



Spring 2004

Advisor

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

TO ADVANCE

TO SERVE

to be judged by
the content
of your heart
rather than the
colour of your skin

B&E M M



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

EDITORIAL**Inside****Race & the Service 3**

Multifaith Conference

Slavery 4**Education 6**

B&EMM School Report and Review

Black & Proud 10

Greatest Black Briton, the Windrush Awards, Prominent Sisters

Leukaemia 12

De Gale Story

Letters 13**Viewpoint 17**

Israel's Security Fence

Personal & Events 19

Cover picture: banner artist Michael Ogwo; made by Durham Bannermakers

Hitting the ground running



ALTHOUGH we are well into 2004 this is my first opportunity, on behalf of your B&EMM National

Committee, to wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous year. If anyone thought that 2003 was eventful, just wait and see what lies ahead.

January started quietly but February has seen an increase in meetings and workload for myself and other Officials. I have attended meetings with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on the equality strategy for our 21st Century Fire and Rescue Service with the other FBU Equality Sections Officials. Also, I organised the B&EMM submission to the recently published National Framework document. My thanks to senior B&EMM Officers Wayne McCollin and Jack Singh for finding the time within their busy schedules to contribute. I certainly could not have done it by myself.

These meetings, plus my FBU responsibilities, means that as usual I've had to hit

the ground running!

Our work for the year is just beginning and we must ensure that B&EMM has a strident voice in all aspects of the workplace – old and new. The next 12 months is going to be a challenging time for ourselves and the Union nationally.

For the first time, B&EMM have three motions to the FBU Annual Conference. Although we can move our own motions we cannot make amendments to the preliminary agenda. Our votes are cast through our Brigades who could vote against our motions. Our motions still have to be "primarily on B&EMM issues", so there is a long way to go to win hearts and minds (that old chestnut!) to make sure we effect the right changes and then proceed to have a fair, equal and true voice at every level within the structures of the Union.

So my message to you is clear – whenever, wherever possible please get involved at all levels. A step forward for one is a step forward in the right direction for us all.

Paul Ahmed, B&EMM National Chair.



Advisor Spring 2004

Published by The Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road,
Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE

Production: periodicals@edition.co.uk

Print: Folium Print, Kingsbury Business Park,
Kingsbury Road, Minworth, Birmingham B76 9DL

DIVERSITY IN THE SERVICE

Multifaith Seminar

THE second multi-faith seminar for the Fire and Rescue Service is planned for the 8th and 9th of July 2004 at the Wembley Plaza. The seminar will cover two faiths – Buddhism and Hinduism. The seminar will be interactive in that it will include visits to places of worship and will have open forums for delegates to ask questions so that they can gain a greater understanding of the two faiths.

This seminar is the second in a series planned following the events of September 11th and in particular the attack on the Twin Towers. What followed was an unprecedented attack on the Islamic faith and a level of hatred stirred up by the popular press that needed to be addressed, not only by the Service, but also society as a whole.

Following a discussion, Jagtar Singh and Wayne McCollin approached the national CACFOA Equality Committee. We agreed that the level of understanding in the Service with regard to faith issues was low to non-existent, and that CACFOA needed to take action to ensure the Service had a balanced understanding of Islam and Sikhism in particular, as the number of attacks on members of those communities was rising and that it was likely that operational firefighters would come into contact with these communities.

During the planning of the seminars it became clear just how limited the Service's understanding of faith issues was and the need to be involved with faith communi-

ties. A meeting with Chris Hewer, the multi-Faith advisor to the Bishop of Birmingham, led us to seek engagement with the faith communities. Our original simplistic approach, that we needed to be involved so we could understand the main tenets of the different faiths with their customs and practices, soon became secondary. For we realised that we could do a lot more with the faith communities by engaging with them fully to support and deliver the primary objectives of the Service.

The faith communities in the UK have within their congregations people from the local community who not only care about their faith group but also the wider community. These groups are involved in education, support networks, helping the elderly and in general terms improving the well being of their local section of society.

We in the Service, when looking for community partners to help us to deliver community fire safety, have a great opportunity by engaging faith groups as they are keen to build a safer society by working in partnership. The faith groups are also diverse in their make up. If we seriously wish to improve the diversity of our Fire Service then we can look to our faith groups to support us in recruiting more men and women who we know will have a firm commitment to help and support the local community from the outset.

The objectives of this seminar are:

- Develop an understanding around the sensitive issues surrounding faith and work.

- A better understanding of these issues will lead to improved service delivery.
- A better understanding will help delegates to develop community fire safety initiatives.
- A better understanding will support recruitment retention issues for under-represented sections of our communities.
- A better understanding will improve the profile of the Brigade, in particular in the under-represented communities.
- A better understanding will help us to engage with the public in all of our work.
- A better understanding will help us support social cohesion.

Jagtar Singh, Wayne McCollin, Carl St. Paul and Rabinder Dharmi will be more than happy to answer any question you may have or support any work you are doing with faith communities, please feel free to contact us.

The CACFOA Seminar Understanding Buddhism and Hinduism 'Meeting the Needs of a Multi-Faith Community' is to be held on 8 and 9 July 2004, at Wembley Plaza, London.

It is open to all CACFOA Members, Equalities Officers and Fire Authority Members. To register your interest, email your name, position, address and contact number to Hollie@finds.org.

EID

EID teaches Muslims how to celebrate the 'Eids'. On these days, Muslims take a bath and wear their best clothes. Even though fasting is not permitted on the Eid days, the major part of the celebration is not eating or drinking; rather it is

prayer that brings Muslims together to remember Allah's bounties and celebrate His glory and greatness.

The Eids and their celebration in Islam, carry a distinctive meaning and spirit. They are totally different from the celebrations in other nations and cultures.

'Eid is not a time to take a vacation from Islamic responsibilities and commitments, nor to waste time and

money in extravagance. For Muslims, the 'Eid is an occasion to increase good deeds by bringing happiness and pleasure to the hearts of other Muslims, by helping and supporting the poor and needy.

Each 'Eid marks the conclusion of an important worship, and the determination to continue in obedience and submission to Allah (Glorified be He).

SLAVERY

‘Rendezvous of Victory’ Convention

The enslavement of African people was one of the ugliest chapters in human history. It has had an enormous impact on shaping the world as we know it. Britain and the world, wealth, politics, tastes, music and culture have all changed as a result.

THE legacy of slavery was explored at the ‘Rendezvous of Victory’ Convention in London, a four-day event in August 2003 celebrating the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition on 23 August. Held in Greenwich and Brixton, areas of London closely linked to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the aim was to promote the anti-slavery heritage of abolitionist resistance and to invite communities to unite in a celebration of humanity and global justice.

The event attracted many speakers from across the black political spectrum, including: Mike Oban (The Gleaner), Mikey Massive (freelance journalist and commentator), Colin Prescod (Institute of Race Relations), Professor N G Hall (Prof of African Music), Darcus Howe (political commentator), Lee Jasper (Advisor on Race to the Mayor of London) and Esther Stanford (Afrikan Descendants Against Racism).

