

FireFighter

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

May/June 2015

THE FUTURE OF OUR SERVICE

Delegates to debate way forward

See p10





Matt Wrack

After the election: our struggle continues!

This editorial is written before the general election and all observers have commented that the result is too close to call.

Once the election is over, our union, with others, will need to assess the situation and the next steps for the FBU and the rest of the movement.

It is clear that we are not likely to face any sudden easing-up of the various attacks we have faced for many years – and particularly since 2010.

That should give us the chance to reflect. Why is it that workers are under attack? Why have living standards fallen for millions? Why have the pensions of over five million public sector workers been attacked and changed? Why have our public services been slashed?

These attacks began after the banking crises of 2007/8 which sparked a world economic crisis leading to a sharp drop in tax income.

It was **this** that set off the escalation of the deficits in public finances in the UK and across much of the world.

We are under attack because of a serious failing in the economic system – not because there were too many firefighters, nurses or teachers.

We need to remember that at all times – especially when we are told that “There is no money – the cuts are necessary”.

The truth is that this society remains a wealthy one.



The resources undoubtedly exist to provide good schools and hospitals for everyone – and to protect our fire and rescue service.

However, the political system is dominated by the needs and demands of big business.

It is these that set the agenda for most politicians of all the Westminster parties.

Unless this grip is broken the attacks will continue. That is a very serious challenge to us – but it is one we need to face up to if we are to protect ourselves and the future for the next generation.

Us and them

For me, this means going back to basics. Workers formed

unions because it was the only way to obtain a voice at work. Workers could not rely on the good will of employers.

That remains the case today. Nothing has changed fundamentally. Only by standing together in the workplace can we build organisations that can challenge the agenda of the employers – including those who set the political agenda for all of us.

From such organisations we can try to campaign and organise politically to challenge the employers' agenda at a national – and international – level.

It means recognising that we have our own interests as firefighters – but also as workers generally. If the

workers' movement as a whole is weakened, then we are weakened as well. It means that the bosses will get away with further attacks on our rights and further cuts to our living standards and conditions.

These are very serious matters that require a serious debate. They will form the background to the debates at FBU Conference 2015 and the discussion amongst members in coming weeks and months. We will need to soberly assess the situation, examine the challenges we face and set out a way forward. It certainly won't be easy.

Please ensure your voice is heard. Please ensure you play your part in building our organisation in your workplace.

Contents

Fighting for our service

Sian Griffiths, one of the first women firefighters, looks back over 30 years

JESS HURD/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



ROD LEON



FBU B&EMM delegate Otis Graham at this year's TUC black workers' conference in London

LETTER

It is not for our union to promote armed forces

I am concerned about the Day Off article in the March edition of *Firefighter* that appeared to be a thinly disguised recruitment advert for the British armed forces.

If young men and women want to volunteer to join the armed forces that is their business.

But it is not the function of a trade union magazine to print articles that could influence young people to forfeit their lives. Shame on you *Firefighter*.

It would be nice to think that this letter might find its way into *Firefighter*, but since the demise of the letters page, you do not seem much interested in debate with members.

Ronnie Robertson, out of trade member, Strathclyde

■ Letters or comments from readers are welcome. Please send to firefighter@fbu.org.uk or FBU, Bradley House 68 Coombe Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT2 7AE

News

- 4** Pension campaign continues
- 5** Essex mobilising system at heart of dispute NI cuts protest
- 6** FBU women's school Union wins cuts pledge Cuts 'solution' breaks down

Features

- 10** **Future of the service** FBU delegates to debate way forward
- 12** **Control staff priorities** Changes and mergers to be monitored

14 Firefighter deaths

Union presses for action based on its report on tragic death of Ewan Williamson

16 Pensions after 7 May

Whatever the government, the campaign will continue

Regulars

- 5** **Sounding off** Officers, pensions and the FBU
- 7** **Focus** Police spied on FBU members
- 8** **The big picture** Stevie McCrorie wins *The Voice*

18 Health and safety

Union ensures furniture regulations are based on evidence

19 Legal Beagle

Shared parental leave

20 People

Sian Griffiths looks back over 30 years as a firefighter

22 Puzzles

Win Yellowstone Festival 4 Tipi Tent

23 Station Cat

The news they don't want you to hear

24 25-year badges

Five pages of award pictures

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Pension scheme imposed but campaign continues

Pension opt-out warning

As the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme was imposed on firefighters across the UK on 1 April, the FBU warned members against opting out of the scheme.

A short video on the pitfalls of opting out or not joining the 2015 scheme has been produced by the union ahead of meetings around the UK at which members and officials will be briefed on recent developments and the FBU's ongoing work.

Although the scheme's proposals have been improved and some of the union's concerns addressed in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the dispute is far from over.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Despite the valid criticisms of the scheme, which does not reflect the physical role undertaken by firefighters, it is better for people to be part of it rather than not.

"It is better for people to have an

occupational pension than not to have one.

"If you opt out of the scheme, you are essentially signing up for a pay cut as the government will not contribute anything toward your workplace pension.

"This scheme is still unworkable, most noticeably in England. Therefore our campaign continues throughout the next parliament and we will continue this dispute with the next government until a fair resolution can be found."

The FBU view remains that the only way to provide a genuine guarantee of an unreduced pension for a firefighter who fails a fitness test through no fault of their own is to include it in the scheme regulations – as has been the case in Scotland

Despite several attempts by the FBU to secure meetings, the Department for Communities and Local Government refused to meet union officials before the scheme was implemented and continues to do so.

The "guarantee" on pensions and fitness given by the coalition government in parliament has now been completely discredited and will not protect firefighters.

The FBU view remains that the only way to provide a genuine guarantee of an unreduced pension for a firefighter who fails a fitness test through no fault of their own is to include it in the scheme regulations – as has been the case in Scotland.

The political work of the union continues against the backdrop of the general election campaign. Senior union officials have met shadow secretary of state Hilary Benn and shadow fire minister Lyn Brown to discuss how they would deal with the pension dispute if Labour were to form a government.

Martin Pottinger: From our EC member to our brigade officer reps – there is a wealth of experience and support that will be there for FBU officer members at every point of their careers



Firefighters mobilised to non-existent incidents

Essex

A failing mobilising system remains at the centre of the industrial dispute in Essex where the fire service was recently plunged into chaos as fire engines from all parts of the county were sent to non-existent incidents by the new set-up.

The meltdown came hours after fire chiefs had fended off questions from councillors at a fire authority meeting who were concerned about repeated failures of the “state of the art” system. Senior managers told councillors that they were confident that all problems had now been eliminated.

Adam Eckley, acting chief fire officer in Essex, later assured the fire authority that senior managers were now on top of the situation.

Riccardo la Torre, chair of the FBU in Essex, said: “One minute fire chiefs were reassuring fire authority members that things were fine, the next, the whole system went haywire, mobilising fire engines all across the county to fake incidents.”

A fire engine in Basildon was responding



STEFANO CANONI

to one such incident when it had to be redirected to a real house fire in progress.

Keith Handscomb, FBU executive council member for the region, said: “This is another example of a close call where a fire engine is unavailable or delayed on an imaginary call-out, when there is a real emergency that they should be responding too.

“This so called ‘state of the art’ system is increasing the risk to the public and firefighters alike. Fire engines are also unnecessarily responding rapidly to fake emergencies through the streets on blue lights.”



More than 400 FBU members recently turned out for a demonstration in Belfast to mark the largest single day of industrial action in Northern Ireland for several years. Organised by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the day was part of a campaign for jobs and public services in the continuing austerity agenda. A large gathering at Belfast City Hall heard speakers including FBU assistant general secretary Andy Dark. The Belfast event was one of a series of rallies and events across the province.

SOUNDING OFF

Officers in dispute

Martin Pottinger, secretary of the FBU officers' national committee, on the effect the pension dispute has had on the officers' section of the FBU

All FBU members are feeling the pain of the long-running pension dispute.

Members of the officers' section are no different. No one wants to be part of a long-running and bitter dispute, but our clear, justified and fact-based campaign leaves us in no doubt that we are in the right.

In some cases the pressure of the dispute has led to some very regrettable outcomes.

Most brigade managers are now presenting our officers with resilience contracts, often trying to tie them into rota changes to bring them in by stealth.

Without the assistance, help and support of officers' national committee reps and other members, our officers might well have unwittingly signed up to something irreversible and damaging to them and future officers.

This current dispute has galvanised our membership and created a stronghold of quality leaders with sound and principled reasons for supporting the campaign.

Being an officer member of the only union with a voice to support you can be challenging but rewarding work.

From our EC member down to our brigade officer reps, you have a wealth of experience and support that will be there for you at every point of your career.

We continue to represent you locally, nationally and right up to Westminster and this will not be changing.

