

Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

VOTE YES

Ballot closes 30 January

See p8

**MEMBERS RECALL
PAST STRIKES**

See p12

**MORE RED PLAQUES
ARE UNVEILED**

See p16

**THE WORKERS'
STATELY HOME**

See p18

December 2022/
January 2023



www.fbu.org.uk

STRIKE BALLOT

By the time you are reading this, you should have received a ballot paper in the post to your home address. This is undeniably a historic moment. If a national strike were to take place, it would be the first national strike since pension action between 2013 and 2015, which did not include control, and the first on pay since 2002-2003.

We are rarely driven to these lengths, and nobody wants to be in this position, but after years of derisory pay increases and a pay offer that is well below inflation, firefighters' and control staff's living standards are in peril.

Since the employers' 2% offer in June this year, the union and you, our members, have been gearing up for this moment.

We have been organising, meeting, debating, and voting. This ballot is your opportunity to stand up for your profession, to say enough is enough: to join with railway workers, postal workers, and nurses, who are all voting with their feet.

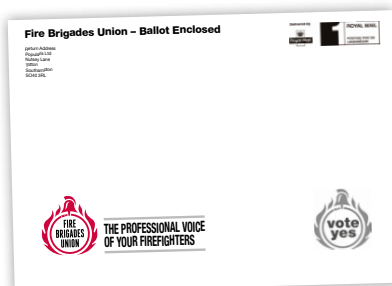
The hard work begins now, to mobilise our members, to show the government and chiefs that we mean business. That we will not stand for it anymore.

I know that this is a



Matt Wrack

Strike action is always a last resort, but we are left with no other option



Watch out for this envelope. It will contain your ballot paper

daunting and worrying time for members.

Christmas is around the corner and circumstances are forcing you to make difficult

decisions for your families. But if we do not use this opportunity to stand up for what is right, we risk losing ground for another decade.

Strike action is always a last resort, but we are left with no other option.

We asked for a pay increase that takes into account the cost of living crisis and did not receive it.

The ball is still in the employers' and government's court. We urge them to provide a decent pay offer and help bring this dispute to an end.



Did you know ...?

The combined wealth of the United Kingdom's 250 most affluent individuals and families is **£700 billion**

LFB CULTURE REVIEW

As *Firefighter* was going to press, the review looking at culture in the London Fire Brigade had just been published.

Clearly, we need to take its findings extremely seriously, and a thorough assessment will be undertaken by the union and actions taken forward.

It is important that the union is clear from the very outset that misogyny, racism, homophobia or transphobia are not tolerated in our structures.

I found the report a difficult read. I deeply respect and admire those who serve in fire and rescue services, and it was truly heart-breaking to read of the horrific experiences of some firefighters.

We must use this opportunity to do better, and to create a service that is inclusive of all.

The FBU will play its part to make sure this becomes a reality.

● In spite of the hardship we are all facing during the cost of living crisis, I wish you, and your family, a merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

PAUL BOX



FBU members at Bristol's Temple fire station in November



In this issue

December 2022/January 2023

NEWS

- 4 London: no place for misogyny and racism in the fire service says FBU
- 5 Wrack refutes Covid slur
Strong consultative ballot response
- 6 13 fire chiefs use pensions tax dodge
DECON campaign progress in Scotland
Claire Wealleans: outstanding ability and professionalism
Merseyside overtime ban after attack on conditions

FEATURES

- 8 Next steps in the pay campaign
- 12 Driven by poverty – pay strike history
- 16 'Self-sacrifice on an almost indescribable scale' – more red plaques unveiled
- 18 Wortley Hall – oasis of socialism in a stately home

REGULARS

- 5 **Sounding off**
Solidarity with nurses
- 7 **News focus**
Pension compensation
- 20 **Equalities**
The stench of biased reporting
- 21 **Meet the rep**
Gareth Cook, regional organiser for London
- 21 **Legal Beagle**
Industrial action and the law
- 22 **Noticeboard**
Letter: Don't write women out of history
- 23 **Station Cat**
He only wants a chat ...
- 24 **Long service badges**

Firefighter

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NEWS

CLAIRE WEALLEANS

Drive and enthusiasm saw the FBU learning centre thrive into one of the best anywhere **P6**



DECON IN SCOTLAND

FBU campaign is taking off

P6



LONDON

There is no place for misogyny and racism in the fire service says FBU

There is no place for racism and misogyny in the fire and rescue service, the FBU said following publication of a review which found that London Fire Brigade (LFB) is “institutionally misogynist and racist”.

It also pointed out that the union has been campaigning on and raising with senior management many of the issues highlighted in the report, and cast doubt on the ability of senior leaders to implement change in their own behaviour.

The review was commissioned after the suicide of trainee firefighter Jaden Matthew Francois-Esprit and examined the culture of the brigade.

It described a “toxic culture” and several horrendous examples of abuse and poor behaviour in the brigade.

In an initial statement after the release of the report, Gareth Cook, FBU regional organiser for London, said it made for difficult reading and that the reported incidents were extremely alarming. “There is no place for such behaviour or attitudes within the fire and rescue service or within our trade union,” he said.

Further FBU responses are due to follow as the report continues to be considered by the union.

Cook’s statement said, in part: “The FBU includes organised sections for black and ethnic minority members, for women members, and for LGBT+ members. These sections were created because of discrimination, harassment and inequality within our industry and our union. We will ensure our equality



sections are fully involved in any fuller response to this LFB report.

“The FBU has policies in place to address issues of discrimination and harassment, which can include (after due process) the removal of representation from individuals accused of such acts. We shall review the effectiveness of our rules and policies in the light of issues raised and of issues we have identified ourselves.

“The FBU is already engaged in major work on the issue of sexual harassment. This includes issues in the workplace and also, if identified, within our own organisation.

‘We shall review the effectiveness of our rules and policies in the light of issues raised and of issues we have identified ourselves’

“We have been working with the TUC and with the FBU women’s section on this for some time and will bring forward changes to policies and structures as required.

“There are elements of this report which confirm concerns raised by the FBU over many years. There are also elements of the report which will cause considerable concern and alarm.

“Our rules and policies require every FBU member to treat others with dignity and respect and to challenge offensive behaviour of any kind.

“The union is committed to equality. We campaign against all discrimination by gender, race or ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability and religion or belief. We have a long record of campaigning on such issues.