Against the backdrop of the African Enslavement Collection Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, the array of workshops and panel discussions revealed some wide ranging and controversial views on where African descendants are now in today’s society and where we need to be in order to influence our own destiny.

Darcus Howe said there was “no power

or influence without demand. We are not given empowerment, it is not a gift”. On the issue of diversity, he said that it was “another way of diluting us, of separating communities”.

He described the Steven Lawrence Inquiry as “folly” and claimed that African descendants had “gone backwards since Martin Luther King and Malcolm

The aim was to promote the anti-slavery heritage of abolitionist resistance and to invite communities to unite in a celebration of humanity and global justice.

X”. The final indignity for him was talk of “corporate boxes at the Notting Hill Carnival”!

Other speakers called for a rejection of the new language of so-called race relations, and discussed the consequences of slavery, the continuing abuse and humiliation of black people and the psychological aspects of migration and displacement.

Titus Alexander from the Council in World Citizenship provided a global perspective. He said the G8 club of the world’s eight richest countries, represented “global apartheid”. He said the UN Security Council is 80% white and 60%

European and Kofi Annan as UN Secretary General represented a token gesture. He also said that the international trade system was set up to protect a minority and exclude the majority and the world finance system puts the majority in debt and keeps them there.

Other speakers railed against the UK Government’s refusal to acknowledge that “slavery was a crime against humanity” and the negative press and media coverage of black people’s communities. Even the black press was criticised for not being as supportive as it could be. It was also debated whether our negativity is linked to the genocide instigated by slavery

The event also celebrated African art forms including dance, poetry and music. There were indoor and outdoor perform-

ances, with the final day seeing activities move to Brixton. To describe the event as an education would be a big understatement. It was an “enlightenment”! We truly appreciated all that was discussed and it kicked off numerous debates amongst ourselves – which was the ultimate reason for attending.

B&EMM reps Warren Simpson, Colin Jarrett and Michael Nicholas attended the Convention

For more information on the Anti-Slavery campaign see www.antislavery.org

Diversity and empowerment

SLAVERY is not the control by others, but the failure to enter the struggle of one's own self. It is as much a mental thing. Sometimes, like prostitution, the only way to have that struggle is to divorce the mind from the body in order to maintain its direction and focus. Others control what we do. Family, friends, morals and even the workplace. Slavery is the failure to appreciate the struggle and the parameters of it. It is also a failure to comprehend the limits of control that we can actively impose on other parties and pressures that affect us individually and collectively.

Empowerment is treated as something that can only be given by an external force and diversity as a term is only capable of definition by people who are not "black".

The truth is, that we must not only use these terms, but define them for ourselves. Diversity is a journey starting at tolerance and respect, progressing to understanding and appreciation, and ending in enjoyment. Empowerment is given from without but is manifested from within.

My community and that "thing" within me empowers me, and it is those intangibles that in turn empower the community.

We should not turn our backs on such words but utilise them to define our struggle and where its journey must necessarily end. We must use terms that "they" understand as well as ourselves; words that within their true definition and context expose the fatal flaw, that



unconditional acceptance will make us urchins by our own hand!

It is possible for you to be right and everyone else to be mistaken!

Warren Simpson,
B&EMM Chair – Reg 7

An historical view

ANY form of complete domination by one human being over another, whether physical or mental, is a form of slavery. And when a person allows and accepts voluntarily, their subjugation to the will of another person, and willingly sacrifices their individual rights and freedoms to another's will, it is a type of slavery.

Slavery did not begin with the black man's subjugation. In ancient times wealthy black and white people kept other black and white people as slaves. This was long before America was 'discovered' and long before black people were shipped to the 'new world' plantations. Many of the Barbary pirates of the Mediterranean Sea were black men who captured white people from European tribes and sold them to wealthy Africans, and the

reverse of this was also common practice. Europeans, white men and women captured by these marauding Afrikan pirates were bartered as slaves in deals of different kinds by the parties involved.

The major difference between the old and the new forms of slavery was the emergence of the 'entrepreneur', the professional trader in human flesh, with purely commercial interest in the transactions. Prior to this period, slaves were prisoners of war, victims of piracy, born in captivity of slave parents and those given by one slave owner to another.

It was purely the commercial element and the transportation of people from Asia

to Afrika, and from Afrika to Europe and the Americas, that marked the slave 'trade' as different from earlier forms of slavery. Englishmen including Sir Francis Drake, and Continental Europeans like Columbus, made their living and fortunes, by sailing around the coast of Africa capturing the native people and bringing them across the Atlantic as merchandise for sale. These

It was purely the commercial element that marked the slave 'trade' as different from earlier forms of slavery

slave traders were sponsored by many of the leading and wealthy families of Europe and Britain. Between them all they made fortunes from the barbaric and inhuman acts that we now know as the African slave trade.

This is an edited version of an article by Frank Bailey.

EDUCATION

B&EMM School 2003



The ninth B&EMM School, held on the weekend of the 10 – 12 October 2003 at Wortley Hall, attracted 72 students, five tutors, 20 guests and a National Officer. In short, it was another “full house”, crammed with almost 10% of the Section’s members. Michael Nicholas reports

ONCE again we had to book extra accommodation at two local hotels to make sure we had beds for all. The only disappointment was the response to our invitations to all FBU Regional FAW reps – just two accepted. It is important to note that debates were structured in varied ways with each tutor ensuring that there was a B&EMM rep/activist as a facilitator for all workshops. These were: Bros Ogwo, Simpson, McCollin, Jarrett, Johnny, Turney, Bowman and Sis Oparaocha.

The School was opened at 2pm on the Friday by B&EMM National Chair, Paul Ahmed, who introduced our guests and reminded students to be respectful

throughout.

The first session – the “ice-breaker” – was a quiz in Q&A form devised by our rep in Region 5, Paul Greaves, who chose to divide us into six teams. The subject was Black and Ethnic Minority history. October is, after all, Black History month in the UK. The competition was fierce yet light hearted and it gave most students a reality check on how much about their own history and historical figures they know little or nothing about. The next session, structured as workshop-based forum, examined why this was the case.

It addressed “what we were not taught within the UK education system”. The idea

was to identify why our history was not, and still is not, taught in the majority of schools. The students worked hard for an hour then reported back for an hour, with many feeling it was a worthwhile session.

PAY DISPUTE

AFTER supper, we reconvened to discuss the Pay Dispute. B&EMM EC Member, Michael Nicholas, and National Officer, John McGhee, gave a report of the year-long campaign and dispute, and an update of where we were in terms of the settlement. Questions followed and then three London B&EMM, Bros Goulbourne, Alie and Appleton, also gave a presentation on the B&EMM perspective of the campaign and why FBU members deserved a pay rise.

There were some emotional contributions. But honesty and respect were shown by all concerned. Some members made it clear that they expected their EC Member to be more involved in answering questions. Some of the many questions asked did not get an answer that satisfied the members and that was frustrating for many. The questions included:

The final settlement – • ongoing negotiations? • IRMPs – FBU strategy? •



Timing of Pay Dispute? • Financial settlement for Pay Rise? • Inconsistencies in Strike Strategy? • Lessons from 1977? • Bain Review – non participation of FBU? • Final outcome – Let down • Union/Media relationship? • FBU Political Affiliation – Labour Party? • Training for FBU Officials?

