

FireFighter

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

July 2008

“I’m NOT cutting jobs”

Terry Walker on controls and a well-run fire service **See page 16**

Regional controls

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A better place to work

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Pay in the fire service



The National Joint Council has agreed a pay rise of 2.4%. This is in line with the pay formula as agreed in the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement. I do not expect any of us are jumping for joy. It is a low rise and is below

the real rate of inflation.

I reported to our annual conference in Southport that the formula calculation would be unlikely to produce a significant rise. That is why conference backed, with the support of the executive council, a resolution from Northern Ireland instructing us to review how we approach pay. We will now push on with that work. However, we all need to understand that achieving significant rises in the current climate is not going to be easy. We all remember the difficulties of the 2002/2003 campaign with 15 days of national strike action. That action did not produce agreement for a long-term formula; it simply decided pay for a five-year period. The agreement expired in 2006. Since then (for 2007 and 2008) we have managed to obtain the pay rise which results from the formula but what is needed is a longer term solution. So I expect the issue of pay to be a central feature of our discussion and debate for some considerable time.

The background to this debate is government policy and the squeeze on public finances. Our message to the fire service employers and to government is that there needs to be a more robust and longer-term mechanism for deciding pay. If we are expected to negotiate pay each year then the employers must accept the consequences. That would mean that every year there would be a debate about whether the deal is good enough and whether or not we will respond with industrial action. That is no way to run a fire service, but if that is the path the employers choose they will have to live with the consequences. We are keen to avoid industrial action and we have made that clear, but we cannot afford to see our living standards eroded by inflation and low pay settlements.



Defend control jobs

Since our debate at conference we have begun to visit control members and others around the country, talking about the fight to defend jobs. This is at an early stage as yet, but everywhere we have been we are getting the same message – FBU members are angry at the way control members have been treated, especially by the Fire and Rescue Authorities in the South West.

This work will continue over the coming months and we will be visiting a venue near you. Please look out for details of local meetings. I am sure that when you hear our case and listen to the impact that the latest proposals will have on FBU members and their families you will be absolutely convinced that we are right to fight. We are right to protect the jobs and conditions of the hundreds of members affected.

Some people in government, in the department for Communities and Local Government, in fire authorities or in the FireControl Project itself may think all this is a done deal and that the FBU is wasting its time. They are wrong. In the past few years we have been told several times that there is no point fighting because “it’s a done deal.” But we have fought on regardless, we have forced changes to the government’s plans for pensions in 2006. We defeated the employers in court over co-responding in 2007. We have just seen the government take a major change of direction over ill-health pensions. Campaigning can and does work. Please make sure you do your bit.

And finally ... some good news

In the past few years good news has often been hard to find in the UK fire and rescue



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

service. However, I know that many members will have been pleased to see the increased and equalised commutation rates issued for the Firefighter Pension Scheme. The new commutation factors will mean that members who choose to commute a portion of their pension on retirement will receive a greater lump sum payment for each portion of pension commuted. We have argued for these changes for a long time and are pleased that the issue has been addressed.

However, we will continue to press for improved backdating of the arrangements. There has currently been no explanation for the cut-off date chosen for the change. We will also continue to argue that the commutation arrangements in the New Firefighter Pension Scheme do not adequately reflect current life expectancy. They need improving too.

Matt Wrack

The 2002/3 strike led to a five-year pay deal. We now need longer-term scheme for today.

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an electric
garden shredder
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win a Ryobi
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garden
shredder



COVER PICTURE
PAUL BOX

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JULY 2008

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PAUL BOX/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



The 2.45% rise will put a competent firefighter on a basic annual rate of £27,851

2.45% pay rise agreed

PAY

The National Joint Council agreed a pay rise of 2.45% for 2008, taking effect on 1 July. This rise is in line with the calculation of the APT formula agreed in 2003 and which was set as the aim of the union by conference in 2007 and 2008.

The 2.45% rise applies to all pay points and will put a competent firefighter on a basic annual rate of £27,851. CPD will also rise by 2.45%.

General Secretary Matt Wrack said: "I do not expect any of us are jumping for joy. It is a low rise and is below the real rate of inflation. We warned of this at our annual conference in May. That's why, as conference agreed, we are reviewing our pay strategy."

"Our message to fire service employers and government is this: There must be a more robust and longer term mechanism for deciding pay."

"If employers want an annual debate about pay - well we'll have to decide each

year whether the deal is good enough or whether we need to respond with industrial action."

"That's no way to run a fire service but if that is the path the employers choose they will have to live with the consequences."

"We are keen to avoid industrial action and we have made that clear. But we will not see our living standards eroded by inflation and low pay settlements."

➔ For updated pay rates visit: www.fbu.org.uk

Victims remembered as inquiry set to open

STOCKLINE DISASTER

A public inquiry into the Stockline disaster will open in July. It will examine the circumstances surrounding the incident, seek to learn the lessons and make recommendations on how to avoid such a tragedy in future.

The fourth anniversary of the disaster was marked on May 11 at the memorial garden outside the factory where nine people died in one of Scotland's worst industrial accidents.

Families of the victims were joined by the local community as more than 100 people turned up at a short ceremony, at the site in Grovepark Street, Maryhill, Glasgow.

Members of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, officials from the FBU, STUC and representatives and congregation members from local churches showed their support for the families of the five men and four women



Firefighters joined other rescue services in the hunt for survivors of the blast

who died on May 11, 2004, when a massive explosion caused the building to collapse.

ICL Tech and ICL Plastics were last year fined £400,000 after they admitted breaches of health and safety law. A build-up of liquid petroleum gas led to the explosion at the factory.

Sounding off!

STEVE HARMAN

Brigade Secretary, Lancashire

Guantanamo detentions

The United States Government has illegally detained in its military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, over 700 people from across the globe without allowing them access to a fair trial – some are still being held have now been detained for over six years.

According to Amnesty International during this period, Donald Rumsfeld the US Secretary of Defence, approved the use of interrogation techniques that included; hooding, stripping, sensory deprivation, isolation, the use of the stress position, the use of dogs to 'induce stress', environmental manipulation and sleep deprivation.

Last month the US Supreme Court settled once and for all that the ancient right of habeas corpus – granting every individual in the custody of the US government the right



to challenge the basis for their detention in a court of law – extends to the detainees of Guantanamo Bay.

The US Government's disregard for international law and the basic human rights of those illegally detained – in particular the US Government's use of torture during interrogation – must be condemned.

It is also deeply concerning though that there are allegations that the British security services may have collaborated by accepting information known to have been gained under torture.

All those who believe in the basic human rights welcomed the release of the four British residents from the United States military prison at Guantanamo Bay in December 2007.

However, the fact is it took several years and a change of British prime minister before this was achieved.

This issue was debated at FBU annual conference in May and it was agreed that the Union will now raise with the relevant Government Ministers these concerns, urging the British Government to do all in its power to obtain open and fair trials for those still detained, or to secure their immediate safe release.

Attack on right to strike

TRADE UNION RIGHTS

The Union has spoken out against an attack by the Government against the right to strike.

The Government briefed the media that it was ready to invoke emergency powers in the Civil Contingencies Act to draft in soldiers to break the oil tanker drivers' dispute.

