

FIREFIGHTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2016

PROTECT YOURSELF

NEW FBU GUIDANCE ON CONTAMINANTS

SEE P10

Plus

ORLANDO
MASSACRE

SEE P12

FBU'S
CENTENARY

SEE P14





MATT WRACK PAY: NO EASY ANSWER, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE PAY FREEZE

The National Joint Council has agreed an increase in pay rates of 1%, applying from 1 July. A central policy of the Tory government, the public sector pay squeeze means FBU members and their families have seen living standards fall since the financial crash.

The anger over this was reflected at our conference in May, when delegates argued that, clearly, this situation cannot continue. There are broadly two approaches to challenging the pay freeze. We have agreed to prepare for both.

First, we need to be part of a broad campaign to defeat pay restraint, with serious discussions about co-ordinated industrial action with other trade unions. Everyone involved would need to be clear about the scale of struggle needed to defeat the government.

The second approach is no easier and has no guarantee of success – discussions with the government about the range of work our members undertake and the need for investment in this.

These discussions have included the five NJC workstreams which we have previously reported on.

We have held initial discussions with the Home Office and are seeking similar talks with ministers elsewhere in the UK, making the case for investment into our service rather than cuts – such investment would support the protection of our service and the increases in pay our members need.

None of this is easy, as



you will appreciate, but we continue to make the case. Over the next few months these discussions will clarify the position on all sides. Later this year we should be in a position to report back in more detail whether progress has been made.

FLOODS – MAKING THE CASE FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

I recently presented evidence to the House of Commons environment, food and rural affairs select committee on future flood protection.

Flooding, and our response to it, is now a central part of the work of our service. Yet

the FBU was the only fire service body to submit written evidence to this inquiry and therefore we were the only organisation to be called to give verbal evidence.

This enabled us to build on the longstanding case we have made for improved planning and resources, and for a clear statutory duty on the service to respond to incidents of major flooding. This is the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland but not yet in Wales or England.

Our research has ensured that we are regularly taking up the concerns of FBU members on the frontline.

Since the floods of 2007, we have made progress on equipment and training, but more needs to be done. The statutory duty in Scotland and Northern Ireland has assisted the service.

Unfortunately, our campaign has not been assisted by a lack of consistency on the part of the Chief Fire Officers Association and the silence of the Local Government Association on the subject. The FBU has been the most consistent champion of our role in relation to major floods.

STEPHEN HUNT – AFTER THE INQUEST

The coroner investigating the death of Stephen Hunt has made a series of recommendations to the Home Secretary which will have implications for the whole of the fire and rescue service. We have summarised the findings in a recent all members circular which you can access at fbu.org/circulars.

The FBU provided legal and technical assistance throughout the inquest and our legal team supported the bereaved family and our members who were affected by Stephen Hunt's death.

The same mistakes keep being made over and over. It has to stop.

DAVEY HOPPER

A stalwart of the trade union movement, Davey Hopper, the long serving secretary of the Durham Miners' Association and good friend to firefighters and the FBU, sadly died in July aged 73. He will be missed – adios marra.

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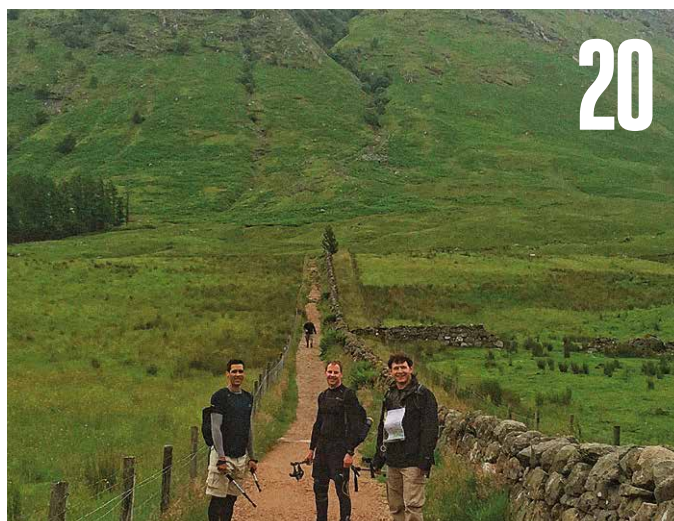
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NEWS

FLOODS

FBU is only fire and rescue service body to give evidence to MPs' flood inquiry
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NEWS FOCUS

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FBU members at a TUC demonstration

UNION PLANNING TWO-PART CAMPAIGN AGAINST LOW PAY

PAY CAP

Firefighters and their families are struggling to pay the bills and to plan for the future, Matt Wrack, the general secretary of the FBU, said after it was confirmed that pay for fire and rescue service staff will be capped at 1% for another year.

It will be the seventh consecutive year that firefighters, along with other public sector workers, have seen their wages frozen or capped.

The news comes as a new TUC report shows Britain has suffered a bigger fall in real wages since the 2008 financial crash than any other advanced country apart from austerity-ravaged Greece.

The union has now laid out a twofold plan to bring public sector pay back to the top of the political agenda. The FBU will work with other trade unions

to build a movement to challenge the public sector pay cap. The union will also work with the national employers and government on the possibility of expanding the role of firefighting, with the proviso that adequate funding is invested into the service.

As a result five workstreams have been created, including emergency medical response (EMR). Thirty six fire and rescue services are currently running trials which are scheduled to end by February 2017. The National Joint Council, made up of representatives of fire service employers and FBU reps, has commissioned an independent study to evaluate the trials that will be completed by the end of the year.

Matt Wrack said that the plan will aim to bring pressure on the government to act. "We are living through the longest period of austerity

since the Second World War. People are really struggling," he said. "We need to deal with low pay within the fire service as well as more widely within the trade union movement.

"We will make the case to the government that firefighters can have a positive impact in these new areas of work, such as emergency medical responding, but only if the right investment is made into the service.

"A major part of the discussions will be about pay and rewarding people for doing a professional job."

Wrack, however, urged caution, saying it would be difficult to get anything out of a Tory government that had drastically cut funding to life-saving public services.

The union has asked that members report any feedback into the trials to their brigade officials.

FBU SAVES LINCOLN FRONTLINE SERVICES

LINCOLNSHIRE

FBU members in Lincolnshire celebrated last month as their campaign to save frontline services paid off.

After a lengthy consultation, the county's fire and rescue service confirmed that it intends to keep Lincoln South fire station operating as a full-time outpost.

In addition, it will not outsource its fire control room functions. Two rescue support units, specialist vehicles that respond to major emergencies such as traffic collisions and chemical spillages, will also stay.

Ben Selby, secretary of the FBU in Lincolnshire, said: "This was a great

campaign run by local activists fighting to keep the public safe. The people of Lincoln are better served by having a station open 24 hours a day which can ensure fire crews can respond immediately to emergencies in the city.

"I am thankful that the acting chief fire officer Nick Borrill allowed fire service managers and the FBU to work together on the new proposals. In the past, there has not always been a willingness for both sides to work together.

"As this result demonstrates, close working relationships with trade unions and organisations can benefit everyone and in this instance keep the public safe."



BEN SELBY

Chairman, Lincolnshire Fire Brigades Union

DO YOU KNOW A HERO?

AWARDS

TV favourites Holly Willoughby and Phillip Schofield are on the lookout for the heroes in the emergency services to be celebrated at the Pride of Britain awards, which will be televised on ITV1's *This Morning* and covered in the *Daily Mirror*.

In an exclusive blog for fbu.org.uk, Holly and Phil want firefighters who have gone beyond the call of duty

to enter the This Morning Emergency Services Award. Last year's winners were the medical team who saved the lives of the young victims of



the Alton Towers rollercoaster crash. The FBU wants its members to be recognised this year.