The session formally finished after 9.30pm, but most of us continued the debate in the bar in the finest traditions of the FBU.

CHOKAR FAMILY CAMPAIGN

On Saturday, our first guest speaker was Aamer Anwah, who was instrumental in the Chokar Family Campaign for Justice in Scotland and is a renowned speaker/advocate on asylum and immigration issues. The presentation and subsequent question and answer session were enlightening and thought-provoking. Many people only ever get the one-sided media angle on these sensitive issues and it is right to give members whenever we can, an informed and balanced point of view. Aamer certainly did that. We thanked him for his important contribution with a gift suitable for a Scottish Muslim!

The following workshop discussed:

- FBU Structure & B&EMM role within it.
- Negative Press and Media Images of Black/Ethnic Minorities
- Mixed Race/Culture Relationships & Society
- Fire Service Culture & FAW issues.

We broke up at midday and agreed a feedback session at the end of the day.

Simon Green, the sacked FBU member from Hampshire, and B&EMM rep for Region 13, Lud Ramsey then gave a short presentation and film of some of the B&EMM activity during the year. We thanked Simon for his contributions and friendship to B&EMM for many years and we wished him well in his struggle for justice with the Hampshire Brigade. Just before lunch we decamped outside for the Annual School photographic session. Some members wore their respective Brigade uniforms and each was proud to do so.



Curtis Maffett, DCFO, North Carolina USA (far left), Carl St Paul B&EMM National Secretary, Garrett Brooks B&EMM Rep Region 11, Gerald Symon, CFO, Oakland California.

AMERICAN BROTHERS

IN the afternoon we heard from the first of two guests from the USA, brothers from the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPFF). We are determined to continuing building links with this fraternal organisation as they have a wealth of experience in dealing with some of the issues that we ourselves are facing in our Service. So why reinvent the wheel?

Gerald Simon, a Fire Chief in Oakland, California, spoke with a passion and professionalism that we have not heard from any Chief Fire Officer in our Service. He gave us a picture of what the Fire Service means to him and his people in the community he serves, and encouraged us to do the same. He spoke about his career and what his position meant to his community. He regaled us with stories of his struggle to achieve what he has today and how important it is that we also strive

to achieve also.

His view on diversity and how to go about attaining a diverse workforce was illuminating. A few of our principal managers should have been present! Gerald spoke and answered questions for an hour and we would have gladly kept him out front for longer. It was truly inspirational. It was about pride in yourself, your career and the communities we serve. It was about understanding and accepting the responsibility of being a role model.

Sunday started with the lead tutor, Alan Sivori, giving us the tutors report on how they felt the workshops and School had turned out. The students also had their input into this session. The B&EMM National Secretary, Carl St Paul, then gave his annual report to the B&EMM School and took questions from the floor.

Then we heard our second guest speaker from the USA, Assistant Chief Officer Curtis Maffett, who works for the Carolina Fire Service. He told us of his background, how he had progressed within the job and how he hopes that other black people can follow his lead. He acknowledged that Gerald Simon "sure is a hard act to follow"! Curtis impressed upon us how important it is, especially as minority members, to behave responsibly and be positive role models for our people in the Fire Service. We must work hard and therefore be judged on merit alone, he said.



EDUCATION



ROLL OF HONOUR

B&EMM 'roll of honour' is a session where we acknowledge and show our appreciation for the efforts of our members and friends in their activities throughout the year. This year we acknowledged several members who have represented the England Fire Service football team, including Ted John (who is the only member to play for the UK football team).

We also thank Dalton Powell, for his efforts at the World Fire Service Games; Royston Joseph (for his charity and community work); our guest Dawn Marks and her team (recruitment of black/ethnic firefighter in London); National Committee Member Mike Ackah, for his efforts before and during the School; and tutors and our facilitators for all their efforts during the course of the weekend.

To end the session we presented gifts to two people whose contributions on behalf of B&EMM have taken place over many, many years.

Philippa Clark was for many years the Research Officer at FBU Headquarters. She finally left, for a bit of peace and quiet, at the beginning of 2003. "Phil" has been the biggest advocate of the Sections and their number one supporter since their inception. Her advice to all our reps has been invaluable and her support immeasurable. It was a wonderful opportunity to say thank you to Phil and wish her all the best in whatever she does in the future.

Garrett Brooks is our B&EMM rep for London and has been part of all we do since

we formed our Section. His experience in the Service and within his community is invaluable to us. For four years Garrett has been the FBU representative on the TUC Race Relations Committee and in 2003 he chaired the Black Workers Conference in Liverpool. He has served us proudly in that forum and is now stepping down from that particular role.

Our last contributor to the School was Linda Bellos. Former leader of Lambeth Council (80s), Linda's CV on all equality issues is impressive. Her work and activity in this arena is immense. She spoke about the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and had plenty to say about public authorities who have not yet complied with its basic legislative requirement – producing a Race Equality Scheme. Linda also had something to say about the standard of those schemes that had been produced. She gave us her opinion on Government policy on race and somewhat controversially, on high-profile black politicians. An illuminating speaker, although not all she espoused was agreed with! Nonetheless, we thanked Linda for sharing her thoughts with us.

Samantha Samuels, B&EMM Vice-Chair, thanked all for attending and making it another successful School. She reminded all that we needed to continue networking throughout the year and to play a part in what we need to do within the FBU.

See you all for the 10th B&EMM School, 8th – 10th October 2004 at Wortley Hall.

The application form is in this issue!!

Michael Nicholas, B&EMM EC Member

DURING the School B&EMM members were expressing dissatisfaction about its content and structure. So afterwards we met up in order to construct some new ideas. Armed with the review feedback questionnaires, one had about as much information as one needed to at least identify the problem.

I know that people put in a lot of work during the day. However, I feel that an opportunity was missed. This is because at the start we were told that this session was about brainstorming, the creation of new ideas, and approaches to the aims and objectives to the purpose of the School.

B&EMM once was the most creative element within the British Fire Service when it came down to issues of diversity and equality. It did not profess to know the answer, only to give an honest view, by the people within its flock. It was not very professional, but it didn't need to be. However, it took a very pure view. By that I mean pure in the political sense. And when I use the word political I'm using it as a substitution for power. Thus B&EMM used to give a view operating outside of the traditional power battles within the British Fire Service.

Some might say that such a position could never amount to anything really, it needed to mature. But it had the potential to change the institutional language both in terms of the FBU and the British Fire Service as a whole. The power of B&EMM was in its autonomy. The FBU is, if you like, synonymous with the mother country. We are of course far better off with it than without it. But the relationship needs to be on B&EMM's terms. To do otherwise is to be dishonest both inwardly and externally.

This is where I feel B&EMM is losing the support of the delegates who attend the School. They can clearly identify the structure of the FBU, a structure that has impregnated the whole culture of the British Fire Service. It's a very powerful structure which has managed to keep a very militaristic culture at bay. However,

B&EMM School

– a review

there has been a penalty to pay. The FBU has necessarily become a reflection of the managerial structure. This means it has a strict, top down approach. B&EMM has adopted this method, which sends shock-waves through its members when they gather.