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack said: "The FBU is extremely concerned about the potential of the Civil Contingencies Act to be used to organise strike-breaking.

"There is no evidence that the UK fire service has ever failed to respond adequately to the seriousness of terrorist events. We believe that some employers, with the encouragement of the Government, are using this legislation to organise strike-breaking activities that can only undermine good industrial relations.

"We would urge the

Government to avoid inflammatory actions against trade unions in the event of industrial action."

There was widespread concern within parliament about these proposals. MPs tabled an early day motion (1761) that regretted that Government sources had threatened the use of emergency powers against striking tanker drivers. It said: "This inflammatory threat sets back the process of achieving a negotiated settlement in this dispute."

John McDonnell MP, the primary sponsor and secretary of the FBU parliamentary group said: "When the Government introduced the Civil Contingencies Act many of us warned that it would be used against trade unionists and this latest threat from Downing Street confirms our concerns that emergency powers could be used to undermine trade union rights."

For more information and updates visit www.fbu.org.uk



Striking tanker drivers talk to union officials at Kingsbury oil depot, in North Warwickshire

In brief

◆ The June conference of the GMB union called for the re-introduction of National Standards of Fire Cover.

GMB central executive member Lorraine Parker (above) said: "Wherever you lived in the UK, you could be confident that you would get the same standard of response from the fire services ... The risk-based system introduced in the place of national standards is a system geared towards cuts, turning one of the UK's finest public services into a fire and rescue service by postcode lottery."



ANDREW WARD



LGA chair Councillor Les Byrom, Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda, Patrick Carberry, Stewart Brown, Yannick Dubois, CFOA President Steve McGuirk and TV presenter Nicholas Owen at the award ceremony

Union proud of diversity award

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Union is "very proud" of its National Gay and Lesbian Committee, which won first place in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Awards.

The awards, presented by the department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Chief Fire Officers

Association and the Local Government Association, were announced at a conference hosted by CLG to mark the launch of the Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2008 to 2018. The top award for outstanding achievement in leadership went to the FBU National Gay and Lesbian Committee.

Committee secretary Pat

Carberry who, together with committee chair Yannick Dubois and Stewart Brown, FBU executive member for G&L accepted the prize on behalf of the committee, said: "Our service recognises that homophobia is an issue that will not be ignored and that those involved in challenging the abusers and representing and supporting the victims deserve full recognition."



FBU Conference is on Youtube

FBU-TUBE

You will have read about the Union's Annual Conference in *Firefighter* – why not view debates and discussions about key FBU campaigns online?

Watch delegates pledging the defence of our control members' jobs, highlighting the issues on ill-health pensions and pay and raising the profile of the Union work on equality and international issues.

→ www.youtube.com/fbutube

'Bonanza in the boardroom, while we must tighten belts'

"We are being told to tighten our belts – but those at the top are told – put your faces in the trough and feast away," General Secretary Matt Wrack told the TUC's public sector pay rally on June 9 in London.

"We have seen a bonanza of boardroom pay. We see city bonuses that dwarf the entire spending on my service, for example, handed to a few thousand people in the city."

Before the meeting hundreds of public sector workers, from firefighters to teachers and civil

servants lobbied their MPs to press their case for fair wage rises.

Other unions at the rally have warned that strikes are inevitable if pay offers do not improve. Unison is balloting 900,000 council staff and the civil service union PCS is also set to ballot members over strike action.

"The anger and resentment of public service workers will spill over into strikes this summer," said Dave Prentis. "Be warned: low pay, low morale versus ever-increasing food and fuel bills is a toxic mix."



Matt Wrack: city bonuses dwarf spending on fire service



◆ The FBU will be attending the Hazards Conference on 18–20 July 2008 at the University of Keele, Stoke on Trent. The theme will be of "an inspected workplace is a safer workplace" with a focus on organising. 500-odd union health and safety reps and activists will be able to learn and exchange ideas at a mixture of plenary, workshops and campaigning meetings. New FBU H&S packs due to be delivered to FBU safety reps over the summer will be on display at the FBU stall.

◆ At the National Joint Council meeting in Northern Ireland on June 10 paragraphs in the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) on dignity and fairness at work were updated to imbed the principles of equality for all members of the fire services. The language was made clearer and the commitment to working together to achieve these aims was strengthened.



The Festival Fireworks (now Alpha Fireworks) factory near Lewes in East Sussex after the 2006 explosion

Owners of fatal explosion factory are charged with manslaughter

The owner of the fireworks factory where two firefighters died tackling an explosion has been charged with their manslaughter.

Martin Winter, 50, boss of East Sussex-based Alpha Fireworks Ltd, and his son Nathan Winter, 23, were each charged with two counts of manslaughter after being arrested in February, and were to appear at Lewes Magistrates' Court on June 18.

Retained duty system firefighter Geoff Wicker, 49, died alongside support officer Brian Wembridge, 63, in the blast at the site at Marlie Farm near Lewes, East Sussex, on December 3 2006.

The family-run company, which was known at the time as Festival Fireworks UK Ltd, is one of the biggest firework importers in the UK.

Alpha Fireworks Ltd were summonsed for breaches of the manufacture and storage of Explosive Regulations 2005, police said.

Twelve other people were injured in the tragedy, including nine members of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, a Sussex Police sergeant and two members of the public.

The FBU has expressed a hope that, in the interests of the families and relatives of the bereaved, the trial will proceed speedily.

'IRMPs need to take into account where businesses are failing to comply'

Full inquests into the deaths of Geoff Wicker and Brian Wembridge have yet to be held as inquiries by Sussex Police and the Health and Safety Executive continue.

The FBU continues its own investigation to identify good practice and bad practice for monitoring and regulating activities at Marlie

Farm, as well as for the safe management of ESFRS operational activities at the farm.

As part of this investigation recommendations will be made to improve the health, safety and welfare of FBU members and the communities they serve, identifying areas of weakness within the UK's systems for regulating, monitoring and classifying fireworks.

FBU regional secretary Jim Parrott said: "Since local integrated risk management plans have been introduced they have assumed best-case scenarios – that the legislation is good, that guidance for regulations is good and businesses are complying with their legal obligations on fire safety. The reality is different.

"The firefighters who have died on duty in recent years have all lost their lives in commercial premises because the owners have struggled to comply with regulation and guidance.

"IRMPs need to take into account where businesses are failing to comply."

Privatisation mapped out

JOHN DRAKE, REGIONAL SECRETARY, FBU SOUTH WEST

“ In March it was announced that there would be redundancies in South West control rooms as a result of the Government’s misguided and flawed regionalisation of fire control in England.

This has sparked a debate within all fire service workplaces about what exactly the regionalisation of controls will mean – and the impact that this will have on firefighters.

What is abundantly clear is that the Government does not want a highly-skilled, well-paid workforce in regional control centre (RCCs).

Guidance “strongly recommended” to the companies controlling RCCs was issued in March by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

It shows how to ensure that the FBU won’t be recognised; it suggests offering reduced rates of pay for any redeployment and shows that if the employee refuses this they will not get any redundancy payment; it tells us that there are new and far more in-depth security checks that, if they are not passed, will mean no job and may even result in discipline and dismissal; and it tells us that fixed-term contracts effectively mean casual labour.

What regionalisation of fire controls will lead to, a few years down the line, is the hiving off of the local authority controlled companies (LACCs) currently running RCCs to the private sector.

