

FireFighter

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

July 2014

Trying to make your pension disappear

**FBU pressure forces
fire minister Brandon
Lewis to put an end to
his vanishing trick with
pension proposals**

See p10





Matt Wrack

We rescue people, not banks

Inspiration from firefighters in Spain

*Rescatamos
Personas, No Bancos
We Rescue
People, Not Banks*

Over the past few weeks FBU members across the country have been photographed wearing the new t-shirt: We Rescue People, Not Banks. The origin of this slogan tells us a lot about our profession and the challenges we face.

Spain, like most of Europe, has suffered the consequences of the long economic crisis in the aftermath of the banking collapses of 2007/8. Like many others, the Spanish government reacted by forcing through cuts and austerity measures.

Unemployment and poverty have increased dramatically.

One consequence of this has been a dramatic increase in homelessness and the number of evictions as people struggle to pay their bills.

In February 2013, firefighters in A Coruña, a city in northern Spain, were sent to evict 86-year-old Aurelia Rey from the apartment where she had lived since 1979.

On arrival, the firefighters refused to help carry out the eviction. As news of this spread, firefighters adopted the slogan "We Rescue People, Not Banks".

This sums up the humanitarian role that firefighters are expected to play by local

communities. Yet the Spanish firefighters were being asked to implement evictions which were increasing as a result of growing poverty and economic hardship. At the same time, the same firefighters had themselves been facing cuts, closures and attacks on pay and pensions.

The Spanish firefighters' slogan expresses opposition to the cuts and closures and to attacks on pay and pensions. At the same time it highlights the vital life-saving, humanitarian role of our profession.

The slogan was soon flying

committees. Get hold of one - wear it with pride.

Strength and unity in difficult times

The fight against attacks on our pensions continues to be long and difficult. We are dealing with a Westminster government that is determined to force through cuts and attacks on public services. Money can be found for some things - like tax cuts for millionaires or bailing out the banks - but not for public services or those who deliver them.

As a result of campaigning by union members, fire minister Brandon Lewis has released the alternative, fully costed pension options that his department had been considering. What we now need is for the government to actually make some alternative proposals for our consideration.

Significant developments in N Ireland and a new legal challenge

The approach of Brandon Lewis is completely at odds with that of his counterpart in N Ireland, who has published proposals that would make firefighters' normal pension age 55.

This is a hugely significant development since it acknowledges the evidence-based case we have put forward over the past three years. We are now discussing the details of these proposals with FBU members.

The union has also launched a new legal challenge against the government on grounds of age discrimination. We have always been clear that we will consider all aspects of the attacks on our pensions with a view to challenging them legally.

Of course, there are no guarantees of success, but I hope you will be confident that we continue to examine all aspects of the attacks on our pensions with a view to improving the position of firefighters.

The campaign will use all possible tools - industrial, political or legal.

The campaign continues. Stay strong and stand together.



TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady and Matt Wrack joined pickets at Shoreditch in east London on 12 June.
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on banners from fire stations across much of Spain. It has been seen on firefighters' marches and demonstrations ever since.

Trade union firefighters in Barcelona designed a t-shirt that we have adapted as part of our campaign here in the UK. We will continue to distribute more of them over the coming weeks through FBU brigade

We held the longest strike action of the campaign so far, walking out for 24 hours on 12 June. Having seen the vibrant, energetic and inspiring picket lines, I would like to praise and congratulate you all for another great show of strength and unity.

It's those two values that have led us toward some significant developments.

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COLIN O'BRIEN



Cambridgeshire firefighters rally as the FBU pensions campaign continues – see pages 7, 10 and 12

LETTER

They expect us to bail them out

Thank you for keeping me informed.

But it is, to say at least, depressing to read of the continual attacks on our fire and rescue services personnel including those from chief fire officers and senior ranks, most of whom came up through the ranks themselves.

New Labour (or should that be New Tory) and this coalition – neither of whose parties were voted for to give a majority government – hand us these Victorian policies and bail out corrupt banks and expect the working folk that are lucky enough to have a decent job to bail them out.

I will continue to support our union in its struggles to get a fairer deal for our firefighters.

Thomas H Brown
OOT member
Scotland



The 2014 London Tunnel 2 Towers run takes place on Sunday 20 July – for more info go to www.tunnel2towersrun.org. Norfolk FRS band The Backdrafts (above) will be performing there – you can see, hear and download their new track *Chose to run* at www.thebackdrafts.co.uk. Donations from the income go directly to T2T charities

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Merseyside firefighters from Kirkdale station on strike over pensions

Overtime pay cut will close stations even more often, FBU warns bosses

Merseyside

The refusal of Merseyside fire and rescue service to pay the nationally agreed rate for overtime will ensure that local fire stations will close for even longer periods of time, firefighters have warned.

The Fire Brigades Union has revealed that, after a decade of cuts, local stations are already regularly closing for long periods on an almost daily basis. The union says staff shortages provoked by the overtime pay reduction will dramatically worsen the situation.

Negotiations between local Fire Brigades Union officials and Merseyside fire and rescue service ground to a halt after 18 months when employers walked away from discussions and said they would unilaterally impose a one-third cut

in overtime payments. Mark Rowe, FBU brigade secretary for Merseyside, asked: "Are Merseyside firefighters worth less than our colleagues elsewhere in the UK?"

"The fire service is paid for by the public and the public demands that their fire engines are available 24/7.

"In this time of austerity, we understand the constraints local fire services are under, but the fire service should not prioritise saving money over saving lives."

The FBU says that by 2016 firefighter numbers in Merseyside could have fallen by almost half in just over a decade from 1,200 to 680.

Fire stations in Kensington, Crosby, West Kirby, Allerton, Whiston and Aintree had all experienced closures as a result of staff shortages, the union said.

For the last 18 months, Merseyside firefighters have been working overtime

at the reduced rate as a "goodwill gesture" to prevent stations being closed. They had offered to continue the arrangement during an extension of discussions.

The FBU had hoped that any agreement could then be backdated for that period, but the fire service has now said that it will "never" abide by national agreements on pay.

As a result, a meeting of local union officials voted to reject the service's proposals, calling the service's decision ideologically driven and unnecessary.

The union also said that – as well as working overtime for the flat rate – local firefighters had recently agreed to a change in shift patterns, agreed to implement those shift changes immediately and, as a consequence, "nearly doubled their workload" as a result of such a rapid reduction in staffing.



Authority approves 'devastating' cuts

East Sussex

One in six firefighters' jobs in East Sussex could be lost after the fire authority approved cuts last month.

The move will see fire engines axed at the Preston Circus station in Brighton and The Ridge station in Hastings.

A vigorous campaign organised by local FBU officials saw a petition against the cuts gaining over 10,000 signatures and a number of politicians of different

parties signing an open letter opposing the changes.

Simon Herbert, chair of the FBU in East Sussex, said: "This decision will compromise public safety, increase response times and hamper firefighters' ability to protect the public.

"The fire authority has ignored the 10,000 people who signed the petition condemning these cuts as well as a cross-party group of politicians who opposed the plans."



Firefighters in Brighton collect signatures from the public against the cuts

Councillors up their own pay 60% as they carry on cutting

Surrey

An independent panel set up to recommend allowances for Surrey councillors has resigned after the council ignored its proposals and awarded itself a 60% pay rise.

Dave Herpe, FBU chair for Surrey, said: "Firefighters and the public alike are astounded by the council's willingness to award itself a 60% pay hike while local fire stations are being closed.

"Public sector workers have received years of real-terms pay cuts and firefighters' pensions are being attacked.

"The FBU in Surrey is working closely with the local fire and rescue service to minimise the impact of ongoing cuts on firefighters and public safety, but in this climate it's inevitable that some very difficult decisions will need to be made.

"By ignoring the pay review panel, the council

has sent a worrying message about its priorities, and we urge them to reconsider."