Let's not be too complacent about the attendance numbers at Wortley. There are so few B&EMM members in the country that any opportunity to network is a welcome break to the sea of whiteness that non-whites will face during their working lives.

A vital opportunity to shout out: I'm a Black Firefighter and proud to be one, to know that other Black Firefighters will signal their appreciation, and accept that identity.

The B&EMM School is about the right to be, not just a Black Firefighter (Black in the political sense), but the right to be Black and British. Looking to the FBU will not provide the answers. We should not expect it to. B&EMM can work in partnership. But its soul needs to remain B&EMM.

We have done very little work on

B&EMM's soul, or if you like on B&EMM's aims.

I am an FBU member, and I have no difficulty in operating as a FBU member in terms of the worker/employer relationship. However, as an FBU B&EMM member, the relationship is not the same. In this respect, the FBU needs to listen to my point of view. It needs to be directed from my language, a language which should not be familiar to the FBU. This is what will give the FBU strength, in that it will have diversity within its very traditional and conservative structure.

The power of the FBU even in terms of education is immense. It draws us into a mode of thinking, which is fine. However we need to incorporate many different ways of thinking in order to face the future. In my view, education means being free to choose the right path, not having a teacher telling you that they know the best way to go. Guidance is good, but the path must be walked by one self, at least at first. If we all take our own path, we should end up at the same place as those who share our views; we will meet up as equals, with our friends. In short the B&EMM School needs

to orientate itself, to deliver 80% B&EMM issues, 80% B&EMM agenda, 80% B&EMM way, whatever that might mean.

One other thing, there will always be someone not wanting to follow the party line, we need to accept that this is healthy. Discipline should only be used when it is clear that an individual has intentionally harmed others by their actions – this could mean depriving someone of the chance to learn. But on the whole, if the subject matters are of interest to the members, then attendance will become self-policing.

What I need out of B&EMM is not a formal FBU structure. I personally can't operate within such strict guidelines. Sticking to such formal and strict structures in terms of delivery, negates other learning styles. It is as if those FBU (brave comrades) who attended the first gathering, have left a legacy: "We must keep these members in control, they are too passionate."

Let's try releasing control, allow people to control themselves. This also includes meetings. Good facilitators work on the basis that people have individual learning needs. It's a question of allowing their abilities to contribute to the topic. You know for many people sitting in a room or a big hall with strange or familiar people, seeing them being shouted down or humiliated by an Official (even in jest) is just a signal not to participate or take the issue seriously. If you can create a relaxing environment you will have the best environment to learn.

Pierre Marsh wrote this article in response to a request from B&EMM Committee



BLACK AND PROUD

Great Black Britons

THE Greatest Black Briton survey was carried in response to the absence of any black/ethnic minority people in the BBC's Greatest Briton poll.

Carried out on the internet, the survey had more than a million hits and 10,000 votes were cast.

Voters made their choices from a collection of past and present black figures.

The survey's organiser, Patrick Vernon, said the survey was part of a campaign to provide role models for black Britons of all ages, especially children.

He also reiterated the fact that black people have been here since the Roman Empire and all black positive role models

are ignored in history lessons within the National Curriculum.

"It is vital that prominent black people are given a standing in history if we are going to accurately reflect the past," he added.

One surprise candidate was St George of England!

He was born in Turkey and is of African descent. Of course, most paintings depict him as white. And history labels him as English.

The Mayor of London's policy advisor on race, Lee Jasper, says: "As a people we are often acknowledged for excelling in music and sport so its interesting that the top ten comes from the worlds of medicine, literature, religion and politics".

THE TOP TEN

Mary Seacole (nurse in the Crimean War – more about her in this edition)

Wilfred Wood (first black bishop)

Mary Prince (first black female writer to be published)

Olaudah Equiano (political activist)

Queen Philippa (wife of Edward III)

Courtney Pine (jazz musician)

Bill Morris (first black union general secretary)

Trevor McDonald (newsreader)

Shirley Bassey (singer)

Bernie Grant (MP)

Professor Stuart Hall (sociologist)

Windrush Awards

THE 2004 6th Annual Windrush Achievement Awards have been launched. A black tie event, to be held at The Savoy on Friday 21 June, the unique Awards recognise the vast wealth of talent among African Caribbean, Asian and Oriental communities, in partnership with the White community. The achievements will be demonstrated by the pioneers, high flyers and stars of tomorrow who are currently making an impact in various occupations throughout Britain.

Founder and successful pioneer businesswoman, Elaine Sihera, introduced the Awards to ensure more recognition of visible minority contribution to the social, cultural and economic life of the UK through a celebration of the legacy of the arrival of Empire Windrush with its West Indian pioneers to British shores. The Awards also seek to recognise wider partnerships with the White mainstream in order to encourage minority inclusion, value in diversity and mutual respect.

Each year Education, the Media, Technology, Small Business, Community,

Public and the Uniformed Services are especially targeted to increase minority representation within those fields. This year, the new categories of Minority Graduate and Editor/Producer of the Year have been added along with the Positive Media Award for the mainstream press. These are designed to reduce the negativity and sparseness of visible minority representation in mainstream broadcast/radio/print, to encourage editors and producers to see inclusiveness as routine instead of additional or extraordinary. However, anyone can enter the Awards, regardless of occupation, because it is mainly about identifying outstanding minority role models at the most significant occupational levels.

Says Elaine: "Minorities are still invisible where it matters on all the prestigious levels while being highly visible when they are being criminalised" she said. "It is usually about 'problems' in relation to them, nothing uplifting. Their contribution to British society, in both spending power and helping to build the

economy, is rarely recognised, but their visibility for negative acts never fails to hit the headlines. The annual Windrush Achievement Awards aim to strike a better balance. They give minorities more visibility and value while helping to create greater recruitment opportunities through much needed role models."

Confirmed Presenters are: Baroness Amos, Leader of the Lords; Lord Navnit Dholakia, President, Liberal Democrats; Dominic Grieve, Shadow Attorney General, Conservatives; Ralph Tabberer, Chief Executive, Teacher Training Agency; Cathy Tyson, Windrush Fellow; Rudolph Walker, Actor; Tony Panayioutou, Diversity Director, Arts Council England, Kofi Kusitor, Managing Director, Black Britain Online and Elaine Sihera. There will also be strong representation from a variety of celebrities and high achievers.

Information on the Windrush Awards, how to enter or attend, is available on www.anserhouse.co.uk/events

Prominent Sisters



MARY SEACOLE

BORN in Jamaica in 1805, and of Scottish and Jamaican parentage. Her mother kept a boarding house for invalid soldiers where Mary learnt her nursing skills.

Mary heard of the collapse of the nursing system in Britain and headed for London. She applied to the War Office, to offer her services as a nurse to soldiers in the Crimean war, but was turned down. This we believe was due to colour prejudice.

She was not discouraged and she paid her own way to Crimea where she set up her own store and 'the British Hotel' where she gave nursing care, food and accommodation.