Dave Green, FBU national

officer, urged members to apply. "I know firefighters don't always like to big themselves up – they tend to shrink from glory hunting – but our members deserve to be given the public recognition for their selfless courage.

"If you know anyone who you think deserves to be considered for the award, please do enter them."

■ For more info and to nominate, go to: www.fbu.org.uk/prideofbritain.

SOUNDING OFF

FLOODING THREAT NEEDS ACTION

Dave Green, FBU national officer, challenges Westminster politicians to give firefighters the resources they need



Proof that the government cares little for climate change came when new prime minister Theresa May, barely through the door at Number 10, scrapped the Department of Energy & Climate Change.

The trouble doubled with the appointment of Andrea Leadsom as environment minister. No doubt her experience as a debt trader and director of her brother-in-law's hedge fund will inform her decision to let the market rip, while ignoring flooding and other environmental impacts.

At the same time, the FBU received correspondence from ministers denying that the fire and rescue service in England needs a statutory duty to respond to flooding.

They should read the Committee on Climate Change's new *UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence*. The committee, an independent statutory body, found that "flooding already poses a severe threat to people, communities and buildings", while "climate change is expected to increase the frequency, severity and extent of flooding".

In Scotland and Northern Ireland fire and rescue services already have a duty to respond to major flooding. In Wales, ministers are due to consult on the issue. England lags behind. Politicians at Westminster should give firefighters the resources and equipment to intervene at floods.

■ **FBU evidence to MPs: p6**



MARK FRIDEN

Matt Wrack (right) with Davey Hopper at the 2015 Durham Miners' Gala

FBU REMEMBERS MINERS' LEADER DAVEY HOPPER

Davey Hopper, the long-serving secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, has died at the age of 73.

A stalwart of the trade union movement, Hopper was credited for revitalising the annual Durham Miners' Gala, which attracts tens of thousands of people each year.

Hopper was also known for raising money for FBU members during the nine-week firefighters' strike in 1977/78.

The support was reciprocated by the FBU to Hopper's own union, the National Union of Mineworkers, of which he was an executive member, during the miners' strike of 1984-5.

Former FBU London secretary Joe MacVeigh remembered his friend of almost 40 years as a principled and brave man.

"He remarked to me on many occasions: 'Ere Joe, I was puttin' money in firemen's buckets in 1977 to help feed their kids and they helped mine by puttin' money in my bucket in 1984. That, comrade, is solidarity.'

"He helped fashion both my politics and political conscience as a young miner and a trade unionist. I will miss him."

That sentiment is shared by everyone at the Fire Brigades Union.

IN BRIEF

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE POKÉMON GOING

A specialist rescue team in Wiltshire had to save a group of teenagers who got lost in a disused mine for more than six hours while playing Pokémon Go.

The augmented reality game, which uses a smartphone's GPS to detect where a player is and make the Pokémon to be "caught" appear around them on the phone's screen, has been blamed for a rash of farcical accidents across the globe since its launch in mid-July.

Two men fell down a cliff in San Diego, California as they were playing the game. In Indonesia, a French man was detained for illegally trespassing on an off-limits military base in order to capture the virtual creatures.

West Midlands fire service issued a public safety notice asking people to take care and be aware of their surroundings as they play.

OLDER PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO BE FIRE VICTIMS

Newly published fire statistics for 2014-15, the first since the Home Office took over responsibility for the fire and rescue service from the Department for Communities and Local Government earlier this year, show that 41% of all fatalities from fires in England were people aged 65 and older. Fires where a smoke alarm was not fitted accounted for almost one third of all dwelling fires and 35% of all dwelling fire fatalities.

FBU AIDS CAMPAIGNER FOR TAIWANESE FIREFIGHTERS

Taiwanese cartoonist Annie Han has used her experience of talking to the FBU during two visits to head office to boost a campaign to help Taiwanese firefighters organise a union. Currently this is illegal in the small island nation 110 miles east of mainland China.

Annie said that seven firefighters had died in Taiwan in 2015 due to overwork and a bad environment. She said: "Firefighters in Taiwan work five days a week, day and night. They are putting out fires with no proper kit to keep them safe with old, dangerous equipment. We are willing to do anything to make them safer and hope the new book, which features the FBU, will help to change things."

UNION PUTS FLOODS CASE TO MPs

The FBU was the only fire service body to submit evidence to a House of Commons investigation into future flood prevention, despite it being a crucial area of work for firefighters and public safety.

The union's general secretary Matt Wrack was invited to give evidence to the environment, food and rural affairs select committee in July about the lessons learned from the winter flooding late last year.

Wrack said the government needed a

"longer term focus" approach and that the fire service should have a clear statutory duty to respond to major flooding.

The committee,



Firefighters rescuing a family in Shipley, West Yorkshire, in December last year

TIM SMITH/PHOTOS PICTURES

chaired by Conservative MP Neil Parish, heard how a statutory duty would help fire services in England and Wales think more strategically about flooding and get away from the culture of "dealing with it as though it were simply a local issue".

MPs heard that, while training had improved, there was still concern about consistent resource shortages, reduced numbers of boat teams available to respond to incidents and a lack of wetsuits for firefighters.



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn steps down from the FBU campaign fire engine after speaking to a huge "Keep Corbyn" rally outside the Houses of Parliament on 27 June

BREXIT VOTE SPARKS POLITICAL TURMOIL

Senior Tories sacked and bid launched to oust Labour leader Corbyn

POLITICS

Britain's two main political parties were embroiled in leadership battles in the wake of the vote to leave the European Union. Following David Cameron's resignation, the Conservative Party would have to decide who would lead the country through turbulent times, with Labour also thrown into turmoil by the referendum result as its MPs moved to oust left-wing leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The Tories began the process of selecting a new leader at the end of a bitter referendum campaign that crystallised long-standing ideological differences.

In a surprise move, apparent front runner Boris Johnson stood down after his Brexit ally and campaign manager Michael Gove withdrew his backing and announced his own candidacy.

Vilified for his Machiavellian tactics and betrayal, Gove came in third place, clearing the field for junior energy minister and leave campaigner Andrea Leadsom to go head-to-head against long-serving home secretary Theresa May in the final round of voting.

But Leadsom succumbed to intense pressure, including claims that she had wildly exaggerated her business credentials, failed to publish her tax returns and suggested that having children made her a stronger candidate for the Tory leadership than her rival. Leadsom withdrew her candidacy, setting the stage for the coronation of Theresa May.

In a clear break with Cameron's administration, prime minister Theresa May unceremoniously sacked senior figures, including George Osborne and Michael Gove.

Nevertheless, she has taken steps to alleviate internal divisions in a strategic

reshuffle that has given prominent government posts to eurosceptic MPs, affording them real influence and power.

May's ability to hold the party together will undoubtedly be tested over the coming months with key decisions to be made on the timetable and terms of leaving the EU.

As the Tories get down to business, Labour remains embroiled in a bitter fight for control of the party.

After weeks of posturing, Angela Eagle triggered a formal leadership contest but it was former shadow work and pensions secretary Owen Smith who emerged as the Parliamentary Labour Party's preferred candidate, with Eagle departing the race in order to unite the ABC vote – Anyone But Corbyn.

Corbyn and Smith are now going head-to-head as they take their campaigns to members and affiliated supporters.

Polling suggests that Corbyn, the candidate backed by the FBU, continues to enjoy extensive grassroots support and is the overwhelming favourite to win the Labour leadership contest.

