

FireFighter

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

January/February 2015

A year of tenacity and camaraderie by FBU members



What will 2015 bring?

See p10





Matt Wrack

We are not going to go away

2014 has been a year of protest, demonstration and struggle for firefighters. As we enter a new year I'd like to pay tribute to all those members who have been solidly campaigning throughout the year for a fair pension settlement or against cuts to our service.

Politicians will know by now how passionate and knowledgeable we are about this cause having taken another 24-hour period of strike action on 9 December. Our message is clear: We are not going away.

Parliamentary debate

Firefighters have been busy lobbying politicians as we were able to secure a parliamentary debate on the 2015 firefighters' pension scheme – a rarity as individual pension schemes are seldom, if ever, discussed and voted on by the House of Commons.

The vote would have called for the regulations for the 2015 scheme, laid before parliament, to be annulled and the government to come back to the negotiating table to find a fairer deal for firefighters.

I know how hard everyone has worked to secure the debate. Talking to the security guards in the parliamentary lobby, they told me that they had seen firefighters there every day for the past month lobbying MPs.

During the debate speaker after speaker from the opposition benches demolished the government's arguments



"A member with backbone" – Adrian Bradshaw, a one-member picket at March fire station in Cambridgeshire. The FBU supports all branches and members – whether it is one person or 100

over firefighter fitness, redeployment and the solutions being found in Scotland and Wales as well as the Northern Ireland industrial dispute being lifted. Indeed, nobody on the government side, apart from the minister, even attempted to put a case for the pension changes.

There is no question – we won the debate. However, the government whipped its MPs and won the vote 313 to 261.

Members can still be proud of what we achieved.

This does not mean the campaign is over by any means. This is a campaign that is being fought politically, legally and industrially. The executive council is putting in place the next steps of our campaign and these will address every aspect of our campaigning arsenal.

This debate and vote was just one of many fronts we are fighting on.

Reinstate Ricky

Firefighters demonstrated their solidarity and determination again when they travelled in large numbers to support victimised firefighter and executive council member Ricky Matthews who was sacked for taking lawful strike action by Buckinghamshire Fire Authority.

We marched through Aylesbury stopping outside the local fire authority headquarters and town hall calling for Ricky to be reinstated.

I know that Ricky was very touched by the number of members who came out to support him. If you haven't done so already, please sign the petition to support Ricky at:

www.fbu.org.uk/campaigns/reinstatericky

Austerity

2015 will be a crucial year for the future of the UK fire and rescue service as the general election comes our way in May. We will need to look at how to hold to account and challenge those politicians who have unleashed an unprecedented attack on firefighters and other workers.

In one of the features in this *Firefighter* we look at how George Osborne's austerity agenda has meant a lot of pain for millions, but gains only for those at the top. Since 2010, we have lost over 5,000 firefighter jobs, 39 fire stations have closed and 999 emergency response times have increased.

Our service needs investment, not cuts.

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Fire minister Penny Mordaunt (left), and other dignitaries were forced to kick their heels as FBU members refused to take part in a photo opportunity at the opening of West Norwood fire station in south London



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Glasgow remembers the 14 firefighters who died in Britain's worst peacetime fire disaster

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HAZEL DUNLOP

FBU members at a briefing in the Westminster parliament before going on to lobby MPs on 15 December

No answers from minister as MPs debate firefighter pension scheme

Parliament

The 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme was the subject of a vote in parliament on 15 December as Labour MPs and those of a number of smaller parties opposed the Westminster government's flawed proposals.

Labour had proposed a debate on the pension scheme followed by a vote calling on parliament to annul the regulations which would have forced the government to consider alternative arrangements.

The government won the vote by 313 to 261, but Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said that firefighters had won the debate.

"Time and again searching questions were asked of the minister, Penny Mordaunt, about firefighter fitness, redeployment and the more positive outcomes in other parts of the UK, even by her own side.

"Our points were made clearly about the fears that firefighters could be sacked for naturally declining fitness; that there are

no realistic redeployment opportunities within the service; and that cost neutral proposals, that would cost the Treasury nothing, were possible.

"This vote does not mean the campaign is over. We will continue to fight for a fair scheme."

Hilary Benn MP, shadow communities minister, opened the debate calling on the government to revise the proposals as the

2015 scheme was "not fit for purpose", saying: "Those retiring at 55 face the loss of more than a fifth of their pension. How is that fair?"

Mordaunt defended the government's stance by claiming firefighters who failed fitness tests would be found new roles in the fire service. But she was unable to give figures on how many redeployments were expected, saying that the "government does not keep data on redeployment opportunities for firefighters".

John Mann, Labour MP for Bassetlaw, asked: "When a useless government minister is sacked, including by the electorate, they get a huge payout and they get a massive pension. Why is it one rule for the politicians and another rule for the firefighters?"

Kate Hoey, a member of the FBU parliamentary group, slammed the government's handling of the issue telling the fire minister: "This is something common sense could have sorted out."

MPs WHO SUPPORTED THE FBU

Labour.....	236
Liberal Democrats.....	7
Democratic Unionist Party (N Ireland).....	4
Scottish National Party.....	4
Plaid Cymru.....	3
Independents.....	2
Respect.....	1
Green.....	1
Alliance (N Ireland).....	1
SDLP (N Ireland).....	1

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 • The pension campaign in review page 10

Dave Limer: FBU officials are making sure that those being consulted understand the proposals and can challenge them



Fire chief: Government must act to settle pensions dispute

West Midlands

West Midlands chief fire officer Phil Loach has written to MPs in the region urging a negotiated settlement to the firefighters' pension dispute.

He said the dispute can only be resolved by the Westminster government and cited the continued negotiations in Scotland and Wales that have resulted in no further strike action being called and those in Northern Ireland where the trade dispute has been settled.

Despite the Westminster government's assurances that "robust resilience plans

are in place", Loach said that during strike action fire services are only "one serious incident away from a situation where we would not have the resources to manage", having only 10-20 fire appliances available, rather than the regular 60.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service has 519 employees who are currently members of the 1992 firefighters' pension scheme and who will be required to transfer to the 2015 scheme next April. In order to achieve the same pension at retirement that they originally signed up to, they would now have to work an extra 10 years.



Commissioner Ron Dobson (centre) answers questions from residents regarding the closure of 12 fire stations in London

FBU legal victory over docked pay

London

London fire commissioner Ron Dobson is under pressure to resign after the judge in a case brought by the FBU ruled that he acted unlawfully when he docked crew managers' pay during a period of industrial action. The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority faces a potential six-figure legal bill.

During a dispute over shift patterns in 2010, firefighters – as a form of industrial action – relinquished the "star" attribute. This means firefighters can act-up to the role of watch manager. Dobson wrongly claimed that they had no right to refuse to do this.

He docked the wages of around 370 firefighters, some losing up to 40% of their income, for not "acting up" – work they were not contractually obliged to do.

Gordon Fielden, regional chair for the

FBU in London, said: "We are delighted by the result, but not at all surprised.

"We always believed the commissioner's actions were as unlawful as they were despicable.

"He treated 368 loyal members of staff like dirt in an effort to break industrial action. He should now seriously consider his position.

"I applaud our crew manager members who stood firm throughout the ordeal."

Luke Rowson, a crew manager at Feltham fire station, said: "I'm extremely pleased at the outcome. I'm not a militant person, but I refused to be bullied. The brigade docked my pay unfairly.