We will not be going away and we will not shy away from difficult positions where we have a clear and justified fight.

The FBU is the only voice that can assist officers and is the only voice that gets you heard. Stick with us, stay united and strong and remember that support is available right up to the highest of levels.

'Your voice matters' – women's school

FBU women's school

The theme of this year's women's school was women making their voices heard at work, at home, in life and at elections. John McGhee, FBU national officer, opened the school to a number of new women as well as previous attendees.

Speakers included Ruth Smeeth, who is standing for the Labour Party in Stoke-on-Trent North in the general election. She spoke about why she became involved in unions.

Lisa Clarke from the No More Page 3 campaign spoke about their efforts to end the feature in the Murdoch-owned *Sun* newspaper. Lynn Collins, regional secretary of the TUC in the North West, also spoke.

Professor Mary Davis gave an enlightening and entertaining presentation on a selection of political women in history around World War One, including Sylvia Pankhurst.

Workshops, designed to help students in their work as union members and officials, covered topics such as helping women find the confidence to speak at union meetings, how to run an effective campaign, how the media can assist campaigning work, and help on handling sensitive issues members may have.

A concluding session covered campaign priorities and how to involve members.



Launching the Against Breast Cancer charity bra recycling drive at the FBU women's school in 2007

MP Angela Smith visited the school on board the pink Labour bus which is touring the country to increase the turn out of women voters in the general election.

Sam Rye, secretary of the FBU national women's committee, said: "Everyone left this year's school refreshed and reinvigorated having identified what they wanted to do when they got back to their branch. As part of the school we collected old, grey and unloved bras to donate to a charity that will donate money. If you missed our collection you can post them."

■ See www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk for details.

FBU wins council pledge on cuts and jobs

Dorset and Wiltshire

The chair of Wiltshire fire authority, Cllr Graham Payne, has publicly committed the new merged Dorset and Wiltshire fire service to having full strength frontline services, a full suite of fire stations and no firefighter redundancies.

His pledge was the result of his reading documents submitted by the FBU.

The union has represented firefighters throughout the merger process and made detailed written submissions as part of the local and national consultations.

A parliamentary order will see the creation of the combined Dorset and Wiltshire fire and rescue authority coming into operation from 1 April 2016.

Cllr Payne said he "agreed almost entirely with the FBU submission".

FBU executive council member for the South West Tam McFarlane said any future authority would be held to this commitment.

"The only reason why this merger was even considered by the two services is due to the politically motivated funding cuts which have left both fire services on the brink of insolvency," he said.

"Our position has been clear throughout.

"We will not pay for cuts with our jobs, our service and the safety of firefighters and the public - either now or in the future.

"The FBU is ensuring that brigade committees and officials in Dorset and Wiltshire are working closely together in order to work on a common agenda for members in the new service."



Makeshift solution to cuts breaks down

Cambridgeshire

Twelve days after firefighters raised concerns over the reliability of a combined Multistar engine used by Cambridgeshire fire service, the £650,000 vehicle broke down again (above), leaving the city and its many ancient spires without any high reach appliance.

As part of £4.3m budget

cuts, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough fire authority announced in March that it would cut the turntable ladder engines to be replaced by the combined vehicle, despite it having registered 11 significant defects in the past three months.

Cameron Matthews, secretary of the FBU in Cambridgeshire, said:

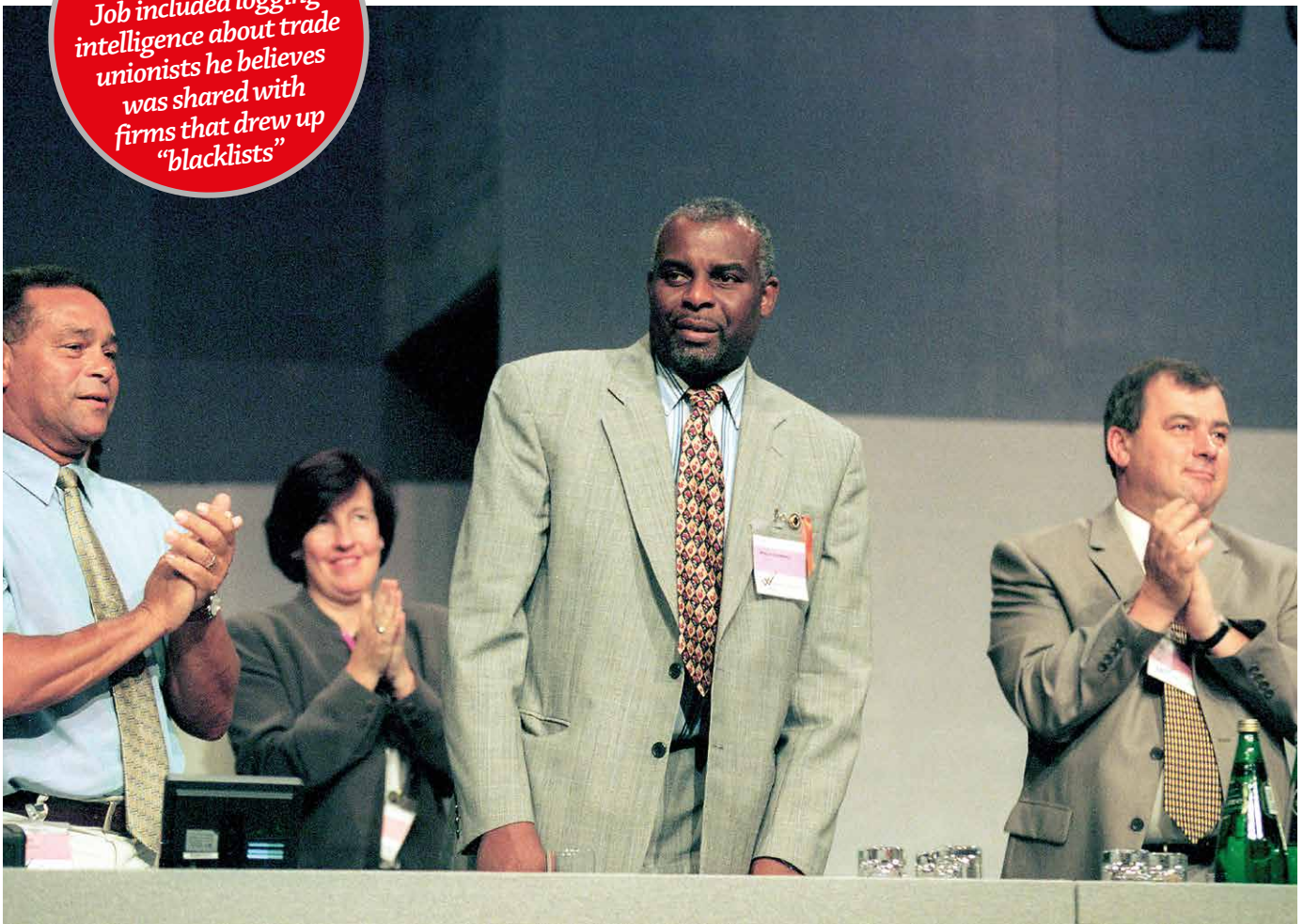
"Firefighters have lost confidence in the Multistar vehicle when it has broken down so many times.

"Reductions in fire cover and specialist rescue capability put public safety and firefighters at increased risk.

"We urge the chief fire officer and fire authority to listen to our concerns before it is too late."

NEWS FOCUS

Job included logging intelligence about trade unionists he believes was shared with firms that drew up "blacklists"



Stephen Lawrence's father Neville addresses the TUC congress in 2000 – was there a police spy in the audience?

Police spied on FBU members

Peter Francis, the Special Branch undercover policeman who two years ago revealed that he had been ordered to "dig up dirt" on the family of murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, has now disclosed that he was also part of a covert team that spied and reported back on six trade unions, including the FBU.

Francis worked undercover in the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) from 1993 until 1997.

As well as infiltrating unions and political groups, the SDS compiled and updated Special Branch files on ten MPs including Diane Abbott, Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone and Dennis Skinner.

Former cabinet minister Peter Hain says the revelations "raise fundamental questions about parliamentary sovereignty".

Home secretary Theresa May has announced that Lord Justice Pitchford will head a public inquiry into police undercover operations and covert work. Its remit will not be announced until July after "consultation with interested parties"

that should include the FBU as one of the organisations spied upon.

It is not encouraging, however, that an internal police investigation called Operation Herne began to investigate the SDS's 40-year history in 2012. To no one's surprise, that inquiry remains "ongoing".

Peter Francis says his job included logging intelligence about trade unions which he believes was covertly shared with firms that drew up "blacklists": names of individuals, often in the construction industry, who would not be employed.

