

FIREFIGHTER

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

**FBU ENSURES
MPs GET THE
MESSAGE
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THREATS TO
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**AS FLOODS
RETURN, KEY
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100 YEARS OLD. A UNION LIKE
OURS DESERVES A LIVING
HISTORY, AND YOU CAN
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**MAKE HISTORY:
SHARE YOUR MEMORIES**



1990 - Supporting the ambulance workers next door during their dispute - we got plenty of honking horns from passing motorists





MATT WRACK OUR FIGHT FOR STANDARDS CONTINUES

As we undergo the worst attacks in our history on our jobs and working conditions, FBU representatives from every fire and rescue service in the UK met in Westminster on 29 November to develop the campaign to defend our profession and our service. They then went on to lobby their MPs.

Weakened and undermined by years of fragmentation, the fire and rescue service is now seeing a free-for-all in terms of how local services are delivered. Citizens cannot accurately judge the quality of a service delivered by one fire and rescue service (FRS) against that delivered by another.

Local standards for each FRS, each with a different, locally based, integrated risk management plan (IRMP), mean that every chief fire officer can make completely different recommendations about how to deal with similar or identical risks.

This has led to a growing variation in how we respond to different types of incident or how we crew fire engines.

DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES

There are even differences between services about what is meant by a “fire engine”.

For the past decade individual services have developed and bought their own vehicles, to a standard which they have set themselves.

There have been some disastrous consequences of such “freedoms” such as combined aerial rescue pumps (CARPs). Manufacturers have used this opportunity to make lots of money from



Leeds Central Labour MP Hilary Benn listens to FBU lobbyists

council tax payers, and much of it has ended up being totally wasted.

This problem stems from two main sources.

First, the standards and structures which protected our service for many years were abolished after 2004, leading to an obsession with “localism” and a free-for-all on many issues.

Second, the unprecedented financial cuts since 2010 have put fire services in the worst of all possible worlds. They are forcing through cuts having previously seen all national standards abolished, and the result is becoming a downward spiral.

The UK fire service which was developed in the wake of the Second World War was, in many ways, a world leader, a service of which every firefighter could be proud.

Fragmentation and

cost-saving attacks are the twin threats undermining more than just our service but the profession of firefighting itself.

As we pointed out on 29 November, this deterioration has led to situations such as that where the Manchester coroner who led the inquest into the death of Stephen Hunt identified a series of failings.

FAILINGS ARE NOT NEW

But these failings are not new. As our report on the inquest carefully sets out, many of the “lessons” were learned and identified many years ago. Disgracefully, they have not been universally applied.

Our answer to this crisis is twofold.

First, there must be a serious debate about the standards needed for our service. Second, we need an

end to the financial vandalism that is being inflicted on our fire and rescue service.

We have said it thousands of times and we will carry on saying it until it happens: we need investment, not more cuts.

We want the most modern guidance, training and equipment. We need it, and the public we serve deserve it.

We must have procedures which allow us to do our job safely and effectively, and we need adequate resources to enable every fire and rescue service to deliver those standards.

That is why we went to parliament on 29 November. We know we can win the argument. Our case is beyond doubt.

We will not let up on our campaign to defend our service, our profession and the public.



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Rosie Winterton, Labour MP for Doncaster Central, talks to firefighters at the lobby

LOBBY TO SAVE A SERVICE GOING BACKWARDS

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Three hundred representatives of the FBU visited Westminster last month to campaign for greater professional standards in the fire and rescue service to better protect firefighters.

The lobby of parliament came after the union published a report (*right*) on the death of Manchester firefighter Stephen Hunt who died in 2013 while responding to a fire at a hair products store.

His death was found to be completely avoidable. Firefighters spent the afternoon speaking to and lobbying their MPs from across the political spectrum, raising their concerns and demanding action.

At a meeting before the lobby, shadow chancellor John McDonnell urged members to make sure their MPs understood the impact of fire and rescue

service cuts on firefighter safety.

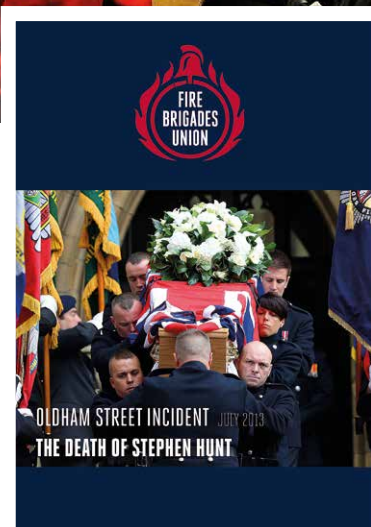
He said: "We have been here time and time again, and those MPs still went ahead and voted for cuts to the fire and rescue service.

"Many firefighters, like Stephen Hunt, would be alive now if these MPs had said yes and listened to us at previous lobbies.

"If we don't get the message across today, we will be back here in a year or so when another one of our brothers or sisters dies."

Also on the platform was shadow trade unions minister Ian Lavery who branded the government "criminal" for axing 10,000 firefighter jobs, declaring health and safety the most important issue in the fire service today.

Shadow environment secretary Rachael Maskell echoed concerns that the government's handling of the fire and rescue service meant it was "going



backwards, not forwards".

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, told the meeting that the fragmentation of the fire service, by successive governments, had been a retrograde step.

He said: "All the things that had been built up since the 1940s to protect our service and to improve our service ... delivered what was one of the finest fire services anywhere in the world.

"After the abolition of those structures we've seen increasing fragmentation. We used to know what we meant by a 'fire engine' and we knew how many people could sit in one.

"Now chief fire officers dream up their own ideas of what a fire engine is and how many can sit in it."

UNION LASHES 'NATIONAL SCANDAL' OF FIREFIGHTERS PRICED OUT OF CAPITAL

RESILIENCE

London would face serious problems in the event of a terror attack because more than half of its emergency workers cannot afford to live there.

A report by Lord Toby Harris, commissioned by London mayor Sadiq Khan, found that this could cause serious problems if all personnel needed to be recalled.

His report was published as three FBU members told Channel 4's *What Britain Earns* that many of their colleagues cannot afford to live in the capital as a result of the cost of living and the government's pay restraint.

The Harris review suggested a possible remedy – give firefighters and other

emergency service workers subsidised housing in the capital.

Paul Embery, secretary of the FBU in London, said: "It is a national scandal that the majority of emergency services personnel cannot afford to live in the city they help protect."

"The Harris report has made clear how difficult it would be for the London Fire Brigade to recall all the firefighters it needs to tackle major incidents."

"We have firefighters commuting to work from as far away as Scotland because they cannot afford to live in the capital."

The report will now be considered by mayor Khan and a formal response published.



PA PHOTOS

FBU HELPS FORMER FIREFIGHTER WIN COMPENSATION FOR MESOTHELIOMA

ASBESTOS

A retired FBU member has been awarded a six figure sum in compensation after developing the asbestos-related disease mesothelioma.

The 80-year-old worked as a firefighter between 1959 and 1989 when he would attend fires in buildings that contained asbestos.

Once a fire had been put out, he would be required at times to pull down unsafe sections of the building and check the debris to make sure nothing was burning, which caused asbestos dust to be inhaled.

It was years later when he noticed that he had an ache

in his chest and developed breathing difficulties. His GP sent him for an X-ray, which discovered fluid on his lungs. The member was later diagnosed with mesothelioma.

He contacted the FBU which instructed asbestos disease specialists, Thompsons Solicitors, to investigate a claim for compensation.

The former firefighter, who wishes to remain anonymous, said: "I couldn't believe it when my doctor told me I had mesothelioma. I've had to give up my hobbies, such as golf and model making, and I'm often too tired to walk."

