

FireFighter

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

May 2009

JUSTICE WON!



Legal win
ends long
battle
See page 10

Firecontrol
Grey Book
payscales

**PLUS FIRECONTROL:
THE HIDDEN AGENDA**
Promises on staffing, pay and
conditions being shredded
See page 14



Budget – further attacks on the way



The state of the economy and the state of public finances will give all FBU members cause for concern. The worsening economic crisis has left a

huge hole in public finances, estimated to be as high as £45 billion. In the fire and rescue service we were already facing a squeeze and attacks on local services. We can now expect that to worsen.

The Budget report from the Treasury included the claim that £110 million savings could be made within the fire and rescue service through revision of

shift patterns, crewing arrangements and human resource saving. What this means at the end of the day is cutting jobs and worsening our members conditions of service.

All the talk we hear about 'modernisation' and 'family friendly' policies is so much hot air. What we really face are cuts in our service that will do nothing to improve the job for firefighters or the services we can deliver to the public.

Save money – scrap regionalisation

There is one easy way in which the government could save a considerable

amount of money with relative ease and without much opposition.

They could immediately scrap the plans to regionalise our emergency fire controls in England.

The Government's FireControl project is hugely expensive and has provided a nice living for overpaid consultants for too long.

It is not wanted in the fire and rescue service and could be scrapped with no opposition.

Such a measure would in all likelihood make more than sufficient savings as required by the Treasury.

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Support our members in South Yorkshire

Our members in Humberside and South Yorkshire have recently voted for industrial action short of strike. I am aware that talks are under way in Humberside and we hope that the issues can be resolved there. In South Yorkshire our members have voted for action following a decision to impose changes to duty systems.

We have seen a growing pressure on duty systems in our service and

particularly against the traditional 2-2-3 shift system. This has been exacerbated by the recent report of the Audit Commission and pressures are likely to increase as a result of the pressure to make cuts.

The FBU has always been willing to sit down with chief officers or with fire and rescue authorities and look at ways of addressing particular problems. However, what we see all too often is that before any meetings are held with the Union, the decision has already been

made. Our members rapidly realise that any negotiations are empty because our employers' minds are made up. It is therefore no surprise that our local officials are forced down the route of industrial action. So we should all congratulate our members in South Yorkshire for standing determined against imposition. The industrial action has been designed so that the public of South Yorkshire will not be affected. Any threat to emergency cover will come from the chief officer and the authority alone.

I urge all members to send messages of support to branches in South Yorkshire and to give whatever support is required. We will ensure that you are kept informed of developments.

I urge all members to send messages of support to branches in South Yorkshire and to give whatever support is required



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Remembering the
miners' strike and
the miners who
became firefighters

JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

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May 2009

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**National Officer
Sean Starbuck
with thousands of
grievances**



HOWARD DAVIES

FBU steps up pension campaign following legal victory for police

FPS COMMUTATION

The FBU is stepping up its Fairer Commutation Campaign, following the legal victory by the Police Federation on the commutation factors used in the police pension scheme.

Commutation is the process of converting an annual pension into a one-off cash lump sum.

The Police Federation, which represents police officers, won a judicial review on 17 March. The legal action had been followed very closely by the FBU and its members because of the similarity of the case to thousands of grievances that have been submitted by FBU out-of-trade members – currently over 4,900.

In the wake of the judicial review decision, the FBU has written to the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to demand that firefighters who retired after December 2006 be covered by the Police Federation

decision and be paid accordingly, and that the grievance continues for members who retired between 2001 and 2006. This should be actioned speedily, the Union said.

The demands came as the FBU found evidence that CLG had knowledge of the new commutation factors as early as August 2006 and has asked that retrospective

‘The Police Federation’s victory has assisted our claims. We have contacted CLG to ensure that the thousands of grievances that FBU members have submitted are dealt with as soon as possible’

commutation rates should be applicable from this date without the requirement of a grievance.

The FBU reiterated the issue of the avoidance of any potential tax implications

that may arise from a second lump sum payment. The department says it is considering the Police Federation judicial review decision and any impact it might have on the Firefighters Pension Scheme and that it will contact the FBU when it has done so. Members and officials will be informed as the situation develops.

National Officer Sean Starbuck said: “The Police Federation’s victory has undoubtedly assisted our claims and we have already contacted CLG to ensure that, now that the legal challenge has been run, the thousands of grievances that FBU members have submitted are dealt with as soon as possible.

“The FBU is the only organisation that has the resources and the willingness to stand up and fight for members’ conditions of service on issues of this scale and the benefits of being an out-of-trade FBU member is being highlighted again.”

→ For more info visit www.fbu.org.uk/workplace/pensions/

Crews back action against family unfriendly shifts

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

South Yorkshire fire crews have voted three to one in favour of industrial action short of a strike against plans to force them to work 12-hour days. It is the first time a UK fire service has ever tried to impose such changes on fire crews.

As well as longer day shifts of 12 hours, up from the current nine hours, there would also be changes to start and finish times. Firefighters say the changes would damage family life and cause problems with childcare.

Firefighters have notified the fire authority that from 00.01 on 4 May 2009 they will only work to their contractual nine-hour days, including their start and finish times. In addition, no pre-arranged overtime will be worked.

South Yorkshire FBU chair John Gilliver said: "South Yorkshire fire crews have shown the strength of opposition to being forced to work an extra three hours during the day shift. This explodes the myth peddled to councillors that there was little opposition and that the plans were popular.

"This damaging myth has led the councillors to support disastrous plans to impose changes without agreement on 4 May. I would urge them to listen to this clear message from fire crews and re-think those plans. The changes would have meant firefighters with children being forced to start at 8am and finish at 8pm."

The Union says this would mean children would have to spend as much as 13 hours in



South Yorkshire firefighters tackling a fire

childcare. Existing childcare arrangements would be disrupted and new arrangements would have to be found. Before and after-school clubs cannot fill the gap and there is little formal childcare available at weekends or school holidays when firefighters are working as normal.

Those fire crews who work shifts do so in 48-hour blocks of two nine-hour day shifts (9am to 6pm) followed by two 15-hour night shifts (6pm to 9am). The proposals would introduce 12-hour day working and 12-hour night working.

Tayside accepts FBU proposals



The FBU campaign included a march last November

CUTS FIGHTBACK

Tayside Fire and Rescue Board has rejected the downgrading proposals put forward by chief fire officer Stephen Hunter. Regional and local officials have mounted a concerted political and media campaign since August 2008 to maintain the current 999 provision at Balmossie.

Jim Malone FBU Tayside Brigade Secretary, said: "After an outstanding campaign, Tayside elected members supported the FBU proposals to retain the wholetime crew at Balmossie, retain the current retained provision at Forfar and place a third fire appliance at Perth.

"The FBU will now attempt to work with CFO Hunter and truly improve community safety in Tayside."

Sounding off!

IAN COPELAND

Health and Safety Executive

Fire service inspections

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are to conduct a series of nationally coordinated inspections in a representative sample of eight Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in Great Britain throughout 2009/10.

HSE has not had such a programme for a number of years, although HSE inspectors have been engaging with FRSs locally. The first of the national inspections will start in May 2009 and inspectors will be drawn from a national team which has been formed specifically for this programme.

HSE will be looking at how health and safety is managed and will be using HSG 65 'Successful health and safety management' as a framework.

In order to achieve this HSE will be looking at health and safety management within each FRS by specific consideration of the following topics:

- ◆ provision of risk critical information
- ◆ maintenance of core operational skills
- ◆ BA and compartment fire behaviour training
- ◆ competence for incident command.

Health and safety aspects of these topics have been chosen because they are of current interest to both the Service and HSE.

During the inspections HSE inspectors

HSE inspectors will consider the FRS's policies and procedures and speak to management and firefighters about their implementation

will make enquiries into the health and safety management of these topics by considering the FRS's policies and procedures and by speaking to management and firefighters about their implementation.

In line with HSE policy this will also include seeking the views of FBU employee representatives. The inspections will typically last for three days and will be conducted by a small team of inspectors drawn from the national team.

Each FRS inspected will receive a written report of the inspectors' findings and once all the inspections are completed a national report will be collated for use by the Service. In planning for these inspections HSE has liaised with key stakeholders – including the FBU – and considers the programme to be a positive one for the Service.

The FRSs currently included are Grampian; North Wales; Cornwall; Durham & Darlington; Greater Manchester; Hampshire; Norfolk; and Oxfordshire.

FBU Women's School celebrates revolution

CUBA50

Gilda Chacon Bravo from Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) and Carolina Amador Perez from the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) joined members at the FBU's Women's School in April to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

Women firefighters and control staff heard about the great successes achieved since 1959, with women now well represented at all levels in education, government, health and within the trade union movement.

Vicky Knight, FBU Executive Council member for women, said: "Gilda and Carolina spoke so passionately about their Cuban society – and even in the struggles against the problems caused by the US blockade they are still getting it right."

"They spoke about how important it is to remove the barriers to equality, which has been done in Cuba through free childcare, free education, free healthcare, freedom to organise, freedom to speak, freedom for the working people to be heard



Denise Christie (centre), FBU Scotland rep on the Union's Women's Committee, with Gilda Chacon Bravo and Carolina Amador Perez at the FBU Women's School

and to build a society free of sexism."

Students heard how Cuba had mobilised, educated, organised and provided representative structures for women to prepare for the massive changes that were to take place.

"Workers divided by gender, race, sexual orientation and class will always be exploited and until we break down these barriers and become equal then we can never aspire to achieve what Cuba has," said Vicky.

Students were very receptive and asked what we could do for them. "But," she says, "I think the question is what they can do for us. Just look at the state of the global capitalist economy. We can learn so much from their socialist society and a system that is unaccepting of sexism – Viva Cuba!"