Effectively, and contrary to the law, it was a crime to be a trade unionist; and the police cooperated to ensure sanctions were

Effectively it was a crime to be a trade unionist; and the police cooperated to ensure sanctions were taken against the 'criminals'

taken against the "criminals".

Francis said that the FBU was singled out for attention and, while no details have emerged, it would appear that the surveillance was both industrial and political.

Identifying and blacklisting individuals ran in tandem with monitoring and reporting political attitudes. And it did not take much for the SDS to deem political activity suspicious: Francis' first undercover operation was infiltrating the anti-racist movement. For the SDS, someone who opposed racism was a threat to the state.

The home secretary also said that a separate inquiry over the past year had found no evidence that the Home Office, which funded the SDS, had "any knowledge of misconduct" by the undercover unit. Even if this is true, it is hardly a comfort: and arguably it is equally sinister.

Trade unions and political groups have long held suspicions that the authorities take an unhealthy interest in their activities.

Last month proved those suspicions to be facts.





Firefighter Stevie has the voice

Kirkcaldy firefighter and FBU member Stevie McCrorie won this year's BBC talent show *The Voice*, beating off tough competition from Lucy O'Byrne, Emmanuel Nwamadi and Sasha Simone.

The 28-year-old blue watch crew member is the fourth winner of the series and became the show's highest charting artist when his debut song, a cover of Adam Levine's *Lost Stars*, made it to number six in the official UK singles chart.

McCrorie, who since his victory has not ruled out a return to active duty in the fire service, won the show after stunning the judges and audience alike with his performances each week.

Mentored by Ricky Wilson, singer of the Kaiser Chiefs, Stevie is now in the process of recording his debut album and is preparing to play the T in the Park festival at Strathallan in Perthshire later this summer.

Asked after his win what his colleagues at the fire station will think, he said: "They were the guys that applied for me for this show.

"A lot of people saw something in me that I didn't see, and even standing up there I've still got that self-doubt and I think it's going to take a while to click in, to take in, that I've actually won *The Voice* 2015."

***Stevie McCrorie
singing in the
final of *The Voice****

GUY LEVY/WALL TO WALL

The future of

The first regular FBU national conference for two years will meet in Blackpool in May and will discuss the future of the fire and rescue service

The FBU conference will meet for the first time in two years in Blackpool from 12 to 15 May to discuss, review and update the union's policy agenda. It will look to the future of the fire and rescue service and what the union can do to influence the debate.

Delegates from brigade committees across the UK will have the opportunity to express their views and opinions on the union's direction before voting on 66 resolutions that will provide the outline of the union's work over the coming years.

Accompanying conference will be fringe events. One will hear from Dave Smith, co-author of the book *Blacklisted: The Secret War between Big Business and Union Activists*, about his campaign to get justice for blacklisted workers in the construction industry and a Unite against Fascism event will celebrate the life of former FBU president Mick Shaw.

Labour MP Ian Lavery, a former president of the National Union of Mineworkers, will consider the outcome of the 2015 general election.

The executive council will also propose a new rule book to conference alongside a number of policy statements.

Among the policy statements to be discussed are:

Future of our fire and rescue service

The pressure of austerity cuts is forcing the pace of organisational and structural change in the fire and rescue service. Cuts and consequential underfunding of the service are the main drivers behind the various initiatives and suggestions which have emerged. The executive council recommends that it should continue to discuss all aspects of the changing role of the service and engage in serious discussions about future structures.

Canvassing and conduct during FBU elections

The executive council will propose that current rules on canvassing and conduct during FBU elections be suspended because a number of problems in their

The executive council recommends that it should continue to discuss all aspects of the changing role of the service and engage in serious discussions about future structures



our service

and sectional health and safety representatives meet with national officials and executive council members at the FBU health and safety committee three or four times per year.

Medical incidents

Conference will revisit the 2001 policy position on co-responder and first-responder schemes. In 2013 conference agreed that the executive council should review all additional roles and responsibilities of work already taken on at a local level. Now the executive council feels that it is time to look again at the three questions that were asked at the 2001 conference.

- Is co-responding in the interests of the public?
- Is co-responding in the interests of the fire and rescue service?
- Is co-responding in the interest of firefighters?

The executive council proposes that discussion on emergency medical responses continue and be conducted through the National Joint Council.

Membership, recruitment and organising

The executive council recommends that the union broaden the scope of FBU membership to reflect the changing industry that firefighters and emergency 999 control staff work in. This would mark a shift towards organising more as an industrial-type union, allowing the FBU to determine the definition of the industry which we seek to organise. The proposed new rule suggests that the FBU seek "To organise all those employed in the provisions of fire-fighting, rescue or related services".

All Different, All Equal

The FBU is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, age and trade union activity. The executive council has produced a review of its *All Different, All Equal* document that will be discussed at conference.

Europe and international solidarity

With a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union high on the political agenda, the executive council has said the FBU will develop its position using the democratic structures of the union. The executive council believes either way, in or out of the EU, workers will continue to face attacks from government and big business.

interpretation have been identified. It will propose an interim code of conduct be adopted. This would lift the ban on canvassing during union elections. Democratic elections are an essential part of the democracy of the union and it is paramount that any change of conduct in elections reflects that.

Health and safety

The executive council believes that safe systems of work must remain a core priority when the future of the fire and rescue service is considered. Therefore the executive council recommends that regional

Control staff set priorities as new projects multiply

A new government report has increased the concerns of the FBU's control staff national committee about planned changes and mergers. *Firefighter* hears from two of its members – Jo Byrne and Lynda Rowan-O'Neill

A new report on control room “improvements” from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has highlighted a number of priorities for the FBU's control staff national committee (CSNC) over the coming months.

The report highlights the disgracefully low number of completed control room projects and the high rate of delays.

As others before it have done, the report advises us that many control mobilising systems are in need of an upgrade. But it fails to explain that the majority of these improvements were required only because many fire and rescue services delayed replacing and upgrading systems in anticipation of the delivery of the failed FiReControl regionalisation project for English controls.

This project was abandoned more than four years ago, and many fire services are still scrambling to update their mobilising systems, with only 66% of the resilience benefits in sight. And the document only deals with England – let's not forget the ongoing cuts and mergers in Scotland and Wales.

Money driven

The DCLG report makes frequent references to major national incidents and natural disasters but fails to detail the day-to-day work carried out by emergency control staff. The

“improvement” projects are totally money driven, with most savings purely notional.

The report refers to firefighter and public safety. But cuts to staffing levels are at an all-time high; operational guidance changes constantly; and mergers and “buddy” arrangements with remote partners are becoming more frequent, making the opportunities for control staff to participate in training and familiarisation less likely than ever.

Arbitrary

Comparisons in the report between current changes to control rooms and those pre-2010 are arbitrary.

These improvements would have been happening anyway and would have been in place much sooner were it not for the FiReControl debacle.

The CSNC believes that many of these “benefits” were already in place, albeit with upgrades being required. Integrated geographical information systems were already a feature in many control rooms by 2009 (the year this report refers to) and would have been in place in many more before 2014 had they not been waiting for the all-singing, all-dancing system promised by FiReControl.

There are glaring omissions in the DCLG report. It makes no mention of the maintenance costs for the empty buildings left by the collapse of the FiReControl project.