"Even though I haven't worked for the fire brigade

for several years, the FBU still made sure I was looked after. They provided me with advice and support when I needed it the most."

"I urge any former firefighters who are suffering from chest problems like me to visit their doctor immediately and get in touch with their union for advice."

Dave Green, FBU national officer, said: "The FBU works hard to support its members, both working and retired, so that negligent employers are held accountable for their wrongdoing."

"Cases like this need to be publicised so that these employers know what they will face if they don't look after their personnel."

SOUNDING OFF

TRUTHFUL POSTS, NOT POST-TRUTH

Tim Lezard, editor of union-news.co.uk, on why trade unionists have a voice of their own

"The media is the most powerful entity on earth because they control the minds of the masses," US black rights activist Malcolm X once said.

Now the masses are fighting back, thanks to the social media revolution that allows them – us – to bypass the mainstream media (MSM), expose their hypocrisy and cover our own stories.

Owned by a distasteful cocktail of oligarchs, peers, porn barons and capitalists, the MSM hate unions that organise workers to win the better pay, pensions and working conditions that eat into their profits.

If they report it at all, they ignore the reasons for a strike, instead focusing on the "inconvenience".

Five years ago I set up union-news.co.uk to counteract this biased reporting. The bosses have their media; we should have ours.

Now we do and we're seeing the benefits. Take your dispute in Manchester in September, where fire chiefs threatened to sack all firefighters.

We broke the story. Our site crashed under the weight of 33,000 hits, our tweet was shared 22,000 times, MPs and councillors were outraged. Within two days, Matt Wrack was on the *Today* programme, and eight days later the sackings were withdrawn.

This is just one example of the power of independent media and the reach of union-news.co.uk.

As a wise friend said: from "post-truth" to "posting the truth".



MEMBERS' HEALTH CASH PLAN

FBU members can now join a plan to cover healthcare costs including dental, optical and therapy treatments for as little as £5.78 a month, payable by direct debit or salary deduction.

It is part of the union's new membership benefits package, and some policies include access to a 24/7 GP consultation service, as well as a telephone helpline for stress, substance abuse, debt, family relationships and legal advice.

The scheme, called Health4All, also covers hearing aids and health screening.

No medical is required for participation in the health cash plan, and 90% of eligible claims are settled within two days of receipt.

"Gold" cover costs £18.50 a month and includes up to £150 towards dental bills, £250 towards diagnostic consultations and up to £500 towards therapy treatments such as physiotherapy, osteopathy and chiropractic treatments.

Members can claim from the start date of the policy with the exception of maternity benefit, which is subject to a 10-month qualifying period.

Anyone with an existing medical condition will have to wait two years before they are covered for hospital claims for the same or related conditions.

■ For more information on the FBU health cash plan call

0800 622 552



Learning with a laugh – members at this year's FBU national school

PAY OUTSOURCE OUTRAGE

LINCOLNSHIRE

Hundreds of firefighters in Lincolnshire have not received their correct wages more than 18 months after problems with a private outsourcing firm were identified.

The county council in April 2015 awarded Serco a five-year contract to deliver services, including paying all its employees.

Since then a catalogue of errors has meant the time leading up to payday has become a source of stress and anxiety for staff.

Ben Selby, secretary of the FBU in Lincolnshire, said: "It is completely unacceptable that this situation hasn't been sorted out. Both Serco and the council have been

apologetic, but they are not taking the action needed to resolve the problems. In the meantime it's our members who are suffering.

"They've known about these problems for a year and a half. In that time they could have switched back to the old payroll system or found another company who could actually deliver what they promised. They chose to do nothing. It is a complete and utter mess."

The fiasco has also had a knock-on effect on the pensions of firefighters. As the wrong contributions are being made, the amount the pension is worth on retirement could be less than it should be.

Equally affected are those who have been overpaid, as

they are likely to be chased by HMRC to pay more tax for wages they did not earn.

Firefighters who receive a reduced wage can apply for a hardship loan, but this can mean spending up to two hours on the phone with the council.

What is even more galling is that the council has refused to pay compensation for the hardship and inconvenience caused, despite having received funds from Serco for failing to deliver the service as contractually agreed.

An internal complaints review by the council concluded that firefighters should not be compensated. As a result, the local FBU has entered into a dispute with the employer and is considering its next move.

IN BRIEF

PENSION: LEGAL CHALLENGE UPDATE

The FBU has submitted 24 large binders full of evidence to the courts for its legal challenge on behalf of members' pensions.

The union contends the transitional protection arrangements that the government introduced as part of the imposed 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme are inadequate and discriminatory.



The court has listed the FBU's case to be heard in January 2017, but this could be subject to change.

■ Watch a full video update on the case at: www.fbu.org.uk/news/pension-update

EC MEMBER KEVIN BROWN RETIRES

2017 will bring a new addition to the FBU's executive council as region 5 member Kevin Brown retires.

The current regional secretary, Les Skarratts, will take up his new position on the EC in January.

Mark Rowe, who serves as the Merseyside brigade chair, has been elected the regional secretary.

SOME DREAMS DO COME TRUE ...

Jo Foot was sorting through a box of photographs that belonged to her late grandmother when she came across a picture of herself as a child soaking two firefighters with a bucket and sponge.

The scene in the picture was particularly fortuitous because, 20 years later, Jo became a firefighter at Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

"My grandma lived on the Isle of Wight, so I thought it was probably a station on the island, but I brought the picture into work one day to show the watch," she says.

"To my surprise, I was told that the two firefighters in the picture were Laurie Smyth and Bob Algar, both of whom were still in the job."

The two long serving firefighters were now stationed at Aylesbury fire station,

WHEN JO ARRIVED AT THE STATION SHE WAS ABLE TO MEET THE TWO MEN WHO HAD SEEMINGLY FORESHADOWED HER FUTURE CAREER

Buckinghamshire where, coincidentally, Jo was posted to for stand-by duties shortly after finding the picture.

When Jo arrived at the station she was able to meet the two men who had seemingly foreshadowed her future career.

"I worked with Laurie and Bob on green watch and over the next few years I got to know them very well. I loved the stories they had from memories around the time the picture was taken.

"I'm proud to say that when I took up the position of FBU brigade organiser they were the strongest and most loyal union brothers you could ask for."

Just before Laurie retired they recreated the photograph that would kick start their friendship years before any of them knew it.



2016 IN PICTURES



MAY London FBU members Jordan Wright and Mitchell Baldock win £10,000 each after accidentally betting that Leicester would win the Premiership

NIGEL FRENCH/PA IMAGES



JANUARY Hundreds pay their respects to one of London's first black firefighters, Frank Bailey, who had died at the age of 90

ROD LEON



JUNE Historic copies of *Firefighter* on display at 'A Hundred Years of Firefighting and Unity', a seminar held at the TUC

STEFANO CAGNONI



JEFF MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

JUNE Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn exits the FBU's fire engine after delivering a speech during a "Keep Corbyn" rally outside the Houses of Parliament



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

SEPTEMBER TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady tries out a fire kit at the FBU's award-winning stall at the TUC congress

SEPTEMBER Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service withdraws threat to sack all 1,017 uniformed staff after FBU intervention



LEE BOSNELL/PA IMAGES



MAY Essex firefighters raise more than £20,000 for four-year-old Stanley Newman, who suffers from congenital muscular dystrophy, the son of Clacton firefighter Rob Newman



MAY FBU annual conference delegates back staying in the EU



NOVEMBER Snow on the ground as FBU national school participants pose for a photograph



FAREWELL to former FBU general secretary Ken Cameron (left) and former president Bill Deal who died in 2016



FEBRUARY *Operator*, part funded by the FBU, wins British Short Film at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Film Awards 2016

TIME TO STEM THE TIDE OF FLOOD MISERY

An important committee of MPs has backed the FBU's demand for fire and rescue services in England to have a statutory duty to tackle floods – providing the funding and workforce to end the appalling conditions faced by firefighters who tackle floods each winter. Lynne Wallis reports.

