,468

my spreadsheet of,
like, writing opportunities

1371

01:01:45,492--> 01:01:48,200

and things that I've pitched
for and applied for is almost all...

1372

01:01:48,224--> 01:01:51,788

I do it orange, because red

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feels a bit too harsh on myself.

1373

01:01:51,812--> 01:01:54,068

So I make them orange
when they're unsuccessful,

1374

01:01:54,092--> 01:01:56,000

but honestly, it's
a wall of orange.

1375

01:01:56,000--> 01:01:57,828

Um, and I think...

1376

01:01:57,852--> 01:01:59,068

It doesn't...

1377

01:01:59,092--> 01:02:01,300

But I think there's versions of
resilience that you need

1378

01:02:01,324--> 01:02:03,588

even, like, you
know, when you're...

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1379

01:02:03,612--> 01:02:05,508

if your book is out in the world

1380

01:02:05,532--> 01:02:07,628

and you're still banging

on so many doors that...

1381

01:02:07,652--> 01:02:09,308

that feel very much closed

1382

01:02:09,332--> 01:02:11,276

when it comes to trying to

get publicity for it,

1383

01:02:11,300--> 01:02:14,380

trying to get people to buy it, trying

to promote yourself, it's really hard.

1384

01:02:14,404--> 01:02:16,068

You need to be so

resilient, and I think

1385

01:02:16,092--> 01:02:18,012

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what's really important

in that is that you are...

1386

01:02:18,036--> 01:02:20,468

Um, maybe to take a step back

1387

01:02:20,492--> 01:02:24,000

and have a think about what
your version of success is.

1388

01:02:24,000--> 01:02:26,668

Um, and... and...

1389

01:02:26,692--> 01:02:31,348

I think it's easy to feel like
there's all these versions of failing,

1390

01:02:31,372--> 01:02:34,988

but if you focus on what maybe
versions of success can look like,

1391

01:02:35,012--> 01:02:40,348

then that is someone coming
up to you at the, um, book event

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1392

01:02:40,372--> 01:02:42,000

where only maybe 6 people came.

1393

01:02:42,000--> 01:02:44,188

But someone came

up to you and said that

1394

01:02:44,212--> 01:02:45,748

they've just really

loved your book

1395

01:02:45,772--> 01:02:47,000

and it really spoke to them.

1396

01:02:47,000--> 01:02:48,000

I mean, that's

1397

01:02:48,000--> 01:02:51,788

more success, perhaps,

than 100 sales, right?

1398

01:02:51,812--> 01:02:57,000

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And so... I think,
um, about looking for...

1399

01:02:57,000--> 01:02:59,908

things sort of, I think, look...

1400

01:02:59,932--> 01:03:03,052

trying to look... and I think probably
what's coming out of a lot of this as well

1401

01:03:03,076--> 01:03:05,188

is that we're here
to sort of talk about

1402

01:03:05,212--> 01:03:07,588

how to make money in
writing, but actually, often,

1403

01:03:07,612--> 01:03:09,228

most of us are making
money in other ways

1404

01:03:09,252--> 01:03:12,000

in order to make the writing

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happen and so, maybe,

1405

01:03:12,000--> 01:03:16,388

success with the writing isn't
just about getting it published

1406

01:03:16,412--> 01:03:18,988

and isn't just about
making money from it.

1407

01:03:19,012--> 01:03:21,000

It's about making stuff
that we're proud of.

1408

01:03:21,000--> 01:03:24,228

And make sure that even if
only a handful of people read,

1409

01:03:24,252--> 01:03:26,000

it speaks to them.

1410

01:03:26,000--> 01:03:28,268

-Yeah, absolutely. I
always remind myself,

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1411

01:03:28,292--> 01:03:31,053

because I constantly have to deal
with, sort of, feelings of rejection

1412

01:03:31,077--> 01:03:36,028

or failure, or, you
know, disappointment

1413

01:03:36,052--> 01:03:38,000

in many, many ways, um, but...

1414

01:03:38,000--> 01:03:40,988

I always try to remind
myself of the positives,

1415

01:03:41,012--> 01:03:42,828

as you say, you know, I think of

1416

01:03:42,852--> 01:03:46,148

how people have responded to
the work that's been published.

1417

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01:03:46,172--> 01:03:49,068

Um, you know, people
who've written to me

1418

01:03:49,092--> 01:03:50,300

or spoken to me and tell me

1419

01:03:50,324--> 01:03:53,188

that my work has meant
something to them and their family,

1420

01:03:53,212--> 01:03:55,000

and I try to keep that with me.

1421

01:03:55,000--> 01:03:57,388

Um, and that, I
think, is important.

1422

01:03:57,412--> 01:04:00,100

I find, as well, making connections
with other writers really helps.

1423

01:04:00,124--> 01:04:02,948

So, I would encourage everyone,

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1424

01:04:02,972--> 01:04:05,148

if you're not already a
member of Society of Authors,

1425

01:04:05,172--> 01:04:08,588

do think about joining and
think about joining a local group

1426

01:04:08,612--> 01:04:10,268

or joining the committee

1427

01:04:10,292--> 01:04:11,508

or, you know,

1428

01:04:11,532--> 01:04:14,000

just finding other ways to
connect with other writers,

1429

01:04:14,000--> 01:04:15,050

because I think it does...

1430

01:04:15,074--> 01:04:16,588

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I think that helps as well.

1431

01:04:16,612--> 01:04:18,828

And also because you'll find
out that everyone's dealing

1432

01:04:18,852--> 01:04:20,200

with these same
feelings as well,

1433

01:04:20,224--> 01:04:21,768

however successful
people might appear,

1434

01:04:21,792--> 01:04:24,048

because we all have to put
our best selves out, don't we?

1435

01:04:24,072--> 01:04:26,200

And it always looks as if
we're wildly successful and

1436

01:04:26,224--> 01:04:27,588

living this amazing life.

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1437

01:04:27,612--> 01:04:29,388

But behind that, there's often...

1438

01:04:29,412--> 01:04:32,100

You know, because a writer's life
is one of ups and downs, isn't it?

1439

01:04:32,124--> 01:04:35,388

It's... it's never a
straightforward path.

1440

01:04:35,412--> 01:04:37,148

Or maybe it is for
the very few people...

1441

01:04:37,172--> 01:04:39,300

the people at the very,
very top, but for most of us

1442

01:04:39,324--> 01:04:41,628

it's a struggle, and
it's up and down,

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1443

01:04:41,652--> 01:04:44,000

and that's part of the
pain, but also the joy of it.

1444

01:04:44,000--> 01:04:49,000

-Yeah, and just to, um, sort
of speak to rejections as

1445

01:04:49,000--> 01:04:52,948

an editor as well, which is,
uh, by far my least favourite.