Completed in/before December 2014

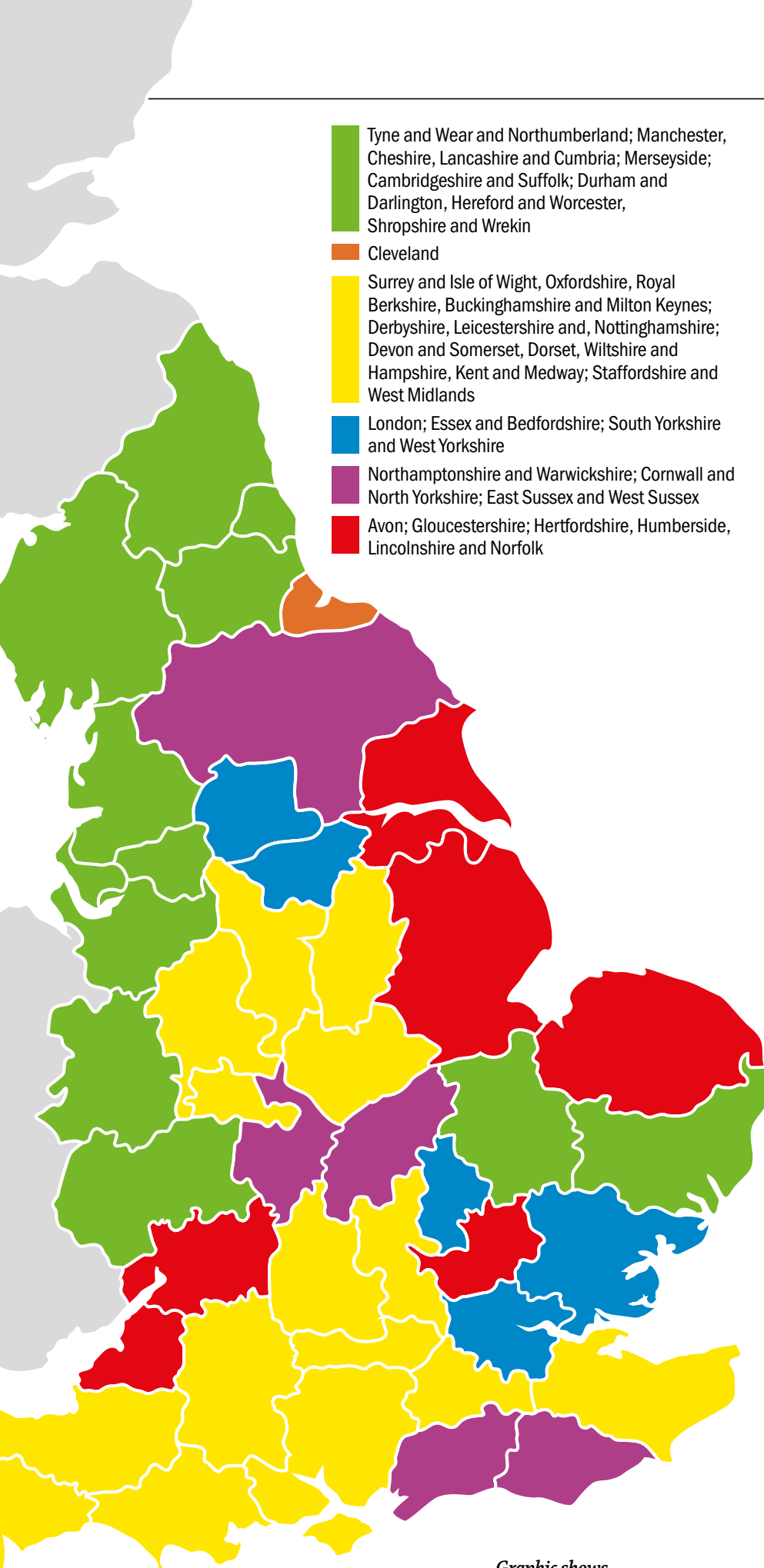
Estimated completion March 2015

Estimated completion June 2015

Estimated completion September 2015

Estimated completion December 2015

Estimated completion 2016



Graphic shows the low number of completed control room upgrades

Two mobilising systems – Systel and Remsdaq 4i – which have been causing major problems in Yorkshire and Essex are referred to in the report but not explained in full. Given the fiascos these systems have created, one has to ask if DCLG is downplaying their ongoing failings?

Priorities

The CSNC's priorities now are:

- Researching the new projects and partnerships that DCLG mentions – the networked fire control partnership and the new control ways of working project.
- Identifying levels of consultation with control staff prior to, during and after these projects and mergers.
- Looking at stress levels and sickness in control rooms affected by adverse working conditions following premature implementation of go-live dates and uncertain job security.
- Identifying the number of police collaborative projects which are in the pipeline – there are obvious concerns

The DCLG report makes frequent references to major national incidents and natural disasters but fails to detail the day-to-day work carried out by emergency control staff

when both services are undergoing massive budget cuts.

- Mapping areas where additional work-streams are being introduced – fewer staff and greater workload is not a viable combination.
- Collating facts and figures on the effects of implementing new mobilising systems before the completion of rigorous testing.
- Monitoring the outcome of completed reviews of projects that are due to start imminently – West Midlands/ Staffordshire, for example.

As part of the control staff national committee, our aim is to assist local and regional officials as much as we can.

Control members can help us to help them by providing vital information and insight when we request it.

Firefighter Ewan Williamson has finally received justice, six years after his death in a fire. Now the FBU has published a report on the tragedy demanding the fire service learn from lessons of the past

After a wait of almost six years for justice, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has at last admitted liability for the death of firefighter Ewan Williamson. He lost his life after becoming trapped while attending an incident involving a fire in the basement of a bar in Edinburgh on 12 July 2009. This tragedy was another unacceptable instance of a firefighter killed in the line of duty. In the past 10 years 15 firefighters have been killed in fires. It is clear that governments and fire

THE FIRE SERVICE LEARN FROM PAST



services across the UK are not learning, or applying, the lessons of firefighter fatalities.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service eventually pleaded guilty to amended charges that only focussed on some of what went wrong at the Balmoral Bar fire.

Since 2010 the Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service that employed Ewan has been reorganised into the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The FBU produced its own fatal investigation report into the tragedy

to highlight the failings that resulted in Ewan's death and to make recommendations to ensure lessons have been learned from the past.

What is clear from the report is that new structures for the UK fire and rescue service are needed to redress dangerous errors made in the past which have seen the role of advisory and inspection bodies watered down.

In 2005 the FBU objected to the removal of the advisory structure that was the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council and its Scottish equivalent.

These are just some of the failings that Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service was responsible for:

RESOURCES: The service did not carry out a task and sequence analysis of the emergencies it faced at the Balmoral Bar. It failed to plan and apply the resources required to extinguish fires, carry out rescues and control the effects of the fire at this incident. The resources sent to the incident were not adequate and human error was an inevitable consequence of these failings.

PROCEDURES: The service did not carry out suitable and sufficient assessment of risk for the types of emergency it responded to. Instead, it relied on the incident commander's judgement using dynamic risk assessment. The impact of human error on work practices is well known. Lack of suitable and sufficient control measures made human error at this incident inevitable.

TRAINING: The service did not clearly define the responsibilities of each line manager in delivering training to operational personnel. Its training policy document, introduced in 1999, was out of date and did not take into account that the way training is delivered, assessed and recorded had changed significantly.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, called on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to implement the 14 recommendations the report makes to safeguard against a repeat of the tragedy.

"Firefighting is a profession which deals with dangerous situations but that does not mean that firefighters expect to lose their lives on the job," he said.

"All fire services owe it to their firefighters to implement the safest procedures and policies in order to minimise that risk. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service needs to implement the recommendations outlined in the FBU's report as well as undertaking its own Fatal Accident Investigation.

"It is the only way we can learn from the mistakes of the past. We owe it to Ewan as well as every firefighter who has been killed or injured in the line of duty."

✦ **View the report online at**
www.fbu.org.uk/resources/14973

E NEEDS TO ST LESSONS



These bodies were charged with ensuring that consensually agreed procedures and standards were made known to brigades. The CFBAC structure helped to ensure professional standards within the fire and rescue service.

The role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit in Scotland) has also changed to an advisory one, rather than undertaking any inspections of policies, procedures and compliance with standards.

Self-inspections have become the norm in the fire and rescue service. This needs to change.

Reformed structure

A reformed and safer structure for the UK fire and rescue service needs to include both an advisory structure for guidance and standards as well as an inspection regime which has the full confidence of firefighters.

Andy Fulton, of Ewan's old brigade of Lothian and Borders, said: "Ewan was a friend to all who knew him and a brilliant firefighter and comrade. He will always be in our thoughts as we fight to improve the safety of all firefighters."

Self-inspections have become the norm in the fire and rescue service. This needs to change.

The coffin of firefighter Ewan Williamson is carried into St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, where firefighters from across the country paid their respects

JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

No matter which party or parties form the new government after 7 May, the FBU will continue to campaign for pensions justice for firefighters. Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer, explains what the next government must do

Fight goes on, whoever wins the election



The first 100 days of any new government is a significant time. No matter who leads the government after the May election, firefighters will have to continue to fight for their service.

Our pensions campaign and fight against austerity will continue no matter who wins. It is sickening that all the major parties would continue with a programme of cutting public services.

What can we expect from the next government?

If it is Conservative-led in any form, we can expect to be treated more or less the same as now or, potentially, even worse.

If a Labour government or Labour-led government of some form makes it to Number 10, there may be more room for manoeuvre.

FBU members were pleased with the way Labour rallied to our call to try

to annul the government's pensions legislation during last December's parliamentary debate.

But the party would need to continue this approach in its first 100 days in power by immediately reopening negotiations with the FBU.

Labour has said that its bottom line is to find a deal that is fair to firefighters and to taxpayers and which is within its cost ceiling. It has already compared the proposals of the Westminster government Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with those made by the administrations in Scotland and Wales.

Labour has agreed that the parliamentary "guarantee" given by fire minister Penny Mordaunt is disingenuous. This was demonstrated most recently in a letter from shadow fire minister Lyn Brown to her DCLG counterpart. Firefighters would rightly expect this to

be addressed. The FBU would demand that a new Labour minister address this matter immediately.