→ For more info on cultural events around the 50th anniversary of the Cuban revolution, visit: www.cuba50.org/

In brief

♦ Watch a new video on FBUTUBE on a delegation from the STUC General Council, including FBU officials, that visited Palestine and Israel to investigate the merits of



calling for a boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign against Israel as a way of showing solidarity with workers and trade unionists in Palestine. The visit came about as a consequence of a number of motions to the Scottish TUC annual congress in recent years calling for such a campaign.

♦ Trade unionists joined thousands of demonstrators on the TUC's Put People First march on March 26, organised to send a strong message to world leaders at the G20 meeting in London. Among them was London member Ben Sprung. He said the privatising neo-liberal system had "led to a huge gap between the few at the top and the rest of society. This system is at the point of collapse and it is us the taxpayer that is being asked to pay for it. I went on the demo to show the world leaders that we want a new economic order that will benefit all and not just a handful of people."

PETER NORDA/WIKIPEDIA



♦ Have you signed the FBU-backed People's Charter for Change? National leaders of 18 unions as well as a cross-party selection of MPs, lawyers, academics and civil rights campaigners have. Figures from the world of arts, entertainment and sport also signing include: Saffron Burrows (above), Billy Bragg; Mark Steel; Linton Kwesi Johnson; Gordon Taylor; Ken Loach; Mark Thomas; Linda Marlowe; and Paul Laverty. Visit www.thepeoplescharter.com and sign now!

FBU reps win recognition

IN THE MOVEMENT

Alex Miller, Strathclyde brigade secretary and regional fairness at work rep, won the Scottish TUC's One Workplace Equality Award for initiatives that included: Unions into Schools; maternity policy; welfare pod for dignified facilities at incidents; access to FRS premises for disabled people; and improvements to flexible working for staff with care responsibilities. He was presented with the award at the STUC Congress in Perth.

Said FBU Scotland regional secretary Kenny Ross: "This award is well deserved and reflects Alex's hard work and commitment which is supported and reflected throughout the region."

Also gaining recognition from trade union colleagues was South West regional secretary John

Drake who has been elected onto the 15-strong South West TUC Executive Committee with the highest number of votes for any official. The elections took place at the regional TUC's annual conference in March.

"The fact that John topped the poll shows the high regard that he is held in by trade unionists across the region and he has earned this election result through hard work, commitment and a strong record of achievement," said Tam McFarlane, executive council member for the South West.

"He has ensured FBU South West has played a leading role in campaigns for working people in the region and has been key in setting up Searchlight South West, which has been hugely successful in combating the threat of the BNP and other far right groups. Clearly his achievements reflect on the FBU and we are all very proud."

No to the BNP

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

FBU members across the country are joining forces with fellow trade unionists, anti-racists and community and faith groups to campaign against the British National Party (BNP).

With the European elections just a month away (in June) and the very real threat of the BNP gaining a seat in Brussels, firefighters are playing their part in relaying the truth behind the far right party's politics.

"The BNP is no friend of trade unions," explains Steve Harman, brigade secretary in Lancashire.

"They are fundamentally opposed to us. They hate trade unions, they argue against equality, they're linked with far-right groups across Europe, they believe in white supremacy, they don't believe in integration and they want to send people back to their 'country of origin', even if they were born here."

The European election offers the BNP the chance to break out of the political wilderness. As the recession bites deeper and more people lose their jobs and homes, so resentment grows among voters.

Much of this anger is directed at the government, but there are always people who will scapegoat migrant workers and immigrants and blame them for taking jobs.

Combined with a general apathy about politics and a sense of being let down by the main political parties, there is a vacuum into which the BNP with its nationalist and populist policies has stepped.

The party is standing a full list of candidates throughout England for the European elections, but is targeting its resources in the North West, where leader Nick Griffin is its lead candidate.

"They've been doing a lot of campaigning here, going out at weekends in shopping centres and villages, leafleting people," says Steve Harman.

"They've been active in vulnerable areas where there is high unemployment and social deprivation. They're selling themselves as an alternative to other political parties and there is an element of the electorate that will buy that."

The BNP needs only a slight improvement on its 2004 vote to win a seat in Brussels. In the North West, it needs to

add just 2% to its 2004 vote of 6.4% to be virtually guaranteed a seat.

"It's our job to get out there as well and let people know the far right won't help their local communities," continues Steve Harman.

"The BNP has several councillors up here, but they're all discredited and they don't have any public support. When you talk to people about them, you won't find people who agree with them. Our battle is to

'A single MEP could deliver the BNP as much as £250,000 a year in salaries, resources and office costs'

have the debate to let people know what the BNP stands for.

"We're going out leafleting in housing estates in areas such as Oldham, Burnley and Blackpool. We'll be out on the streets and shopping centres, talking to people about the threat posed by the BNP. If we don't do anything, Griffin will get elected. It's up to every one of us to ensure that he isn't."

"We have some 6,000 members up here, and we're encouraging them to talk to their friends, families and relations about the BNP. If they each get ten people to vote against the BNP, that's 60,000 extra votes, which will make a huge difference."

The party is also gaining popularity in the Midlands. "We have a lot of BNP councillors in the West Midlands and Stoke but they don't do anything," says Chris Wood, regional treasurer for the West Midlands. "They talk a good talk to get elected, but once they're in office they do nothing for their communities except spout their racist agenda."

"Some of the councillors sit on the fire authority, which is shameful. They sign up to our equality and diversity policies, yet their party is openly campaigning against ethnic minorities."

The Union works closely with the anti-fascist magazine Searchlight and Unite Against Fascism, supporting them financially and distributing leaflets. The brigade is also supporting the Love Music Hate Racism carnival at the Britannia Stadium in Stoke on May 30.

The dangers of the BNP gaining an MEP are outlined by Searchlight's Matthew Collins, who urges all firefighters to sign up to the Trade Union Friday campaign running on May 15.

"A single MEP could deliver the BNP as much as £250,000 a year in salaries, resources and office costs," he warns, "and, unlike the useless UK Independence Party, the BNP is likely to make this money work for the party."

→ More info: www.hopenothate.org.uk



A Land Rover and trailer advertising the BNP 'save our culture' campaign in Leigh, Greater Manchester during a protest that prevented the BNP meeting in the town

PAUL HERRMANN/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



Burma: a struggle for freedom

ANNA ROBERTS, DIRECTOR, THE BURMA CAMPAIGN UK

Burma has been ruled by one of the world's most brutal military dictatorships for decades but its people have never given up their courageous struggle for freedom.

September 2007 saw the biggest demonstrations in Burma for 20 years. Tens of thousands of monks led massive demonstrations in towns and cities across Burma. Thousands of Burmese civilians from all walks of life joined the peaceful protests to call for an end to military dictatorship. The regime responded with typical brutality, launching a crackdown, killing peaceful demonstrators and arresting thousands.

The media spotlight may have moved away from Burma but the human rights situation is worse than ever. The regime continues to wage a war of ethnic cleansing in eastern Burma, burning villages and using

rape as a weapon of war against ethnic women and children. Thousands are forced into slave labour and the number of political prisoners has doubled to more than 2,100, many subjected to horrific torture.

One of those prisoners is prominent labour activist Su Su Nway, who was sentenced to 12 and a half years in prison last year for participating in the demonstrations. She is reportedly being kept in solitary confinement and denied medical treatment for her heart disease, typical treatment for political prisoners, who are often singled out for harsh treatment.

Su Su Nway won a landmark labour rights case in 2005, successfully prosecuting her local authorities for forced labour abuses. However, as a result of taking the action she was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

Such is the scale of forced labour in Burma, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has accused the regime of "a crime against humanity" for its widespread and systematic use of forced labour. Every day thousands of men, women and children across Burma are used as slave labour by the regime.

They are forced to work without pay on construction projects, to break stones to build roads, construct and maintain military camps or to carry loads of ammunition and supplies for the army.

They face punishments which include extortion, beatings, torture, rape and murder. Villagers are also used by the army as human minesweepers, made to walk in front of soldiers in areas where there are landmines.



Most villagers are small-scale farmers, so when they are forced to labour for the military, it means that they have to abandon their farms for days or even weeks on end.

In early 2007, after sustained pressure by the ILO, the regime signed a cooperation agreement with the ILO to provide victims of forced labour with a mechanism to file complaints. However, this has not resulted in a reduction in the use of forced labour in Burma, in fact the ILO recently admitted the use of forced labour by the military is getting worse.

Victims of forced labour who do speak out and make complaints are met with intimidation, threats and even imprisonment by the regime.

The military dictatorship in Burma has some of the most repressive anti-trade union

laws in the world, ruthlessly persecuting trade unionists and labour activists. But, despite this, trade unionists are active in Burma. Coordinated by the exiled Federation of Trade Unions Burma (FTUB), activists travel around the country, organising workers, setting up networks, and bringing news of what is happening in Burma to the outside world. Every day trade unionists in Burma risk their lives. In April this year, five FTUB members were arrested in Rangoon after participating in the first national congress of FTUB on the Thai-Burma border. International pressure helped secure their release but thousands of activists remain in prison or at risk. They are asking the international trade union movement to support their struggle for democracy and human rights. Please answer their call.

→ What can you do?

- Make sure your union is supporting the campaign for freedom in Burma.
- Encourage your trade union branch to affiliate to the Burma Campaign.
- Join the Burma Campaign's Trade Union Action Network and receive monthly updates and news of campaign actions. Just send a blank email to: burmaunions-subscribe@lists.burmacampaign.org.uk
- For more information, contact: Burma Campaign UK
28 Charles Square
London N1 6HT
Email: info@burmacampaign.org.uk
www.burmacampaign.org.uk



JUSTICE FOR FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS WON!