MAY'S STRATEGIC RESHUFFLE HAS GIVEN PROMINENT GOVERNMENT POSTS TO EUROSCEPTIC MPs, AFFORDING THEM REAL INFLUENCE AND POWER



DAMON CORR: "Our lads doing fire behaviour training (FBT) at Eastleigh, Hampshire. We came over from the Isle of Wight for the courses – a long day with ferries and all, but a good one."



MATTHEW DANIELS: "Derelict church, well alight, make pumps 6, Llanelli. Rapid fire spread, initial attack by crew using main jet."



WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS

The FBU photo competition for 2016 was won by Wayne Roe (West Midlands) with Damon Corr (Isle of Wight) and Matthew Daniels (Mid and West Wales) as joint runners up.

The five judges each chose their best three of the 80-plus entries and, with some overlap, the winners were chosen from a final 12 photos with thought given to the original remit.

The winning photo (right) was judged the best of the bunch because it conveyed firefighters working as a team, going about their work. The editing of colour and light gave the photo an extra dimension.

The photos will be framed and hung at FBU head office.

We congratulate the winners and thank all the members who took part.



WAYNE ROE: "Exercise Towering Inferno, Birmingham. Staying up to date inside a high rise at the entry control point. Beats being behind a desk any day."

CONTAMINANT

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE RISKS

New FBU guidance spells out what must be done to minimise hazards, **Lynne Wallis** reports



Proving the link between workplace hazards such as contaminants and illnesses such as cancer is notoriously difficult, as has been shown by hosts of workers who have been put at risk in the workplace over past decades. Steelworkers who developed respiratory disease as a direct result of tiny steel particles getting deep into their lungs waited so long for justice that many of them had died by the time their cases had been “won”.

There is now mounting evidence that firefighters are at a higher risk of carcinogens and other contaminants than the rest of the population. They are believed to be at increased risk of developing three types of cancer: testicular, prostate and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The source is a 2006 study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Since its publication, fire services in the UK, USA and elsewhere have started to take the threat seriously.

But firefighters themselves need to know what the risks are and what they can do to protect themselves.

The International Association of Fire Fighters, which represents firefighters and emergency medical services workers in the USA and Canada, says that cancer is the leading cause of death among firefighters, at 63%.

Male firefighters are also 100 times more likely, says the IAFF, to suffer from certain cancers, including testicular, than other men.

Firefighters can be affected by contaminants present in fires and by-products, by diesel fumes, and by building materials, such as dust and asbestos.

They are protected when they are fighting an actual fire – it is when the fire is extinguished that the risks to their health can become serious.

Firefighters will often leave dirty kit in the appliance, and not clean it before its next use, and this is when dangerous contaminants can seep into the skin.

Historically, there may have been reasons other than a bit of laxness with kit cleaning that prevented firefighters from taking care of themselves properly.

US firefighter Carter Jones told a journalist recently: “In May I’ll have 50 years with the fire service, and for years it was almost a

badge of honour that the dirtier your clothes, the dirtier your helmet, reflected that you were an aggressive firefighter.”

Thankfully, there is growing awareness of the risks posed by this outdated attitude – there’s nothing soft about protecting your health. Modern firefighters are now actively encouraged to ensure that their fire kits are kept clean between shouts, and to use common sense, for example, by not storing a newly cleaned kit near a contaminated PPE store.

The FBU has just published a new guide *Dealing with Contaminants* which contains a range of good advice about how to stay safe as well as things that reps should be pressing management for, including ensuring that all appliances are equipped with the resources firefighters need to clean themselves, such as wet wipes, disposable gloves, dust masks and hand washing facilities.

It also urges firefighters to take responsibility for their own fire kits, making sure they are clean, that they fit correctly, that kits are stored in clean air and not in the vicinity of diesel fumes.

Sadly, it is all too late for American “volunteer” firefighter Bucky Mock, 73, who was diagnosed with multiple myelomas in 2012. He had wondered since diagnosis if his cancer could have been work-related.

Then he got the confirmation he needed – the fire service he had worked for started putting tags inside all new fire kits urging firefighters to keep them clean at all times to protect themselves against cancer-causing contaminants.

He says it was then that he knew that it was his great love – fighting fires – that was the cause of his poor health.

He now spends what time he has left talking to groups of firefighters about prevention, so that no-one else is put at risk.

**IT IS WHEN FIRE
IS EXTINGUISHED
THAT RISKS TO
HEALTH CAN
BECOME SERIOUS**

GUIDANCE

New FBU guidance encourages all reps to print and mount on the station wall a 10-step guide to working with contaminants along the following lines

1

Always make sure your PPE is clean and stored in a clean environment. Always wear the right PPE for the incident

2

Wear BA if you are concerned about the possibility of airborne products of combustion

3

When damping down, wear full PPE and consider the use of a personal issue respirator

4

Post incident and while still on scene, clean your PPE to remove as many products of combustion as possible

5

Use wet-wipes as issued to remove soot etc. from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands immediately

6

When cleaning dirty PPE and equipment, wear gloves, dust masks etc.

7

Replace dirty fire kit on return to station and clean helmet, boots etc.

8

Thoroughly clean the fire appliance interior, equipment and lockers after a fire

9

Do not take dirty PPE home or store it in your vehicle

10

If necessary after removal of PPE, consider the need to shower and change your clothes

CHECKING ORL

Firefighters in the Florida city of Orlando responded to the worst mass shooting in recent US history. **William Murphy** reports on how they coped and how they plan to recover.

In the early hours of Sunday 12 June, 29-year-old Omar Mateen walked into the gay nightclub Pulse in Orlando, Florida and slaughtered 53 people. The fun sound of laughter, music and clinking drinks was silenced by chilling screams before the constant sound of ringing mobile phones filled the club. Calls from people desperately trying to contact their loved ones, calls that would go unanswered.

One police officer at the scene said the dozens of ringing phones coming from the dead bodies was “one of the worst sounds I’ve ever heard”.

The attack on the Pulse nightclub was the deadliest mass shooting and the worst violence against LGBT people in US history. Firefighters were the first emergency responders on the scene, which is unusual for a mass shooting. Just 300 metres from the club lies Orlando’s Fire Station 5, a small, smart, 1950s era station that houses one appliance. Patient zero, the

term given to the shooter’s first victim to be identified by the emergency services, showed up outside just minutes after the shooting began with five gunshot wounds.

Ron Glass, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in Orlando, a sister union to the FBU, said that from then on they were so quickly overrun that firefighters had to begin treating the victims on the station.

SHOOTER STILL ACTIVE

“They couldn’t sit back and wait,” says Glass. As reinforcements from Orlando’s central fire station were making their way to Pulse they were passed by a half dozen police cars. The implication was clear – the shooter was still active.

The Orlando Fire Department is no stranger to dealing with the fallout from shootings. In its medical responding role, the department is in charge of the city’s ambulance fleet and they are

often called out to respond to such events.

But they are almost always isolated incidents and after the fact (i.e. the shooter has fled the scene).

“Our guys would never have been asked to go into the club, knowing that the shooter was in there. We’re just not trained for that,” says fire department district commander Bryan Davis, who was in charge of the rescue operation. “What we do is triage, treatment and transport.”

As firefighters set up the three staging areas to get this work under way, they had to make the call on who would be transported to hospital for emergency treatment and who would not.

Victims were colour coded according to their injuries. Red in the most serious cases, yellow for those requiring medical treatment but not in a critical state and green for those with minor injuries. The dead were marked black.

There was a momentary lull

US flags, one for each victim in the Pulse massacre, adorned the lawn of Orlando Fire Department Station 5 next to the Pulse nightclub

PA PHOTOS

ANDO'S PULSE

in rescue operations as Mateen, who had holed himself up inside the club with hostages, indicated to police that he had rigged the club with a bomb.