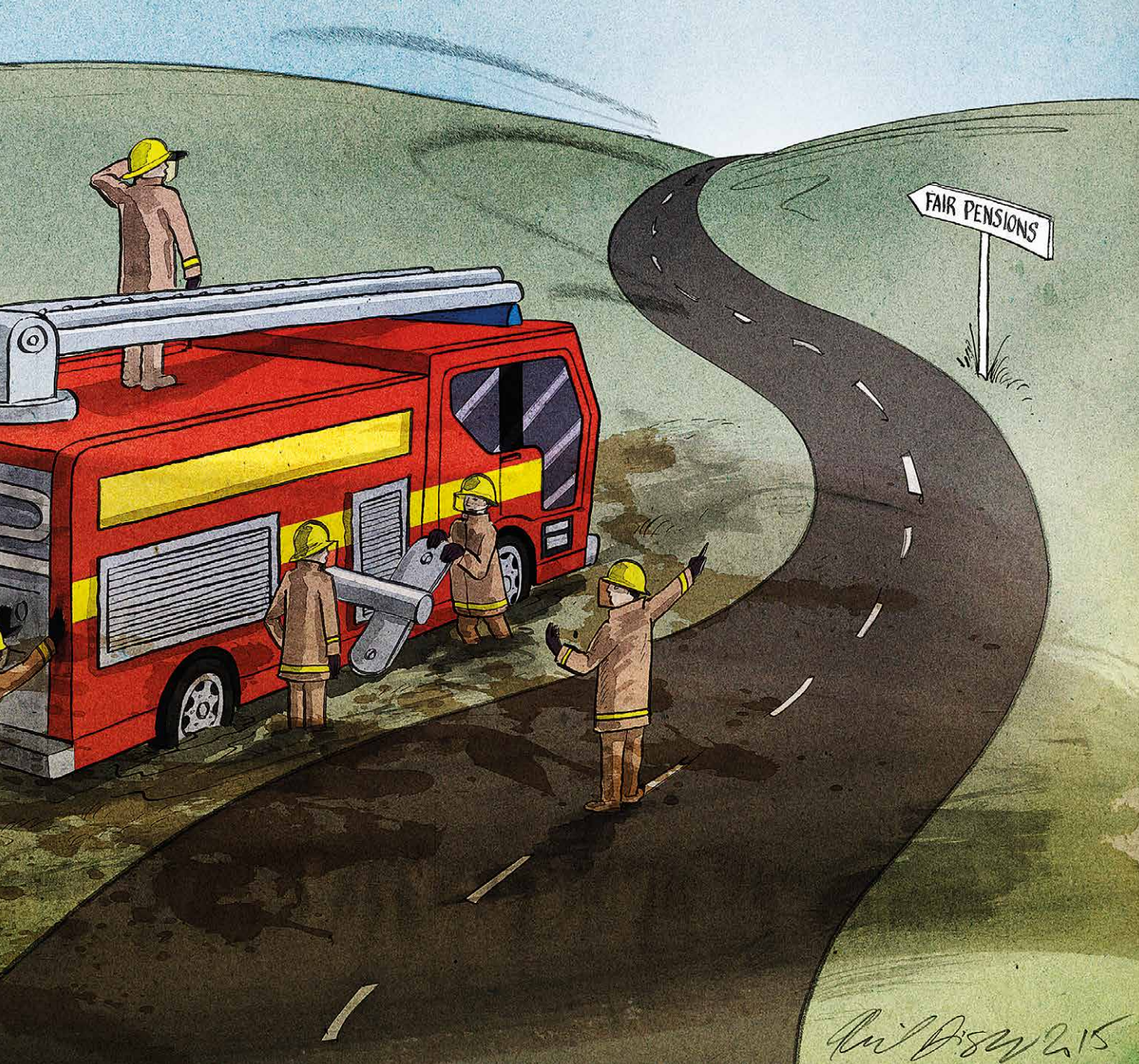
Lyn Brown set out some of Labour's options in a letter to Matt Wrack – which was sent to FBU members. She suggested that a Labour government would consider a methodology that delivered fewer punitive reductions for firefighters who took early retirement from age 55.

Immediate

This is something the union would expect to be discussing with a new Labour government immediately.

The union has also said that a new government needs to look at the current protection arrangements for existing firefighters.

Lyn Brown's letter is less committed on this issue, suggesting that Labour would look at these, but that they must be deliverable within the "cost envelope".



The FBU is not saying naively it is all going to be OK if a Labour government is elected, because it will not be.

We need to remember the areas where Labour's stance has disappointed us. The party did not oppose the Public Service Pension Act which imposed the normal pension age of 60, nor did it oppose the increase in employee contributions.

And Labour has stated that it will stick to the Tories' cost ceiling and spending plans. This approach is disastrous and will do nothing to address the needs of

firefighters and other workers. Along with other unions, we need to demand a complete change of direction.

Firefighters, along with huge numbers of members of the public, have lost faith in the parliamentary process. Our case clearly won the debate, but not the vote, in the House of Commons in December. We have won the arguments and negotiated in good faith, but the coalition government rammed through an unfair and unworkable pension scheme.

A new government will have to take

steps to restore working relations with the FBU and to regain any sort of trust from firefighters. It would have to make it clear from the start that it would reopen the negotiations over pensions with a commitment for a fairer deal for firefighters.

It would also have to provide an alternative to austerity. Our service cannot continue to take the projected job losses and cuts.

Safety at risk

Since 2010 the fire and rescue service has suffered 20% budget cuts leading to 5,000 firefighter jobs being cut with stations, equipment and fire appliances all being reduced. As a result response times are continuing to increase and both firefighter and public safety is being put at risk.

The work to challenge the new government starts now.

Firefighters, along with huge numbers of members of the public, have lost faith in the parliamentary process

FURNITURE FIRES

FBU ensures policy is based on evidence and consultation

The FBU was the first to pick up on the potential risk of the proposal and alerted others in the fire sector

In 1979 a fire in the furniture department of the Woolworths store in Manchester resulted in 10 deaths. It would have been more had the fire service not rescued 26 people.

Fire deaths in the UK had been increasing year on year and as the '80s dawned, the problem began to hit the headlines.

In January 1981 13 young people died in a single fire at a party in a house in New Cross, south London. Multiple fire fatalities were becoming commonplace and, by the mid 1980s, the annual fire death figure had reached nearly 800 with nearly 500 of those in accidental dwelling fires.

At the time it was well known that the polyurethane foam used to fill upholstered furniture burned very quickly, created large volumes of highly toxic smoke and was a major cause of many of these deaths.

In 1987 the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) (the government department responsible for product safety at the time) began to draw up plans to introduce safer furniture that would ignite less easily and burn more slowly; but its officials failed to consult fire and rescue services on these proposals.

However later that year fire and rescue services and the FBU became involved through a group called the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC).

The CFBAC did not think that the DTI proposals were workable. The FBU thought

that the proposals did not go far enough and wanted an outright ban on flammable foam in furniture but, over the winter of 1987/88, the union worked with others to amend the proposals into a format that would lead to improvement.

No coincidence

The result was the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 that have been in force ever since.

It is no coincidence that fire deaths have fallen in almost every year since they were introduced.

In 2013, the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) (the government department responsible for product safety today) decided to amend the fire tests in the furniture fire safety regulations.

The idea was to amend

the furniture fire test so that, according to the department, less fire retardant chemicals would be required; making furniture "greener" and cheaper. The level of fire safety would not be reduced, the department said.

Unfortunately, history repeated itself and BIS failed to consult fire and rescue services on its proposals until 2014 when they were all but cast in stone.

The FBU was the first to pick up on the potential risk of the proposal and alerted others in the fire sector.

The problem was not that the proposal was obviously unsafe; it was simply that there was not enough evidence to say that the proposal **was** safe.