The Union has emerged victorious from its campaign against detrimental changes to firefighters' ill-health pensions and has called on the Government to urgently redraft the guidance to restore pensions to firefighters unable to work due to injury or disability

The Court of Appeal in London has ruled that changes to guidance to the Firefighters Pension Scheme that enables fire brigades to sack disabled and badly injured firefighters without a pension or redundancy payment is unfair. The Court has backed three London firefighters who, supported by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), sought a judicial review after their ill-health and injury pensions

were removed when the Government suddenly changed the guidance applying to the Firefighters Pensions Scheme. The new guidance, issued in September 2006, meant that if a firefighter was still capable of doing any small part of their work they would not get a pension even if the Fire Brigade could not offer them a suitable job. The Appeal court described the Secretary of State's case as "deeply unattractive" because it



Retired London firefighter
Martin Marrison after the
High Court decision. 'Now
I can get on with my life'



 **FBUTUBE**
www.youtube.com/fbutube

For more on the campaign

PENSIONS

leads to a “no job, no pension” consequence where there is operational unfitness but no redeployment available.

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack said:

“This is a tremendous victory for the Fire Brigades Union after a long and hard fight.

“The Court’s ruling is a victory for fairness and common sense. The Government’s view that disabled or badly injured firefighters should be sacked without a pension has been scandalous and repugnant. Our members routinely put their lives in danger and to deny them a pension if they are unable to work as a result of being injured is totally unacceptable. “We now call on the Government to urgently redraft the guidance to restore ill-health pensions to firefighters unable to work due to injury or disability. It must make that re-drafted guidance retrospective to restore pensions to any of our members who have

already lost them.”

One of the three retired London firefighters, Andy Scott, said:

“I would like to thank the FBU and its solicitors Thompsons for all the help and support over the last few years and especially at the judicial review hearings. The Union’s legal team presented our case extremely well in court and the government’s position was once again shown to be an utter disgrace. My family and I have suffered because of this. It is appallingly callous. I was proud to be in the court together with the FBU fighting for justice for all firefighters across the UK.”

Colleague Martin Marrion said: “I am very grateful to my union, the Fire Brigades Union, which has fought this case for me and for all firefighters. The result is a tremendous relief to me. Now I can get on with my life. My real retirement starts today.”

JESS HURD/REPORTAGE.CO.UK



Andy Scott (left), Martin Marrion (centre) and General Secretary Matt Wrack at the High Court

TIMELINE

17 July 2003

Fire Service Circular 9/2003: opens consultation on a number of amendments to the FPS including an amendment to the definition of ‘regular firefighter’ including one that was presented as being designed to allow re-deployment to other duties within the firefighter’s rank.

30 September 2003

Consultation ends

Early 2004

Fire Service Circular 14/2004: ODPM response to the consultation is consistent with the 2003 consultation, with the explanatory note referring to the changes to the FPS as: “A change in the definition of firefighter allowing people to remain in the pension scheme if they undertake roles other than fire fighting. At present, a firefighter no longer engaged in full operational duties is unable to remain in the scheme.”

28 July 2004

Statutory Instrument making the amendment laid before Parliament. The explanatory memorandum confirms, as previously, that it is to “broaden the definition of “firefighter” to allow a firefighter, who is no longer fit enough to engage in operational duties, to remain in

the FPS rather than be retired with an ill-health pension”

2004

Fire Service Circular 30/2004 is issued: “...the definition has been amended to allow a firefighter who subsequently becomes permanently disabled for firefighting while remaining fit for other related duties to continue as a member of the FPS... If the FRA cannot offer other employment, fitness to perform other duties would not be relevant and the person may be retired with an ill-health award.”



4 September 2006

Firefighters Pension Scheme Circular 11/2006 issued: “...We have revised the guidance which we have been giving to fire and rescue authorities when asked about the consequences of the amendment. The test in assessing whether a regular firefighter ought to retire on the grounds that he is permanently disabled under Rule A15 is

whether he is permanently disabled for firefighting and for performing other duties appropriate to the role.”

17 January 2007

FBU challenges DCLG on Circular 11/2006 at the Firefighters Pension Committee. Chairman, Martin Hill for DCLG, responds that “... the guidance given in circular 11/2006 clarified DCLG’s view of the pension scheme. It could not be an interpretation of the Scheme. The decision of whether or not to retire a member on an ill-health pension remained with the FRA. The question of whether a member, who does not qualify for ill-health retirement, can be dismissed if no suitable job is available was an employment matter and not for the pension schemes.”

11 July 2007

Martin Marrion, along with Andy Scott and Neil Burke, receive letters telling them their pension is to be stopped as from August 2007.

27 July 2007

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack writes to London Commissioner Ken Knight calling for him to reverse the decision to stop the pensions of three FBU members in London.

27 September 2007

General Secretary Matt Wrack writes to the then fire minister Parmjit Dhanda calling for an urgent meeting about reversing guidance to the position prior to the detrimental change in 2006.

28 November 2007

Early Day Motion is lodged at the Westminster parliament that calls upon the Fire Minister “to step in and resolve the matter” of ill-health pensions in the fire service “at the earliest possible moment”.

22 Jan 2008

MPs debate ill-health retirements in the fire service following lobbying by thousands of FBU members.



Neil Burke, Andy Scott and Martin Marrion

STEFANO CAGNONI

“Waste of taxpayers’ money”

The Union has slammed the Government for a massive waste of taxpayers’ money on the legal case to defend its disgraceful move to change the rules to leave ill or injured firefighters without a job or a pension.

The successful appeal by the Union at Judicial Review means that the Union’s legal costs will be met by the Government and ultimately, the taxpayer. The total costs, which could exceed £300,000 for a totally unnecessary attack is a total waste of taxpayers’ money and the department of Communities and Local Government should hang their heads in shame.

Sean Starbuck National Officer expressed his disgust at this and said: “The FBU were forced into action to defend our members’

rights to a fair pension when CLG disgracefully attacked three members and potentially ended the ill health pension scheme. We knew that if our legal challenge went badly that we could face a bill for both sides’ costs but this was a fight we had to take on.

“We are the only organisation that had the resources and the will to take this on and we were heavily criticised by other organisations for not accepting the initial Judicial Review decision. But we knew the 2006 guidance spelt nothing but disaster for our members. If others thought acceptance of this was OK they were kidding themselves and their members.”

Matt Wrack General Secretary explained that this type of waste made a mockery of accountability. It has demonstrated the

importance of being an FBU member.

“An individual faced with a challenge to their pension scheme on this scale without the support of the FBU would be in big trouble. The FBU saw the importance of this issue a long time before any other organisation did and acted to protect members.

“CLG have just wasted over £300,000 trying to fix something in the pension scheme that wasn’t broken.

“We are facing proposals to close fire stations, remove frontline appliances and change duty systems because FRAs say that they need to save money up and down the country.

“Then CLG go and waste public money attacking our members’ pension schemes.”



Parmjit Dhanda

Parmjit Dhanda tells MPs “it was never the Government’s intention for an injured firefighter not to receive an appropriate award or to be left with no job or recompense. It is really important to have that on the record so that fire and rescue services are aware of that when they take these decisions.” He announces the formation of a working group involving the unions, employers and other stakeholders to “map out the way forward.”

10 February 2008

The Union welcomes announcement by Scotland’s Community Safety Minister Fergus Ewing that he would stop injured firefighters being sacked without a pension (with new guidance that was issued in May 2008), and calls for Whitehall to quickly follow suit.

6 March 2008

A Judicial Review hearing challenging the legality of guidance that leaves badly injured and disabled firefighters sacked and without a pension starts in the High Court. It is launched by the three London firefighters backed by the FBU. Despite the fire minister’s statement to parliament, the lawyer acting for the Westminster government at the hearing argues for a position that would leave firefighters without a job or pension.

March 11 2008

An Assembly Motion is lodged at the Northern Ireland Assembly in Stormont, drafted in the joint names of DUP and SDLP, noting the “detrimental” impact of the 2006 guidance and calling upon the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to “ensure that the arrangements contained within the CLG Guidance promulgated in 2004, should continue to provide framework in respect of the Firefighters Pension Scheme Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.”

February 27 2008

Val Lloyd and Ann Jones raise a Statement of Opinion – equivalent to Westminster’s EDM – calling the Welsh

Assembly Government to issue separate guidance on ill-health retirements for firefighters. It states that the changes of guidance brought in by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) in 2006 “opposes changes to the Firefighters Pension Scheme’s conditions relating to ill health retirement” as it “places unfair pressure on firefighters and calls on the Welsh Assembly Government to do all it can to amend the scheme.” Within two weeks of being raised, close on a third of the 60 Welsh Assembly Members (AMs) sign it.

15 May 2008

Union expresses disappointment at Judicial Review ruling on ill-health



Fergus Ewing

pensions. The court backed new Government guidance issued in 2006 that a firefighter capable of doing any part of their job, even answering the phone, would not get an ill-health pension regardless of whether they were able to be redeployed to such restricted duties. Separately, following detailed discussions with the department of Communities and Local Government, the Union expresses hope of a satisfactory agreement on new guidance.

14-15 January 2009

London firefighters Martin Marrion, Neil Burke and Andrew Scott, backed by the FBU, start Court of Appeal challenge to Judicial Review judgment handed down at the High Court on 15 May 2008.

6 April 2009

The Court of Appeal rules that changes to guidance to the Firefighter Pension Scheme that enables Fire Brigades to sack disabled and badly injured firefighters without a pension or redundancy payment is unfair. The Appeal court described the Secretary of State’s case as “deeply unattractive” because it leads to a “no job, no pension” consequence where there is operational unfitness but no redeployment available.

There is a 'hidden agenda' to slash employee pay in the new regional control centres planned for England, irrespective of the effect this will have on safety, according to a fire authority chair who has been a long term supporter of FireControl

The hidden agenda

Promises of decent pay and working conditions to lure highly skilled staff to England's regional control centres are only a "pretence" that will be dropped for a major attack on pay and conditions.

This shocking revelation has been made by Derek Davis, chair of Staffordshire Fire Authority, who has declared that promises made in recent high level meetings he attended about staffing and management of the new West Midlands region centre in Coven, near Wolverhampton, will be broken. Cllr Davis believes this "hidden agenda" in the Government's FireControl project could be mirrored across the country with no regard for safety.

