

FIREFIGHTER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2016

SAFETY FOR SALE

**TIMES HAVE CHANGED
THE RISKS HAVE NOT**

SEE P14

Plus

**FBU AT THE
LABOUR PARTY
CONFERENCE**

SEE P10

**FIREFIGHTER
FATALITIES:
MORE THAN
JUST
GUIDANCE
NEEDED**

SEE P12





MATT WRACK CUTS, AND THOSE WHO FORCE THEM THROUGH, MUST BE RESISTED

During September our members in Greater Manchester were facing a bleak future.

More than 1,250 firefighters faced the sack – only those who agreed to sign up to worse conditions of service would be re-engaged.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has to find savings of more than £14m, but this is no justification for threatening such action.

FBU officials mounted a vigorous campaign that attracted a lot of public and political support. Officials and members all played their part in spreading the word that this was no way to treat a workforce and that the FBU would not accept such a threat.

We were at the Labour Party conference during this time and lobbied for the support of politicians and visitors alike while there.

Unsurprisingly, every single visitor to our stand passed on their support for these members in Greater Manchester, expressing horror that they should be so shoddily treated.

The story caught the attention of national media and I was invited onto Radio 4's influential Today programme to explain what was so bad about the proposals.

Later that week, we had the welcome news that the dismissal notices had been withdrawn and that both sides were going to the Technical Advisory Panel.

An ill thought out move that would have gone against the grain of any proper joint



negotiating process was stopped, but our officials in Greater Manchester are well aware that further battles lie ahead. They will get our full support.

THE REASON FOR OUR LOTTERY

People may assume that, when a firefighter is killed or injured while on duty, his or her family will be taken care of financially.

Sadly, this is often not the case. Those who should be left in peace to grieve are suddenly and wrongly shackled with serious money worries at possibly the worst time of their lives.

Which is why, on 1 October, we launched our very own national lottery – to raise funds for the families of fallen and injured firefighters.

The Firefighters 100 Lottery, so called because it is launching in the run-up to our centenary in 2018, will raise funds not only to help these families but also offer humanitarian assistance to victims of fires and other incidents.

The lottery's proceeds will also help to fund memorials to fallen firefighters, and be used for research into the wellbeing of firefighters who, we know, suffer higher rates

of mental ill health than the rest of the population.

We are proud that our lottery will see a higher percentage of the monies raised going directly towards the good causes it supports than many other lotteries. This is how it should be.

TORIES ARE THE REAL ENEMY

And so Jeremy Corbyn remains leader of the Labour Party, so let's work towards building a united movement and remember that the real enemy here is this Tory government.

They are freezing public sector pay for the seventh consecutive year, cutting critical, life-saving public services to the bone.

At the same time they are widening the chasm between the vast majority of the population and a privileged few who enjoy a high standard of living, are strangers to the stigma of claiming state benefits and the horrors of zero hours contracts, or year after year without a holiday.

Jeremy Corbyn has pledged to invest in the fire and rescue service and to stop the cuts, promising to give you, our members, the tools to do the job, and end the

current state of affairs where response times are increasing, putting lives at risk.

We have campaigned relentlessly over the past six years, warning politicians that the scale of cuts to the fire and rescue service is such that public safety is seriously compromised.

We now have fire authority members also publicly expressing this fear, as the link between an increased response time and rising fire deaths is inextricably linked.

But this government remains deaf to the concerned voices and further cuts are in the pipeline. The question is no longer "How much worse does it have to get?" but "How much worse can it get?"

We tried to get a dialogue going with employers by organising a fringe meeting at this year's Tory party conference, a first for the FBU.

We had speakers lined up and invitations about to be issued, when the conference organisers told us out of the blue that we had been refused and that our fringe could not go ahead after all.

Would any government interested in the opinions of a group of life-saving professionals have cut off this valuable opportunity to promote dialogue between them and their employers in a time few could deny is one of crisis for the fire and rescue service?

They say they are interested in considering all views before making decisions about important public services. This shows what they really think of us.

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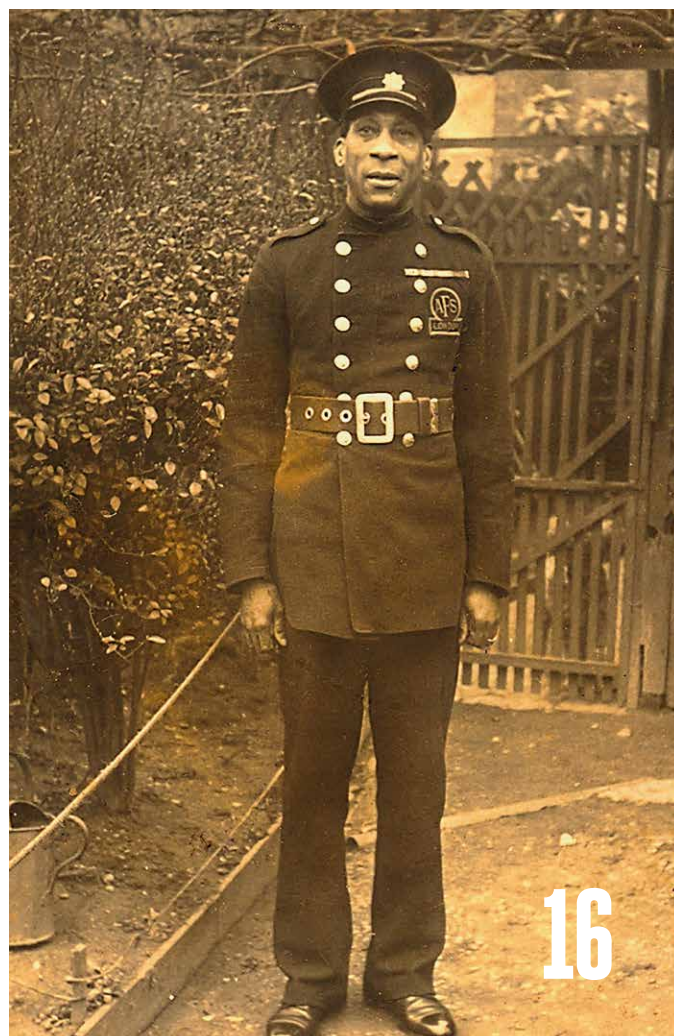
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NEWS

SPRINKLER WARNING

Decision to drop requirement for sprinklers in schools 'arrogant'

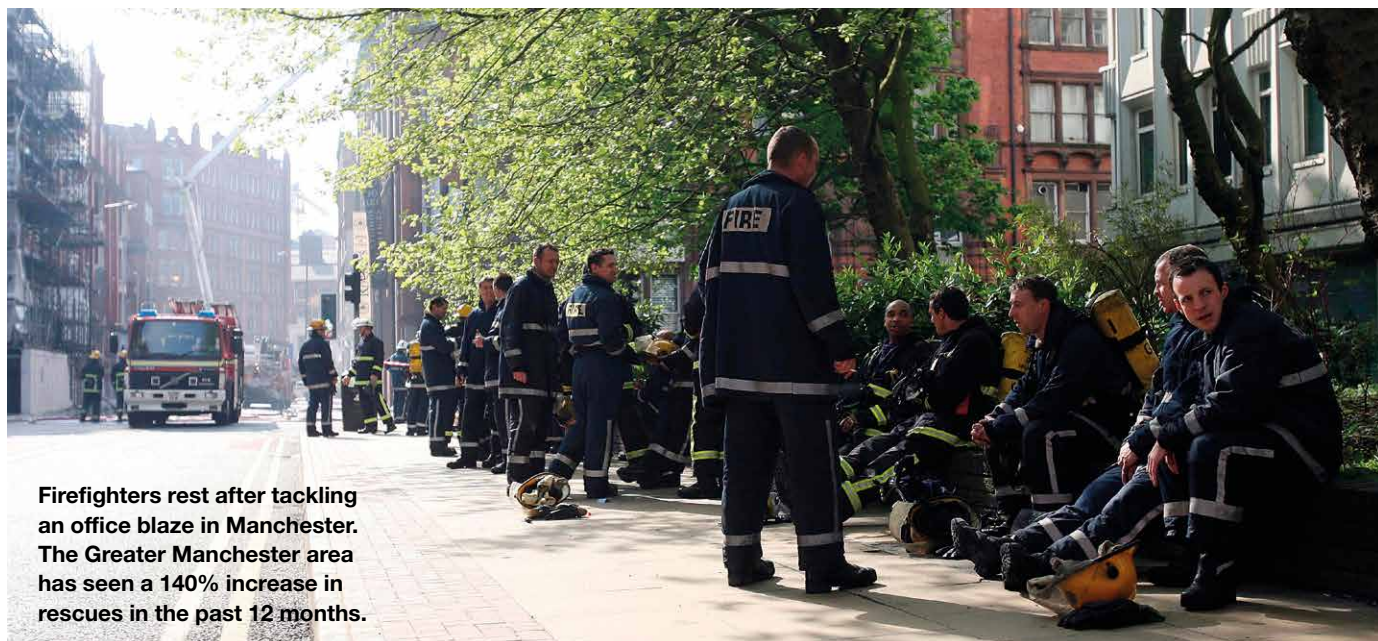
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TUC