1446

01:04:52,972--> 01:04:54,468

I hate... I hate doing them.

1447

01:04:54,492--> 01:04:57,628

But, uh, I think that thing of
connecting with other writers

1448

01:04:57,652--> 01:05:02,188

is really important, because one sort
of piece of advice I give quite often is,

1449

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01:05:02,212--> 01:05:04,868

you know, rejections, they
are part and parcel of it,

1450

01:05:04,892--> 01:05:07,228

but it's an opportunity to
make that piece of work better.

1451

01:05:07,252--> 01:05:10,000

Don't... If you get a rejection,

1452

01:05:10,000--> 01:05:12,148

you know, there's always,
always room for improvement

1453

01:05:12,172--> 01:05:13,628

and if you don't know...

1454

01:05:13,652--> 01:05:16,508

-Yeah, and if you're lucky enough
to get feedback, then that might help.

1455

01:05:16,532--> 01:05:18,368

-Yeah, and that's, I mean,

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that's really hard.

1456

01:05:18,392--> 01:05:20,648

Like, I wish I could give
more feedback than I'm able to,

1457

01:05:20,672--> 01:05:23,000

but you can get it from
friends and people who,

1458

01:05:23,000--> 01:05:26,388

um, you know, even people
who don't necessarily write.

1459

01:05:26,412--> 01:05:28,468

Just a reader's response.

1460

01:05:28,492--> 01:05:30,948

And also just come back
to stuff with fresh eyes,

1461

01:05:30,972--> 01:05:33,600

and usually once it's been through
the process of being submitted

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1462

01:05:33,624--> 01:05:36,248

go back, it's been a couple of
weeks or months, and so now you've...

1463

01:05:36,272--> 01:05:38,108

you've got an opportunity
to go back to that,

1464

01:05:38,132--> 01:05:40,168

so I think you use rejections
also as opportunities

1465

01:05:40,192--> 01:05:41,568

to make that piece
of work better.

1466

01:05:41,592--> 01:05:44,708

-Yeah. Absolutely. I have a
drawer full of rejected manuscripts,

1467

01:05:44,732--> 01:05:47,308

but I find that the longer they
stay there, often I get them out

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1468

01:05:47,332--> 01:05:49,613

and I think, oh, I could do
something different with that.

1469

01:05:49,637--> 01:05:51,308

And you don't feel
as close to it any more,

1470

01:05:51,332--> 01:05:53,408

so you're not as precious
about making those changes

1471

01:05:53,432--> 01:05:54,768

that you actually need to make.

1472

01:05:54,792--> 01:05:56,188

I'm gonna move on to another.

1473

01:05:56,212--> 01:05:57,848

Somebody's saying
they're going to join!

1474

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01:05:57,872--> 01:05:59,108

Um, brilliant!

1475

01:05:59,132--> 01:06:01,108

So...

1476

01:06:01,132--> 01:06:03,308

Uh, another question

here from Adam.

1477

01:06:03,332--> 01:06:05,788

"Do you have any

experience of setting up

1478

01:06:05,812--> 01:06:07,268

a community interest company

1479

01:06:07,292--> 01:06:09,300

and applying for pots or

funding as an organization

1480

01:06:09,324--> 01:06:10,908

instead of as an individual?

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1481

01:06:10,932--> 01:06:13,028

And if so, what were
your experiences?"

1482

01:06:13,052--> 01:06:15,000

Have either of you...?

1483

01:06:15,000--> 01:06:17,000

-No, I'm so sorry.

-No.

1484

01:06:17,000--> 01:06:20,068

-Yeah, no, I mean,
we considered it

1485

01:06:20,092--> 01:06:22,508

when we were, um,
forming Folding Rock,

1486

01:06:22,532--> 01:06:24,544

but we decided to be a
company limited by guarantee

1487

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01:06:24,568--> 01:06:25,568

-Yeah. Right.

1488

01:06:25,592--> 01:06:29,988

But I do think that, um, when
looking at things like funding,

1489

01:06:30,012--> 01:06:33,788

so funding from the
Arts Council in Wales,

1490

01:06:33,812--> 01:06:36,508

things like the Create Fund,

1491

01:06:36,532--> 01:06:39,000

which you can apply to
as an individual

1492

01:06:39,000--> 01:06:41,588

but also as an organization,

1493

01:06:41,612--> 01:06:43,000

if you're looking
to do a project,

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1494

01:06:43,000--> 01:06:46,148

is that company interest groups

1495

01:06:46,172--> 01:06:49,868

are a way of being able to then,

1496

01:06:49,892--> 01:06:51,500

yeah, apply for

certain kinds of funding.

1497

01:06:51,524--> 01:06:54,948

-And they... they do like

collaboration, don't they?

1498

01:06:54,972--> 01:06:56,100

The Arts Council Wales.

1499

01:06:56,124--> 01:06:57,708

They do love that.

1500

01:06:57,732--> 01:06:59,108

So that could be an opportunity,

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1501

01:06:59,132--> 01:07:01,000

a way into getting
some of that funding.

1502

01:07:01,000--> 01:07:03,108

Um, thank you.

1503

01:07:03,132--> 01:07:08,000

Um, Adam's also asking whether we've
found any reliable and comprehensive lists

1504

01:07:08,000--> 01:07:10,828

online of annual
funding opportunities

1505

01:07:10,852--> 01:07:14,000

with the deadlines
clearly listed.

1506

01:07:14,000--> 01:07:16,508

Um, I don't...

1507

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01:07:16,532--> 01:07:20,000

I mean, for me, I would
just look at the individual

1508

01:07:20,000--> 01:07:21,348

websites, really.

1509

01:07:21,372--> 01:07:24,000

I don't know whether
anyone's sort of collated, um...

1510

01:07:24,000--> 01:07:28,428

I would... I would say,
just to flag, um, Kathryn's

1511

01:07:28,452--> 01:07:32,000

link to Sian Meades-Williams is...

1512

01:07:32,000--> 01:07:36,000

her book, The Pyjama
Myth, if you do want to be

1513

01:07:36,000--> 01:07:40,428

a freelance writer,

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um, is brilliant as well.

1514

01:07:40,452--> 01:07:42,548

I know some of you in the
room already have a copy,

1515

01:07:42,572--> 01:07:44,100

because I've heard
you talk about it.

1516

01:07:44,124--> 01:07:48,000

But yeah, it's really... it's
great, and Sian's brilliant.

1517

01:07:48,000--> 01:07:50,148

-Yes, I totally second that

1518

01:07:50,172--> 01:07:53,000

and her book's
really, really good, and uh, she

1519

01:07:53,000--> 01:07:56,468

collates also now, I
think, monthly round-ups

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1520

01:07:56,492--> 01:07:59,028

of the sort of, yeah, the
bigger competitions and things,

1521

01:07:59,052--> 01:08:01,508

as well as weekly round-ups
of absolutely everything.