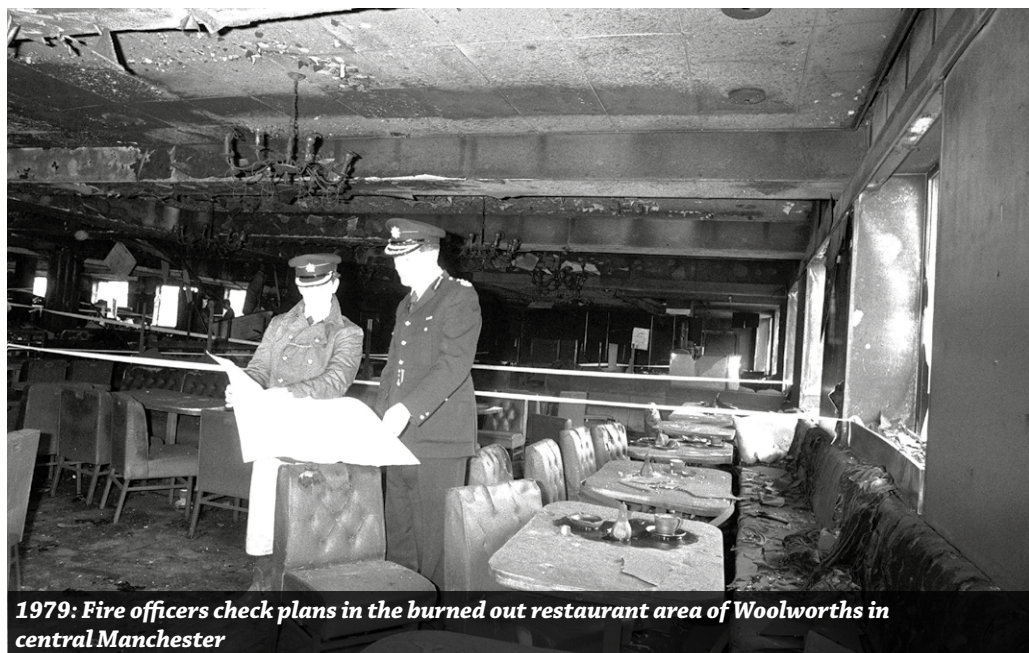
Important

The FBU managed to convince enough people in the fire industry that the furniture

fire safety regulations were so important that they should not be changed unless there was cast iron evidence that the change would not damage their effectiveness.

During the summer of 2014 the consultation process was suspended. The FBU's fire safety advisor called a meeting with the Fire Protection Association and foam industry experts to draw up an alternative approach that was put to BIS. On 25 March 2015 BIS formally halted its proposed changes and adopted the alternative.

The furniture fire safety regulations are still to be reviewed in the future, but this time they will be reviewed openly by a large panel of fire industry experts (including from the FBU) to make sure that the final proposal is fully tested and satisfactory to all concerned



1979: Fire officers check plans in the burned out restaurant area of Woolworths in central Manchester

PA PHOTOS

Legal Beagle

Bringing up baby – together

FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
0808 100 6061
IN SCOTLAND
0800 089 1331

Jo Seery of Thompsons Solicitors explains a new system of shared parental leave for parents who had a baby or had a child placed for adoption on or after 5 April this year



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Q I thought we already had parental leave?

A Shared parental leave is separate and in addition to existing parental leave provisions which entitle qualifying parents to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave to care for a child up until the age of five (or 18 if the child has a disability).

Q What is shared parental leave?

A Shared parental leave gives mothers an option to share their maternity leave with their partner. The initial two-week period of maternity leave is compulsory and still has to be taken by the mother or primary carer, but they can bring their maternity leave and/or statutory maternity pay to an end to enable their partner to share the remaining 50 weeks of parental leave.

Shared parental leave is intended to give parents more flexibility.

Under the new system, working parents can now decide how to share the remaining 50 weeks of leave between them. Parents can convert the mother's entitlement into shared parental leave and pay, which can be taken either separately or at the same time.

Previous rules on additional paternity leave required parents to wait until their child was 20 weeks old before sharing leave.

Q Who qualifies?

A Eligibility requirements for shared parental leave are complicated.

To qualify mothers/primary carers must:

- Be entitled to statutory maternity leave
- Have been employed for 26 weeks up to and including the 15th week before the expected week of birth
- Remain in continuous employment until the week before the shared parental leave starts.

As well as meeting the above criteria, the father/partner must have been employed for a total of 26 weeks in the 66-week period up to the expected week of birth and earned at least £30 per week on average in 13 of those weeks.

Q What about shared parental pay?

A To qualify for shared parental pay, the parents must show they have earned more than the "lower earnings limit" (currently £111, it changes each year) per week in the eight weeks leading up to the 15th week prior to the date of childbirth or adoption.

Q If I qualify, how do I take leave under the new system?

A You need to provide your employer with a notice of entitlement eight weeks before you plan to start sharing parental leave. It must include:

- The names of the parents
- The start and end dates of any statutory maternity leave taken by the mother
- The total amount of shared parental leave available and how much each parent intends to take
- The expected week of birth
- The start and end dates of

shared parental leave.

You and your partner will also have to sign a declaration saying that you fulfil all the eligibility criteria.

When taking shared leave a "booking notice" has to be given to the employer. It must be in writing and given at least eight weeks before the start date of your leave. The booking notice should set out the start and end dates of each period of parental leave. Both the entitlement and the booking notice will usually be given at the same time.

Shared parental leave can be taken either in one chunk or in discontinuous periods, but the minimum period is one week. If the leave is taken in one chunk, the employee must be given the leave on the notified dates. However, if the booking notice sets out two or more discontinuous periods the employer can agree, offer alternative dates, or refuse within two weeks of the notice. This means that it is very important that, if parents want to take shared parental leave, they plan well ahead and consider their options carefully.

Q What if I am adopting?

A The same new rules apply if you are planning to adopt a child, provided you meet the requirements detailed above.

■ If you need more information or advice before taking shared parental leave, speak to your union rep first. Guidance is also provided on the Acas website: www.acas.org.uk.

This year we celebrate more than 30 years of women in the fire service. It is also time to say farewell to Paddington, London, white watch manager Sian Griffiths, who is retiring after 30 years. One of the first generation of women to enter London Fire Brigade, she blazed a trail for women. Awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service, she was the inspiration for the female character in TV drama *London's Burning*. She talked to *Firefighter* about her life at work.

People may not have always agreed with me, but I hope they understand why I have done these things



When I joined the London Fire Brigade as a fire-fighter there were five women. There are now 333. I would like to see a lot more women in the fire

service after 30 years. It is still very much a male-dominated job, so there is still work to be done.

At training school there were 11 women and what seemed like hundreds of men. I had one other woman in my squad and she lasted three weeks. You just had to keep going, dig in and be resilient.

I had to prove, especially to the men, that I could do it. Not only be as good as them, but sometimes a bit better.

I passed out on 4 July 1985, then the next day we were all dropped at our stations. When we got there some of the men were hanging out the window shouting: "Where's the women?" I thought: My god, what have I let myself in for? However I also met very polite and reasonable people that day.

People would not talk to me

There were still people who would not talk to me at other stations, people who would like to see me struggle. Initially, some people would get up and walk out of the room when I went in, not talk to me around the mess table, and be difficult on the fire engines, especially if I was in charge, to get them to do things.

I was only two years in when the King's Cross fire happened in November 1987. At that time we were wearing plastic leggings, wool tunics and cork helmets. It was very basic.

A huge fire developed at the station when a lit match was dropped onto an escalator shaft. It caught alight and flashed over. Tragically, thirty-one people were killed that night, including station officer Colin Townsley from Soho.

As we arrived all I remember was the smoke coming out of every orifice at King's Cross. As I was about to descend down into the stairway my colleagues were carrying a person out.

Then I realised that that person was a fire-fighter because they had a tunic on. Then I recognised it was Colin. The dangers of the job we do became very real that night.

Women in the service

I like the fact that I did try to do the right thing for women, that I represented women, that I did stand my ground. People might not have always agreed with me and sometimes I am seen as a thorn in their side, but hopefully they understand why I have done these things.

If we can create a gender balanced service I think people will be more respectful of each other and that would provide an even better service to the members of the public.

Cuts affect safety

Fire authorities will argue that cuts are not going to affect safety. Of course it's going to affect safety, because if the neighbouring station is no longer there and we are busy at another incident, who's going to attend?

The attack on pensions by the coalition government is outrageous. Firefighters could find themselves paying into their pensions for the best part of 40 years to see it massively reduced because of naturally declining fitness. I think it's a really, really poor way to treat anybody.

The people that are in charge of us, namely those people that have never worked for the fire service, seem to treat us with complete contempt.

We should aspire higher

That is why it is so important to have a union. If we do not have them as a buffer between the employers, we would be really undermined and our conditions of service and our pay would really be worse than they are now. It's right to fight for that. Everybody should fight that. It should not be a battle to the lowest common denominator, we should aspire higher than that.





*Pictures of Sian Griffiths' retirement
by Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk*



Prize quiz



Win a Yellowstone Festival 4 Tipi Tent

HOW TO ENTER

To win a Yellowstone Festival 4 Tipi Tent please send your answers by 30 June on a postcard to: Prize Competition (May/June 2015), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 7AE. Include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 Which of the following film soundtracks does not feature the Castaways' song *Liar Liar*?