Firefighters had to move patients out of the newly extended hot zone and set up new staging areas. After a tense stand-off, a SWAT team stormed the building and shot Mateen dead at approximately 4:30 am. Firefighters resumed a final round of triage, treatment and transport and were there for up to 12 more hours securing the scene.

AFTERCARE FOR FIREFIGHTERS

"While we have spent many hours preparing for this type of incident, training scenarios will never replicate the horrific scene our members encountered," Glass says, outlining how aftercare of the firefighters involved is now a top priority.

The IAFF has sent in a team of five peer support advisers to Orlando, including two New York City Fire Department firefighters who had responded to the 9/11 attacks. The emphasis is to be supported by someone who has dealt with a similar, traumatic event and who knows exactly what the person affected is going through.

It is natural for firefighters to re-run the incident and question whether they made the right decisions.

For Glass, however, there is no doubt. "Everyone pulled together and gave an amazing response, once again protecting their community with great pride and a strong sense of responsibility."

Davis agrees – his crew performed to the best of their abilities. Strong leadership and great teamwork are vital when responding to atrocities like the Pulse club attack.

Pushed as to what improvements could be made, Davis says that, on reflection, communications between different agencies, particularly law enforcement could be improved with more face to face contact between senior police officers and firefighters. "In big incidents, face to face contact can be useful to quickly pass on a lot of intel," he says.

A day after the shooting, 53 American flags were placed on the green lawn in front of Fire Station 5 – one for each victim of this ghastly crime.

One silver lining of a very dark cloud – patient zero survived. All thanks to the heroism and speedy response of

the Orlando Fire Department.

As this article went to press there were reports of another shooting at a Florida nightclub, this time in Fort Myers. At the time of writing, two people had died and 18 were injured.

Firefighters may not feature prominently in the news coverage of these type of events but they are always there serving their communities with distinction and pride.

Thousands of people gathered in Soho, London, in a vigil for the Pulse victims

JESS HURD/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



PATIENT ZERO – THE FIRST VICTIM TO BE IDENTIFIED BY THE EMERGENCY SERVICES – SHOWED UP OUTSIDE JUST MINUTES AFTER THE SHOOTING BEGAN WITH FIVE GUNSHOT WOUNDS. FROM THEN ON THE STATION WAS SO QUICKLY OVERRUN THAT FIREFIGHTERS HAD TO BEGIN TREATING THE VICTIMS THERE.

Firefighters and their union have been at the forefront of many key developments in the fire and rescue service, research for the FBU's centenary confirms.

Helen Hague reports.

By the end of 2018, FBU members and the public should know a great deal more about the history of the firefighters' union and the key role it has played in shaping a much loved and trusted emergency service.

For 2018 is the union's centenary year. Regions, sections and head office are already gearing up to shape a memorable programme of events aimed at connecting with rank and file members.

General secretary Matt Wrack said the union was "under huge pressure" as the fire and rescue service faces "unprecedented cuts". But he made it clear that the union's leadership will not be deflected from marking an important milestone in FBU history.

Speaking at "A Hundred Years of Firefighting and Unity", a seminar held at the TUC with academics, fire service representatives, EC members and FBU officials from across regions and sections, he said: "We didn't want the centenary to just pass us by. So it's important to plan well ahead." The seminar was



1977: Firefighters taking part in a national pay strike protest against Labour prime minister Jim Callaghan in Blackpool

A KEY ROLE IN HISTORY

the first formal event in the run up to 2018.

Wrack opened the day with a whistlestop tour of key moments that helped to shape the union and the modern fire service. The Second World War, which claimed the lives of many firefighters in the Blitz, proved a turning point, he said.

There was a "big strategic debate" in the union over recruitment of wartime auxiliary or part-time firefighters. Those who believed they should join won the day, despite fierce opposition from some FBU officials and many full-time firefighters. As a result, the union "grew very, very significantly".

A bigger, stronger union was in place after the war. As the new politics of the post-war consensus gave unions "a seat at the table" the FBU was, Matt Wrack said, in a "strong position to shape the new fire service". Which is exactly what it did.

This was the fire service he had joined in the early eighties. Now, many of the structures then in place have been dismantled.

Today's firefighters face a very different world – where public services are treated "much more like

markets" in the drive towards privatisation.

Leeds Beckett University historian Shane Ewen, author of *Fighting Fires: Creating the British Fire Service 1800-1978*, argued that the fire service was, for the most part, created by its firefighters.

It was firefighting professionals who championed saving people as well as property from fire and pushed for fire prevention measures to help save both lives and buildings.

EQUALITY AT WORK

Academic researchers are already interviewing firefighters in preparation for a book to be published on the union's centenary. Tessa Wright of Queen Mary University of London has found that the FBU was seen as a leader in promoting equality and diversity at work by other unions in the late nineties.

Minority sections for women, black and ethnic minority and LGBT members have also strengthened activism to the union's wider benefit. Women activists "punched above their weight", focusing on all industrial issues alongside securing good deals on



JOHN STURROCK/REPORT ARCHIVE/REPORTING.CO.UK

maternity leave and lobbying for separate facilities.

Sam Rye, national women's committee (NWC) secretary, hopes to research and tell the stories of past women members who influenced their peers and made a difference, inspiring those who have come after. She is impressed by women auxiliaries who played key roles in keeping citizens safe during the Second World War, decades before women were recruited as frontline firefighters.

Michael Nicholas, black and ethnic minority members (B&EMM) secretary, cites the historic resistance of the UK fire and rescue service to employing black people in operational roles – and those who left the service after facing overt discrimination.

VOICE THEY DESERVED

Equality sections were, he says, prompted by self-organising groups, enabling the union to take the lead role in driving the equality agenda in the service. Changes in union rules and structures “gave minority members the voice they rightly deserved”.

Male homosexuality was criminalised until the late sixties. Now gay marriage is celebrated. LGBT pioneers supported members in an overtly hostile culture – an important part of the union's story, says Pat Carberry, LGBT section national secretary.

Regions are already gathering material for centenary celebrations. In the South West, the union is going through its archives.

Photographs of members at rallies and conferences back in 1948 have just been found, says EC member Tam McFarlane. “Our history is that of our job and our industry. We are uncovering not

RY AND FIREFIGHTING



Tessa Wright of Queen Mary University of London spoke on equality issues in the FBU and in the fire and rescue service

Dr Shane Ewen, South West EC member Tam McFarlane and Dr Terry Segars looking at Firefighter magazine front covers dating back over 60 years



STEFANO CAGNONI

just the history of the FBU as an organisation, but the pivotal role our union played in developing and building the fire service.”

Retired Essex firefighter and FBU official Keith Handscomb is keen to commemorate firefighters killed in the line of duty over the decades, chronicle his own experience and encourage other retired members to share their stories.

Wrapping up the history seminar – which could be the first in a series in the run up to the 2018 celebrations – Wrack said the centenary would be “not just about looking backwards but organising for the future”.

The union's leaders hope members will connect with and contribute to centenary events. Expect news soon from your local region and section.

And if you've unearthed a relative's firefighting diary from the Second World War or pictures of firefighters marching against austerity many years back, get in touch and share what you've found. After all, it's your union ...

■ centenary@fbu.org.uk



A REALLY TWEET RELATIONSHIP

William Murphy explains how social media helps
FBU campaigns and communication

On Wednesday 17 September 2014, nearly 200,000 people received the same message simultaneously on the social networking website Twitter. “East Sussex Fire & Rescue: Drop the appeal against liability and pay compensation owed #Justice4Firefighters.”

The campaign to secure compensation for the families of Brian Wembridge and Geoff Wicker, two FBU members who were killed in the Marlie Farm fireworks disaster in 2006, successfully used social media to help bring a repugnant injustice to a mass audience.