"Coming just before Christmas the deductions hit us particularly hard. I'm grateful to the FBU and their solicitors Thompsons for all their hard work. This result shows the benefit of being in a union."

SOUNDING OFF

Fighting cuts

Leicestershire firefighters have been organising and fighting back against proposed cuts to frontline services, says Dave Limer, executive council member for the East Midlands

Proposals by Leicestershire Fire Authority could see 100 wholetime firefighters cut and the county becoming the first in the country to impose compulsory wholetime redundancies.

The proposed cuts would also see three appliances removed, a crew of four as standard on all appliances, a flat rate payment for overtime, cross crewing on all specialist appliances and a further Leicestershire fire station adopting day crewing plus.

In response, we have been engaging and lobbying local fire authority members and have held rallies at every authority meeting. The FBU battle bus attended the latest rally at the opening of the new £11.5m fire service HQ on 10 December.

Local officials have gone into towns in affected areas educating the public of the dangerous implications of these proposals, handing out leaflets and jargon busters to

'Local media have covered all of our rallies and the message has been loud and clear – say NO to these devastating cuts'

explain the cuts and ensure those being consulted can challenge these proposals.

Every business in the areas affected by the proposed loss of a fire engine has been written to by the FBU. Local media have covered all of our rallies and the message has been loud and clear – say NO to these devastating cuts.

Our health and safety reps have worked hard to question and challenge the risk assessment process – or lack of one – in the development of these proposals. They have prepared a number of safety critical notices to submit to the brigade and HSE.



'I went away feeling very enthused'

FBU national school

The focus of the FBU national school (above), which took place at Wortley Hall near Sheffield in November, was organising and campaigning for future challenges.

Courses covered a variety of subjects including learning lessons from the past and how to prepare for future challenges; economics; campaigning against the challenges facing the UK fire service; recognising challenges facing trade unions and the public sector; as well as a range of wider industrial and political issues.

Speakers included former shadow fire minister and Labour MP Chris Williamson and representatives from the independent trade union WAC-Ma'an that is based in Israel and unites workers regardless of religion in a very challenging part of the world.

Attendees enjoyed a musical showcase, with a political slant, on the work of American folk

singer Woody Guthrie by University of Central Lancashire professor Will Kaufman.

Visits were arranged to the National Union of Mineworkers' headquarters in Barnsley and Wilberforce House in Hull – birthplace of the nineteenth century politician and anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce – where participants researched presentations.

Ross Smallcombe, a member from the Isle of Wight, said: "This was my first time at national school.

"I found the course extremely helpful and beneficial to my everyday work on behalf of the union and for my personal development.

"Thank you to all the people who helped put together the school. I went away feeling very enthused about what we can accomplish.

"The evening presentation with WAC-Ma'an, the trade union for Arab and Jewish workers in Israel, was very interesting and shows the links internationally that the union has."

Picketing firefighters save life of heart attack victim

Darlington

A man who suffered a heart attack in front of an FBU picket line during the four-day pensions strike last November has thanked firefighters for saving his life.

Michael Johnson, 49, collapsed outside Darlington fire station. Quick-thinking firefighters grabbed trauma equipment and used a defibrillator before carrying out CPR.

Mr Johnson is now making

a full recovery. He thanked firefighters and supported their campaign for a fair pension scheme.

Richard Fretwell, a firefighter who was at the scene, said: "Firefighters are forced into taking industrial action reluctantly because we understand our position within the community.

"Fortunately for this gentleman, our picket line was in the right place at the right time to give him the

best possible chance of a full recovery.

"Everybody involved in administering CPR acted on impulse using their professional skills. For once our dispute with the Westminster government couldn't have been further from our minds.

"Everybody is delighted with the speed of Michael's remarkable recovery and we'd like to thank him and his family for expressing their gratitude towards our part of his care."

IN BRIEF

Miners' film on DVD

The FBU-backed documentary *Still The Enemy Within*, detailing the struggles during the miners' strike of 1984-5, is now available on DVD. The film takes a first-hand approach to the strike, interviewing only the people who lived through the highs and lows of the struggle. It was screened at the FBU's national school.

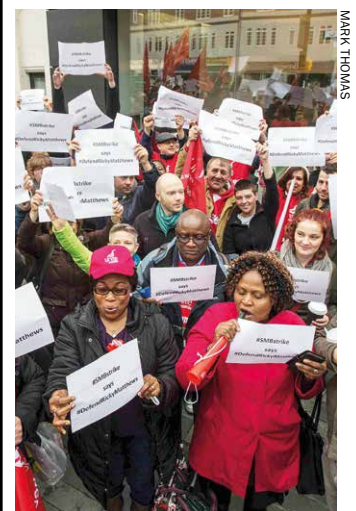
You can buy the DVD at <http://the-enemy-within.org.uk/shop>.

See quiz prize – page 22

LGBT school

Applications are now open for the 2015 LGBT school which takes place from 25 to 27 February. The school will consider the question of campaigning and organising whilst studying the influence the FBU can have on wider LGBT issues.

Applications can be made at www.fbu.org.uk/resources/lgbt2015.



Solidarity

After successful strike action on behalf of new employees who were being paid significantly lower wages and suffering reductions in their terms and conditions, workers at the charity St Mungo's Broadway, members of Unite, showed solidarity with FBU executive council member Ricky Matthews, sacked by Buckinghamshire Fire Authority for taking part in lawful strike action

NEWS FOCUS

Any member of the public can enter parliament and ask to speak directly with their MP



Cambridgeshire firefighters lobbying parliament stood in unity with another group of ardent campaigners – the National Pensioners Convention – with similar pensions grievances to our own

‘It makes our claim visible’

Lobbying

Lobbying politicians is one of the most effective campaign measures and fire-fighters have recently been doing it with some success – securing a parliamentary debate on firefighters’ pensions on the floor of the House of Commons.

Lobbying is the process of raising matters directly with elected politicians to try to influence the form of action they take.

It can consist of writing letters to a local MP, visiting them at their local advice surgery or calling into the Houses of Parliament.

A group of firefighters decided on the latter approach as the best way to raise the issue of pensions.

They have been travelling to Westminster every Wednesday to lobby members of parliament in person over the government decision to force through damaging pension regulations.

They chose Wednesdays to coincide with Prime Ministers Questions – as nearly all MPs will be present on the day.

Any member of the public can enter parliament and ask to speak directly with their MP via the “green card” process. A green card is filled in with your details

and parliamentary staff try to track down your MP.

One group of firefighters tried to speak to Westminster fire minister Penny Mordaunt in person. The minister initially agreed before sending an aide in her place.

Cameron Matthews, brigade secretary of the FBU in Cambridgeshire, says that the lobby of parliament was impromptu to begin with but turned into a weekly event.

One of the highlights on their first lobby

“Without having attended these lobbies, we would not have been able to communicate the injustice of the 2015 firefighters’ pension scheme being laid before parliament”

was running into a sheepish secretary of state for communities and local government, Eric Pickles, who, when he spotted firefighters, made a quick getaway.

Fast forward to a few weeks later when firefighters lobbying parliament ran into Pickles again and this time were able to corner him to discuss the pensions dispute.

One group of firefighters was able to secure a face-to-face meeting with Vince Cable, the business secretary, for about 20 minutes. They were able to give him a unique perspective on pensions and give him information that he otherwise might not have had.

Matthews accepts that one lobby of parliament won’t win the whole campaign, but says: “It helps. It makes a difference. It makes our claim visible. Without having attended these relatively small lobbies, we would not have met the range and number of people we did and would not have been able to communicate the injustice of the 2015 firefighters’ pension scheme being laid before parliament.”