Earlier this year the Conservative-controlled authority voted to close fire stations in Sunbury and Staines and halve the number of fire engines based at Spelthorne.

● A petition asking councillors to return their pay rises is at <http://petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/moneygrab/>.

SOUNDING OFF

We desperately need more foster carers

Firefighters can make excellent foster carers says Ian Loughlin

Every year the number of children coming into care increases, but there are not enough foster carers able to give them a safe home. A child enters the care system and needs a foster home every 22 minutes in the UK.

Some children need a safe place to stay for only a few nights, while others might stay in long-term foster care until they are grown up. It is vital that children who require care have foster carers who can meet their needs, so fostered children are matched very closely with carers to help ensure the placement will be successful.

Could you make a difference to a child in desperate need?

You don't need formal qualifications to become a foster carer

Foster carers come in all shapes and sizes, they can be married, live as a couple, or be single; gay or heterosexual; home owner or tenant; employed, unemployed or early retired.

There are foster carers from every ethnic background, culture and religion and, best of all, you don't need any formal qualifications to become a foster carer.

What they all have in common is a spare room for the exclusive use of the foster child and the time and energy to invest in a child or young person.

Retired firefighters, as people who have served in the emergency services, can make ideal foster carers. Could you use your disciplined approach to tasks, teamwork skills and life experiences to successfully undertake the fostering role?

● For more information about fostering please contact Ian Loughlin at Alpha Plus Fostering on 0161 684 2323 or e-mail ian@alphaplusfostering.co.uk or text Foster12 and your name to 88020.



The Warrington control room

Firefighters' vote shows no confidence in new control

North west control

Firefighters in the north west of England have passed a vote of no confidence in a new fire control room near Warrington dealing with emergency calls for four brigades.

The centre was originally part of the infamous FiReControl project that would have seen the replacement of 46 emergency fire controls across the country with nine regional controls – but which was dropped after running up costs of almost

half a billion pounds. The fire services of Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Cumbria, and Lancashire subsequently took over the project, but local firefighters say that poor staffing levels and a reduced local knowledge could cost lives.

FBU Manchester secretary Gary Keary said the new fire control would have a total of about 45 operators. "We had a similar number just to cover Greater Manchester," he said. "There are severe concerns about this fire control."

FBU members join austerity protest

Austerity protest

The People's Assembly – a national campaign against austerity, cuts and privatisation – organised a march through London in June to protest against government austerity policies.

It coincided with a seven-hour FBU strike over pensions and firefighters from London and further afield took part in the march from BBC Broadcasting House in the West End to Parliament in Westminster.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said the future of firefighters and the fire service had been put at risk by cuts. "The march came as firefighters took further action against attacks on their pensions. This highlights that our battles against cuts and for decent pensions are part and parcel of the wider campaign against austerity."

Other speakers included comedian Russell Brand, National Union of Teachers general secretary Christine Blower and Len McCluskey, general secretary of the Unite union.

'Russian roulette' ambulance plan

Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire firefighters may take legal action over proposals that would see them driving patients to hospital in an ambulance, the FBU has announced.

Lincolnshire fire and rescue and the East Midlands ambulance service are stationing "fire ambulances" at Long Sutton, Stamford and Woodhall Spa fire stations in a £491,000 trial.

Local fire crews say they have concerns over the legality of the fire ambulance consultation process and the effect proposals would have.

They are asking that the proposals include a condition stipulating that the mobilisation of fire engines would always take priority over ambulances.

Karl McKee, FBU secretary for Lincolnshire, said: "These proposals play Russian roulette with fire safety and could lead to damage to property, loss of businesses and even loss of life."

IN BRIEF

Barry Downey elected

Barry Downey, FBU brigade secretary for Staffordshire, has been elected to represent West Midlands region fire-fighters on the union's executive council.

He will take over from Rose Jones who is retiring. Barry has served in the fire service for almost 25 years. His first post was in 1989 in Essex.

"I am so proud to be elected to serve the fantastic members of the FBU in the West Midlands," he said. "I'd like to thank Rose Jones for her hard work and dedication during her term."

Murray new vice-president

Ian Murray, who represents Yorkshire and Humberside on the FBU's executive council, has been elected unopposed to be the FBU's next vice-president. He will take up the position when the current vice-president Jim Barbour, who represents N Ireland, stands down.

The executive council has also announced that it will soon hold an election for the position of president. Alan McLean currently holds the position and is eligible for re-election.

Singing against cuts from top of FBU fire engine

The streets of central London were treated to a live performance from up-and-coming singer Stephen McMahon and his band in June.

The Cork-born singer owes his life to



firefighters after a near-fatal car crash in 2007.

To show his support for firefighters, McMahon teamed up with the FBU to highlight the campaign to stop cuts to fire and rescue services across the country.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "McMahon's story demonstrates the vital role that firefighters play in protecting public safety."

McMahon's new single *Fire* was released on 25 May.

**NEWS
FOCUS**
‘It’s time for the
government
spin to
end’



Cambridgeshire firefighters rallied before marching to the Cambridge guildhall (inset)

**MORE
PICTURES
PAGE 12**

Action total reaches 14 with the first 24-hour strike for a decade

Pensions strikes

Firefighters in England and Wales were on strike twice in June, bringing to 14 the number of periods of action in the current campaign and including the first 24-hour walkout by firefighters in more than a decade.

FBU members in England, Scotland and Wales also took part in a period of action short of strike, which saw a ban on voluntary overtime and a refusal to train strikebreakers.

On the eve of the first strike, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack demanded a national televised debate on government attacks on pensions with the England fire minister, Brandon Lewis.

‘It’s time for the government’s spin to end,’ he said. ‘If he’s confident in his arguments, surely he’ll accept the opportunity for us to both lay our cases out in public?’ There was no response from the minister.

Rally

Cambridgeshire firefighters and supporters staged a rally during the union’s 24-hour strike. The demonstrators then marched to the guildhall.

Firefighters from **Essex** took the campaign to the Brentwood constituency of communities and local government secretary Eric Pickles, who has overall responsibility for cuts to firefighters’ pensions and to fire and rescue services. FBU assistant general secretary Andy Dark joined the protests which began at the Brentwood fire station picket line.

“ FBU members showed enormous unity again on 12 June when they took strike action to defend their pensions from government attacks. On behalf of the executive council, I would like to congratulate you all and thank you for all the solidarity and determination you have shown. ”
Matt Wrack
FBU general secretary

Firefighter of the Year joins in

During the run-up to the strike, Paul Rich, the winner of this year’s Firefighter of the Year award, used the award ceremony to appeal directly to the government to abandon attacks on firefighter pensions.

The London firefighter, whose brave actions and quick thinking helped ensure that the lives of six children were saved during a fire in Southall on Christmas Day 2012, was presented with the award at a ceremony in London attended by Eric Pickles.

Rich said: ‘The government’s

attacks will make firefighters’ pensions unworkable, unaffordable and unfair, and they must work with the FBU to find a negotiated solution.

‘They’re ignoring all the evidence and imposing a scheme that will be devastating for thousands of firefighters across the country.

‘I’m really proud of the award I received, but firefighters don’t work for praise. We just want to be treated fairly and have the promises we were made about our retirement honoured.’

Strikebreakers fail

When the action had ended, firefighters attended the scene of a serious fire in Hackney, London after strikebreaking crews had failed to properly extinguish the blaze.

It took FBU members 90 minutes to bring the situation under control after it was found the roof and other parts of the building had reignited.

Wrack pointed out that Brandon Lewis had claimed ‘robust contingency arrangements’ meant it was ‘business as usual’ during FBU strikes.

‘But the reignition of this serious fire demonstrates that claim to be ludicrous,’ he said. ‘The strikebreaking crews are woefully undertrained and ill-prepared. They failed to properly extinguish this fire, leaving our members to go back there to do the job properly.