In the weeks before the havoc wrought by Storm Angus in November flooding had already hit the news. The House of Commons environment, food and rural affairs (EFRA) select committee, which scrutinises the work of the government department with the same name, called for substantial funding for fire and rescue services to tackle flooding.

The MPs also backed the long awaited and much demanded measure of giving fire and rescue services a statutory duty to carry out flood rescue in England. This duty already exists in Scotland and Northern Ireland, with a statutory duty for Wales imminent.

On 10 November the government announced it was putting the army on standby for winter flooding, while two Cumbria firefighters were interviewed on ITV's *This Morning*, having made it to the *Daily Mirror* Pride of Britain awards shortlist for a lifesaving flood rescue they carried out from a sinking car last winter.

Flooding is a devastating, ongoing seasonal nightmare for rural and other communities. There is urgent need for investment if the tide of human misery it causes, alongside the massive strain it puts on under-resourced fire and rescue services, is to be stemmed.

Last winter, more than 60,000 homes in Cumbria and Lancashire were severely damaged by devastating

deluges, with thousands of families evacuated from flood wrecked dwellings with no electricity.

An estimated five million people in England alone are now at risk of flooding. There have already been flood related deaths in autumn, as we plunge into another potentially difficult, stormy wet winter.

The Labour Party made a statutory duty for flooding a manifesto commitment ahead of the 2015 election. The union has been calling for such a duty for more than nine years.

PRIMARY RESPONDER

The fire and rescue service was the primary emergency responder throughout the 2015-16 winter floods, providing 70% of the boats used and undertaking 3,000 rescues, even though there is no statutory requirement for the service to make such provision.

The fire and rescue service makes the largest contribution to the national flood response capability. A statutory duty would secure the necessary funding and workforce to ensure that rescue work is done properly. It would ensure an effective, adequate, reliable flood response to keep the public safe.

The government has announced that 1,200 members of the armed forces have been put on 24-hour



**Flash flooding
in Manchester**

JON SUPER/AP/PA PHOTOS

standby to assist with flooding this winter, a move cautiously welcomed by the Chief Fire Officers Association but not by the FBU.

General secretary Matt Wrack said: "They say they are making soldiers 'available', but we need to ask what this actually means. Is it that they are available when they are not in Afghanistan?"

"What are the guarantees that they will be there during flood rescues? We are concerned that troops have been deployed to floods without adequate training, resources or PPE.

"It is wholly inappropriate for soldiers to be mobilised in this way, just so that the government can be seen to be 'doing something' about tackling the flood risk."

The EFRA committee MPs' recommendations say that the government must consult on the methods and funding of the statutory duty by the end of this year (2016).

The EFRA paper's emergency response section states: "We are concerned that continued pressure on resources would jeopardise the fire and rescue service's ability to deliver a high standard of service in future.

"We recommend that the government places a statutory duty on the fire and rescue service in England and Wales to provide an emergency response to flood events." The paper also notes that "many witnesses to flood rescues praised firefighters for their bravery and commitment".

APPALLING CONDITIONS

Quite right too, given the appalling conditions many firefighters found themselves working in over the Christmas period last year.

Dave Burn, brigade chair for Cumbria, recalls carrying out some challenging flood rescues with just two dry suits between 11 firefighters.

He said: "I swam to work in a padded tunic and running pants one day because my fire kit had floated away.

"We pitched our ladders into fast-flowing water to rescue people from their homes. I was crouched by one window holding a ladder for 20 minutes while colleagues rescued an elderly lady from a top window.

"I was in the water for two hours because there were no fresh crews to take over, so we worked 13-hour shifts solidly.

"I was so cold afterwards someone had to hold my cup so I could drink my tea, as my hands were shaking so badly."

The fire station, meanwhile, was under eight feet of water.

A statutory duty would not put an end to these conditions immediately but would strengthen our campaign to improve planning and resources for this modern challenge to our service. But nothing is likely to be put in place in time for this winter.

So it looks, once more, as if firefighters will step in and do the job without the proper resources or equipment, with the result that safety and efficiency is compromised.

And most firefighters in this climate would say: "So – what's new?"



**AN APPEAL TO FIREFIGHTERS,
SERVING AND RETIRED:**

**HELP US RECORD
THE HISTORY OF
OUR SERVICE, OUR
PROFESSION
AND OUR UNION**

As plans to celebrate the union's centenary
in 2018 gather pace, FBU general secretary
Matt Wrack appeals for members' help

The Fire Brigades Union will be 100 years old in 2018. On a recent visit to the union's archives, which are held at the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick, we found a first edition rule book which had belonged to Jim Bradley. Jim was FBU general secretary from 1922 to 1929 and he played a central role in founding the union.

This first rule book records the union as being founded on 1 October 1918. The legal registration required under the Trade Union Act was completed on 31 December 1918. The Firemen's Trade Union was born, and it kept that name until 1930 when it was renamed the Fire Brigades Union.

Firefighters had attempted to form unions or join branches of other trade unions previously. But each attempt had faced firm opposition from both chief fire officers and the local authorities who were responsible for local fire brigades. The creation of a separate union for firefighters was not easy.

The climate changed at the end of the First World War. A wave of radicalism among workers across much of the world was reflected in growing numbers joining trade unions and burgeoning militancy.

Firefighters were not exempt from this, in Britain or around the world. There were already independent firefighter unions in Australia. In 1918, firefighters in North America formed the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) – international because like many North American unions it organised in the USA and in Canada. Firefighter trade unionism was emerging worldwide.

Looking back at early records, we can see that many of the issues that prompted firefighters to get organised in 1918 – duty systems, uniform, payments for detached duties – are still with us, albeit in different forms.

Looking at key turning points in our history, we can see how the development of our union is inextricably linked to the development of the fire service itself and of the firefighting profession as a distinct and unique area of public service.

The men and women who built our union faced huge challenges, facing victimisation or legal hurdles at various times. What kept the union going was the closeness of the workforce born out of shared experiences and shared risks.

ORGANISING FOR OUR CENTENARY

If we want to know where we need to be heading, we also need to know where we came from. It is with this in mind that the executive council has started to put in place plans for 2018, the centenary year.

They will include publications, events and other communications. We should remember those who went before us, the struggles they fought and the battles they endured to improve things for those who were to come after as they built a better fire service for our

communities. But we also want to mark more generally the role of firefighters in society and the contribution they have made, and continue to make, to keeping society safe.

Our centenary project needs to record the voices of those on the front line. It cannot simply be a record of conferences, meetings and general secretaries. Our union was built by firefighters and we want to ensure their voice is heard.

Therefore we are making an appeal to current and retired firefighters to think about what you can contribute.

- Do you have records, letters or photographs which say something about our history?
- Were other members of your family FBU members? Do you have records which may be of interest?
- Do you have records at your station or elsewhere locally which may be of help in developing

our project?

- Are you in touch with retired members who may be able to help with memories or anecdotes, photographs, or other records?

We want to ensure this is your history, recording the voice of those on the front line. It's a fascinating story and one we should be very proud of. Let's get ready for 2018.

■ **If you are able to share any material with us please contact: centenary@fbu.org.uk**

**WE WANT TO ENSURE
THIS IS YOUR
HISTORY, RECORDING
THE VOICE OF THOSE
ON THE FRONT LINE**



Chimney fire before height restrictions

1990

FIREFIGHTERS

Christmas, 1977. Paul McCartney and Wings were number one in the music charts with *Mull of Kintyre*, the first *Star Wars* film debuted in UK

cinemas and more than 28 million people tuned in to enjoy the final *Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special*.