She became a favourite of the soldiers.

One soldier writes in his memoirs – she was a wonderful woman.... Her never failing presence amongst the wounded after a battle, made her beloved by the

rank and file of the whole army.

After the war ended in 1856 she returned to Britain in ill health and destitute. The Times brought her predicament to the public attention.

A letter asked 'while the benevolent deeds of Florence Nightingale are being handed down for posterity are the humble actions of Mrs Mary Seacole to be entirely forgotten? Wellwishers including two commanders in the Crimean war put on a benefit for Mary.

This benefit lasted for four days and over 1,000 artists performed. She was awarded a Crimean Medal, French Legion of Honour and Turkish Medal

Mary died in 1881. Her grave is to be found in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Harrow Road in London.

On 9th Feb 2004 Mary Seacole won the 100 Great Black Britons Award. There is a campaign for a public garden in her honour in Scrubs Lane, close to her grave.

BENAZIR BHUTTO

BORN 1953 in Karachi, eldest child of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, she passed her O levels at 15. In 1969, at 16, she was admitted to Harvard University's Radcliffe College in the USA.

As well as obtaining a degree in philosophy, politics and economics, she also completed a postgraduate course in international law and diplomacy at Oxford in the UK. In 1977 she was elected president of the prestigious Oxford Union.

She returned to Pakistan in June 1977.

Benazir Bhutto was sworn in as Prime Minister of Pakistan on December 2 1988. Becoming the first woman to head the

an Islamic state.

In the proceeding years of struggle she spent nearly six years in prison or detention for her dedicated leadership.

On assuming the office of Prime Minister, she emphasised the need to heal past wounds, including reducing discrimination between men and women.

She launched a national program of health and education reform.

She received the Bruno Kreisky Award for Human Rights in 1988 and the honorary Phi Beta Kappa Award from Radcliffe.

In 1996 Benazir Bhutto was removed from government and now lives in exile in the UK.



VALLY MCNAMEE/CORBIS



FBU CONFIDENTIAL STRESS AND SUPPORT LINE

0 8 0 0 7 8 3 4 7 7 8

DON'T BE BULLIED, DON'T GET STRESSED, GET HELP FROM THE FBU FREE SERVICE

LEUKAEMIA TRUST

African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust

This is a story about my son Daniel who was recently finally able to personally and visually say thank you to the person who directly gave him the Gift of Life, says Beverley De-Gale.

ON Wednesday June 16 1999 after six years of suffering with Leukaemia, Daniel finally had a Bone Marrow Transplant from a Matched Unrelated Donor. This wonderful person had only just recently joined the Bone Marrow Register, therefore proving our theory that Daniel's donor could always be the next person who joined the register. We have always been eternally grateful to this mysterious individual, wherever in the world they lived. But now hopefully we will soon be able to get the chance to say "Thank you" in person.

It all started on December 23. We all decided to make contact with the donor close to Christmas, as we thought it would be highly appropriate. Our first attempt ended when her voicemail kicked in. However, we listened to her voice right to the end of the message. I left the room feeling slightly disappointed and went to tell Daniel and his sister Dominique that she was not at home. Ten minutes later Orin, Daniel's step father, called me upstairs to say he had her on the line. I was so taken by surprise that I just couldn't speak. After a little confusion on her side, this lovely lady did not know whether to laugh or cry in fact she did both. For my part, I was just beyond making any sense at all.

Doreene Carney is now 50 and lives near Detroit in Michigan, USA. Doreene is single with no children and has a brother and sister. She joined the Bone Marrow Register when the American Red Cross launched an appeal for donors – especially Ethnic Minorities – at her workplace, the



Doreene Carney: wonderful lady

United States Postal Service. Doreene was not aware until then of the shortage and need for black people to step forward as potential donors and so joined the register that day. Shortly afterwards she was contacted and told that she was a match for a 12 year-old boy urgently needing a match. Doreene then had a choice to make. She could have refused. But, as she said: "I could not possibly see how anyone would not want to be a blessing to someone else when possible".

This wonderful lady has now become a part of our family and she is now calling us her family. She refers to Daniel like he is a son. Daniel decided not to speak with Doreene on the phone, so we expressed his gratitude on his behalf. We told him to do it in his own time, as we felt he probably was feeling very emotional about the whole thing. He has since started his own very personal dialogue with Doreene via email. He would also like to meet her at sometime in the not-too-distant future.

We also constantly express our thanks to her via email. Her family, friends and work colleagues are ecstatic with the news and both of our families are very happy and keen for a meeting to take place.

Our collective and individual emotions were recently uplifted tenfold when, from ITN TV studios of London Today, we were able to directly reach out to Doreene via satellite. Daniel expressed his gratitude and reiterated that without Doreene's intervention he would not be sitting in the studio talking to her. It was a wonderful experience and the feedback from family and friends have been incredible.

It is now approaching 11 years since Daniel's original diagnosis. He is now 17. Last year he sat his GCSE exams and somehow managed to gain 12 with A to C grades in all subjects. He is currently at 6th form college studying for four A Levels in Biology, Geography, PE and Business Studies. We are very proud of his current achievements and Daniel is very pleased with everything in life. He is a pleasure to be around and is a very level headed young man.

The closing chapter of this amazing real life story will hopefully take place in the not-too-distant future when we hope to visit Doreene in the USA. What better story is there than our Daniel's story of coming back from the brink and finally meeting his lifesaver. Hopefully it will inspire others from all communities to register as potential Bone Marrow donors to help save a life.

BEVERLEY De-Gale is Co-Founder and Office Manager of the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust. For more information ring 0208 667 1122, email beverley@aclt.org or log on to www.aclt.org

Looking to the future, united

ONCE again I am writing to say congratulations on an ever improving and hugely readable magazine.

The first thing that caught my eye was the editorial by Paul Ahmed who called for the Union to unify to become... "the only 'stakeholder' that truly cares about the communities that we serve" and concluding by saying that "our future is in our hands".

How right he was. But I must take issue with his statement, no doubt borne out of personal experience. that "To my knowledge, NOT ONE Senior Brigade Officer was prepared to defend the service we provide".

I happen to represent FBU members in Region 7 and despite the likes of Ken Knight (CFO of the West Midlands Fire Service at the time of the dispute) catching the eyes and ears of the press with unfounded allegations about our members to further his own political ends, there were Senior Officers who made positive contributions during the dispute.

Unfortunately, however, CFOs like Ian Kerr of Shropshire being warmly welcomed on the picket line is not the kind of news that the press was looking for. But it is testament to the kind of Senior Officers who were crucial in providing a counterbalance to the extremes of Ken Knight during the national dispute. I believe that it is hugely important that we recognise that there were Senior Officers who were prepared to defend the Service that our members provide and who are now playing a crucial role in the current period of change. Not all CFOs and Senior Managers come out of the same mould as Ken Knight.

In the post-dispute period that we

now find ourselves in there are factions within our organisation who seem intent on ripping us apart while the Fire Service National Employers and the Labour Government look on with glee at the sight of FBU members finishing what they started.