Partly as a result of the campaign, the families received the compensation they should have had years previously.

“It was the first time we realised just how powerful social media could be as a campaigning tool,” says FBU national officer Dave Green. “It is amazing what can be achieved by sending out a simple tweet. It’s so easy and quick to do, and the impact can be huge.”

The power of social media is undeniable and the FBU is doing well at exploiting it. But we could be doing better. The union’s national Twitter account has nearly

20k followers. Its Facebook page, launched just a few months ago, has over 5k “likes”.

For a relatively small union, we are punching above our weight. The digital consultancy Infobo (disclaimer: they designed our union’s website) ranked the FBU as the joint fifth most influential trade union on social media in their yearly rankings.

Tam McFarlane, executive council member for the South West, is an avid supporter of using social media to campaign and communicate to members and the public alike.

Known for fronting the FBU’s video updates, he is no stranger to new technology. “In the age of 24-hour news, it is important that our members hear from us first. Social media allows us to do just that,” he says. “But it also means we can engage the public with the work of the fire and rescue service. With the government mantra of decreasing fires

used as a way to legitimise funding cuts, we can hit back on social media and reach a lot of influential people.

“We tweet out all the different and unexpected incidents attended by firefighters in the South West on our regional Twitter account, which we use to challenge perceptions and set the record straight – it has a real, tangible effect.

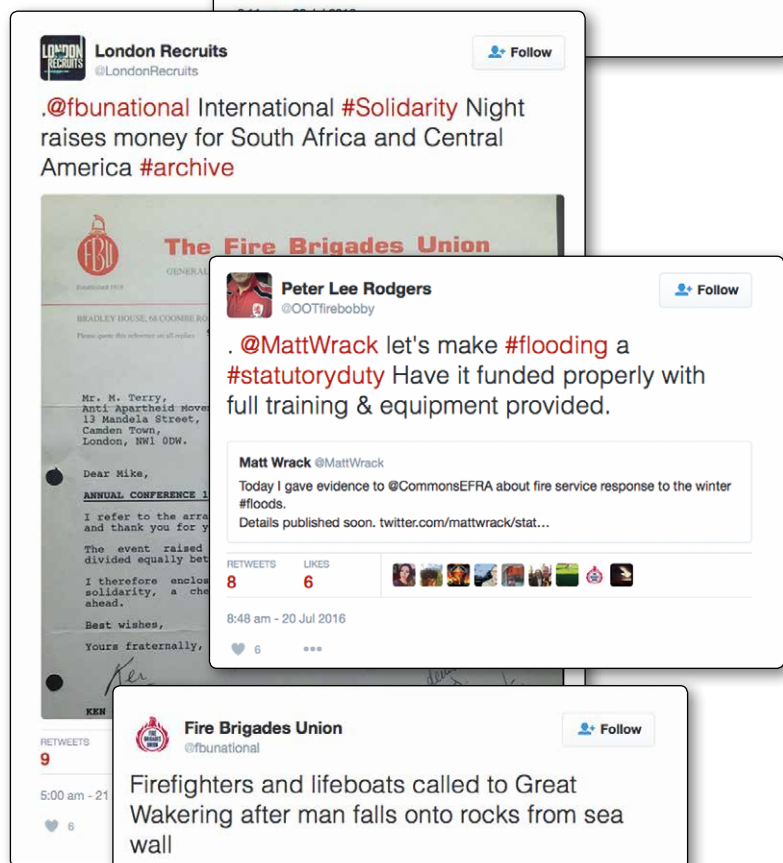
“For example, we gathered tens of thousands of petition signatures we otherwise wouldn’t have been able to get, when we were campaigning against cuts to fire services in Devon and Somerset.”

The FBU has, at times, been apprehensive about social media, and some members have been disciplined by over-zealous managers for voicing their opinions online.

The FBU is working with the National Joint Council, made up of union representatives and fire service employers, to put together a service-wide best practice guide on social media.

In the meantime here is a handy guide to Twitter, the social media platform the FBU is most active on. You can also find us on Facebook, YouTube and SoundCloud.

**WE GATHERED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF
SIGNATURES WE OTHERWISE WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET**



Follow the FBU Twitter account: @fbunational

WHAT IS TWITTER?

Twitter is a micro blogging website whose users send messages of up to 140 characters, known as a Tweet. The limit of 140 characters came after research by German communications expert Friedhelm Hillebrand found that the average length of a clear and concise message was 160 characters long. The creators of Twitter reduced it by 20 characters so as to accommodate Twitter handles in tweets.

What is a handle?

A handle is the unique username that identifies you and is always preceded by an @ sign. For example, the FBU's official Twitter account is @fbunational. The FBU's general secretary has the Twitter handle @MattWrack.

What is a retweet (aka RT)?

You can re-share a Tweet you find interesting with your "followers". You don't always have to agree with the message – much of Twitter is about political debate – but a civil and polite conversation can be a great way of getting a debate going. But please do think carefully about the content of a message before reposting it.

What is a follower?

People who subscribe to your Twitter profile are called followers. They will be able to see all of your posts as well as retweets in their feed. But don't forget Twitter is a public-facing platform and, legally speaking, you are bound by the same rules that broadcasters, such as the BBC, have to abide by. Make sure what you post is accurate.

What is a feed?

This is the stream of tweets you see on your Twitter homepage that is comprised of updates from users you follow. It will also include the Tweets that the people you follow have retweeted.

What is a hashtag?

A hashtag (#) can denote a topic of conversation (#Pensions) or a larger linked discussion (#TheXFactor). A hashtag allows you to find tweets based on specific topics.

HOW TO USE TWITTER

BE POLITE. Posts will be visible to the public, including workmates, bosses and family. Profanity, threats, discriminatory nicknames, harassment, bullying, etc will not be tolerated.

BE AWARE. Social media sites are not the best arena for discussion about sensitive subjects, such as industrial action and union strategy. In fact, such discussions on social media may be used against you and your colleagues and may undermine the work of the FBU.

DISCUSS, DON'T ARGUE. It may be a fine line, but the aim should be to convince people, particularly third parties to the conversation.

NEVER BE DEFAMATORY. You should assume that you will be held legally accountable for anything said online in the same way you would if written in print or said publicly.

STAY ON TOPIC. Keep the conversation relevant to the community and contribute to the dialogue. We reserve the right to remove content that is off-topic, out of context, spam, promotional or links to third party sites.

HEALTH

THE MORE SLEEP THE BETTER

In a 24-hour, competitive, non-stop culture with a “sleep when you’re dead” attitude, finding the time to get a good night’s rest is hard enough.

In the shift-based fire and rescue service it’s even more difficult. Add children or caring responsibilities to the equation and there’s almost no hope.

But the merits of a solid sleep are incalculable. The lesson here: The more sleep, the better. Period.

Doctors recommend you should be getting eight hours sleep a night. The likelihood of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and depression increases with a lack of sleep.

One of the most common underlying causes of sleep loss is chronic stress. A University of California study demonstrated a link between poor sleep and weight gain.

Another found that those working night shifts were more likely to be obese. When you do not get enough

sleep the levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin in your body increases. You also suffer a corresponding decrease in the hormone leptin which is responsible for the full up feeling you have after a big meal. The mixture of the two can lead to severe overeating.

Lisa Artis, a spokesperson for the Sleep Council, says the combination of shifts and working in a high stress environment is a double whammy

for firefighters.

“Firefighters need strategies to help them to relax, handle changing sleep patterns or to get the most out of broken sleep,” she says.

“Sleep deprivation is a very serious challenge. It can affect our reaction times, memory and

judgement and causes poor concentration, increased irritability and hostility. All of which are important for the safety and wellbeing of emergency service workers and for the public they serve.”