For FBU members, however, the mood was sombre. Up and down the country, firefighters and control staff were on picket lines as the first national strike, which began in November, continued throughout the festive period.

"Christmas was cancelled that year for many families," recalls FBU executive council member Kevin Brown who at the time was a firefighter at Phillips Park fire station in Manchester.

"It was only the generosity of the public who donated money that got us through."

That generosity came from various places. The controversial comic Bernard Manning laid on a Christmas Day meal at the Embassy comedy club in Manchester for firefighters and their families. And when dockers and factory workers left work on payday they would stuff fire helmets with money to be given to the firefighters.

"There was a lot of goodwill towards us but there was still much hardship," says Brown. "Four and five years later members were still paying off debts that they accumulated during the strike."

Still, the comradely spirit of FBU members remained undefeated. In the run-up to Christmas, as firefighters and their families were starting to feel the bite in their pocket, members of the Hereford and Worcester brigade requested help from the Claimants Union. This was a community organisation that gave advice to

In the first in a series of features covering the history of the union and the firefighting profession – as we approach our centenary in 2018 – William Murphy looks back at some memorable firefighters' Christmases

help people trying to access benefits and other forms of government support.

However, when the adviser turned up to assist the brigade, the firefighters were shocked by his appearance. "His complexion was consumptive, he looked undernourished and desperate for a good meal," wrote firefighter John Gordon. So they ended up having a whip round to pay for his fares, buy him a beer and give him £5 for his troubles.

Although the advice was welcome, no one in the brigade got any benefits for their families.

SECOND WORLD WAR

Working on Christmas Day is no one's idea of fun. Grafting during the festivities in the middle of a war? Even less so. During the Second World War, the Nazi Luftwaffe went on bombing raids over Manchester on four consecutive nights shortly before Christmas 1940.

Firefighters from Stoke Newington visit Great Ormond Street children's hospital in London on Christmas Day 1985



1985

AT CHRISTMAS

The final night of bombing in Sale, Greater Manchester, saw 96 fire calls, says local historian and son of a Manchester firefighter Eric Midwinter.

"A stick of 200 incendiary bombs fell at one period, then a couple of hours later another 200 fell," he says.

"My father was helping to fight the fire in Sale Town Hall and he and another fireman got out just before the big town hall clock fell right into the council chamber where the blaze was."

For all their work, Manchester's firefighters were offered just a single cold sausage for their Christmas dinner.

But the famous wartime spirit was most definitely alive within the country's firefighters. Merle Cartright recalls how, as a child during the Second World War, she and her friends were given Christmas presents made by members of the Auxiliary Fire Service.

"Money and goods were in short supply back then, but even so they spent hours making needlework boxes for the girls," she says. "The interior and hinged lid were padded and lined with a silky fabric and given a fancy edging. They were a reasonable size and my sister and I still have and use ours nearly 70 years later. It has been only in adulthood that we've appreciated the workmanship and long hours that must have gone into making so many."

THE GOOD AND THE BAD CALLS

There are moving accounts of the kind of call-outs firefighters get on Christmas Day itself.

FBU president Alan McLean remembers turning up to one shout in Tyneside where the children of a couple did not even know it was Christmas Day and had no presents. One of his colleagues was so moved that he bought a fort playhouse for the children so they had at least one present to enjoy.

NLAO/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

1977



During the 1977 national strike by firefighters a large turkey was delivered to No 10 Downing Street by the FBU as the Callaghan government refused to meet a 30% pay demand

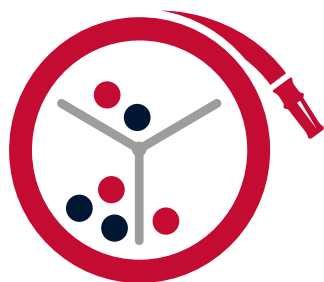
More recently, in 2012 Paul Rich was named firefighter of the year after saving the lives of six children during a fire in Southall, west London, on Christmas Day. But not all call-outs have such a happy ending.

"Fatal call-outs are tragic any time of the year but they're far more poignant at Christmas," says Kevin Brown.

"In one particularly bad year, there were 20 fatalities over the Christmas period within Greater Manchester. I know a lot of firefighters hope to get through Christmas without a fatality. Sadly, we're not always that lucky."

**THE COMRADELY SPIRIT OF
FBU MEMBERS REMAINED UNDEFEATED**

'EVERYONE WHO CAN SPARE A POUND A WEEK SHOULD SIGN UP'



FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

FIRE BRIGADES UNION | SERVING FIREFIGHTERS SINCE 1918

WINNER

The lottery's first draw was won by FF Mark Dixon, West Midlands



When, earlier this year, the FBU started to explore the possibility of starting its own lottery in the run up to its centenary in 2018, there was much that could have deterred us. There are many "good causes" lotteries out there already competing for an increasingly slender wedge of peoples' hard earned cash.

Members will appreciate that their union is not easily deterred, and a good job too – at the current rate of ticket sales, the new Firefighters 100 Lottery will be generating an income of around £130,000 each year for the five good causes it identified when it was established.

5,000 TICKETS LATER

With lottery experts Gatherwell as our partners, the union has now sold over 5,000 tickets, generating nearly 3,000 supporters. The lottery has been promoted heavily to members and beyond, using social media, newspapers and magazines, and of course our own website and *Firefighter*.

We are enlisting celebrity support, most notably Sue Perkins of Great British Bake Off fame, who has agreed to make a short film for us in support of the Firefighters 100 Lottery and its aims.

The good causes include support for the families of seriously injured and bereaved firefighters, as well as the establishment and maintenance of memorials to those who died in the line of duty.

The lottery will be focussed on the creation of memorials and remembrance events in 2018, the FBU's centenary year, and is discussing joint initiatives with the Firefighters

Memorial Trust.

Discussions about potential designs for commemorative plaques are continuing.

People who will be supported by lottery funds include mothers like Susan Veevers, whose son Stephen Hunt died while on duty in Manchester in 2013.

Fortunately for his family, Stephen was a union member which means that all of the considerable legal costs involved in holding the fire and rescue service to account were met by the union.

Susan Veevers told us: "I was so pleased to hear that the FBU are launching their own lottery to support, among other good causes, the families of fallen and injured firefighters.

"No one could imagine the hell our family went through after my son Stephen Hunt died while on duty in 2013 – people assume that families such as ours are looked after following such a tragedy, but it's not always the case.

"A special fund to support those unlucky enough to lose a loved one is much needed and very welcome."

SPECIALIST SUPPORT

Funding could be made available for specialist medical support or equipment, alterations required at home due to a medical condition or to assist young people attending college or university where, due to the loss of a parent's salary, they may be under threat of having to abandon their studies because money for fees or maintenance is no longer available.

Help will also be given to victims of fire and other disasters, at home and abroad, where, for example, homes have been destroyed leaving people homeless.

If The Fire Fighters Charity or other charities decide to provide any of the services covered under the Firefighters 100 Lottery's good causes, funding can be made available.

WELLBEING

A good cause close to the lottery's heart is funding for research into firefighters' mental and physical wellbeing.

It is widely known now that



In addition to the weekly lottery, FBU members have the chance every quarter to win a prize, the most recent of which was an iPhone 7 and, thanks to a very generous anonymous benefactor, there is also a Christmas draw for £2,000.

firefighters and other emergency service workers suffer significantly poorer mental health than the rest of the population.

If the mental and physical wellbeing of firefighters is to improve, hard evidence is the only way to achieve the recognition necessary to bring about change.

Lottery funds will also be used to ensure that the lessons from tragedies such as the death of brother Stephen Hunt are not just learned but fully implemented.

The first Firefighters 100 Lottery winner was Mark Dixon, a firefighter stationed on green watch at Highgate fire station in Birmingham. Mark won the £920 jackpot just days before he turned 31.