1522

01:08:01,532--> 01:08:03,628

And I read it religiously
every week, and um...

1523

01:08:03,652--> 01:08:05,688

I've applied for all sorts
of things through that.

1524

01:08:05,712--> 01:08:08,600

I think she's probably got, at the
moment, one of the most comprehensive

1525

01:08:08,624--> 01:08:10,828

ongoing and up-to-date lists,

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1526

01:08:10,852--> 01:08:12,548

because they land in
your inbox every week,

1527

01:08:12,572--> 01:08:15,000

so I always say to any...
to anyone wanting to

1528

01:08:15,000--> 01:08:18,468

get themselves out
there, slash, make money

1529

01:08:18,492--> 01:08:20,811

as a writer, they should
be following her newsletter.

1530

01:08:20,835--> 01:08:22,000

[laughs]

1531

01:08:22,000--> 01:08:24,268

-Fantastic. Well, everybody's
gonna be on it now.

1532

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01:08:24,292--> 01:08:28,000

She's going to have a sudden influx
of followers, I feel, after this, so...

1533

01:08:28,000--> 01:08:29,508

Thank you, Emma,
for posting that.

1534

01:08:29,532--> 01:08:31,608

Emma's been doing a
brilliant job in the background,

1535

01:08:31,632--> 01:08:34,700

posting up all the links for everyone,
so I hope you've all been taking note.

1536

01:08:34,724--> 01:08:38,188

Somebody is asking here

1537

01:08:38,212--> 01:08:39,748

whether there's an equivalent,

1538

01:08:39,772--> 01:08:43,988

the Developing Your Creative

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Practice grant, in Wales.

1539

01:08:45,772--> 01:08:49,028

-Well, there isn't
that I'm aware of.

1540

01:08:49,052--> 01:08:50,828

I don't know...

-Not currently.

1541

01:08:50,852--> 01:08:53,028

I would say the
Hay Writers at Work...

1542

01:08:53,052--> 01:08:56,000

If you can get 10 days out

1543

01:08:56,000--> 01:08:57,388

over the Hay Festival,

1544

01:08:57,412--> 01:09:00,000

I totally apply for
that year on year.

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1545

01:09:00,000--> 01:09:04,428

Um, and, um, if you meet the
criteria of representing Wales,

1546

01:09:04,452--> 01:09:06,000

but other than that, I'm not...

1547

01:09:06,000--> 01:09:11,000

I don't know of other pots... I
don't know if Kathryn does?

1548

01:09:11,000--> 01:09:13,548

-Uh, no, I mean,
unfortunately, I mean,

1549

01:09:13,572--> 01:09:15,868

the beauty of the DYCP grant

1550

01:09:15,892--> 01:09:18,828

is that it's not project-specific
and I think that's why...

1551

01:09:18,852--> 01:09:21,068

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I mean, it is in a
way, but really it's for...

1552

01:09:21,092--> 01:09:24,388

it's like the Time to Write
Fund that used to exist.

1553

01:09:24,412--> 01:09:25,908

It's for, um...

1554

01:09:25,932--> 01:09:28,468

It's for spending
time on your practice

1555

01:09:28,492--> 01:09:30,388

and developing your skills,

1556

01:09:30,412--> 01:09:31,512

which is the beauty of it.

1557

01:09:31,536--> 01:09:34,268

Um, but the...

1558

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01:09:34,292--> 01:09:37,828

There are project-specific
pots of money in Wales.

1559

01:09:37,852--> 01:09:41,000

So we just mentioned the Create
Fund from Arts Council Wales.

1560

01:09:41,000--> 01:09:43,908

Um, that is being reviewed.

1561

01:09:43,932--> 01:09:45,388

I think the, um...

1562

01:09:45,412--> 01:09:49,108

Its current form is
finishing in August.

1563

01:09:49,132--> 01:09:53,268

Um, and they do have a
thing on their guidelines

1564

01:09:53,292--> 01:09:55,768

when you dig deep, saying if

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you're interested in literature,

1565

01:09:55,792--> 01:09:57,668

then go to Literature Wales.

1566

01:09:57,692--> 01:10:00,000

But I... my advice would be,
because Literature Wales

1567

01:10:00,000--> 01:10:02,028

don't have the available funds

1568

01:10:02,052--> 01:10:05,148

for, for, um, sort of ad
hoc funding like that,

1569

01:10:05,172--> 01:10:09,668

but to still try if you've got,
um, a more project-specific idea.

1570

01:10:09,692--> 01:10:12,468

And then the other
thing I would say, again,

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1571

01:10:12,492--> 01:10:14,028

it's project-specific,

1572

01:10:14,052--> 01:10:16,200

but things like the Royal
Society of Literature have

1573

01:10:16,224--> 01:10:18,788

the Literature Matters fund,

1574

01:10:18,812--> 01:10:19,988

which is open at the moment,

1575

01:10:20,012--> 01:10:23,548

um, and closes at the
beginning of August, I believe.

1576

01:10:23,572--> 01:10:26,068

And that is for,
sort of, projects.

1577

01:10:26,092--> 01:10:27,688

And again, there's

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lots of opportunities

1578

01:10:27,712--> 01:10:30,508

that aren't Wales-specific, but

UK-wide, that you can still apply to.

1579

01:10:30,532--> 01:10:32,492

-But that you can still

apply to, living in Wales.

1580

01:10:32,516--> 01:10:35,108

Yeah, exactly. Um, so they're

not... they're not England-specific,

1581

01:10:35,132--> 01:10:37,028

like the Arts Council England.

1582

01:10:37,052--> 01:10:39,000

And that one is

1583

01:10:39,000--> 01:10:43,428

sort of for projects

that I think generally

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1584

01:10:43,452--> 01:10:45,988

it's good with that kind of thing
to be working in partnership

1585

01:10:46,012--> 01:10:48,068

with organisations
or with other creatives,

1586

01:10:48,092--> 01:10:49,394

but it's... if there's a project

1587

01:10:49,418--> 01:10:51,788

that you want to do that will
have an impact in literature

1588

01:10:51,812--> 01:10:53,108

and so it's worth checking out.

1589

01:10:53,132--> 01:10:55,468

But yeah, unfortunately,
something equivalent to that,

1590

01:10:55,492--> 01:10:58,000

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which is really all about
your personal practice

1591

01:10:58,000--> 01:10:59,428

doesn't quite exist.

1592

01:10:59,452--> 01:11:01,348

I think you can shoehorn
it into some things,

1593

01:11:01,372--> 01:11:03,000

but, um...