‘It is time for the government to realise the damage their actions are doing to the reputation of the fire service and to settle this dispute.’



VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM

Firefighters battle California

2,600 firefighters battled wildfires in Southern California in May as 20,000 acres of brush in northern and eastern San Diego county were consumed by fire.

They were supported by four air tankers and 22 military helicopters. At least one firefighter was injured while tackling the blaze.

Tens of thousands of homes were evacuated in the suburb of Carlsbad where a housing complex and four other homes were destroyed and the Legoland theme park was forced to close.

A badly burned body was found by firefighters in a “transient camp” – where homeless people had been living.

Non-essential staff at San Onofre nuclear power station were evacuated as a “precautionary measure” and personnel at the nearby Camp Pendleton military base were forced to flee.

Students taking final exams were kept off campus at the San Marcos campus of California State University.



15 May: Firefighters from all over California worked together to combat flames approaching a neighbourhood in San Marcos as the Cocos fire, one of 10 in the county, threatened homes

JAMES PARKER/DEMOTIX/PA PHOTOS

wildfires

Police charged a 57-year-old man with arson. He was suspected of adding brushwood to smouldering bushes. Two teenagers in Escondido were arrested for starting two small fires that were quickly extinguished. They were later released due to lack of evidence.

Smoke and ash travelled as far as Orange

County and Los Angeles County.

The *Guardian* reported that the fires had caused more than \$20m in damage.

Although the police suspect acts of arson may have begun the fires, extreme weather conditions not normally seen until late summer, including dryness, strong winds and temperatures of over 32° C, ensured

the blazes spread widely.

Al Said of Escondido was quoted in an article on the BBC website, saying: "That house burned and the house next to it burned.

"By the grace of God and the hard work of these firefighters, they came in and they saved my house right here."

THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING REAPPEARING PENSION PROPOSALS



England fire minister Brandon Lewis has, at last, been forced by pressure from the FBU and others to publish the options for firefighter pensions that he and the government have been considering

In a letter to firefighters on 12 June, the fire minister for England, Brandon Lewis, suggested that he was prepared to make a revised offer on firefighters' pensions, but that this had been derailed by the FBU walking away from discussions.

However, after three years of negotiations – and a three-month pause in industrial action – there had been no signs that the government was willing to offer an alternative to their unaffordable, unworkable and unfair proposals – despite it being clear that alternatives existed and were considered affordable by the Government Actuary's Department.

Since January, the union had been taking advice from pension and financial experts and discussing possible improvements with Lewis and his team.

It was clear during negotiations that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had been considering various options, and had spent public money in costing these to see if they could be

delivered within wider government financial constraints.

The union also assisted and encouraged the department to look at various options by offering advice from our own actuarial and financial experts.

During discussions, the department said that, before any proposals could be made, it would need to have wider discussions within government.

The union was shown various options and was able to have them checked by its own actuaries.

Despite this, government attacks have continued in the interim. Employee contributions have risen for a third consecutive year.

In addition, rather than make an offer based on the work undertaken, the minister began a public consultation on the introduction of the scheme based on the final proposals from May 2012 and did not include the information produced during negotiations, leaving firefighters, the public and ministers in other parts of the UK in the dark over alternatives.



*Now you see it, now
you don't: England
fire minister Brandon
Lewis now has no excuse
not to present his
proposals to the FBU*

Demand to release information

A key demand raised in the run-up to the strikes was, therefore, for the department to release any costings they have and, more importantly, to turn any such costings into clear, formal proposals.

On 12 June, as a clear result of campaigning by FBU members and lobbying and pressure from other politicians, the minister finally published the various options he had been considering, along with extracts from email exchanges and related documents from negotiations.

Within the documents is a redacted letter, dated 19 March, to the DCLG from the Government Actuary's Department, which confirmed that the most favourable option under consideration (with the lowest actuarial reduction) could be delivered within the government's cost ceiling, but that it was dependent on approval by the Treasury.

But the correspondence also demonstrates that, although under consideration by government, these alternatives were never "offered" to the FBU as a potential resolution to the dispute.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "This is the point we have been making for several months: although Mr Lewis has had this information available for some time, he has simply not made any revised proposal.

"Mr Lewis clearly now has no excuse not to present revised proposals to the FBU so that we had clear information and options for members to consider.

"We have a simple message: make an offer of revised proposals which improve the position for firefighters and we will consider it."

**"We have a simple
message: make
an offer of
revised proposals
which improve
the position for
firefighters
and we will
consider it"**



Members of the FBU women's committee in Bristol





12 JUNE

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady (left) was one of many trade unionists and other supporters to join an FBU picket line on 12 June – when union members took 24-hour strike action for the first time in a decade to press the government to defend their pensions. “It is regrettable that the government is still not listening to its own advice or the concerns of fire-fighters, and is set on imposing these ill-thought out pension changes,” she told pickets (above) in Shoreditch, London.

Matt Wrack said: “We held the longest strike action of the campaign so far, walking out for 24 hours. Having seen the vibrant, energetic and inspiring picket lines, I would like to praise and congratulate you all for another great show of strength and unity”.

PICTURES: JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



National Union of Teachers members joined pickets in Ipswich. They will be on strike on 10 July, alongside school support staff, over government policies. “For teachers, performance related pay, working until 68 for a full pension and heavy workload for 60 hours a week are unsustainable,” said general secretary Christine Blower.

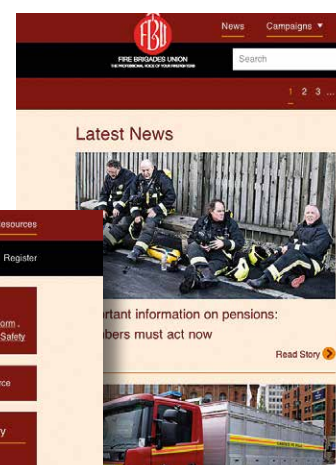
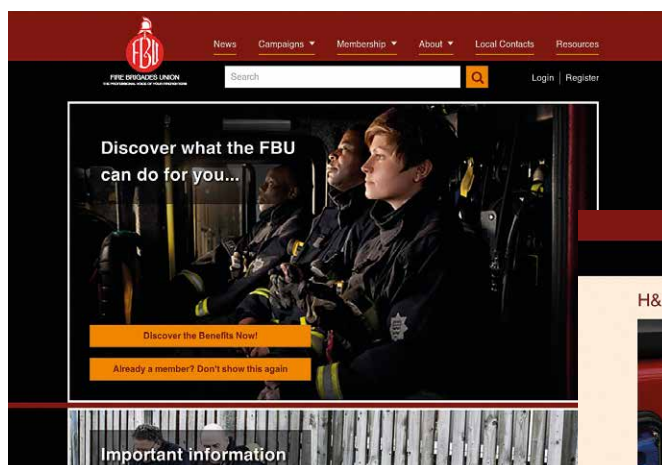


Blaydon MP Dave Anderson (3rd left) joined pickets at Swallow station, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear



Unison and Portsmouth Trades Council supporters joined pickets





FBU unveils

New design aims to help members and

Digital communication is vital to the work that the Fire Brigades Union undertakes. As a campaigning organisation, it's crucial that we are able to take our campaigns to the public and decision makers in Westminster, devolved administrations, local government and beyond.

As a democratic organisation, it's just as important that we can engage with our members – keeping them informed of the latest developments in the fire and rescue service and the ever-fluctuating landscape of UK politics.

For these reasons, our website and social media operation is a crucial tool in helping the union serve its members and win victories in the workplace and the wider world.

Late last year we conducted a survey of our members to ask about their expectations of our digital operation and their views on the current website.

It was clear from responses that there was a great deal about our web presence

that people appreciated: news and press releases were promptly uploaded and the site contained a very helpful range of information to assist the work of union representatives and members themselves.