"I was so surprised," he told *Firefighter*. "I found out just after returning to my station after a call out on Bonfire Night.

"I signed up for the lottery to support a great cause, but to win the best part of a thousand pounds is just amazing.

"I didn't expect it at all. I don't know exactly how I will be spending the money yet, but it was a nice surprise... everyone who can spare a pound a week should sign up to the lottery."

THE GOOD CAUSES

The Firefighters 100 Lottery Fund shall be administered appropriately by the Fire Brigades Union for the future benefit of all firefighters and their bereaved families in accordance with the following good cause criteria:

Family support and welfare: to provide longer-term support to the families of firefighters killed or seriously injured in the line of duty, including financial support such as individual bursaries to help towards the costs of further education, or grants towards the provision of specialist medical equipment, or support for inquests or similar processes.

Memorials and remembrance: to support, establish and maintain memorials and/or memorial events in remembrance of firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Protect, prevent and promote: to promote the lessons learnt from the deaths and serious injuries of firefighters so as to better protect firefighters, the communities they serve and prevent deaths and injuries in the future.

Research: to support research into the physical and mental health and wellbeing of firefighters; the "all hazards" nature of the modern fire and rescue service role; and the prevention, protection and intervention work firefighters undertake to save lives in our communities.

Humanitarian assistance: to support humanitarian initiatives and appeals, including internationally, which are aimed at assisting those affected by fire or disaster and where there is a particular need for the support of skilled fire and rescue service intervention.



Newly installed 'active lighting' to illuminate the National Firefighters Memorial

firefighters100lottery.co.uk

HEALTH

CHRONIC LACK OF ORGAN DONORS

Each day, three people die while waiting for an NHS transplant. Choosing to be an organ donor could save one of those lives.

Mark Serwotka could not have imagined how one stroll in the woods with his dog would change his life so profoundly. “The dog came back smelling of something foul, so I washed him down,” the general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services union told BBC News last month.

“The next day my face and legs had swollen grotesquely like an extreme allergic reaction. A week later I got rushed to hospital with a heart rate of 220 beats per minute.”

The virus, contracted in 2010, caused Serwotka’s heart to inflate massively and, by the time the swelling subsided,

his heart was irreparably damaged. It would eventually lead to heart failure and he was fitted with a ventricular assist device to pump blood around his body.

He is now one of more than 6,000 people in the UK waiting for an organ transplant. The shortage of organ donors means that, on average, three people die each day while waiting for an NHS transplant.

Opt-in system

The UK, with the exception of Wales, has an opt-in system of donor registration, so that a person has to actively sign up to the NHS database and give consent for their organs to be donated.

Although half a million people die each year in the UK, only 1% of them do so in the very specific circumstances which allow organs to be donated – usually in a situation in which the

donor is brain dead but other organs are undamaged. NHS Blood and Transplant, the organisation responsible for organ donation in the UK, says this narrow definition of when it is appropriate to receive a donated organ means when a family says no to donation, someone waiting for a transplant may miss out on their only opportunity to reclaim their lives.

In cases where people die unexpectedly and their bodies are viable for transplant, 40% of families choose not to go forward with the procedure. This is despite most polls showing widespread support for organ donation.

Sally Johnson, director of organ donation and transplantation at NHS Blood and Transplant says that if people are willing to receive an organ transplant, they should be prepared to donate.

“We recognise that families are approached about organ donation at a difficult time, but with almost all of us prepared to take an organ if we need one, we need to be ready to donate too,” she says.

“Think about what we would want others to do for us if we ever need a transplant, and be prepared to donate.

“Talking to your relatives about what you want is crucial as it is much more difficult to agree to donation when you don’t know what the patient would have wanted.

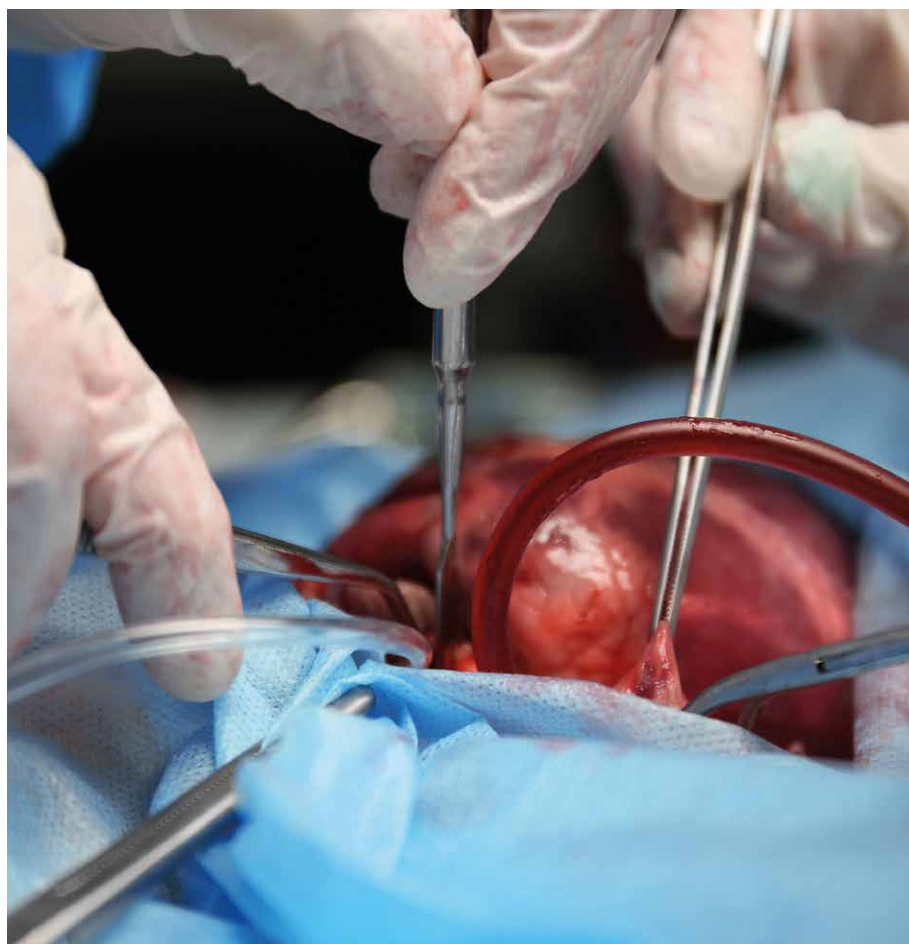
“There are around 6,500 people waiting for a transplant now and they need people to agree to donate for them to get the organ transplant they so desperately need.”

1,000 additional transplants

NHS Blood and Transplant estimates that if 80% of families approached to donate a relative’s organs said yes, more than 1,000 additional transplants would take place across the UK each year.

That would go a long way to help people like Serwotka who are relying on a viable donor organ to become available so that they may live.

■ To join the NHS Organ Donor Register visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call 0300 123 2323.



LEGAL BEAGLE

INSURANCE FAT CATS WANT YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR MONEY



**FBU FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
0800 100 6061
IN SCOTLAND
0800 089 1331**

The government plans to help the privileged few at the expense of working people, says **Doug Christie** of Thompsons Solicitors

Nearly a year after the policy was announced, the government has published its plans to restrict access to justice for people who are injured in accidents.

The plans would increase from £1,000 to £5,000 the “small claims limit” for personal injury cases. This means that anyone claiming less than £5,000 for an injury would have their claim allocated to the “small claims track” where legal representation is not allowed.

The government wants to remove the right of injured people to use professional solicitors to help them secure fair compensation.

This will leave the injured worse off while lining the pockets of insurance companies which will benefit from what is, in effect, a huge gift from the government.