It was due to these lobbying efforts that made 281 MPs, from across the political spectrum, sign Early Day Motion 454 Public Service Pensions – the most popular EDM since 2012, which helped secure the parliamentary debate on pensions.

VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM



Photo opportunity falls

Westminster fire minister Penny Mordaunt was forced to turn back after her visit to open the new West Norwood fire station in south London was disrupted by more than 200 firefighters.

She had been invited to open the station

on 25 November, despite being part of a government that has cut thousands of firefighter jobs, closed stations and axed engines.

What was initially a small police presence was gradually reinforced as

the minister's car returned to the scene, and after another attempt, made it into the building.

Once inside the minister began a tour of the station, accompanied by London chief fire officer Ron Dobson, but looked forlorn



through for minister

as on-duty firefighters refused to have their picture taken with her.

The event was organised by the FBU in London but members from as far away as Yorkshire and Wales travelled to take part.

Paul Embery, secretary of the FBU in

London, said: "Firefighters are livid that the fire minister was asked to open this fire station when she is part of a government that has closed over 40 stations and cut over 5,000 firefighters' jobs.

"Despite spending the last four years

cutting the service to the bone, with a general election now six months off, the politicians responsible want to suddenly stand with firefighters. This was clearly a photo opportunity for the minister to trade off of the good name of firefighters."

2014

PENSION CAMPAIGN REVIEW



2014 was a year of industrial action, hardship and protest for firefighters battling the government for a fair pension settlement. It is because of the tenacity and camaraderie of members that the fight continues. *Firefighter* looks back over key events from the past year

The first strikes over pensions in England and Wales began in September 2013 and continued throughout 2014.

The FBU undertook industrial, legal and political action to fight the government's theft of members' pensions.

Firefighters in Scotland and Northern Ireland did not take strike action because their governments recognised the union's arguments and continued to discuss the issue and revise their proposals.

The first of many legal challenges was launched early in the year. A pre-action letter relating to an age discrimination issue was submitted to the secretary of state for communities and local government over the amounts by which firefighters' pensions would be reduced if

they retired between 55 and 60.

These were huge amounts and meant that firefighters would not be able to retire at age 55 and access their pension. For instance, a firefighter who had to retire at age 55 would have faced a reduction of 47.8% while those who retired after 57 would have their reductions calculated very differently and less punitively.

Due to the legal challenge, the government came back to the negotiating table and improved this position slightly. This proposal still meant that a firefighter who had to retire at age 55 would face a reduction of 21.8%.

The FBU has now submitted a legal challenge that demonstrates why this reduction is potentially unlawful. The Scottish and Welsh governments have recognised this argument and have suggested a reduction of about 9% at 55.

New fire minister

When David Cameron reshuffled his cabinet in July firefighters said goodbye to Brandon Lewis and hello to Penny Mordaunt. Best known for her appearance on the ITV diving show *Splash*, she was an unknown quantity as a minister.



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*Garnering public support
against the theft of
firefighters' pensions*

Initially, there was promise in her appointment when, in a letter to firefighters, she said: "My goal is clear: to get the best deal possible for firefighters and resolve this dispute."

Firefighters held off strike action, negotiated in good faith and presented an evidence-based case why 60-year-old frontline firefighters would be unworkable.

Despite suggesting that she would try to get the best deal, firefighters did not receive any improved proposals and were offered exactly the deal proposed by Brandon Lewis.

The minister compounded the situation by publishing regulations in October that would ultimately impose the new scheme.

Firefighters felt let down and took part in their longest strike in over a decade with a four-day strike just before bonfire night.

The strike gained a lot of media attention with FBU officials appearing on Good Morning Britain, Adam Boulton Live, the Today programme, LBC radio, Sky News and BBC News.

But this period also saw Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority suggest the FBU had called an



STEFANO ORSINI

**Firefighters felt
let down and
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strike just before
bonfire night**

unlawful strike.

Striking firefighters in the county had already been treated harshly and lost substantially more than colleagues taking strike action elsewhere.

Although the fire authority said the strike had been called incorrectly, it did not challenge it legally. But the FBU had retained a QC, waiting for a legal challenge that did not materialise.

When FBU executive council member Ricky Matthews took part in the strike a dismissal notice was hand-delivered to his wife in the middle of the night.

That is why when a further 24-hour strike was called for 9 December firefighters went in their thousands to protest in Aylesbury, calling for Ricky's reinstatement.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Ricky's sacking is an attack on all firefighters and their right to organise in the workplace. We will support Ricky until the fire authority reinstates him."

"Firefighters have been steadfast through 2014 in this fight to stop their pensions from being decimated.

"We are not going away. If the Westminster government think we will just roll over and accept this pension robbery, they can think again."



European fire

European firefighters meeting in Glasgow hear how austerity

Firefighters from across Europe came together in Glasgow as the city hosted the 2014 European Firefighters Network meeting in October last year.

The network is organised by the European Federation of Public Sector Unions (EPSU) which brings together 265 unions representing more than 8 million public service workers, including the FBU.

The event, which takes place every other year, was organised by the FBU and chaired by president Alan McLean.

It lasted for two days and discussed a wide range of topics ranging from health and safety to pensions, pay and how the fire services are organised.

Austerity

A major issue for discussion was the pressure facing fire and rescue services created by austerity, cuts and privatisation.

The conference heard from unions facing the same attacks as those in the UK.

Spanish firefighters have seen their pay reduced twice and then frozen.

Firefighter numbers in Ireland have been cut by 25% since 2009. Turkish firefighters reported major cuts in the capital Istanbul and other cities.

The stories were similar across Europe and all delegates felt that more needs to be done to bring together our struggles to highlight the crisis facing firefighters in the continent.

Having noted the long-term trend of an increasing number of national disasters, the conference adopted a joint statement, presented by the FBU, calling for an end to austerity and for investment in fire and rescue services throughout Europe.

Austerity threatens the quality of work firefighters can undertake as numbers, stations and engines are all being cut across Europe.

Industrial action

The conference also discussed industrial action taken by firefighters across Europe, including a frank exchange of views on joint action and collective bargaining. It was recognised that fire and rescue services all over the developed world are suffering from the same calls for austerity, cuts to the frontline and attacks on conditions of service.

Also discussed was the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – a series of trade negotiations carried out mostly in secret between the European Union and America. As a bilateral trade agreement, TTIP will reduce the regulatory barriers to trade for big business such as food safety

Delegates to the EPSU conference; firefighters in Tbilisi, Georgia, protesting against cuts to their fire service; FBU members protesting in London against cuts



fighters meet

and cuts are affecting services all over the continent

laws, environmental legislation, banking regulations and the sovereign powers of individual nations.

It is, as John Hilary, executive director of campaign group War on Want, said: "An assault on European and US societies by transnational corporations."

The conference agreed a statement asking for the inclusion of binding social and environmental standards in the drafting of European trade agreements.

Latest equipment

Delegates visited the fire service training centre in Glasgow and saw demonstrations of the latest equipment and training available to firefighters in Scotland.

The FBU expressed its thanks to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for facilitating the visit and providing a conference hall.

The conference were given a presentation on the new system – "E-call" – that is designed to enable an early response by firefighters to accidents involving the transport of dangerous goods.

In the event of a crash, an "E-call" equipped car automatically calls the nearest emergency control centre. Even if passengers are unable to speak due to injuries, a minimum set of data is sent, which includes the exact location of the crash.

