

How to prepare for a more successful Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival

Screenwriters' website TwelvePoint.com is putting together a collection of articles that will help you make the most of your time at the Screenwriters' Festival in Cheltenham. Some of these articles are already available on the TwelvePoint website. More will follow over the next two weeks, with the emphasis on practical advice to help you prepare and plan your time.

As a Screenwriters' Festival delegate, speaker or staffer, you are entitled to 6 months' free membership of TwelvePoint.com. If you haven't yet logged on, **please activate your free membership by emailing jonquil@scriptwritermagazine.com** with your SWF registration number (delegates) or your name if you are a speaker, staff member, Festival runner or have complimentary membership.

It will be valuable for you to read these articles before you get to Cheltenham. All speakers and delegates are entitled to a free 6-month membership of TwelvePoint.com **BUT YOU HAVE TO ACTIVATE YOUR FREE MEMBERSHIP BY EMAILING:**

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She will provide you with a username and password. You need to give her your SWF registration number if you are a delegate, or your name if you are a speaker or have complimentary membership. This also applies to the runners.

In addition to the articles summarised below, there will be short practical guides covering:

SPECIAL FEATURES
1: How to prepare for the Festival
2: Understanding the role of the producer
3: Networking do's and don'ts
4: Pitching do's and don'ts
5: Session timetable – how to plan your Festival
6: Last minute checklist
7: Post-Festival round-up and what to do next

There are also notes on many of the producers on the SWF website who will be there, so writers in particular can have no excuse for not knowing what they have done. This information, culled from the internet, should give you ideas about which producers are more likely to be interested in what you are writing and which are not.

There are also Q&A interviews from many of the agents so that if you are speed dating you will be able to get straight into your short time with them without having to ask basic questions, which they have answered in the interviews.

For the speed dating there is also advice on how to pitch in five minutes: your pitch can be far more successful if you study these notes before you get to Cheltenham.

If you have any questions not answered by all the information provided you can ask on TwelvePoint's dedicated SWF discussion forum. TwelvePoint Forum, where there is a section specifically for the SWF: <http://www.twelvepoint.com/?q=forums/forum/-screenwriters-festival-forum>

ARTICLES

In addition to useful articles on the craft and business of writing for the screen, this list includes features about or by industry professionals who are speaking at the Screenwriters' Festival.

How to write more effective treatments – part 1

In this valuable series of TwelvePoint training articles, Julian Friedmann, who has worked with writers as an agent, editor and publisher for 40 years, looks at the prose documents that writers should work on before they start writing their script or novel. These documents are invaluable aids when planning a story but, more importantly, they're also crucial to the selling process.

Despite all that has been written on scriptwriting, there is relatively little information available on treatment writing. Simple treatments will be provided in this series of articles.

How to write more effective treatments – part 2

In this second part of his article on treatments Julian Friedmann focuses on the selling process. He looks at pitching, the three pitching documents needed by writers and, perhaps the most important part of a treatment, the synopsis.

Inventing stories and treatments

Tamsin Meddings attended Julian Friedmann's masterclass on Treatments. Julian provides tips on how to approach a writing project and poses questions that writers should always ask themselves when setting up stories to become scripts. He also explores pitching and negotiating skills as Treatments are often used to raise money or sell ideas.

Making drama at the BBC: an interview with Kate Harwood – part 1

Kate Harwood is, alongside John Yorke and Nick Brown, one of the pillars of BBC television drama; her official title is Controller of Series and Serials. Here she talks to Julian Friedmann about how she landed her role, how her department connects with other parts of BBC television drama and how they select and work with writers.

Making drama at the BBC: an interview with Kate Harwood – part 2

In the second extract of this interview Kate Harwood talks to Julian Friedmann about how the BBC drama department relates to BBC Films; its attitude towards single dramas; changing drama budgets; Ben Stephenson's role; how writers can best approach the BBC with series ideas; and how writers join series teams.

Making drama at the BBC: an interview with Kate Harwood – part 3

In the last part of this interview, Kate Harwood talks to Julian Friedmann about how projects can be submitted (directly to the drama department or via the independent route); whether BBC drama takes enough risks; her attitude towards political correctness; her views on American drama; why the BBC doesn't make *The Wire*; and the greenlight process in BBC drama.

Mamma Mia's Catherine Johnson

The name Catherine Johnson may not be as recognisable as that of Oscar-winner Simon Beaufoy or even Peter Morgan, but her movie *Mamma Mia* has done considerably better at the box office than any film penned by either writer. Alice Charles gives an account of Johnson's speech at a 'Women in Film and Television' seminar in London.