This will be the first true privatisation in the UK fire and rescue service.

Now, Ministers will tell you that is not the case. They will say that the UK fire and rescue service will remain in public ownership. They will say all the words that they think will reassure you and I.

However, the experience of other public sector trade unions shows a very different picture –

health, education, prisons and the civil service remain at the forefront of this Government’s privatisation agenda. So, what does the future holds for firefighters?

I make no apology for plagiarising the German Pastor Martin Niemoller:

First they came for control, but I did nothing – for I am not in control

Then they came for the retained, but I did nothing – for I am not retained

Then they came for the officers, but I did nothing, for I am not an officer

Then they came for me and there was no one left to fight for me!

The fight to save our control members’ jobs is a fight for all. This is not only because the arguments put forward by Ministers and civil servants do not convince the vast majority of the fire and rescue industry. This is not only because the loss of local control rooms will not result in one extra life being saved or one second off attendance times.

It is also because our control members deserve our full support and solidarity to stave off being sacked – because that is the stark truth. Forget “redundancy”: it’s called being sacked!

The executive council emergency resolution carried unanimously at FBU annual conference calls for a recall of conference with a recommendation for national strike action should one of our members receive a formal notice of compulsory redundancy. This is a very real prospect.

All branches and members should be considering the impact that this Government’s flawed regionalisation of controls will have on them, not only in the short term but also long term.

Fight privatisation now or wait until it comes to your station.





GOVERNMENT ACTS ON FBU PENSION LUMP SUM DEMANDS

Longstanding FBU demands for an increase in the rates of commutation and equalisation of these rates between male and female members of the FPS have been met and a number of members are now set to gain a major boost to their retirement money

All members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme who have retired since 1 October 2007 will receive an increased lump sum.

Longstanding FBU demands for an increase in the rates of commutation – the process of converting an annual pension into a one-off lump sum – and equalisation of rates between male and female members of the FPS have been met.

Since converting a pension into a lump sum reflects the period over which the pension would otherwise be paid, commutation rates should improve as life expectancies improve. The higher the commutation factor, the greater the lump sum received for each pound of pension surrendered.

Sean Starbuck, FBU National Officer responsible for pensions, said: “The Union has demanded for some time that if the department for Communities and Local Government insists upon changes to the pension schemes because life expectancies are improving, it should see the logic of their policy through and improve the commutation factors. We are pleased that CLG has listened to our demands.”

‘The Union has demanded for some time that the department should see the logic of its policy and improve the commutation factors. We are pleased that CLG has listened to our demands’

The amendments will produce a higher lump sum available by commutation for both male and female scheme members. The commutation factor is the lump sum value per £100 commuted from the annual salary.

The previous commutation factors ranged from £1,110 for a 65-year-old male to £1,500 for a male aged 50 years old or under and £1,320 for a 65-year-old female to £1,725 for a female aged 50 years old or under. The

new rates are gender neutral and range from £1,400 for age 65 to £1,900 for age 49 and below.

The other change is that the factors now recognise completed months instead of just completed years.

This means that the differential in amount is less severe.

Taking the example of a commutation lump sum, under the old factors in FPS Rule B7, a 54-year-old scheme member choosing to commute £6,000 of their final salary would receive £87,900 (£6,000 x 14.65) if male and £99,600 (£6,000 x 16.60) if female.

But using the new factors, which are gender neutral, for a scheme member of 54 the lump sum would be calculated as follows: £6,000 x 18.2 = £109,200 – an increase of £21,300 for a male and £9,600 for a female.



Members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme will benefit from the changes



PAUL BOX/REPORTERDIGITAL.CO.UK

No more than 25% of the pension may be commuted and unless the member retires with 30 years pensionable service or more, or retired at age 55 or over, the lump sum derived from commutation may not exceed 2.25 times the amount of the pension before commutation.

The reason for such limits is that the FPS has not taken advantage of the greater leeway that is now allowed under a new tax regime that came into force in April 2006 and the Union will continue to press for it to do so.

Commutation rates in the New Firefighters Pension Scheme have not changed. The rate remains £12 lump sum for each £1 of pension surrendered, regardless of the member's age or gender. This 12:1 "one size fits all" factor has been adopted in the new arrangements for all public sector pension schemes and is not at all generous.

The FBU will continue to press for improvements but Sean Starbuck said members would appreciate that this involves government

Some members who retired before the date set for the change in commutation rates are very unhappy that they have missed out and the Union is currently looking at this situation.

policy applicable right across the public sector and not just in the NFPS.

The new commutation rules for the FPS are backdated until 1 October 2007. FPS members who have retired since then will need to have their lump sum recalculated and will be entitled to an additional payment – as will firefighters who left with a deferred pension which has been brought into payment since 1 October 2007.

Some members who retired before that date are very unhappy that they have missed out on this change and the Union is currently looking at this situation.

Members entitled to the additional lump sum will be notified automatically.

→ More info and updates visit: www.fbu.org.uk and for advice contact your local official.

TAKE ADVICE

Commuting a pension is not necessarily a sensible step to take; for some members the residual pension after commutation will not provide an adequate income in retirement. The Union cannot advise you whether or not to commute or how much of your pension to commute. By law, only a regulated financial adviser can do that. It is an important decision that you need to take at the point of retirement and if you are in any doubt you should seek financial advice.



STEFANO CAGNONI

Retired FBU member Martin Marrion's home was threatened when his pension was cut off

New guidance on ill-health pensions said to be 'imminent'

As *Firefighter* went to press, the draft Communities and Local Government circular that was placed before delegates at FBU Annual Conference in May had yet to be issued. However the Union had been informed by senior CLG



pensions official Martin Hill that it was "imminent".

The Union is also considering the guidance document for independent qualified medical practitioners (IQMPs) that was left unfinished before the Union went to conference.

The key sentence "provided the member can carry out one of the duties of the role he/she cannot be permanently unfit" has been removed.

The FBU has put forward further amendments to the remainder of the document and is awaiting a final document.



Making the service a better place to work

Since the launch of the fire service's equality and diversity strategy in May, many members and officials have been querying it. Here are answers to some common questions.



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Trainee Emma Pass with colleagues
at Tamworth Station

the fire and rescue service is a career opportunity for them and will be encouraging women to apply through the same processes as everybody else. The fire service historically and today is still seen as white and male dominated and therefore many women do not feel or realise that they can join or even contribute positively to the fire service.

Why is the fire and rescue service getting away with positive discrimination to recruit women?

Fire and rescue services are not getting away with positive discrimination in attempting to recruit 15% of all trainees for operational roles be women by 2013. What they will be doing is taking positive action, which is a lawful process developed to encourage women and ethnic minorities to consider the fire service as a career. At the point of application women will still have to go through the same processes as everybody else.

If women wanted to join the fire service they would apply anyway!

Many women won't 'just' join the fire and rescue service because the reality and image of it is predominantly white and male. It's hard to join the 'club' when you can't identify your potential role within it.

Our fire and rescue service won't be able to recruit that number of women!

Most fire and rescue services have reduced the number of firefighters that they are recruiting and as such this is a problem for all FBU members who are fighting to save the fire service. However; in fire and rescue services where they are only recruiting two or three firefighters a year, it would be very easy to ensure that one of those trainees was a woman and it would be unreasonable and unfair to suggest that in the whole of the local population that not a single woman wanted and was able to be a firefighter!

