

Advisor

**Race Equality:
Union
maintains
momentum**



The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union Black and Ethnic Minority Members ♦♦♦ www.fbu.org.uk

Summer 2007

Back to B&EMM School

**Members focus
on personal
development**



Foreword

This is our first issue for 2007 and as usual we've had to hit the ground running on your behalf. First of all I would like to personally thank all of you who took part in my re-election last December. I've always been proud to represent B&EMM at all levels, and I will continue to do my utmost to keep your confidence and trust.

The year had barely started when the inappropriate behaviour of the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority chair – Jerry Willmott – came to our attention. We wrote to all our members explaining the situation and I'm sad to have to report that he's *still* got his job. We have now written to various senior figures, within the fire service and elsewhere, demanding that action is taken against this dinosaur. The Standards Board (for complaints against elected councillors) is still investigating. We will keep you updated. We have also written to Jerry Willmott as well and only received an acknowledgement.

B&EMM officials were recently invited to take part in consultation workshops that are currently evaluating the entire equality and diversity strategy of the UK fire service. A fresh start is certainly needed as the word 'failed' is stamped across much of what has been done in recent times. We will continue to look for a better way to make our service equal and fair for all, and to implement the good work being done by too few brigades. Far too many are still doing little or nothing at all.

We have written what seems now like our annual letter to senior politicians and principle managers, requesting information under their

general duties of the Race Relations Act 2000. So far 35 Brigades have responded – and fairly positively. Our full report of all responses and actions will be published in the next issue of *Advisor*.

This year's FBU Annual Conference takes place on the 9-11 May in Southport and it promises to

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be a landmark conference in many ways. In my opinion, the future direction of the FBU will be signposted over the course of those three days. There are three motions submitted by your B&EMM National Committee.

However, just as importantly, there are two motions that call for the removal of the vote from the 'equality' sections at various levels of this union. All the usual spurious arguments are taking place on proportional representation, accountability, number of members, democracy, block voting at the EC and so on. Some brigade committees have invited us and the other sections to meetings for an open, honest discussion. And we've been quite happy to bury a few myths, some arising from the pay dispute. Some brigades won't extend an invite because the last thing they want is to have a balanced debate – that's not on their agenda! Their agenda is to spread the myth that a sectional vote is corrupting this Union's democratic process. It's complete rubbish, and the only thing that damages democracy is to deny all parts of our union a full representative voice.

A voice without a vote is a silent one. No union has ever made a progressive step and then taken such a regressive one. So we genuinely hope that our Union continues to be the forward-thinking union it is often lauded as within the UK trade union movement. I always believe that our role as trade union members is to be inclusive of all and the FBU is still some way short of being capable of representing all its members on all their issues.

Micky Nicholas B&EMM Executive Council Member



REUTERS/ANBAR O'REILLY



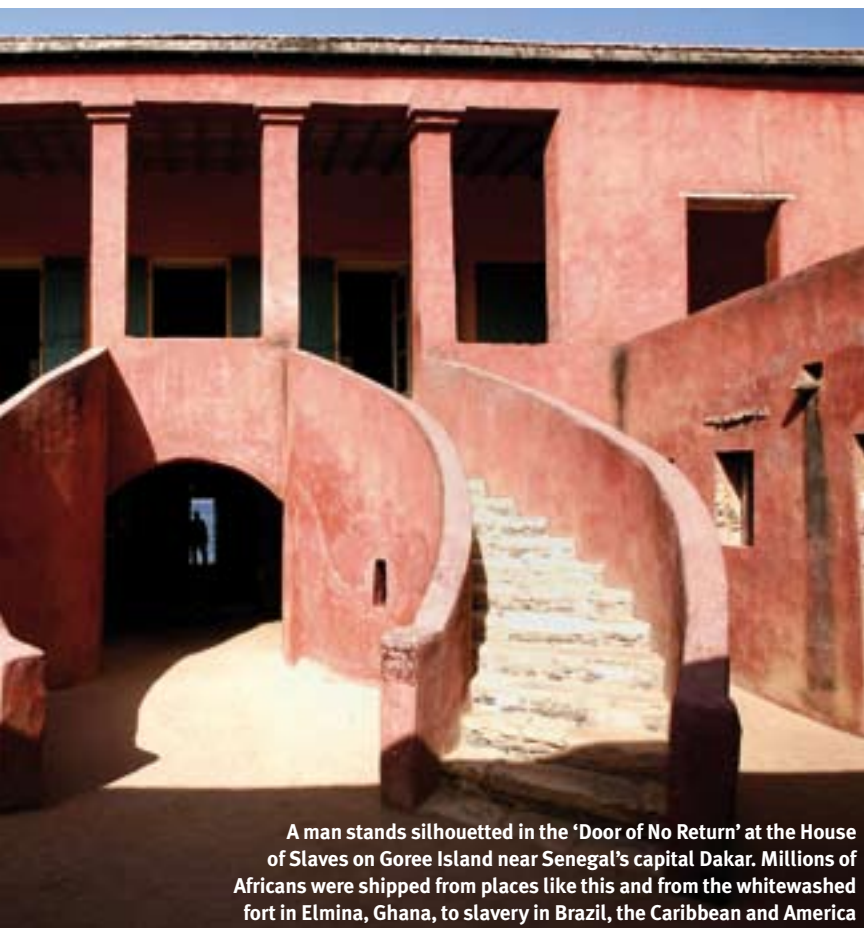
Help end slavery today

2007 marks 200 years since Britain abolished the slave trade, an important step on the way to ending one of the most brutal chapters in human history. But the achievements of 1807 did not mark the end of slavery as a practice or system.