Indispensable

Harold Schaitberger, general president of the International Federation of Fire Fighters (IAFF), which represents more than 300,000 firefighters in the United States and Canada, told delegates how the IAFF has developed a strategy positioning firefighters as an all-hazards response service, making them indispensable to the public.

This has strengthened their hand in negotiating for funding from local and federal politicians, he said in his guest speech.

Concluding the conference, Dave Green, FBU national officer, said: "I would like to thank all the delegates for attending. There are over two million wholetime, retained and volunteer firefighters across Europe and if we are going to successfully fight the international austerity agenda we have to campaign together, not apart."

Delegates felt that more needs to be done to bring together struggles to highlight crisis

Austerity – hurting

George Osborne said in 2010 that he would cut the deficit to £40bn this year – it is now £100bn and is still rising

On taking office in 2010 the coalition government declared that its overriding economic objective was to cut government debt and deficit.

The deficit is the difference between what the government receives as tax and what it pays out, so a deficit feeds a rising debt.

The welfare of the British people was to be sacrificed to this end in favour of austerity – “temporarily” the government said. Tories hoped that by the time of the 2015 election, they would be approaching the broad sunlit uplands of eternal prosperity. It was not to be.

Public debt ballooned during and after the economic crash principally because of the enormous cost of bailing out the banks.

The National Audit Office has estimated that this bill peaked at £1,185bn, more than 75% of Britain’s gross domestic product.

Deficit still going up

In 2010 George Osborne predicted that, as a result of the government’s austerity programme, the budget deficit would have fallen to below £40bn this year. He promised “to eliminate the structural deficit by March 2016”.

In fact, the deficit will be almost £100bn this year, and it is still going up.

David Cameron now asserts that the government has made “savings” of £100bn in this parliament. The prime minister has a tendency to fantasise. For instance, he included 2015-16 cuts (which lay in the future) as done and dusted in his calculations.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), which is politically neutral on claims like this, is dismissive. When he concludes that “the vast majority of the planned cuts have happened”, the IFS retorts: “They haven’t ... We are just under half

way there.” If the Tories form the next government we face another five years of grinding austerity.

The *Financial Times* (10 November, 2014) endorsed these conclusions. Rather than “only” £25bn of cuts a year, we face £48bn annually for the next five years. This is ferocious.

The *FT* calculated: “If the next government continues to ringfence health, schools and overseas aid, the non-protected departments face real cuts of 33%, compared with the 21% cuts they faced between 2009-10 and 2014-2015.”

Completely irresponsible

To make things worse, Cameron has promised £7.5bn in income tax cuts over the next parliament. This is completely irresponsible, given the pickle the government has left the public finances in. So, under the Tories, things can only get worse.

Why has austerity failed?

The coalition began by cutting public investment, causing permanent damage to Britain’s productive capability. The *FT* commented: “These deep reductions in capital spending were probably damaging

The *Financial Times* calculates non-protected departments face real cuts of 33%, compared with the 21% cuts they faced between 2009-10 and 2014-2015



g, but not working



PHIL DISLEY

to growth, but easier to implement because they did not affect services directly." As a result, the economy flat-lined for two years. In other words austerity is penny wise, pound foolish.

Most people in Britain have paid heavily for the government's attempt to pay down the debt. According to Andrew Haldane, chief economist at the Bank of England, living standards have declined by about 10% over the last seven years. This is the steepest fall since the mid-nineteenth century.

These figures are, of course, averages. Some people are doing rather better. According to the *Sunday Times* "Rich List" for 2014, "The wealthiest 1,000 people in Britain today are worth £518.9bn, up 13% from last year."

Debt is symptom, not cause

Austerity has failed because government deficits and debt are a symptom of a weak economy, not the cause. Balancing the budget is a policy like bleeding, practised by medieval surgeons. Letting blood weakens the body and dampens a fever, but does nothing to cure the patient.

Austerity is not really an exercise in balancing the budget. The coalition is using the crisis as an opportunity to boost profits for their big business backers, driving down wages and the social wage in the process.

The coalition boasts that hundreds of thousands of new jobs have been created since the economy began to recover. Despite the upturn in the economy the recession in wages goes on and on and the deficit is still rising.

One reason for this is that the vast majority of jobs created have been low-paid and insecure, so not much tax has flowed into the exchequer.

The answer is simple: implement a decent minimum wage so that workers can afford to pay taxes, and their bosses are not subsidised by in-work benefits for their employees.

The government could also take seriously big business tax dodgers. We are missing out on £120bn in unpaid tax, according to the Tax Justice Network.

What Britain needs is a high wage, high productivity economy, not everlasting austerity.

Heritage trail marks Glasgow disasters

How one city honours the sacrifice of its firefighters over the years

Firefighters' jobs are inherently dangerous. They risk life and limb whenever they attend a major incident.

But on 28 March 1960, a 999 call to the Glasgow fire service would have a profound effect on the service and the city's people for decades to come.

Fourteen firefighters from the service and five members of the Glasgow salvage corps lost their lives in the worst peacetime tragedy in the history of the fire service in Britain.

An explosion at Cheapside Street whisky bond caused 20m high walls to crash onto the street below.

The explosion took place in a building that contained almost 4.5 million litres of whisky and more than 140,000 litres of rum.

Falling masonry instantly killed three firefighters in Cheapside Street and 11 firefighters and five salvage workers who were battling the blaze from the rear of

the building in Warrach Street.

Crews fought the resulting fire for 11 hours until it was brought under control shortly before 06:20 the next day.

To mark this tragedy and the awful toll it took on the service and local families, 50 years on a lasting monument to all the sacrifices made by firefighters in the city, has received much needed lottery funding.

Memorial plaques

The Firefighter Heritage Trail, now in its fourth year, received a grant of £54,000.

With the assistance of veterans and the local community, the Firefighters Heritage Committee worked hard to set

12 memorial plaques on pavements where firefighters have lost their lives in the line of duty in Glasgow's long history.

Several other sites have been identified as playing an important role in Glasgow Fire Service history.