However, the online world moves quickly, and many respondents commented that they would like a more up-to-date looking site with information laid out in a more logical way.

As a result, the union has just released a new website. Based on feedback from members and officials, the following features were included.

■ Registration

There is a huge volume of information on the website, much of it related to particular regions, sections and campaigns. Members and

supporters can now register for the site, meaning that the information relevant to them is prioritised when they visit.

Like other modern sites, they can register and log in using their social media profiles. Logging in enables members to gain access to exclusive

information, such as circulars, while ensuring that when other visitors access the site we prioritise more publicly-facing material.

In addition, by encouraging members and supporters to register, we can build up more comprehensive contact lists to keep people up-to-date with the latest information.

■ One stop shop for resources

The huge amount of circulars, documents, reports and campaign material available online is now accessible through the “Resources” page. Here you can use the “filters” to navigate to the information you need.

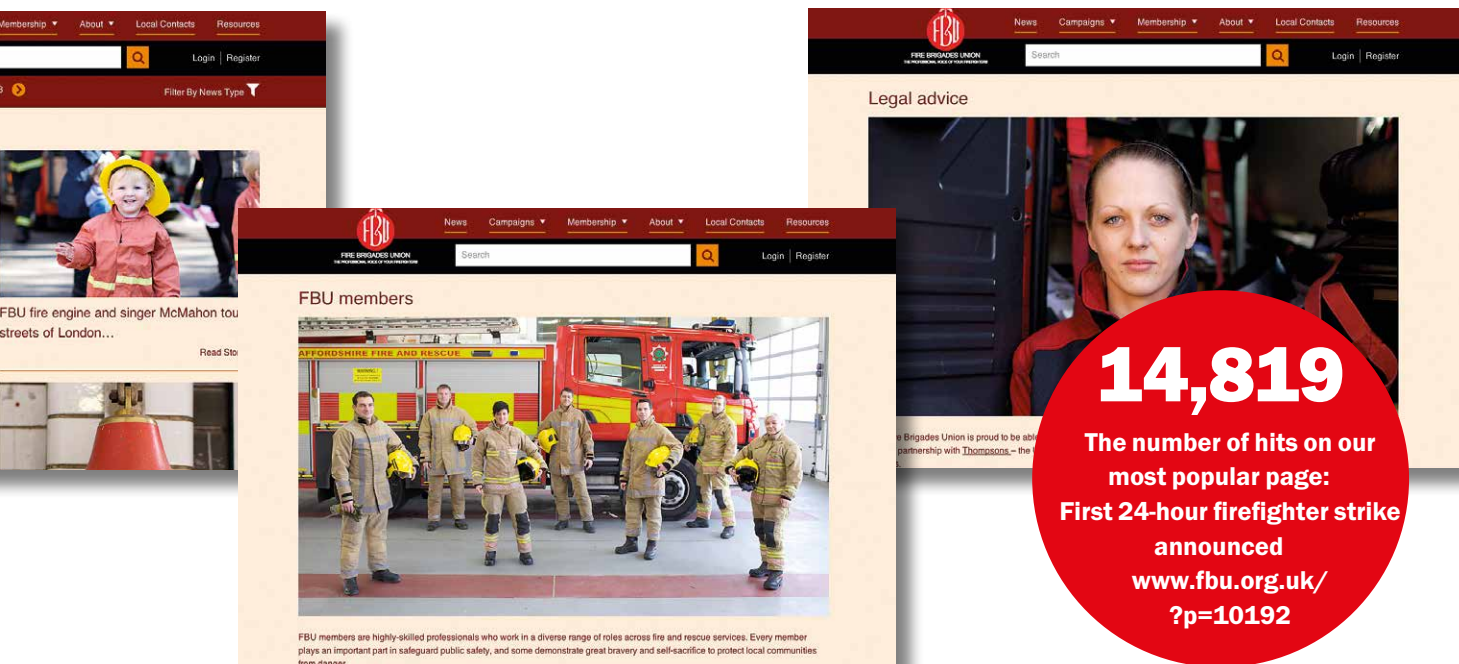
Looking for all the latest information on pensions? Apply that filter and you'll be able to view the material you need. Want to find a circular written by a particular official? Select their name and you'll bring up everything they have written to look through.

■ Less clutter

By simplifying the navigation processes on the new site, we were able to strip down the amount of sections on the website's front page, creating a more appealing welcome to visitors.

We undertook two photo-shoots of

Be the first to know
Have you signed up to Rollcall, the FBU's e-newsletter? Keep up-to-date with the latest information. Register at <http://bit.ly/FBUrollcall>



new website

officials find information they need

firefighters in stations to provide new photos to accompany stories in order to present the union as a membership-led organisation and to emphasise the crucial work that our members undertake. There is more space and clarity to the new site, meaning that people are more likely to spend time looking at our information.

FUTURE PLANS

We were keen to get the new site up and running as quickly as possible, but we're not yet done with improvements to our online operation.

Very soon we'll be able to provide a full profile page for regional, brigade and sectional officials, and make accessing information on regions and brigades far easier.

Eventually, the new site will be able to host "mini-sites" for different parts of the union with a similar but distinct identity and unique content. We're also discussing how to expand our social media presence.

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS!

Do you have any feedback on the new site? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Email press@fbu.org.uk with your thoughts.

8,000 FOLLOWERS AND COUNTING!

Social media are vital weapons in the FBU's armoury.

The union's Twitter account enables us to spread our message far and wide.

We can engage with members, answering their questions and finding out developments locally and regionally instantaneously.

We can also engage with decision makers, helping to recruit their support for our causes and keep them up-to-date with the concerns of our members.

Since the last issue of Firefighter, the number of followers we have on Twitter has sailed passed 8,000.

Every year, the website infobo.com publishes an article on trade union's twitter presence. We're currently ranked seventh; a high position, particularly considering our relatively small membership. But

since the rankings were published, we've stepped up our efforts further, tweeting more regularly and using techniques like hashtags and namechecking more effectively.

8,000 followers is quite an impressive number: the equivalent of about 20% of our membership. Unite, number one on Infobo's list, has 1.42 million members and 27,800 followers – about the same proportion.

Despite this, we're ambitious to get that number higher. We've set a target of 10,000.

 You can help: remember to follow @fbunational, retweet our tweets and use our hashtags – #hoop for 'Hands off our pensions', #sofs for 'Save our fire service' and #firefighters for more general information – and help us to climb further in Infobo's rankings!

Tips on using social media and web sites



The use of websites, social media (such as Twitter and Facebook), online forums and blogs can be a powerful way for firefighters to stand up for the fire and rescue service and set out our arguments to the public.

Life online is also a fundamental part of modern existence, and firefighters have the same right to take part as anyone else.

But there are many

dangers in the digital world, both for individual firefighters and for our work in defending the service.

The FBU has assisted several members who faced disciplinary action as a result of posts on social media websites and other internet forums.

This has often increased during periods of industrial action and is likely to do so during the current dispute to defend fire

service pensions.

Make sure you read through the FBU's democratically decided policies on equality and fairness at work. These apply as much to online behaviour as anywhere else.

If you find yourself subject to disciplinary proceedings, contact a local FBU official as soon as possible for advice on what to do next.

Assume that what you write can be read by anyone. Even if your posts are written on private sites, they can be easily reposted elsewhere.

Imagine saying the same thing to yourself. If you would not want the same thing said to you, it is probably not a good idea to say it to others. Don't swear, be polite, and your arguments will be strengthened.

Imagine saying the same thing to your boss, friends, spouse or mum.

The fact that you are not discussing something face-to-face will not affect how people will assess your comments as offensive, unsuitable or unfair.

Take your time. You should never feel an obligation to respond immediately online. Everyone balances time at their computer with other

activities, so a delay for you to compose your thoughts, calm down and consider the right response is often a good idea.