FBU makes its presence felt with award-winning stand and kit try-ons

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Firefighters rest after tackling an office blaze in Manchester. The Greater Manchester area has seen a 140% increase in rescues in the past 12 months.

LEE BOWEN/UPA PHOTOS

SACK THREAT DROPPED AFTER FBU PRESSURE

GREATER MANCHESTER

Plans to sack the entire Greater Manchester firefighter workforce were dropped at the end of September after pressure from the union on the fire authority to withdraw its threat.

Letters issued under Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992 would have started the process of terminating the employment of 1,250 firefighters. Section 188 places a duty on an employer to consult staff if they propose to dismiss as redundant 20 or more employees at one establishment within 90 days or less.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) intended to re-employ only those firefighters who agreed to new 12-hour shifts.

The new arrangements would have meant many members hardly seeing their families. The employer was also seeking to cut one fifth of the workforce, some 250 jobs.

Soon after the plan became public, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack and president Alan McLean visited Manchester – 95% of GMFRS firefighters are members – to address a

meeting of those affected. Matt Wrack urged a packed roomful of firefighters to “fight back, not beg”.

Local and national media covered the story extensively, while every visitor to FBU stands at the TUC and Labour Party conferences expressed horror at what firefighters in Greater Manchester could be facing.

More than 20,000 people signed an FBU petition asking for the GMFRS to withdraw its plans. On 27 September the affected firefighters breathed a collective sigh of relief as the news came through that their jobs were no longer under immediate threat. Talks between the FBU and GMFRS are continuing to try to find a way forward.

GMFRS is under pressure from central government to save £14.4m, even though the service has seen an increase

GREATER MANCHESTER FRs IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO SAVE £14.4m DESPITE A THREEFOLD INCREASE IN FIRE DEATHS IN THE PAST YEAR

in all rescues of 140% over the past 12 months, alongside a threefold increase in fire deaths.

Manchester brigade secretary Gary Keary told *Firefighter*. “We were absolutely staggered that GMFRS would jeopardise workforce relations in this aggressive way.

“To start the process for dismissing firefighters to then simply re-engage them on an un-negotiated basis is appalling, and a serious breach of agreed mechanisms for industrial relations in the UK fire and rescue service.

“We did everything we could to avoid a bitter and damaging dispute and, thankfully, in the end GMFRS saw sense and withdrew their threat. We are continuing negotiations to try to find a way forward.”

As *Firefighter* went to press, talks that began on 29 September via the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP), an offshoot of the National Joint Council negotiating body, were in session.

Greater Manchester firefighters currently work two 10.5-hour shifts a week plus two 13.5-hour night shifts, as well as some “rostered” reserve shifts.

MPs WARNED OF 'BREAKING POINT' IF MORE JOBS AXED

STAFFING CRISIS

Nearly 10,000 firefighter jobs have been lost in the past six years, plunging the fire and rescue service into its worst state of crisis for decades.

The FBU has written to all MPs warning that another round of central government funding cuts will take an already struggling fire service to breaking point.

An FBU analysis earlier this year found that central government funding is likely to be cut by a further 20% by the end of the current parliament.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Thanks to the government, there are now 10,000 fewer firefighters across the UK to save people's lives. The public deserve a first rate emergency service, not one that has been unrelentingly slashed to the bone."

"Politicians seem to justify the unprecedented cuts by repeating the line that there are fewer fires nowadays. This masks the real work the fire and rescue service undertakes – 90% of the rescues are at non-fire emergencies. The modern day fire and rescue service is an all-hazard emergency service – one that needs to be funded properly."

FBU statistics show that 9,668 firefighter jobs have been axed across the UK since 2010 as central government funding to the service has been cut by 30%.

The government's own figures, released by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in December last year, have revealed that response times to fires are now at their slowest for 20 years.

In August, the Home Office admitted that the number of people who have died in fires has jumped by 15% in the past year.



FBU banners on a protest in Birmingham during the Conservative Party conference. Organised by the People's Assembly, it called for an alternative to austerity

FIRE STATION UPGRADE COMES AT A COST

LEICESTERSHIRE

In a move designed to improve fire response times to incidents, a retained fire station in Leicestershire will now be crewed by firefighters during the day.

The move at Market Harborough fire station is expected to cut response times by about five minutes.

Graham Vaux, FBU Leicestershire brigade secretary, said the move was broadly positive. "It's good news for the public as we will be able to get to incidents more quickly during the day. Another fire station, Lutterworth, will also have a full time day crew in the near future," he said.

However, the move does

come with some caveats.

A fire appliance will be cut at Market Harborough, only to be replaced by a two person tactical response vehicle, which have yet to be tested in Leicestershire. Loughborough fire station will also lose one of its fire appliances and crews at Wigston fire station will have to change their shift rotation.

SOUNDING OFF

DYSLEXIA AWARENESS

Janice McClelland of Texthelp urges fire services to do more for employees who are dyslexic

The theme of this year's Dyslexia Awareness Week in October was Identifying Dyslexia.

This opens up discussion of how UK fire services can best support staff with dyslexia.



It is estimated that 1 in 10 of the population has dyslexia. But the dyslexic strengths of innovation and practical skills are essential in emergency situations, so it is believed the sector has a higher rate.

How can employers become more dyslexia friendly?

- Nominate some dyslexic champions
- Educate higher ranks about dyslexia and encourage them to look for signs in staff
- Assistive technology like Texthelp's "read&write" software offers literacy support to dyslexic staff.
- Communicate to staff that you are dyslexia-friendly and that assistive technology support is available.

Texthelp has supported the FBU's Union Learning Fund reps, enabling them to help dyslexic firefighters. Texthelp works with many blue light organisations to help provide solutions to literacy issues including dyslexia.

■ For more information contact Janice McClelland: j.mcclelland@texthelp.com.

■ For information about support available through the FBU go to: bit.ly/FBU-dyslexia.



EDDIE MITCHELL/ARND BRONKHORST

DISASTER WARNING AFTER 'ARROGANT' GOVERNMENT AXES SCHOOL SPRINKLERS

FIRE PREVENTION

The government has been condemned for watering down legislation that requires all new school buildings to be fitted with water sprinklers.

In an update of the Design in Fire Safety in Schools regulations, the Department for Education dropped the crucial requirement that has been government policy since Labour schools

minister Jim Knight introduced it in 2007. The move has been strongly criticised by fire service professionals and comes after two separate incidents in August alone when fires broke out in schools in Chichester and Southend-on-Sea, to which dozens of firefighters had to be called out.

Neither of the schools had sprinklers as they were built before the legislation was introduced. The Selsey Academy

in Chichester (*above*) was described as “effectively a skeleton” after the blaze ripped through the building.

Tam McFarlane, FBU south west EC member, said: “The government’s arrogant decision flies in the face of overwhelming evidence. Since the policy was introduced sprinklers have been credited with saving 17 schools from huge fire damage. The removal of sprinklers would be disastrous.”

MORE RESCUES IN PAST YEAR THAN EVER BEFORE – 100 A DAY

FBU RESEARCH

Firefighters carried out more rescues over the past year than at any time before, new research by the FBU has shown.

Over 40,000 people were rescued in incidents attended by the fire and rescue service between April 2015 and March 2016.

This equates to roughly 100 rescues each day and represents a 7% increase in rescue activity across the UK.



The huge number of rescues from non-fire incidents was a major research finding.

Non-fire incidents are now the primary rescue work of the service, including cases of flooding, chemical spillages, road traffic collisions and lift rescues.

The service still makes significant intervention at fire related emergencies with almost 4,000 people rescued from fires over the last year.

COULD THE MARRIAGE ALLOWANCE BE CUTTING YOUR TAX BILL?

TYNE AND WEAR

FBU members are being made aware of a government scheme that allows couples to reduce their tax bill by up to £220 a year.

The “marriage allowance”, which is also open to people in civil partnerships, lets a husband, wife or civil partner who earns less than their partner transfer £1,100 of their personal allowance (the amount that can be earned before someone becomes liable for tax) to them. This could reduce tax by up to £220 a year.

Keenan McMahon, a branch rep at Swalwell fire station in Tyne and Wear, says the scheme is little known. “The tax office does not seem to promote it, but it is very helpful. Out of a branch of 28 members, four are now claiming the tax allowance,” he said.

■ For more information see: bit.ly/2dKjVIK.



TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady tries firefighting kit at the FBU stand

TUC NEWS ROUND UP

BREXIT: DEFEND OUR RIGHTS

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack warned delegates at the TUC's 148th annual congress, that Brexit has given confidence to fascists, as we enter a new period of turmoil and tension. As part of an address around a composite motion on Europe, Wrack said: "Low wages are caused by rip-off bosses, not migrants. I do not accept criticisms of Jeremy Corbyn on Europe – this scepticism about the EU is reflected by my own union's concerns. We have to set out a vision and we have to defend our rights and public services. Divisions in the Tory party will grow and grow, and we can exploit them."

BREXIT: UNIONS MUST BE INVOLVED

The TUC will be pressing for trade union inclusion in negotiating talks ahead of the UK leaving the European Union, Frances O'Grady told TUC congress delegates "Negotiating our exit can't be left to the Tories ... it's about shaping the future of our country. We need a cross-party negotiating team, including the nations, London and the North. And it can't be

a case of cosy chats with the City and the CBI either. As the voice of working people, trade unions must be at the table too. Before we go into article 50, we need proof that workers' rights will be safe. We fought hard for those rights. They weren't gifted by Brussels, but won by trade unionists.

"And people didn't vote Leave to get rid of holiday pay, to lose time off to care for sick children or junk rights for temporary and agency workers."

EQUALITY

Fire Brigades Union supporter Angela Rayner MP told delegates that this government talks the language of equality, but then acts against it. She pledged that a future Labour government would scrap employment tribunal fees so that efforts by workers seeking to launch discrimination cases against employers would not be hampered by costs they could not afford to pay.

"This won't just help women [who have suffered sexual harassment]" Rayner explained.

"It will help anyone who's been the victim of discrimination or unfair

treatment at work, like BME workers, who earn less than white workers, no matter how qualified they are."

AWARD FOR FBU STAND

Every year, the union exhibits at the Labour Party conference and the TUC to build support for our campaigns. This year's stand with the union's new logo and branding caught the attention of delegates. As a result, the union's stand won first prize in the best stand competition at the TUC congress and second prize at the Labour Party conference, competing against scores of other stands.

At both exhibitions people were eager to try on fire kit, watch campaign videos and offer solidarity to members in Greater Manchester. Delegates showed their admiration for firefighters and were shocked to hear the situation facing the service. Many took our leaflets and materials away with them to support our campaigns, including key politicians.

Executing a successful exhibition requires extensive planning, however the results are often rewarding. When we campaign and communicate effectively, we can win mass support.

TRAGEDY AS SECOND QUAKE HITS ITALY

On 24 August a 6.2 magnitude earthquake hit the Lazio region around Rome, killing nearly 300 people and injuring hundreds more.

One of Italy's most picturesque regions is also one of the country's most seismically active. More than 300 people were killed in the city of L'Aquila in 2009. One of the victims of the latest earthquake was an 18-month-old baby whose mother survived the earthquake in L'Aquila and had moved away from there after that terrible experience.

In this mountainous area of hilltop towns and villages in central Italy, the worst loss of life was in Amatrice where there were 229 fatalities. In one small hamlet 13 of the 15 inhabitants were killed.

Vigili del fuoco (firefighters) and relief workers used heavy lifting equipment and their bare hands to search for survivors. They were repeatedly halted in their work by numerous after-shocks, which made the search and rescue amongst the fallen masonry increasingly perilous.

In the village of Pescara del Tronto, where almost all the houses collapsed, an eight-year-old girl was pulled alive from the rubble by a firefighter after being trapped upside down for over 17 hours. Sadly, her sister did not make it.

Italian authorities are vowing to investigate whether negligence or fraud in failing to follow building codes played a role in the high death toll.

They also called for efforts to ensure organised crime does not infiltrate the awarding of lucrative contracts to rebuild the picturesque towns levelled in the disaster.



Firefighters and other emergency service workers in Pescara del Tronto after the earthquake

REUTERS/REMO CASILLI



FIREFIGHTERS CENTRE STAGE AT LABOUR PARTY

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



The Case Against All Cuts fringe meeting

ANDREW WIAARD

William Murphy reports from the first Labour Party conference since the FBU rejoined after 10 years

For the first time in a decade the Fire Brigades Union attended the annual Labour Party conference as an affiliated organisation. It gave the union the chance to influence debate and decisions that the party takes over the next 12 months.

During the economic debate, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack spoke in favour of a motion to defend and promote the nation's public services against Tory attacks. Wrack said the fire and rescue service had seen a third of its funding from central government slashed and 10,000 frontline firefighter jobs cut since 2010. He pointed out to shocked delegates: "When you dial 999 it takes us longer to get to emergencies than it did 20 years ago."

In the same speech, Wrack cautioned against plans to allow police and crime commissioners to take over governance of fire and rescue services. The plans, he said, were "fundamentally flawed" and would threaten the independent, humanitarian culture that allows firefighters easy access to people's homes in order to perform rescues and undertake fire safety checks.

Wrack also laid out the union's support for the re-elected leader Jeremy Corbyn who he said was setting out a "radical alternative" which was "shifting politics in favour of ordinary people".

**CORBYN LED PRAISE FOR THE
FIREFIGHTERS AND ALL PUBLIC
SECTOR WORKERS WHO SAVED
PEOPLE FROM FLOODS LAST YEAR**

THE LABOUR FAMILY IS RE-UNITING

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn thanked the FBU for re-affiliating to the party in his keynote conference speech, saying it was proof that the Labour family was "re-uniting". The conference hall echoed with applause as Corbyn led praise for "all of the firefighters and indeed all of the public sector workers who worked so hard to save people during the floods last winter".

In a barnstorming speech, that even his most ardent critics admitted was amongst his best, Corbyn laid out his vision of "socialism for the 21st century" with a raft of policy measures that would put workers' rights first.

Most notable was the proposed repeal of the draconian Trade Union Act 2016, which makes it harder for trade unions to represent their members effectively.

Other eye-catching announcements included a pledge to renationalise the railways, allowing local authorities to borrow money to build more council homes, and significant curbs on tax avoiders.

With rumours swirling in the political world that prime minister Theresa May could call an early general election, Corbyn stressed that Labour needed to be ready for a snap poll. He made clear that winning the next election is a priority – mentioning the word "power" more than 40 times.



Jeremy Corbyn meets supporters



Jo Stevens, MP for Cardiff Central, feels the weight of a firefighter's kit



FBU general secretary Matt Wrack addresses the conference



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



CONTRARY TO THE CLAIM THAT AUSTERITY HAS ENDED, PEOPLE SHOULD EXPECT AUSTERITY IN DISGUISE FROM MAY

THE CASE AGAINST THE CUTS

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell warned that the government's austerity drive was putting the lives of firefighters and the public at risk.

Speaking at the FBU's fringe meeting The Case Against The Cuts, he told the packed room that, contrary to the claim that austerity had ended, people should expect austerity in disguise from the May government.

"They're making the cuts in grants at central government level then forcing [local authorities] to make those cuts.

"You don't notice it until the next tragedy occurs. Either a firefighter will lose their life or a tragedy occurs and some others lose their lives as a result of the fire.

"The government won't get the blame. They'll try to blame the fire service or the individual firefighters," he said.

The event, organised in association with the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group, also heard from Kate Hoey MP who said that Labour-controlled councils had to do more to tackle cuts.

STATUTORY DUTY FOR FLOODING

Rachael Maskell, the shadow secretary of state for the environment, used her keynote conference speech to call for the government to give the fire and rescue service a statutory duty to respond to flooding. She guaranteed that a future Labour government would take the step.

Maskell also criticised the government's slow responses to implementing preventative flooding measures and tackling climate change.

MAKIN' A STAND

Visitors to the FBU stand had a chance to get their very own fire kit selfie. Wearing an issue grade fire helmet, tunic and breathing apparatus, visitors – MPs and councillors among them – commented how heavy the equipment was, and that was just them standing in it, let alone working.

"A lot of visitors came to the stand for a fun picture but left with a renewed appreciation of how physical firefighting is and how dangerous government funding cuts are for firefighters and the public alike," said FBU south west EC member Tam McFarlane.

The Labour party was obviously impressed as well, as the FBU came second in the competition for best conference stand.

GUIDANCE ALONE WILL NOT PREVENT FURTHER FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES

The FBU is determined to ensure that fire services learn and act on the lessons from the death of firefighter Stephen Hunt. National officer **Sean Starbuck** explains the campaign to achieve this

The death of Greater Manchester firefighter and union member Stephen Hunt at Oldham Street in Manchester's Northern Quarter in July 2013 was tragic and needless, something that never should have happened. Intent on ensuring that the lessons learned from Stephen's death are implemented, the FBU played an active role in the inquest – the outcome is that the senior coroner wrote to the Home Secretary outlining 10 serious concerns to be actioned to prevent future fire deaths.

The FBU also made a detailed submission to the Home Secretary, giving examples of these same concerns being raised following previous firefighter fatalities stressing that, sadly, these lessons had not been learned.

The union followed this up with the government's chief fire and rescue advisor (CFRA) at a meeting where we were informed that the majority of these concerns would be addressed through a review of guidance.

We challenged this approach at the meeting and in a follow-up letter reiterating that guidance alone will not prevent further firefighter deaths or injuries. This letter detailed the inadequacy of the government's approach and explained why other factors need to be considered.

The union is determined to ensure that fire services apply the lessons from Stephen Hunt's death, which in several areas tragically reflect similar lessons from earlier deaths. We want the lessons of other firefighter fatalities, injuries and near-misses to be learned and acted upon.

We have published a full report on the Oldham Street incident as part of our campaign on firefighter safety. It contains all of the above correspondence.

Although the guidance is very important, it is only part of the remedy and there are at least five factors that need to be actioned if firefighter safety is going to be improved.

■ An immediate review and amendment of the existing guidance – a clear example is given related to breathing apparatus – including a review of the training provided.

■ Ensure that this training is appropriate, consistent, effective, managed, recorded and scrutinised.

■ Monitoring of fire and rescue services to ensure that they adhere to the guidance and the training packages.

■ Review of incident command to ensure that the lessons taught as part of the guidance and training regimes are delivered and adhered to at incidents

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Ensure that this training is appropriate, consistent, effective, managed, recorded and scrutinised

Monitoring of fire and rescue services to ensure that they adhere to the guidance and the training packages

Review of incident command to ensure that the lessons taught as part of the guidance and training regimes are delivered and adhered to at incidents

THE FIVE FACTORS TO BE ACTIONED

■ Enforcement is necessary to ensure that the guidance and training packages are applied as proposed and not diluted or ignored.

The FBU supports Home Office plans to establish an independent fire inspectorate in England. We believe this could improve the monitoring and enforcement required for fire safety.

But we have stressed that the inspectorate must be "sector competent" in order to understand the challenges of the occupation and risk involved.

The failings associated with simply looking to CFRA and the Chief Fire Officers Association for guidance have

ALL MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE REPORT AND TO JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

been reiterated, and we have suggested areas where the FBU can assist with improvements.

We have already met to discuss the inspectorate's remit and mode of functioning. We stressed that it must concentrate on operational matters and the improvement of the professional standards that are crucial to firefighter safety.

KEY ROLE

The coroner who conducted the inquest into the death of Stephen Hunt recognised that the FBU and fire and rescue authorities have a key role in managing and monitoring how his concerns are implemented.

We are taking steps to ensure that the topic will be on the agenda for

joint health and safety committees, and that our relevant officials are thoroughly briefed.

Every member of the FBU needs to play an active part in the collective safety measures that will best protect firefighters on the fire ground.

We are organising meetings with members and officials and providing the tools to engage and campaign for improvements in firefighter safety.

Members are encouraged to take part in political lobbying to help ensure that firefighter safety – protecting those who save the lives of others – is given the priority it deserves.

The union will continue to advocate central government structures and the representation of the full range of fire service views, with the FBU playing a central role in securing ongoing action on firefighter safety.

All avenues will be explored as we drive this issue forward and members will be regularly updated on the progress of this campaign. Union officials will discuss this issue at FBU brigade committees, and make sure it is on the agendas of joint health and safety committees.

All members are asked to consider the contents of this report and to join the campaign. These critical lessons around firefighter safety must be learned once and for all.

Enforcement as necessary to ensure that the guidance and training packages are applied as proposed and not diluted or ignored

When Thomas Farriner, the King's baker, forgot to shut down his ovens on Pudding Lane in early September 1666, he triggered the most notorious kitchen blaze in the capital's history – breaching safety laws and sparking the Great Fire of London.

Sparks grew to flames, feeding off oven debris. Fanned by strong winds, huge tongues of fire soon swooped and spread through tinder-dry timber buildings, crowded together in narrow medieval streets. Within days, more than 80,000 Londoners were homeless.

The 350th anniversary of the Great Fire provided a thrilling spectacle on the Thames in early September this year, as a wooden replica of the seventeenth century skyline was set alight.

It was also a grim and timely reminder of how quickly fire spreads havoc and devastation. Back then, firefighting equipment was very basic, featuring leather buckets, fire hooks to pull down damaged walls and wooden “fire engines” that could “squirt” only six pints of water at short range.

EVERY SECOND COUNTS

In the 21st century, a speedy response from well-equipped fire crews can save lives and minimise damage. And, as every fire professional knows, every second counts.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan seems to have got the message – the day before the Great Fire anniversary, he announced that Anthony Mayer is to head up the promised “full review” of London's capacity to fight fires. When running for office, Khan branded lengthening fire response times as “a danger to the safety of Londoners”.

Those lengthening response times are viewed by the FBU as Boris Johnson's lamentable fire and rescue legacy, needlessly hobbling firefighting capability in the capital. It's a view that is gaining currency.

As mayor, Johnson pushed through the closure of 10 fire stations, slashing more than 550 firefighter jobs and 27 fire engines to match a shrinking budget for fire and rescue laid out in the statutory London fire plan.

Non-Tory politicians on the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority fiercely opposed his enthusiasm for

SAFETY FOR SALE

As the new mayor of London orders a review of the city's firefighting capacity, **Helen Hague** looks at two historic threats to the capital's safety – the Great Fire and Boris Johnson





SOLD 
KINGSLAND £14,400,000

SOLD 
BOW £6,910,000

SOLD 
SILVERTOWN £6,570,000

SOLD 
WOOLWICH £760,000

level – for just over two years. Terrorist attacks have killed people in Nice, Paris and Brussels this year. Bernard Hogan Howe, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, warned this summer that the UK risk of a terrorist attack remains a case of “when, not if”.

The opening line of the official explanation of the decision to sell off the stations, still up on the web, is almost beyond parody. “The reductions in fire stations and fire appliances which are part of the Fifth London Fire Safety Plan went ahead on January 9, 2014.” Safety is Closing Fire Stations must be up there with Freedom is Slavery as an instance of Orwellian doublespeak.

CITY IN TURMOIL

At the Museum of London, not far from Pudding Lane, the *Fire! Fire!* exhibition is bringing Thomas Farriner’s catastrophic kitchen blaze and all it sparked to life – fragments of artefacts, contemporary letters and diaries, soundscapes, silhouettes and computer games conjure a devastated city in turmoil.

The leather bucket is particularly poignant – as is the wooden fire engine with feeble squirting capacity, painstakingly reconstructed around the original wooden barrel and pump from a 19th century photograph. The show provides a powerful lesson in fire safety – and not just for the school parties flocking to see it; it’s on the national curriculum

IMAGE: HANNAH MCKAY/PA PHOTOS

'THE BRIGADE CAN'T MEET ITS OWN TARGET RESPONSE TIMES ACROSS A THIRD OF NEIGHBOURHOODS'

cutting jobs and appliances and selling off strategic sites to property developers. But Johnson forged ahead anyway, brushing aside concerns over public safety.

The FBU has welcomed the Mayer review. It will scrutinise Johnson’s legacy and what is to be done to ensure London is prepared not only to handle fires, but to meet the challenges of floods and terrorist attacks. The fire review will feed into the review of plans to deal with terrorist activity by Lord Toby Harris.

STATIONS SOLD OFF

New figures show that the sale of eight London fire stations closed by Johnson has already raised more than £53m. The fire station and former training site at

Southwark is expected to raise a further £54m. But at what cost to Londoners? Guarding and maintaining the two fire stations yet to be sold off cost more than £180,000 in the last financial year.

But it’s not only about money. As Paul Embery, London FBU brigade secretary, puts it: “Now the brigade can’t meet its own target response times across a third of neighbourhoods throughout the capital.”

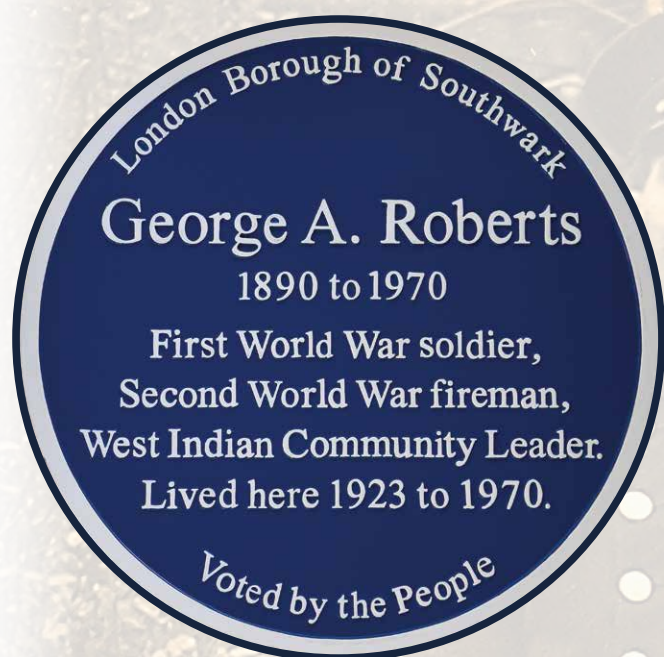
The decision to close and flog off key stations – taken in the teeth of warnings from the FBU and opposition councillors – was announced in early 2014.

MI5’s threat assessment reflecting the risk of an international terrorist attack has been at severe – the second highest

for five to seven-year-olds. Every second counted then and counts now – though the equipment has, of course, got way more sophisticated.

Firefighters were on hand as the wooden city burned on the Thames this September – hosing it all down at the end and ready just in case throughout.

But fire crews don’t normally get notice of what they are about to face. They are trained professionals, hardwired to act speedily when the shout comes whatever it is, wherever it is. A simple kitchen blaze can turn catastrophic if left to burn. It’s sobering to think that lengthening response times caused by station sell-offs could well increase that risk.



George Roberts, firefighter, soldier and opinion former has got due recognition.

William Murphy reports

A PIONEER

The man thought to have been Britain's first black firefighter has been honoured, posthumously, with a blue plaque and a ceremony to commemorate his work throughout the blitz during the Second World War.

The plaque is now on the wall of the former South London home of George Arthur Roberts, who lived in the Camberwell house for more than 50 years.

It was chosen by a popular vote organised by Southwark council.

"It was an absolutely amazing day," says George's great-granddaughter Samantha Harding. MPs, representatives from the fire service and members of the local community joined George's descendants as they watched black and ethnic minority firefighters

line up as a guard of honour as the plaque was unveiled.

"I was shocked by the number of people who came out for George," says Samantha. "I made 40 programmes for the day thinking that would be more than enough. Literally, within minutes of arriving, we were all out of them."

Like many firefighters, George came from a military background. Originally from Trinidad, he served in his country's army before he voluntarily made the decision to fight for Britain when World War One started in 1914.

As a member of the Middlesex Regiment, he saw action in France including the war's bloodiest encounter, the Battle of the Somme, where over a million men were killed or injured.

More than six feet tall, George was known for his deft hand at chucking back grenades that the enemy had thrown over.

BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL

After the war, George settled down with his first wife Margaret in Camberwell and fathered two sons, Cyril and Victor, both of whom would go on to fight in World War Two. He then signed up to the national fire service and was posted to New Cross fire station in south east London.

Later he would be promoted to the rank of section leader and in 1944 was awarded the British Empire Medal, in part because of his firefighting duties, but also for his role in co-founding the fire service's discussion and education groups.

These forums were attended by as many as 15,000 people each week who would go to their local fire

stations (or fire houses as they were known then) to hear a range of speakers on various topics such as politics.

The groups were designed to help combat the rise of fascism and the drift to war that had devastated much of Europe.

SPECTRE OF FASCISM

Sadly, George would recognise the eerily familiar spectre of fascism haunting the world today. From the rise of fascist parties across Europe – once marginal parties that are now attracting millions of votes – to the growing popularity of Donald Trump in the United States. Samantha is certain that if her great-grandfather were alive today he would be furiously organising against them.



George Roberts in his firefighter's uniform and (above) in a *Picture Post* magazine feature on fire service discussion and education groups

HONORED

George's blue plaque unveiling comes just months after a statue of Crimean war nurse Mary Seacole was unveiled in the grounds of St Thomas' Hospital, London. It is believed to be the first named statue of a black woman in the UK. Belatedly, black public service workers are being recognised for their contributions. Just 4% of blue plaques, however, honour ethnic minorities in London.

Michael Nicholas, national chair of the FBU's black and ethnic minority members committee, said the life and work of George Arthur Roberts was a historic chapter of black history in the UK fire and rescue service.

"A decorated wartime hero, George Arthur Roberts is a powerful and positive legacy to all current black members of the military and fire

service. We are proud to commemorate his achievements and humbled to have joined his family members at the ceremony.

"Events like this enable a wider community knowledge of his commitment and bravery in service of his country. We follow very big footsteps," he said.

Speaking on BBC radio's *Calling the West Indies* in 1947, George said: "If what I am doing can assist in some small way to bring about a better understanding and a true fellowship amongst the peoples of the earth, I shall be extremely happy." That's quite a legacy.

IF HE WERE ALIVE TODAY, MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER WOULD BE ORGANISING AGAINST FASCISM

HEALTH

SEX ADDICTION: A SERIOUS CONDITION

Mark is a good looking, intelligent, 28-year-old with a great group of friends and a good sense of humour.

But Mark has a secret. He is a sex addict. It started out, as it does for many sufferers, with watching porn when he was in his teens. But the addiction has escalated to visiting sex workers. No one in Mark's life, bar his therapist, knows about his condition and he is the last person on earth you would imagine suffering from a condition like this.

Relationship counsellor

Mark is the example that relationship counsellor Paula Hall gave in a popular TEDx (technology, entertainment and design) talk earlier this year about the sort of person that sex addiction can afflict – and that is absolutely anyone.

The topic can reduce people to giggles, but sex addiction is a serious and life-altering condition which can destroy lives.

So what is sex addiction? Let's start by examining what it is not. If you have a vigorous sex life, enjoy it and immensely look forward to having more – this does not mean you are an addict. Neither does it have any connection to your particular sexual appetites or kinks.

Sex addiction is defined by NHS Choices as any sexual activity that feels out of control.

It can involve sex with a partner, but it may also involve activities such as viewing pornography, masturbation, visiting sex workers or using sex chat lines or live sex webcams.

Common traits

It's easy to be dismissive about sex addiction but it shares common traits with substance abuse. Sex addicts receive the same powerful interactions of chemical substances – which are released in the brain during sex – as those experienced by drug users.

Much in the same way that there is no such thing as a “quick drink” for alcoholics, sex addicts find that there's no such thing as five minutes of porn, just an hour in the strip club or just one partner this week. When this behaviour starts to spiral out of control, help must be sought.

Tell-tale signs include continuing your behaviour even if you are aware of the severe consequences of doing so; wanting to stop, but feeling you are unable to do so; needing greater amounts of sex to reach the same

climax; and spending increasing amounts of time planning and engaging in sex.

It's common for sex addicts to see their personal relationships with friends and family falter as they neglect these areas of their life to focus on having more sex. Just like any other addiction, sex addiction has far-reaching consequences.

The organisation Sex Addicts Anonymous has had success by developing a 12 step plan (much like the famous Alcoholics Anonymous programme) which helps patients to understand the psychology of their condition.

Proven method

Paula Hall, who runs regular recovery courses for sufferers, advises that the most proven method for treatment of any kind of addiction is within a group environment.

Although the prospect of joining a group initially terrifies most people, it often proves to be the single most significant step toward life-long recovery, as it helps to break through the feelings of shame and isolation that often help to perpetuate the cycle of addiction.



LEGAL BEAGLE

CLOSE PROXIMITY CREWING IS UNLAWFUL

Close proximity crewing shift patterns are draconian and unlawful and no firefighter should be forced to transfer to them. **Doug Christie**, of Thompsons Solicitors explains ...

Recent years have seen the introduction by many fire brigades of "day crew plus" and similar shift systems that are completely contrary to the Working Time Regulations 1998 (WTR).

No member should be forced to undertake these new shift patterns, so it is important for FBU members to be aware of how they are supported in law against illegal working patterns and how to assert their rights to protect themselves against them.

Many fire services refer to the new policy under different names. For example, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) has named it close proximity crewing (CPC). CPC requires firefighters to work four consecutive 24-hour shifts, consisting of 12-hour day shifts and 12-hour nights on call. The on-call time has to be spent at, or in close proximity to, the station. The new pattern also means that firefighters would not have the minimum 11-hour rest period in any 24 hours as required under the WTR.

In many cases, members were being forced to sleep at the station in between their shifts meaning they are present at the station for four days straight.

Earlier this year, Thompsons and the FBU were successful in bringing a case against SYFRS after



"SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI"

24 members were forced to transfer stations when they refused to volunteer for the change.

Two stations in South Yorkshire, Lowedges and Aston Park, were selected to take part in a trial of working hours differing from the normal 2-2-4 pattern.

The existing system meant that firefighters would work no more than 48 hours in one week (42 hours on average), while CPC meant that, including hours spent on call, firefighters could end up working up to 96 hours per week in one go. The new CPC system would, therefore, require individual employees to opt out of the maximum

weekly working hours under the WTR.

The two stations selected as suitable for this trial were seen as quieter stations and much less likely to be required to attend incidents at night. Despite no agreement being in place with the FBU around any move to the new shift pattern, SYFRS required firefighters at these stations to "volunteer" to work under CPC. Any who did not were liable to be compulsorily displaced.

Concerned that the move to CPC constituted a breach of the law, and that the process that governed the change went against the principles of collective

consultation as set out in the Grey Book, the FBU pursued action against SYFRS in the Leeds Employment Tribunal.

The tribunal found that the transfer to a new shift pattern, which had not been agreed by the FBU, was unlawful and that, when the firefighters who did not want to work under CPC were forced to move to another station, they suffered an unlawful detriment.

The tribunal also found that the 96 consecutive hours (working and on-call) all constituted working time and were therefore a breach of the WTR. They also prevented members from having the required minimum rest time of 11 hours between shifts.

This decision has shown that the use of CPC and similar systems is illegal and contravenes a number of key workers' rights which unions have fought hard to secure and preserve.

Thompsons will continue to work with the FBU to fight any other instances of CPC-type shifts being forced on members anywhere in the country.

Both the coalition and the current Tory majority governments have shown that they have a complete disregard for workers' rights. It is vital that our movement works together to protect workers from any attempt to weaken these rights, especially in the aftermath of the decision to leave the European Union.

■ If you believe that you have been treated wrongly by your employer, it is important that you contact the union or speak to your legal service directly on 0800 100 6061, without delay.



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

'PERFORMING IS ALL ABOUT CHANGE'

Helen Hague talks to activist performer Mark Thomas, whose acclaimed new show, *The Red Shed*, goes to the heart of the issues facing working people today

When Mark Thomas moved from London to Wakefield in West Yorkshire to study drama in the early 1980s he soon found himself drawn to “the 47ft long, wooden red socialist shed” in town.

It was home to the local Labour club, venue for trades council meetings – a place steeped in socialist camaraderie and Yorkshire bitter beer. It is where the young Mark got his political grounding – campaigning against nursery closures, writing and performing sketches with edge, going along to trades council meetings. And, of course, immersing himself in the miners’ strike – performing at and raising money for soup kitchens alongside striking miners, performing at fundraisers and socials.

The Red Shed is still very much open for business: it now serves real ale and has just turned 50.

Mark Thomas, who has spent his life encouraging engagement and activism, using wit, canny stunts and performance to hold corporate and state power to account, returned there this year.

LIVES AND VOICES

As part of the anniversary celebrations he was researching his latest show *The Red Shed – a Topical Tale about the Miners’ Strike*. It’s rooted in the dispute but swoops through what has happened since, capturing lives and voices in a changed industrial landscape.

Secure, unionised well-paid jobs in mining have all vanished. Fast food outlets with low-paid, insecure, largely non-unionised workers abound. Zero hours contracts are rife. Mark found the bakers’ union is on the case – out there and keen to recruit and organise.

The Red Shed picked up two awards

and five-star reviews at the Edinburgh Festival fringe this year. The show is now on the road, touring well into next year. There were standing ovations two nights running when it kicked off in Liverpool. In the audience were members of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign which seeks to overturn the unjust prosecution of 24 pickets in 1973 following the first ever national building workers’ strike.

EMOTIONALLY CHARGED

The performance is an emotionally charged exploration of why collective memory matters – and how narratives can shape how people think, act and remember.

At the heart of *The Red Shed* is Mark Thomas’ quest to track down a memory from March 1985 – which surfaced for the first time in an interview with a journalist a few years later.

He recalled joining miners as they marched through a village back to their pit when the strike ended, children singing “Solidarity Forever” from behind the railings of a Victorian primary school playground. He couldn’t remember which village and the pits are long gone.

But did it really happen? And if it did, has he sugarcoated the memory? The play unfolds through the voices of strike veterans, Red Shed regulars and present day fast food organisers.

Audience members with masks and a tape recorder help to tell the story, demonstrating how stories people tell about themselves and their communities build collective memory.

The way stories are framed can have a huge impact on how things pan out, as the EU referendum showed, says Mark.

Boris Johnson and the Vote Leave camp had no intention of diverting



Mark Thomas wrote a note of thanks to the construction companies whose illegal blacklisting of activists – including him – indirectly funded Red Shed.

The list contained 3,000 construction workers’ names and about 200 activists were on a separate “Green List”.

Everyone on the lists had a file on their activities in unions, politics or health and safety which also had private details such as where the workers lived, their National Insurance number and the like. “The files were created with one purpose – to stop those workers getting work in the building industry.”

Unions, including Unite and GMB, took legal action on behalf of some 800 workers on the list which has resulted in the companies paying out £75m in compensation.

“Two years ago a friend in the GMB phoned to tell me I had been included on the Green List. The GMB legal team took my case.

“The file on my activities has been lost or destroyed; however, I was paid £10,000 in compensation from the blacklisters.

“That money has been used to fund the development of this show. It has covered the travel and accommodation of the people working on the show, and some of the wage bill too.”



£350m to the NHS when they won the referendum, he points out. But it played to a narrative that hit home with many. In both Wakefield and Barnsley 68% voted Leave. In a “post factual” world, the dominant narrative can count for more than facts and reasoned argument.

“People want narratives, they are bored with experts,” he says. “The left has failed to provide a credible narrative where people can say ‘this is the place I belong to, this is my history, this is the place I can get to’.”

For Mark Thomas, “performing is all about change – people come into a room thinking one thing and you can get them laughing and leaving thinking another”.

There’s a seamless link between his performances and his activism. He belongs to two unions – the GMB and the National Union of Journalists and has strong ties with others, including the FBU, links strengthened by a shared belief in international solidarity.

RING OF FIRE

He was at the Ring of Fire events against the cuts on London’s South Bank two years ago. And he performed at a campaign gig to reinstate London firefighter and union activist Sian Griffiths – suspended from duty just a week after receiving the Queen’s Fire Service Medal at Buckingham Palace.

He joined the GMB after the union

told him he was on a construction companies’ blacklist – or, more specifically, a “greenlist” of environmental activists. As chairman of the Ilisu Dam Campaign, he helped to block temporarily the development of the huge dam in South East Turkey – the UK-based construction company Balfour Beatty pulled out in 2002. But

‘THE LEFT IS NOTHING WITHOUT COMMUNITY ACTIVISM’

the dam is now nearly complete – at huge cost to displaced Kurdish villagers and the environment.

In a satisfying twist, the very companies behind the notorious blacklist helped to get the new show off the ground. The £10,000 Mark received in compensation funded its early costs.

Mark also discovered he was on the UK national domestic extremism database after “a copper dropped a spotter” – a laminated sheet with pictures of activists police were instructed to look out for at demonstrations. Mark’s face was staring out. He is among several members of the NUJ intent on suing the Metropolitan Police through the European Court.

Mark, a Green Party member,

describes himself as a “green socialist”. He “likes Jeremy Corbyn a lot” and praises him for his “authenticity and grass roots activism”. He’s even “sorely tempted” to join the Labour Party “now there’s a leader comfortable with showing up on picket lines”.

Mark doesn’t “really do apathy”. For him, “the left is nothing without community activism. It’s really important to me that people feel part of a community when they come to see a show.”

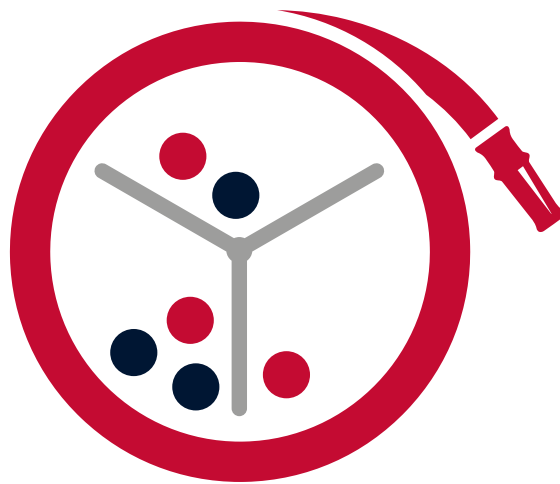
CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES

The Edinburgh fringe run and early dates in Liverpool show that *The Red Shed* is connecting with audiences.

It’s not that easy to engage and empower people day in day out when the dominant narrative seems intent on dissing the collective and bigging up the selfish individualist and the millionaire entrepreneur.

But, in this poignant, engaging and mature work, Mark Thomas is giving it his best shot. Solidarity, class struggle, collective memory and the power of history are weaved into a moving and necessary narrative. *The Red Shed* is a story that needs to be told. Catch it if you can.

■ Find tour dates at markthomasinfo.co.uk/tour-dates.



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STATION CAT THE THINGS THEY SAY ...

COUNCILLOR OF DESPAIR

There are people who seem unable to open their mouths without saying something so stupid that you feel embarrassed for them.

Such a one is the Conservative councillor Andrew Dransfield, vice-chairman of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, whose latest faux pas occurred on a visit to Great Holm fire station, where he went up to a black firefighter and said: "You're the first one I've seen." The embarrassed firefighter said nothing, so Councillor Dransfield added helpfully: "You know – ethnic minority. Now all we need is a woman. Are there any here?"

Connoisseurs of Councillor Dransfield's indiscretions were unsurprised. An ardent Brexiteer, on 4 July the councillor tweeted: "Despite all the anarchist demonstrations, the public is moving even further towards Brexit!"

Back in 2012 he offered a vintage example of his penetrating social and political analysis. Firefighters, it seems, have a really cushy life: "Over 200 days a year they're off duty, and they sleep for a good proportion of the night shifts. Under 5% of their time is spent at fires and emergencies, and they get £30,000 wages." (In 2012 starting salary for a trainee was £21,000 before rising to £28,000 after about three years.)

In 2006 the wretched man was sacked as chairman of Milton Keynes education committee after



The Great Fire of London seen from Newgate
© MUSEUM OF LONDON

admitting dating women through internet sex sites. The *Sunday Mirror* reported that he used the codename "Whynotyou" on websites called Sex In The UK and Adult Action Cam. Members of the Adult Action Cam website, reported the *Sunday Mirror*, are invited to take part in "live nude video chats" and can post home-made porn videos on the site.

Conservative group leader Ruth Jury said: "Someone who has dabbled in internet sex sites is not suitable to be in charge of education." Councillor Dransfield shot back: "She clearly cannot accept that my private life is my private life. I have done nothing wrong legally or morally."

NO COMMENT ON PRESS OFFICER

Remember Tim Bevington? He was the Cheshire FRS press officer who had a blue light attached to the top of his car, presumably so that he could speed to fires and rush through the crowd, shouting "Let me through, I'm a spin doctor".

Well, there seems to be no end to Mr Bevington's talents. He's not just a press officer with a

blue light on his car; he's a press officer who gets to sit on disciplinary hearings with the human resources adviser, one Ursula Jones.

One member of staff who appeared in front of them seems to have clumsily left his phone in the room, set to record, and the transcript, circulated to all members of the fire authority, has just turned up in your Cat's saucer.

It turns out Mr Bevington knows all about managing people, too, with acute judgements like: "He's an arsehole, he's an arrogant arsehole, and I don't know; he's never; it's a fundamental part of his personality."

"How out of sync is this going to appear if we went straight to a bullet?" he asks Ms Jones.

Your Cat put the whole thing in front of the FBU chair in Cheshire, Andrew Fox-Hewitt, who told her: "We do have concerns about the culture and working environment at Cheshire FRS." You don't say.

A Cheshire FRS spokeswoman told the Cat: "This is part of an ongoing internal investigation so we cannot comment any further at this time." So do these sentences reflect the culture at Cheshire FRS? "No," she said firmly.

What a waste – wine flows from a tanker in southern France

PAUL COOPER/COOPERPIX/COM



WINE FLOWED LIKE WATER

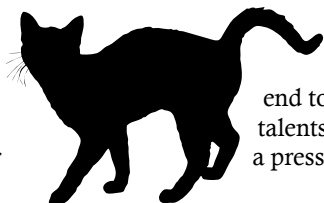
Your Cat spent much of the summer in France, visiting her French colleague Pompier Chat. So she was on the spot to watch firefighters draining tens of thousands of gallons of wine from the streets of the Mediterranean town of Sète.

The wine was released just before midnight by a dozen masked men who broke into a wine merchant, and flooded cellars and underground car parks. It was a protest by CRAV, the Comité Régional d'Action Viticole – the Regional Wine Action Committee – against cheap wine from Spain.

Sète is where they make Picpoul, a white wine of which your Cat is especially fond, and some local producers are being forced to sell their wine at prices that are lower than the cost of manufacture.

HOT ISSUE, COLD CASE

Who started the great fire of London in 1666? At the time, a man was put to death for it, but was that the whole truth? A new book *The Great Fire of London 1666: A Cold-Case Fire Investigation brings modern techniques to the investigation*. Dr Peter Mansi, a firefighter and fire officer between 1981 and 2011, has been investigating fires for the London Fire Brigade since 1999. He has collaborated with the Worshipful Company of Firefighters to rebuild the investigation into the Great Fire of London. To buy the book – the paperback costs £16.66 and there's a leather-bound version for £166.60, what a coincidence – visit bit.ly/2byiUMF.



25-YEAR BADGES



Gez Coates (r), white watch, Lincoln South, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Bill Dziadkiewicz in cage of ALP at full height)



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



Steven Howarth (r), St Annes, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Ian McGill



Nick Border (r), driver training, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser George White



Derek Bolton (r), Sheldon, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rod Barrett with colleagues looking on



Layne Buckley (l) white watch, Worksop, Notts, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dave Spink with fellow watch members Paul Mitchell and Lee Patrick looking on



Craig Fotheringham (r), RDS, Diffield, Humberside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Collingwood



Gary Lea (r), red watch, Leek, Staffs, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Mosley with colleagues Dean Murrell, Ant Ball and Dan Green



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



Paul Blower (l), Alcester, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Marcus Giles, with brigade health and safety rep Adrian Young (l) and Ian Crook



Andy Fellows (r) blue watch, Ladywood, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Richard Field



Jeff Hall (l), red watch, Sutton, London, receives his 25-year badge from SW London secretary Dave Young



Paul Goldhawk (r), Cambridge, receives his 25-year badge from Cambs brigade secretary Cameron Matthews



Mark Guile (r), Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mark Rowe



Tony King (r), Dartford, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Terry Beal



From left: **Gerald Adams**, **Paul Foster**, **Ken Newport** and **Andrew Ackrill**, Handsworth, West Midlands all receive their 25-year badges



Martin Lapham (r), Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Pete Mawhood



Dai Hughes (r), South Wales HQ, receives his 25-year badge from region 8 EC member Grant Mayos



Terry Clapp (l) West Moors Training Centre, Dorset and Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from GM Sean Frampton (centre right) with crews from Springbourne and Redhill Park white watch



Sue Phelan (r) control branch, Tyne and Wear, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



From left: **Dai Wigley, Paul Tancock** and **Shaun Phillips**, Ammanford, Mid and West Wales, receive their 25-year badges from ONC chair Mick Higgins (centre right)



Paul Arden (3rd left), Glossop, Derbyshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rob Barber and **Julian Bell** (3rd right) receives his from brigade secretary Chris Tapp with blue watch members looking on



Steve Franklin (l), Sheldon, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rod Barrett with colleagues looking on



Paul Hassall (r), Sheldon, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rod Barrett with colleagues looking on



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



Stephen Jones (l), blue watch, Fulham, receives his 25-year badge from London region executive council member Ian Leahair



Steve Billington (l) and **Andrew Darch** (r) green watch, Exeter Danes Castle, receive their 25-year badges from FBU Exeter official Dave Chappell (c) with colleagues Rob Pugsley and Jamie Town looking on



Stuart Jones (l), blue watch, Hornchurch, London, receives his 25-year badge from London region executive council member Ian Leahair



Kev Rickard (l), red watch, Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Scott Blandford with (l to r) Mark Downing, Heidi Hawley and Simon Upshall



Front row (l-r) **Steve Page, David Sowerby, Jules Harding** and **Jim Gregory**, Coalville fire station, Leicestershire, receive their 25-year badges with colleagues looking on



Chris Brown (l), green watch, Bridlington, receives his 25-year badge from East Riding rep Stew Ball with green watch colleagues looking on

25-YEAR BADGES



Thomas Reid (l), Wareham retained (100% FBU) receives his 25-year badge from Dorset membership organiser Scott Blandford with Wareham station colleagues looking on



Russell James (l) Wareham RDS station, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership organiser Scott Blandford with station colleagues (100% FBU) looking on



Terry Austin (l) Newmarket, Suffolk receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew with colleagues looking on



Vince Marshall (r), Sheldon, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rod Barrett with colleagues looking on



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



John Miller (l), blue watch, Blackness Road, Dundee, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Colin Chalmers



Kevin Napier (r), former brigade secretary in Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from Cambs brigade secretary Cameron Matthews



Darren Gilson (l), Bridlington RDS, receives his 25-year badge from East Riding branch rep Stew Ball with colleagues looking on



Tam Symington (l); Group 1, Greenock, District Six, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from former branch official and OOT member Ian Scott with his watch looking on



(l-r) **Keith Barnes, Neil Glanville, Mark Smith and James Noble**, red watch, Southall, all receive their 25-year badges from region 10 NW area secretary Dave Shek (far left)



Mick Turver (r) black watch, Gainsborough (RDS), Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from Leigh Street, H&S rep, with colleagues looking on



Paul Burton (r) orange watch, Leek, Staffs, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Mosley with colleagues Carl Mason and Kev McClintock looking on



Dean Murrell (r), branch rep, red watch Leek, Staffs, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Mosley with Ant Ball, Gary Lea and Dan Green looking on



Tim Barnes (l) blue watch, Godstone, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Wyatt with colleagues (l-r) Dan Phillips, Richard Peters and Mark Richardson looking on



Rob Evans (r), red watch, Swindon, receives his 25-year badge from Tony Littler with red watch colleagues looking on



Keith Chaffey (centre l) blue watch, Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Scott Blandford with watch colleagues (l to r), Paddy West, Martin Shore, Graham Jackson and Sean Berry



Dave Strong (l), red watch, Godstone, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Mick Wyatt



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



Lester White (r), white watch, West Bridgford, Nottingham, receives his 25-year badge from red watch CM Robert Barton



Dave Goode (l) white watch, Chertsey, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Lee Duddy on the morning of his retirement following the last call of his career



Denver Walton (l), Wiltshire officers' branch, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Hamish Daya



Chris Mettam (r), branch secretary, Margate, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mark Simmons



Lance Forster (r), blue watch, Swindon, receives his 25-year badge from Tony Littler with colleagues looking on



Jeff Stephenson (l) Rainton Bridge, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



Arthur Brown (l), Lanark, Group 1, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Watt



Stewart Payne (r), Training, Leicestershire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dean Thornton



Calvin Wood (r) Channel Tunnel, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Bob Chilmad



Ian Cotton (r), Castle Donington, receives his 25-year badge from East Midlands H&S rep Adam Taylor

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.



Jason Marshall-Smith (l), green watch, Northolt, London, receives his 25-year badge from region 10 FBU north west area secretary David Shek

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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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0800 100 6061

England, Wales and N Ireland

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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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