THE
**FIREFIGHTERS'
HERITAGE
TRAIL**



December 1960: The Pagensand in Prince's Dock on the Clyde at Govan



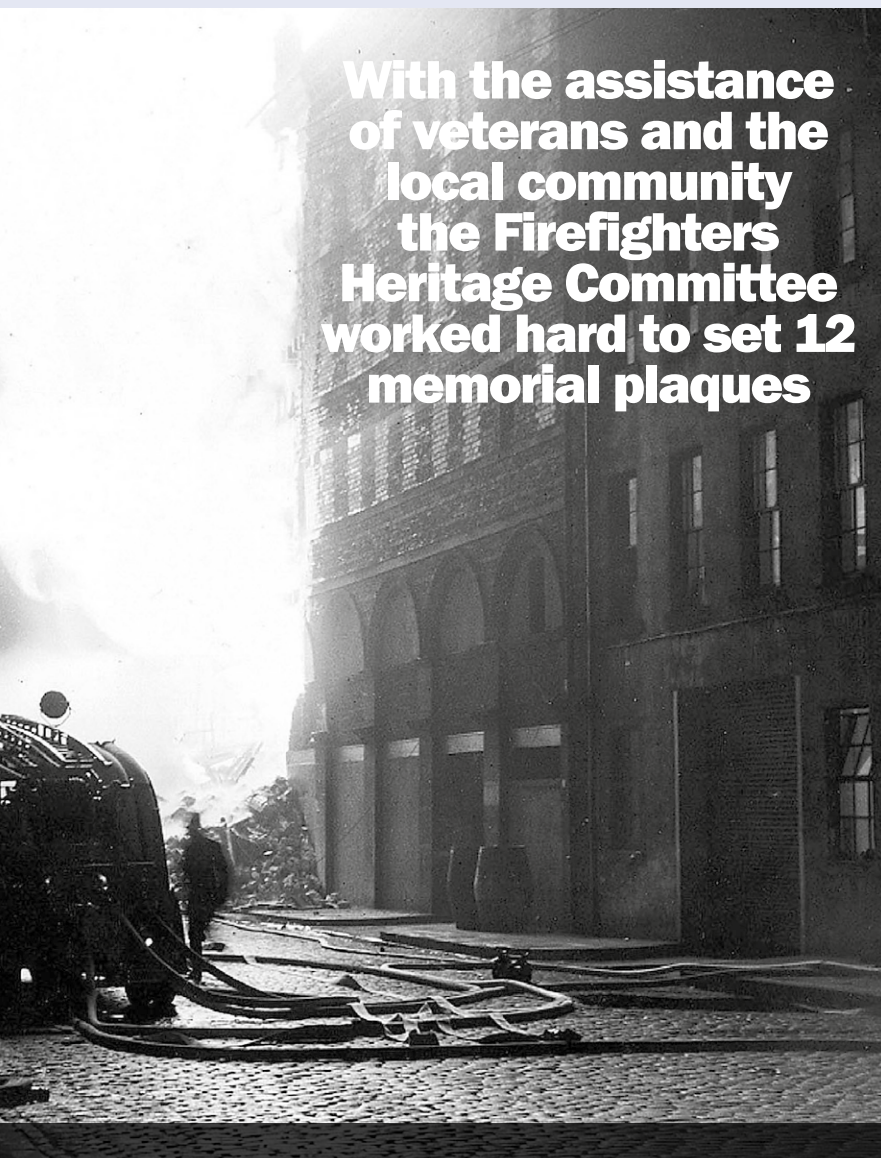
August 1972: Kilbirnie Street



March 1960: Cheapside Street



March 2010: Memorial service at Glasgow Necropolis marking the 50th anniversary of the Cheapside Street fire



With the assistance of veterans and the local community the Firefighters Heritage Committee worked hard to set 12 memorial plaques

DANNY LAWSON/PA PHOTOS

Heritage trail highlights

1 QUEENS COURT

On 14 January 1832 a disastrous fire took place in the 24 properties comprising Queens Court. During the extensive operation firefighter James Bruce was killed when he fell from a ladder at what was described as "one of the most destructive fires that has occurred in Glasgow for a very long period of time".

The owner of the property offered the firefighters £5 (a large sum at the time) if they would retrieve his safe from the ruins. This was done but the firefighters agreed the widow of James Bruce be given the reward money.

Like all firefighters at that time James Bruce would have been a volunteer who turned out when required.

2 CITIZEN FIREFIGHTER

This bronze sculpture, unveiled in 2001 as a tribute to all firefighters past and present, stands in Gordon Street, outside Glasgow Central station. It became a focal point for grief after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in which many firefighters lost their lives.



3 PRINCE'S DOCK

Friday 2 December 1960. Station officer Douglas Mearns lost his life and 11 firefighters and dockers were overcome by fumes and taken to the hospital during

attempts to put out a fire in the hold of a German cargo ship carrying matches, wood pulp and paper.

Officer Mearns had been in charge of the St Mungo fireboat. Together with a detachment of firefighters wearing breathing equipment, he had gone into the hold of the Pagensand to deal with a fire. Almost immediately there were cries for help.

Dockers boarded the ship to help firefighters rescue their comrades from the sulphurous fumes but tragically Mearns could not be revived.

4 THE GLASGOW NECROPOLIS

One of the greatest Victorian cemeteries in Britain, many of the firefighters commemorated in the Firefighters' Heritage Trail are buried here.

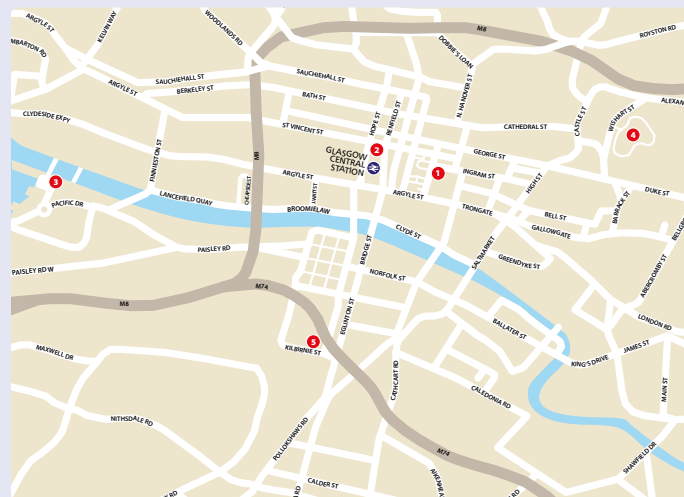
5 KILBIRNIE STREET

When a firefighter became trapped in a house while tackling a fire, six of his colleagues entered the property to rescue him.

A massive flashover of extreme heat overtook them resulting in the deaths of seven firefighters.

The people of Glasgow were so shocked by this, the second major fire service tragedy in 12 years, following the Cheapside Street disaster in 1960, that a huge crowd lined the streets as hearses bore the bodies of the Kilbirnie Street victims to Glasgow Cathedral for the funeral service. The bodies of six of the seven firefighters were laid to rest in the Necropolis.

NEWSQUEST



STATION FIRES

The lessons of King's Cross are being undermined

'Going back on any of the recommendations of the Fennel inquiry is a recipe for disaster'

Twenty-seven years ago on 18 November 1987, 31 people, including fire station officer Colin Townsley, lost their lives in the King's Cross station fire in London.

The Fennel inquiry, set up to investigate the cause of the fire, concluded that the risk of fires on the London

Underground network had not been taken seriously by transport chiefs.

The inquiry led to many improvements in areas such as fire safety, health and safety in the workplace and to smoking being banned on all parts of the London Underground.

Lasting 91 days, the inquiry heard from 150 witnesses and examined more than 80,000 documents, 100 reports and 15 videos.

Tests conducted by the

Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) and the Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) revealed that the fire broke out as a result of a lit match being dropped down one of the station's wooden escalators, some of which had been operating from as early as 1911.

The escalators had wooden treads, risers and skirting boards – a huge safety risk if they were to come into contact with naked flames.

Smoking ban

After a major fire at Oxford Circus underground station smoking had been banned on tube trains in 1984. But many passengers would light up when they reached the escalators on their way out of stations.

Whilst investigating how the fire started HSL researchers tried to recreate

the exact circumstances in which it began. They started by dropping lit cigarette ends between the treads and skirting of the escalators.

When this failed researchers substituted lit matches for cigarettes. The results were immediate. The matches hit a layer of grease on the running track and ignited. Within minutes the fire had consumed the entire escalator and flames were just becoming visible on the passenger side.

As a result of the Fennel inquiry, and its 157 recommendations, new fire safety regulations were introduced and wooden escalators were removed from all stations.

Smoke and heat detectors were installed in stations, fire safety training was introduced for all staff members and a smoking ban extended to all

parts of all stations.