What makes the trades union movement what it is today, is that we have all gone through tough times and come out the other side, more or less intact. It is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that the enemy is outside our Union and not within, and now more than ever we should be uniting to move on to whatever is destined to be the Union's future ... not dwelling on what is now the past.

Let's convert all of our negative energy and anger into a positive future for this Union and its members. What is important is what we do from now on and not what we did in the past. And those members who look back at the 1977/78 dispute with rose tinted glasses are either suffering from a temporary memory loss, or weren't there. There was no great victory for the Union then!

As Paul Ahmed rightly said: "Our future is in our hands". So let's look forward to that future with a renewed and united commitment.

Maurice Brookes, Regional Fairness at Work Officer, Region 7

IN DEFENCE OF ALAN DOIG

WHAT Mr Doig, CFO of Staffordshire, did in relation to recruitment of minorities and women may be seen as indefensible by many. But I believe it is totally understandable.

I cannot profess to know the full

ins and outs of his situation and the situation in Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. But I am more than familiar with the issues in my own West Midlands Fire Service.

To whom should the criticisms be addressed?

- The British Fire Service
- The Fire Brigades Union
- My own Brigade, West Midlands Fire Service
- Last, but by no means least, the B&EMM EC Member along with the whole of the ineffective National Committee

The British Fire Service: that archaic institution that has, despite numerous reports culminating in the Thematic Review, have failed to make any real impact on figures for minorities and women. We do not even need to look as far as the progression of such groups within the Service to find the true meaning of their "paper" intent. Diversity I and Diversity II and now a Race Relations Policy, a legal requirement that will no doubt be doomed to gather dust at best and levelling some table at Brigade HQ at worst. The Thematic Review was as damning of this Service as the Lawrence Inquiry was of the police. The police, however, can be seen to have done considerably more in relation to such matters.

The West Midlands Fire Service: We have no outreach team. Representation for all Phase I and Phase II entrants is still not compulsory. The recruitment team in no way represents its targets. It does not invest in the advancement of its minority or female personnel.

It has no selection process to evaluate the suitability of those that have access to new entrants at training centre. It has a re-employment policy that reeks of cronyism and that may well serve to increase the tenure of a management that has been criticised as failing in "Bain". Further, the current policy needs to be challenged on the grounds of indirect discrimination in relation to minorities and women. It still does not have exit interviews for all personnel. I

LETTERS

feel confident enough to say that they will breathe a sigh of relief now that Mr Doig has been criticised so they can justify their own failures and lack of future effort.

The Fire Brigades Union: The least criticisable from my perspective. An enlightened few have been compromised by the will of their own membership. They have been forced to tread the weary road of 'winning hearts and minds' of a white male membership keen to preserve its exclusive club.

B&EMM: We have let Doig go unsupported. If nothing else he provided a platform for us to debate the goings on in the Service while it had a national profile. We always wanted the limit of positive action to be pushed. But on the grounds that we were not consulted by Mr Doig, we are all too keen to have the issue go away. We are not a group to be dictated to or to provide a black face at our paymaster's dictate. We were born out of a struggle we, it would appear, have lost sight of. Wake up my brothers and sisters before it is too late!

Where were the critics when the law was broken to keep minorities and women out?

So-called lower standards still produce 90%+ white males on any training centre course I have ever known. If anyone knows any different then please let me know?

Have we all so quickly forgotten the audacity of a well cited Senior Manager in the Manchester Service?

Warren Simpson,
Region 7 B&EMM Chair

OPEN LETTER TO CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS – JOINT WORKING PARTNERSHIP

I am writing to you on behalf of the Black & Ethnic Minority Members of the FBU. The reason for writing is to extend a hand of friendship and inviting you to join with us in developing processes to address issues concerning race in your Brigade.

The word "issues" is not a negative connotation but to act as a gateway

leading to a better understanding of some concerns that affect the British Fire and Rescue Service and possibly, your Fire Brigade. We would also like to examine all aspects of different subject matters that come under "race" within the auspices of Equality & Diversity.

The recently published White Paper has once again highlighted the shortfalls of the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to Gender and Race. It is implicit that these problems will be addressed and rectified. With our experience in dealing with these problems, it makes absolute sense to develop working practices giving rise to Best Practice. The White Paper names Brigades who are doing good work in this area, so why not add your Brigade to this list?

Areas/Issues such as Race Relations Amendment Act, Race Equality Scheme, Recruitment (Outreach), Retention, Promotion, Discipline, Community Relations & Equality Training, B&EMM have and can play an integral part in improving the working experience of all concerned.

Agencies such as the ODPM, CRE, Race Equality Councils and the TUC are all examples that we have done and do work with, and who we can call upon to get involved in any potential initiative. One of the best ways of achieving these aims is to use the resources already at hand, i.e. black personnel and in fact anyone within Brigades who has a level of commitment and belief to the subject matter.

Sometimes we cannot see the wood for the trees! We believe the key to the whole principle of Equality & Diversity is to give ownership. To this end, let us all give each other ownership by working towards that common goal. Please get in touch so we can initiate the first steps together.

Carl St Paul
National B&EMM Secretary.

** Carl sent this letter out to CFOs and Equality Officers just before Christmas 2003. The responses so far have been favourable, with a number of Brigades requesting meetings.*

B&EMM SCHOOL AND 'WHITE FOLKS'

I HEARD some questions being asked and comments being made about white people attending the B&EMM School from differing perspectives. My personal position has remained consistent and that is the FBU (for us, by us) principle. We have the talent and ability to organise and manage our School without "outside" influence or intervention. Although we still have difficulties getting people to the School and running under capacity,

I think we still need to make sure that every person of "colour" that wants to attend should be there and we limit the spaces available for guests.

When I start to rationalise and consider some realities then a slightly different position comes through. I accept that it is an FBU School and that National Officials have a right and duty to be there. There are also those whose contribution should be recognised.

There is no doubt that Bro. Simon Green and Lud Ramsey have contributed to each other's development and Lud's influence on the Section will become more measurable as a result.

There is the issue of dealing with "dead wood". Why invest the effort of filling the School with people who come and go without any contribution when, having an appropriate number of influential people could make a difference? By the way, that argument doesn't follow through to inviting watch members just to satisfy their curiosity and attempt to allay any "fears" they might have! That is their issue for them to deal with.

I am not an extremist and will always come down on the side of rationality. It is a School for our members and everything should be done to make each School an enlightening, uplifting and enjoyable development experience for all who attend.

If there is a value to be had by the presence of appropriately qualified and committed white people, then they should be accommodated.

The impression of the 2003 School was that the balance had tipped. But that visual impression was added to by the number of members now coming from Europe and the Middle East as well as people of mixed heritage. B&EMM is inclusive!

Wayne McCollin
Lothian & Borders

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

I'VE been a firefighter with Dumfries and Galloway for eight years now and my second bun-fight with B&EMM was in Edinburgh back in December at what was to be the very first Region 1 meeting.

My first encounter was last October, at the National School down in Wortley Hall, which was a heartening revelation. I went expecting to feel like an audience member for "Kilroy" and left feeling something good had been set in motion for me. How bizarre!