Getting the most from scriptwriting festivals

A primer from Caroline Ferguson on why you should make the investment, what to expect and how to get the most out of one. This article provides invaluable advice on dealing with The 'N' Word: Networking.

Networking. Not working?

Paul Brannigan knew he needed to be better at networking so he went to Janice Day's workshop on effective networking and left with a much better mind-set.

How the Screenwriters' Festival taught me to stop worrying and love the doubt

Will Snow, full of doubt and disillusionment that he would make it as a scriptwriter, goes to the Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival feeling like a fraud, only to discover that self-doubt is universal. Here he describes what he learned from the speakers and other writers.

Do some developers need to be taught a lesson?

Script consultant and development producer Sarah Olley attended the Screenwriters' Festival, where Sir David Hare made some negative comments on Script Development being taught academically. As a graduate of the very course being mentioned, in this article she explores the nature of good development, the necessary skills and the role of a practical course. Are these two points of view as diametrically opposite as they seem?

A Digital Editorial

Julian Friedmann welcomes readers to the first issue of ScriptWriter magazine online at our new TwelvePoint.com website. Two events take place this week that have a bearing on the future of screenwriting: The International Screenwriters' Festival (SWF) – the third and best yet – starts in Cheltenham and ScriptWriter magazine takes off online with the launch of TwelvePoint.com.

The Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival

At the first Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival in 2006, Paul Hoggart was commissioned to write a diary piece for a pitching competition and conduct an interview with Jimmy McGovern. This is his account of the new event, which tackled the subjects of breaking into the film industry, the art of pitching and features summaries of interviews with Hollywood writer Bill Nicholson as well as McGovern.

Cannes vs. Cheltenham: a writer's view

Having attended both The Cannes Film Festival 2006 and The International Screenwriters' Festival at Cheltenham, Tom Williams compares the two, approaching them from a scriptwriter's perspective. Taking into account the logistics, as well as the benefits of each, this article serves as a valuable guide for first-time festival-goers.

Networking

Lolita Fortuin looks at the art and business of networking for experienced writers to beginners. At the Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival she interviews Cecile Marchant and Maya Hammarsal who have each developed effective, personal networks.

Script development

Monica Solon, a writer, attends the Script Factory's workshop on script development. The tutor, Kate Leys, explains that development includes technical aspects of script analysis as well as managing the relationship with the writer to enable them to find solutions to the problems in the script.

Promoting your work

Being a professional writer involves much more than simply writing scripts. Understanding how films and television drama are financed and how writers are often selected because of who they are as well as how well they write, can make the difference between earning a living as a writer or not. Lucy Hay tells us how to be noticed.

Why every writer should have a blog

Jason Arnopp genuinely believes that running a screenwriting blog will improve a writer's life. Plugging directly into an existing online community, writers will feel less of the solitary sting that naturally besets them when toiling away at a keyboard with less social interaction than they might like. What's more, if a writer blogs well enough, it might even gain them employment.

Hollywood Boulevard in your own backyard

Being in Hollywood is not always possible. Skip Press shows how writers can make the most of Hollywood without actually being there.

To live and write in LA

Hollywood takes over your life. Your friends are all in the business. Your conversations are about this movie or that or this script or that or this hiring/firing/moving/shaking or that. In this article, Tom Williams explains what living in LA did to his writing career and what it could do for yours.

Writing conferences

There are an increasing number of scriptwriting courses on offer, but fewer conferences. Janice Day finds out exactly what writers derive from conferences (apart from hangovers), providing comments from a variety of writers who have experienced the benefits.

Getting known in small town Hollywood

With the thousands of writers already there you'd be forgiven for thinking it impossible to get yourself known in Hollywood. Skip Press outlines how a writer must conduct himself in this cut-throat town in order to meet the right people and get noticed.

TO RECAP:

The Screenwriters' Festival website also hosts a wealth of information. There are notes (based on internet research) on many of the producers who are due to attend the Festival, so delegates will have no excuse for not doing their homework. This information should give writers, in particular, ideas about which producers may be more open to hearing about particular projects.

*There are also Q&A interviews with many of the attending agents, so that if you take part in the Speed Dating you can make the most of your sessions without having to ask basic questions that are covered in the **interviews**.*

Also with regard to Speed Dating, agent and pitching guru Julian Friedmann offers advice on how to pitch in five minutes. Improve your chances of pitching success by studying these notes in advance.

If you have any questions about preparing for SWF you can post them on TwelvePoint's dedicated SWF discussion forum, where there is a section specifically for the SWF.