INDUSTRY LOBBYING

The insurance industry has spent years lobbying its mates in government to change the legal system to make its life easier and its shareholders wealthier.

It has tried to justify these changes by stirring up fears of a “compensation culture” and “whiplash fraud” which, it claims, is pushing up insurance premiums.

Reality shows this to be nonsense. Helped by the

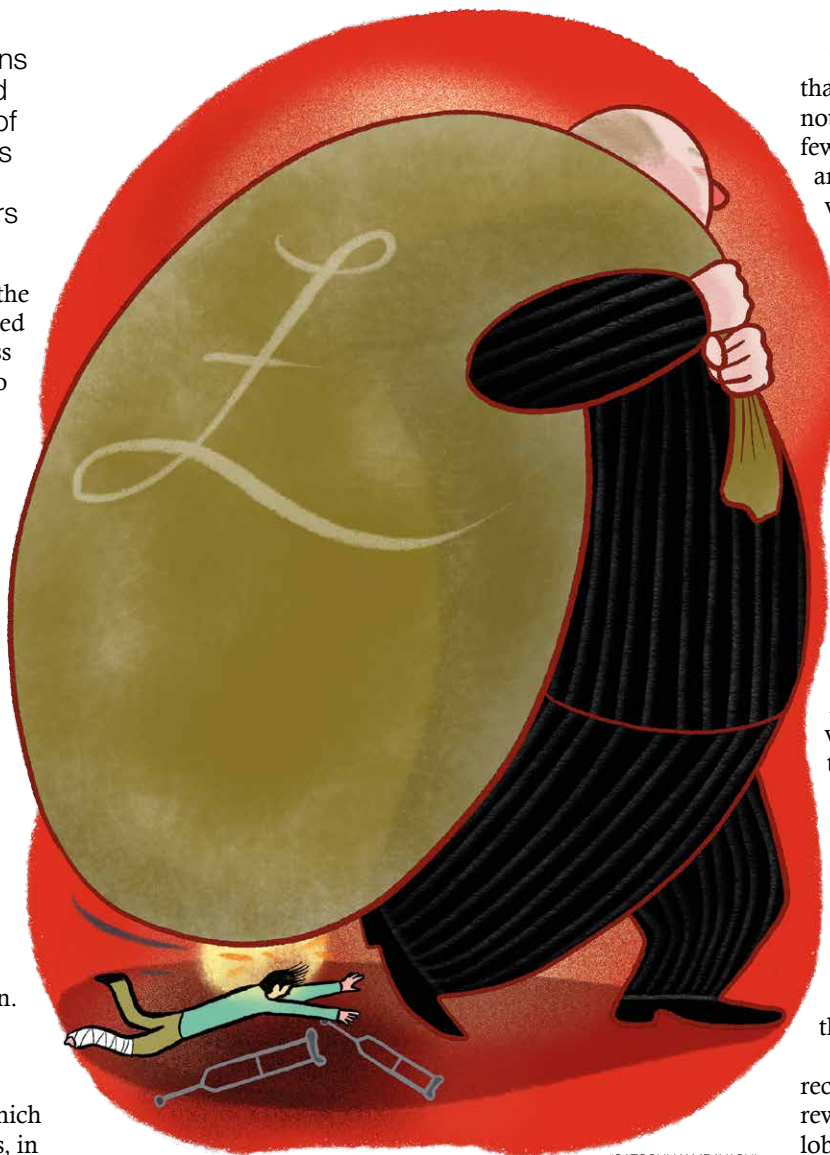
government, over the past five years insurers have saved a staggering £7.8bn in claims costs while continuing to put up premiums at the expense of the average consumer.

The total number of injury cases has dropped by 6% since 2013 and whiplash injuries have gone down by nearly 60%. The facts simply do not reflect the picture insurers are trying to paint. Insurers are choosing to see premiums go up while they rake it in.

Thompsons Solicitors

investigated the pay of the CEOs of the top three insurers and found that their salaries, benefits, bonuses and dividends gave them earnings in 2015 ranging from £4.82m to £37.82 m.

Admiral’s Henry Engelhardt pulled in an enormous £37.82m, while Direct Line’s Paul Geddes earned £4.82m. Aviva’s Mark Wilson doubled his pay to £5.67m. These three men claim to be on the side of the ordinary person. It doesn’t look like that to us.



“SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Theresa May has said that her government would not work for the “privileged few” and that people who are “just about managing” would be the focus of government policy.

It is hard to think of many people who fit the definition of “privileged few” more than these CEOs. It is hardworking people on low incomes who cannot afford not to drive a car to get to work in the morning and home to their families in the evening who bear the brunt of the rising cost of insurance.

UNACCEPTABLE

And it is the same people who are being told that their injury, worth “just” £5,000 is too small to justify the support of a solicitor. Let them tell a dinner lady, a street cleaner, or a firefighter working long hours every week that £5,000 is insignificant and see how they react.

The audacity of those receiving eye-watering rewards is staggering. They lobby for changes to the small claims limit that will only mean more profit for them and leave people injured at work or on the roads out in the cold.

It is simply unacceptable.

■ The FBU and the wider trade union movement will fight these proposals but your help is needed. This may mean writing to your MP or signing an online petition. Visit bit.ly/SmallClaimsBigImpact to join the campaign.

■ See YouTube for more details: youtu.be/Vbq4tHj4HNk.

WONDER, AMAZEMENT AND AMUSEMENT

How does he do it? **Helen Hague** spoke to Derbyshire firefighter and magician Matthew Ramsell in a bid find out

Derbyshire firefighter Matthew Ramsell seems to have a good few tricks up his sleeve – and more, perhaps, in his pocket. For, away from fighting fires, Matthew is a performing magician. And to succeed in the magic game, you must keep the audience entranced, enthralled – and guessing.

For more than a year, Matthew has been a member of the magician's premier league, the Magic Circle. He can't say too much about it – but lets slip that wannabe members must perform in front of a panel and show that "they know a bit" about the history of magic. And, no, he hasn't come across any former Hogwarts pupils since he joined.

Matthew, who lives in Ilkeston, Derbyshire, joined the fire service as a wholtime firefighter at Long Eaton more than 10 years ago – around the time he became seriously interested in studying magic and performing tricks. Apart from a brief stint in Derby, he's been at the station ever since.

"I absolutely love the job, it's one of the best in the world," says the white watch member, who was once voted best wedding entertainer in the Midlands.

PAUL DANIELS MAGIC KIT

Money is a bit of a theme in Matthew's tableside set. He can bend metal at close range – 2p pieces a speciality. And he can also turn five lottery tickets into a £50 note, plucked from his empty wallet in front of astonished onlookers. "That one always seems to go down really well," says Matthew, who first got the taste for performing tricks after he was given a Paul Daniels magic kit as a child.

Magic has undergone a major image rebrand in recent years, he reckons. Fewer stage acts include "box jumpers", where people – often scantily clad

women – jump unexpectedly out of what the audience has been led to believe is an empty box.

Cheery uncles in top hats and white gloves are no doubt still doing card tricks at children's parties, and maybe even pulling the odd rabbit out of a hat. But cooler, more street-wise performers are eclipsing this old-style magic.

YouTube and the internet have played a major role in the modern day magic makeover. "Close-up magic has had a real resurgence," says Matthew, citing the magician Dynamo who saunters up to people in the street and performs, close up, once he's got their attention.

He uploaded his encounters to YouTube, and it all went a bit viral. Dynamo had his own series on Dave TV, then the BBC. "Dynamo has revolutionised what people expect from magic in this country," says Matthew, who confesses to being a bit of a fan. "He's

the British equivalent of America's David Blaine." Another cool magician, Richard Jones, won *Britain's Got Talent* recently – further evidence that magic is on a roll.