**THE LIKELIHOOD OF
DEVELOPING DIABETES,
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE,
HEART DISEASE AND
DEPRESSION INCREASES
WITH A LACK OF SLEEP**

SLEEP COUNCIL TIPS FOR SHIFT WORKERS

- Help to keep your biological clock tuned in to your sleep with anchor sleep. Aim for at least four hours sleep at the same time every night/morning (e.g. 3-7am). Use the weekend or days off to get in some extra “recovery” sleep.
- Introduce bright light in the evening before your shift starts (you can get bulbs with a much higher wattage value than ordinary domestic ones).
- Develop a wind down routine. A restful bedroom environment should be cool, quiet, dark and free from distractions like computers, tablets, mobile phones and TVs.
- Avoid screen time at least an hour before bed as the blue light these devices emit suppresses the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.
- Don’t be tempted to fire up the PlayStation for some late night gaming or surf YouTube for funny videos. Try to find other ways to relax.
- When it’s time to wake up you need light. Lamps which start with low level light and gradually get brighter help to speed up the biological clock once more and are a more pleasant way to wake than an alarm clock
- Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, large meals or vigorous exercise for at least 3-4 hours before going to bed. Don’t use over-the-counter sleeping aids which may make you over-sleepy when you need to be alert (driving home, for example).
- The best bedtime snack contains complex carbohydrates and protein and perhaps some calcium – which is why dairy products (yoghurt, milk) are top sleep-inducing foods.
- Avoid alcohol. It simply magnifies the effects of sleeplessness – poor concentration, thinking, memory, increased irritability and hostility. It reduces your quality of sleep too.



Stress and shift work – the enemies of sleep

IAN WARLOW

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO PROTECT OTHERS – ALL PART OF FBU MEMBERSHIP

Last year, Thompsons Solicitors secured a very significant £3,291,812 in damages for Fire Brigades Union members, including pension victories, discrimination cases and injuries. FBU members, who are protected by a tailor-made, comprehensive package of legal services via Thompsons, keep 100% of their compensation, whatever the injury or claim. Most claims companies and high street law firms take up to 25% out of any damages they win as standard, leaving the injured person with only 75% of what the courts think they are due. Thompsons, established in 1921, are the only dedicated trade union specialist solicitors in the UK; they never act for insurance companies or employers, only ever representing the injured or mistreated.

As part of the union's legal scheme, all FBU members benefit from personal injury cover, including accidents or disease sustained away from work or on holiday, or on the roads. Serious injury, including brain or spinal cord injuries, are covered, as well as industrial disease or illness. Employment law cases are covered through your FBU region as are work-related criminal matters, including inquests, criminal prosecutions and criminal injury claims. Most of these services are either accessed totally free to FBU members, or available at a discounted rate. For example, union members get 90% of clinical

negligence damages (high street firms will deduct at least 25% and they are usually jacks-of-all-trades rather than experts). FBU members' families are covered for personal injury claims away from work and, again it's free of charge and with the same guarantee of 100% of damages.

Thompsons represented a group of firefighters in a water rescue case against a training venue and fire and rescue service employers, which was

(ROOT) members qualify for free legal expenses insurance (LEI) cover – the kind of legal protection that is often added to car or home insurance, but at a cost. Some home insurance policies put on LEI as standard, so do check your policy. If you are paying extra, you may want to cancel it and use your FBU ROOT membership for better value protection instead.

From advice on handling a dispute with a contractor or tradesman



THOMPSONS
S O L I C I T O R S

STANDING UP FOR YOU
www.thompsons.law.co.uk

fought all the way but concluded in 2015. Firefighter "Martin" from Sheffield (he wished to remain anonymous) said: "Thompsons built a solid case against the training venue and the employers, and used many top experts in compiling their evidence. As a result, the defendants eventually settled out of court resulting in injury compensation for those affected, including myself. Thank you to the FBU and Thompsons."

FBU retired and out of trade

through to protection if you need to make a claim against a person or organisation following injury, your FBU ROOT membership has it covered.

Thompsons also provide a range of paid-for services as part of your union legal package, from lasting power of attorney to re-mortgaging, fixed fee probate, conveyancing, PPI claims and equity release. You can also get free telephone advice on consumer issues such as disputes with neighbours.

Get in touch for expert advice today on 0808 100 6061
Scotland: 0800 089 1331
www.thompsons.law.co.uk/fbu

'IT'S NOT A RACE, IT'S A CHALLENGE'

Brian Seaman has seven times driven teams of firefighters doing the Three Peaks Challenge – now he's asking more to take part to raise funds for The Fire Fighters Charity

Homerton, East London, firefighter Brian Seaman is a man with a mission. This station charity rep is keen to see more firefighters get to the top of the highest mountains in the land. And, while they're up there, help raise funds for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Firefighters have a long history of taking the Three Peaks Challenge – getting to the summit of Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in the English Lake District and Snowdonia in North Wales. For nearly 20 years there has been a dedicated fire service Three Peaks Challenge event.

RUN, WALK – OR AT YOUR OWN PACE

"Teams can run to the top, walk to the top, go at a pace that suits them – just as long as they're well prepared and are properly equipped," says Brian, a Homerton white watch member for 26 years. "The weather can turn in the blink of an eye. There's snow on the top of Ben Nevis all year round."

The Fire Service Three Peaks Challenge has become a regular fixture on The Fire Fighters Charity fundraising calendar. As it needs stamina, discipline and team bonding it's a natural fit for firefighters.

But, says Brian, organisers would like to encourage more teams to rise to the challenge – and, of course, boost charity coffers.

There are two events – A and B – which take place over the last two weekends in June and the aim is to complete all three walks within 24 hours.

Brian slogged up the peaks with colleagues from Homerton back in 1998, when the challenge was in its second year. He hasn't scaled them since. But he has proved a key



team player many times over.

In June this year Brian was Homerton team minibus co-driver, the seventh time he has driven firefighters and supporters to walk to the top of the highest mountains in Britain.

After the drive from London, the minibus clocks up over 500 miles across three nations as the team eats and sleeps in the back between ascending peaks. Once the challenge begins, this is the only sleep they will get.

Which is why Brian says it's so important to "acclimatise" and "maybe have a curry and a drink" before getting a good night's sleep in Fort William, the Scottish town nearest to Ben Nevis. It's the first peak in the challenge and the highest in the UK.

The walkers don't set off until early evening the next day, and there's a lot to be done. First, there's a briefing at the local fire station with a chance to buy a "Blaze Bear". If the team takes the bear to the top of each peak, the soft toy will get a medal and can be auctioned off later to raise more funds.

There are more safety and equipment checks just before the team begins the first ascent. At the summit of each peak, volunteer marshals, usually serving or retired fire service members, check tallies so teams can see exactly how long the challenge took them.

MULTI-TASKING

This June, the Homerton team set out at 6 pm and came down three hours 52 minutes later. A "standard strong walker" should be able to walk each peak in five hours, so not bad going.

Meanwhile, the multi-tasking co-drivers have prepared food: "pasta, sarnies, pot noodles". It will be consumed en route. There is just time for a quick change of clothes



THREE PEAKS FACTFILE

- Ben Nevis rises to 1,346 metres
- Scafell Pike in the Lake District is 978 metres high
- Snowdon in Wales is 1,085 metres high



CHALLENGE

- Once completed, teams will have walked over 20 miles
- Successful teams climb more than 10,000 feet and drive over 500 miles



Brian, third from right, above, with his 1998 team and, below with this year's



before the six-hour drive through the night to Scafell, the toughest walk in the challenge.

Scafell is the hardest walk for two reasons, says Brian, who remembers his own clamber up there.