“We have raised concerns about many of the issues contained within this report historically and as a consequence we remain sceptical about the changes senior leaders will implement with regards to their own behaviours.”



Wrack refutes Covid slur

Giving evidence to the Westminster Parliament's home affairs select committee, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack refuted claims that the union had obstructed the response to Covid.

In fact, he said, FBU members had made a significant contribution to it. "The one thing that possibly brings home in the most stark way what our members volunteered to do, in agreement with their union,

was that we had specialist teams in at least two services moving the bodies of the deceased, and that included FBU officials."

At a previous session of the committee former fire service inspector Tom Winsor had claimed the FBU had obstructed the fire and rescue service helping with Covid. The union wrote to select committee chair Diana Johnson MP, asking to reply in person.

PAY

Vote on strike follows strong consultative ballot response

FBU members are voting on strike action after a resounding rejection of the "derisory" 5% pay offer. On a 78% turnout 79% voted to reject.

The ballot on strike action will close on Monday 30 January.

The FBU's executive council is recommending a vote in favour of strike action.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "We have firefighters using foodbanks. Our members worked through the pandemic to help protect their communities, taking on extra duties to do so. A further real-terms pay cut is an absolutely disgusting way to thank them. Whilst strike action is always a last resort, our members simply can't go on like this."

Due to anti-union laws the ballot is postal-only. Eligible members (all Grey Book members and North West fire control members) whose address has changed, or might be

wrong, should urgently contact memberservices@fbu.org.uk

Members should post their ballots as soon as possible as strike action by Royal Mail workers is affecting postal services.

Wrack said: "I have now written to the fire service employers seeking an urgent resolution by means of an improved pay offer. I have also written to ministers and government departments seeking meetings to discuss this situation, including the need for urgent central government funding for fire and rescue services.

"The responsibility to resolve this growing dispute rests with the employers and with government ministers."

■ A rally and lobby of Parliament took place on 6 December. Updates will be present on the FBU website and social media channels, and will follow in the next issue of *Firefighter*.



Sounding off

Solidarity with nurses

Pat Cullen, general secretary and chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing, urges solidarity and support between firefighters and nurses as both contemplate strike action to protect patients and the public

Nurses have said enough is enough – no longer can we accept that we are too important to strike but not important enough to pay a fair wage. RCN members will be taking strike action across the UK for the first time in our 106-year history for our patients as much as ourselves.

The nursing workforce crisis and low pay has made care unsafe. There are 47,000 nursing vacancies in England alone and UK health and care services are buckling under pressure.

Low pay is pushing nurses out of the profession – they are deciding the stress of the job is no longer worth being underpaid. This applies to other workers, including firefighters.

The public deserves safely staffed services and we deserve to work in them – that's the kind of care we came into nursing to give.

Since 2010, our pay has dropped by 20% in real terms, and we are now effectively working one day a week for free. No wonder record numbers are leaving the profession.

Nurses have told me time and time again of how they leave shifts demoralised and angry by their inability to deliver the care their patients deserve.

And then they get home. And they can't make ends meet. Their children going without too often.

We will no longer tolerate a financial knife-edge at home and a raw deal at work – that is why we've voted to strike.

Politicians have the power to stop strike action at any point – but only if they put serious investment into nursing including fair pay. Otherwise, our first strikes will happen this month.

All of us at the RCN stand in solidarity with the FBU as you go through your strike ballot process, and we appreciate the resolute support shown by the FBU and its members.

RETIRE AND REHIRE

13 fire chiefs take advantage of 'cosy' pensions tax dodge

Thirteen current or former fire and rescue service bosses have used a controversial practice, opposed by the Westminster government, that can make them wealthier at the expense of taxpayers.

It allows bosses to both halt their pension contributions and to receive tax-free payments.

The practice is being or has been used in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Humberside, Lancashire, London, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, South Yorkshire, West Sussex, and West Yorkshire.

The bosses first "retire" then are rehired by the service soon after. The employing fire and rescue authority ceases to pay pension contributions.

The government has formally discouraged the practice in England.

It results in taxpayers having to make up the difference between halted pension contributions and the pension benefits to be paid.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "It is outrageous that bosses in fire and rescue services are being allowed to rob taxpayers. Bosses are making cosy agreements that firefighters could never hope for."

DECON

DECON campaign progress in Scotland

There has been significant progress in Scotland on the FBU's DECON campaign.

Meetings have been held involving the union, the Scottish Parliament, the fire and rescue service, and Professor Anna Stec, who is leading on the DECON research at the University of Central Lancashire.



In the Holyrood Parliament a motion on the issue is supported by

DECON discussion (l-r) FBU EC member for Scotland Colin Brown, Professor Anna Stec and Maggie Chapman MSP

27 MSPs and DECON was raised twice at First Minister's questions.

CLAIRE WEALLEANS

Outstanding ability and professionalism

The FBU has announced with great sadness the passing of Claire Wealleans, FBU learning centre manager for nearly 20 years. She lost a long and courageous battle against a very rare cancer, leaving her partner Lee and two young sons, Ben and Zac.

Claire was a very intelligent woman with a personality, humour and smile that made people very comfortable in her company. Her drive and



enthusiasm saw the FBU learning centre thrive into

one of the best anywhere.

Her knowledge and understanding led to the centre achieving national academic status to deliver approved qualifications as well as winning many national awards.

FBU president Ian Murray said: "Our condolences and thoughts go to all of Claire's family. Her outstanding ability and professionalism in running the FBU learning centre was clear for all to see."

MERSEYSIDE

Overtime ban after attack on conditions

Merseyside FBU members are operating an overtime ban over several issues after an overwhelming vote for industrial action which could last for six months.

The percentage of "Yes" votes for action short of strike was 88.06%.

The issues are:

- An imposed reduction in night-time numbers in Merseyside's fire control room from the agreed level of six, to five.
- The introduction of new duty shift systems – without negotiation – which essentially require new firefighters to work both wholetime and retained. These systems breach nationally agreed terms and conditions in relation to overtime pay.
- A non-agreed expansion of the firefighter role in contracts for all new entrants.
- Firefighter apprentices being required to attend the workplace outside of core hours for training sessions, assessments, charity days and exams.

Merseyside brigade secretary Ian Hibbert said: "FBU members do not take industrial action lightly, but we can no longer stand by as our terms and conditions of service are attacked."