Matthew's own act has been evolving over the years. He has full public liability insurance – fire included. And, yes, fire does appear in his act sometimes. The amount of fire he uses is "minimal" – no pyrotechnics, no fire-eating.

OBJECTS FROM FIRE

He's been producing objects from fire for a good few years now but never at work, obviously. Now he's producing "a large block of ice from fire", riffing on opposing elements. Lollipops have also been known to feature.

Matthew's visual close-up magic takes "fire to the table" and produces looks of wonder and disbelief.

There are loads of reactions, but wonder, amazement, and amusement, show the act is working. He wants his audience to have a good time, feel relaxed, have a laugh – and, of course, wonder how on earth he does it.

But for 31-year-old family man Matthew, the "most magic day of my life" was when his daughter Isla was born, four years ago. And that wouldn't have happened unless a fire station colleague had fixed him up with Liane in a blind date. Romance burgeoned and marriage soon followed.

It comes as no surprise to learn that Matthew's best man was a fellow magician, or that Isla can "do a basic cup and balls routine already". It's "the oldest trick in the world", says Matthew, appearing on the Pyramids in ancient Egypt.

Matthew is quick to point out that he's not the only working firefighter who has the magic touch or to belong to the Magic Circle.





MATTHEW IS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT HE'S NOT THE ONLY WORKING FIREFIGHTER WHO BELONGS TO THE MAGIC CIRCLE

There are, he says, “a number of very good magicians in the fire service, a lot of talent out there”. There’s a lot of informal networking and “quite a few of us” attend what’s thought to be the biggest magic convention in the world, held every year at Blackpool’s Winter Gardens. The event attracts more than 5,000 people each year.

Even seasoned performers such as Matthew can’t always pin down how a magician pulls off a trick. “I have a rough idea most of the time, but I still love being fooled. It’s like being a kid again. Sometimes I haven’t got a clue how it’s done.”

MAGIC IN THE INTERNET AGE

In the internet age, a performer’s reputation is no longer down to word of mouth. Magic tricks and reaction shots uploaded on YouTube act as calling cards.

If you want to see what Matthew’s up to, pump his name into Google or check out his Facebook site.

And, next time someone fools you with the cup and balls routine, just remember that young Isla cracked it at three, performing it, not working out how it’s done.

There’s no shame in being astonished. After all, it’s the magician’s job to keep you amazed, amused – and guessing. That’s the magic of it ...



COULD YOU CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF OUR WORK?

The 2016 FBU photo competition attracted a lot of interest from current members. The 12 final shortlisted entries are now framed and adorn head office walls, and were used to illustrate the FBU 2017 calendar which has been sent to all branches and can be bought from the FBU shop at shop.fbu.org.uk.

We would like to repeat the experience and, with the kind sponsorship once again from College Hill Press, are inviting members to send in their photos to firefighter@fbu.org.uk by **15 June 2017**.

We are looking for powerful, creative, intriguing and/or educational photographs which showcase the huge range of work our members undertake. So whether it's a dramatic picture of firefighters in action, or control operators dispatching engines, or staff on downtime, working in the community, undertaking training, or returning from a shout please submit your photo and see if you could win.

The first prize will be £500, with two runner-up prizes of £100.

TERMS

The 2017 FBU photo contest opens to entries from 1 January 2017 and closes on 15 June 2017. By submitting an entry, each entrant agrees to the official rules.

WHO MAY ENTER

The contest is open only to individuals who are current FBU members.

HOW TO ENTER

You can enter either online or by post. Include your full name, address, membership number, contact telephone number, email address with a short description of your picture detailing where it was taken and the story behind the photo.

Digital images must have a minimum size of 3,000 pixels on their longest edge. Physical prints or slides must be of sufficient quality and resolution to be printed at large size. Original negatives for prints must be available.

Email: firefighter@fbu.org.uk with the words "Photo competition" in title line
Post: FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Rd, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, KT2 7AE.

CONTEST PRIZES

First prize of £500.
Two runners-up will receive £100.

JUDGING

The judging panel will be made up of Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, Chris Longley from our sponsors College Hill Press, Anna Zych from the FBU communications team as well as editor and designer Alan Slingsby and photojournalist Jess Hurd.

OFFICIAL RULES

This competition is only open to FBU members whose membership fees are up to date.

All entries must be the original work of the entrant and must not infringe on the rights of any other party.

Each image entered must be the work of the individual submitting it and must not have been published elsewhere nor have won a prize in any other photographic competition.

It is the responsibility of each entrant to ensure that any image they submit has been taken with the permission of all people recognisable in it and that the image does not infringe the copyright of any third party or any laws.

Copyright in all images submitted will remain with the entrant. But each entrant grants a worldwide, irrevocable, perpetual licence to the Fire Brigades Union to feature any or all of the submitted images in any of its publications, websites and/or in any other material published by the union.

There is no limit on the number of entries per person.

Entries will be considered from fire service photographers.

The competition closes 15 June 2017.

We cannot guarantee entries can be returned.

The decision of the judges will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Entrants must warrant that they took photograph they submit and that they own its copyright.

Submission of an entry will be taken as acceptance of the rules of the competition.



Winner of the 2016 competition: Exercise Towering Inferno, Birmingham, by Wayne Roe



Runner-up: Fire Behaviour Training, by Damon Corr



Runner-up: Blaze in a Derelict Church, by Matthew Daniels

STATION CAT THICK SKINS AND BIG MOUTH PROBLEMS ...

Edinburgh firefighters
get a close look at
Bertus the rhino

SCOTTISH FIRE SERVICE



GIVING WITH ONE HAND, TAKING WITH THE OTHER

Here (right) is a nice picture of Suffolk councillor Matthew Hicks handing over a white van at Princes Street, Ipswich, fire station which Suffolk FRS is kindly giving to the charity Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue.

And behind the suited and benevolent Councillor Hicks is the fire engine he and his Tory colleagues have just axed.

Why has Suffolk's Councillor Hicks axed that fire engine? It's part of a £2m package of cuts. And what is the saved £2m going to be used for? Why, to add to Suffolk's store of rainy day money. Which already stands at £220m.

So when a fire engine can't get to a building in time to save a life, Councillor Hicks will be able to comfort the bereaved with the words: "But if we had kept the fire engines, Suffolk's rainy day fund would only have £220m in it, instead of £222m. Think of that. Your loved one did not die in vain."

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND FIRE SAFETY

Colorado firefighters may have rescued the then presidential candidate Donald Trump when he was trapped in a lift, but that didn't stop him denouncing them at one of his rallies soon afterwards. He was angry because fire marshals imposed a safe limit on the number of people his hall could hold.

"This is why our country doesn't work," he roared into his microphone. "We



have plenty of space here. We have thousands of people outside trying to get in. And we have a fire marshal that said, 'Oh we can't allow more people.' And the reason they won't let them in is because they don't know what the hell they're doing. Hey, maybe they're a Hillary person. Could that be possible? Probably."

Trump later added that the fire marshal was "probably a Democrat".

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND BORIS JOHNSON

But we needn't worry about Trump. All this weeping and gnashing of teeth is a "whinge-o-rama". Who says so? Foreign secretary Boris Johnson says so, that's who; and Johnson, as the London mayor who closed many of London's fire stations, knows a good whinge-o-rama when he sees one.

He's also rubbished the idea that Britain can't have access to the free market if it closes its borders to EU citizens. Of course you can, says Boris; any suggestion to the contrary is "b*****s." During the

Brexit campaign he was photographed in front of a huge placard saying "Let's give our NHS the £350 million the EU takes every week."

I expect any suggestion that this was a lie would have been "b*****s" or a "whinge-o-rama." But there's no sign of the money.

HEAVY LIFTING AT EDINBURGH ZOO

Newcraighall fire station's crew recently had to move a vast, ungainly, thick-skinned creature to a place of safety where its mouth could be opened safely.