- A – Married to the Mob
- B – Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels
- C – Good Morning Vietnam
- D – Pinocchio



- C – Henry II
- D – Henry VII

4 Who was Britain's prime minister when WW2 ended in September 1945?

- A – Winston Churchill
- B – Clement Attlee
- C – Anthony Eden
- D – Harold Macmillan

5 In the last 10 FA Cup finals, which of these teams has not lifted the cup?

- A – Chelsea
- B – Arsenal
- C – Manchester City
- D – Manchester United

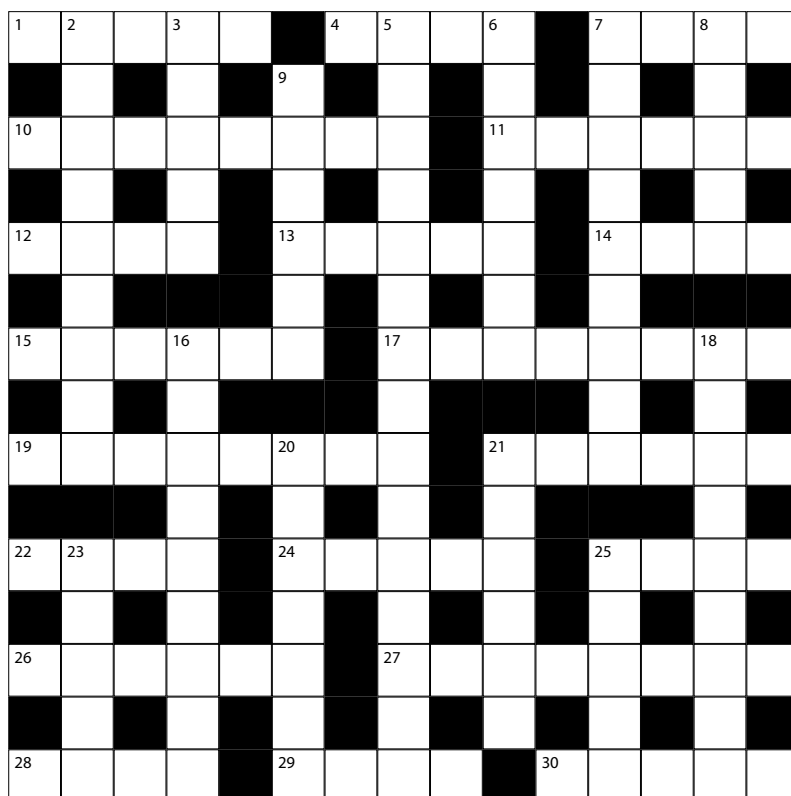


2 Which of the following characters is not in Walt Disney's *Aristocats*?

- A – Edgar Balthazar
- B – Thomas O'Malley
- C – Cruella de Vil
- D – Toulouse

3 The remains of which English monarch were recently discovered under a car park in Leicester?

- A – Richard III
- B – Richard II



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1,6,7 ac** Enormous flaming orbs, as sung by Jerry Lee Lewis (5,5,2,4)
- 4** Absorbent pad used in surgery (4)
- 7** Violent oxidation (4)
- 10** State method of raising revenue (avoided by the wealthy?) (8)
- 11** Arthur Daley's warehouse? (4-2)
- 12** Funeral 7 across (4)
- 13** Road passenger vehicles (5)
- 14** Thought - possible plan (4)
- 15** Grub-eating mammal with distinctive black and white striped snout (6)
- 17** Plant for separating parts of crude oil (8)
- 19** Morning bugle call (8)
- 21** Salt solution (6)
- 22,7 ac** Put me out! As sung by Springsteen (2,2,4)
- 24** Welsh peninsula - once England cricket captain (5)
- 25** White pigeon (4)
- 26** Six-legged bug (6)
- 27,7 ac** Way to get fingers burnt, according to the Rolling Stones (4,4,4)
- 28** Black powdery stuff left by 7 (4)
- 29** Walled city on the Ouse and Foss (4)
- 30** Snake - enjoy one with a curry! (5)

DOWN

- 2** Off the peg (5-4)
- 3** Not asleep (5)
- 5** It keeps driver's view clear (10-5)
- 6** See 1
- 7** Not factual (9)
- 8** Way from A to B (5)
- 9** One who tells porkies (6)
- 16** Protected rural land around cities - fourth level in karate (5,4)
- 18** One who does things up (9)
- 20,7 ac** Got a match? As sung by The Doors and José Feliciano (5,2,4)
- 21** Loud, piercing noise (painted by Munch?) (6)
- 23** Tropical fruit (5)
- 25** Favourite sci-fi series over half a century (2,3)

Last issue's answers and winners



Crossword solution April

April quiz answers

- 1** – C Marvin Gaye
- 2** – B Fifty Shades of Grey
- 3** – D The Brit Awards
- 4** – C The Green Party
- 5** – B Nico Rosberg

Winner of March quiz

John Speed, Cheshire

Station Cat

Suspend your disbelief – it's Essex

*Now you see him –
now you don't – and
now you do again!
Cambridgeshire deputy
CFO Chris Strickland*



Suspension's not strange in Essex

 Your Cat loves nonsense. This week she thrilled to the pronouncement of Tony Hedley, the chair of Essex fire authority when he spoke about the suspension of the county's chief fire officer, David Johnson, "pending an internal investigation".

"No comment", Mr Hedley said, before adding that "suspension is a neutral act".

In Essex, suspension is not a tiny bit of a hint that someone's not happy with you.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, both the fire service and the fire authority have declined to say why Mr Johnson has been (neutrally) suspended.

Your Cat can only guess that as he has been on "long-term leave" since last June, he's been suspended for coming back to work!

In the bizarre world of Essex firefighting, this sort of behaviour is nothing out of the ordinary.

The previous deputy chief fire officer, Gordon Hunter, was suspended in April 2012. He retired early – coincidentally, on the same day as his

suspension – and thereby avoided an internal investigation. No doubt we'll find out if Mr Johnson decides that might be a prudent move for him ...

Nothing petulant or childish here

 Firefighters went to a Portsmouth North general election hustings in April to put fire minister Penny Mordaunt on the spot.

As they handed out leaflets drawing attention to the perilous situation of the fire service, one of the audience looked at the material, and told them: "I won't take your FBU leaflet, I'm a Conservative" – demonstrating that party's attitude towards trade unionists and public services in a single sentence!

Inside the hall, Ms Mordaunt came up with the perceptive observation: "We need someone doing this job who is a grown-up".

Not, for example, someone who, to pay a forfeit awarded at an officers' mess dinner, said, in their own words, "an abbreviation of cockerel, several times during a speech on the floor of the Commons" and mentioned all the names of the officers present at the dinner.

One door closes – the same one opens

 Firefighters concerned about pensions need look no further than Cambridgeshire for instant solutions. The "Cambridge Formula", as it is known, solves all concerns

about poverty after work.

The formula works like this. First, you say you are going to retire and apply for a full pension. This is granted to you. You retire. Second, you slightly change your job title, go back to work at a salary very similar to your previous one, but draw your pension as well! There! Retirement worries disappear at a stroke!

Anyone wanting further details of the scheme has only to examine the case of Chris Strickland, who recently retired from his £128,000 job as Cambridgeshire's deputy chief fire officer and was then re-employed doing the same job.

He is the latest in a long list of his colleagues who have benefitted from the now tried-and-tested Cambridge Formula. All three of the county's senior fire and rescue service officers have retired and gone back to work.

They weren't doing too badly before they retired, pulling down half a million quid in total. But now, with their pension as well, the wolf is at quite a distance from the door.

It would be wrong to suggest that the formula applies only to the Big Three. The past five years have seen an area manager and three station managers benefit.

Regrettably, a sour note was struck by city councillor Dave Baigent (Labour) who accused managers of being less concerned about fire safety than "re-employing

their cronies".

Despite this unmerited attack on the formula, your Cat considers it to be very reasonable and fails to see why more firefighters don't take it up. Really, it's a steal ...

Never fear – you'll be fit to be an MP

 Since fire minister Penny Mordaunt's guarantee that firefighters failing a fitness test will be re-deployed or receive an unreduced pension has turned out to be garbage, your Cat is offering careers advice. It is: Become an MP.

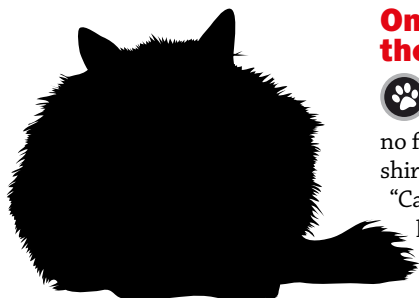
A bit too late this time round, maybe, but we can rely on a handful of vacancies to crop up in the interim thanks to bad behaviour by incumbents.

FBU members are excellently placed for these jobs as the starting age for MPs tends to be just over 50. Sixteen MPs elected in 2010 were over 70.

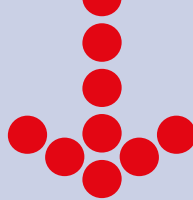
Of course, there is a snag. Not a lot of MPs were previously firefighters: in fact, previous manual workers elected in 2010 made up 1% of Tory and 9% of Labour MPs: and the proportion of former manual workers in the Commons is declining.