In brief

Manchester Arena inquiry report

The Manchester Arena Inquiry has published volume 2 of its report, which is concerned with the emergency services' response to the terrorist bomb attack. FBU assistant general secretary Andy Dark said: "Our thoughts are with the families and friends of those who lost their lives. We are considering the contents of the report. We will consider the report in detail before commenting any further."

■ The report can be found at manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk

Another big cut in funding

Analysis released by the FBU shows yet another large fall in central government funding for English fire and rescue services. Funding now stands at £882m compared to £1,240m in 2013-14 – meaning there has been a cut of 29%, or more than 40% in real terms. Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Firefighters are facing a cash-starved service every day of the year."



FBU members at a briefing to lobby MPs about pension issues in 2014

As a result of legal action brought by the FBU, nearly 9,000 firefighters are set to receive government compensation of at least £3,750 for the stress and worry they suffered as a result of the 2015 pension changes.

Claimants with “additional reasons for being aggrieved” are set to receive £7,250 in total.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said that the debacle had caused: “significant uncertainty with regards to firefighters’ financial futures”, and that “we are pleased to have been able to win this for our members”.

The pay-out will go to members who filed an Employment Tribunal claim by completing an FBU survey in 2015. The survey was run for a second time in 2020. Legal action for these claimants is ongoing.

How the pay-outs will be processed is still being negotiated. Members should look out for circulars and emails for updates.



News Focus

9,000 firefighters to receive compensation in pensions win

Any FBU members with questions about this development should contact their regional officials.

The case arose after government changes to public sector pensions in 2015 which included provisions that only protected the

pensions of older firefighters.

The FBU successfully argued in court that this amounted to age discrimination. Judges ruled that the pre-2015 pension scheme (the legacy scheme) applied to the time members were in the relevant schemes between

'This is a significant step on the road to putting right the situation, but there is still further to go. This is a mess of the government's making'

1 April 2015 and 31 March this year.

Wrack said: “Today’s agreement on starting the process for making those payments to our members underlines the amount of distress our members have been under.

“Our members work long careers saving the lives of others and risking their own in what is often a very stressful job.

“They do not deserve to be treated like this and be caused unnecessary distress. This is an unnecessary step on the road to putting right the situation with regard to firefighters’ pensions, but there is still further to go. This is a mess of the government’s making”.

In an all-members circular Wrack added that: “Although the offer made is a very good result for almost 9,000 FBU members, there remains a lot to be done in relation to the other claimants and potential claimants identified and detailed in this circular.”

■ All-members circular at: bit.ly/FBU-pensions-201022

NEXT STEPS *IN THE*



PAY CAMPAIGN



IMAGE: JESS HURD

We are in the middle of a national strike ballot on pay. The first in over 20 years. The importance and significance of this is huge. We should remind ourselves how we ended up here. In the summer, despite rampant inflation, our employers made us a 2% pay offer. FBU members were shocked and insulted.

This offer came after firefighters and control staff had worked through the pandemic. Firefighters took on extra duties including, in some cases, moving the bodies of the deceased.

We held meetings across the country and the message that came back was clear. We needed to reject this 2% offer.

Having done that, we began to prepare a ballot for strike action. But on seeing our Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign build, employers came back with a 5% pay offer. FBU members achieved a pay offer increase of 3% just by preparing a strike ballot. The strike ballot had not even opened.

HUGE REAL TERMS PAY CUT

But 5% still represents a huge real-terms pay cut. After years of derisory pay settlements, this was never going to be acceptable. And so it proved. FBU members categorically voted to reject the 5% pay offer in a consultative ballot in which 79% voted to reject on a 78% turnout. That's huge.

The ballot period was only two weeks. This was a resounding decision by FBU members and showed remarkable strength of feeling.

I want to thank all our members for

FBU members at Bodmin fire station, Cornwall



THERE WAS A 79% VOTE TO



FBU general secretary Matt Wrack outlines the background to the union's pay campaign

this result. I also want to thank FBU officials, who put huge amounts of effort into helping members exercise their vote and receive information on the issue.

Of course, the ball is still in the employers' and government's court. On receiving the result of the consultative ballot, I wrote to fire service employers to seek an urgent improved pay offer. I wrote to ministers and government departments asking for meetings for reasons including the urgent need for improved central government funding for fire and rescue services. I have not yet had a response.

The executive council quickly decided to move to a strike ballot to be launched on Monday 5 December to Monday 30 January. This was to ensure that members have enough time to receive and return their ballot papers, taking into account the impact of strikes in Royal Mail post services. Unlike the consultative ballot, ballots on industrial action can only be done by mail, not online.

As part of our pay campaign, in preparation for a yes vote in a strike ballot, a rally took place on 6 December at Methodist Central Hall in London, attended by FBU members from all



FBU members at Beaconsfield fire station, Buckinghamshire



REJECT ON A 78% TURNOUT. *THAT'S HUGE.*

Matt Wrack at a meeting on pay in Northern Ireland

parts of the UK before they headed over to the Houses of Parliament to lobby their MPs.

As we ramp up our efforts in this campaign, I want to hear from as many members as possible.

Having conversations about the impact of your pay, and the union's strategy is my number one priority.

In mass meetings up and down the country, I have heard some shocking stories, of union officials having to refer firefighters to foodbanks. I know that FBU members will be faced with huge energy payments, just like the rest of the country, and that some will be struggling with mortgage payments.

It is not acceptable. Pay for firefighter and control staff must keep up. Strike action is always a last resort. But firefighters and control staff cannot go

on like this.

We need to challenge the lie that public sector pay increases would cause inflation increases. The current rise in inflation is not caused by workers. Public sector workers have all faced the same pay restraint – so public sector pay cannot be driving inflation. It's a farcical argument.

PROFITS OF LARGE CORPORATIONS

What is driving it, to a large extent, is the profits of large corporations.

We also need to confront head on the misinformation from some chief officers that a pay rise would mean cuts to services. We need an increase in funding for the fire and rescue service, full stop: to cover resources, appliances and more firefighters, as well as a decent pay rise. It's not too much to ask when the service

has been decimated for over a decade.

The public deserve a properly funded service that can keep them safe. And you deserve a pay rise. It should not be one or the other. What do I say to those chief fire officers pedalling untruths? I would ask them when they last demanded more money from the government ministers for the services that they represent.