Don't feel obliged to get involved/respond. You are under no obligation to respond to offensive, inaccurate or otherwise irritating claims online, and getting a rise out of you can often be the poster's objective. Hardly any internet discussions finish with one



side conceding they were wrong. Don't feel obliged to have the last word.

Ask for help. If something is in real need of correction – particularly if issued in an official capacity by government or other organisation – contact the FBU comms team.

Never consider yourself anonymous. It does not take a great deal of technical knowledge to trace internet activity back to particular computers, email addresses and, ultimately, people. If you would not say something if you could be identified, do not say it at all.

Discuss, don't argue. It may be a fine line, but the aim should be to convince people, particularly third parties to the conversation – not to point score, undermine or otherwise detract from the issues.

Don't make enemies without reason. However great our grievances on pensions or anything else, firefighters are not the only group under attack from government. It's a mistake to let us be played off against each other.

Assume your post will be visible forever. Although websites and social media may have "delete" functions, it is impossible to truly remove the footprint left by a post, and deleting a post can actually draw more attention to it.

Never be defamatory. You should assume that you will be held legally accountable for anything said online in the same way you would be if you wrote it in print or said it publicly.

Check your comments for spelling and grammar before you click send. No one is perfect, particularly online, where content is often submitted very quickly, but grammatical and spelling mistakes will detract from your argument, and will be picked up by those who disagree with you.

Be particularly careful with photos. Never, ever submit a photo online that you would not be comfortable being seen on the work noticeboard, in your Christmas card or on a t-shirt.

Don't post drunk. This may seem obvious, but you would be surprised how often this leads to trouble.

Don't quote people without permission. Your professional and social life may make you party to information that others would be uncomfortable being made public. Don't quote it without permission.

Hide unsuitable comments from friends. Social media can create a unique space where your friends, families and colleagues share a single space. Like it or not, you will be judged on posts by your associates. If your friends are being inappropriate, don't hesitate to hide or remove their activity.

Only befriend or follow people you can trust. Again, you will be judged on the behaviour of your online associates, and your information on social media – such as phone numbers, email addresses and even financial details – can be used for nefarious purposes. Choose your company carefully.



Familiarise yourself with privacy settings. Remember many social media and website providers allow you to change who has access to your information. Make sure you get to grips with the settings and use them appropriately.

Don't post links without reading them. If a post with a seemingly innocuous title turns out to be racist, pornographic or otherwise unpleasant or illegal after you have posted it, you will be judged accordingly! It is also embarrassing to be told that a link you have posted does not work, as it implies you're trying to claim credit for finding/understanding it without actually reading it properly.

Be accurate. There is no shortage of information online, and you can't trust anything and regurgitate it without checking that it is true. Avoid the temptation to rely on rumour: the fact that your mum's cousin's dog's vet's sister's social worker said that government pensions are growing faster than anyone else's does not make it true. Be factual, concise and clear.

Be particularly careful at work. The presence of IT at work and the ubiquity of smart phones mean you can now access social media and the full extremes of online content at work or anywhere else. Browser histories, the auto-complete function of web addresses and even calls from internet providers can lead to trouble, and posting while on duty will often be viewed as little different from mouthing off in uniform. If your workplace has an internet policy, read it and follow it, raising any problems or issues with an FBU rep.

If your workplace has an internet policy, read it and follow it, raising any problems or issues with an FBU rep

FIRE CONTROL

Cuts affecting whole service and the public

Emergency controls must operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Control under-crewing

Under-crewing in emergency fire controls has become "safety critical", the control staff national committee (CSNC) of the FBU has warned.

Sharon Riley, the union's executive council member for control members, told a meeting of the executive that the shortages are risking the safety of fire crews, the public and FBU members in emergency controls.

"Cuts to fire and rescue services are not only affecting those attending fires, but also undermining the wellbeing of control staff, their capacity to work professionally and the ability of emergency controls to function," she said.

"Control staff play a vital role in the work of fire and rescue, and staff shortages will mean a greater risk of injury and loss of life to firefighters and the general public.

"The FBU will continue to monitor the situation and offer support to all our members, but to remove this growing danger government cuts must stop."

Unlike other parts of the fire and rescue service that can be taken "off the run", emergency controls must all operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The FBU said under-crewing in emergency controls creates several serious issues, including:

- Shifts taking place without anyone of sufficient rank or responsibility on duty
- Members being forced to



make managerial decisions beyond their training or competence

- Members coming under increased pressure to carry out excessive levels of overtime
- Backlogs of work with members only having time to carry out "critical fire work"
- Changes in shift patterns and the creation of "mixed watches" which undermine established, cohesive watch structures
- Increased levels of stress

among members, which can lead to a deterioration in staff wellbeing and decrease their ability to undertake work

- The creation of an "inroad" for fire and rescue services to start using staff whose employment is not governed by the Grey Book – the national agreement on terms and

conditions for employees

- Situations arising where only one non-managerial member of staff is on duty at a time
- The use of the "buddy system" – where emergency controls from different fire and rescue services assist with calls during times of particularly large-scale emergency – being used to cope with standard levels of demand.

As part of an FBU investigation into the state of

under-crewing, control reps across the UK were asked to report any emergency controls that have been operating with fewer staff members than is required over the previous three months. They were also asked how many shifts had been covered with overtime, swapping

The FBU has said that many fire and rescue services are refusing to recruit new control staff members as a result of budget cuts



Sharon Riley: Government cuts must stop to end growing danger

shifts or with "time owing" to bring staff levels up to minimum cover.

Members in **West Yorkshire** reported that 22 overtime shifts had been worked over the previous three months.

In **Northamptonshire** the emergency control has been running at times at night with only one normal control staff member and two operational managers.

In **East Sussex**, it became clear that out of 86 shifts over the last three months, 55 required cover.

The FBU has said that many fire and rescue services are refusing to recruit new control staff members as a result of budget cuts.

Riley said: "Our control members have to make the system work with reduced numbers on duty as there is often no alternative.

"This means insufficient supervision and an inability to take part in training.

"This all leads to an increase in stress levels amongst staff."

Legal Beagle

Mesothelioma – you, the law and your union



Mesothelioma

Lorna Webster, regional asbestos team supervisor at Thompsons Solicitors, on mesothelioma and the law

Q What is mesothelioma?

A Mesothelioma is a form of cancer that affects the lining of the lungs. It is incurable and normally proves fatal within six to 18 months from the onset of symptoms.

It can take between 20 and 50 years for mesothelioma to develop after asbestos fibres have been inhaled. The most recent figures show that in 2010 and 2011 the number of deaths from mesothelioma increased to more than 2,000 a year, with over 2,000 new cases of asbestos disease also being reported each year.

Although exposure to asbestos can lead to a number of different types of lung disease, not everyone who has been exposed will be affected.

Q Does mesothelioma affect firefighters?

A Firefighters have been exposed to asbestos when attending fires where asbestos was present, such as shipyards, power stations, petrochemical plants and in many buildings.

While the importation of asbestos to the UK is now banned and it is no longer used in construction, it was routinely used in pipework insulation, partition walls and ceiling tiles in most commercial and public buildings constructed or renovated before the late 1970s.

Q Has new legislation improved things?

A The Mesothelioma Act came into effect on 31 January this year. It applies to cases in which the employer who exposed the worker to asbestos no

longer exists and the employer's insurer cannot be traced.

Rather than put in place comprehensive legislation to support sufferers of the disease in getting access to justice, the government sided with the interests of the insurance industry rather than with ordinary workers affected by the disease.

As a result, the Act applies strict conditions on who can apply for compensation.

Only people diagnosed with mesothelioma caused by exposure to asbestos at work are covered. That means that



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

thousands who have other forms of asbestos-related disease and people who were exposed to asbestos through someone else's employment (for instance, a family member coming into contact with a relative's contaminated work clothes) cannot claim.

The Act also has an arbitrary cut-off date of 25 July 2012 so that people who were diagnosed before that date are ineligible to claim. Finally, only 80% of average compensation will be paid in successful claims.

Q How would I make a claim?

A It is always best that the FBU's lawyers have the maximum time possible to begin to investigate a claim. The time limit for lodging a claim is three years from the date the disease was diagnosed or known to be linked to asbestos exposure, or from the date of death.

The FBU's lawyers, Thompsons, are the UK's leading asbestos litigators. They ran the first cases, have run thousands of cases since and have been involved in every asbestos test case there has been.

Thompsons will stop at nothing to secure justice for union members who have been negligently exposed to asbestos.

The FBU recently helped to secure compensation for the family of a firefighter who died of mesothelioma as a result of asbestos exposure dating back to the 1960s. The union can play a crucial role in gathering witness statements from members and former firefighters. If you have been diagnosed with asbestos disease contact your trade union rep as soon as possible. Expert advice from Thompsons is free of charge throughout the process.

Q How long do legal proceedings take?

A Thompsons pursue all mesothelioma claims through a special fast track court system that cuts down delay and limits the scope for employers and their lawyers to drag the case out.

Q I think I was exposed but have no evidence of disease

A Members can assist the investigation of mesothelioma claims possibly for themselves, but also for colleagues, by recording details of any known exposure to asbestos on the FBU asbestos exposure database.

This can be found on the FBU website www.fbu.org.uk under "member services" and "FBU official forms".

When tufts of grass started morphing into hedgehogs she knew it was time to bail out

Outside her time as a retained firefighter, Monique Hollinshead packs enough into her life for at least two Day Off features

When Smokey the smoke alarm – long arms, short legs, huge smiley face – takes to the streets, chances are there's a firefighter inside.

But it won't be Monique Hollinshead, the retained firefighter from Cheshire who created Smokey after chatting with crew members at Crewe station during a training session.

"We were having a brew, I mentioned I made props and costumes for a living and next thing, they asked if I could come up with a smoke alarm," says Monique

who started at Audlem fire station less than two years ago.

Smokey duly made his debut at the Crewe home safety event and has been out and about ever since, spreading the fire safety message. He's not just a smiley face – the public can press his nose to test the smoke alarm.

Monique worked for many leading theatre companies, including Opera North, before going freelance.

She is adept at creating distinctive props and costumes – from

a prom dress for a Goth to bodies for "mice" in Northern Ballet's *Nutcracker Suite*.

Her first job after college was to make the Duchess of Malfi look "just a bit" pregnant in John Webster's macabre Jacobean tragedy of the same name.

That pregnancy corset helped Monique carve out a successful niche when she went freelance. She has made an *Emmerdale* actress look convincingly pregnant with IVF triplets and models in a maternity wear catalogue look "about five months with a neat bump". She also does bespoke wedding dresses – but doesn't always let on to the bride-to-be that she's "good at making women look pregnant".

She's made youngsters look extra chubby with "obesity prosthetics" for Jamie Oliver's *Return to School Dinners* programme.

This turned out to be a calling card for drama documentaries featuring Neanderthals and



Monique created Smokey for Cheshire fire and rescue service



early homo sapiens. The costumes she designed for the Discovery Channel's *Decoding Neanderthals* had to show homo sapiens was that bit more advanced than homo neanderthalensis.

Monique used "an awful lot of hair product and heavy waxes" on Icelandic sheepskins to get the "shaggy and unkempt look" needed for barelegged Neanderthals swathed in woolly mammoth skin.

Homo sapiens had strips of reindeer skin tied round their legs with rough leather thongs – primitive trousers maybe.

Mid-interview, Monique lets slip her astonishing back story in endurance sports, well worth another Day Off of its own.

There's the gruelling Marathon des Sables – running nearly 150 miles across the Sahara with a backpack in scorching heat. (Featured in *Firefighter* in March 2008 when we followed the preparations of Cambridgeshire firefighter Paul Oliver for the week-long race.)

Then there's a good few triathlons. And, finally, there's the Deca Ironman Triathlon in deepest Hampshire where entrants aim to complete ten triathlons over ten days – that's a 2.4 mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a marathon run every day, back-to-back.

Nobody sleeps much. And there are definitely no days off allowed.

Very few go the distance. Monique got to day nine on her first attempt. When tufts of grass started morphing into hedgehogs because of hallucinations and she couldn't stay awake on the bike, she knew it was time to bail out.

Undeterred, she trained intensively for her next Deca, running, swimming and cycling relentlessly. The eight-day cycle from Land's End to John O' Groats with supportive partner Dave was the leisurely bit. "Different counties,

Costumes she designed for the Discovery Channel's *Decoding Neanderthals* had to show homo sapiens was that bit more advanced than homo neanderthalensis

different capps – it was brilliant," says Monique. "I cycled myself fit."

She then got stuck into the Deca. But this time round repeating the course each day seemed "a bit boring, a bit rubbish". On day five it was raining, and Monique was "wet and miserable on the bike". Running was next up. "Dave got me some dry clothes, I got half way round the first lap and thought 'you know what? I've had enough of this and I don't need to do it anymore.' And I stopped."

Monique had already applied to join the fire service back where she grew up near to the Shropshire border. "I just wanted to do something where it's a team effort rather than something solo," she says. She joined the FBU straight away and enjoyed meeting activists at women's school.

"I knew I wanted to throw myself into village life, and being retained is giving something back to your community. And I absolutely love it. It's good to use fitness for something useful."

Astonishingly, Monique "struggled a bit with upper body strength" when she first started firefighting. But she soon sorted it – with a spot of hod-carrying for the builder she was paying to put up a new garage.

She also got a team together to build a raft, and race it, dressed in the Hawaiian costumes she made. The team won a prize for costumes if not water skills.

And she's just taken up bee-keeping ...

With her unique skill set and take on life, Monique should surely write a book. And, of course, she is. It's a pretty safe bet she'll go the distance, sharing what she's learned from going beyond endurance.

■ Monique's website: <http://about.me/moniquehollinshead>

Finishing one of the ten 2.4 mile swims in the Deca Ironman Triathlon



Win a £100 Sigma Sport e-voucher

HOW TO ENTER

To win a £100 Sigma Sport e-voucher please send your answers by 31 July 2014 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (July 2014), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.



1 Which England player was top scorer at the 1986 world cup?

- A – Gary Lineker
- B – Bryan Robson
- C – Kerry Dixon
- D – Glenn Hoddle

2 The Mexican Wave started at which world cup?

- A – 1986
- B – 1982
- C – 1990
- D – 1994

3 Who captained the winning Brazil side in the 1970 World Cup?

- A – Tostão
- B – Pele
- C – Jairzinho
- D – Carlos Alberto

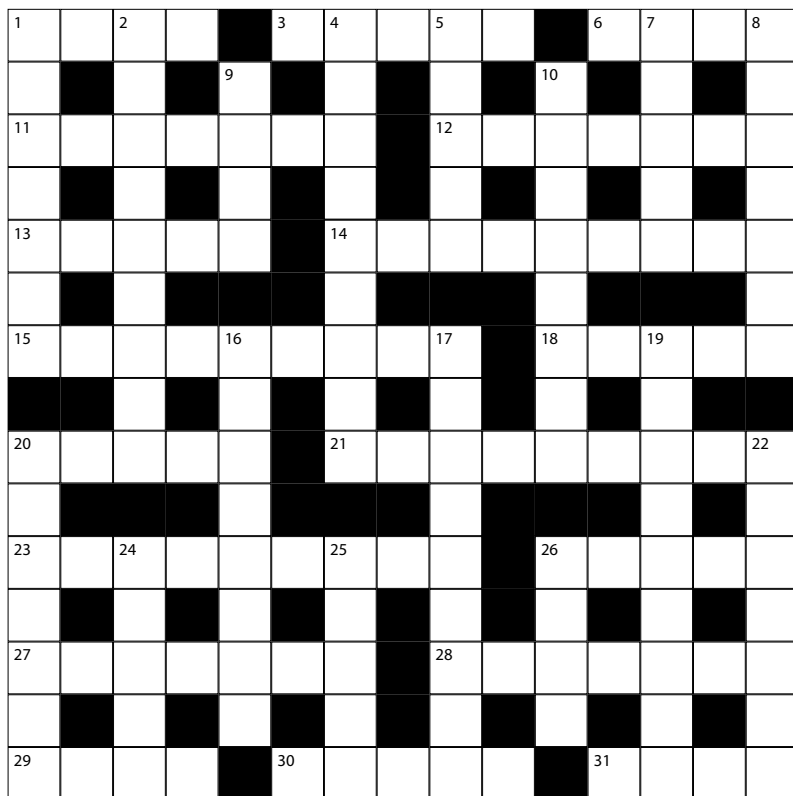


4 Who was the first foreign manager of an England world cup squad?

- A – Fabio Capello
- B – Luiz Felipe Scolari
- C – Sven Goran Eriksson
- D – Louis Van Gaal

5 Name the dog that found the missing world cup in 1966?

- A – Butch
- B – Spot
- C – Rover
- D – Pickles



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1** Exploding device (4)
- 3** Very large body of water (5)
- 6** Violent, exothermic oxidation (or dismiss!) (4)
- 11, 13** See 6, 10 (7)(5)
- 12** Formation of three or more battalions – of firefighters? (7)
- 13** See 11 (5)
- 14** Meat-eater (9)
- 15** Cavity created by boring equipment (5-4)
- 18** Nibbles, Spanish-style (5)
- 20** Chef Rick (or German beer mug) (5)
- 21** Oversee (9)
- 23** Keep amused (9)
- 26** Cook in oven (5)
- 27** Iron road (7)
- 28** Roman, for example (7)
- 29** Flat, most basic boat (4)
- 30** Chelmsford's county (5)
- 31** Much is generated by 6 (4)

DOWN

- 1** Waffled meaninglessly (7)
- 2** ... in the intervening period ... (9)
- 4** Aware, awake, compos mentis (9)
- 5** Between red and green (5)
- 7** US state, capital Boise (5)
- 8** Without organs of vision (7)
- 9** The middles of the month (beware those of March!) (4)
- 10** Church or government functionary (8)
- 16** Shadow 6, 10 (3,5)
- 17** Not cheap (9)
- 19** Sell off public asset (9)
- 20** Geordie footballer-turned-pundit (7)
- 22** Dead – as a dodo! (7)
- 24** One who purloins (5)
- 25** Seemingly bottomless chasm (5)
- 26** Harvest (4)

Last issue's answers and winners



Crossword solution May/June

May/June quiz answers

- 1** – A The Queen
- 2** – B The Nobel Prize in Literature
- 3** – D Michael Fish
- 4** – C Dudgeon's Wharf explosion 1969
- 5** – B 1992

Winners of April quiz

Mr G Levitt, Leeds; Mr M Nunnery, Spalding; Mr S Winter, Kent; Mr M Faulkner, West Yorkshire; Mr G Marr, Angus; Mr P Higgins, Neston

Station Cat

For sale, the flats that time, and LFB, forgot

*Untouched for 60 years:
"Tom Sayers watching
for flying bombs,
25/6/44" – written in
pencil on a beam in the
loft of the flats*



 Mayor Boris Johnson's mass cull of London fire stations has uncovered one of the London Fire Brigade's strangest and dirtiest secrets.

Clerkenwell fire station, the oldest purpose-built fire station in Europe, is part of a big and elegant Grade 2 listed block of flats. The whole building is owned by the LFB and dates from 1912.

And these flats, right in the centre of one of the most sought-after and expensive areas of London, a minute from Farringdon tube station and from Sadler's Wells theatre, have been lying empty and derelict for at least half a century.

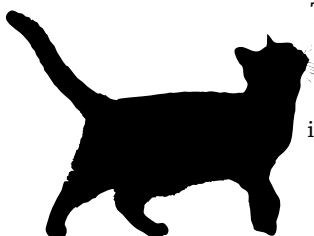
They could have housed dozens of London families who have been priced out of their city, and brought in rent for the LFB. They could have been used for key workers – teachers, nurses, firefighters. They could have been used for social housing, in a city where families are sleeping rough. Or they could have been luxury flats for the rich, bringing in massive rents for the LFB.

Instead, they are silent, empty ghost rooms in the teeming centre of the city, gathering dust.

A firefighter who was based in Clerkenwell 16 years ago told Station Cat: "I wandered through them, because I'm interested in history. They had obviously been undisturbed for decades even then, but the rooms were spacious and well proportioned – they would have made wonderful flats. It was strange, these silent, untouched rooms in the middle of one of the busiest areas in London."

He found one clue to the date on which they might last have been used: the newspapers lying around dated from the mid 1960s. But they may have been empty for much longer than that. In the loft you can still find, written in pencil on a beam: "Tom Sayers watching for flying bombs, 25/6/44."

Now more than



Our picture shows the last day of the 142 years of Clerkenwell fire station in January this year. It was taken for the Spitalfields Life blog by photographer Colin O'Brien, more of whose work will be on show at his London Life exhibition at Hackney Museum from 24 June to 6 September (Admission free).

www.hackney.gov.uk/museum
www.colinobrien.co.uk
www.spitalfieldslife.com

£100,000 of public money will be spent on security measures at Clerkenwell fire station – the highest amount spent on site security of all the capital's former fire stations. It's to stop people sleeping there.

 The flats were originally built for firefighters, who in those days often lived above their fire stations.

Now, of course, the flats will at last make money – but not for the fire brigade. The whole building is being sold through upmarket estate agent Dron & Wright.

The developer who buys them will get a bargain, and will make a lot of money. One bedroom flats in Rosebery Avenue fetch £1,000 a week in rent, or sell for at least three quarters

of a million pounds; two bedroom flats change hands for £1m. There are about 60 flats there, of varying sizes.

Anyone who wants to bid for all nine fire stations being culled by Mayor Boris is welcome to do so, says Dron & Wright.

How on earth has LFB just sat on this vastly valuable resource? Here's what they told us: "It would have been costly and impractical to rent the flats above Clerkenwell fire station. We would have incurred very expensive building costs to make them safe to rent largely because there is no public access to the flats."

It's true that the only entrance currently is through the fire station. But the cost of building a new staircase to the first floor, any time in the last half century, would have paid for itself many times over – even adding in the cost of modernising the rooms.

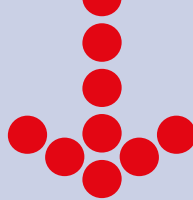
 But, given they had kept the place empty for half a century or more, why not, even at this late stage, renovate the flats and use the revenue to save the fire station?

That doesn't work for LFB either, apparently. "We have previously looked at ways in which a private contractor may have been able to redevelop the site and maintain a fire station to no success," they say. That's hardly surprising. It's much more profitable for a private contractor to buy the whole building and not have to worry about keeping the fire station.

LFB adds: "Even if we thought we were able to recoup the cost of developing the flats over time, the rent from the flats would not have been enough to meet the year-on-year saving we need to make."

If LFB had done something about it any time in the last half century, London's fire service would now be reaping the rewards. Instead, they have kept the whole place secretly empty, and are now spending £100,000 to keep everyone out, so that a developer can reap the benefit.

25-year badges



Graham Taylor (l), blue watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon



Mark Pollard (l), green watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon



Nigel Coleman (l), green watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon



Sam Bennett (l), green watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon



Dan Hattley (l), red watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Mick Lowe with members of the brigade committee



Dave Seddon (r), Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dave Turner



Kent FRS members (l-r), **Ian Meyers**, Dymchurch, **Joe Latty**, Folkestone, **Nigel Woodward**, Tunbridge Wells, and **Kevin Sherman**, Dymchurch, receive their 25-year badges from brigade secretary Mark Simmons (c),



James Henry (l), H&S rep, white watch, Preston, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Kevin Deacon



Wayne U'Chong (l), North Kensington, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Phill Fennah



Paul Trenter (r), green watch, Ipswich East, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Roy Humphreys



Steve Cunningham (l), blue watch, North Kensington, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Phill Fennah



Ray Kilbourn (r), Thameside, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from group rep Steve Vallance



Brian Adams (l), blue watch, Orsett, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Riccardo la Torre



Roy Potter (r), green watch, Dartford, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Bob Chilmad



Mike Davies (r), blue watch, Wrexham, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from Wales EC member Grant Mayos



Russ Willoughby (r), blue watch, High Wycombe, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Stuart Long



Terry Johnson (r), blue watch, High Wycombe, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Stuart Long



John Franklin (r), blue watch, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Stuart Long



Peter Cummings, red watch, Glengormley, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Peter Crossett (l-r) FF Haughian, WC Monahan, FF Cummings, FF Crossett, FF Osborne and FF Elliot



Derbyshire officers branch members (l-r) **Pete Maltby, Ronnie Barker, Dave Lovett, Pete Aykroyd, Mark Bailey, Simon Fairchild** and **Alan Richmond**, are presented with their 25-year badges by region 6 executive member Dave Limer



Rob Bailey (r), Macclesfield, receives his 25-year badge from Lancashire brigade chair Stuart Hammond with blue watch colleagues looking on (l-r) Tony McCourt, Stuart Hammond, Anthony Poynton, Rob Bailey and Aiden Fiske



Steve Kavanagh (l), blue watch, Ossett, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser John Iveson with (l-r) Dave Atkinson, Chris Harrison and John Crabtree



Dave Gould, green watch, Harlow Central, receives his 25-year badge from Essex political officer Stefan Tanfield with colleagues (l-r) Ricki Pemberton, Dave Gould, Paul Huntley, Paul Rodgers, Stefan Tanfield and Paul Smith looking on



Dave Atkinson (l), blue watch, Ossett, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser John Iveson with (l-r), Steve Kavanagh, John Crabtree and Chris Harrison



George Gaul (r), blue watch, Clapham, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Brian Mollaghan with colleagues looking on



Steve Cornish (l), receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Robbie Green (r), Greenbank, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from blue watch colleagues



Jag Hayer (c), Derbyshire, receives her 25-year badge from members at FBU women's school



Mick Passingham (r), green watch, Northolt, London, receives his 25-year badge from London north west area secretary Dave Shek



Victoria Henry (r), blue watch, Northolt, London, receives her 25-year badge from London north west area secretary Dave Shek



Pegswood, Northumberland, blue watch members, (l-r) **Steve Cook, Ian Woods** and Paul Mirfield, receive their 25-year badges from branch rep Stu Dixon



Timothy Holder (r), Worksop, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dave Spink with blue watch looking on



Paul Dunn (l), Lancashire receives his 25-year badge from officer branch rep Frank Robinson



Steve Dunnet (l), red watch, Stockhill, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil Coates



Dave Sheard (l), Carlton, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Ian Mason



Bruce Gamgee (l), Newark, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Andy Cooper with blue watch looking on



Richard Fidler (r), receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith



Giuseppe Zangaro (r), receives his 25-year badge from Lewis Lane with colleagues Andy Wagner, Kev Challener, Ryan Grundy, Andy Scarrett, and Harvinder Kaur (station cleaner) and Rita Hawley (station cook)



Steve Rhind (l), fire safety, Princes Street, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



Marc Anderson (l), receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Jim Moran (r), receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith



Bob Williams (r), receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith



Tony Vickress (r), green watch, Rayleigh Weir, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dan Evison



Kenneth Green (l), red watch, Perry Barr, receives his 25-year badge from West Midlands acting vice-chair Steven Price-Hunt



Martin Causey (l), Torquay, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



Terry Scott (r), Torquay, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



Alan Coates, Nottinghamshire brigade secretary, receives his 25-year badge from Beeston branch rep Alan Alvey



Ian Hemsley (l), red watch, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Steve Collins



John Roderick (l), red watch, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Steve Collins



Ruby Murray (l), blue watch, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Steve Collins



Paul Rance (r), green watch, Winchester receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Paul Trew



Jasper Taylor (l), Southsea, Hampshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Nigel McCullen with white watch looking on



Rob Hogg (r), Stratton St Margaret, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Brent Thorley with red watch looking on



Martin Aldred (3rd l), Stockhill, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from region 6 EC member Dave Limer



Gary Parker (l), white watch, Hindley, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from divisional rep Rob Grundy



Mick Fletcher (r), red watch, Hindley, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from divisional rep Rob Grundy



Ian Houghton (l), white watch, Farnworth, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from divisional rep Rob Grundy



Andy Petersen (r), legislative fire safety, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



New Inn, South Wales, members (l-r) **Mark Randle**, **Andrew Tottle** and **Steve Watkins**, receive their 25-year badges from brigade organiser Jo Byrne



Trudy Durrance (l), control, Lincolnshire, receives her 25-year badge from control rep Amelia Diallo



Lee Mason (r), Cardiff Central, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



Mark Webb (l), receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Noel Gubbins (r), Highfields, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from East Midlands EC member Dave Limer



Bill Simpson (l), blue watch, Stockhill, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from friend and colleague Steve Ainley



Martin Bowers (l), fire safety, Tonbridge, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Tony Bickers (l), white watch, Princes Street, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Roy Humphreys



Peter Taylor (l), green watch, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade BEMM rep Nick Davis



Des Pritchard (l), green watch, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade BEMM rep Nick Davis



FF Foster (l), green watch, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade BEMM rep Nick Davis



Tracey Richards (r), blue watch, South Wales control, receives her 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins with colleagues looking on

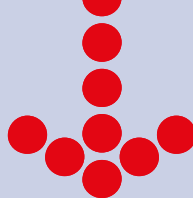


Mark Chaplin (c), red watch, Harlow Central, receives his 25-year badge from Essex political officer Stefan Tanfield with red watch comrades (l-r) Stephen Pritchard, Chris Allan, Paul Copper, James Brown, Thomas Wass, Mark Kent, Rob Kettridge and Vince Norton



Mick Lowe (l), Princes Street RDS, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew

25-year badges



Tim Handy (r), green watch, Ashford, Kent receives his 25-year badge from Malcolm Harmer



Andrew Beeres (r), receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith



Mark Simmons (r), Kent brigade secretary, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Kent firefighters (l-r), **Laurence Short, Kevin Church, Adrian Gilham, Robert Envis**, (Mark Simmons) **Andrew Hudson** (all blue watch) and **Colin Holness**, white watch, receive 25-year badges from regional chair Mark Simmons



Rowly Brown (r), branch chair, Old Swan, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Tony Richardson



Janine Curry (r), operational support, Lincolnshire, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karl McKee



Neil Powell (l), Buckingham, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Bob Ogle with RDS members looking on (l-r) Ed Mclean, Paul Nicholls, Neil Stafford, Neil Powell, Bob Ogle, Scott Goodman, Jake Sugden, Mike Dunkley



Brian Dunning (c), blue watch, Stockton, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack with brigade secretary Dave Howe (r),



Steve Reid (l), blue watch, Preston, receives his 25-year badge from Lancashire brigade chair Kevin Deacon with Andrew Musson looking on from the cab



Nick Hopkins (l), officers' branch, Nottingham, receives his 25-year badge from Edwinstowe branch rep Richard Copson with white watch looking on



Sean Madeley (r), Kentish Town, London, receives his 25-year badge from regional official Ben Sprung with green and white watch looking on

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.

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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

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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.

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