This is political correctness gone mad, we do a good job anyway!

Nobody is saying you don't do a good job. It's a great job to have but why can't it represent the society we live in and be a career opportunity for all.

51% of the population

are women with 46% of them making up the working population. Currently only 3% of firefighters are women.

FRSs are only attempting to have 15% of their trainees for operational roles to be women by 2013. Is that so unreasonable?

Won't standards be lowered to let women in?

The department of Communities and Local Government worked for a number of years developing a national standard for recruitment and selection for the role of a firefighter. This standard was thoroughly researched and tested on existing firefighters and new trainees.

The Government's strategy recommends that the nationally developed recruitment and selection standard be applied within all fire and rescue services as this ensures consistency across FRS'. If yours isn't, then perhaps you should be asking them why not and encourage them to adopt it for the sake of fairness. So no, standards will not be lowered.

What do we have to give up reaching these targets!

You don't have to give anything up but for the sake of the unity of the FBU, let's support and encourage women into the fire service to create an interesting working environment for us all. Let's stick together and take ownership by making sure that management are fair with their recruitment process and procedures.

We've had the thematic review which set targets before? If that didn't work then why are we repeating the same old thing again?

The target set following the thematic review was regarding a final position in relation to numbers of women fire fighters compared to men. The difference today is that the target is a percentage of women trainees at recruitment stage.

FRSs should have learnt from their past mistakes and will have to prove that they are working towards the target for recruitment. This strategy is much more driven with the ability for FRS to obtain advice along the way and a reasonable time to achieve it.



MARTIN JENKINSON

With all these targets being set, there will be no white men allowed to join the fire service

A target set that expects 15% of all trainees for operational roles to be women by the year 2013 does not mean that white men will not be allowed. This actually means that 85% of all trainees will be male. In simple terms out of 20 trainees, three would be women and 17 trainees would be men.

Why are women getting preferential treatment in regard to recruitment?

There is no preferential treatment on recruitment. Fire and rescue services will be attempting to ensure that women know that

ATTEND YOUR **BR** **DEFEND** CONTROL

We will continue to campaign against the FireControl project because it will:

- Not result in the savings being claimed
- Result in reduced call-handling capacity and resilience
- Impact upon the safe and efficient mobilisation and control of fire appliances, personnel and equipment
- Lead to a worse service for the people of England
- Lead to a loss of jobs for firefighter (control) FBU members
- Still leave much work currently completed by brigade controls be carried out by individual brigades

In the event of the Westminster Government forcing the project the minimum aims of the FBU must be to secure:

- Guarantees of no compulsory redundancy
- NJC Grey Book conditions as a minimum including FBU recognition for all staff required to work in the regional control centres

Conference instructs the executive council, regional committees and brigade committees to use all means available to pursue these aims, including such industrial action as may be appropriate.

Source: Executive Council Emergency Resolution, passed unanimously, Annual Conference 2008.



DAVE ALLSEY

Firefighter
Salford, Greater Manchester

“Even the government’s own experts say there’s a high risk of total project failure, so it’ll be a huge gamble – a £1.4bn gamble. The total budget for the fire service is only £1.6bn.

In our area there can be five roads in the same area with the same name. Someone 50 miles away in a different county won’t be able to handle it. It will be dangerous, really dangerous. Firefighters need controllers with superb local knowledge. And say we do get problems, are we going to see the awful sight of fire appliances cruising the streets trying to find fires where people could be dying?

The government needs to listen to people who know what they are talking about – not consultants.

If they get away with sacking the people in the South West – it’ll happen everywhere. An injury to one, is an injury to all”

STUART BECKS

Firefighter
Folkestone, Kent

“This is not a local fight. It affects us all. If they get away with making this amount of redundancies in the South West it will give the green light to cut jobs everywhere. I’m prepared to do anything necessary to defend jobs whether in Falmouth or Folkestone.”



ANCH MEETING! L JOBS!

DEFEND CONTROL JOBS
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



NEVILLE WHITE
Firefighter
Garston, Hertfordshire

“All the firefighters I’ve spoken to in Hertfordshire are pretty despondent about regionalisation and very angry about the redundancy notices in the South West of the country. Whatever the South West needs, we’ll support them.

We’re really unhappy about the cost of setting up regionalisation. The money would be far better spent on frontline fire services, for better equipment and training.

In Hertfordshire, our control staff are fantastic. They know the local issues and the regular dailies that we face. We’re on first name terms with them. It makes for fast and better communication. All that will be lost with regionalisation. In our area the staff numbers in control would go from 26 to 9, so they won’t have the same capacity to help us as they do now.

The government will always go on about new software that gives us plans of where we have to go on a shout. But these plans won’t be able to glean the information we need and provide the essential back-up and invaluable help we get from our control centre.”

MARK PONTIUS
Firefighter, Malton,
North Yorkshire

“Regionalisation will be hugely expensive and unnecessary. It won’t improve anything. It’ll just demoralise the service. This isn’t progress, this is change for the sake of change. I support the control staff in the South West. Feelings are running strong in North Yorks. We’re behind them.”



MARIE SCOTT
Control
Cleveland

“I take great pride in my job and like all control personnel am highly trained to cope with often life-threatening situations. Why would we want to lose such valuable people?

They talk about improving resilience but we deal with a lot of chemical fires here in Cleveland and our resilience and response times are superb.

We have to cope with people panicking at incidents. If we don’t know the area they live in, it could jeopardise how they react to us. Regional controls mean poor local knowledge and this means a poorer service.

We’re all in this together. We could be the next control in the firing line. I’ll be supporting my colleagues in the South West.”