No, we are not talking about Boris Johnson this time. This was Edinburgh Zoo's two-ton rhinoceros Bertus, who was suffering from toothache. So they sedated him, and then moved him into a position in which vets could operate on him using winching and pulling equipment and techniques more often seen after collisions involving heavy vehicles or at the site of a collapsed building.

Bertus's operation was a complete success, says Simon Girling, head vet at the zoo.

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND TONY BLAIR

As if things weren't bad enough, what with Trump, Brexit, and Marine le Pen, your Cat hears that Tony Blair is keen to get back into British politics.

The Labour prime minister who gave us the Iraq War and academy schools, and in 1999 threatened to ban all strikes in public service in order to stop a firefighters' strike, feels government has need of him again.

The man who gave greed a bad name by working for bloodthirsty dictators thinks his judgement can help the nation again.

The Middle East envoy who spent his time creeping round oil-rich sheikhs is hoping for another big job.

And to prepare himself, he's getting to know key Trump acolytes and looking for a Westminster office for his 130 staff. He will call his new outfit either the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change or the Tony Blair Centre for Global Change.

Some people have no shame.

POST-TRUTH POLITICS AND KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

The Trump acolyte whom Blair met recently was the president-elect's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, 35, who, if Trump can get round the laws designed to prevent nepotism, will be bringing all the experience and worldly understanding of 15 years in real estate to the affairs of America and the world. Wonder what he and Blair discussed over lunch in New York. They probably found they had a lot in common.



25-YEAR BADGES



Andrew Strand (r), Kent officers' vice-chair, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mark Simmons



Ronny McMurrough (r), Rainton Bridge, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



Ray Sillito (l), Peterlee, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Ian Mclean



Chris Fraser (l), Merseyside fire control, receives her 25-year badge from branch rep Tim Gerrard



Craig Etherington (r), white watch, Burnley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary John Rivett with watch members looking on



Paul Watton (l), white watch, Redbridge Hill, Southampton, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Nigel Blight with colleagues looking on



Mick Hawke (r), white watch, Burnley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary John Rivett with watch members looking on



Glen Stewart (l), Peterlee, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Tony Curry



Alex Lindsay (l), Ayr, receives his 25-year badge from Scotland district 7 secretary Ian Bryden



National officer Dave Green presents 25-year badges to (l-r), Rob Hall, Andy Newbury and Wayne Slawson, Nottinghamshire



Mark Squirrell (l), white watch, Princes Street Ipswich, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



Barry Drake (r), Hendon and Mill Hill, London, receives his 25-year badge from North West London area secretary Dave Shek with Sean Madeley looking on



Andy Vingoe (l), white watch, Princes Street Ipswich, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



Tim Colson (l), white watch, Princes Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



John Higgins (r), Tenbury Wells, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Gould



Dan Sharpe (l), green watch, Old Kent Road, London, receives his 25-year badge from Les Howson, with colleagues (l-r), Alex Miller, Bob Bennett, Mark Mullins, Lee Missen, Mus Osman, Dave Huggett and Tony Belmont



Neal Coleman (r), D watch, Worthing, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Andy Hockley



John Harvey (r), red watch, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Simon Wall with colleagues looking on



Mark Hayes (r), Swalwell, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from division chair Keenan McMahon



Dunfermline, Scotland, firefighters (l-r), Fergie Forshaw, Martin Halliday, Graham Barclay and Allan Still with their 25-year badges.



Chris Prior (l), blue watch, Hexham, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin



Ian Brown (l), green watch, Princes Street Ipswich, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



Ray Palmer (3rd r), blue watch, Berwick, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin



Mark Shipway (r), red watch, Swindon receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Thompson with colleagues (l-r), Andy Edmondson, Rob Evans, Andy Thompson, Mark Shipway, Rob Haddow, Lee Brathwaite and John Irwin



Wayne Millson (r), Skegness, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jonno Scott



Andy Harris (l), receives his 25-year badge from South West London area secretary Dave Young



Lisa Clinton (r), green watch, fire control, Merseyside, receives her 25-year badge from branch rep Tim Gerard



Rik May (l), green watch, Greenbank, Plymouth, receives his 25-year badge from Des Wraight with colleagues (l-r), Richard House, Nat Haytor, Nick Williams, Mark Rogers, Jim McMelville, and Nigel Tooze



Dave Cook (r), white watch, Bethnal Green, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Glenn McDonald



Trevor Hill (r), Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Steve Collins with red watch colleagues looking on



Steve Cockburn (2nd r), red watch, Berwick, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin



George Gordon (4th r), red watch, Berwick, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin

25-YEAR BADGES



David Watt (l), group 5, East Kilbride, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from Martin Feenie



Scott Laing (r), area trainer, East, North and South Ayrshire, receives his 25-year badge from Scotland district 7 secretary Ian Bryden



Dave Parratt (l), Brentwood, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Steve Underhill (l), officers' rep, Dorset and Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from Dorset membership organiser Scott Blandford



Tony Read (r), blue watch, Barnstaple, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Scott Young with colleagues looking on



Phil Swainston (l), blue watch, Redbridge Hill, Southampton, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Nigel Blight



Nigel Vincent (l), St Austell, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Guy Herrington with colleagues looking on



Peter Taylor (l), Bishop Auckland, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dave Welsh with blue watch colleagues looking on



Nick Saddler (r), white watch, Bethnal Green, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Glenn McDonald



Stan Broderick (r), red watch, Wallasey, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from Warren Radley with colleagues looking on



Andy Phelan (l), white watch, Redbridge Hill, Southampton, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Nigel Blight with colleagues looking on



Pete Lloyd (l), Training, Cheshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Malcolm Jones with (l-r), Russell Austin, Andy Watson, Paul Bickerton, Graham Thomas and Huw Coates



Bob Mitchell (l), red watch, Newbury, Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Matt Clark



Chris Davies (r), blue watch, Malpas, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Sam Harding



Matty Maggs (r), Training and Development Centre, Devizes, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Thompson with fellow instructors and course attendees looking on



Tony Casey (r), green watch, Carlton, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Richard Jones



Jeanette Pike (l), blue watch, fire control, Merseyside, receives her 25-year badge from control branch rep Tim Gerrard



Anthony Lee (l), white watch, Swalwell, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from divisional chair Keenan McMahon



Jono Hay (r), blue watch, Retford, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Bull



Dave Curtis (r), Rainton Bridge, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



Juan Fry (l), Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Clare Hudson



Adrian Dash (r), Avon, receives his 25-year badge from region 13 executive council member Tam McFarlane with former regional chair Kevin Herniman (l), and Avon FBU secretary Chris Taylor



Dom Bentley (r), Worthing, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Andy Hockley



Steve Walker (c), brigade chair, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack and president Alan McLean



Eddie Goodes (r), Addington, London, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Paul Embery



Steve Fullwood (l), Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Ray Burton



Tony Weatherstone (r), Rainton Bridge, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



Mark Ashborne (r), white watch, Kingston, London, receives his 25-year badge from area secretary Dave Young with colleagues looking on

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.

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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.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

0800 100 6061

England, Wales and N Ireland

0800 089 1331

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The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

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Through the FBU shop we aim to supply high quality, value for money, ethically sourced FBU merchandise.

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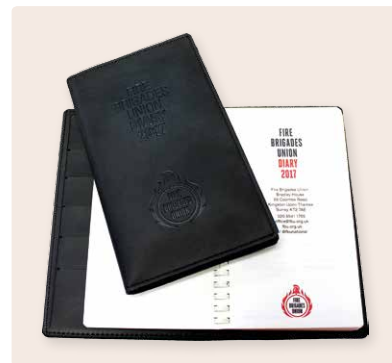
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