1594

01:11:03,000--> 01:11:05,508

Yeah, it's... we'll... We'll, hope.

1595

01:11:05,532--> 01:11:07,748

-Not exactly the same,
not at the moment, anyway.

1596

01:11:07,772--> 01:11:08,868

-No, no, exactly.

1597

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01:11:08,892--> 01:11:10,468

-The only other

one I was thinking,

1598

01:11:10,492--> 01:11:12,388

if you have some track record,

1599

01:11:12,412--> 01:11:14,628

would of course be

the Society of Authors

1600

01:11:14,652--> 01:11:17,000

have grants that they give.

1601

01:11:17,000--> 01:11:20,000

Um, so I've had the K Blundell

Trust Award, and then just

1602

01:11:20,000--> 01:11:22,468

a Society of Authors award.

1603

01:11:22,492--> 01:11:25,000

I think they were to the tune

of 1 and 2,000 pounds each,

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1604

01:11:25,000--> 01:11:27,268

possibly two or three.

1605

01:11:27,292--> 01:11:28,948

So they're also worth looking at

1606

01:11:28,972--> 01:11:32,000

and Emma will definitely
have the links for those.

1607

01:11:32,000--> 01:11:33,228

Yeah, so I would...

1608

01:11:33,252--> 01:11:35,068

But I think, as
with many of these,

1609

01:11:35,092--> 01:11:37,108

if you're successful, you
have to then wait 4 years

1610

01:11:37,132--> 01:11:39,300

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before you can apply again,
of course, which is great.

1611

01:11:39,324--> 01:11:42,228

So, it's worth
looking at those, too.

1612

01:11:42,252--> 01:11:44,348

-Yeah, thank you, thank you both.

1613

01:11:44,372--> 01:11:47,100

Um, I think that was... that was
hopefully very helpful for everyone.

1614

01:11:47,124--> 01:11:49,508

Um, Louise has a question here.

1615

01:11:49,532--> 01:11:51,388

"How beneficial
do you find juggling

1616

01:11:51,412--> 01:11:54,000

multiple jobs within the
creative writing industry?

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1617

01:11:54,000--> 01:11:58,000

So working as an editor, either
in the industry or freelance,

1618

01:11:58,000--> 01:11:59,188

as well as writing part-time.

1619

01:11:59,212--> 01:12:04,000

Is this a necessity for
any sort of decent income?"

1620

01:12:04,000--> 01:12:07,388

-Yeah. That's a
really good question.

1621

01:12:07,412--> 01:12:08,588

I mean, I wonder what...

1622

01:12:08,612--> 01:12:11,000

I wonder when Louise
is saying "beneficial",

1623

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01:12:11,000--> 01:12:15,108

I'm... I don't think it benefits

1624

01:12:15,132--> 01:12:17,000

my chances of being
published, I just...

1625

01:12:17,000--> 01:12:18,000

-No.

1626

01:12:18,000--> 01:12:21,508

-I do not think you need to be
in the industry to be published.

1627

01:12:21,532--> 01:12:23,200

I really don't. It just so happens that

1628

01:12:23,224--> 01:12:25,748

[inaudible] both are,

1629

01:12:25,772--> 01:12:27,948

so I want to really
make that clear.

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1630

01:12:27,972--> 01:12:31,000

-Yeah, I mean, I'm

not... I don't have any other

1631

01:12:31,000--> 01:12:32,628

skin in the publishing game.

1632

01:12:32,652--> 01:12:34,552

I don't, you know, I

don't work for a publisher,

1633

01:12:34,576--> 01:12:36,000

never have, um...

1634

01:12:36,000--> 01:12:40,000

So, I'm an example of

someone who has made it work

1635

01:12:40,000--> 01:12:42,000

for a number of

years as a writer.

1636

01:12:42,000--> 01:12:46,268

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-But I think having
had a portfolio career

1637

01:12:46,292--> 01:12:48,228

pretty much all my career, it...

1638

01:12:48,252--> 01:12:51,668

I think that one of the huge
benefits from doing that

1639

01:12:51,692--> 01:12:54,028

is that you develop very...

1640

01:12:54,052--> 01:12:56,000

a very specific set of skills

1641

01:12:56,000--> 01:12:58,308

where you can

1642

01:12:58,332--> 01:13:00,000

conceive of a project

1643

01:13:00,000--> 01:13:02,748

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or conceive of a book,

1644

01:13:02,772--> 01:13:05,388

and see that idea

through to completion,

1645

01:13:05,412--> 01:13:07,868

which is huge, like, actually

completing something,

1646

01:13:07,892--> 01:13:11,000

whether that's a podcast

series, or a book, or, um...

1647

01:13:11,000--> 01:13:12,908

you know, a poetry collection,

1648

01:13:12,932--> 01:13:15,948

or setting up a magazine, or,

you know, building a [inaudible].

1649

01:13:15,972--> 01:13:19,908

Whatever it is, it means that you

can do that whole range of things,

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1650

01:13:19,932--> 01:13:24,000

and I think, um, if you think about
the transferable skills that you...

1651

01:13:24,000--> 01:13:26,588

I think thinking
about other ways

1652

01:13:26,612--> 01:13:28,200

in which you could
apply yourself then,

1653

01:13:28,224--> 01:13:31,468

like, you can kind of...
you could turn yourself

1654

01:13:31,492--> 01:13:32,868

to kind of anything,

1655

01:13:32,892--> 01:13:36,108

which is an amazing
entrepreneurial skill,

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1656

01:13:36,132--> 01:13:37,628

I think, in a way.

1657

01:13:37,652--> 01:13:40,428

Use the word entrepreneur,
but I think authors very often are.

1658

01:13:40,452--> 01:13:42,200

-Yeah, I think we are,
because we're always

1659

01:13:42,224--> 01:13:44,508

hustling, basically.

1660

01:13:44,532--> 01:13:47,508

We have to to
create opportunities.

1661

01:13:47,532--> 01:13:51,000

-And often so... Because we're
working within communities as well,

1662

01:13:51,000--> 01:13:53,708

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you know, I think

that actually...

1663

01:13:53,732--> 01:13:55,948

because I've worked a

little bit in social enterprise

1664

01:13:55,972--> 01:13:57,988

and often there's a

huge crossover, I think,

1665

01:13:58,012--> 01:14:00,628

between... when I look at

what social entrepreneurs do

1666

01:14:00,652--> 01:14:03,000

and what people who work

in writer development or are

1667

01:14:03,000--> 01:14:04,988

authors are doing,

1668

01:14:05,012--> 01:14:08,000

especially when there's

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messages in those books

1669

01:14:08,000--> 01:14:10,028

around kind of social

justice or whatever.