PHIL POOLE **Control, Derbyshire**

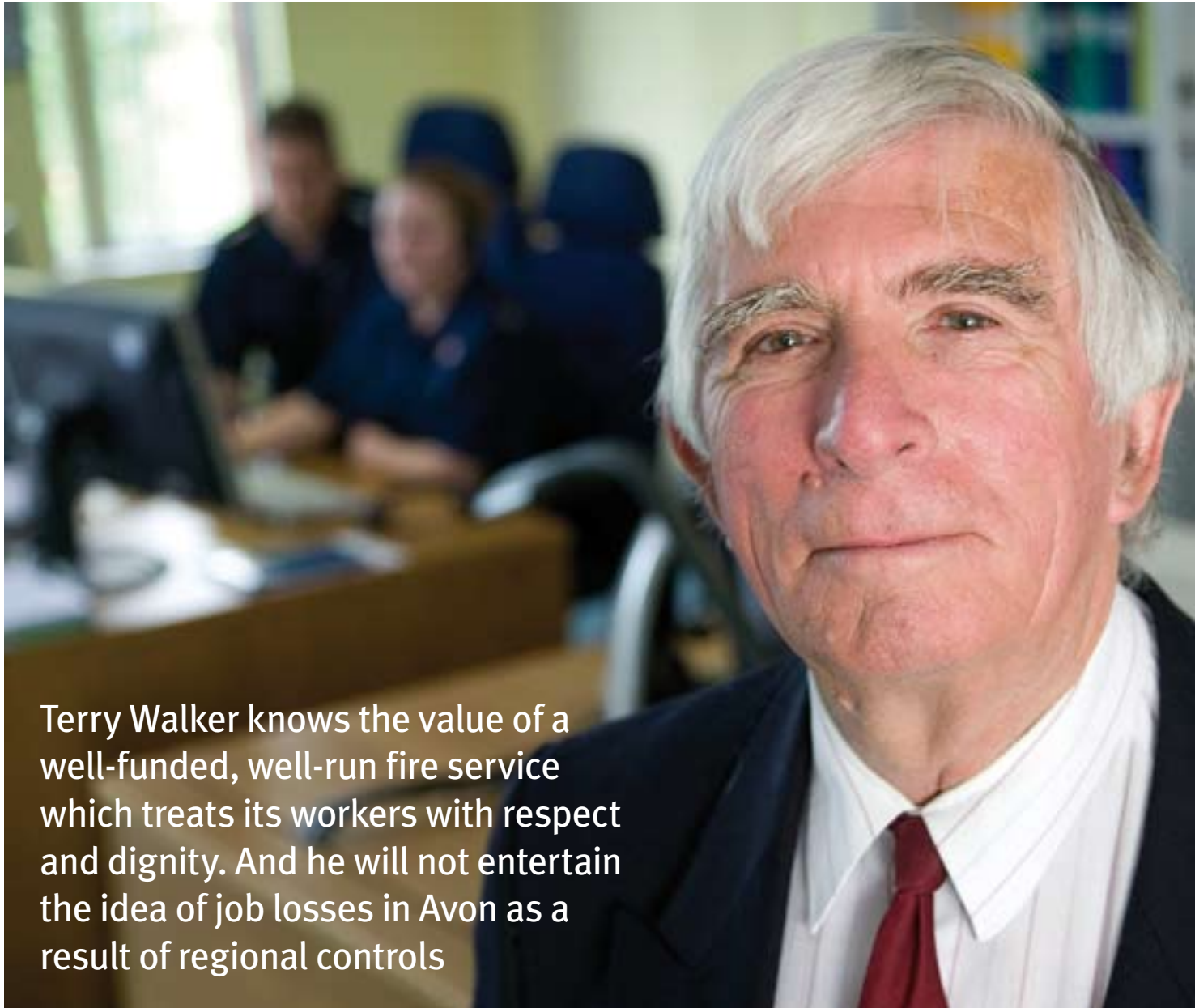
“There’s no justification for the government’s FireControl plan, either financially or morally, because lives will be put at risk.

They keep quoting resilience. If our control goes down in Derbyshire, then Leicester or Notts can call our firefighters out and vice versa. If one of these regional control centres went down another one a very long way away without local knowledge would have to effectively take the calls of all 7 brigades here in the East Midlands. They wouldn’t be able to cope and lives would be lost.

And we handle calls in 7 seconds. Regional call centres are estimating they will handle calls with a 15 second response. So it will take twice the time. It’s a nonsense.

If we don’t fight this regional control centres will be run by Rentokil or someone like that in a few years. I support my colleagues in the South West 100%.”





Terry Walker knows the value of a well-funded, well-run fire service which treats its workers with respect and dignity. And he will not entertain the idea of job losses in Avon as a result of regional controls

WHAT DOES A FIRE AUTHO

Terry Walker, chair of Avon Fire Authority, is a man who takes things personally. A trade unionist all his life and former (old) Labour MP for five years, he knows the value of treating workers with respect and dignity.

He also knows the value of a well-funded, well-run fire service, so when he hears that 123 staff across the south west of England are to lose their jobs as a result of government plans to press ahead with a regional control centre in Somerset, his hackles rise.

"As an emergency service, if people are killed tonight the main onus falls on myself and the chief fire officer," he says. "That

means we have to make sure the service is robust and up to standard.

"This wrong-headed, lunatic project is a nonsense and will certainly be neither robust nor up to standard. What it will be is a call centre, not a control centre and we've already seen the disastrous way that's happened with the police: a lot of questions are asked rather than sending the people to do the job."

The new centre in Taunton has come under fire from the public and local politicians who are alarmed at the faith placed in an untried computer system to guide crews to incidents, rather than local operators with specialised skills and local knowledge.

It's also been strongly condemned on many levels by the FBU, not least because of the job losses. This is a concern shared by Terry, who didn't hold back when he met the former Fire Minister, Angela Smith, last year.

"In the presence of the Minister, I made a pledge that we would lose no jobs in Avon," says Terry. "I told her I'm not prepared to make cuts for a regional control centre because the idea was ill thought-out, it was too costly and it would not give a better service."

Terry is as good as his word. Avon is the only authority in the south west of England guaranteeing no staff members will lose their jobs as a result of the new centre.

'I've seen seven chiefs in my time – but our no-cuts policy has always been the same'

elected MP for Kingswood in Bristol in 1974. When he lost his seat at the subsequent election, he bought a newsagent's business so he could continue his political career.

"I used to open my shop at four o'clock in the morning and be away by ten in order to do politics," he says with a smile. "I'm now 72 and retired. You can't be in politics for nearly 50 years and still be 36."

Consisting of 25 councillors appointed from local authorities, the fire authority meets six times a year to set the budget and make policy decisions on how to spend that budget.

"We have power over everything relating to the authority except the operational side, which is the responsibility of the chief," explains Terry, before adding: "but we appoint the chief!"

"I've had seven chiefs during my time as chair and they've all been quite different, although our policy of no cuts has always been the same.

"We've moved appliances around and come up against the union sometimes, but what we've done is to make sure we're strong enough to withstand the pressures of this great city and surrounding area."

While admitting to the odd tussle with the FBU, their relationship remains coveted throughout the country.

"I keep very closely in touch with the Union," said Terry. "I think a lot of the problems they get in places like Merseyside and Norfolk is because they don't keep in touch with the union.

"Individual firefighters, rightly, are concerned about decisions that are being made about the future of their job and the future of the service. They come through the union and I'm available always to answer those queries.

"A lot of them are of a political nature

Working For You



ROSE JONES

West Midlands Brigade Secretary

In the last week of May, the initial staffing pool (ISP) figures for the regional control centre (RCC) for the West Midlands region were announced.

When the RCC in Wolverhampton becomes operational, it will have 48 staff. By the time the last FRS cuts over in September 2010, it is "anticipated" that staffing levels will have increased to a "steady state" of 82. Half of all existing control staff in brigade controls in Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands will lose their jobs.

As *Firefighter* went to press, the local authority controlling company (LACC) had provided no information on how many managers, what levels of managers or how many control operators are required. They do believe, though, that we will be providing "a robust staffing system organised within a team based environment."

In the real world what we know is that there are no job roles – nor detail how many people on each role are required. The shift system means that when you do an overlap shift you will owe the LACC five hours. And you pay this back when they want you to. What notice do you get? Who knows?

Initial selection for jobs will begin around November 2008 with all staff selected knowing by March 2009 if they have a job.

What does the selection test entail – no-one knows? And what of those not successful? And will they offer incentives to retain staff? Not known, though a senior manager in West Midlands FRS did offer "a bar of chocolate every Friday." This is the contempt in which they hold professional emergency fire control staff here. Our chief fire officer will be lucky to have any staff after March 2009, let alone experienced people.