But now, a quarter of a century later, London mayor Boris Johnson is trying to push measures that would undermine lessons learnt from the tragedy.

All London Underground staff have been trained in fire safety but the RMT union is currently having to fight the mayor over his plans to leave entire stations without any staff.

Recipe for disaster

Sian Griffiths, an FBU London official, who attended the original incident at King's Cross, said: "It is vital that we remember the lessons of King's Cross.

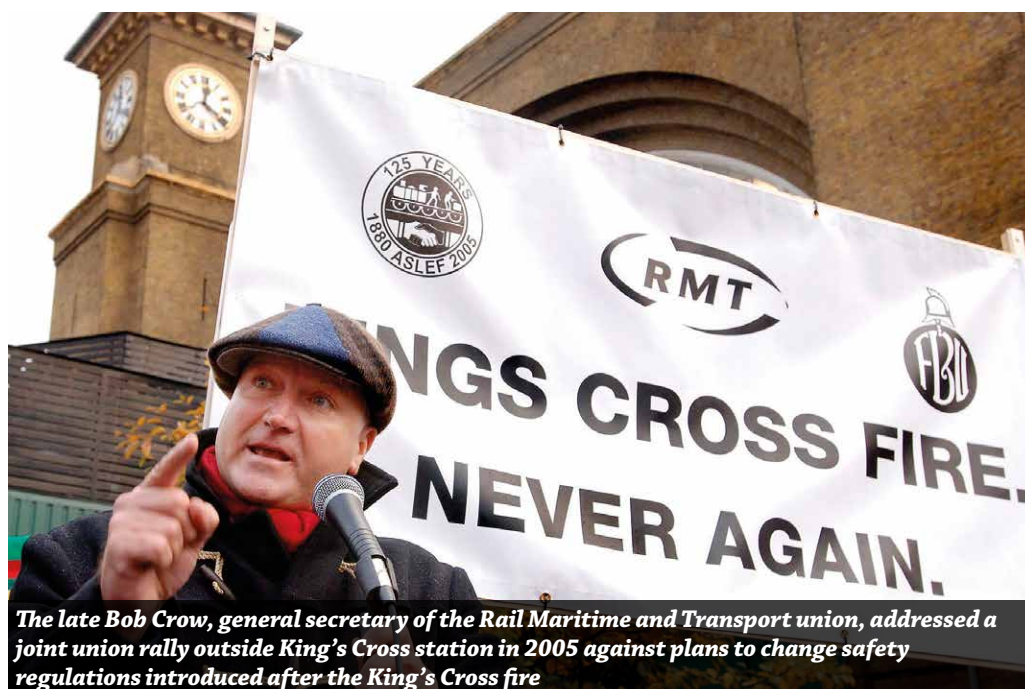
"Going back on any of the recommendations of the Fennel inquiry is a recipe for disaster that cannot be reversed once implemented.

"It will only lead to death and destruction for many, including more firefighters like Colin Townsley."

Firefighter Colin Townsley was awarded a posthumous certificate of commendation for his bravery, as were five other firefighters who survived.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "We remember Colin Townsley, the highly respected station officer who died trying to rescue people at King's Cross. Our members have never forgotten the fire and what happened to our people.

"We will also fight to make sure that the safety improvements that followed from the King's Cross inquiry are maintained and built on."



JOHN STILLWELL/PA PHOTOS

The late Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail Maritime and Transport union, addressed a joint union rally outside King's Cross station in 2005 against plans to change safety regulations introduced after the King's Cross fire

Legal Beagle

FBU pensions legal action update

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

Q Has there been any progress in the FBU's Fairer Commutation campaign?

A Retired and out of trade members of the FBU have been patiently waiting for the outcome of the union's long-running campaign for fairer pensions commutation. It seems an age since the FBU started the campaign on behalf of a significant number of members in 2008.

The issue relates to retired members of the 1992 firefighters' pension scheme who left after 1998 and who had used pre-2008 factors to convert pensions into lump sums at retirement.

The factors were improved in May 2008, meaning that firefighters who left after this date got a bigger lump sum for the same investment. The campaign contends that these factors should have been reviewed earlier than they were.

An interim victory for the campaign forced the government to make a revised payment to affected members who retired after 22 August 2006. But this development did not fully address the issue for members who had retired before this date, so an application was made to the Pensions Ombudsman.

The FBU supported test cases to the ombudsman based on claims of maladministration of the scheme. The ombudsman has been deliberating on these cases for a considerable time and has expressed preliminary views on the leading complainant's case.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

The ombudsman had been expected to issue a comprehensive preliminary decision in November which would have covered relevant aspects of the complaint.

Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer, said: "This has been a long-running campaign involving several thousand individual grievances that have been taken as test cases.

"FBU members have been very patient, but we are hoping this will be resolved shortly. As always, we are confident in the arguments that have been put forward

and are hoping that the right decision is made."

Q Age discrimination – Firefighters and the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme

This issue relates to firefighters who joined the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) below the age of 20. Members in this position are not allowed to accrue further benefits after the age of 48 because of the 30-year maximum accrual cap. Neither are they allowed to

retire and immediately access their pension until they are 50 (except in cases of ill health).

The FBU has been pressing the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on this issue and believes it could amount to unlawful age discrimination because the members affected are required to continue to contribute to the scheme with little or no benefit because of the accrual cap.

Several remedies have been suggested to resolve this issue and they have been considered by DCLG.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department, which provides legal services to government departments, revisited an earlier discussion around age discrimination and firefighters who joined the service below the age of 20. It has now proposed that they should seek a legal ruling on the issue.

This clarification will be sought using a "Part 8 proceeding" where one party asks the court to make a ruling on one specific issue. This involves the claimant (in this case HM Treasury) arguing its interpretation while the defendant (in this case the FBU) argues all contrary positions.

In this case the FBU has selected a test case and has submitted a position for consideration.

Members will understand that the legal system does take time but can be assured that they will be updated on any progress made.

‘You are competing against yourself, trying to improve on your personal best – plus no-one is trying to punch you in the face’

Tom Mayes tried kettlebells when it was hard to get to his regular gym – now he is a gold medal winner and English record holder

When Berkshire firefighter Tom Mayes first started using kettlebells – weights shaped like cannonballs with handles – he did it to hone his fitness. He had just moved house and could not easily make it to his regular gym.

But “being a bit of a geek”, he soon discovered Girevoy sports when surfing the net.

Girevoy is Russian for kettlebells. The sport was huge behind the Iron Curtain and is still very big in Russia and eastern Europe. And it is catching on fast in the US. In the UK it is yet to take off big-time – but it’s definitely bubbling under.

Tom was about to enter a whole new world, where kettlebells are used to compete for titles as well as boost personal fitness. It was to have a big impact on his life, not just his fitness regime.

Impressive titles

He converted the garage to a gym, signed up for personal online Girevoy coaching from a world champion in Slovenia and now runs kettlebell fitness classes in hired halls in Berkshire with his wife Tanya, who cabin-crews for British Airways. Both compete in Girevoy sport. And both have notched up impressive titles, including the coveted candidate for master of sport.

Like many niche sports, Girevoy has its own, initially baffling, terminology. Tom was last year’s British champion in the “long cycle event”, a series of manoeuvres that neatly illustrate how the sport builds both strength and endurance.

The long cycle involves passing the kettlebells through the legs, raising – or

“cleaning” – them from knee to chest level, then “jerking” them above the head, arms outstretched.

Competitors do this as many times as they can in ten minutes, no breaks allowed. Grimaces and guttural grunts often come with the territory.