1670

01:14:10,052--> 01:14:13,668

So, yeah, I'm not sure if that

answers your question, Louise,

1671

01:14:13,692--> 01:14:16,548

but, um, I've found

it deeply rewarding.

1672

01:14:16,572--> 01:14:18,188

I do wear too many hats

1673

01:14:18,212--> 01:14:20,000

and I'm trying to let

go of some of them.

1674

01:14:20,000--> 01:14:22,468

-No, I think it's...

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1675

01:14:22,492--> 01:14:24,000

I think that was a
very good answer.

1676

01:14:24,000--> 01:14:27,308

-I can see that
Louise has also added

1677

01:14:27,332--> 01:14:29,000

beneficial in terms
of money to live.

1678

01:14:29,000--> 01:14:30,000

-Ahh, yeah.

1679

01:14:30,000--> 01:14:32,868

-And I think, um...

1680

01:14:32,892--> 01:14:35,628

I agree with Julia

1681

01:14:35,652--> 01:14:38,308

in terms of that it's beneficial

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in other ways as well.

1682

01:14:38,332--> 01:14:40,028

I actually talked

about this recently on a

1683

01:14:40,052--> 01:14:42,508

really good podcast that I'd

recommend called Books Unpacked,

1684

01:14:42,532--> 01:14:44,900

which, um, takes a look at,

sort of, behind the scenes of

1685

01:14:44,924--> 01:14:46,728

different aspects of

the publishing industry.

1686

01:14:46,752--> 01:14:50,000

And, um, about, sort

of, being on both sides

1687

01:14:50,000--> 01:14:51,028

of things.

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1688

01:14:51,052--> 01:14:54,000

And I think that...

1689

01:14:54,000--> 01:14:59,000

Yeah, in terms of... for me,

it's a necessity, because it...

1690

01:14:59,000--> 01:15:02,548

Sort of having that portfolio

is so that I have money to live,

1691

01:15:02,572--> 01:15:03,868

but I found it really hard

1692

01:15:03,892--> 01:15:06,000

when I had more

hats than I have now.

1693

01:15:06,000--> 01:15:07,708

When I was sort of freelance

1694

01:15:07,732--> 01:15:10,508

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without having the kind
of linchpin of the magazine

1695

01:15:10,532--> 01:15:14,628

because I felt
like I was spending

1696

01:15:14,652--> 01:15:16,868

more time looking for work

1697

01:15:16,892--> 01:15:19,068

and applying for
stuff and pitching

1698

01:15:19,092--> 01:15:21,228

than I was actually doing
work and making money,

1699

01:15:21,252--> 01:15:24,388

and I think that at
some point, that shifts,

1700

01:15:24,412--> 01:15:26,248

and you know, you have

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stuff coming in to you

1701

01:15:26,272--> 01:15:28,512

and that's great, and it
takes a long time to build that,

1702

01:15:28,536--> 01:15:30,548

but I found that
really hard, um,

1703

01:15:30,572--> 01:15:35,188

and I think, for me, having
sort of a little bit more clear-cut,

1704

01:15:35,212--> 01:15:37,708

sort of, this is a magazine
day, this is a writing day.

1705

01:15:37,732--> 01:15:40,108

-Yeah, a bit of delineation, yes...

1706

01:15:40,132--> 01:15:41,708

-This is a podcast day, like, I...

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1707

01:15:41,732--> 01:15:45,376

for me personally, those
boundaries are quite important.

1708

01:15:45,400--> 01:15:46,548

-Yeah, yeah.

1709

01:15:46,572--> 01:15:48,588

-Um, so, yeah, I
mean, that, again,

1710

01:15:48,612--> 01:15:51,812

I think there's lots of different ways
to talk about that, and it's interesting.

1711

01:15:51,836--> 01:15:53,868

It's something I'm really
interested in, actually,

1712

01:15:53,892--> 01:15:56,000

is sort of working on
both sides of the bar.

1713

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01:15:56,000--> 01:15:58,188

-Absolutely. And somebody's
asking here that, sorry,

1714

01:15:58,212--> 01:16:00,000

this was a question
that came in before

1715

01:16:00,000--> 01:16:02,148

tonight's event,

1716

01:16:02,172--> 01:16:04,000

and I just want to
touch on it briefly.

1717

01:16:04,000--> 01:16:05,708

Somebody's saying they're...

1718

01:16:05,732--> 01:16:07,788

they're currently working
in a different career

1719

01:16:07,812--> 01:16:10,600

and they're asking whether it's

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possible to learn the craft of writing

1720

01:16:10,624--> 01:16:13,148

while you're in a non-writing
or non-creative career

1721

01:16:13,172--> 01:16:15,000

and transition to
becoming a published writer.

1722

01:16:15,000--> 01:16:18,388

Um, presumably, I'm not sure
who it was who asked this question,

1723

01:16:18,412--> 01:16:21,000

but presumably you're
working full-time, I'm not sure.

1724

01:16:21,000--> 01:16:22,948

Um...

1725

01:16:22,972--> 01:16:25,508

I mean, I certainly
managed to transition

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1726

01:16:25,532--> 01:16:26,708

from being, um,

1727

01:16:26,732--> 01:16:28,000

from being a lecturer.

1728

01:16:28,000--> 01:16:31,668

I was lecturing in Spanish at
UWE and we actually all, um...

1729

01:16:31,692--> 01:16:32,692

Well, we lost our jobs,

1730

01:16:32,716--> 01:16:35,600

because they decided in all their
wisdom to close the entire department

1731

01:16:35,624--> 01:16:37,788

and we all became
made redundant.

1732

01:16:37,812--> 01:16:41,000

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And I had a baby and a
toddler at the time, so it's like...

1733

01:16:41,000--> 01:16:43,748

Help, what do I do? I
need... I need to work

1734

01:16:43,772--> 01:16:46,000

and I'd always wanted to
be a writer, and I ended up...

1735

01:16:46,024--> 01:16:49,000

I did have a little bit of time over the
summer holiday and I just ended up

1736

01:16:49,024--> 01:16:53,000

writing like mad,
all the time and, um,

1737

01:16:53,000--> 01:16:56,268

just developing my
work really, really quickly.

1738

01:16:56,292--> 01:16:57,748

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Slightly, um...

1739

01:16:57,772--> 01:16:59,868

I don't know whether I'd
necessarily recommend that.

1740

01:16:59,892--> 01:17:02,708

And obviously, I wasn't, you
know, working full-time at the time,

1741

01:17:02,732--> 01:17:04,000

but, um...

1742

01:17:04,000--> 01:17:05,508

So I think it is...

1743

01:17:05,532--> 01:17:07,748

it's certainly possible
to develop your craft.

1744

01:17:07,772--> 01:17:09,828

I mean, it depends how
much time you have available

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1745

01:17:09,852--> 01:17:11,788

and how committed
you are to it, really.