We all have our differences and similarities. But to be in the company of so many people who share an explicit bond was surprisingly comforting – especially being the only B&EMM, I knew up to that point. I am enthused now, whereas before I was content.

Edinburgh was a smaller – yet, perfectly formed – affair. But hopefully not for long. It pressed home to me that while there are larger national, and international issues there are also topics specific to Scotland. I'd like to thank everyone at B&EMM, in particular Mickey and Carl for making me feel so welcome.

If in doubt, come as you are. After all, if you don't explore yourself, the only thing you'll get out of this life is older.

Sami Chaudhry
Dumfries & Galloway

ASSAULT AND ARREST OF DELBO KING

ONCE again Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is under the spot light for the wrong reasons. I was truly horrified to see the CCTV footage of a Black man, Delbo King, being sprayed with CS gas, wrestled and pinned to the ground by four Police officers, and then repeatedly

and brutally kicked and stamped "after" being restrained with handcuffs.

Further to this the same officer who inflicted the kicking's was instrumental in slamming Delbo King's head against the door frame as he was thrown into the back of the police van.

Absolutely no regard was paid to the life of Delbo King from either a Human or Civil Rights perspective. This could very easily have been another "Death in Police Custody".

This sort of behaviour is nothing short of state sponsored thuggery and should be wholly condemned by all parties along with the call for a full independent inquiry

The fact that police from outside of Greater Manchester will be conducting an investigation supervised by the Police Complaints Authority does not instil me with great confidence that justice will be done. The Police should not be allowed to investigate themselves. The fact that to date only one Police officer has been taken off front line duties – not even suspended – is testimony to that.

This whole issue raises the question, what message is GMP sending out to the community? They of all people are fully aware of the CCTV coverage of the city centre.

This quite clearly enforces the view recently exposed by the BBC documentary The Secret Policeman that some officers within GMP feel they can mete out this kind of treatment with impunity.

A Police force culture which supports this kind of behaviour as we have seen should come as no surprise to anyone, especially when you couple these prevalent issues together with the Government's own figures which show that Black people are still far more likely to be stopped and searched by police.

This is wholly unacceptable, justice must be seen to be done and the rotten core must be rooted out!

Paul Greaves FBU Black & Ethnic Minority Members Representative in Oldham.

This is a draft of a letter addressed to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police.

BRITISH GAS

DAVE, a B&EMM serving at Newbury Fire Station, did not realise just how difficult it is to look at a private company race equality scheme and diversity training. He wanted to make a formal complaint about the behaviour of one British Gas employee.

In July last year a gas engineer came in to his house and said: "You are dark, where are you from?" This could have been an unconscious statement but it was unwanted. What offended Dave most about this comment was the manner in which it was made.

After this comment was made Dave and his family felt totally humiliated, and uncomfortable with this man in their house. It was clear to me that this man had no knowledge or experience about communicating with ethnic minorities. After correspondence between the FBU and British Gas, they wanted to close the matter.

We insisted on answers to questions such as:

- What steps are to be taken to ensure the agent concerned has been comprehensively castigated and continually monitored?
- How are we to be sure that the agent concerned will never subject another family or individual to personal abuse again both within and outside their own homes?
- Why have British Gas risked their reputation on continuing to employ an individual who has proved himself to be a high risk to the organisation and in fact brought you into disrepute?

We received no response from British Gas. We then contacted Dave's local MP. He did nothing. Then we went to the Commission for Racial Equality. They contacted British Gas for us asking them for their policies on Race Equality. They realised that they have got gaps in their policies and needed to learn from this incident.

We also contacted the police. The advice they gave us was very interesting. If this comment had been made outside

VERBATIM

The views of our witnesses were virtually unanimous. Institutional racism is present throughout the NHS. Greater effort is needed to combat it ... particularly black and ethnic minority people find it difficult to access mental health services. Black patients were more likely to be restrained, secluded and medicated than any other group. They are less likely to get psychiatric treatment.

Inquiry into NHS services

They treated him as a lesser being who should be ordered about. They were unaware of the corrosive and cumulative effect of racist abuse upon a black patient. He died from excess pressure used to restrain him.

Blofeld Inquiry into death of David Bennett. The inquiry took five years!

Ethnic minority nurses are losing out on pay when acting up to a higher grade and are less likely to be successful in gaining promotion than their white colleagues.

Royal College of Nursing (RCN) survey of 10,000 staff

THERE is beyond doubt that racism exists across the NHS.

RCN Gen Sec – Beverly Malone

Britain is not getting more racist but racist attitudes and prejudices are becoming more deeply entrenched and difficult to detect.

Dr Ali Dizaei, Metropolitan Black Police Association



YU MOK/PA PHOTOS.COM

Me? I thought, OBE me? Up yours, I thought! No way Mr Blair, no way Mrs Queen. I am profoundly anti-empire.

Poet Benjamin Zephaniah – on being nominated for a New Year Honour

The Civil Rights movement is over and we don't have a leadership that has a clue as to where we are.

Paul Robeson Jr – Black Activist.

Racism is much more subtle now, like the way the tabloids peddle lies against asylum-seekers. Positive discrimination can sow anger, it can be damaging and detrimental. Black people want fair treatment to help us with training and education. We

don't want positive discrimination without justice.

Lord Herman Ouseley, President of the Local Government Association

Violently homophobic lyrics could be prosecuted as public order offences or as threats/incitement to kill.

Lord Goldsmith, Attorney General.

Some reggae singers have defended homophobic lyrics as part of Jamaican culture. Apartheid, one might recall, was part of South African culture. That didn't make it right.

Peter Tatchell, Gay Rights campaigner

Police are racist because they can get away with it.

Paul Atkinson, former police officer and a producer on the BBC documentary 'The Secret Policeman'

The entire recruitment process was tainted by the overriding objective of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer to increase the representation of females and those from ethnic minorities by adjusting the process as it progressed.

Employment Tribunal report on Staffs selection procedures

The issue of whether this incident has any racist motive will be an integral part of the inquiry.

Manchester Dep Chief Constable Alan Green responding to questions on CCTV footage of officer kicking and stamping on a black man restrained by other police officer

LETTERS

Dave's house, it would have been considered a racial offence.

If any one else knows of any other people who have experienced any similar problems with these large utility companies, please let us know. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 covers only public bodies. So private companies can do what they want.

**Lud Ramsey,
Region 13**

THANKS TO ROSIE QURESHI

WE would like to send special words of thanks to Rosie Qureshi, Black and Ethnic Minority Representative, Region 13, and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Equality Advisor, who left the Service in April. She has been a strong supporter of B&EMM and the work we do.

She has always tried to involve us with all projects carried out by the Service on diversity.

We would like to wish her well in the future.

B&EMM National Committee

VIEWPOINT

Israel's Apartheid Wall

The West Bank 'security fence' was started by the Israeli Government in 2002 despite worldwide opposition. It is now the subject of a legal challenge in Israel and the International Court in The Hague. The Israeli Government has already refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the International Court.

Wall? Fence? What exactly is this structure?