"You start at Ben Nevis well rested in the late afternoon. At Scafell you've snatched what sleep you can in the van, you start out between four and five in the morning, and it's a very steep walk in parts. It gets quite rocky towards the top."

EATING EN ROUTE

Once down, it's back in the van for the walkers – the drivers have had a sleep. The team will eat en route during the four-hour drive to Snowdonia, the last leg of the challenge.

"It's the easiest walk of the three," says Brian. "But by then you've got two walks behind you." The challenge finishes at the top of Snowdon and teams can get their medals and certificates once they come down. There's even a masseur provided for muscle-weary walkers.

There's also an evening awards ceremony at the Royal Victoria Hotel in nearby Llanberis. "It's not a race, it's a challenge," says Brian.

Having said that, there are many medals up for grabs – from the "First Team" to "The Largest Team", from the "Youngest Team" to the "Over the Hill Oldest Team". And, of course, the "Charity Champions" who have raised most cash.

This year, the Homerton team got a gold medal – for finishing the challenge in an impressive 19 hours seven minutes – the team's fastest time under Brian's watch as driver.

He's already collecting names for next year's challenge – and would love to see more teams get involved, including women's teams and mixed teams.

Non-brigade members, friends and family are also welcome. "It's a brilliant experience, wonderful countryside, great team bonding away from fires. And when you get to the end, priceless."

So, what's stopping you? Details of the 2017 events on 25/26 and 29/30 June are already up on the Fire Service Three Peaks Challenge website.

■ For more information contact:
www.firefighters3peaks.co.uk
ludomacaulay@hotmail.com
 01722 332211

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Sturdy, unique and weather-resistant

Fire hoses have helped save lives in countless firefighting missions – dragged through rubble and mud, withstood flames and heat, transporting many thousands of cubic metres of water. The individual markings of various fire stations and traces of firefighting missions make each Feuerwear bag truly unique and water-resistant.

To be in with a chance to win, just answer this question:

In what year will the Fire Brigades Union celebrate its centenary?

HOW TO ENTER

To win a Feuerwear bag send your answer on a postcard to Prize Competition, FBU Head Office, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston, KT2 7AE by 30 September 2016. Include your name, address and membership number. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries.



FBU LEGAL SERVICE

Firefighter Ben Short, an FBU member from Cornwall, suffered damage to his ear when the tyre of a mobile crane exploded as the fire appliance he was travelling in, came alongside it.

The explosion was violent enough to cause damage to neighbouring windows.

The other party refused to negotiate settlement and after commencing court proceedings a satisfactory settlement was reached. No deduction was made from the settlement and Ben received a cheque for £2,000.

In another case, Barry Stray, a retained firefighter based in Hampshire, suffered injury to his lower back when he fell from a ladder which had been badly placed against a slanted roof during an incident which involved tackling a fire from a roof.

Once again, the other side's insurers refused to negotiate and, after court proceedings, a satisfactory settlement was reached on behalf of Barry who received £13,000, the full amount of the settlement.

This case may assist health and safety reps at the workplace prevent similar accidents in the future.

These cases highlight the value to members of the union's legal service.

■ See more: page 19

TWEETS

Kind of the new prime minister to join me in the shower this morning.



BACK IN THE DAY 1994

A major piece of legislation that made it harder for working people to be members of a trade union and swamped organisations in red tape, all courtesy of a Tory government – remind you of anything?

In 1993 the Tory government's Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act forced all FBU members and those of other unions to agree formally once again to pay their membership fees by check-off – the system where employers take a member's union subscriptions from pay and pass it directly to their union.

The legislation was seen as a hollow, political attack on trade unions, with even business leaders failing to see an upside to it.

In this piece from 1994, FBU national officer Alan Totterdell writes how the Engineering Employers' Federation said the law would be "an unnecessary administrative nightmare without any commensurate benefit". The Institute of Management argued it would "lead to administrative burdens on employers" and the Association of British

SIGN UP FOR CHECK-OFF AND DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS

THE FBU has now commenced the major administrative task set us by the latest piece of anti-Trade Union legislation TUREIRA 1993. Every member of the FBU, YES each of the 50,000 plus has to sign to agree to continue paying union contributions by the Check-Off System.

The main reason behind this bit of legislation is to make it difficult to retain the Check-Off system, where employers take union subscriptions from pay-packets and pass them directly to trade unions.

Even the employers did not want it, as was shown in the responses to the government's green paper which preceded the Act.

The Engineering Employers' Federation said that the new law would be "an unnecessary administrative nightmare without any commensurate benefit".

The Institute of Management gave a similar response, arguing that the proposal would "lead to administrative burdens on employers".

Its survey of 600 managers showed that "few employers are calling for change in this area", while the Institute of Personnel Management commented that "there has been no groundswell of support from our members for a change in the Check-Off procedures".



BY ALAN TOTTERDELL

thereafter local/branch discussions will commence.

The Executive Council has established a Sub-Committee to deal with the legislative requirements of TUREIRA, and Check-Off is one of its major tasks. The

Chambers of Commerce concluded that it had "difficulty" seeing what advantages there were.

Fast forward to 2016, and the government recently performed a U-turn on outlawing check-off.

However, the FBU is urging all of its members to sign up to pay their subscriptions by direct debit because, as history shows, the urge to attack check-off is hard wired into Tory DNA.

STATION CAT POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA – YOU DON'T NEED TO MAKE IT UP

Andrea Leadsom
talks to the
media about
her *Times*
interview – see
Gutter Journalism
CHRIS RADBURN/PA PHOTOS



A CLEAR CASE OF LOSS OF MEMORY

Andrew Marr: Can the NHS have the £350m a week you promised?

Iain Duncan Smith: "I want to be quite clear about this."

Yes, it's as bad as that.

MONEY CAN'T BUY YOU FREEDOM

Kelly Hoppen is a woman with £50m. She's a fashionable interior designer for luxurious homes and yachts. Being very rich, she used to be on *Dragon's Den*, a programme in which the mega rich get to sneer at the



Kelly Hoppen and
her rescuers

would-be mega rich, and the would-be mega rich get to grin in a subservient and sickly manner.

None of which did her much good when she took her car into the car lift to a basement car park in Kensington, and the lift stuck. Her own phone didn't have a signal, and the emergency phone in the lift didn't work.

When at last it sputtered into life, it put her through to a call centre, which she could hardly hear. She gave the call centre her boyfriend's phone number, but they didn't ring him. So she beeped her horn and screamed for 20 minutes until a man heard her and

called the lift engineers, and discovered it was going to take them hours to get there.

The private sector having failed, the man called the London Fire Brigade, and its firefighters got her out.

AND ALL THEY GOT WAS A LOUSY TRUMP T-SHIRT

Some bright entrepreneur in New York has produced T-shirts that say, "Firefighters for Trump" and claims to have sold out.

Your Cat is trying to get in touch with her American counterpart, Fire House Feline, but she's betting not many of them were bought by real firefighters. Not after Trump congratulated firefighters for their work on 7/11 – he meant 9/11.

GUTTER JOURNALISM AND, WORSE, IT WAS TRUE

"This is the worst gutter journalism I have ever seen. I am so angry – I can't believe this," wrote the politician to the journalist. We sympathise. Firefighters on strike have to read lies about them every day.

So, hey, Andrea Leadsom, we feel your pain. *The Times* reported that you'd said you would be a better prime minister than Theresa May because you were a mother and she wasn't.

And they lied? You didn't say it, did you? Oh, you did say it, but they shouldn't have made such a big deal of it? You were reduced to tears? Dreadful.

Dreadful. Next time the media tells lies about firefighters and the FBU, the firefighters will know things could be worse. They could be Andrea Leadsom.