1746

01:17:11,812--> 01:17:14,988

How much you-- You've got to really
need it and want it, and I find that that,

1747

01:17:15,012--> 01:17:16,628

for me, was a huge motivation.

1748

01:17:16,652--> 01:17:20,000

In my case, I needed
another income stream

1749

01:17:20,000--> 01:17:21,828

and I didn't want to go...

1750

01:17:21,852--> 01:17:25,468

I couldn't really think of anything
else that I really wanted to do.

1751

01:17:25,492--> 01:17:28,000

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So, yeah, I don't know if
you've got anything to add to that

1752

01:17:28,000--> 01:17:30,868

very quickly, Kathryn or Julia,

1753

01:17:30,892--> 01:17:33,000

because we are going to
have to close in a minute.

1754

01:17:33,000--> 01:17:34,000

-I would say...

1755

01:17:34,000--> 01:17:36,148

-Yeah, I mean, I... oh, go on.

-Sorry.

1756

01:17:36,172--> 01:17:40,000

-Um, I... I wrote Seaglass

1757

01:17:40,000--> 01:17:43,028

whilst working full-time
for New Writing North

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1758

01:17:43,052--> 01:17:46,000

and even though that
was a sort of related job to

1759

01:17:46,000--> 01:17:48,708

the industry, I...

1760

01:17:48,732--> 01:17:49,908

it was quite hard in a way,

1761

01:17:49,932--> 01:17:52,000

because I was working
with authors all the time.

1762

01:17:52,000--> 01:17:54,148

But, you know, none
of those situations

1763

01:17:54,172--> 01:17:55,748

was I the writer in the room.

-Yeah.

1764

01:17:55,772--> 01:17:58,748

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-I was very much
facilitating other writers,

1765

01:17:58,772--> 01:18:00,228

so I was, you know,
organizing events

1766

01:18:00,252--> 01:18:02,200

for other people to launch
their books, and um...

1767

01:18:02,224--> 01:18:06,188

helping run development
programs for emerging writers,

1768

01:18:06,212--> 01:18:08,868

and in none of those spaces... I
very much felt like a closet writer

1769

01:18:08,892--> 01:18:12,000

and I was working full-time, and I
was commuting to Newcastle from York.

1770

01:18:12,000--> 01:18:13,000

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-It's a long way.

1771

01:18:13,000--> 01:18:14,908

-Most days in the week.

1772

01:18:14,932--> 01:18:17,708

And honestly, spending most
of my salary on that commute.

1773

01:18:17,732--> 01:18:19,148

[laughs]

1774

01:18:19,172--> 01:18:20,388

[inaudible]

1775

01:18:20,412--> 01:18:24,000

A lot of it was written
on the train, and um...

1776

01:18:24,000--> 01:18:28,108

But it's... it was a book I felt really
strongly about and I loved writing,

1777

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01:18:28,132--> 01:18:29,388

so I made it happen.

1778

01:18:29,412--> 01:18:31,948

And I don't think I could
necessarily do that with every book.

1779

01:18:31,972--> 01:18:34,348

But, um, especially
not, sort of, once you've

1780

01:18:34,372--> 01:18:35,748

then got a book to promote

1781

01:18:35,772--> 01:18:37,188

and you're working
on the next one,

1782

01:18:37,212--> 01:18:39,500

because then that's sort of
two full-time jobs, in a way.

1783

01:18:39,524--> 01:18:42,428

Um, but... but

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it's totally doable.

1784

01:18:42,452--> 01:18:45,100

If it's the right book, if it's a
book that you really care about

1785

01:18:45,124--> 01:18:47,548

then, you know,
and I don't say that...

1786

01:18:47,572--> 01:18:49,308

I don't say that lightly,

1787

01:18:49,332--> 01:18:51,500

because people have all
sorts of responsibilities and--

1788

01:18:51,524--> 01:18:52,948

-Yeah, yeah, of
course, of course,

1789

01:18:52,972--> 01:18:55,000

but I would second that
and I would also say,

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1790

01:18:55,000--> 01:18:57,628

perhaps, you know, if you're
talking about developing your craft,

1791

01:18:57,652--> 01:18:59,708

do make use of
the opportunities.

1792

01:18:59,732--> 01:19:01,868

So, for example, Tŷ Newydd
that offers many courses,

1793

01:19:01,892--> 01:19:03,200

as I'm sure you're all aware,

1794

01:19:03,224--> 01:19:05,508

residential courses, some
of them are quite short.

1795

01:19:05,532--> 01:19:08,268

Um, so you could try to use
some of your holiday time

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1796

01:19:08,292--> 01:19:10,228

or go for a weekend course,

1797

01:19:10,252--> 01:19:11,988

meet other writers, um,

1798

01:19:12,012--> 01:19:14,000

have some mentoring.

1799

01:19:14,000--> 01:19:15,628

Um, and then just...

1800

01:19:15,652--> 01:19:17,188

We've got two more questions.

1801

01:19:17,212--> 01:19:19,068

I wonder if we've got
time. Very, very quickly,

1802

01:19:19,092--> 01:19:21,108

we're going to have to
almost answer in a sentence.

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1803

01:19:21,132--> 01:19:22,748

Do the panellists
think it's a good idea

1804

01:19:22,772--> 01:19:25,000

to focus on developing our
writing in a certain niche?

1805

01:19:25,000--> 01:19:28,000

A certain genre? What
do you think? Very quickly.

1806

01:19:28,000--> 01:19:31,548

-Um, yeah, well, it's a
really good question.

1807

01:19:31,572--> 01:19:32,588

So, I've...

1808

01:19:32,612--> 01:19:34,628

I've done the
non-strategic thing.

1809

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01:19:34,652--> 01:19:36,308

So my first book

was non-fiction,

1810

01:19:36,332--> 01:19:37,748

second book was fiction,

1811

01:19:37,772--> 01:19:39,428

third book is poetry,

1812

01:19:39,452--> 01:19:40,708

fourth book is memoir.

1813

01:19:40,732--> 01:19:43,428

And from a career perspective,

1814

01:19:43,452--> 01:19:45,508

that's probably not advisable

1815

01:19:45,532--> 01:19:49,508

if you want to be a

highly remunerated

1816

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01:19:49,532--> 01:19:51,308

career author,

1817

01:19:51,332--> 01:19:53,588

because, you know, it's a bit...

1818

01:19:53,612--> 01:19:56,000

it potentially

confusing, however,

1819

01:19:56,000--> 01:19:58,348

I tend to kind of work

1820

01:19:58,372--> 01:20:00,000

where the art wants

to take me, so...

1821

01:20:00,024--> 01:20:04,388

not necessarily

looking to maximize

1822

01:20:04,412--> 01:20:07,148

that kind of aspect

of things financially.