Most staff have had a talk and letter from senior control managers. All feel even more disillusioned than before with still no more to go on to make informed decisions on their lives and futures.

A well attended branch meeting on June 4 in West Midlands, attended by members of the Control Staff National Committee, was informed of Annual Conference resolutions and spirits were lifted. The fight continues!

→ Rose Jones is former Control Rep, West Midlands region

RITY CHAIR DO?

For those who know him, this decision – shamefully not copied by other brigades in the region – is no surprise: Terry has form.

Elected chair of Avon Fire Authority in 1981, he is proud of his record of never having sacked a firefighter, never closed a fire station and never taken an appliance off the streets.

"My policy has always been no cuts," he says. "Mainly because I believe it's right and secondly because I think if you're asking people to go on the line for an emergency service, then they deserve very special treatment and we regard our employees, our firefighters, as very important to us."

An accountant by profession, Terry was

because they require a political decision about what we do.

"You cannot expect the chief fire officer to deal with political matters. He keeps out of the political side and I, very largely, keep out of the operational side.

"There are authorities that want a fight with the FBU. Why? They lose the confidence of the workforce.

"My philosophy is: we rely on people in the fire service to go beyond the call of duty. That's what we're asking them to do every day and every night.

"And if we're asking them to do that we must be fair with them."

Bumpy ride?

As the summer holidays get nearer, here are some tips to avoid travel sickness

TRAVEL SICKNESS

Travel sickness, or motion sickness, is when you feel sick or vomit because you are moving. It is caused by repeated unusual movements during travelling.

Travel sickness is common. Children experience travel sickness more often than adults, but they often grow out of it as they get older. Symptoms of travel sickness may include: nausea, vomiting, yawning, becoming cold and sweaty and turning pale, producing excess saliva, rapid breathing and headaches. These symptoms often worsen as the journey continues, but usually get better quickly once the journey is over. In a few people the symptoms go on for a few hours, or even days, after the journey ends.

Causes

Repeated movements, such as going over bumps or round in a circle, can send mixed messages to your brain and the conflict in your senses can make you feel sick. Travel sickness can also be triggered by anxiety or smells, such as food or petrol. Sometimes trying to read a book or a map triggers travel sickness.

Treatment

Your GP can prescribe medicines for travel sickness prevention, or you can buy them over the counter at a pharmacy.

Medicines for travel sickness include hycosine, which prevents the confusing nerve signals going to your brain. Hyoscine is available in tablets that can be bought without a prescription from pharmacies.

They need to be taken around 30 minutes before you travel to be most effective, and the dose may need to be repeated during long journeys. Side effects include sleepiness, dry mouth and blurring of the vision, although these side effects are unusual at the low doses used for travel sickness. Antihistamines may also be useful but some can cause drowsiness, so if you are affected, do not drive.

Always ask your pharmacist for advice on which treatments are suitable, depending on your age, the severity of sickness, and other medicines you are taking. It is advisable to start taking medication before symptoms have appeared as most are ineffective once sickness occurs. Try to get some fresh air, sip some cold water and take a short walk if possible.

Alternative treatments include ginger, which can be eaten in a biscuit, in tea or can

SYMPTOMS OF TRAVEL SICKNESS

- ◆ nausea,
- ◆ vomiting,
- ◆ yawning,
- ◆ becoming cold and sweaty and turning pale,
- ◆ producing excess saliva,
- ◆ rapid breathing, and
- ◆ headaches

be crystallised. Peppermint may also help, which can be sucked as a sweet or drunk as a tea. These treatments appear to work in some people, but they have not been proven to work in clinical trials.

One technique that has been shown to work in a clinical trial is to breathe deeply and slowly, and while focusing on your breathing, listen to music on a MP3 player, or portable CD or tape player. Many airline pilots have reported that breathing deeply and slowly helps to reduce feelings of travel sickness.

Prevention

Do not eat large meals or drink alcohol before or during travelling. In a car, sit in the front seat if possible so you can get a clear view of the road.

Do not focus on something close by such as a book or film. Look at objects in the distance, or better still, close your eyes and try to sleep. Make sure the car is well ventilated. Stop for a break and stretch regularly throughout the journey.

On a boat, go on deck and get as much fresh air as possible and focus on the horizon. If you cannot go outside, sit in the middle of the boat, where it moves least. If you feel sick lie down and keep your eyes closed. In a plane, try and sit over the wings where it is most stable.

If you are sick, replace lost fluids with frequent small sips of cold, still water and breathe slowly and deeply through your mouth.

➔ More info: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk



MARK CLARKE/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Neighbours ...

Q My next door neighbour has asked me to cut back my tree because she says it is cutting out her light. Do I have to do this, and if so, should she share in the costs of the tree surgery?

A Unless the tree is overhanging your neighbour's property or is dangerous or causing damage then you are not obliged to have the tree cut back. However, in the interests of good relations with your neighbour it would be advisable to discuss with her having the work done and whether she will contribute to the cost. Neighbour disputes are best avoided as they can cause long-term problems, particularly when trying to sell a property as they have to be declared and can affect the value.

If the tree is overhanging your neighbour's property then it is unlawfully interfering with her use and enjoyment of that part of her land. It is also a form of trespass and the neighbour has the right to cut it back to the boundary line if you refuse to do it. She should return to you any branches or fruit removed from the tree.

Before either you or the neighbour cut the tree back it is best to check with the local authority if it is subject to a preservation order as it may be protected from pruning or felling unless it is classed as a nuisance, dangerous or dead.

Overhanging or poorly maintained trees can be dangerous and can damage property. A neighbour has the right to ask the local authority to serve a notice on the responsible person requiring them to cut it back or they will undertake the work

themselves and recover the costs.

Q My neighbour makes a great deal of noise most evenings, sometimes until late, disturbing the sleep of my children and so causing great distress to my family. What are my legal rights to put a stop to this?

First, approach the neighbour to settle matters amicably. If the problem continues then consider putting

your grievances in writing to them and, if the neighbour is a tenant, also write to the landlord. Think about the possibility of involving the police. Any ongoing problems need to be logged and it is advisable to keep a diary of events that may be useful to use as evidence in any future action.

For persistent problems, contact the Environmental Health Officer at the local authority. They have powers under Section 80 of the

Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993), to deal with noise nuisances. This could result in them serving a noise abatement notice. If this is not complied with, they may prosecute in the Magistrates' court, where a maximum fine of £5,000 may be imposed. Local authorities also have powers to seize noise-making equipment and/or apply for an injunction.

The local authority has a duty under s79 of the act to inspect the noise and therefore can be forced to do so if it refuses or does not appear willing to do so. You would need to go through the internal complaints procedure at the local authority then possibly refer the matter onto the Local Government Ombudsman.

If you wanted to take your own private action, you too could apply to the court under section 82 of the Act or take civil action. This can be expensive, and legal advice is likely to be necessary. At least three days written notice of intended action and details of the complaint needs to be sent to the person making the noise. If you are successful you may obtain an injunction to stop the nuisance and/or win damages. Civil action may be taken against the person causing the noise for either nuisance or harassment, if the action is deliberate. Again, any legal action taken against a neighbour may have to be declared to any buyer if you decide to move. This could affect the price and the sale overall.