It is part wall, part fence. Some 440 miles long, it has a concrete base and is five metres high. It is topped by razor wire with a four-metre ditch on each side. The structure has electronic sensors and costs about £1 million a mile! Part of the structure includes watchtowers and the solid section around the Palestinian town of Qalqilya is a "sniper wall" to prevent gun attacks on Israeli motorists.

Why is Israel building it?

THE Government claim it is to prevent Palestinian suicide bombers from entering Israel and attacking its citizens as has happened during the current Intifada*. There was an initial reluctance amongst ministers to build any structure which might have left Jewish settlements stranded in Palestinian land. The fence is not built on the pre-1967 boundary but makes inroads into the Palestinian West Bank to link up illegal Jewish settlements to Israel.

What are the main objections?

THE wall epitomises all that is wrong with Israel occupation of Palestinian land and its approach to making peace in the Middle East. Palestinians have lost their land and means of economic survival in order for Israel to build this wall. The impact of the wall has been felt most acutely in Qalqilya

which was once known as the "fruit basket" of the West Bank. It is now cut off from the farms which supply its markets and the region's second largest water sources. Access to the 40,000 inhabitants is now through a single Israeli checkpoint.

Why wasn't the fence built along the 1967 boundary?

PALESTINIANS say a fence around the West Bank would have shown that Israel was serious about ending their occupation of Palestinian land. The Palestinians argue that the structure will hem them into 42% of the West Bank – something that Ariel Sharon has been planning all along! Israel says that the fence is purely a security measure and not part of any "future border". They claim there is nothing to stop the fence being removed after a negotiated settlement on the border and land disputes has been reached.

American position?

STILL keen to keep the "roadmap" peace plan alive, the US views the fence as problematic as it poisons the atmosphere between the two sides. In July 2003, President Bush said "it is very difficult to develop confidence ... with a wall snaking through the West bank". A few days later he said "the prime minister (Sharon) has made it clear that this is a sensitive issue and I promise him we will continue to discuss how to make sure that the fence

sends the right signal to the Palestinians". The US later raised objections to any extensions of the fence. Washington was considering withholding loans from Israel to the value of any fence extension that they considered unnecessary. Israel then planned to make concessions to the US.

United Nations position?

IN September 2003 a UN report condemned the fence as illegal and "an unlawful act of annexation". The Commissioner on Human Rights, John Dugard, warned that 210,000 Palestinians living between the fence and Israel will be cut off from social services, school and places of work. He added that "this will lead to a new generation of refugees and displaced people". Israel dismissed the report as "one-sided, highly politicised and biased". Forty-four countries have filed opinions on the fence. Israel, the US, the EU and others argue that the International Court is not the right forum to discuss this issue.

Another group of countries are urging Judges to denounce the barrier as illegal.

How much longer must the indigenous people suffer?

This is a personal view of the security fence by Paul Ahmed, B&EMM National Chair – Region 3. Paul is of Yemeni descent.

PERSONAL

SYMPATHY

FAMILIES of: Firefighter Joe McCloskey (Region 2)

FIREFIGHTER Steve Martin (Region 11)

IRANIAN Firefighters (lost in train explosion tragedy)

WARREN Simpson (B&EMM reg 7) loss of dearly loved nephew.

FAREWELLS

MIKE Lawson (National Officer)

PETER Skinley (EC Member – Region 9)
Wishing you all the best for whatever the future brings. Thank you.

CONGRATS

GARRETT Brooks (B&EMM rep – Region 11) Citizenship Award. In recognition of outstanding commitment and contribution to social action.

KAREN Edwards (B&EMM Region 10) on the birth of daughter D'Arcy.

TED John (B&EMM Region 11) on the birth of son Tyresse.

DANIEL Alie (B&EMM Region 11) on the birth of his daughter Clarissa.

B&EMM DVD

SIMON Green and Lud Ramsey have produced a DVD with RAYAVISION about some of the events B&EMM took part in last year. Any members wishing to purchase this unique product email me at lud.ramsey@ntlworld.com

Lud Ramsey

EVENTS

SINCE last edition...

NOVEMBER 2003

- B&EMM National AGM at Wortley Hall. Eight resolutions were agreed upon
- Jag Hayer hosted a 'Thank You' birthday party in Derby for all who have aided her in her struggle in the last four years

DECEMBER 2003

- Meetings with Derby & Notts Equality Managers
- TUC Training Course –three days – for B&EMM Union reps in London
- B&EMM National Committee Meeting at Kingston Lodge Hotel. We selected three motions for Annual Conference 04. They are: Race Equality Schemes, Institutional Racism, Deaths in Police Custody
- First B&EMM meeting in Scotland at Lothian & Borders Fire Service.
- B&EMM reps took part on BBC 'Test the Nation' as part of Fire Service team. We won!

JANUARY 2004

- B&EMM School 2003 review at Wortley Hall.
- FBU 'Moving Forward' seminar in Nottingham.

FEBRUARY 2004

- Equality Sections meeting with ODPM in London.
- FBU 'Moving Forward' seminar in Glasgow.

MARCH 2004

- B&EMM National Committee meeting at Kingston Lodge Hotel.
- B&EMM School 2004 Planning meeting at Wortley Hall.
- 'Unite Against Fascism' events at Birmingham and London.

APRIL 2004

- TUC Black Workers Conference at Torquay – 22/25 April.



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Birmingham: Anti racists demonstrate against the visit of extreme Right French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen to Britain. He was invited by the BNP. B&EMM has been heavily involved in the Unite Against Fascism campaign.

MAY 2004

- Descendants Dinner and Dance at Aston Villa FC – Sat 1 May.
- Meeting with Notts B&EMM and CFO – 5/6 May.
- Closing date for B&EMM National Chair Election Nominations – 10 May.
- FBU Annual Conference at Bridlington – 10/14 May. Adjourned.
- B&EMM National Committee meeting at Newcastle – 27 May.

FORTHCOMING events...

JUNE 2004

- FBU Annual Conference – reconvening at Southport, 15-17 June.
- B&EMM National Committee meeting at FBU HQ – 23 June.

JULY 2004

- CACFOA Multi-Faith Seminar – 8/9 July.
- Closing date for B&EMM School Applications! – 19 July.

EDUCATION

FIRE BRIGADES UNION EDUCATION APPLICATION FORM – 10th B&EMM SCHOOL

COURSE: **B&EMM SCHOOL, DATE 8 -10 OCTOBER 2004.**

SURNAME FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

POST CODE

BRIGADE UNION NO STN & WATCH

STATE WHAT POSITIONS YOU HOLD IN UNION

GIVE DETAILS OF ALL SCHOOLS ATTENDED

DO YOU REQUIRE CRECHE FACILITIES YES / NO

NUMBER OF CHILDREN Age Sex

FOR BEDROOM ALLOCATION

ARE YOU A SMOKER/NON-SMOKER MALE/FEMALE

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE DATE

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL NEEDS?

CLOSING DATE: 19th July 2004

Endorsed as a Candidate for Course

B&EMM NAT. SEC DATE

Please return to: Carl St Paul @ FBU, 68 Coombe Rd, Kingston, Surrey KT2 7AE.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