Tom can be seen and heard grappling with the long cycle in his garage on footage uploaded to his website www.momentumkettlebells.co.uk. The site also gives a lot more information on the sport, and runs through the medals and achievements Tom and Tanya and people they train have notched up.

The other contest “lifts” are the “jerk” – where two kettlebells are held at shoulder level then “jerked” above the head, and the “snatch”, where a single kettlebell is swung between the knees to above the head in a single sweep.

When Tom won his British champion long cycle title in autumn 2013, he lifted two 28-kilo weights 60 times.

Building on his technique and strength, he has moved up into the professional lifting category – and now lifts two 32-kilo weights. That’s equivalent to lifting someone weighing about ten stone above his head – over and over again. As the *Firefighter* went to press, Tom’s personal best stood at doing this 45 times in ten minutes. Without stopping, remember.

He did it in August last year when entering his first international Girevoy competition, held in Darlington. He also set a new English record in the sport and won a gold medal. He had to pull out of the British championship last October for





personal reasons – his second son Luke was born on the day of the contest.

In his younger days Tom, now 37, used to take part in mixed martial arts – a quick internet search shows he won a good few fights and two national titles.

But that was then.

“There is only so long you can get away with a heavy contact sport before it starts to take its toll,” he says. “Girevoy sport builds strength and endurance in muscles, joints and mind. When your body is screaming at you to stop, your mind is the only thing pushing you forward. That builds tremendous will power and self-awareness which filters out into the rest of your life.”

Great community

The MMA scene was all about confrontation and fighting. Girevoy, says Tom, is very different. “There is a great community out there, everyone is very friendly - and the thing is, you are competing against yourself most of the time, trying to improve on your personal best. Plus, unlike MMA, no-one is trying to punch you in the face!”

There’s also something refreshingly back-to-basics about Girevoy kettlebells training, Tom says. “You don’t even need lots of machines, like you get in big commercial gyms. And you can do it virtually anywhere.”

The sport is also refreshingly democratic

and inclusive. “In classes everybody does the same exercise, male or female, fit or unfit, big or small,” says Tom. “The only difference is the size of kettlebells they use.”

Firefighters are already on board.

Tom trains Newbury firefighter Jamie Stephens, who has won three gold medals for the sport this year – and was named an absolute veterans champion.

When fresh to the sport, Tom was inspired by Hampshire firefighter Will Dollar. “He won at the first contest I went to.” In November, Will was ranked master of sport in the world championships.

In fact, Tom was keen to turn this Day Off into a feature exploring the Girevoy achievements of fellow firefighters – and why it’s a sport and training regime that ticks all the right boxes.

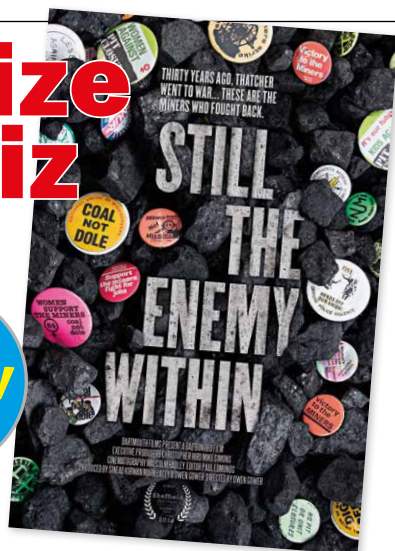
“Strength and endurance is the kind of mix firefighters need,” says Tom. “Raw strength is handy for kicking down doors, but when you’ve got to drag somebody out you need that strength endurance to keep going.” It’s also great for cardiovascular fitness, endurance, building strength and helping protect muscles at the base of the spine

Working with the Royal Berkshire fire and rescue service fitness adviser, Tom has already delivered some training sessions for watch PTIs. And he’s keen to build a firefighter kettlebell sport team.

If Girevoy goes mainstream, remember you read it first in *Firefighter* ...



Prize quiz



Win one of six copies of *Still The Enemy Within* DVD

HOW TO ENTER

To win a copy of *Still The Enemy Within* please send your answers by 28 February on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Jan/Feb 2015), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.



PA PHOTOS

1 Which of these films is not based on a work by Elmore Leonard?

- A – Jackie Brown
- B – Get Shorty
- C – Pulp Fiction
- D – Mr Majestyk

2 Which Grade 1 horse race is usually run at Kempton Park on Boxing Day?

- A – Champion Hurdle
- B – King George VI Chase
- C – Hennessy Gold Cup
- D – Queen Mother Champion Chase

3 Who won sports personality of the year 2014?

- A – Jenson Button
- B – Lewis Hamilton
- C – Jo Pavey
- D – Rory McIlroy

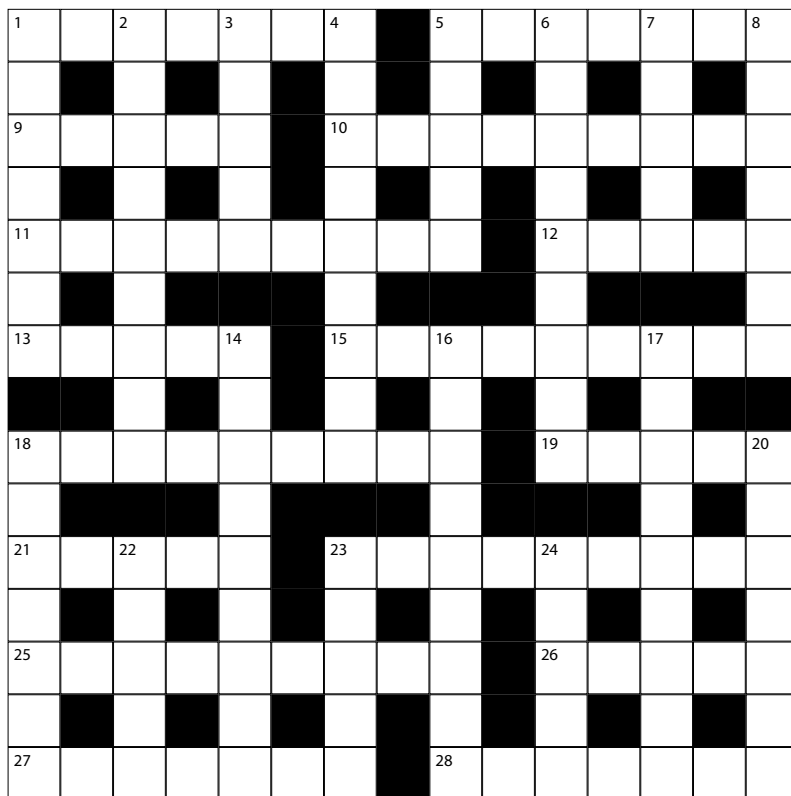


4 Which famous book about a bear from Peru was released as a film in 2014?

- A – Winnie the Pooh
- B – Rupert Bear
- C – Paddington
- D – Yogi Bear

5 Who said: "A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past"?

- A – Fidel Castro
- B – Lenin
- C – Mahatma Gandhi
- D – Giuseppe Garibaldi



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Half-way through period of office (3-4)
- 5 Secondary title in news article (3-4)
- 9 Type of services provided by 10 (5)
- 10 FBU's lawyers (9)
- 11 Expressing false feelings (9)
- 12 Endangered African mammal with zebra-like stripes, related to giraffe (5)
- 13 One showing the way (5)
- 15 Cases may be taken to these by 10 (9)
- 18 Lance-Corporal Jones's catch-phrase (4,5)
- 19 Subject – with a hazelnut in every bite? (5)
- 21 Vestibule – in which to collar your MP? (5)
- 23 State of having no luxury – imposed by the government (9)
- 25 US state (9)
- 26 It's stored in a granary! (5)
- 27 Refrain from – voting? (7)
- 28 Arena of drama, war or surgery (7)