I would ask them when they last demanded more money for their hardworking employees who deserve a decent pay rise.

As we enter this next phase, it is more important than ever that we stand together. Look what happened when we even threatened a strike ballot – we got an extra 3%.

Workers organising is the only way for workers to win. And so it is proving again.

Due to legislation designed to restrict trade unions, this is a postal-only ballot
If you think we might not have your correct postal details, please contact **membershipservices@fbu.org.uk**



Driven by poverty pay

With only the third ever national fire service strike in prospect, **Will Stone** talks to FBU members involved in previous disputes

November marked the 20th anniversary of the start of a nationwide strike by more than 50,000 firefighters over pay. It was a bitter dispute lasting more than six months.

Disgruntled firefighters fed up with poverty pay, which had been declining in value for years, wanted a 40% increase to take the average salary up to £30,000 a year

But they were offered an insulting 4% raise, which was promptly rejected, before the New Labour government under Tony Blair – more concerned with

funding wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than paying firefighters a proper wage – commissioned an “independent” review into the fire service in a last ditch attempt to prevent looming strikes.

'TOTAL SHAM'

The resulting Bain Inquiry recommended firefighters be given an 11% pay rise in exchange for major changes to their working practices, including more flexible shift patterns and fewer officers on night duty, leaving members “absolutely disgusted” and labelling the review a “total sham”.

Linda Smith, a former London firefighter who was on the regional executive during the strike, was heavily involved in the run up to the campaign, vote and ballot.

She said: “We felt we were massively underpaid and the solidarity was strong and totally solid.

“Most stations were on the picket line. North Kensington had a caravan cut in half with a disco ball inside it.”

And despite the slew of right-wing media smear stories about striking firefighters, with Blair’s channelling of Thatcher in his determination to make



IAN HODGSON/REUTERS/ALAMY

Manchester firefighters in November 2002



PEERPOINT/ALAMY

Striking firefighters in 2002 wave to supporters from behind a picket poster bearing a mask of then prime minister Tony Blair at Soho fire station in London

**When
we engaged
the public we got
support ... they know
the service saves
lives**

the dispute his very own miners' strike by going to war with the union, most of the public saw through the propaganda and supported the strikers.

"When we engaged with the public we got widespread support, because they know the service helps save lives," Linda says.

"I was on the picket line in Islington and three eight-year-old boys came up and gave me about 75p in change for the strike fund.

"One said: 'This is for you, this is our pocket money. We're giving it to you because you saved my sister who would

have died.' It broke my heart, but there were loads of stories like that. Little old ladies tried to open their purses, but we wouldn't let them."

Dawn Forrest, who has worked at Johnstone control in Scotland for 30 years, remembers being swept away by the solidarity of the action.

She recalls: "It was like a big sort of family. There was a real feeling of being part of something and supported by people around you.

"And there was a lot of support from the public. A local baker would turn up with pies, and there were children on the picket line."

NATIONAL WALKOUT

At the time, the strike was only the second ever national walkout in the FBU's history, the first being 25 years earlier in 1977 – again over the issue of pay.

Dawn says: "It felt fitting that I brought my partner's son on the picket line as I joined my father, who was a striking firefighter in 1977, on the picket line as a child.

"It reminded me how important it is to teach the younger ones why we strike and how important it is to go out and fight."

She said the hardest thing for control workers on strike was the thought of walking away from a life-saving call.

Her retired colleague Roddy McAllister, who also worked at Johnstone control, took part in both national pay strikes and doesn't mince his words as he drew parallels between them.

He said: "The reason for going on strike was then as now – we were driven by poverty pay.

"We're being robbed blind by these

people – working longer and getting paid less.

“The bottom line is we have a conscience, and it takes a lot to walk away from a fire station or an emergency control room – you feel guilty.

“But it’s the responsibility of governments to pay us properly. The shaming thing about this was that in both strikes it was a Labour government in charge. Shower of bastards.”

Unsurprisingly, the 2002 dispute got so ugly that the FBU voted to disaffiliate from Labour in 2004 – severing an 80-year link, with the party losing valuable income and political support from the union.

Labour ministers had described striking firefighters as “criminally irresponsible”, even calling them “wreckers” and “fascists” – which the right-wing press were keen to lap up and exploit.

The military took charge of providing very basic cover during the strike with their ageing army fire engines, the Green Goddesses, with soldiers trained for just 10 days.

BASIC EQUIPMENT

Some of the vehicles were 50 years old, could only travel at 30 mph and contained very basic equipment with ladders that only reached a second floor window.

Many of them had even been rolled out a quarter of a century earlier during the '77 strike.

Retired FBU member Tony Maguire, former Northern Ireland regional secretary based in Belfast, also served as a firefighter during both national strikes.



A ‘green goddess’ army fire engine in London during the 2002 pay strike

He said: “In 1977 firefighters pay had fallen way back, people with children were claiming supplementary state benefits.

“Where I lived in Northern Ireland a big number left firefighting to join the police or prison service.

“We knew something had to be done. That strike was a massive success. That pay formula reared my family.

“I never had to go and work on my days off. We were well paid for many years.”

The formula agreed after the 1977 strike ensured the wages of firefighters kept in line with those in the top 25% of male manual workers

But Tony says that by the mid-90s pay had started to fall behind again, and there was always the threat that the pay formula would be taken away.

He believed that then FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist was doing what he thought best when he launched the



2002 strike but that he walked into a trap.

The strike ended in 2003 after firefighters settled for a 16% pay increase, which many felt was not enough to make up for the compromises they agreed to.

These included changes to the Grey Book covering national pay and conditions in the service.

“It took a wee while to sink in just what exactly we lost,” Tony says. “Now the whole nature of the fire service has changed. We are looking at a future where pay has fallen far behind.”

WHAT WAS LOST

Roy Humphreys, who was in Suffolk fire service during the strike but now serves in Dagenham, also recognises what was lost following the strike.

“There were lots of strings attached with the deal,” he says. “We had to do a lot more community fire safety to the point where we were doing more of that than we were training.”

But he understands why firefighters accepted a 16% pay rise, even if it fell short of what they wanted.

“It was the winter of discontent because people were working but not earning enough,” he says. “Most



Firefighters, their families and supporters rally in Glasgow in November 2002



firefighters were on benefits.”