→ Write in with your legal problem to legalbeagle@fbu.org.uk and those of widest relevance to FBU members in the workplace will be selected and answered in future editions. With thanks to Thompsons solicitors.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Legal Beagle

Answers to some frequently asked legal questions that members put to the FBU

'I'm not really interested in new-fangled trains'

When he was at primary school Tim James' parents took him for a ride on the Watercress Line ... now his own children enjoy the same experience – with the added thrill of being driven by their dad, sometimes when he's driving Daisy

When the Thomas the Tank Engine franchise pulls into town for school holiday treats, Tim James gets to drive "Daisy the Diesel Railcar" on the Mid-Hants Watercress Line.

But Tim, a self-confessed "railway fanatic", is quick to point out that driving trains on a preserved railway is not really the stuff of Toytown, even when well known "characters" from story books take to the rails. Volunteers are rigorously trained before they can take the controls with a train full of passengers.

"You can't just turn up and say you want to drive a train. There are a few paid maintenance staff, but drivers, signalmen and station staff are all volunteers and you have to show commitment before you are trained at the controls."

Learning from an experienced driver

Tim had no trouble showing his commitment – he used to work on the railways. Mirroring the way drivers were trained under the old British Rail system, would-be Watercress Line drivers start out as a "second man" riding in a cab learning from an



TIM JAMES

Firefighter Tim James was a member of ASLEF's Basingstoke branch before joining the FBU's Winchester branch, Hampshire. A self-confessed "railway fanatic," he spends his days off driving heritage steam and diesel trains at the preserved Watercress Line.

experienced driver – though women are, of course, welcome to train.

After a spell "driving under instruction" from a qualified colleague, trainee drivers are examined, and, if successful, "Passed Out". They are then qualified to drive the train.

Tim never actually took up train driving during his time on the railways. He wasn't really interested in the "new-fangled trains" that were coming along, and left in the early nineties to take up firefighting. But he is now driving the kind of train he always wanted to, and even wears old-style British Rail uniform, in keeping with the preserved railway engines and rolling stock.

The Watercress Line – which runs ten miles through an agreeable stretch of the Hampshire countryside – features mainly steam trains. But Tim has always loved diesel locomotives best, which is why he chose to



‘You can’t just turn up and say you want to drive a train. There are a few paid maintenance staff, but drivers, signalmen and station staff are all volunteers and you have to show commitment before you are trained at the controls’

drive the train that is transformed into Daisy the Diesel when necessary. It is a “heritage diesel multiple unit” which was withdrawn from service in the early nineties.

Dr Beeching – who slashed the rail network in the seventies – is an unlikely hero for those who love preserved railways, as Tim explains: “There are several preserved lines all round the country, mainly from those shut down by Dr Beeching.

Terrible at the time

“They have been re-opened by enthusiasts and societies. Many people say that Beeching did us a favour, though it was terrible at the time. If they were all still open there would be nowhere to run preserved steam and diesel locos.”

Daisy is the only diesel train in the Thomas the Tank Engine stable, outnum-

bered, as she is by steam trains. But, steam or diesel, the nostalgia count is high for anyone stepping back in time and into a heritage railway carriage.

Thomas-themed events are popular with children and adults alike, and help generate income for the lines as well as the company that holds the Thomas the Tank Engine intellectual property rights.

But most of the time, the line functions without any gimmicks, providing a pleasant ride from Alresford to Alton throughout the year – weekends only in winter – except for a break in November when the line shuts for essential repairs.

Tim’s enthusiasm for trains first took hold when he was at primary school and his parents took him for a ride on the Watercress Line. Now his own children enjoy the same experience – with the added thrill of being driven by their dad, sometimes when he’s driving Daisy.

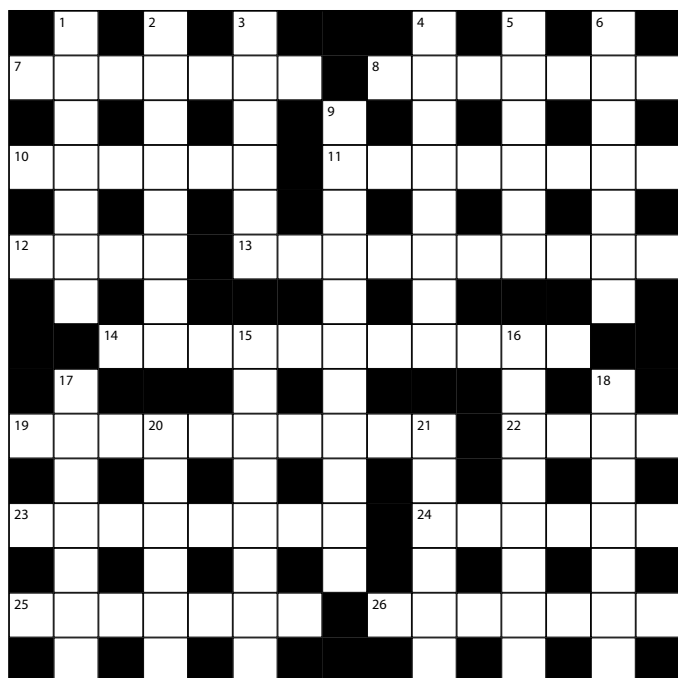
He left the rail industry because he felt he needed a career change – and, frankly, the rolling stock wasn’t quite what it used to be. He’s swapped the ASLEF Basingstoke branch for the FBU’s Winchester branch, and says both sectors nurture team working, camaraderie and share a culture where service badges and retirement functions are valued.

By pursuing a career as a firefighter and taking up train driving, Tim now feels he “gets the best of both worlds”.

And if there was ever any doubt about how keen Tim is on trains and railway heritage, a part of his email address is a bit of a give away. What on earth can 125 stand for? “I think it’s a train number,” he says. “But we’ll pass quickly over that.”

→ www.watercressline.co.uk/

Quick Crossword

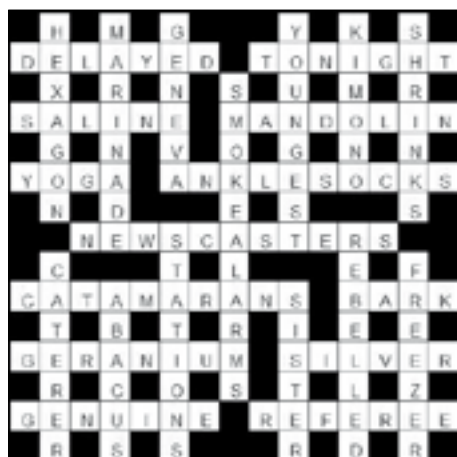


ACROSS

- 7 After the event (7)
- 8 Crazy kind of fruit? (7)
- 10 Curries (6)
- 11 Few leave here alive (apart from the staff) (8)
- 12 Honey factory (4)
- 13 Firefighter's feline gossip-merchant (7,3)
- 14 Mind-expanding, hallucinatory, bizarre – it's a 60s thing! (11)
- 19 More than just a heavy shower (10)
- 22, 24 What we say No2 (4,6)
- 23 Italian eatery (8)
- 24 See 22
- 25 In a tired, foot-dragging way (7)
- 26 Thin decorative coverings, especially in wood (7)