The Union commended Cllr Davis for making these plans public and will now be recommending to annual conference in May the "strongest possible action" if fire authorities and the new companies established to run the regional controls fail to guarantee no redundancies or refuse to honour current pay, terms and conditions.

Cllr Davis, who has served as chair of the Staffordshire Authority for nearly 15 years, said in a statement to the press on April 6:

"I have been astonished by what I have

recently heard. High level meetings in the West Midlands region during the planning of the Regional Centre discussed promising decent pay and working conditions to lure highly skilled staff to the new regional centre.

"It has now been made clear that this is only a pretence until the centres are up and running. There would then be a major attack on pay and conditions, with talk of pay cuts of up to £10,000.

"I am certain this will undermine public and firefighter safety in Staffordshire and across the region. A problem that could be

'It has now been made clear that the promise of decent pay and working conditions is only a pretence until the centres are up and running. There would then be a major attack on pay and conditions, with talk of pay cuts of up to £10,000'

mirrored across the country.

"I have personally assured highly skilled emergency fire control personnel in Staffordshire that their pay and conditions are assured, if they move to the new centre in Wolverhampton. I was astonished therefore to find out that this may not occur and the opposite could happen as soon as the centres are up and running early next year.

"It is obvious that this project will not deliver the safer and better system it promised if we cannot take highly skilled and motivated staff with us and retain them. This appalling hidden agenda undermines both the project and the promises which have been made to our workforce.

"I have been a long-term supporter of this project and I cannot in all conscience go along with making promises which I have recently learned will be broken as soon as it is possible to do so."

Cllr Davis said he would be discussing these issues with fire service personnel and other councillors on the fire authority.

Chris Wood, regional official for the West Midlands, says:

"I am appalled that elected members who make up the regional management board are prepared to pretend to the public and emer-

agency control staff that everything is fine with the new project, when they know it is not true.

"In secret, they have decided to cut pay in the emergency control centres by £10,000 a year. Quality of staff will plummet, and we will end up with a call centre instead of an emergency control centre. This will put lives at risk."

Sharon Riley, executive council member, control, says: "If Chief Fire Officers and fire and rescue authorities really do value their control staff as they repeatedly tell us they do then they should see through this misguided project and listen to what the FBU has been saying all along."

"This is undoubtedly a dumping down of our highly professional role within the organisation which will result in a worse service for the public and firefighters alike. The attack on control members terms and conditions is a wake up call. FRSs must act now and refuse to transfer their control function to the RCCs."

The news angered control staff across the country.

Public safety risk

Sharon Thorndyke, control rep for East Anglia (region 9) says Cllr Davis' comments reveal just how little those in charge of the FireControl project understand about the role of emergency fire control staff and what little respect they have for them.

"It is not just the computer systems that make control rooms work efficiently but the people who are using them, and without the benefit of the expertise and knowledge of the experienced staff this project will fail. This will further endanger the public and the fire crews attending incidents."

Andy Hiscox, rep at Avon's control room says: "This only confirms what control staff have known since this project's inception - that the government was more intent on saving money on staff wages than improving service standards."

"When the RCC project started we looked at comparable models such as the Highways Agency where staff are paid considerably less and have to suffer ridiculous shift patterns and training demands on their spare time and decided then that it was likely that the same fate awaited staff at the RCC."

"Highly skilled and trained control staff who have remained dedicated for years will be replaced and there will be a high turnover of people who will just be passing through on their way to better things. And who could blame them?"

In applauding Derek Davis for "lifting the lid" on plans for emergency control room

staff, the Union says the revelations demonstrate "a disgraceful attitude" and "utter contempt for the people that work tirelessly out of public view to ensure that the fire and rescue service delivers to the public when they need it most."

Assistant General Secretary Andy Dark, says: "We believe that what Mr Davis has exposed may well be what is being planned across England. Our control room members are an integral part of the fire service team and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

"We shall be recommending to Annual Conference the strongest possible action if fire authorities and these new companies fail

to guarantee no redundancies or refuse to honour current pay, terms and conditions."

In a letter to fire minister Sadiq Khan, general secretary Matt Wrack said Mr Davis' statement "completely vindicates" the concerns consistently raised by the FBU that the project was "an excuse for attacking and undermining the terms and conditions" of control staff. The general secretary reminded the minister that he and his predecessors as well as CLG officials had assured the Union that they were "totally unaware of any such discussions" and that "such thinking has played no part in the development of the project."

Once again, the Union has called for the minister to scrap the FireControl project.





STEFANO CAGNONI/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

The best of times an

The year-long miners strike is seared into the memory of those who fought to save their pits and communities 25 years ago. It was a defining moment in Labour movement history – with mass picketing at Orgreave and soup kitchens in village halls. And some firefighters will have a very personal take on the quarter century anniversary. They are the miners-turned-firefighters who lived through the strike and saw their pits shut and communities suffer in its grim aftermath.

National demonstration in support of the 1984 miners' strike organised by miners' wives; police attack women from miners women's support group, Orgreave

many of his activist colleagues from the area, the strike to defend pits and jobs was seen from the early days as a fight against Margaret Thatcher's determination to smash the power of the unions – especially the National Union of Mineworkers.

Joe spent some time in London during the strike, raising support and spreading the word. But his heart was back in Seaham – a village with three coal mines back then.

His lasting memories are of the strength of the people determined to defend their communities. "We all grew up together. During the strike, there was unity of purpose, and solidarity in the face of outrageous provocation from the government, the media and the police.

"But they destroyed the coalfields. I left the village and joined the fire service. Such a lot has changed. The pubs may have gone, and shops shut, but when I walk back into the miner's welfare club it's as if I've just popped out for a packet of fags," said Joe. He is saddened that many old colleagues never managed to find proper work. "Getting by on two bit jobs or the dole – that's Thatcher's legacy for too many."

Chris Wood, treasurer of the FBU's West Midlands region, was on strike in the Staffordshire coalfield – and joined the fire service in spring 1985. While out on strike, he clashed with the police very close to home. "I lived next door to a policeman who used to wave his pay packet at me when he came down the drive. There was lots of overtime. I was penniless and getting letters from the

d the worst of times

It's shocking to recall the extent of the loss. There were 170,000 miners in Britain's pits when the dispute over closures started. Now just 5,000 are employed in the few pits left. And to think Arthur Scargill was accused of scaremongering when he warned 70,000 pit jobs were under imminent threat.

Miners and firefighters have a lot in common: the crucial importance of teamwork, a willingness to work in potentially dangerous situations and the camaraderie both bring. Joe McVeigh, firefighter and the Union's London

Regional Secretary, is quick to acknowledge the link. Underground or at the fire scene, colleagues have to trust each other. It's not like shop or office work.

Joe was 23 and a miner at Dawdon pit in the North-East when the strike against closures spread from Yorkshire. For Joe, as for

building society telling me to hand the keys to my house back within seven days. We managed to hold them off after going to Citizens Advice. But it wasn't good to see this bloke flashing his cash and gloating."

"It was the best of times and the worst of times," says Chris, "and a very long haul. It

was a struggle and there were tensions. Some of my family went back to work early. Some people are still not talking to pit deputies who didn't come out on strike 25 years on. Or miners who went back early. There's still that resentment

Bert Stewart (far right) with NUM leader Arthur Scargill and fellow miners during the strike



MINERS STRIKE

and families are divided. But I wouldn't have missed the strike for anything. We did a bit of flying picketing and we used to have 200 a side football matches. It was crazy. You look back now with rose tinted glasses but at the time we were fighting for survival. We knew what was coming – they were going to shut pits and we'd be out of a job. It took me a good ten years to recover from the strike in terms of finances – we never got any strike pay even though they said we were getting fifteen pounds a week. We never did. Nobody did. We used to have to go to soup kitchens on a weekend to get groceries. The public were fabulous. You certainly learned about the power of the state and how it operated. Arthur Scargill wasn't everybody's cup of tea. But what he said was spot on. They were going to close pits. It was a political decision because the miners took Tory governments on and had won before."