They made up 16% of MPs in 1979 but this has now dropped to 4% across all parties. One in seven MPs has never worked outside the political machine at all.

So, odd as it may seem, it might be best to pretend you've never done any real work when applying.



25-year badges



Martin Daniel (l), white watch, Swansea West, receives his 25-year badge from H&S rep Richie Vaughn-Williams



Steve Gilboy (r), Paignton, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Alan Woodhouse (r), Marine Station, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Buck Rodgers



Steven Hansen (r), Spilsby, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Smith



Mick Langley (c) receives his 25-year badge from West Sussex technical rescue unit branch rep Antony Walker (l) and W Sussex brigade organiser Pawel Kosla



Ian Caudwell (r), Billingham, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Smith with colleagues looking on



Neil Young (r), red watch, Crosby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst with brigade chair Kevin Hughes



Brian Cappello (l), Torbay group support, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



Gary Smith (c), blue watch, Preston Circus, East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Chris Scholes with colleagues (l-r) Matt Prunty, Luke Kelsey, Iain Franks, Mo Ahmed, Dean Clarke, Steve Charman, Darren Kemp, Steve Petch and John Perrett



John Riley (c,r), green watch, Blackburn, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Steve Horrocks with (l-r) Mark Cottam, Paul Connaghan, Tanya Birtwell, Lee Pennington, Steve Horrocks, John Riley, Danny Gorton, Shane Ramsdale, Lee Cook and Martin Counsell



Steve King (r), officers' branch East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Dave Barritt



Patricia Harte (l), SFRS Group 3 Johnstone brigade control, receives her 25-year badge from Linda Coughlan



Chris Routledge (l) receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire brigade chair Paul Drinkwater



David Ward (r), Louth, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Mick Smith



Spencer Chapman (l), West Division, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dan Taylor



Paul Rowley (l) receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire brigade chair Paul Drinkwater



Craig West (c,l), green watch, Blackpool, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Chris Molloy



Terry Kipps (r), blue watch, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Cumming



Peter Hill (r), Biggar, district 6, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Craig Marshall



John Carrick (r), Biggar, district 6, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Craig Marshall



FF Dave Allen (l), green watch, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade committee vice-chair Gary Critch



Paul Copeland (l), red watch, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Cumming



Adrian Miller (c,l) green watch, Weymouth, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Luke Howell with colleagues (l-r) Spencer Nicklin, Martin Ryan, John Wall, Darren Langdown, Graham Hunt and Jim Ford



Carl North (l), blue watch, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Cumming



Paul Craven (c,l), Collingham, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Wayne Brooks with crew members (l-r) Guy Norton, Andrew Shaw, Ben Weaving and Patrick Holland



John Bryan (r), Biggar, district 6, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Craig Marshall



Hugh Millar (r), Biggar, district 6, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Craig Marshall



Retired ACO Mick Deacon (l), receives his 25-year badge (14 years late!) from West Sussex brigade secretary Foff Bishop



Steve Palmer (r), Aldridge, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Sean Berry (l), blue watch, Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Keith Chaffey with watch colleagues (l-r) Jon Pattison, Graham Jackson and Dave O'Bryan



Alex Fyfe (r), green watch, Guildford, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mark Christmas with colleagues (l-r) Steve Butwell (brigade vice chair), Mick Coppinger, James Freestone, Ted Larnar and Dick Hopwood



Graham Jackson (c,l), blue watch, Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Keith Chaffey with blue watch colleagues (l-r) Jon Pattison, Sean Berry, and Dave O'Bryan



Dave Marsh (r), fire safety, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Lee Sketchley (r), Smethwick, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Paul Hopcroft (r), Aston, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Cris Williams (r) Aston, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Jim Calder (r), Kings Norton, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Andy Secker (r), Perry Bar, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Michael Halloran (r), Perry Bar, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Phil Green (r), red watch, Bootle and Netherton, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch official John Backstrom



Craig Stanley (c,l), green watch, Ladywood, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Richard Field with green watch members (l-r) Mohammed Taj, Lyndon Flavell, Peter Edwards and Mikele Likaj



Ian Melville (l), white watch, Horsham, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Pawel Kosla with watch colleagues (l-r) Rob Hollingum, Andy Shaw, Brian Evanson, Neal Temperley, Quentin Smith, Neil Mason, Don Campbell and Chris Witten



Andrew Harvey (l), white watch, Newcastle, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from region 7 EC member Barry Downey



Ashley Denton (c,r), Acomb, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from divisional chair Paul Warnock with red watch colleagues



Russ McGrath (l), blue watch, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Gavin Roberts with colleagues looking on



Pete Fotios (l), blue watch, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Gavin Roberts with colleagues looking on



Mark Wiggins (l), Haden Hill, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Andy Dennis with colleagues looking on



Nicholas Bird (l), Haden Hill, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Andy Dennis with colleagues looking on



Stephen Bladen (l), Haden Hill, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Andy Dennis with colleagues looking on



Noel Swinterton (l), red watch, Kensington, Liverpool, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst on the picket line



Duke Curtis (l), blue watch, Kensington, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst on the picket line



Charlie Maddock (l), white watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst with watch members, Dan Dalton (l) and Stan Swann (r)



Willy Bickinson (l), green watch, Kensington, Liverpool, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst on the picket line



Trish White (l), green watch, Hereford, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steven Goulding



Ronny Rowe (l), Rainton Bridge, Tyne & Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Russ King



John Chilton (l), red watch, Hexham, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin



Ian Wanyun (r), Formby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Eddie Tate



Sid Kennedy (r), red watch, City Centre, Liverpool, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from retired watch member Willy Bebb with retired watch members (l-r) Jack McGarrity, Dan Thomas, Stan Davis, Toby Markey, Pete Hoey and Rick Childs



Stuart Dillon (r), blue watch, Staines, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rep Scott Lomas with colleagues (l-r) Frank Foster, David Miller, Nathan Beeby, Ian Welton and Lloyd Earl



Simon Goodchild (c,l), red watch, Redhill Park, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from branch membership organiser Scott Blandford with (l-r) Terry Brokenshire, Simon Neil and Simon Smith



Terry Holdcroft (l), orange watch, Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Rich Williams



Ken Kerr (l), orange watch, Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Rich Williams



John Wilkinson (l), red watch, Hexham, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Guy Tiffin



Dickie Cooling (r), blue watch, West Hampstead, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Sam Lee



Martin Maughan (c,l), Redhill Park, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from membership organiser Scott Blandford with crews from Redhill Park and Springbourne white watch, (l-r) Faris Mani, Kenny Holland, Janine McCumiskey, Richard Chave, Gary Bown, Anthony Gawler, Rob Phelps, Brad Stevens and Sarah Bascombe



Mark Miller (c,r), Group 2 Chippenham, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Andy Thompson with watch colleagues looking on (l-r) Steve Garraway, Julian Hancock (fire safety) Jack Nicholson, Dave Bishop, Steve Lodge and Dave Kay



Neil Ashworth (l), white watch, Burnley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Rivett with white watch colleagues

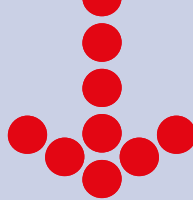


Mark McCaig (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 5 officers' rep Ged Phelan



Alan Ashworth (l), white watch, Burnley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Rivett with white watch colleagues

25-year badges



Steve Baldwin (r), H & S rep, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Aston Everett on the picket line with members from Clacton-on-Sea



Ernie Capener (l) and **Darren Leach** (r), Newtown, Mid and West Wales, receive their 25-year badges from branch rep Mike Wareing



“Taff” Lewis (l), Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack on a break from a 35-pump fire at Smethwick



Ian Wilson (r), Buckinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Keith Williams



Dave Gale (l), Dorset brigade chair, Ferndown, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Scott Blandford



Peter McCann (l), Castlemilk, district 6, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from Scottish organiser John McFadden



Linda Coughlan (r), Johnstone control, group 3, Scotland, receives her 25-year badge from district 6 secretary Phil McDonald



Hefin Williams (l), Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Simon Wall



James Del Mullaney (r), Cudworth, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jade Styan



Jacky Ryland, fire control, Merseyside, celebrating 40 years of membership, receives a certificate from Merseyside officers' section from regional control rep Tim Gerrard



Rodclif Barrett (l), region 7 B&EMM official, receives his 25-year badge from region 7 executive council member Barry Downey



Tim Clarke (l), green watch, Hereford, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steven Goulding



David Falvey (c,r), green watch, Maesteg, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Ciaran Gibbons with colleagues looking on

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

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Change of address or next of kin

Advise your Brigade Organiser of any change of address and Head Office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

0808 100 6061

(England, Wales and N Ireland),

0800 089 1331

(Scotland),

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS