

FireFighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union ♦♦♦ www.fbu.org.uk

August/September 2013



YES

***Why you should vote YES
in the pensions ballot***

See p10

Tragic death of a firefighter in Manchester



Matt Wrack

We remember Stephen Hunt and our brothers in Arizona

Everyone in the FBU will have been shocked and saddened by the death of Brother Stephen Hunt at a fire in Manchester city centre on 13 July. The thoughts of all of us will have been with Stephen's family, friends and colleagues. The fire service does pull together at such times. The risks that are shared mean that such a loss is keenly felt throughout the union. I am also sure that we all wish Stephen's BA partner, Jeremy (Jez) Jones best wishes for a recovery from the injuries he sustained at the incident.

We were also shocked by the deaths of 19 firefighters in Arizona, killed fighting a major wildfire. It was the worst loss of life in the fire service in a single incident since 9/11. I have

contacted our colleagues in the North American union, the IAFF, to pass on condolences and solidarity.

I was able to attend the site of the tragedy in Manchester the following day so as to see the scene while firefighting was still under way. I am grateful to all those members who took time during the day to speak to me, explaining their experiences of the previous day. I am particularly grateful to members at Philips Park fire station where I was able to meet members of Stephen's family, talk to FBU members and attend a change of watch bell ceremony.

A very difficult and painful process will now be under way. It is essential that this terrible incident is thoroughly

investigated. That is something we owe to Stephen and to his family.

The FBU will conduct its own investigation. We will need to examine very carefully what went wrong. It will need to address all relevant issues: planning and fire safety matters; preparation and planning for such incidents; the relevant procedures and their application; and the issue of whether relevant resources were available at all times.

Our firefighting procedures have developed over years. They have developed to avoid this type of tragedy, so we will need to examine what broke down and what went wrong.

What has happened since 2008?

In 2008, we published *In the Line of Duty*, a report on firefighter fatalities. It remains the most thorough study conducted in the UK in recent years. We raised the findings and recommendations with government and with various parties within the service. Our conference in May this year expressed concern that lessons from firefighter deaths are not being learned and that in too many cases the same factors are being identified at different incidents.

We will now need to examine whether the findings have been addressed; whether government ministers and others have properly taken account of the concerns we have raised. If not then we will hold them to account – at whatever level.



STEFANO CAGNONI

who has already retired, taken a (very considerable) lump sum – and then been re-employed on a salary firefighters can only dream of.

In another case, a principal manager on the verge of retirement has expressed his opposition to the FBU decisions.

The brass neck of such people is astounding. They are the highest-paid people in the service. They have pensions that are protected as well as being the highest pensions in the service. And they have the nerve to advise firefighters that taking industrial action is wrong. Perhaps they should have been expressing their 'professional' views to government before now and we might not be in this situation – or perhaps it's just a case of 'I'm all right, Jack.'

In contrast, I have met many members of the FBU who are close to retirement, but who have said very clearly that they will stand with their brothers and sisters to try to defend pensions for the future. It is a matter of principle for them.

Principle. Now, that is something to be proud of. Standing up for your principles, standing up for your workmates, standing together, teamwork – those are the best values of the fire service. Those are the values of the Fire Brigades Union.

Solidarity!

Pension ballot – Vote Yes

By the time you receive this magazine our ballot for strike action will be under way. You may well have already voted. If you have not done so, I would strongly urge you to vote YES.

The ballot is something we would all have wished to avoid. But eventually government set a deadline and presented us with an ultimatum – accept our proposals or face imposition of worse. That is not the way to do business. FBU members are not likely to accept being bullied and that is why we had no alternative but to launch the ballot.

One sad aspect of the debate has been the intervention of certain principal managers in certain fire services. This has included at least one officer



Follow the general secretary on Twitter: @MattWrack

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Aerial Ladder Platform: Firefighters battle a huge fire in the West Midlands which has exposed the risk of austerity cuts

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE



Stephen Hunt

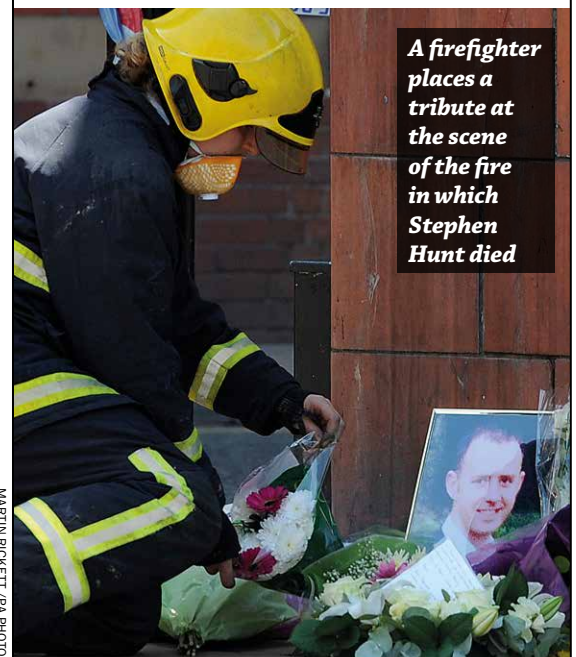
Brother Stephen Hunt died during an incident at Oldham Street, Manchester city centre on the evening of Saturday 13 July. He was a member in Greater Manchester fire and rescue service.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "This is a terrible tragedy. Firefighters in Greater Manchester and around the UK are devastated by the news. The thoughts of everyone in the fire and rescue service will be with Stephen's family, friends and colleagues at this terrible time."

"This terrible



incident will now need to be thoroughly investigated and we are putting those arrangements in place. That will draw on experience and expertise from around the country to ensure the process is followed carefully and methodically."



MARTIN RICKETT / PA PHOTOS

No choice but to ballot on pensions

Pensions

The FBU's executive council decided last month to ballot members for strike action over pensions. The balloting process is open until 29 August and it is vital that every member takes part.

The decision was made for two main reasons. First, the Westminster government fire minister Brandon Lewis wrote to the FBU on 19 June with a new offer, but with an ultimatum to accept it by 12 July. Lewis wrote that the offer was also conditional on the FBU's executive council recommending it to members.

This is not the right way to conduct industrial relations. Talks have been ongoing in recent months. The new pension scheme is not due to come into operation until April 2015, so there is still time to negotiate. Imposing an arbitrary deadline makes it harder to find a settlement.

Second, the offer is not acceptable because it does not address the detailed issues raised repeatedly by the FBU. Last year the government commissioned a review into the normal pension age for firefighters. The FBU took part in the review, contributing additional evidence to ensure firefighters' interests were represented.

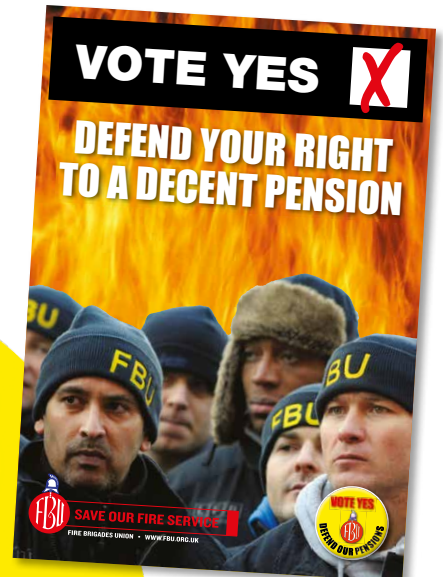
The review, written by Dr Tony Williams and published in January this year, confirmed many of the FBU's concerns. It showed that the majority of firefighters

– at least two-thirds and probably more than that – are unlikely to be fit enough to work to 60. The report argues that the whole life-cycle of a firefighter's career, from recruitment through promotion to retirement, needs to include a high fitness standard.



Williams warned that given the necessary fitness requirements of the job, many firefighters would face the threat of capability dismissal, with the prospect of losing both their job and pension.

So far the government has failed to



respond to these concerns, raised in a report it commissioned, chaired by an independent expert it appointed, and with conclusions accepted by employers too.

The fire minister has written an open letter to firefighters in response to the FBU's move to ballot.

Lewis says that firefighters need all the facts before making a decision. That is exactly the point the FBU has been making to him.

In reality, the government has not clarified what will happen to those who cannot maintain operational fitness. It has not confirmed the contribution rates for the new scheme. Other matters raised in the trade dispute are not clear.

The FBU is willing and able to negotiate. But the government must address our legitimate concerns.

Vote YES in the ballot.

Dave Smith: Blacklisted workers are calling for a Leveson-style inquiry to uncover the truth about the links between the police and building firms



Pressure still on after stations stay open

London

Firefighters demonstrated in London on 18 July against plans to close ten fire stations and cut hundreds of firefighter jobs.

Two fire stations – Clapham and New Cross – previously earmarked for closure are to remain

open following a sustained FBU and public campaign against the closures.

Paul Embery, FBU regional secretary for London, said: “Make no mistake, the decision to keep Clapham and New Cross stations open came about only because of the pressure of a sustained

public campaign in which the FBU played a pivotal role. But that campaign doesn’t end here.

“Ten stations remain under threat, and we must redouble our efforts to save them from the axe too. The FBU will not rest until the threat of all frontline fire service cuts is off the table.”



Firefighters and supporters demonstrate in London on 18 July

FBU forces managers to think again

Control

Before the Isle of Wight fire and rescue service closed its emergency control room in March last year and transferred its vital functions to Surrey, FBU officials raised concerns that were ignored by managers in both services.

The union registered a complaint at an employment tribunal against both services for failure to comply with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE).

The services tried to settle out of court, making three increasing financial offers, which the FBU declined. Final negotiations took place on 13 May this year, as the tribunal was due to start.

Both services admitted they had failed to comply with TUPE and acknowledged

that full information about the measures should have been provided to the FBU. They accepted that it was for the union to determine at what level within the union TUPE consultation should have taken place.

It is extremely rare for settlement terms to include an admission of liability or an open agreement to pay compensation.

“This settlement should send a clear warning to other fire and rescue services embarking on mergers of fire controls,” said region 12 secretary Ricky Matthews. “FBU members working in control rooms can be assured of the value the union places on them and the importance of the work they do during these increasingly difficult times.”

Region 11 secretary Danni Armstrong said: “The FBU is the only union that has the wherewithal to pursue a case of this nature.”

SOUNDING OFF

Britain’s dirty secret

Dave Smith from the Blacklist Support Group

The BBC Panorama programme *Blacklist Britain* exposed the dirty secret of the construction industry.

For decades, it had been a rumour but, in 2009, the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) raided the Consulting Association organisation and found the evidence.

Files on 3,213 workers contained not only names, addresses, national insurance numbers, phone numbers, car registrations and photographs, but also union and safety reps’ credentials.

The 44 biggest companies in the building industry used the Consulting Association to check prospective workers. If a name was listed, the worker was refused work or sacked. Each check cost £2.20. During the building of the Olympic Park, McAlpine and Skanska were invoiced over £28,000 each in one year: blacklisting on an industrial scale.

For union activists this resulted in repeated dismissals and long periods of unemployment. Skilled workers had their children on free school meals, families divorced – because they backed their union.

John McDonnell MP said this blacklisting is “the worst case of organised human rights abuse ever in the UK”. Yet four years since the ICO raid none of the firms has been held to account for its actions. Court evidence and a Westminster parliament select committee investigation have shown that the police and security services supplied information.

Far from being a thing of the past, Unite is currently involved in a major industrial dispute about the blacklisting of its rep Frank Morris on Crossrail, the largest publicly funded project in Western Europe.

Blacklisted workers are calling for a Leveson-style public inquiry to uncover the truth about the links between the police and multi-national building firms.

Until justice, the struggle continues.



More information:
www.hazards.org/blacklistblog

Cuts campaign will continue, vows FBU

Devon and Somerset

Devon and Somerset firefighters vowed to fight on after the fire authority pressed ahead with plans for more cuts last month.

The union organised a lobby with local people to voice concerns on 10 July. This followed a massive campaign of opposition by the FBU locally which gained overwhelming public support.

Tam McFarlane, FBU executive member for the South West, said: "Our campaign

has really resonated with local people and we will fight on.

"Firefighters collected over 27,000 signatures in their local communities and garnered widespread media coverage. Politicians of all stripes have been lobbied and all have heard our voices.

"It's clear that those who decided weren't there to represent the views of their constituents or the fire and rescue service, but to balance budgets and implement cuts."



FBU members and local residents lobby Devon & Somerset fire authority against cuts

Budget attacks will 'cut through bone' says FBU

Spending review

The UK's capacity to cope with large emergencies is under serious threat, the FBU warned after the announcement in June of big cuts to the fire and rescue service budget.

Responding to the comprehensive spending review's cut of 7.5%, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, said: "After three years of station closures, 3,600 job losses and a dangerous slowing of response times, these new attacks to fire services will start to cut through bone.

"The UK's capacity to cope with large or concurrent emergencies is under serious threat. Whoever wins the next election must ensure that emergency services are properly funded in order to prevent greater loss of life.

"For this reason, the Labour Party must abandon plans to continue with the current government's spending plans if elected. Labour will not win support from working people by promising to ape the Tories on cutting services."

On the announcement of a £30m fund to finance fire service reforms and

a £40m fire and rescue services capital fund, Wrack said the FBU had pioneered improvements within fire services for decades.

"But," he went on, "any reforms must put public safety first and discussions on the future of emergency services must include the expert voice of firefighters themselves.

"No amount of reform will compensate for the damage done to fire and rescue services by the ongoing cuts agenda, and our priority should be protecting services from the knife."

IN BRIEF

Arizona tragedy

The FBU has sent its members' condolences to the United States IAFF firefighters' union after 19 firefighters were killed on 30 June in Arizona. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The FBU and its members are very sad to hear about the deaths of 19 firefighters in Arizona. This appears to be the worst incident for firefighters' loss of life since 9/11.

"There is a strong sense of solidarity between firefighters across the world. Our thoughts are with the families and colleagues of those who were willing to risk their lives to save others.

"Wildfires in the US south-west highlight the hazards firefighters face every day, here and across the world."



Solidarity: UK and US firefighters with other participants at the 2013 Tunnel2Towers run in London. It is based on the Tunnel to Towers runs in New York which honour emergency services workers killed in the 9/11 attacks

Union wins compensation

FBU solicitors Thompsons won substantial damages for a Scottish retained firefighter last month.

David Melrose was injured three years ago when a steel joist collapsed and hit him on the back of his neck at an incident.

The settlement compensates him for injuries, loss of past and future earnings, the cost of past and future care and any adjustments that may have to be made to his house.

Roddy Robertson, FBU executive council member for Scotland, said: "We have always fought for safer systems of work and have been clear where they don't exist and our members are injured we will pursue fair compensation: we would prefer the first option."

B&EMM SCHOOL 11-13 October

Hillscourt Conference Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8RS

Details have been sent to B&EMM members' home addresses but are also available on the FBU website

We still need to combat bids to privatise the fire service

Cleveland FBU members are campaigning vigorously against 'mutualisation' plans that would be the precursor to privatisation. *Firefighter* explains the issues

Mutualisation

Reports of the disappearance of fire service privatisation have been greatly exaggerated.

Many private firms are still trying to get their claws into the fire and rescue service. Cleveland FBU members are currently at the sharp end of this attack – but are campaigning vigorously to oppose it.

Hasn't fire service privatisation been ruled out by the government?

Not completely. Fire minister Brandon Lewis spoke in a debate about the issues in Cleveland at Westminster on 13 May 2013. He said: "Cleveland will not be able to go down the road of becoming a mutual with the help of the government unless we can find a way of doing it that does not open the door to privatisation."

However on 9 July 2013, Lewis told MPs: "Any decision on mutualisation will be a matter for Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority and its elected members."

Isn't mutualisation different from privatisation?

In the Cleveland case they both mean the fire service would compete in the open market where, chief fire officer Ian Hayton

has previously admitted, it would have to learn "how to swim with the sharks". Forming a mutual can also be the precursor to privatisation. Look at Royal Mail.

Cleveland fire authority first called it an "employee-led" mutual, until the vast majority of firefighters indicated that they did not support the model, and that the

Everyone loses apart from the fat-cat owners

only ones who did were a small coterie of senior managers.

It is now described as a "locally led" mutual. And the term "mutual" is a misnomer. Senior managers certainly do not seem to be taking any notice of what firefighters think on this issue.

Won't the mutual bring in more money?

Not necessarily. Cleveland fire authority's community interest company (CiC) won a six-month contract to provide assistance to the elderly and vulnerable in emergencies.

It recently submitted a further tender, but the original contractor won the contract.

Why can't we do a bit of work on the side?

Mutualisation and privatisation will undermine firefighters' hard-won pay and conditions. Those employed by the mutual will not have Grey Book conditions.

Instead of a permanent job, compulsory competitive tendering means contracts are renewed every few years – so firefighters could be out of a job altogether.

To "make money" the mutual will slash its firefighters' pay and conditions – to undercut what other fire services pay firefighters. Everyone loses apart from the fat-cat owners.

Doesn't the Labour Party in Cleveland support mutualisation?

The Labour group on Redcar and Cleveland council agreed a motion on 15 July 2013 that opposed the spinning off of Cleveland Fire Brigade into a public service mutual. All the Labour MPs in Cleveland (and many others elsewhere) are opposed to the mutualisation and have said so repeatedly. The FBU is opposed. Even the Chief Fire Officers Association is against it.





Stretched to breaking point by cuts

ROSE JONES, West Midlands FBU executive council member, praises firefighters' fantastic work but warns of the risks

The West Midlands fire and rescue service was stretched to breaking point by government cuts when responding to the fire at a Smethwick plastic recycling plant at the beginning of July.

FBU officials, including general secretary Matt Wrack, visited the site of the operation and spoke to firefighters about

their experiences.

Firefighters and fire control did a fantastic job in fighting the massive fire and deserve nothing but praise.

But the Smethwick fire stretched the service to breaking point.

Those involved in fighting the fire made it clear that government cuts

have hampered their ability to deal with major incidents, which may have massive consequences for public safety.

Firefighters dealing with the incident said that cuts to the service had caused delays to the arrival of specialist fire engines.

Some firefighters were required to spend



excessive time (in some cases 12 hours) in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions.

Fire engines were sent from Stafford and Malvern to compensate for shortages.

Only one West Midlands engine was left to cover the rest of the brigade (covering around 2.6 million people) through large

parts of the fire's first night.

The West Midlands fire and rescue service has recently experienced a 26% (or £20m) cut to its budget and a 22% reduction in the number of firefighters (from 1,850 to 1,450).

Firefighters said that several of the fire engines which fought the fire will be lost

to the cuts in a matter of weeks.

At least 13 firefighters were injured while fighting the blaze.

The government must stop the cuts. People's lives are at stake.

Firefighters are sick of being praised by politicians while seeing our service slashed to pieces.

WHY WE HAVE TO BALLOT ON PENSIONS

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack explains the union's decision

The FBU's executive council met on 9 July to discuss the next stage in our pension campaign. Executive council members recognised that there are several key issues that remain unresolved by the latest government proposals.

Brandon Lewis, the Westminster government fire minister, had asked for a response from the FBU by 12 July. He also said that the latest offer is conditional and would be removed if members did not accept the 2015 scheme without further modifications.

This is a very unhelpful way of negotiating. Threats such as this severely limit the options available to us. Throughout the negotiations, and despite the justifiable anger of members at the attacks on our pensions, we have attempted to avoid presenting ultimatums or unrealistic deadlines.

Threat

It is extremely unfortunate that central government has now threatened to impose changes to our pensions without agreement and without addressing a whole range of questions raised over the past two years.

After careful consideration of all options available, the executive council decided to ballot members for strike action in England, Scotland and Wales.

This is a decision that was not taken lightly. It is a situation that we have tried extremely hard to avoid. Despite our best endeavours, we still face a firefighter pension scheme that is totally

unworkable and that we cannot recommend to FBU members.

The FBU has made it clear that a negotiated settlement is the best way of resolving the issue. But the government must be willing to address the key concerns that remain unanswered.

Proposals unacceptable

The executive council has been very clear that it cannot recommend the proposals from the government. The latest proposals do not address adequately the terms of our lawful trade dispute:

- Protection arrangements
- Contribution increases
- Contribution ratios
- No job, no pension (capability dismissal)
- Early retirement options
- Commutation rates
- Cost ceiling
- The Retained Modified Scheme.

It is extremely disappointing that, even at this stage, the government is unable to answer many of the legitimate questions about future pension arrangements. FBU members have been clear over the past two years that we do not want to sign up to something that is vague and lacking in detail.

The government is still unable to set out clearly and precisely what pension contributions FBU members would be expected to pay in the 2015 scheme. This is largely a direct result of its failure to take account of the evidence we have already presented on the risk of opt-outs or non-participation in the scheme in the future.



PICTURES: IAN MARLOW



Firefighters want to work to protect their communities, but we cannot accept pension changes that ignore all the evidence we have presented and a scheme that is unaffordable and unworkable

The government is also completely unable to answer the questions we have asked about fitness standards and the threat of capability dismissal.

This issue has been identified as a major concern by the Williams' report which the government commissioned. Members still face a very real threat of: no job, no pension.

Retained firefighters

Retained members of the FBU will be well aware of the long-running battle for equal treatment. This resulted in a legal victory and a requirement for government to allow the relevant members access to pension rights on similar terms to wholetime colleagues.

The union has been discussing this for years with government and has been assured on numerous occasions that the arrangements (called the modified scheme) would be put in place.

These arrangements have not been put in place and, despite numerous requests for information, no adequate explanation about the delay has been provided.

The union has therefore added a point to our lawful trade dispute seeking full implementation of the modified scheme as negotiated with the FBU. Retained members will be sent further information on this aspect of the campaign.

Control

The executive council decided not to include FBU members who work in fire controls in this ballot. This matter was debated at our conference in May. Control members are not eligible to join a fire service specific scheme.

Further advice will be issued in relation to control members in due course.

Northern Ireland

The executive council also decided not to include FBU members in Northern Ireland at this stage, because of a significant difference in the law. In England, Scotland and Wales, legislation relating to all public service pensions has already come into force. That is not the case in Northern Ireland.

At this stage, therefore, an immediate ballot will not commence in Northern Ireland. The situation will be kept under review with the Northern Ireland regional committee.

Ballot

None of us want to see strike action. However, we cannot accept pension changes that ignore all the evidence we have presented and a scheme that is unaffordable and unworkable.

We have explained to ministers that their measures threaten to undermine the very future of fire service pensions. It is important to note that no minister, anywhere in the UK, has done anything to address these concerns or to answer the evidence we have presented.

Therefore we reluctantly embark on a ballot for strike action. We are confident the evidence supports us. Let us stand up and stand together to defend decent pensions in our service.

If you have not done so already, please vote yes in the ballot.

Key politicians float plans for radical blue light mergers

Politicians at the Westminster parliament are agitating for wide-ranging mergers of and within the emergency services. *Firefighter* examines their ideas



Homeland security sounds like a popular American drama series. In fact it is the name adopted by an influential group of MPs and peers at the Westminster parliament that recently proposed huge changes to the fire and other emergency services.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Homeland Security published *Improving Efficiency, Interoperability and Resilience of our Blue Light Services* in June. It has a foreword by Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude, the lead minister responsible for “delivering cross government efficiencies and savings”.

It suggests greater blue light interoperability on national resilience grounds, going as far as to suggest a national fire service or even a merged (fire and ambulance) “emergency response service”.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: “The FBU has pioneered genuine improvements within fire services for decades, and we’re glad to see the authors of this report share our concerns over the need for better coordinated

training and planning for large or concurrent emergencies.

“But the greatest threat to the UK’s capacity to cope with large emergencies is ongoing and unprecedented funding cuts, which are leading to fire station closures as well as fewer firefighters and fire engines across the country.”

Resilience

The report appears to be driven by genuine concerns about national resilience in the face of terrorist incidents, major flooding, industrial incidents and other large-scale emergencies.

It claims that the Olympics in 2012 “exposed gaps in overall response and recovery capability, resulting in bespoke, but temporary, resilience procedures”.

It makes the case for national standards for equipment, training, communications and other matters – something the FBU has long championed.

The report is an important counter to the “let-it-rip” localism heard from sections of the Conservative Party, who want better-off areas to keep more

money and cast deprived and underprivileged communities to the dogs.

National resilience and cross-border cooperation are a vital part of the fire and rescue service.

The report acknowledges that FiReControl was an expensive disaster and warns of botched attempts to improve public services without understanding emergency planning. Disappointingly, it regards unions as a “drag anchor” to reform when it was the FBU that warned from the beginning that FiReControl would be a disaster.

Chaotic experiments

The balance between national resilience and local accountability is one that the fire and rescue service has had to grapple with throughout its history. The service was a patchwork until the Second World War. It was briefly nationalised because of the Blitz, before becoming a universal but locally run service after the war.

But these are not just historical debates. The government’s latest comprehensive spending review made £30m available “to encourage joint working between fire and rescue



authorities, collaboration with other blue lights services, and to meet the upfront costs of service transformation”.

This could potentially create the same chaotic bidding and merger process we have seen in control after the collapse of FiReControl.

Forced mergers of control rooms in the north-west and south of England with no geographical logic and which axe essential control staff have already begun to alter the landscape of the service.

We have already seen maverick police and crime commissioners in places like Northamptonshire claim that they could take over the local fire and rescue service. In Merseyside, plans to co-locate fire and police control rooms control rooms are being prepared.

Big plans

The MPs' report claims that there are advantages to the further integration of fire and rescue services, including economies of scale, the removal of duplication and simpler standards to enforce and maintain.

The authors argue that many rural fire and rescue services are “too small” and

Maverick police and crime commissioners claim that they could take over the local fire and rescue service

that the number of fire services should be aligned with the ambulance service which has 11 regional units in England and Wales.

It goes further by arguing that “a more radical approach towards a full merger might be the creation of a single ambulance authority and single FRS for England and Wales broken down into possibly ten administrative hubs which adopt the regional political boundaries”.

The report argues for a drastic takeover of fire control by ambulance control, without any idea of how this might affect

local communities or firefighters.

The report is a clear warning that many outrageous and contradictory proposals for the fire and rescue service are circulating at the highest levels of government.

The *Sunday Times* (16 June 2013) reported that home secretary Theresa May had met Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude and fire minister Brandon Lewis to discuss merging blue light services under the control of police and crime commissioners.

FBU members and officials will have to remain vigilant for developments in the coming period.

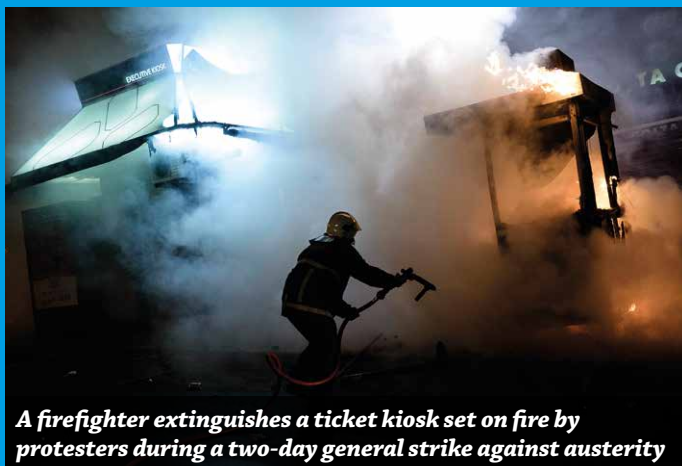
The status quo is changing, but the shape of the service in the future is by no means set in stone.

FBU must be a factor

The FBU must be an active factor in shaping the new terrain. The union will be working out its strategy in the coming months. Members should make their views clear.

Wrack said: “Discussions on the future of emergency services must include the expert voice of firefighters themselves”.

GERASIMOS KOILAKOS/INVISION/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



A firefighter extinguishes a ticket kiosk set on fire by protesters during a two-day general strike against austerity



Thousands demonstrated outside ERT headquarters to protest against the closure of the public broadcaster

SOCRATES BALTAGIANNIS/INVISION/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



The demonstration outside ERT headquarters to protest against the Greek government's decision to shut down the public broadcaster continued into the night



Athens: Metro workers on strike against cuts outside the central depot. The government declared the strike illegal, forcing them back to work under threat of imprisonment

SOCRATES BALTAGIANNIS/INVISION/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

SOCRATES BALTAGIANNIS/INVISION/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS IN GREECE

FBU national officer Dave Green reports on the austerity agenda facing Greek firefighters

Workers in Greece are at the sharp end of austerity attacks taking place across Europe. The economy is collapsing and the Greek government is all but bankrupt. The European Union, World

Bank and International Monetary Fund (known collectively as the 'Troika') have agreed emergency loans to the Greek government to prevent bankruptcy. The conditions for these loans include austerity policies and sale of Greece's publicly owned assets.

As a result there has been a rapid drop in the standard of living of ordinary Greek men and women:

- Wages and pensions have fallen across the board by between 35% and 50%
- Funding for public hospitals has been cut by 40%
- There has been a 27% rise in VAT
- Electricity prices have increased by 44% in four years.

Effects of austerity

The FBU was invited to take part in a visit to see how austerity is affecting workers including firefighters.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, executive member Sharon Riley and national officer Dave Green took part in the two-day visit that saw a packed schedule of meetings with union leaders, politicians and public sector workers. Dave Green had previously visited Greek firefighters in March 2012.

As in the UK, Greek firefighters are finding their living standards slashed by the austerity measures. The delegation spent a day with members of our sister union, the Panhellenic Union of Fire Employees, whose offices are in central Athens.

Informative and depressing

We then spent time at central Athens fire station and also the city's control centre. The meeting with union officials in the morning was informative and depressing in equal measure.

The cold facts are that Greek firefighters have seen their pay cut by 40% over a four-year period, with May 2010 seeing a one-off cut of 20%. New recruits in the fire service now start on 650 euros a month and the highest-paid firefighter (a senior officer) will earn just over 2,000 euros a month.

Firefighters, along with many other public sector workers, are surviving on the edge of poverty. As they did in 2012, they urge European unions to heed the warnings of what lies ahead of us all if we do not

challenge the cuts being imposed by governments across Europe.

The cuts are not just being imposed on workers. The young, the unemployed and the retired are also in the firing line.

Retired firefighters, despite having paid into a pension scheme all their working lives, have seen the amount they get in their retirement cut by up to 40%.

However, the people in Greece are organising against austerity. As well as massive protests, strikes, occupations and non-payment campaigns, they have been setting up autonomous self-organised groups in communities.

These include dozens of free social health clinics

where health workers go after their shifts and give their time to provide essential health care to people who otherwise would have nothing.

The clinics rely entirely on volunteers and donations, and reusing old drugs.

Sense of hope

The volunteers were clear that this is not charity work but part of the anti-austerity movement and, in particular, the campaign for public health services

As in 2012, the delegation came away with a sense of hope that, through this organisation and solidarity, workers can change things.

In Greece, workers have shown mass resistance. What happens in Greece will be repeated in Portugal tomorrow and in Italy the day after.

In Britain the coalition government is committed to the same policies with savage cuts in welfare, pushing down wages, removal of rights that protect

people at work and the haemorrhaging of money from the public sector into the profits of major corporations.

At the frontline, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Greece. The fight of the Greek people to survive and oppose the politics of austerity will affect us all.

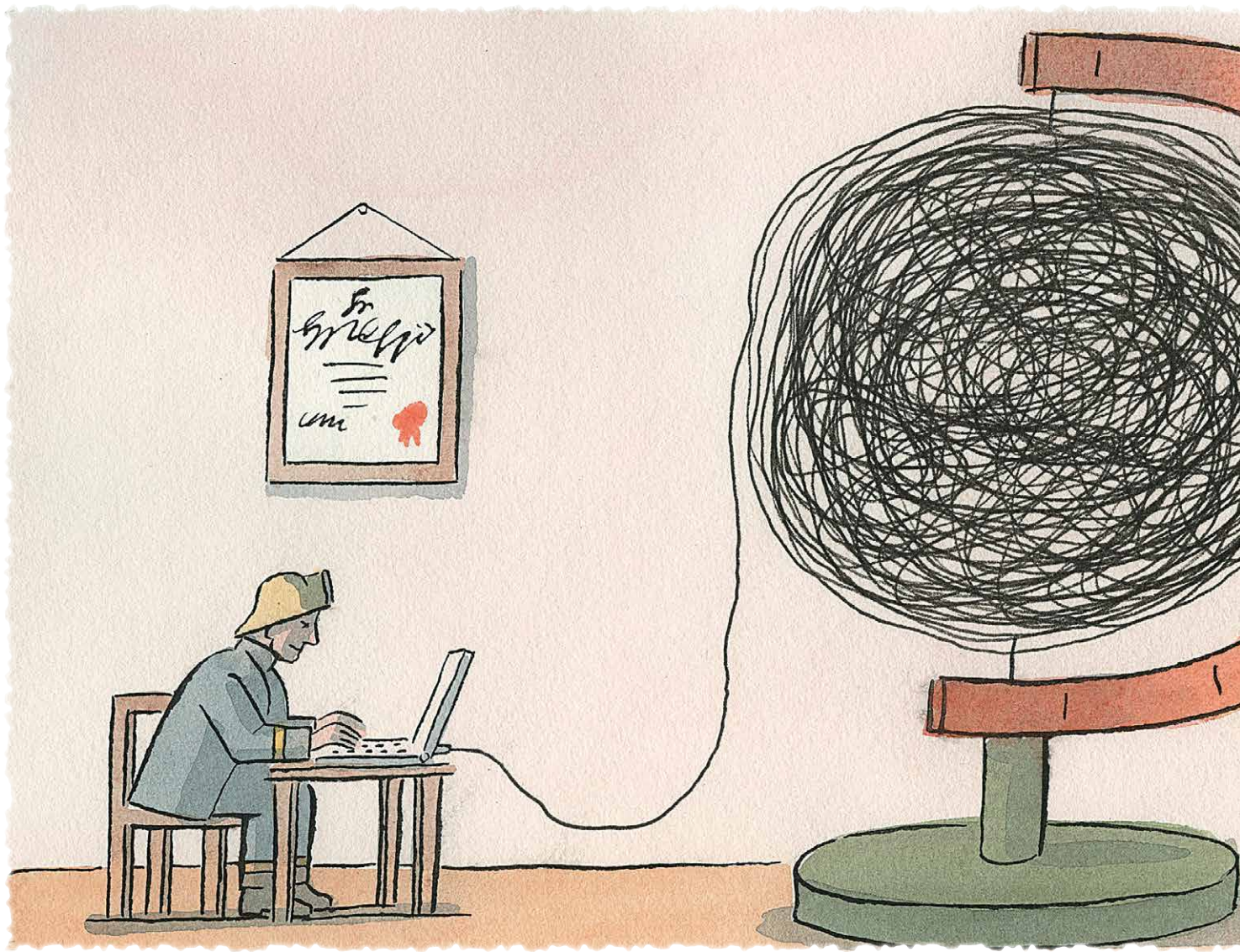
ATTACKS AND RESISTANCE

In June, the Greek government suddenly closed the state media station, ERT, sacking 2,650 people. With mass public support, including a one-day general strike across the country, journalists and technicians have occupied the ERT offices to continue transmission.

Also in June, the Health Ministry of Greece reintroduced a ministerial decree for mandatory HIV tests. Those targeted include migrants, people who inject drugs and sex workers, and people from the LGBT community, who are being rounded up by the police.



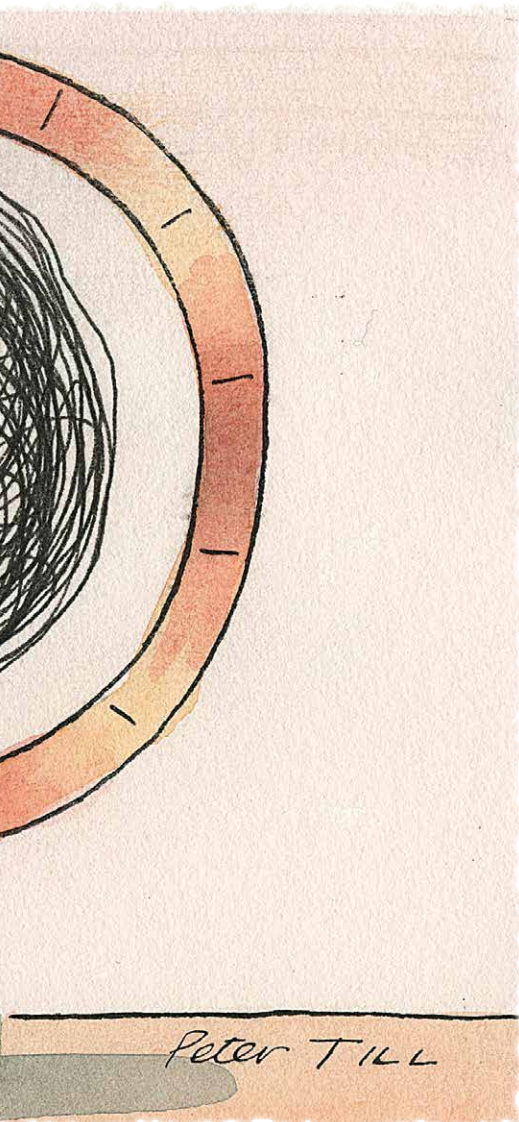
The FBU delegation with firefighters in Athens



Catching the learning bug



Stephen Kennedy, a firefighter at Leytonstone in London, has recently become re-engaged in education with the help of the FBU's lifelong learning project. His is an inspiring story



Stephen Kennedy left school at 16 in 1976 with four CSEs. He had no further education until he joined the fire brigade, where, as he describes: "I was given a large stack of training school notes to learn. I managed to just scrape through and went on to pass my qualified four yearly firefighter's exam."

It was shortly after becoming qualified that he became interested in the FBU. "I undertook various courses like health and safety awareness, equality and diversity, station rep and accused friend (discipline representative)."

Due to family commitments, which coincided with him being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, his studies were interrupted.

Mental health awareness

"About eight months ago, I noticed an email from the FBU that offered members the opportunity to study and to choose from a number of different courses. Having lived with my disorder, as well as a family history of dementia,

the level 2 course on mental health awareness was a great interest to me and I applied for it."

Tim Davis, the FBU regional project organiser, has been able to offer a range of distance learning courses to fire service staff and has been working in partnership with the education provider – Nescot College in Epsom, Surrey – for a few years now. Tim said: "It has become apparent that this particular course, level 2 mental health awareness, has become one of our most popular courses. The fact that Stephen has not only learnt more about his own condition but has also used his new knowledge for the benefit of others is very rewarding."

Stephen found the course very interesting and it had the added benefit of, in his words, "giving me an insight into my own disorder as well as many other mental health issues. The knowledge I have gained from the course has been invaluable in my work both operationally and whilst carrying out home fire safety visits."

Adult learning

Helen Beckenham, the adult learning co-ordinator from Nescot college, has been working with Tim Davis and the London Fire Brigade for the past few years to offer a range of distance learning programmes that meet the work/life needs of a wide range of staff.

"This case study is a fantastic example of how distance learning works in practice," she said. "Stephen has proved without a doubt how beneficial these courses can be and his story demonstrates how the knowledge and skills he has developed have enabled him to respond to some very challenging situations."

"It's great to hear how our courses have had a positive impact on people's lives, the working environment and local community. We're looking forward to continuing work with the FBU and the London Fire Brigade."

Angry occupant

On one occasion, firefighters from Stephen's station were called to a fire in a flat. On arrival they were met by an angry occupant.

Stephen was able to recognise him as suffering from paranoid delusions. The resident claimed a neighbour was putting lighted paper through his letterbox. He also claimed to be able to smell smoke and showed his forearms which he stated had suffered burns.

Despite his protests there were no signs of any burning or smell of smoke. He had destroyed his smoke alarms in a fit of anger and he was at serious risk from the

poor general condition of the flat.

Using techniques he had learnt from the course material, Stephen managed to calm the occupant and persuade him that it was in his best interests to allow them to fit some new smoke alarms. The incident was resolved to the satisfaction of London Ambulance Service, the police and to the great relief of the man himself.

Positive role

Crew manager Steve Frampton, who is Stephen's direct line manager, has observed the knowledge that carrying out this course has instilled in him.

"I have been witness to a number of occasions where he has used these skills to positively reinforce his communica-

"It's great to hear how our courses have had a positive impact on people's lives"

tion and actions with various members of the public in challenging situations," he said.

"Firefighter Kennedy has been a major factor in successfully concluding these incidents and I believe that learning opportunities like these have a very positive role to play in developing individuals."

Stephen further explains that "the course has also enabled me to relate to and show more compassion for sufferers of dementia and Alzheimer's."

"I now understand that although they may sometimes appear to be unresponsive or act in a bizarre manner, it may be due to a loss of their power to communicate."

"I know that they will sometimes have moments of complete clarity. Sometimes sufferers will be treated as 'non-people' which could injure their self-esteem and have a seriously damaging effect on their health."

Stephen is now studying his next course, level 2 equality and diversity, provided directly by the FBU and he has already indicated he will be looking for another later this year.

He clearly has the learning bug.

 **FBU education
and learning website**
www.fbueducation.org

FBU SURVEY

Head and neck cancer among firefighters

'I feel it is more than a coincidence that two of us should suffer the same illness when we worked so closely together'

Cancer in the fire service

Firefighter received the following account from an out-of-trade member, which we publish as part of our appeal for information about cancer in the fire and rescue service. The member asked to remain anonymous – but the story is powerful nonetheless.

“ I joined the fire service in 1971 along with a colleague.

Those of us who joined in the 1970s would have worked a 56-hour week, plus overtime. My colleague was on a different watch to me. We had a three-watch system which meant we worked two days, two nights and two days off.

On numerous occasions my colleague and I worked together, one of us being on overtime. This continued for around five or six years and our paths then changed direction due to station changes.

We didn't meet up again until 2008 at a local hospital, where we were both undergoing radiotherapy for head and neck cancer. Sadly my colleague died in 2011. I would add that I am a non-smoker and have never smoked.

I am writing this because I would like to know if anyone else in the fire and rescue service has head and neck cancer. These cancers include those as far down as the oesophagus and anything above such as the tongue, throat, ears, etc.

Appeal for information

- Type of cancer – oesophagus, throat, neck, ear, etc.
- Location of service
- Length of service
- Rank/role
- Wholtime or retained
- Still living or deceased – if deceased, what was the year of death?
- How long in the fire service before the illness was diagnosed?
- Send information to: cancerdatabase@fbu.org.uk or post to head office (address p2) c/o Paul Woolstenholmes

Now, five years on and as a direct result of this type of cancer, I am unable to eat or drink. I am fed through a percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy or PEG, which is a tube coming out of the wall of my stomach. All my food, liquids and medication is administered through this tube as I am now unable to swallow anything.

I would like to know if any colleagues know of or have

experienced this type of cancer.

I feel that it is more than a coincidence that the two of us should suffer the same illness at the same time when we worked so closely together at the beginning of our careers.

If anyone out there from the fire and rescue service has had or is experiencing this type of cancer, can you please let the union know. I want to put together some research in order to find out how prevalent this

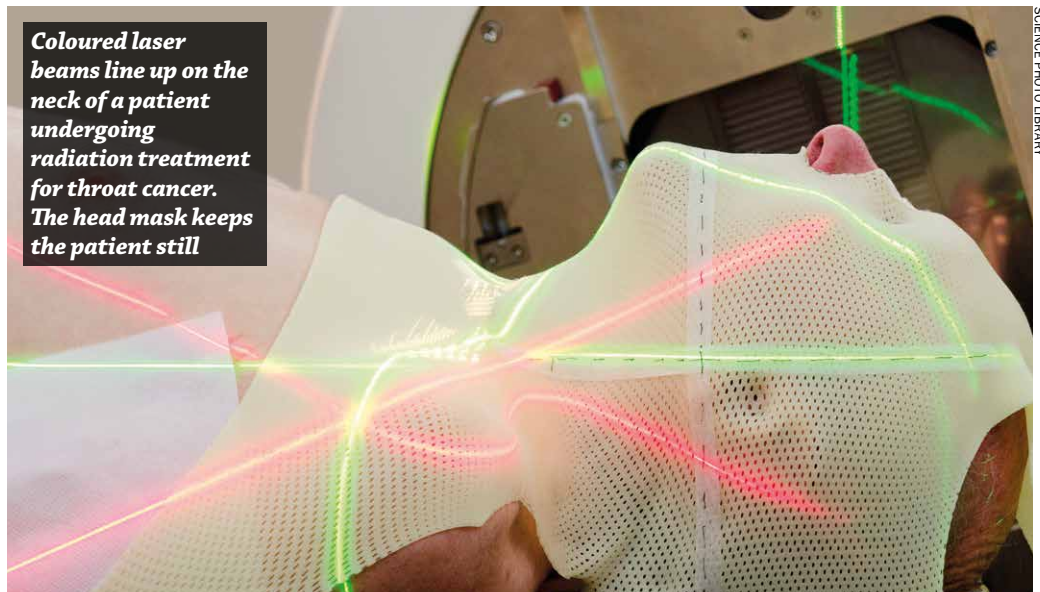
is within our occupation.

Having started to research head and neck cancer, we were surprised to find that there appears to be little or no information or statistics on the prevalence of certain types of cancers in the fire and rescue service. There is, however, lots of information coming from America showing statistics on all the types of cancers firefighters have suffered over there.

We know we have to start somewhere and feel that this would be the ideal way to find out the information.

The FBU will collect information on a confidential basis. This will be managed by Paul Woolstenholmes, the national officer responsible for safety and health. Information will be shared with other members only if consent is given by the provider.

Coloured laser beams line up on the neck of a patient undergoing radiation treatment for throat cancer. The head mask keeps the patient still



SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Legal Beagle

A quiet chat or prelude to the sack?

**FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
0808 100 6061
IN SCOTLAND
0800 089 1331**

Q I have heard employers are going to be able to hold “confidential talks” with employees that they want to get rid of. Can you explain?

A From 29 July this year, what are called “pre-termination negotiations” come into force. These will allow certain discussions between an employer and an employee, when the employer is seeking to terminate that employee’s contract of employment, to be kept confidential from an employment tribunal in most unfair dismissal cases.

Pre-termination negotiations are controversial. They were originally known as protected conversations and were seen as an attempt to allow employers to “fire at will”, safe in the knowledge that their conversation with the employee and any offer made to them would never have to face public scrutiny.

Clearly the system is open to abuse. ACAS is developing a code of practice to try to ensure that employers cannot behave improperly in their conversations with employees. This would include bullying, harassing or intimidating an employee, victimisation and discrimination and using undue pressure to accept an offer to go.

Undue pressure includes not giving an employee a minimum of ten days to consider the offer, reducing the value of an offer during that time, telling an employee that dismissal is inevitable and, from the other side,

an employee threatening to undermine their employer’s public reputation.

However there are many other potential abuses that have not been included in the ACAS draft code and time will tell whether pre-termination negotiations become just another tool for employers to give vulnerable employees little option but to accept an offer and go.

Q What is the new requirement on employment tribunal claimants to seek early conciliation?

A From Spring 2014 all prospective employment tribunal (ET) claimants will have to contact ACAS before

lodging ET proceedings, with a view to a possible settlement of their dispute.

They or their union representative will have to fill out a simple form and ACAS will then contact the claimant to discuss the dispute and whether an attempt to conciliate it would be welcome.

The early conciliation (EC) process means that no one will be able to proceed with an ET claim without being issued with an EC certificate by ACAS which will confirm that the attempt at conciliation failed (or was rejected). The limitation period “clock” on ET claims will be stopped while the attempt at early conciliation takes place, until the EC certificate is issued.

Although the requirement to contact ACAS before lodging

ET proceedings is mandatory, the decision about whether to accept ACAS’s offer of early conciliation is not. Both claimants and respondents can refuse the offer and the claim can then proceed.

The government has consulted on the details of the EC scheme and more information about its implementation is expected.

Q Can an employee who is harassed by a member of the public take their employer to an employment tribunal for not stopping the harassment?

A Up until now, under the Equality Act 2010, an employee was able to pursue a claim against an employer for failing to take action when there had been at least two acts of harassment by a third party, such as a supplier or customer, which the employer was aware of. This was on the basis that the employer’s failure could contribute to the creation of a hostile work environment and thus constitute harassment by the employer.

However, as of 1 October this year, the provisions on third party harassment in the Act are repealed. This is despite the majority of respondents to the government consultation opposing repeal. The government’s somewhat contradictory justification was that the provisions were a burden on business, yet on the other hand that they were rarely used.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

'It's probably one of the most exciting, crazy things I've done'

Shropshire firefighter Ed Booth scales the heights

Rock climbing

It's hardly surprising that firefighters are not fazed by heights. After all, being ready to scale buildings to rescue people is hard-wired into those who choose a frontline career in fire and rescue.

But Telford firefighter Ed Booth doesn't just have a head for heights – he actively seeks them out. And he relishes them in a way that far exceeds any firefighter job spec.

For Ed is a rock climber and his love of heights has taken him up many steep granite faces and craggy peaks. It has even led him to bed down for a night or so on narrow cliff ledges, sleeping bag tied onto the rocks, part-way through a tricky ascent.

Non-climbers can tend to lump all climbers together. But, as Ed explains, there are different kinds. He's not all that bothered about snow-capped mountains – "there's a lot of snow-plodding to get there" – and doesn't go in search of extreme weather conditions.

Crag knowledge

But he did climb the Old Man of Hoy – a "sea stack" off Orkney – in storm-force winds. He had driven from Shropshire with a bunch of climbing mates and it's a long way to come without having a crack at ascending one of Orkney's most famous sights.

"It was a bit of an adventure," says Ed, who confides he had to call on a fair bit of "crag knowledge" to get to the top.

Ed has also been up "The Nose" – a route on the south east face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, California.

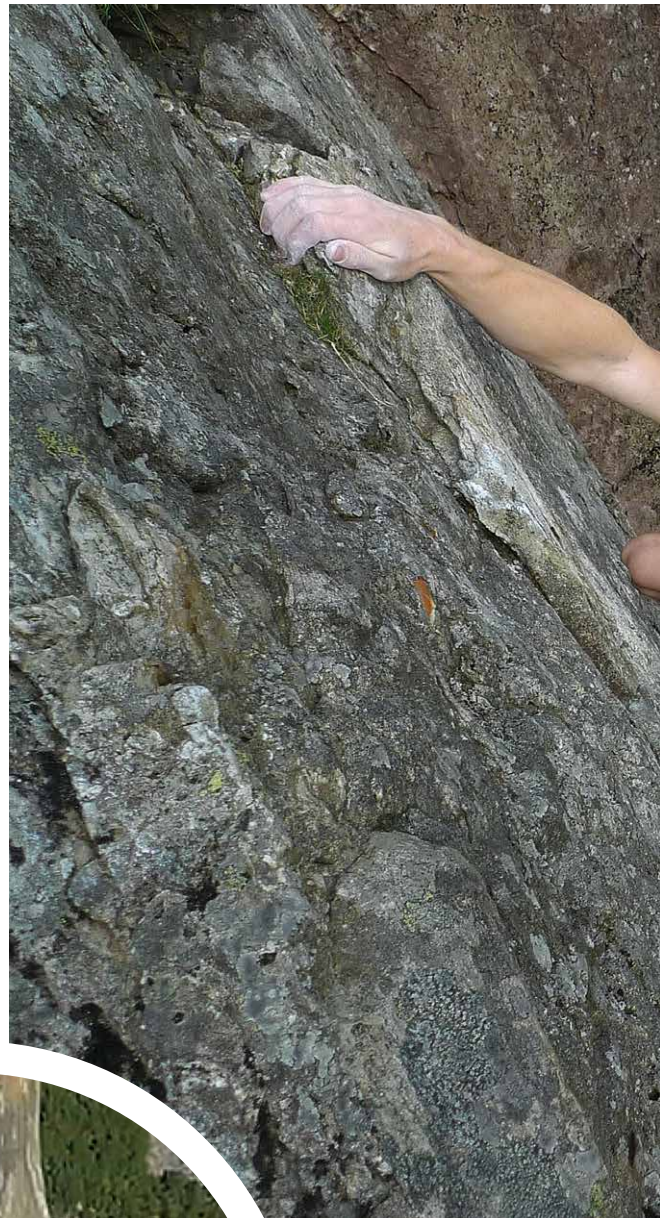
It was the first ever route climbed on the main part of the huge slab of cretaceous granite rock in the Sierra Nevada range. Apparently it is shaped like a 3,000-foot-tall

A head for heights: Ed Booth (below) on the Porch Swing. See the movie at highsports.co.uk/blog/el-cap-porch-swing



nose. It was here, three years ago, that Ed and his climbing colleagues spent three nights kipping on narrow rock ledges, in sleeping bags tied to rocks. The ascent took three and a half days.

Ed has one particularly vivid memory of climbing El Capitan – which is captured on video at highsports.co.uk/blog/el-cap-porch-swing.

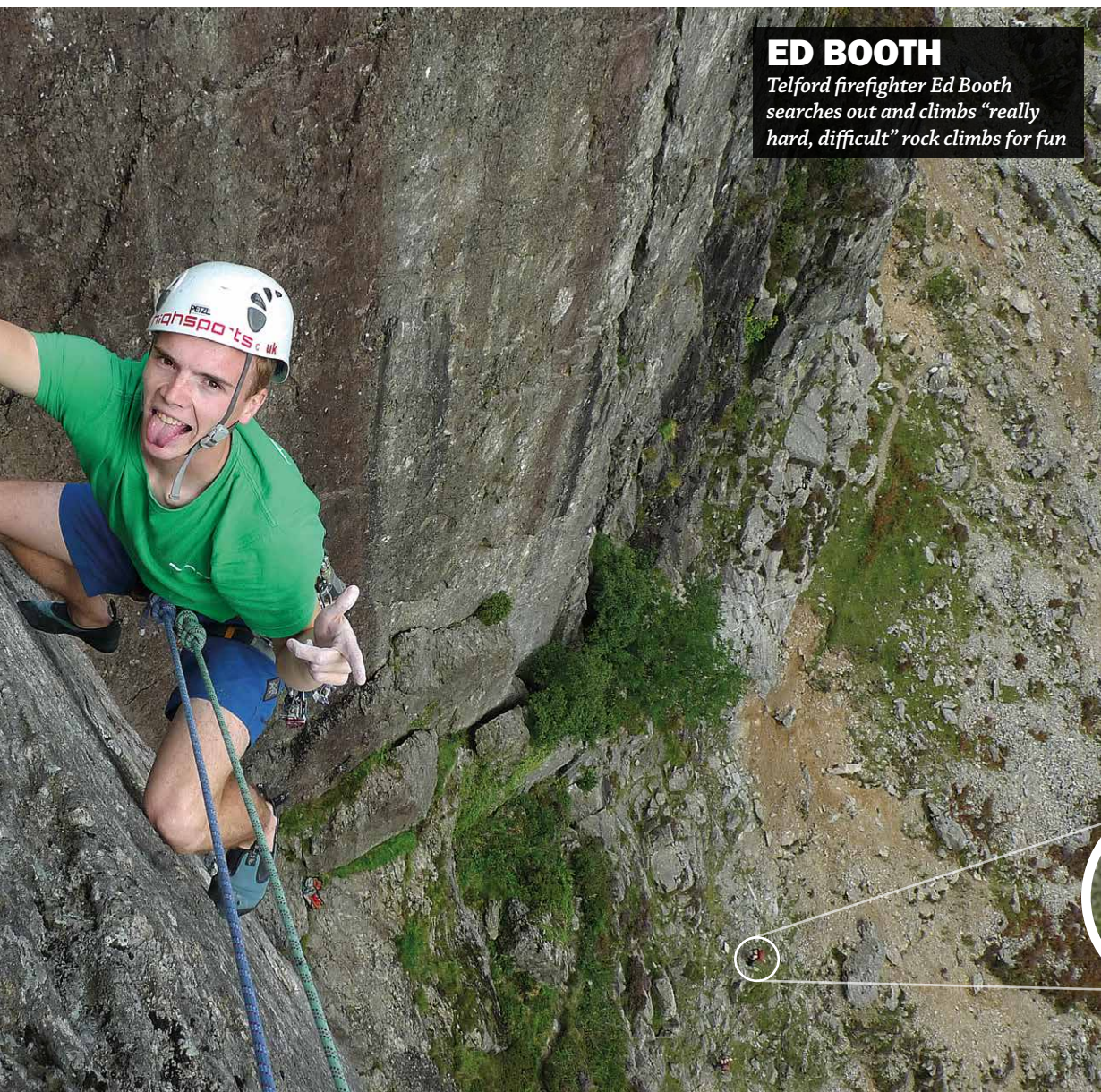


"We did a rope jump from the top – it was basically a few seconds free fall before a giant pendulum, a sort of home-made bungee jump – it's called the Porch Swing. It's probably one of the most exciting crazy things I've done."

Challenge

For Ed, the climbing challenge is more and more about seeking out "really hard, difficult routes". And he is increasingly happy to do so near home and over in France. "It's more like trying for a personal best in the 100 metres sprint than taking part in endurance events," says Ed, a graduate who has been climbing for 12 years.

And we don't have to take Ed's word for it. A Shropshire climbing website, HighSports, describes him as "a local climbing legend with hard and bold ascents



ED BOOTH

Telford firefighter Ed Booth searches out and climbs “really hard, difficult” rock climbs for fun

‘It’s more like trying for a personal best in the 100 metres than taking part in endurance events’



Yes, that is another human being at the bottom

across the UK and the rest of the world”.

Ed started out climbing with Shrewsbury climbers when he was 12, initially inspired by his big brother Ad (Adam), and is an ambassador for the sport in his locality. Ad – a doctor – is still climbing too.

First ascents

Then there are the first ascents. In climbing, the first team to climb a new route gets to name it. Ed has notched up a few so far – one gratifyingly close to home. The location, Nesscliffe, near Shrewsbury, ticks all the boxes. It is, says Ed, “a really good cliff with lots of dangerous routes”. And it is “technically demanding”. Ed and his mates named the route Local Rite.

Nesscliffe is popular with Lake District climbers. But the local boys scaled the top by a new route first, as the name implies. “We managed to get in before them,” says Ed.

And it certainly wasn’t a doddle. The climbers’ code for the route – E8 6C

– indicates that Local Rite presents both “a quite high level of technical difficulty” and is “quite dangerous and sustained”. Ed hasn’t yet got round to scaling the hardest route on Nesscliffe – 1,000 Setting Sons. Given his track record so far, it probably won’t be too long.

The other first ascent route Ed had a hand in naming back in 2008 is Ceres qui Bougent or “Mountain Range that Dances”. It is in the South of France – and he scaled it in 2008.

When he’s not working on green watch at Telford, chances are Ed’s out scaling a local peak, getting to grips with holds in a quarry – or climbing up an indoor wall to keep his skills and muscles honed for the next outdoor ascent.

When *Firefighter* tracked Ed down he was in France, off on holiday with friends. And yes, he did expect they would be getting out there for a few climbs. Nothing too technical this time round – but no “snow plodding” either.



Prize quiz



RUGBY LEAGUE
WORLD CUP
ENGLAND AND WALES 2013

WIN!

Win a pair of tickets for the 2013 Rugby League World Cup opening ceremony and double header England v Australia and Italy v Wales at the Millennium Stadium in October

HOW TO ENTER

To win a pair of tickets to the Rugby League World Cup please send your answers by 30 September 2013 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Aug/Sept 2013), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 How many previous Wimbledon finals did Andy Murray reach before winning this year?

- A – 3
B – 2
C – 5
D – 1



4 England took a 2–0 lead after the Ashes second test at Lords, trouncing the Australians by how many runs?

- A – 478 runs
B – 347 runs
C – 428 runs
D – 174 runs

2 Winner of the 100th Tour de France, Chris Froome joined the Sky cycling team in what year?

- A – 2011
B – 2012
C – 2010
D – 2008

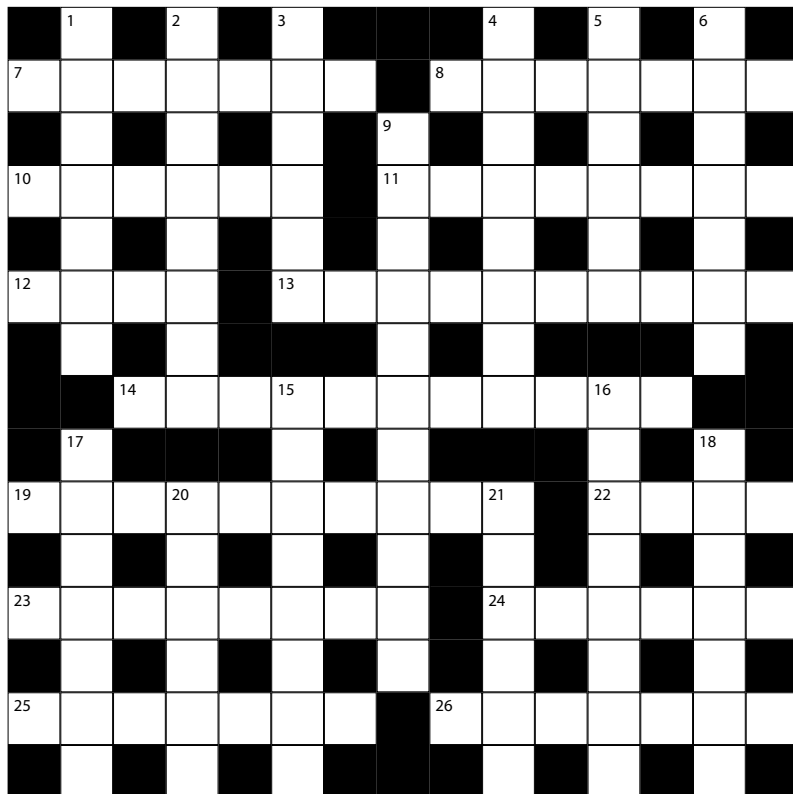
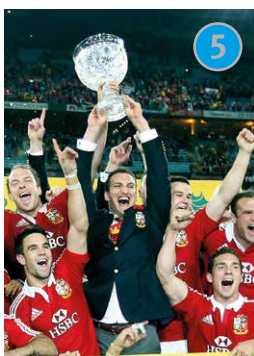


3 Which UK golfer made third position on the final leaderboard at the Muirfield Open?

- A – Lee Westwood
B – Ian Poulter
C – Justin Rose
D – Rory McIlroy

5 The British and Irish Lions claimed their first rugby test series win since ...?

- A – 1899
B – 1989
C – 1997
D – 2001



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7** One from central American country (7)
8 Crowded hens' home; energy store (7)
10 Antenna (6)
11 What our 5,3 is over (8)
12 Root refined into sugar (4)
13 At risk; menaced (10)
14 One who goes before another (11)
19 The real fourth emergency service (10)
22 Dried blood covering healing wound (4)
23 Insufficiency (8)
24 Stone often used in sculpture (6)
25 It's colder than the fridge (7)
26 Raging fire – of hell? (7)

DOWN

- 1** Arbitrator, especially in sport (7)
2 One such as Brandon Lewis (careful!) (8)
3 See 5 (6)
4 Contradicts (8)
5,3 Vote on industrial action (6, 6)
6 Ms O'Grady, new TUC general secretary (7)
9 Was grateful; recognised significance or nature of something (11)
15 Turned down corner of page; shabby and worn (3-5)
16 One who watches (8)
17 News from __: William Morris book (7)
18 Judy, singer, actor and mother of Liza Minnelli (7)
20 Sequence of things or (sporting?) events (6)
21 Ask, emphatically (6)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution July

July quiz answers

- 1** A – The labour movement
2 C – Race for Mayor of London
3 D – His organic salad dressing
4 B – Gay marriage
5 B – My Name is Joe

Winner of the May quiz

Dave Parsons, Lincolnshire

Station Cat

Conservatives:

The things they say

Margaret Hodge:
Not confident
about the latest
attempts to reform
fire control

PA PHOTOS



Have the people spoken?

 Embarrassment for Mark Healey, Conservative chair of Devon and Somerset Fire Authority. He consulted on his cuts plan. Almost unanimously, local people told him that cutting one in five frontline firefighters' jobs is a bad idea, and 28,000 people signed a petition begging him to stop.

Fine, said Mr Healey, We'll ... er ... do it anyway. So, asked a journalist, the consultation was a sham? "I don't know how you can say that," said Mr Healey with an entirely straight face.

It's not so very long since Mr Healey took a much more generous view about spending public money. He used his casting vote to force through an increase in the expenses of fire authority members. From all of which you may gather that Mr Healey is rather muddled.

Have a look at his homily on the FRS website: "We are now ready, and have already begun our second journey of adventure, a journey towards excellence. How do we strive to arrive there in today's economic climate? By being different, innovative, daring and brave, by thinking the unthinkable, through colleagues and peers, who have placed their trust in us as leaders, allowing us to guide them forward ..."

If this mishmash of management jargon means anything, it's that he's going to make the FRS better. And getting rid of one in five front line firefighters is an odd way to do it.



They're wasting their time – the Conservative Party will defeat attempts by the Conservative Party to close fire stations – simple

London Tories against cuts!

 Clapham Fire Station in south London has been saved from closure. And we owe it all to the Conservative Party.

I know, I know, you thought Conservatives were behind the closure proposal in the first place. You thought London's Conservative mayor Boris Johnson wanted to close 12 London fire stations, and threatened London's fire authority with dire consequences if they don't get on and close them quickly. You thought Conservative GLA spokesman Tony Arbour went on London Broadcasting and called the cuts "a masterstroke".

All wrong, you see. Lambeth Conservative Group leader

John Whelan told his local papers how pleased he was that Clapham fire station had been reprieved:

"The Lambeth Conservatives have opposed the closure from the start and are delighted that our constructive community lead campaign has been a success."

All those firefighters demonstrating outside, all the local campaigning, none of this had anything to do with the reprieve, he said. Labour and the FBU did nothing, said Mr Whelan: "It was left to Lambeth Conservatives to do the heavy lifting."

Fire control – bad to worse?

 Your Cat was smirking like its Cheshire cousin after a word from the fierce Margaret Hodge, who chairs the Public Accounts Committee at Westminster. She's famous for grilling those nasty firms like Amazon and Google, who've been avoiding paying their taxes.

But she's been keeping an eye on the fire and rescue service of late – and is especially cross

about cash wasted in control.

She told the Cat last month: "The original FiReControl project was one of the worst cases of project failure we have seen and wasted at least £482m of taxpayers' money."

Three years after the project was cancelled, the DCLG has still not decided what it is going to do with many of the project's high-specification facilities and buildings. Four of the nine regional control centres are still empty and likely to remain so.

The government has given fire and rescue authorities an extra £82m to implement a new approach based on 22 separate local projects.

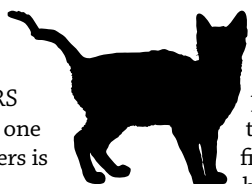
"The new programme has already slipped by three months and projected savings are now less than originally predicted," warned the MP. "Seven of the 22 projects are reportedly running late and two have been delayed by 12 months."

"We are therefore sceptical that projected savings, benefits and timescales will be achieved."

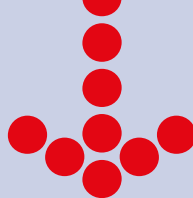
"Relying on multiple local projects risks value for money. We are not confident that local teams have the right IT and procurement skills."

"There is a risk that the DCLG has swung from an overly prescriptive national approach to one that does not provide enough national oversight and coordination and fails to meet national needs or achieve economies of scale."

The FBU agrees and has said this from the beginning. Chaotic mergers are not the answer. National resilience is what's needed.



25-year badges



Andy Hague (r), white watch, Lowedges, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Martin Farmer



Kim Telfer (r), Plymstock, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



Chris Harding (r), USAR, North Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Gerry Duffy (l), red watch, Mill Hill, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Del Edwards



Pat Davie (r) now retired, Grays, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from regional treasurer Del Godfrey-Shaw



Trevor Ashwell (r), red watch, Peterhead, receives his 25-year badge from Grampian brigade secretary Alan Taylor



Keith Hobbs (r) and **Stuart Taylor** (l) receive their 25-year badges from BEMM brigade rep Rodclif Barrett



Stuart Phillips (r), green watch, Brixton, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Paul Eveson



Neil Dinwoodie (fire safety), **Mick Crowe** (training), **Neill Forbes** (community safety) and **Geoff Aird** (community safety) all received their 25-year badges at the Museum of Fire, Lothian and Borders HQ



Paul Adams (r), Grays, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from regional treasurer Del Godfrey-Shaw



Richard Henry (l) Acomb, North Yorkshire receives his 25-year badge from North Yorkshire divisional chair Paul Warnock



Glen Jones (r), Grays, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from regional treasurer Del Godfrey-Shaw



Dave Reeks (r), red watch, Mill Hill, London, receives his 25-year badge from Barnet borough secretary Greg Edwards

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REGION 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex

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Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
01273 309762, 11rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 12 Bucks, Berks, Hants,

Oxon, Isle of Wight
FBU Regional Office, The Merlin
Centre, Unit L, Gatehouse Close,
Aylesbury HP19 8DP
01296 482297, 12rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 13 Cornwall, Devon and

Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset
158 Muller Road, Horfield,
Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

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

0808 100 6061

(England, Wales and N. Ireland)

0800 089 1331

(Scotland)

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.

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

Please send prints or
digital files to: Firefighter,
FBU, 68 Coombe Road,
Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE
or firefighter@fbu.org.uk.
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 and when it was taken.