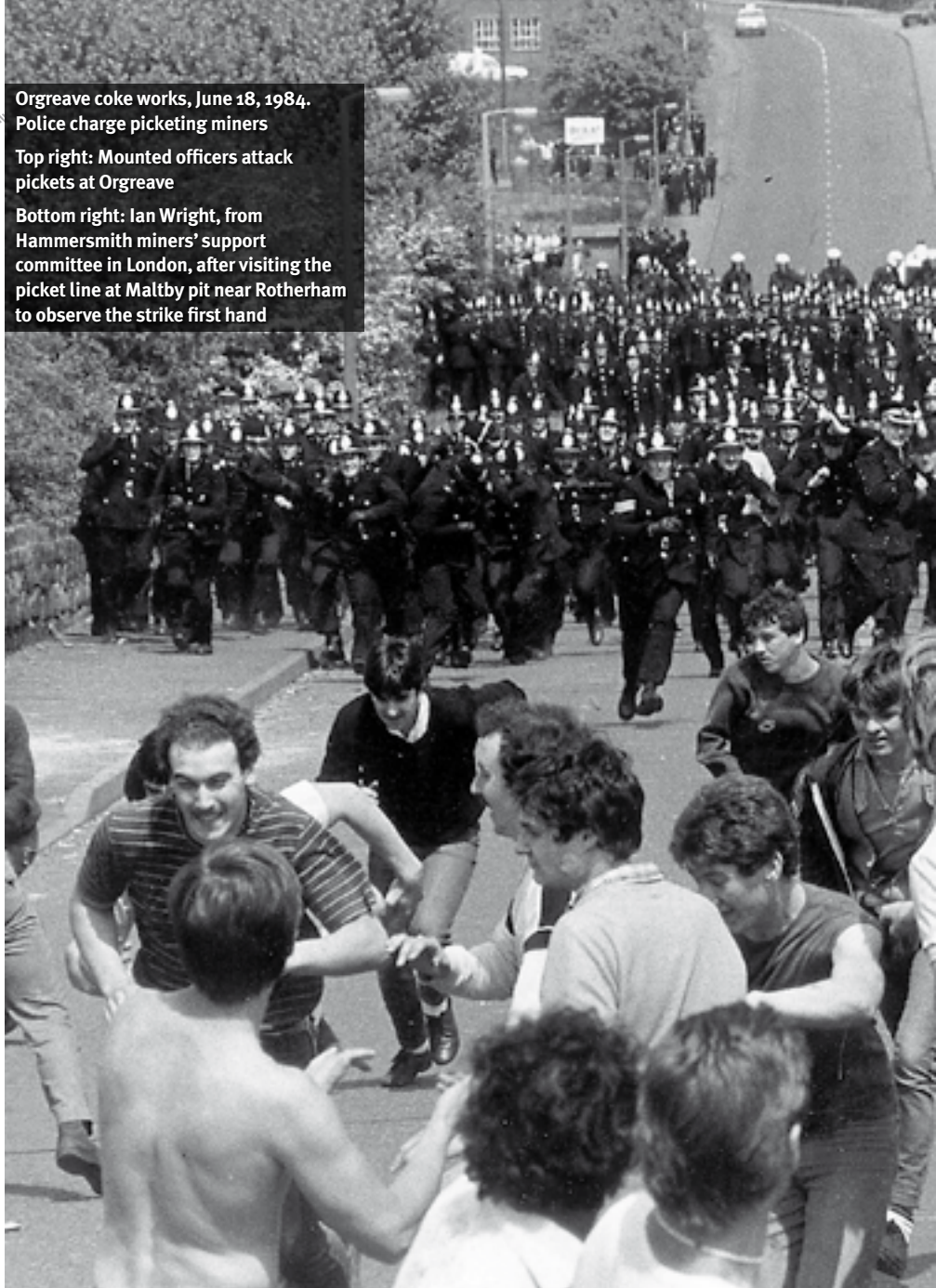
Sean Starbuck, now an FBU national official, was a young apprentice at Brodsworth pit near Doncaster when the strike started. Sean says quite candidly that he was only really politicised after the strike. It is a legacy that has shaped his trade unionism and bolstered his belief in the need for solidarity. "I was just a young lad, at the time, and didn't really understand what was going on. I was an average loyal NUM member, went to strike meetings and that was it really. I'm not going to pretend otherwise – it would be an insult to those who were more active. My dad was on strike too and my sister kept us going. Times were very hard for people. There was no strike pay and a lot of hardship." But it was only afterwards, Sean says "when no industry came in to replace the pit that still had 70 years of coal underneath, that I realised just how much our community had been destroyed. It still hasn't recovered. Clubs that used to have turns on each week have shut.

Orgreave coke works, June 18, 1984.

Police charge picketing miners

Top right: Mounted officers attack pickets at Orgreave

Bottom right: Ian Wright, from Hammersmith miners' support committee in London, after visiting the picket line at Maltby pit near Rotherham to observe the strike first hand



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

During the strike, there was unity of purpose, and solidarity in the face of outrageous provocation from the government, the media and the police

Much has been lost."

Sean thinks himself lucky he was able to forge a new career in the fire service – he quickly got involved in the union and was branch rep within two years. But many ex pitmen were not so fortunate. And the devastation suffered by his home village, the lack of opportunities for its former miners and young people rankles deeply. The site of the old mine is now a nature reserve. "People have tried to pretend there's never even been a pit there," says

General Secretary Matt Wrack with Arthur Scargill: Yorkshire NUM Annual David Jones and Joe Green Memorial Lecture, 14 March 2009



Sean. There is no doubt the strike and what came after have fuelled his belief in a better deal for working people. He remembers how miners were demonised, vilified and branded as "the enemy within" by government and media as they tried to save their communities. "When the FBU was under attack in 2003, it was very familiar," says Sean. "There was a week when

we were under attack and it all came back to me. The miners had it for a year. Miners were the villains then, but, after

what's happened, people are more likely to see miners as heroes and victims now. You could see that in coverage of the anniversary this year. If only we'd got more support back then."

Martyn Lambert, White Watch manager at Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan, was a face mechanic at Garw Ffaldau colliery north of Bridgend when the strike hit South Wales. He was also a retained firefighter – and only backed off from regular picketing at a nearby steelworks when police took an increasingly tough line against pickets.

"People started getting arrested for breach of the peace just for being there," and he had fires to fight. Martyn remembers "a very hot summer and a very cold winter," FBU members



JOHN STURROCK/
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JOHN STURROCK/
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collecting for miners outside local supermarkets and the strong sense that people were fighting for the future of their communities.

His pit shut on Boxing Day 1985. He took a job in a local mental hospital – now the site of a private prison – and trained to be a nurse. In 1992, he became a wholtime firefighter – and can name a handful of fellow ex miners who made the same journey from the coalface to the incident ground. “When you cut to the quick, it’s about knowing you can rely on colleagues.”

Bert Stewart was an electrician at Seafield colliery in Fife, a “super pit” sunk in the fifties. “The writing was on the wall for the Scottish coalfield when Seafield shut a couple of years after the strike,” says Bert, who notched up 14 years as an NUM member.

“I began to look for work offshore and also applied to the fire service.” Bert was nearly 31, so he just got in – 30 was the cut off point for new recruits. He has stayed in Fife, working his way up through the ranks.

Bert had two small children when the

strike began, and counts himself lucky that he could earn a bit of money through carrying out union-sanctioned safety checks at the pit.

“My wife did extra jobs too. It was hard at times, but we came through it, and I feel that we became better people because of the experience. A lot of people you’d expect support from didn’t support you and those you didn’t did.”

Bert counts himself “extremely fortunate” to join the fire service straight after his pit shut – and knows others who made the same career switch.

The move proved to be fortuitous. You experience the same support and the same kind of bond you get with miners when you’re on a watch – almost like a family unit. Now an FRS Group Manager, Bert may have left watch life behind. But, like other miners turned firefighters, he won’t forget living through the year-long pits strike. And if his memory ever needs jogging, he’s even got a picture of himself in the dispute, standing alongside Arthur Scargill.

This image, alongside hundreds and thousands more chronicling the dispute, comes from a bygone era where Britain still had pits and pit villages.

But the government chose to shut mines and wipe out communities rather than invest in clean-coal technology. It’s not as if a global energy crisis was looming. And after all, there were old scores to settle ...

➔ On the second Saturday in July, Matt Wrack, the FBU general secretary, will be speaking at the 125th Durham Miners’ Gala – still one of the highlights of the Labour movement calendar. In its heyday, when there were more than 100 pits in the Durham coalfield, it attracted 250,000 visitors – six times the population of Durham. Today there are no pits in the area. But the spirit of the once shock troops of the Labour movement lives on in this annual celebration – traditionally attended by Labour prime ministers and key trade union leaders as an expression of solidarity with working people. The message still holds good today.



WHAT'S MY ROLE?

Dan Giblin
FBU Academy Organiser



My dad was a firefighter on Merseyside and active within the union, so I jumped at the chance to

work for the FBU when the opportunity arose. I had been working as a civil servant in Liverpool, where I was the PCS workplace rep, branch organiser for the North West and national group executive committee member, when I decided to apply for a position with the TUC's Organising Academy.

The placement was with the FBU, I applied for the job and got an interview.

During the assessment, Matt Wrack explained the focus of the job was to not just recruit more retained members, but to make those members active within the union.

I got the job, have been in post now since November 2007 and still my feet haven't touched the ground! It's been really busy, but I'm loving it. I occasionally work from head office and on the odd days I'm there I'll be writing reports, planning campaigns and sorting out promotional materials.

But I spend most of my time on the road, at meetings all round the UK, building

branches, giving them any assistance I can and, although they know they can always call on head office or their region for help, making them as self-sufficient as possible thus attempting to lighten the busy workload of brigade and regional officials.

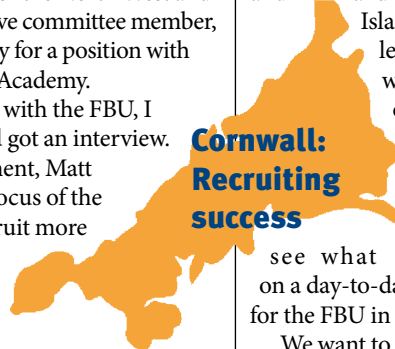
We've had a lot of success recruiting – at meetings in Cornwall and Hertfordshire we picked up more than 25 new members, and a further 45 in Highlands and

Islands – but we don't want to leave them in the situation where they're without an FBU official on the branch. If that's the case, then they're just an FBU member, not involved in the wider world of the union, and they don't get to see what the union is doing for them on a day-to-day basis, and what they can do for the FBU in return.

We want to move away from this idea that you join the union as a type of insurance for your job; you pay your subs every month in case you get injured or into trouble.

We want members to get involved so if an issue arises within their brigade, they're already in a position to fight that issue with their friends and colleagues in the workplace, people they've worked alongside for years.

**Cornwall:
Recruiting
success**



FBU
www.youtube.com/fbutube

Watch Dan on the road

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- ◆ Assisting the union to recruit new members
- ◆ Encouraging existing members to be more active
- ◆ Boosting union organising at various levels
- ◆ Arranging Activist Academy & mentoring courses

Dan Giblin (right), on a visit to a fire station in Berkshire, discusses the Union with local official Ricky Matthews

PICTURES: SIMON GREEN

I spend most of my time on the road, at meetings all round the UK, building branches, giving them any assistance I can

They'll have more success doing it that way, too, because the more organised a workplace is, the stronger it is. There'll always be people who join a union solely for the benefits they receive, but we want to try to encourage people to join because they believe in what the FBU is fighting for and to encourage them to get involved in our campaigns.

That message forms a large part of my job. I find it rewarding because the union is building for the future. One instance that really stands out for me was when we visited a branch in Hertfordshire and encountered someone who was really quite negative towards the FBU.

Not only did we manage to recruit him

to the union, but he is now the brigade retained rep! I was delighted to see him at last year's annual conference, standing up and speaking on a resolution.

Sometimes when I go to branches I come across negative comments about the union – sometimes they're very hostile – but I'd say nine times out of ten, after listening to the great work that the FBU does on behalf of RDS firefighters, the meeting turns positive and people join up.

My job is to put across the union's policies and ethos, explaining the reasons why we do the things we do and why we support the things we do. It's always gratifying when the most vocal anti-union people join up at the end of the evening. You can see the attitudes change because they can begin to see for themselves that the only union with the interests of firefighters at heart – whatever duty system they work – and the future of the fire service as a whole is the Fire Brigades Union.

It's successful because we win the arguments. I talk about what we're doing nationally, about our big campaigns – pensions, migration from RDS to wholetime, equality for RDS, various nationwide campaigns against station closures and fatalities.

It's also successful because people are angry about issues at work and joining the FBU gives them a place to turn that anger into something constructive, into a solution.

Some of the most rewarding work I've been involved in was assisting organising and running of the Activist's Academy. We held our first one, in Humberside, in the autumn and it was very well-received.

We had eight people on it working on various organising projects but it

wasn't a case of them simply going into the classroom and doing a bit of theory; they were required to go back into their workplace and carry out a practical project.

These projects included building a database of their members and profiling the workforce, going round branches, speaking to reps, finding out about any specific issues, seeking out potential new recruits, finding out where their members lived so they could build a list for lobbying local councillors, MPs and so on.

The Academy has led to the creation of an organising strategy for Humberside, which I believe is a first for the FBU. This is something I'm particularly proud of.

Of course my job would be impossible without the tremendous support from all the local officials I work with right up to the EC members, and I really appreciate this because I know how busy they are.

I also benefit greatly from the support I receive from the General Secretary, AGS and National Officer Sean Starbuck who has the remit for organising.

Even though Sean is snowed under with work he's always willing to give his time to discuss and assist me with any part of my role. I think the fact that we both believe so strongly in the benefits of the organising agenda makes working together really productive.

My whole job is about building for the future, laying foundations that can be used for many years. I really enjoy it. I just hope it makes a difference.”

Humberside:
Organising
strategy

Highlands & Islands:
45 new
members



Station meeting: 'I come across negative comments. But I'd say nine times out of ten, after listening to the great work that the FBU does on behalf of RDS firefighters, the meeting turns positive and people join up'

Don't be embarrassed ...

One man in ten suffers from this condition

IMPOTENCE

When a man suddenly finds he cannot get an erection, he thinks he must be the only person in the world with such a devastating problem and he is surprised (and to some extent reassured) to know that it is remarkably common, with one man in ten, at any age from 16-95, suffering from impotence.

More accurately, this should be called erectile dysfunction (ED), which is "the inability to achieve or maintain a firm erection sufficient for sexual activity". Sadly, impotence is something other men laugh or jeer at, mocking anyone who has a problem, which is why no one dares to admit to having it, even to a close friend, and certainly not a work colleague.

To a sufferer, it can be the most humiliating and shocking thing that could ever happen to him.

If he tries again, he is usually so anxious not to fail that the anxiety makes him fail, which makes him feel he is no longer a man, and he is angry, ashamed and depressed. To avoid it happening again, he backs away from trying, much to the distress of his partner.

She starts to wonder if there is something wrong with her, that he's gone off her and found someone else. She blames herself, and he blames himself and the rift grows bigger, with neither speaking to the other about the problem. So what are the causes? They can be physical, psychological or both.

KEY POINTS:

- ◆ ED is much more common than you realise – you are not alone
- ◆ It is easily treated, with a variety of treatments
- ◆ Overcome your embarrassment and talk to your partner
- ◆ See your GP. You need to find the cause and sort it out
- ◆ Only certain illnesses qualify for NHS treatment. Otherwise, you will need a private prescription (which your GP cannot charge for, but the pharmacy will)
- ◆ Under NO circumstances be tempted to buy your tablets from the internet – the great majority have been proved to be fraudulent or fakes

Physical causes:

- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ Diabetes, existing or hidden
- ◆ Raised cholesterol, which furs up the penile and coronary arteries
- ◆ Too much or too little thyroid or a low testosterone level
- ◆ Previous surgery on the prostate or pelvis
- ◆ Smoking, alcohol ('brewer's droop') and recreational drugs, especially cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy
- ◆ Some prescribed drugs – antidepressants, older treatments for blood pressure and diphenhydramine found in some over-the-counter sleeping pills such as Nytol, and some cold treatments.

Psychological causes

- ◆ Depression, mental trauma, stress and acute anxiety
- ◆ Bereavement, especially loss of a partner
- ◆ A broken relationship
- ◆ Fear of redundancy, financial worries and family problems
- ◆ First night nerves with a new partner

Management

Get help. Don't be embarrassed – see your GP and it will be in complete confidence. ED is easily treated but can be an early warning of hidden problems such as raised blood pressure, hidden diabetes or too high cholesterol. Your blood pressure will be checked and you should have urine or blood tests to check for diabetes, cholesterol and testosterone (and if the problem has happened suddenly and you are under 50, prolactin).

For more detailed information on these, go to the Sexual Dysfunction Association website – www.sda.uk.net/

Management nowadays is simple.

There is a variety of treatments. The easiest is a tablet, which can be one of three – Viagra, Levitra, or Cialis. Usually, you start on the highest dose and adjust downwards.

Viagra can work for four to six hours, but Cialis can last for 36–48 hours, which some prefer, as it means that making love does not have to be timetabled and is therefore more spontaneous.

The tablets only work if you are both mentally and physically stimulated – if you are in the right mood mentally and you have lots of foreplay.

These drugs clash with very few others, except for nitrates – found in anginal sprays, some old blood pressure tablets or "poppers" used when going clubbing – where the effect on blood pressure can be catastrophic.

If by any chance none of these work, there are other ways, all of which are very good but they are not so easy as a tablet. For more details, see the SDA website.

If stress or anxiety are causes, a psycho-sexual counsellor can be extremely helpful.

→ For more info and help contact
The Sexual Dysfunction Association
0870 7743571 www.sda.uk.net
The British Association for Sexual and Relationship Therapy: www.basrt.org.uk
Relate: www.relate.org.uk
Men's Health Forum
www.menshealthforum.org.uk



NAURO FERNARIELLO/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Temporary contracts

Q Is there any limit or restriction on how many temporary contracts can be issued to an employee consecutively?

A Fire authorities have a statutory duty to make sure that employees who work under fixed-term contracts are not treated less favourably than permanent employees. A fixed-term contract covers, say, an engagement for six months or where the employee is engaged to do a specific task.

An employee engaged without a break in service under a number of fixed-term contracts for a total period of four years or more has a statutory right to be regarded as a permanent employee unless the employer has a good reason for not doing so based on the type of work being carried out.

Members who consider themselves to be permanent employees can apply to the tribunal for a declaration to that effect. However, prior to making an application, members must have sought a written statement from the fire authority confirming their permanent employment status. Such a statement is to be provided by the fire authority within 21 days and must either confirm the change to permanent employee status or give reasons why the member remains a fixed-term employee.

While it is important to take steps to protect your legal position, it should be noted that in practice a tribunal claim is not always the best approach. It is likely that the issue will be best resolved by contacting the FBU to negotiate your behalf.

Equality reps

Q I am an FBU rep representing women members. My brigade is refusing me adequate time off to carry out my duties and to take training relevant to this role. What are my rights?

A Although trade union reps have a statutory right to time off for trade union duties, there



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Legal Beagle

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

is currently no right to time off for trade union equality reps.

Harriet Harman, the deputy prime minister, has pledged to strengthen the role of equality reps through the Equality Bill that is currently before Parliament. However, the Bill does not include statutory recognition for equality reps.

The FBU is campaigning with the TUC and other unions for statutory rights for equality reps. This would ensure consistent treatment with other union workplace reps, including health and safety and learning reps and would overcome the difficulties that you and many others encounter in trying to represent women, black and ethnic minority and lesbian, gay and transsexual members.

There are clear benefits not just for equality reps and members, but for employers too. It has been shown that the role of union safety reps has helped to make unionised workplaces safer. Equality reps can work with employers to help them to

become employers of choice.

It would certainly help fire authorities to meet the targets set in the Fire Service National Diversity and Equality Strategy 2008-2018.

However, until such a right is achieved for equality reps, then you will have to rely on the law that gives officials of recognised trade unions the right to claim paid and unpaid time off work to take part in certain union activities.

Although there is no absolute right to take time off, an employer should not refuse a reasonable request to do so. Speak to other FBU reps about how to present training for your role as legitimate trade union activity.

The FBU has successfully pursued a number of cases to the employment tribunal on behalf of members refused reasonable time off by brigades to carry out their union duties.

It should be noted that as a safety rep, you enjoy statutory rights and in such a role you would tackle welfare issues

that an equality rep might deal with. So, until such time as the law changes, any equality rep encountering such difficulties should consider also seeking to be appointed as a safety rep or raising any welfare issues direct with the safety rep so that they can deal with them.

Divorce: legal costs

Q I am in the process of getting divorced due to an adulterous affair by my spouse. Who has to pay legal costs?

A There is no general rule as to who has to pay the costs of a divorce. The court has discretion to order any party to a divorce to pay the legal expenses (solicitor's fees) of the other side, or not to make an order for costs at all. Either party may be eligible for civil legal aid to pay some of the costs.

The parties may reach a voluntary agreement about who should pay. They could agree to share the bill equally with neither asking the court to make an order for costs. They could alternatively agree to pay for their own legal expenses and not ask the court to make an order.

However, where one party is deemed to be "at fault" in a divorce, it is common that the petitioner will ask for costs to be awarded against the other partner and, potentially in adultery situations, the co-respondent. This means that the other party will be ordered to pay most of the costs of the divorce.

The other party may not be ordered to pay all the legal expenses as the court has to look at both parties' financial circumstances as well as their behaviour. Orders for costs cannot usually be enforced against a person who has received legal aid.

The court fees are usually payable in full by the petitioner unless they are exempt from paying them or they qualify for a reduction.

→ The advice published here is not intended as legal advice on individual cases. With thanks to Thompsons solicitors.

'It's a great game at whatever level'

Nicola Hobbs' shift patterns on Green Watch Rotherham mean she can miss an England under-23 football squad call-up, but firefighting comes first for her

Rotherham firefighter Nicola Hobbs plays in goal for Doncaster Belles in the FA Women's Premier League National Division. But it's far from the only team footie fan Nicola plays for in the ultimate defending position ...

It didn't take long for Nicola to get involved in women's football when she started her chosen career last year. Since joining South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service she has played in goal for both her local fire service and been called up for the brigade national side.

She may be a probationary firefighter, but, as her footballing fire service colleagues

are finding, she's certainly no novice when it comes to saving goals.

Doncaster Belles – currently sixth in the women's equivalent of the FA Premier League – is Nicola's second premier league club. She moved there from Blackburn after a stint playing for lower division Lincoln. Oh yes, and she was scouted to play for England while still at school and has played in the national squad since she was just 14. She's

currently playing for the under-23s – when shift patterns allow.

Nicola is engagingly modest about her achievements – she mentioned playing for England mid-way through her interview with *Firefighter* about playing for Doncaster Belles. And she is up front about putting her career as a firefighter before football – a true enthusiast.

"I love football and I love my job. But football won't pay the mortgage. Women have to go to America if they want to make money out of the game. For me it's all about playing football. I love it, but firefighting comes first."

Called up twice

Shift patterns mean Nicola cannot always take up the call to play for England. She's been called up twice since joining the fire service – once for a tournament in Spain and once for a training camp in Slough in November.

She could not get time off to go to Spain but certainly isn't moaning about it. "Slough was fun," she says.

She is the only woman on Green Watch in Rotherham – a station where there are quite a few football fans and even a former



PICTURES: MARTIN JENKINSON



Nicola and her Doncaster Belles team mates



NICOLA HOBBS

Probationary firefighter Nicola Hobbs has football in her genes, but she puts her career in the service before her sport

rather than scoring goals. “Mum took me along to the centre for excellence at Norwich when I was 11. There were hundreds of girls there after a place in the team. Mum bought me a pair of goalie gloves because she reckoned that many people weren’t interested in going in goal.”

She has not looked back, but would be happy to play anywhere on the field (“I’ll go where I’m needed”) but striker is her second favourite position. “I’ve played in goal for so long I can read what the keeper is thinking – and try and get the ball in the hardest place for them to save it – the top or bottom corner of the net.”

Nicola’s skills and commitment to being a team player have certainly paid off. So far, she’s represented her country in France, Belgium, Norway and Romania.

A team for everyone

There is, she says, a particular thrill about playing in front of a big crowd, and recalls when she came on as a substitute goalkeeper in a European championship qualifier in France four years ago. “I let one in but saved quite a few. It was a good feeling.”

And Nicola’s advice for women in the fire service who fancy the idea of playing football but who have not yet got round to it? “Get a group of mates together and make your own five-a-side team, then go out and enjoy it. You won’t know ’til you try it. There’s a team out there for everyone.”

professional player on the same watch. She finds the job, and her work colleagues “spot on” and is glad she did not take up a job as a firefighter in the Navy she was offered before applying to fight fires nearer home.

“My colleagues are great. They take the mick but it’s very good-natured. They are very supportive and encouraging about my game. In this job, no day’s ever the same. You can’t get bored because you never know what you’re going to end up doing.”

Nicola is not alone among non-fire-fighting football team members in working in a male-dominated job. Her team mates in Doncaster include a plasterer, a painter and decorator, a post woman and a lorry driver – as well as a good few students.

“They’re a good bunch and I really enjoy playing. It’s a great game at whatever level.”

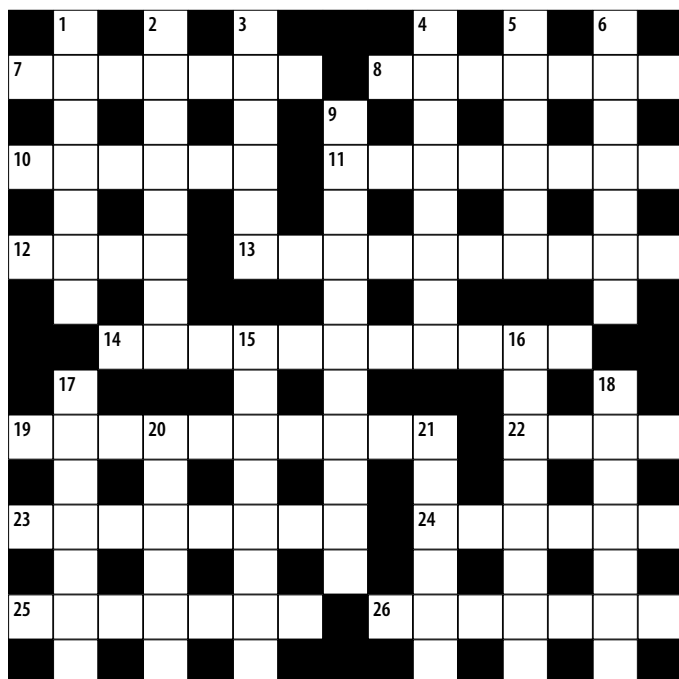
Football is in the family genes. Nicola’s younger brother Jack is currently on loan to Leicester from Liverpool. Nicola puts her love of football down to support and encouragement from both parents.

Her dad, a Tottenham fan, introduced her to the delights of watching the beautiful game when very young.

But it was her mother who played a key part in setting Nicola on the road to saving



Quick Crossword



ACROSS

- 7,8** Campaign to put people before bankers (7, 7)
10 Song (6)
11 Can't make one without breaking eggs (8)
12 Bill of fare (4)
13 Spirit is crafted here (10)
14 Jumped over (11)
19 Steve Bell, Gerald Scarfe for example (10)
22 Pie without lid or sharp to taste (4)
23 Least grubby (8)
24 Strip for take-off, landing – or models (6)
25 Where to catch your union videos (7)
26 Slandered or libelled (7)

DOWN

- 1** Took it easy (7)
2 Appreciation shown (of performance) (8)
3 Took note of (6)
4 Loud noise made in approval (often accompanies 2) (8)
5 Trial, difficult task (6)
6 Occidental cowboy movie (7)
9 Limits, especially physical (11)
15 Old Testament book; wise sayings (8)
16 National of Baltic state (8)
17 Small marsupial (7)
18 Wider (7)
20 Drinks to – or heats slice of bread (6)
21 At which one takes aim (6)

Solution to April 2009 crossword

Winner of the March Firefighter 2009 quiz
 Mr Robson of Cheltenham

Answers to March 2009 Firefighter Quiz

- 1** Dustin Hoffman
2 Daniel Day Lewis
3 Kevin Spacey
4 Pulp Fiction
5 Mike Myers



WIN!
 a pair of
 olive tress



Prize Quiz

Win a pair of olive trees



1

1 Which novel opens with the line "The Mole had been working very hard all morning, spring cleaning his little home"?

- a** The Hobbit
b Return of Oz
c The Prisoner of Azkaban
d The Wind in the Willows

2 The ancient greeks celebrated Mother's day in which season

- a** Winter
b Spring
c Summer
d Autumn

3 What famous poet wrote the well-quoted line: "In the spring, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love"?

- a** William Shakespeare
b Lewis Carroll
c Alfred Tennyson
d James Joyce

4 In which US state (normally associated with ex president Bill Clinton) would you find Hot Springs National Park?

- a** Oregon
b Montana
c Arkansas
d Alaska

5 Who romances a middle aged widow in the film 'The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone'?

- a** Warren Beatty
b Gregory Peck
c Marlon Brando
d James Dean



5

HOW TO ENTER

To win a pair of olive trees please send your answers to the Prize Quiz by 31 May 2009 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (May 2009) 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

Inflexible FORD



Why couldn't the fire officer in charge at a fire in Stockport in April have the eight pumps he needed?

It's not as though the appliances weren't there. They were – empty, locked up and with no one to crew them, because the fire authority has been saving a little money by cutting frontline firefighters.

It's a wonderful system they've got in Greater Manchester, which they call by one of those dreadful acronyms: FORD. It stands for Flexible Operational Resource Deployment, probably because it's exactly the opposite: **it makes the fire service inflexible, prevents appliances being operational, cuts down on resources and prevents them from being deployed.**

Under this system, four appliances across the fire authority's empire are deemed unnecessary. And – this is the clever bit – they spread it around. Sometimes it's an appliance at one fire station, sometimes at another, which means that no one can ever say: you've decommissioned an appliance at my local fire station.

It's such a clever idea that other fire authorities are thinking of copying it.

Bad joke



All right, that question was too easy. How about this? Why, in another area of Manchester, did it take an hour and a half to get a hose layer? And why, a couple of weeks later, did it take over an hour to get a hose layer to another Manchester fire?

Couldn't be another example of our old friend, efficiency savings, could it?

How did you guess? **There are no permanent crews for this specialist equipment.** So the crew that was fighting that second fire had to race back to the station, blue lights going, to pick up a specialist vehicle which they alternately crew.

And while doing this, they had to be careful not to run into another crew racing back to the station, blue lights going, to pick up their command vehicle that they now also alternately crew.

It would be funny if it weren't potentially fatal.

Duty calls



Station Cat promises to stop talking about those Manchester fires any minute. But we do want to mention that a crew sent to fight the Stockport fire sent a radio message to some colleagues at 9.45 p.m. saying: "You do know we're the day crew?" They should have been off duty at 6 pm.

McGuirkside tales



An odd letter from the chief fire officer of Merseyside has come to the Cat's attention.

He's upset that the report on firefighter deaths commissioned by the FBU last year says Merseyside did not provide much information.

It says that Merseyside first rejected the approach of the researchers from Labour Research Department and then provided only limited information.

"I have no record or indeed recollection of any such formal or informal requests by LRD," says Mr A.J. McGuirk.

Which is very odd indeed, because Jean Crimmins, his Corporate Information Sharing Officer (**they may have to cut back on firefighters, but the fire authority can still afford a Corporate Information Sharing Officer**) wrote to the LRD on 21 April last year: "Your request for information has now been considered and it is not possible to meet your request ..."

Curious cat



Mr McGuirk's behaviour gets curiouser and curiouser. Having said he has no record of LRD asking for information, he then claims his authority must have responded to the request that it never received.

"I accept we may not have responded in the manner that suits LRD," he adds, and only Mr McGuirk knows what that strange sentence means.

And then – clearly in Mr McGuirk's mind the coup de grace – he adds that if they did respond, they shouldn't have done: "If, after further investigation, this proves to be the case, then I would politely remind you and the LRD that it is not the role of the Fire and Rescue Service to act as an information

generating unit."

No, **Station Cat doesn't know what an information generating unit is**, either, though it doesn't sound like a healthy place to stop and have a chat.

Pork pies



Now, which of these two bits of the Communities and Local Government Department is telling the truth, and which is telling pork pies?

Fire Minister Sadiq Khan told the House of Commons on 20 April: "There is no mechanism that allows Communities and Local Government to access how many fires have been prevented."

But a month earlier, a CLG press statement claimed: "More lives have been saved and fires prevented thanks

to the success of firefighters carrying out Home Fire Risk Safety Checks."

One of their well-paid external consultants had come up with some very exact figures. Home fire risks safety checks each

year have, apparently, saved 53 lives, reduced the number of people injured by fire in the home by 888, and reduced the incidents of fires in people's homes by 13,670. **Why hasn't anyone told Mr Khan?**

Actually, they have. He's quoted in the press release as saying what a good show it is: "I congratulate England's Fire and Rescue Authorities for this achievement. Visiting nearly 2 million homes over four years and installing over 2.4 million new smoke alarms has prevented tragedy and heart break for many families."

Which is the truth? Here's a clue. How can anyone possibly know how many fires would have happened without home safety checks?

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



25-year badges

This issue of *Firefighter* has five pages of 25-year badge photographs to clear a backlog



Mark Orchard (l) and Ged Stocker (r), Poole Branch, receive their 25-year badges from Martin Reed, Dorset vice-chair (centre), accompanied by members of Blue Watch, Poole fire station



Peter Frazer (r) receives his 25-year badge from Pete Turner, branch rep Blackburn



Kieran Rice (r) Carrickfergus Fire Station, Northern Ireland receives his 25-year badge from EC Member Jim Barbour



Guy Chapman (r) CFFT training, Essex FRS, receives his 25-year badge from colleague Steve Harrison



Bob McLaren (l) Blue Watch, Calton Fire Station, receives his 25-year badge from David McRoberts, Branch Chair Calton



John Musto (l) Green Watch, Fairweather Green, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Bradford District Secretary John Rankin



Tony Batty (l) Blue Watch, Mansfield Road, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Secretary Liam Diver



George Watson junior (r) Carrickfergus Fire Station, Northern Ireland, receives his 25-year badge from EC Member Jim Barbour



George Watson senior (r) Carrickfergus Fire Station, Northern Ireland, receives his 25-year badge from EC Member Jim Barbour



Tony White (l) Green Watch, Greenwich, receives his 25-year badge from Ian Leahair, EC Member for London



Jim Crane (r) Carrickfergus Fire Station, Northern Ireland, receives his 25-year badge from EC Member Jim Barbour



Peter Chirgwin (l) White Watch, Edmonton, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Rep Barry Payton



Allen Ellis (l) Blue Watch, Weston Super Mare, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Secretary Adam Course



Terry Hunt (r) White Watch Mansfield Road, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Secretary Liam Diver



Dave Bosley (r) Lewisham & Greenwich Fire Safety Team, receives his 25-year badge from Richard Lockwood, chair officers central committee for London



John Hall (r) Central Red, Sheffield, South Yorkshire receives his 25-year badge from Central branch secretary Cath Toovey



Andy Laken (l), Green Watch, Temple station, Weston Super Mare, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Secretary Adam Course



Neil Finch (r) Blue Watch, Purley, London Fire Brigade, receives his 25-year badge from Richard Lockwood, chair officers central committee for London



Andy Copley (r) Blue Watch, Pontefract, receives his 25-year badge from Bill Delve, Wakefield divisional secretary. Looking on are (l to r) Mick Old, Craig Turner and Darren Swales



John McIntyre (centre) and **Simon Leaf (r)** Beckenham, London Fire Brigade, receive their 25-year badges from borough rep Mark Freeman



L-R: Colin Hannigan, Joe Buick, Graham Clark, Steve Hill, Scott Thomson, Jim Malone (Brigade Secretary), Paul Young, John Duffy (Region 1 Chair), Kenny Blues, Ronnie Costello (Brigade Chair) Tayside, receive their 25 year badges from Region1 Chair John Duffy



Mike Marsh, Dorset Fire Control, receives his 25-year badge from Allen Westerby, BMS Dorset



Stuart Huxter (r) Blue Watch, Hadleigh, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from Branch Rep Daryl Arnold



Dereck Smith (r) receives his 25-year badge from Cleveland Brigade Vice Chair David Howe at Grangetown Fire Station



Mick Leach (r), Rugby, receives his 25-year badge from Steve Roberts, Vice Chair Warwickshire Fire and Rescue



Roger Lucraft (r) Southend & Rochford Command HQ, receives his 25-year badge from Essex Officers Section Chair Bob Wahl



Glenn Smeeth (l) receives his 25-year badge from Rushmoor Branch Chair Steve Brimble



John Cobbold (l) White Watch, Enfield receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Barry Payton



Matt Gardner (r) Red Watch, Paignton, receives his 25-year badge from branch chairman Brian Cappello



Paul Halford (l) West Bridgford, Notts, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil Coates



John Irving (l) Red Watch, Kingsland, London Fire Brigade receives his 25-year badge from Kingsland branch rep Scott Frankland



Lee King (r) Firefighter Development STC, London Fire Brigade, receives his 25-year badge from Ian Leahair, EC member London



Pete Coombs (l) Green Watch, Weston Super Mare receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Adam Course



Eddy Smith (l) Princes St, Ipswich, receives his 25-year badge from former colleague, national officer Paul Woolstenholmes



Jeff Simpson (l) Mansfield Road, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Liam Diver



Mark Wroe (r) South Elmsall, Green Watch, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Brigade Secretary Mark Wilson



Dennis O'Connell (r) receives his 25-year badge from Branch Rep Dave Herpe, both from Blue Watch, Godstone Fire Station, Surrey



Phil Palmer (l) Ops Support Group, receives his 25-year badge from West Midlands Brigade Secretary Rose Jones



Marcus Webster (l) Nigel Maidment (centre) and John Feltham (r), Poole Branch, receive their 25-year badges from Martin Reed, Dorset Vice-Chair (far right), accompanied by members of White Watch, Poole fire station



Bob Ramsey (r) Southend & Rochford Command HQ, receives his 25-year badge from Essex Officers Section Chair Bob Wahl



Kevin Biggs (l) Croydon, London Fire Brigade, receives his 25-year badge from Richard Lockwood, chair officers central committee for London



Pete O'Reilly (r) Group One, Fulwood, Lancashire receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Ian McGill



Liam Diver (l) Mansfield Road, South Yorkshire receives his 25-year badge from Jeff Simpson, branch chair



Peter Kelly (r) Lancaster Fire Safety, receives his 25-year badge from Russ Stephenson, branch chair Lancaster fire station



Steve Brown (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pete Turner, branch rep Blackburn



Vince Magyar (r) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Peter Newton (r) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Steve O'Conner (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Eric Pimm (l), Nailsea, Avon, receives his 25-year badge from Kevin Herniman, South West regional official



Jon Thornton (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Tim Wilkes (l) Green Watch, Greenwich, receives his 25-year badge from Ian Leahair, EC Member, London



Neil Angell (r) Atherstone Warwickshire receives his 25-year badge from Mark Rattray Brigade Chair



Donny Clarke (r) Nuneaton Warwickshire receives his 25-year badge from Mark Rattray Brigade Chair



Derek Joyce (r) Bedworth, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from Mark Rattray Brigade Chair



Les Moore (r) Atherstone, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from Mark Rattray Brigade Chair



Mark Rattray (r) Brigade Chair Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from Donny Clarke Nuneaton fire station



Greg Shephard (r) Nuneaton, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from Mark Rattray Brigade Chair

25-year badges



Ian Brown (r) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Peter Cowup (r) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Mike Curran (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Martin Gayton (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Andy Palmer (r) Green Watch Leytonstone, London Fire Brigade, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Tim Roedel



Gil Luke (l) receives his 25-year badge from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



From left: **Mark Hams, Steve hench, Tom Butler, Alan Emms, Neil Orbell, Ziggy Hurron, Lee Allen and Malcolm McGride** receive their 25-year badges from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Mark Innes (r), Sittingbourne, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jim Green



From left: **Martin Howard, Laurie Denny, Bob Selby and Ray Taylor** receive their 25-year badges from Pan Poullais, officers' secretary, London



Mel Creton (l) Blue Watch, Bath, receives his 25-year badge from, Bath branch secretary Al Dunlop

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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