It's hard to believe that this trivial incident is the real reason Leadsom pulled out of the leadership race. And indeed, your Cat has a snitch in the Tory Party who says it isn't. Days before it happened, our mole told us: "Don't worry, Andrea's going to pull out. They know too much about her." And he winked. If your Cat can find out what it is, you'll be the first to know.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED ...

And now, the strange story of Richard Chandler, until two months ago the chief fire officer of Leicestershire.

Mr Chandler only held the job for a year. Ordered to find cuts in frontline services, he produced a plan to get rid of 88 firefighters, 11 fire engines and two fire stations, then had to withdraw the plan after 12,000 people signed a petition against it.

Now, here's the odd part. The fire authority chair, Nicholas Rushton, who is also the Conservative leader of Leicestershire County Council, says he won't say why Chandler is going, for legal reasons. He won't say why they've bunged him £84,000 of our money, either.

Your Cat thinks that smells a bit fishy. So does a member of the fire authority, Liberal Democrat councillor Michael Charlesworth.

He says Rushton, and Rushton's deputy, Labour's Peter Soulsby, are getting Chandler out because they feel humiliated by the defeat of the cuts package.

Charlesworth told the *Leicester Mercury* that they want a "non-operational pen-pusher" in Chandler's

place. Someone who has never been a firefighter, and can cut frontline services without knowing the harm he or she is doing.

EAGLES – FAMOUS FOR THEIR PERFECT HINDSIGHT

Your Cat is celebrating today. Whoever leads Labour, it's not going to be Angela Eagle.

Eagle – apart from being robotic – voted for war in Iraq in 2003. She now says that, with hindsight, she would have voted differently.

Robin Cook and John Denham wrecked their careers by voting with their consciences. They didn't need hindsight. They just needed integrity.

MONEY TO BURN, OR DO WE MEAN SAVE?

Two years ago, then London mayor Boris Johnson closed Clerkenwell fire station – to save money. So what will we do with all the money we're saving? Quite simple. Common sense really. We're spending it on maintaining the empty, disused fire station. It's cost us £264,000 so far.

AN APOLOGY

Firefighter apologises for the offence it may have caused by publishing a photograph in our February/March issue of the senior management representative for Cambridgeshire FRS, area commander Nick Foster, asleep during the tribunal of former firefighter Kerry Baigent. We understand that we broke the rules by publishing a photograph taken in an employment tribunal, and we are very sorry for any distress we have caused.



25-YEAR BADGES



Jim Laker (l), Middlemoor, Exeter, receives his 25-year badge from Exeter FBU official Dave Chappell



Peter Jones (l), blue watch, Wallasey, receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Mark Rowe



Steve Boyne (r), white watch, South Shore, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Mick Drake



Clive Sharp (l), Pill, Avon, receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor with station colleagues looking on



Keith Massam (l), Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Gould



John Cochran (l), Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Gould



Stuart Campbell (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Price-Hunt



Dave Petch (r), Ealing borough rep, London (now retired), receives his 25-year badge from London North West secretary Dave Shek



Louis Brown (l), alpha watch, Coleshill, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Marcus Giles with colleagues looking on



Chris Pirt (r), Evesham, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Rich Blake



Tim Jaines (r), green watch, Louth, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dan Taylor with colleagues looking on



Trevor Moyce (r), Newport, Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Dave Hunt



Mark Dooley (l), learning and development, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from officer branch chair Phil Revill



Stuart Darby (r), Fulwood, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Ian McGill



Carl Mills (r), Wroxham, Norfolk, RDS, receives his 25-year badge from brigade RDS rep Ryan Hastings



Ron Monaghan (r), North Moor, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Eddie Harrison



Mark Woodward (l), Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from (since retired) brigade chair Kevin Deacon with white watch colleagues looking on



Paul Readhead (r), Garelochhead, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from Bruce Bailey



Mark Joel (l), Haverfordwest, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from Graeme Callan



John Jones (l), Pembrokeshire county command, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from Graeme Callan



Darren Wilkins (r), white watch, Slough, Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Hayden Jenkins



Mark Crookes (r), blue watch, Ossett, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Emley Moor Mast's general manager at 900 ft up the UK's tallest (1084 ft), structure



Gary Hargreaves (r), red watch, Burnley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary John Rivett with colleagues looking on



Kevin Tolan (r), Beaumaris, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Stephen Campbell with the station crew looking on



Shaun Eastham (r), red watch, Burnley, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary John Rivett with colleagues looking on



Al Thomas (r), green watch, Hyndburn, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Neil Hitchen with blue and green watch colleagues looking on



Jock O'Thy (r), red watch, Crosby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst



Tim Williams (r), white watch, Wrexham, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Rich Clutton with white watch colleagues looking on



Liam Merton (centre), red watch, Crosby, Merseyside, accompanied by his dad (r), receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst



Keith Bradshaw (r), Whitefield, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from C division chair Karl Sorfleet



Kevin Ellis (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Pete Mawhood



Sean Harrison (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Spencer Cave



Julian Bradwell (r), blue watch, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Duncan Smith



George Pare (l), Training and Development Centre, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Marcus Giles with colleagues looking on



Steve Cotter (r), blue watch, Aston, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Steve Gregory

25-YEAR BADGES



Mark Hearnden (r), Arnold, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from former East Midlands EC member Dave Limer



Mick Percival (r), Cambridgeshire service training centre, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Cameron Matthews



Julian Fountaine (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Spencer Cave



Pete Mawhood (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Spencer Cave



Gerald Jones (r), Blaenau Ffestiniog, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Stephen Campbell



Andy Walton (l), London Fire Brigade HQ, receives his 25-year badge from national officers secretary Simon Amos



Steven Williams (r), Blaenau Ffestiniog, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Stephen Campbell.



Graham Orchard (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Pete Mawhood



Simon Fyrth (l), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Pete Mawhood



Bev Whorwood (r), Isle of Wight, receives her 25-year badge from brigade chair Pete Mawhood



Chris Venmore (l), white watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Craig Holsgrove



Stuart Thompson (l), red watch, Central, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from B division rep Steve McGovern with red and green watch colleagues looking on



Scott Tickner (l), Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from T&D branch rep Pat Sheridan



Chris Whittle (c.l), ops resource pool, Idle, Bradford, receives his 25-year badge from division secretary Dave Gillian with Nas Hussain and Alan Ramsay



Ian Clare (l), white watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Craig Holsgrove



Alan Ramsay (c.l), red watch, Idle, Bradford, receives his 25-year badge from division secretary Dave Gillian with Nas Hussain and Chris Whittle



John Carter (r), blue watch, Birkenhead, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Craig Holsgrove



Danny Farrington (l), training school, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



Michael Nicholas (l), BEMM national secretary, receives his 25-year badge from national officer John McGhee at head office



Conrad Kirkham (l), blue watch, Kensington, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



Larry McQueen (l), Huyton, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



Jacob Hannah (l), St Helens, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



Vinnie Omar (l), Speke, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



Mark Shanks (l), green watch, Kensington, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



John Gilluley (r), group 4, Paisley, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from health and safety rep Dave Hart



John Crawford (r), group 4, Paisley, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from health and safety rep Dave Hart



Gordon Reilly (r), group 4, Paisley, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from health and safety rep Dave Hart



Steve Piercy (r), white watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mark Rowe



Simon Swann (l), City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts

Please send good quality, high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE. Please include full details for every picture – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.



Dave Spink (r), white watch, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Lane Buckley with colleagues (l-r), Shane Elliot, Paul Mitchell, Ian Morrison and Notts brigade secretary Steve Bull looking on

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Change of address or next of kin
Advise your brigade organiser of any change of address and head office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

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