Chris Kemp, Northamptonshire brigade secretary, says he has fond memories of how well the union stood strong together in 2002 but says the call to action needs to come again.

“The camaraderie and solidarity on the picket line was massive,” he says. “All my friends couldn’t understand how underpaid and undervalued we were as a service.

“But for the last 11 or 12 years we’ve not had a decent enough pay rise. Enough is enough.

“We’re prepared to go out on strike again but nobody wants to go out. We’re doing it to protect the future of the fire service.

“People leave the fire service after a few years, which was unheard of up until recently.

“Inflation is going up so quick you can’t put a number on it. That’s where we are with it.

“There are a lot of similarities between 2002 and now – the feeling’s the same, we’re at the end of our tether.”

A key difference today is that back in 2002 the press had more power and there was no social media to challenge

**Any
advances have
had to be fought for.
We need to harness
that grassroots
energy.**

the lies that were being published about striking firefighters.

“Social media is a great tool to get the right info out and challenge the wrong info,” he adds.

THE TRUE STORY

Steven Gregory, an Aston branch rep in Birmingham, agrees: “Everyone’s got social media and can tell the true story.”

He is also more positive about the legacy of the 2002 strike: “I think every

time you stand up for what you believe in it is successful.”

But history has a habit of repeating itself, with firefighters once again facing plummeting pay now that another two decades has passed.

Today’s firefighters have voted to reject an insulting 5% pay offer just as inflation soars above 11%, with FBU members now being balloted for strike action again.

If successful it would be the third national strike over pay in the union’s history.

Veteran Northern Ireland firefighter Tony added: “It seems that the wheel has almost turned and here we are another 20 years on facing the same problems. Wages and conditions have diminished right across the public sector.

“There’s a head of steam now with railway workers and NHS staff going on strike, and I think it would be remiss of any public sector union to not take advantage of this head of steam.

“Any advances that firefighters have got in living memory have had to be fought for. We need to harness that grassroots energy. If I was still there I would be well up for it.”

Half a century ago, fire spread from a disused paint shop in Glasgow, ripping through nearby buildings. Battling through fire and smoke, firefighter Adrian McGill gave his breathing apparatus to a woman he was trying to save, as smoke filled her top floor flat. Neither sub-officer McGill nor Alice Mulgrew – the woman he was striving to save – survived.

A red plaque celebrating his bravery and service was unveiled in Glasgow at Maryhill fire station, near to where the fire broke out, exactly 50 years after Adrian McGill lost his life in the line of duty. Firefighters carried out up to 200 rescues during the blaze. Buildings collapsed and many had to be demolished later.

The unveiling came days after Bob Doris, MSP for Maryhill and Springburn, lodged a motion in Scotland's Parliament remembering all firefighters across Scotland who lost their lives in the line of duty – and commending the Fire Brigades Union for its red plaque scheme. He praised the bravery of Adrian McGill and the red plaque as “a fitting tribute to his memory”.

Unveiling the plaque, Colin Brown, FBU executive council member for Scotland, spoke of sub officer McGill's “heroism, gallantry and humanity”. “Commemorating his bravery and sacrifice, we also honour and thank those who serve today,” he added.

SPLIT-SECOND DECISION

Seona Hart, FBU Scottish regional treasurer, paid tribute to his bravery. “He made a split-second decision – it was self-sacrifice on an almost indescribable scale”.

In the early seventies, Glasgow was known as “tinderbox city” because fires were so frequent and widespread.

Less than three months before sub officer McGill lost his life, a textile warehouse fire in Kilbirnie Street killed seven firefighters. A stone memorial commemorating their sacrifice was erected in the city soon after.

Fifty years on, in late August, a red plaque honouring the seven men who were killed was unveiled.

To date, seven red plaques have been installed in Scotland – and four more are already planned for next year.

They are funded by members and their friends and families who buy



IT WAS SELF-SACRIFICE ON AN ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE SCALE

The latest red plaques to be unveiled honour the bravery, service, humanity and selflessness of firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty over more than a century



CRAIG MACLENN



John Johnson Hunt

MORE RED PLAQUES UNVEILED THIS YEAR

Malcolm Kirton
William Fraser
Anthony Marshall
John Ogden
David Barnes
Neil Goldsmith
Edwin 'Eddie' Goodman
Frederick Willoughby
Alexander Drummond
Edwin James Booth
Lexie Wylie and
Leonard McCartney

RODDY SCOTT

Firefighters 100 Lottery tickets. Seona Hart said: "It's crucial we all support and continually promote the Firefighters 100 Lottery, both within and beyond our membership, to maintain funding for the DECON campaign and continue laying red plaques, to ensure our fallen comrades are never forgotten."

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

The FBU did not exist when Superintendent John Johnson Hunt lost his life in the line of duty in 1905.

He died after a roof part fell when he was fighting a blaze at the Brooklands Hotel in Sale, Cheshire. He was a well-respected firefighter with 40 years' service in Manchester and Sale. Thousands joined his funeral procession.

Before his untimely death he was renowned and lauded for many acts of bravery. In 1885 he saved a fellow firefighter's life by crawling along a sixth-floor parapet in dense smoke. This led to several awards and even a popular song.

In October, his bravery and service were honoured with a red plaque on the site where he sustained the injuries that killed him – now an office building.

Clockwise, from top left:

Red plaque unveiling for Leading Firefighter Frederick Willoughby of Twickenham, who was overcome by fumes whilst fighting a four-hour fire in the basement of the Royal Palace Hotel in Kensington, London, on 22 February 1956.

Scotland FBU regional treasurer Seona Hart (centre) with relatives of Adrian McGill at the unveiling of the plaque in his memory. His son, Steven, a firefighter himself, spoke at the event.

At the unveiling of the red plaque honouring seven Glasgow firefighters who died in the line of duty in August 1972.

Red plaque unveiling at Hanley fire station, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, for Edwin James Booth who gave his life in service in the Blitz in 1940, attended by his descendants Jeff and Sue Cotton.



**FIREFIGHTERS 100
LOTTERY**

FIRE BRIGADES UNION | SERVING FIREFIGHTERS SINCE 1910

WHERE THE LOTTERY MONEY GOES

The lottery has raised an average of over £134,000 a year and more than £818,000 since its launch in 2016. A total so far this year of £156k has been spent on good causes.

Around £15,000 went to red plaques and work connected to red plaque unveilings, including photo commissions and hosting the red plaque website.

The union's DECON project was the main beneficiary from lottery funds – including Grenfell firefighters contaminants project – with continued research by the University of Central Lancashire.

A donation was made to the widow of firefighter James Bell and a small donation to Kensington station memorial garden following the death of member Josep Talens-Garcia.



An oasis of socialism in a stately home

Helen Hague celebrates the history and importance of Wortley Hall – built by aristocrats but now owned by workers



Wortley Hall, a Georgian mansion in South Yorkshire, was built for aristocrats who got rich on coal and the toil of miners in the pit they owned nearby.

The ancestral home of the Earls of Wharnccliffe, Lords of the Manor of Wortley, it now hosts conferences, weddings and trade union education.

Known as “The Worker’s Stately Home”, it has been owned collectively by supporters of the labour movement for more than 70 years.

Its history is an uplifting story of ownership passing from the few to the many, with trade unionists and socialists as shareholders and profits ploughed back into the venue.

The hall, commandeered for war service, was in a dilapidated state when the army left after WW2 and the Earl wanted to lease it out.

Former miner Vin Williams – blacklisted by pit owners for his role in the 1926 general strike – was a man with a vision. In 1950 he asked others in the local labour movement: “Why should only the wealthy occupy grand houses?”

Wortley Hall, he argued, could be owned by working class people and run by them, providing worker education and family holidays, away from smog and smoke.

His vision won support and a lease was agreed.

Miners, engineers, foundry workers, labourers and other volunteers poured in to clean, renovate and restore the buildings and grounds.

Wortley Hall, now “Wortley Hall (Labour’s Home)” was opened officially in May 1951, in front of 3,000 supporters. Hall and grounds were “sold to the workers” for £10,000 eight years later.

Set in 26 acres of glorious parkland and formal gardens and benches honouring labour movement figures, it has become a hugely popular venue for weddings.

The FBU has strong bonds with Wortley Hall – successive general secretaries have championed it, and many members have honed their activism there.

Stewart Charnley, former president of Wortley Hall, first served as vice president of the FBU. A meeting room is named in his honour.

FBU national schools are held there – and, since 2000, “equalities” schools for under-represented groups – women, black and ethnic minority and LGBT+ members.

Control, retained and officer committees also convene there for AGMs and seminars.

Fleur Lombard, the first woman firefighter to die on duty in peacetime, is honoured. At 21, she lost her life in a flashover in a Bristol supermarket fire. A framed picture of Fleur receiving a silver axe as top recruit in her training school hangs in the National Assembly of Women’s (NAW) Garden Room.

Wedding guests can’t miss the historic links with the labour movement. There’s the Unite Ballroom, the Unison Room and the FBU Bar, one of the most spectacular rooms in the hall.

All the bedroom wings are named after socialists – including Keir Hardie, George Lansbury, Robert Owen and Wortley’s own Vin Williams. All men – a point not missed by the many women who have sharpened their activism over the years at Wortley Hall.



The Sylvia Pankhurst library



JESS HURD

FBU members at Wortley Hall in the 1960s, 1990s and this year



Poetry night at this year's FBU national school at Wortley Hall



At the end of the nineties, the NAW sponsored the Garden Room – and later successfully championed re-naming the library after trailblazing socialist Sylvia Pankhurst.

An annual lecture exploring her legacy is given every August – on the same weekend as the free South Yorkshire festival.

Philippa Clark, life-long trade union activist and former FBU research officer, is a member of the Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Committee.

Also a shareholder, she has been visiting Wortley for decades. “It is steeped in socialism – and it seeps into your soul,” she attests.

Wortley Hall survived recent lockdowns – when weddings and union schools were cancelled, and staff furloughed.

The Workers’ Stately Home is having to adapt.

The pits are long gone and weddings are booming, but bedrock principles like providing education for trade union activists in a splendid countryside setting remain – with socialist shareholders there to make sure they are upheld.

As former firefighter Stewart Charnley put it when he was Wortley president: “This is our oasis of socialism, let us ensure its successful continuation”.



Rachel Rogers, Scotland regional women's rep, speaking at this year's Scottish TUC

The stench of bias

Reporting of changes to strength tests for all firefighters was factually incorrect and seems designed to have a negative impact of serving and potential female firefighters, says **Rachel Rogers**

There is no getting away from the fact that the firefighter role is overwhelmingly male. Over the years women have showed themselves to be brave and tireless firefighters, but women remain very much under-represented.

There is more to be done here. All the more baffling, then, that some would take active steps that will likely have a negative impact on potential female firefighter applicants.

On 13 October the *Telegraph* published an article with the headline "Firefighters' plan to recruit more women ... make strength tests easier". The first line of the article said "A strength test for firefighters is to be made easier in a push to attract more women".

This is not one of the (many) situations where we can smell the stench of a particular bias being put on a series of tenuous facts by a particular part of the media. There were no facts of substance here. The core of the article was and is factually wrong.

The evidence that the article relies on is the fact that the standard for the shoulder press test was made easier. However, the standard was changed to align with NFCC recommendations, and



to reflect the newly registered (lower) weight of the ladders – as the article itself stated.

A quote from the HR manager at the service, Avon, additionally referenced "additional factors" such as "fatigue" and "allowance for different heights".

There was no specific mention of an adjustment for gender in the article, aside from the *Telegraph's* headline, first line, and a line in the article stating: "The move is expected to result in increasing numbers of female firefighters joining the service, as the shoulder press element had previously been failed by many female candidates," with no further evidence provided for this sentence.

As a letter from the FBU's National Women's Committee pointed out to the *Telegraph*: "It is disappointing that there is no mention about how many male candidates have also failed the strength test, so no fair interpretation can be attained".

We went on to state that: "The article is misleading and has a substantial negative impact for existing women firefighters and potential applicants, and undermines the achievement and courage of each and every one of our female members".

Our letter was not published by the newspaper.



Meet the rep

Gareth Cook, regional organiser for London

1. What made you want to become a rep?

My whole family were involved in trade unionism and, as a consequence, I was brought up to challenge. Just because somebody says something is right doesn't make it so. Firefighters make a difference to outcomes daily, often placing themselves last with regards to their own needs. Having witnessed acts of pure humanity and bravery, there is no greater reward than to be a voice for firefighters and to be there when they need help.

2. What is your proudest moment as a rep?

There is no one moment, there are huge highs and lows often. I am always proud of what we can achieve when we truly come together.

3. Who is your ultimate hero?

Ross Laughner, I was incredibly privileged to be mentored by Ross throughout my life and I view him as the father I never had. A devout socialist, educator and activist, he has helped so many people and continues to challenge injustice. I will forever be in his debt and love him dearly.

4. Describe yourself in three words.

Creative, agile and objective.

5. What was the last conversation you had that made you think differently about something?

Working in London I have daily conversations that make me challenge my

thinking. It is only through open and sometimes painful conversations that we can truly understand one another and evolve collectively.

6. Which TV show could you not live without? – or – What's your favourite band or musician?

I rarely watch mainstream television and quite frankly I can live without it, but music, well that's completely different. As a musician, I have endless musical influences, some big names for me though would be Pink Floyd, Big Country, Sex Pistols, U2, The Clash, Red Hot Chili Peppers, City and Colour, RATM, Alexis on Fire, Billie Marten, Katie Pruitt, Ray Lamontagne, Eddie Vedder, Placebo, Bears Den, Rise against, Michael Kiwanuka, Bruce Springsteen, Sam Fender, Hendrix, Angus and Julia Stone and on it goes. My favourite musician though is John Frusciante he has been a huge inspiration to me.

7. If you weren't a firefighter, what would you be?

Retired and volunteering to help others.

8. If you could travel back or forward in time, where and when would you travel to and why?

Knowing what we know now, I'd travel back to get the DECON message out there and likely save many firefighters' lives.



Legal Beagle

Amid talk of how employers and government might react to industrial action in the fire and rescue service, Thompsons Solicitors set out the legal position

Fire and rescue services (FRSs) have a legal obligation to provide cover Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, (CCA 2004) classes fire and rescue authorities as "category 1 responders".

As such, an FRS is required to "maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the [FRS] is able to continue to perform ... its functions."

An emergency is defined as "an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare. That may include industrial action in the FRS.

The duty the FRS has is to develop "business continuity management arrangements" and to identify any gap in the event of an emergency between its existing capability and the requirement for it to continue to perform its functions.

The CCA 2004 does not require a category 1 responder to deliver its functions at "ordinary levels" in an emergency. In practice, to satisfy the duty upon it, an FRS will try to coordinate its arrangements with other category 1 responders such as the police.

The national framework says that the FRS should plan to manage disruption without the support of the military.

Contact

FBU Freephone legal advice:
0808 100 6061

In Scotland: 0800 089 1331

[thompsonstradeunion.law/
trade-unions/fbu](http://thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/fbu)

LETTER

Don't write women out of history

I was interested to see the article about Joe Strummer in Acton Town Hall (Firefighter September/October 2022) and that all the people mentioned were men.

The main driving force for the gig was Ghada Razuki, (former FBU rep) assisted by me, the London regional treasurer at the time.

Ghada had the contacts through working in the Stop the War office to get hold of Strummer and between us, with a lot of help from others including Acton red watch, Willesden blue watch, Simon Green, Tim Hoy, Sian Griffiths, all the other acts and bands, Dave Thomas (presenting



Joe with the statue in the photo) to name a few, we pulled off the most amazing gig ever.

The night was made all the more special by Mick Jones joining Joe and the Mescaleros on stage and playing together for the first time since the Clash broke up.

Joe was nothing but gracious and we were thrilled they put on a brilliant night for us and the FBU.

Me and Ghada also managed to get into the after party and meet the great man.

The date was fortuitous too, because of cancelled strikes, the event fell exactly at the end of the first solid 48-hour strike of the 2002 pay campaign.

It raised more than £10,000 for the strike fund and ended up being legendary.

It was easily one of the best nights of my life.

Six weeks later Joe was dead and his wife Lucinda asked firefighters to form a guard of honour, which we proudly and emotionally did, we even managed to get London fire engines there.

When our histories are written women must be included, because, all too often, we are written out, just like in your article.

Knowing Joe Strummer's politics, he would not approve and neither do I!

PS Matt Wrack bought a ticket but ended up not going because it was straight after the strikes and we had all been working non-stop.

Linda Smith ROOT

Retired London regional treasurer



MARK THOMAS

Hang onto the ladder ...

This former London Fire Brigade Dennis Type N open-top appliance took part in this year's London to Brighton Veteran Car Run in November.

Firefighters on the wooden planks at the side had to hang on to the ladder to stay on board.

New in 1916, this appliance has quite a history, the *UK Emergency Vehicles* website reports. It started life with LFB in 1916 – based at Vauxhall and intended to deal with First World War Zeppelin raids. It was retired in 1932.

It then became the factory fire engine for Joseph Crosfield and Sons Limited in Warrington, Cheshire. In 1955 it was donated to Imperial

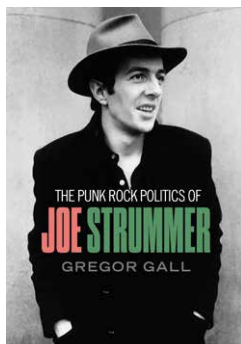
College London.

Four students drove the appliance some 200 miles from Warrington to London at speeds of up to 35 mph. It is still at Imperial College today, looked after by the Royal College of Science Motor Club – set up for this purpose.

Some of its TV and film appearances include *Blue Peter* in 1982 and *Downton Abbey* in 2014. Veteran cars cross Westminster Bridge on their way to Brighton in the annual car run.

The London to Brighton Veteran Car Run is not only the world's longest-running motoring event but also the world's largest gathering of veteran cars. To qualify, participating cars must have been built before 1905.

SHOP.FBU.ORG.UK



BOOK: THE PUNK ROCK POLITICS OF JOE STRUMMER
by Gregor Gall
£12 inc free P&P



FBU CALENDAR 2023
£9.99 inc free P&P



BOOK: UP IN SMOKE
by Leigh Hosi-Pickett
£15.99 inc free P&P



Wrack on the Road



■ Speaking from the FBU fire engine before handing in a petition at 10 Downing Street as part of the Truth about Zane campaign. It has more than 110,000 signatures calling for an inquiry into the unexplained death of seven-year-old Zane after a flood near his home in Chertsey, Surrey, in 2014.



■ Branch meetings in Belfast and Londonderry/Derry on 24 October.



■ London all members meeting with FBU president Ian Murray on 28 October.

■ At FBU national school at Wortley Hall in November.

COMING UP:

■ Mass meetings in Swansea, Cardiff and Bristol among others to discuss with members why they should vote yes in the ballot for strike action, which ends on 30 January.

He's a man with a plan

Station Cat on when a cosy chat is not a cosy chat

As we write, Oxfordshire's chief fire officer, Rob MacDougall, is about to have some cosy chats with his firefighters.

He's said in the past that he wants to remove "some of the old-fashioned privileges of rank," adding: "Our senior leaders will actively discourage the use of titles like 'sir' and 'guy' and would much rather be called by their first names. I am the chief fire officer, but I expect people to call me Rob."

What a decent and democratic gent! But union officials are suspicious folk, and the FBU's Southern regional secretary Mark Chapman smelled a rat when he heard that Mr MacDougall wanted to talk to members about what they thought of the pay offer.

Chapman told the boss rather tersely that this was the union's job. "I never heard any CFO here wanting to know members' views on that before there was a ballot going on," he says.

Sorry, said Mr MacDougall, he hadn't meant to say he wanted to talk about the pay offer. That was "a poor choice

of words." Managers wanted to go to watches to talk about how fire brigades are funded, and what the budget of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) was. "Nope" said Chapman.

Once the ballot delivered a resounding "No" to the pay offer, Mr MacDougall had another go, and this time the union said: "OK".

Mr MacDougall calls the meeting the "next phase of our continued communications with you," and here, in his own words, is what he wants to do:

- to discuss the support available to you
- give an opportunity to hear your thoughts
- discuss our strategic intent for leadership, values and behaviours
- to update you on what we are doing across OFRS to plan for potential IA (industrial action).

And that nasty suspicious

Mr Chapman thinks the only one of those four points which matters to Mr MacDougall is the fourth one.

He thinks Mr MacDougall is just trying to get some of his firefighters to break the strike and help keep the OFRS on the road. What an unworthy thought.



Think of me as Santa and taxpayers as my little helpers

See story page 6

25-year badges



John Sapsford (r), Northamptonshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair, John Wadsworth



James Bainbridge (l), training centre, Shropshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Louise Fletcher



Ian Gunstone (l), white watch, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Louise Fletcher



Martin Honey (l), white watch, Ely, Cardiff, receives his 25-year badge from South Wales brigade secretary Mike Alexander



Justin Read-Riseley (c), red watch, Wallington, London, receives his 25-year badge from area secretary Paul Reed and borough rep Lee Coombe (r)



Philip Sowerby (r), Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Wayne Anderson



Kevin Payne (r), red watch, Ely, Cardiff, receives his 25-year badge from South Wales brigade secretary Mike Alexander



Ty Millward (r), white watch, Plumstead, London, receives his 25-year badge from colleague Matt Cole



Paul Hatton (r), white watch, Smethwick, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from borough rep Carl Goode, with colleagues looking on



Steven Rudol (l), green watch, Oldham, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary and brigade women's secretary Maccyla Turner, with (l-r) Adi Patrick, Rosie Hynes, Devon Burnell, Chris Woods, Cat Hopkins and Steve Broadhurst

40-year badge



Tony Bird (r), Chopwell, Tyne and Wear, receives his 40-year badge from regional secretary Brian Harris with colleagues looking on



John Girdwood (l), blue watch, Stockton, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe, with colleagues looking on



Matt Wainwright (l), Shoreham, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Andy Lamb, with colleagues looking on



Chris Witten (r), Shoreham, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Andy Lamb



Greg Brown (l), fire protection, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Callum Hodgkin



Dan Lorenzo (l), St Helens, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dylan Westerside



Ian Anderson (centre), Dumfries, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch sec Duncan Gracie and certificate from branch chair Paddy McGonigle with white watch members looking on



Robert Negus (l), blue watch, West Sussex technical rescue unit, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Antony Walker with unit members



Darren Guest (c), St Helens, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dylan Westerside and Peter Myels



Russell Warren (r), Kent, receives his 25-year badge from Kent FBU group rep Sam Sellick



Mike Jenkins (r), Wyre Forest, Hereford and Worcester, (now retired) receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Neil Bevan



Phillip Blanchard (l), Bransholme, Humberside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Gavin Marshall



Brian Holmes (r), receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Mark Kassab at central area office, Conwy, North Wales



Alan Simpson (r), Kingsway East, Dundee, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Johnnie Williamson



Mark Philipson (l), green watch, Guildford, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from Nigel Wickham with (l-r), Rob Watts, Paul Strong, Craig Roxby and Scott Martin



Shaun Ford-Tout (c), Kensington, London, receives his 25-year badge from South West London area secretary Dave Young



Paul Grant (r), Kingsway East, Dundee, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Johnnie Williamson



Chris White (r), headquarters, Shropshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Louise Fletcher



Neil Hanlon (r), South Shields, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Christopher Cook



Mark Upperton (r), white watch, Worthing, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge, from BMO Pawel Kosla, with (l-r), Andy Heward, Dan Burke, Kerrie Lewis, Connor Ryan, Bill Woodfine, Steve Hayes and Lee Barnard



Chris Moon (r), green watch, Worthing, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from BMO Pawel Kosla, with (l-r), Richard Frazier-Mills, Spencer Paul, Phil Castleton, Lance Tufft, Steve Burns and Paul Holden



Ryan Binks (l), West Yorkshire brigade organiser in a historic t-shirt, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Martyn Bairstow



Michael Potter (dangling), blue watch, technical rescue, West Sussex receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Antony Walker with (l-r) Robert, Dave and BMO Pawel Kosla



Sam Comer (r), Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Danny Barrett



Andy 'George' Norton (r), Maidstone, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Danny Barrett



Mark Allbutt (l), Worcester, (now retired) received his 25-year badge from FBU president Ian Murray and was joined by his family at FBU conference in Blackpool

Please send high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE

For your image to look its best, we need the original, full-resolution image. One lifted from a website may not do justice to a unique occasion. We do our best with images that are low resolution, taken directly into a bright light or suffer from camera-shake, or have other problems, but cannot perform miracles. Please include details for each image – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.

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Change of address or next of kin

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

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

England, Wales and N Ireland

0800 100 6061

Scotland 0800 089 1331

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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