DOWN

- 1 Made of clay (7)
- 2 Stuffed fabric case designed for sleeping on (except in fire stations) (8)
- 3 Ends (6)
- 4 Such as The FireFighter or a cassette of ammo (8)
- 5 Do up; secure (6)
- 6 Papal home (7)
- 9 Trained to assist doctors and give first aid (11)
- 15 They shouldn't be regionalised (8)
- 16 Useful for seeing in the dark (8)
- 17 Cone-bearing tree (7)
- 18 Where things really do grow on trees (7)
- 20 Shave with them (6)
- 21 Essential kit for rising to the occasion (6)



Solution to June crossword

June issue quiz answers

- 1. Steptoe and Son
- 2. Fawley Towers
- 3. Rising Damp
- 4. Only fools and horses
- 5. The League of Gentlemen
- 6. Ab Fab

Winner of the May quiz was Damian Griffiths of Bristol



Prize Quiz

Win a Ryobi Rsh-2455 electric garden shredder

Just answer the questions below
The theme this issue is geography

1 Who was the Italian explorer after whom America was named?



2 After which revolutionary leader was Bolivia named?

3 Which group of South Atlantic islands are named after a 17th century treasurer of the British Navy?

4 Which Australian capital was once called Palmerston, but changed its name in honour of a famous naturalist?

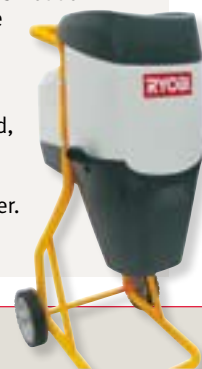


5 Which English county used to be divided into ridings?

6 George Everest was responsible for the naming of what?

HOW TO ENTER

To win the Ryobi electric garden shredder please send your answers to the Prize Quiz by 31 July 2008 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (July 2008) FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.



StationCat

... brings you the news they don't want you to hear

Station chimp



Station chimp consultancy services (these chimps are so good with numbers) are having an impact. The Government has stopped claiming in press releases that the number of fires is falling.

This was blatantly untrue, although the silly fools are sticking to their story. The press release alongside the latest *Fire Statistics Monitor* boasts the number of primary fires is falling.

This is indeed technically true ... for primary fires. What that release does not make clear is that the total number of fires rose by several thousand.

The total number of fires will, of course, fall in 2007. It was one of the wettest years ever, so be ready for an astounding drop.

That won't mean the fire service was sitting around doing nothing in 2007. Many months were taken up dealing with the flooding and its aftermath.

You won't read that in the press release when the figures come out. It will all be put down to the wisdom of policy in driving down numbers, not driving rain.

Blue day in Merseyside



It was surely a blue day for firefighters in Merseyside and across the UK. Councillor Les Byrom has been voted off

Merseyside fire authority, a move which has also seen him out of the chair of the National Joint Council.

Proud holder of a CBE, Byrom excelled himself as the Conservative spokesman for the fire authority. He oversaw an unprecedented attack on jobs and such a deterioration in industrial relations in Merseyside that it provoked the longest local dispute in the history of the fire service.

His departure should perhaps not surprise us that much, coinciding as it did with an outbreak of common sense among councillors on relations with staff and their representatives in the Fire Brigades Union.

In comments that must have brought a tear to the eye of all who knew him well, Cllr Byrom told local reporters that he believed "passionately in our emergency services. We ask them to put their lives at risk to keep us safe in our homes and the least we

can do is to fight to give them a better deal." OK, maybe not for staff, but for Cllr Byrom surely a blue day (or should I say red).

For the Tory councillor and prospective Tory candidate for parliament believes "only Labour" could give fire crews a "better deal". Yes he's shredding his Conservative party card after 30 years – 11 of these gaining his "political apprenticeship" during the vicious Thatcher period. And it is in the ranks of New Labour that he is hoping to make the most of his talents.

Thank goodness these have been recognised. "Les Byrom is a man of great ability, experience and political stature and I'm delighted he is applying to join the Labour Party," commented Parmjit Dhanda MP, the New Labour fire minister who – under the FireControl project – is overseeing the biggest mass redundancy threat in the history of the UK fire service.

'Noddy' gets his medal



And so it is that Brian Hesler has finally been honoured for his great work at Northumberland FRS with a Queen's Fire Service Medal.

Among his achievements as chief fire officer of the North East brigade are an unstinting commitment to mortgaging the future of the Service through the public finance initiative. No matter that consultants Cap Gemini concluded in a Government-commissioned analysis of projects in the fire service that PFI was an "expensive and time-consuming way of procuring assets".

He's planning to close four fire stations and replace them with two remote PFI stations – and cutting 30 firefighter posts to pay for it. This is the decision that led Blyth Valley MP Ronnie Campbell in a parliamentary debate to suggest the chief to "go back to where he came from—Noddyland, where he produced his Noddy policy."

'Noddy' Hesler has also made a name for himself as a master at industrial relations, having sent them to an all time low by withholding CPD payments and refusing to negotiate on rank-to-role.

There are some other considerations that may have swung it for the Queen's Fire Service Medal. One is the contribution of Northumberland to readiness for the terrorist threat. Except that while CLG might be under the impression that the

service is prepared nationally on New Dimension, after four years Northumberland firefighters still haven't had any training on mass decontamination. A record definitely worth a right royal award!



✂ if you have any snippets you think Station Cat should get his sharp claws into email: stationcat@fbu.org.uk

25-year badges



Kevin Stock (l) White Watch Clacton receives his 25-year badge from Branch Chairman **Dickie Barton**



Dave Warwick (l) white watch Clacton receives his 25-year badge from Branch Chairman **Dickie Barton**



Peter Mansi (r) Region 10 London receives his 25-year badge from Officers Secretary **Pan Poullais**



Rob Furnace (r) Ilkeston Fire Station receives his 25-year badge from Brigade Secretary **Mark Ferron**



Gary Lizzemore (r) Green Watch Euston Fire Station receives his 25-year badge from **Greg Edwards** Western Group 3 Secretary



Eddie Foster (l) and Nigel Barber (r) receive their 25-year badges from branch chairman **Jack Grady**



John Calvert, Dave Emburey and Steve Ryan (l-r), Region 10 London, receive their 25-year badges from Officers' Secretary **Pan Poullais**



John Day (r), Region 10 London, receives his 25-year badge from Officers' Chair **Richard Lockwood**

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



Trevor Meers (r), Region 10 London, receives his 25-year badge from Officers' Secretary **Pan Poullais**



AGC K Langtry (r) Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue receives his 25-year badge from ONC Chair **Allen Guest**

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→ **Region 9 Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk**
28 Atlantic Square, Station Road,
Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521
09rs@fbu.org.uk

→ **Region 10 London**
John Horner Mews, Frome Street,
Islington, London, N1 8PB
020 7359 3638
london@fbu.org.uk

→ **Region 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex**
Fire Station, Coldharbour Road,
Northfleet, Kent, DA11 8NT
01474 320473
11rs@fbu.org.uk

→ **Region 12 Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight**
The Fire Station, St Mary Street,
Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2HE
01494 513034
12rs@fbu.org.uk

→ **Region 13 Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset**
158 Muller Road, Horfield,
Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132
13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin

Advise your Brigade Membership Secretary 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

The line provides advice for **personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues.**

For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

T THOMPSONS SOLICITORS