DOWN

- 1 becoming un-frozen (7)
- 2 Process of extracting nutrients from food (9)
- 3 DeGeneres, Page or Burstyn, for example (5)
- 4 Tatty, as if munched by bugs (4-5)
- 5 Indicates the presence of fire, they say (5)
- 6 Secondary result of process (2-7)
- 7 Deadly disease killing thousands in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea (5)
- 8 Sack; send away (call in 10?) (7)
- 14 Lung disease causing chronic shortage of breath (9)
- 16 Without pause (9)
- 17 One who's submitted form seeking job (9)
- 18 Quandary (7)
- 20 Capital of French Guiana, or pepper named after it (7)
- 22 We rescue people, not these (5)
- 23 Oak seed (5)
- 24 Bird of prey (5)

Last issue's answers and winners



Crossword solution November/December

November/December quiz answers

- 1 – D Extremadura
- 2 – D Frederic Auguste Bartholdi
- 3 – D Mycroft
- 4 – D The Visigoths
- 5 – B The Velvet Underground

Winner of October quiz

Paula Jones, East Sussex

Station Cat

Mordaunt wit gives view of another world

Speak out of turn – one law for them ...

 The Cat's endless search for smut and scandal has taken her out of the station to the jovial palace of fun known as Westminster, and the merry antics of fire minister Penny Mordaunt.

While others might be concerned about the perilous decline of our emergency services, Penny is much more concerned with coming up with jolly japes to amuse her spiffing chums.

It has to be said that Ms Mordaunt is a much better comedian than she is a fire minister, despite the fact that she's an awful comedian.

Penny thought it would be quite a lark to give her pals a chuckle by saying some naughty words in parliament – and she applied herself to the task with an enthusiasm she's yet to show for the fire service.

In a rib-tickling House of Commons speech, she managed to say "cock" six times, and "laid" five times! Isn't that just the cleverest thing! She really is a card. Had she been in a school playground, I'm sure it would have made all her chums titter. (Oops!). However, she was not in a playground. Neither was she giving the Bernard Manning Memorial Lecture. She was addressing the nation's parliament.

Perhaps the Cat should not be surprised. Three months before she was elected to parliament

she got dressed down to appear in *Vanity Fair* in poses she presumably thought attractive.

Earlier this year the fire minister put aside her jolly hockey sticks to remove even more clothing in order to appear in the TV programme *Splash!* Penny's a bit of a gal!

The "rude parliamentary remarks" episode began when she was messing with some sailors. That is to say, she was having dinner with some marine training chappies who said she flipping well had to do a forfeit if she didn't eat up all her pudding – the forfeit was to say "cock" in a House of Commons speech. All very droll.

Matt Wrack confided in the Cat that it was like hearing stories from another world. He seems to think the episode shows how remote these politicians are from working people.

After all, while Penny was having wizard fun using parliament to crack in-jokes for the privileged few, 5,000 firefighters were losing their jobs.

Portsmouth North MP Penny does, however, have a serious side. She recently contacted fire officers urging them to spy on firefighters who tried to publicise our pensions dispute.

Like Orwell's Big Brother, sniggering

Ms Mordaunt wants a clampdown on the expression of opposition

voices. In her mind, it is reasonable to discipline 42 firefighters who dared to write to their local council about our industrial action and to sack one for a remark she didn't approve of on Twitter.

But she doesn't see it as at all unreasonable to use the House of Commons to amuse one's chums.

There's a joke somewhere about fiddling while Rome burns, but the Cat, in common with the country, is now bored of Penny Mordaunt ...

No chance of hugging this hoodie

 At the time of going to press, over 270 MPs had signed Early Day Motion 454, which opposes the proposed Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

They are overwhelmingly Labour, but also include Lib Dems, Welsh nationalists and a couple of Northern Ireland politicians.

Conspicuous by their absence are any signatories from the Conservative Party.

FBU officials started an informal competition to get a Tory to sign the EDM. The first person who achieves this will be presented with an FBU Ring of Fire hoodie.

The Cat thinks the likelihood of the prize being collected is about the same as finding George Osborne downing a few pints of stout before a Millwall game.

Fire minister Penny Mordaunt (left), and other dignitaries were forced to kick their heels as FBU members demonstrated at the opening of the new West Norwood station in London in November. For more, see *Aerial Ladder Platform*, page 8



No point in asking me, I'm just an MP

 In a desperate effort to secure the coveted hoodie, one FBU member wrote to Totnes MP Sarah Wollaston. The reply droned on about her not ever signing EDMs and reproduced the government guff about generous offers and fitness groups before coming to a marvellously abrupt and revealing conclusion: "I must be honest and say I have no chance of altering the fire fighters' pension deal."

That is to say, "I have no influence whatever so why on earth do you bother writing to me?"

Our member can hardly reply saying he wanted a hoodie ...

The prizes of privatisation

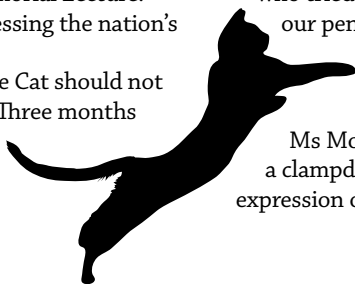
Not everyone is displeased that the London Fire Brigade's training was privatised after 136 years.

In fact, some people have been made extremely happy – they would be shareholders in Babcock International who took over the training.

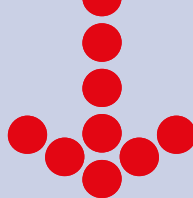
Last month Babcock reported a 32% rise in its half-year profits, which amounted to £187m.

It's nice to know we've done our bit to help Babcock investors keep the wolf from the door.

And, just to revert to the top story again for a moment, what fun Penny would have with the company name ...



25-year badges



Jeff Scrivens (r), South Wales operations department, receives his 25 year badge from outgoing South Wales FBU chair Vaughan Jenkins



Ged McGenity (c), Upton, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Mick O'Marney (l) accompanied by regional officers' rep Ned Phelan



Stuart Kalber (l) receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade secretary Trevor French with members of Croyde Surf Club



Nigel Brook (r), red watch, Bingley, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Bradford division chair Dave Gillian on the picket line with Bingley and Shipley colleagues Josef Woodger, Glenn Harrison, Andy Carr and Chris Burke



Simon Kaye (c, r), red watch, Westbourne, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from membership organiser Scott Blandford with watch colleagues Esther Nash and Chris Sergent looking on



Andy Hayes (c,l), green watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon on a pensions picket line



Gary Walsh (c,l), Avon, receives his 25-year badge from South West executive council member Tam McFarlane during a brigade committee meeting



Les Hallam (r), Mansfield, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Topping



Mark Millington (centre), HQ branch, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alan Coates and brigade organiser Clare Hudson



Darren Kenniford (l), Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from EC member Grant Mayos at Pembroke Dock picket line



Richie Everall (l), North Wales officers' rep, receives his 25-year badge from North Wales brigade secretary Shane Price



Clive Griffin (r), Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Jamie Wyatt

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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

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.

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