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1823

01:20:07,172--> 01:20:09,000

I publish a book
every 10 years as well.

1824

01:20:09,000--> 01:20:12,628

I hope, once my kids
do both leave home,

1825

01:20:12,652--> 01:20:14,428

speed up a bit, but um...

1826

01:20:14,452--> 01:20:18,148

I think that you can also publish
under a pseudonym as well,

1827

01:20:18,172--> 01:20:22,000

so it's always good
to remember that too.

1828

01:20:22,024--> 01:20:23,288

-That's true. Thank you.

1829

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01:20:23,312--> 01:20:25,468

And one very last

question here from Sophie.

1830

01:20:25,492--> 01:20:28,200

Um, "what do you think about the
ethics of writing articles for free

1831

01:20:28,224--> 01:20:31,068

in the interest of
book promotion?

1832

01:20:31,092--> 01:20:34,428

Um, I had an interesting conversation with
some other writers at Tŷ Newydd recently,

1833

01:20:34,452--> 01:20:37,000

and there was a fair
bit of criticism of writers

1834

01:20:37,000--> 01:20:38,468

taking on unpaid commissions."

1835

01:20:38,492--> 01:20:40,988

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But I have been guilty of it with
my first book out this summer

1836

01:20:41,012--> 01:20:42,188

and I do understand that.

1837

01:20:42,212--> 01:20:45,668

I mean, obviously, there's a
huge temptation, isn't there?

1838

01:20:45,692--> 01:20:49,028

Um, because we all
want to promote our work

1839

01:20:49,052--> 01:20:50,908

and we often... I think all of us

1840

01:20:50,932--> 01:20:53,000

as writers do
sometimes undertake

1841

01:20:53,000--> 01:20:54,308

work for free

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1842

01:20:54,332--> 01:20:56,308

in the interest of
promoting our...

1843

01:20:56,332--> 01:20:57,628

our work.

1844

01:20:57,652--> 01:20:59,988

It's almost an ethical
question, isn't it?

1845

01:21:00,012--> 01:21:02,588

But it's also... I don't know,
it's a bit more than that.

1846

01:21:02,612--> 01:21:04,492

Kathryn, could you say
something really quickly?

1847

01:21:04,492--> 01:21:07,508

-Yeah, I would say, Sophie,
don't feel guilty about that,

1848

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01:21:07,532--> 01:21:10,948

because, um, I mean, I

did loads of it for Seaglass,

1849

01:21:10,972--> 01:21:12,708

because I wanted it to... it's...

1850

01:21:12,732--> 01:21:15,068

I think the thing with, um,

publicizing a specific book,

1851

01:21:15,092--> 01:21:17,000

it is a bit different, because

1852

01:21:17,000--> 01:21:19,228

you're getting...

1853

01:21:19,252--> 01:21:20,788

you're getting in

return publicity,

1854

01:21:20,812--> 01:21:22,288

which hopefully

leads to book sales.

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1855

01:21:22,312--> 01:21:25,788

And so, it is

relatively standard

1856

01:21:25,812--> 01:21:28,428

for publications offering

you, say, for instance,

1857

01:21:28,452--> 01:21:31,000

an interview or a focus piece

1858

01:21:31,000--> 01:21:32,628

related to your book.

1859

01:21:32,652--> 01:21:34,028

Um, but to not...

1860

01:21:34,052--> 01:21:36,708

But because it's specific

publicity for that book

1861

01:21:36,732--> 01:21:39,388

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and there will be a link

to buy the book, then it...

1862

01:21:39,412--> 01:21:41,028

that's the payment, in a way.

1863

01:21:41,052--> 01:21:44,628

And I think when it comes to,
yeah, promotion, unfortunately,

1864

01:21:44,652--> 01:21:46,268

we do a lot of work
around that, and

1865

01:21:46,292--> 01:21:49,748

when we're with independent publishers
that don't have the resources, um...

1866

01:21:49,772--> 01:21:52,852

-Yeah. Or even with mainstream publishers,
I mean, I feel this is a discussion

1867

01:21:52,876--> 01:21:55,148

for another day, perhaps,

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but I certainly... I get...

1868

01:21:55,172--> 01:21:57,028

I get frustrated by
the number of times

1869

01:21:57,052--> 01:22:00,000

I'm asked to do things
for free, even by my own...

1870

01:22:00,000--> 01:22:02,068

The publicists at my
publishers are often,

1871

01:22:02,092--> 01:22:05,388

you know, sending me Q&As for
this magazine or that magazine,

1872

01:22:05,412--> 01:22:07,268

and, you know, asking me to...

1873

01:22:07,292--> 01:22:11,228

to, um, devote my time to writing
an article completely for free.

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1874

01:22:11,252--> 01:22:14,200

It's not paid, it's just assumed
that I will do this as part of the deal.

1875

01:22:14,224--> 01:22:18,976

-Yeah, I would say as well
that it's, uh, it's really hard.

1876

01:22:19,000--> 01:22:21,988

But you can always
ask for money.

1877

01:22:22,012--> 01:22:24,468

They're not gonna say...
they're not gonna say...

1878

01:22:24,492--> 01:22:27,428

You can ask nicely, but firmly.

1879

01:22:27,452--> 01:22:28,740

-You can ask, and if there's no...

1880

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01:22:28,764--> 01:22:30,188

there's no money,

there's no money,

1881

01:22:30,212--> 01:22:31,812

but I would always

ask as well, and um...

1882

01:22:31,836--> 01:22:34,288

Emma's just saying a piece of
advice, don't forget to invoice.

1883

01:22:34,312--> 01:22:35,788

And I would agree, you know,

1884

01:22:35,812--> 01:22:38,000

you need to really keep

tabs on the time you spend.

1885

01:22:38,000--> 01:22:43,000

And, yes, and B, don't be

afraid to be assertive as well,

1886

01:22:43,000--> 01:22:48,000

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I would say, and remember
what your time is worth.

1887

01:22:48,000--> 01:22:49,000

Um...

1888

01:22:49,000--> 01:22:51,228

-Yeah, being mindful
about saying yes to things

1889

01:22:51,252--> 01:22:53,708

for specific
reasons for yourself.

1890

01:22:53,732--> 01:22:54,976

So if it's book publicity,

1891

01:22:55,000--> 01:22:58,108

because it's something that you want to
do to maybe give back to the community

1892

01:22:58,132--> 01:23:00,708

or it's a topic that you
feel passionately about,

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1893

01:23:00,732--> 01:23:02,268

or even you're doing
someone a favour,

1894

01:23:02,292--> 01:23:03,908

or it's for exposure,

1895

01:23:03,932--> 01:23:05,400

as long as you're
clear with yourself

1896

01:23:05,424--> 01:23:08,108

and also with what
the value of that thing

1897

01:23:08,132--> 01:23:09,948

that you're doing for
free would be otherwise,

1898

01:23:09,972--> 01:23:12,000

I actually know an
author who invoices

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1899

01:23:12,000--> 01:23:14,548

even when they're

doing something for free

1900

01:23:14,572--> 01:23:16,148

but waives the fee,

1901

01:23:16,172--> 01:23:18,000

just to demonstrate

what it would cost

1902

01:23:18,000--> 01:23:19,000

for them to do that.

1903

01:23:19,000--> 01:23:21,908

But just to recognize

the time that they're given.

1904

01:23:21,932--> 01:23:24,200

-Yes. That's... that's a... that's

a really good idea, yeah.

1905

01:23:24,224--> 01:23:25,668

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Absolutely, value your time.

1906

01:23:25,692--> 01:23:28,000

Value your input as well.

1907

01:23:28,000--> 01:23:29,988

Um...

1908

01:23:30,012--> 01:23:32,692

So, I'm really sorry, but I'm gonna
have to draw this to a close now

1909

01:23:32,716--> 01:23:34,088

because we're
nearly out of time.

1910

01:23:34,112--> 01:23:36,000

I hope everyone's
found this helpful.

1911

01:23:36,000--> 01:23:38,508

I'd like to say a huge thank you

1912

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01:23:38,532--> 01:23:40,388

to both Kathryn and Julia

1913

01:23:40,412--> 01:23:42,000

for joining me

for today's event.

1914

01:23:42,000--> 01:23:44,948

And thank you to everyone

who's joined us as well

1915

01:23:44,972--> 01:23:48,000

with your questions

and comments.

1916

01:23:48,000--> 01:23:50,028

Thank you very much for

Emma, to Emma Boniwell,

1917

01:23:50,052--> 01:23:53,463

for moderating today's event and also for

putting in all those links in the chat box,

1918

01:23:53,487--> 01:23:56,548

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which I hope you've all
had time to take note of.

1919

01:23:56,572--> 01:23:58,886

If you've enjoyed this event
and you're still not a member

1920

01:23:58,910--> 01:24:00,788

of the Society of Authors,

1921

01:24:00,812--> 01:24:03,148

please do consider
joining our community.

1922

01:24:03,172--> 01:24:05,628

There's a special Society
of Authors at Home offer,

1923

01:24:05,652--> 01:24:07,000

you can get 20% off

1924

01:24:07,000--> 01:24:08,668

first year of membership.

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1925

01:24:08,692--> 01:24:10,000

Just have to use the code

1926

01:24:10,000--> 01:24:12,588

"SOAATHOME20".

1927

01:24:12,612--> 01:24:14,588

Um, on a personal note,

1928

01:24:14,612--> 01:24:15,978

I've been on the

steering committee

1929

01:24:16,002--> 01:24:18,508

of the Society of Authors

Cymru for several years now.

1930

01:24:18,532--> 01:24:21,028

Um, I'm about to step

down from my duties,

1931

01:24:21,052--> 01:24:23,588

and give somebody else

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a chance to contribute.

1932

01:24:23,612--> 01:24:25,868

It's an entirely voluntary role.

1933

01:24:25,892--> 01:24:28,500

We're not paid. I haven't been paid for being here this evening.

1934

01:24:28,524--> 01:24:30,308

But what it does give you

1935

01:24:30,332--> 01:24:33,000

is the chance to work with other authors here in Wales

1936

01:24:33,000--> 01:24:35,108

to try to improve things for us all,

1937

01:24:35,132--> 01:24:38,000

and it also gives you a sense of community, um...

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1938

01:24:38,000--> 01:24:40,628

And being part of that
writer's community here.

1939

01:24:40,652--> 01:24:42,348

So, if you're interested,

1940

01:24:42,372--> 01:24:44,748

please do consider putting
yourself forward for election.

1941

01:24:44,772--> 01:24:46,668

If you feel fired up
from tonight's discussion

1942

01:24:46,692--> 01:24:48,300

and you feel that
you could contribute

1943

01:24:48,324--> 01:24:51,068

and make a difference,
then please do consider this.

1944

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01:24:51,092--> 01:24:54,000

There will be an email
going out about this

1945

01:24:54,000--> 01:24:56,628

to all members next
week, I believe, Emma.

1946

01:24:56,652--> 01:25:00,828

Um, and the next, uh, Society
of Authors at Home event

1947

01:25:00,852--> 01:25:03,788

takes place this
Thursday from 2.30pm,

1948

01:25:03,812--> 01:25:05,868

with an In Conversation with

1949

01:25:05,892--> 01:25:08,000

translators David
Colmer and David McKay

1950

01:25:08,000--> 01:25:12,108

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in conjunction with the Society of
Author's Translators Association.

1951

01:25:12,132--> 01:25:14,348

And, um, for more
information about that,

1952

01:25:14,372--> 01:25:16,108

you can head to the website,

1953

01:25:16,132--> 01:25:18,000

the events page of
the website to book

1954

01:25:18,000--> 01:25:20,788

or check out the
events programme.

1955

01:25:20,812--> 01:25:23,548

And, yeah, just a final reminder

1956

01:25:23,572--> 01:25:25,268

that this event was
free to everyone,

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1957

01:25:25,292--> 01:25:29,000

but if you can afford to

do so and you would like to

1958

01:25:29,000--> 01:25:31,600

then do consider donating to the

Society of Authors Access Fund.

1959

01:25:31,624--> 01:25:34,828

And as we talked

about earlier, you know,

1960

01:25:34,852--> 01:25:38,000

these funds are created and

then people can benefit from them.

1961

01:25:38,000--> 01:25:40,588

So, might even be yourself

benefiting one day, but...

1962

01:25:40,612--> 01:25:43,068

Anyway, thank you so much

to everyone for joining us,

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1963

01:25:43,092--> 01:25:45,000

especially to

Kathryn and Julia

1964

01:25:45,000--> 01:25:48,828

for all your fantastic

advice and input today.

1965

01:25:48,852--> 01:25:51,988

Um, and let's continue this

conversation on social media

1966

01:25:52,012--> 01:25:53,112

with the festival hashtag

1967

01:25:53,136--> 01:25:56,868

Society of Authors...

so, #SoAatHome

1968

01:25:56,892--> 01:25:59,508

and I think Emma's

putting that up for us now.

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1969

01:25:59,532--> 01:26:01,108

So, thank you very
much, everyone,

1970

01:26:01,132--> 01:26:02,828

and enjoy the rest
of your evenings.

1971

01:26:02,852--> 01:26:04,468

-Thank you.

1972

01:26:04,492--> 01:26:06,988

-Thanks, everyone.