The transatlantic slave trade itself stands apart from both past and present forms of slavery in terms of its scale and brutality, the legal framework that supported it and the long-term repercussions it would have on three continents.

Approximately 24 million people were violently abducted, taken from Africa and enslaved. Only 10 million managed to survive long enough to reach the Americas and the Caribbean. They were removed permanently from their homelands

Slavery



A man stands silhouetted in the 'Door of No Return' at the House of Slaves on Goree Island near Senegal's capital Dakar. Millions of Africans were shipped from places like this and from the whitewashed fort in Elmina, Ghana, to slavery in Brazil, the Caribbean and America

Contents

4 Campaign news

European Court backs Union's expulsion of BNP member

5 Union rep

Stella James, Hertfordshire B&EMM Rep

6 B&EMM school

Be the change you want to be

8 Advancement

Carl St Paul – station manager via the targeted development programme

8 Personal

What's been happening in the lives and work of B&EMM members/officials

Cover picture Martin Jenkinson

and had little chance of freedom. They were wholly owned and, in law, had no rights and were equal to property.

Today, the legacy of the slave trade continues to have consequences and remains at the root of some acts of racism, discrimination and intolerance against the black community as well as the underdevelopment of countries and communities from which people were abducted.

The bicentenary provides an important opportunity not only to draw attention to the realities of the transatlantic slave trade and its

The transatlantic slave trade stands apart from past and present forms of slavery in its scale and brutality

legacies, but also to focus attention on the fact that slavery is still a reality for millions of people worldwide.

Today at least 12 million men, women and children are in slavery. They are forced to work through the threat or use of violence. They are denied freedom, dehumanised and treated as property or bought and sold.

In the Philippines, young girls

are used as domestic slaves; boys as young as four are abducted from their families in South Asia to be used as camel jockeys in the Gulf; in Niger people are born into a slave class; young men in Brazil are used as forced labour to clear the Amazon making way for cattle farms; and men and women are trafficked to the UK and forced to work in food processing factories.

Even though it is illegal under international law, no region is free from this abuse and slavery such as bonded labour and human trafficking is found in most countries.

However large the problem of slavery is, solutions are possible. Two hundred years ago, hundreds of thousands of people across Britain demanded an end to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and continued the fight to demand an end to slavery. Today, you can harness the abolitionist spirit and demand an end to slavery once and for all.

Beth Herzfeld
Anti-Slavery International

→ To be part of the fight against slavery and for details of Anti-Slavery International's bicentenary campaign, visit: www.antislavery.org



Taking notes at the B&EMM annual school

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In brief

◆ In line with FBU education and the All Different All Equal policies, and the expanding need for good, relevant education for officials, brigade officials and brigade fairness at work reps attended a two-day training seminar in March to deal with changes in legislation with regard to equality which have a direct impact on negotiations held at local level. Legislation covered includes the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).



◆ Minister for Policing Tony McNulty has praised the work of black and minority ethnic women working in the police service, and the National Black Police Association for helping them to develop their careers. "All women, whether police officers or police staff, have the same aspirations as their male colleagues," he said. "The perception that women need to have a proven record or need to be 'one of the boys' to further their careers often acts as a barrier, preventing staff from demonstrating their full potential and abilities. I am determined to change this."



Protesters against the BNP

European Court backs union over expulsions

UNIONS AND THE BNP

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that unions can expel members of the fascist BNP and this is not incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Unite Against Fascism welcomed the decision, declaring it a victory for those who have campaigned to keep fascists out of the workplace, on the grounds that the BNP spread division and hatred.

The case was brought by the rail union ASLEF, after British courts ruled in favour of a BNP member it had expelled because of the incompatibility of BNP views and those of the trade union movement.

The BNP has attempted to increase its legitimacy by setting up "Solidarity" – a front organisation to infiltrate the trade union movement.

Billy Hayes, General Secretary of

Communication Workers Union and Treasurer of Unite Against Fascism said: "This ruling is an important step forward in the fight against the growth of fascism."

"The BNP poses a threat to the trade union movement not only because it is incompatible with the principles of the movement, but also because it whips up hatred and division, posing a threat to black, migrant, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers and others who are a fundamental part of the British trade union movement."

"The BNP seeks electoral legitimacy by infiltrating mainstream organisations such as the trade union movement. This ruling is the logical conclusion of what the BNP actually represents – a gang of racist thugs with a history of violence and criminality that must be opposed by all those who value democracy and freedom."

➔ More info: www.uaf.org.uk

LONDON SCHOOL A SUCCESS

LONDON B&EMM held its first school at City Hall on 21 February.

Headline speakers included Lee Jasper, the Mayor of London's director of equalities and policing and Karen Chauhan, director of the 1990 Trust.

They outlined the wider political problems faced by black and ethnic minority people in the UK, delivering inspirational messages.

Workplace issues adversely affecting B&EMM were discussed by a panel including the then FBU President Ruth Winters, B&EMM Secretary Carl St Paul, London Fire Brigade Deputy Commissioner for fire and emergency planning Roy Bishop, LFB Assistant Commissioner, Service Delivery Ron Dobson, LFB Head of Equality Pat Oakley and LFB firefighter Pam Oparaocha, as well as Karen Chauhan. B&EMM EC member Michael Nicholas chaired.

Gun crime was addressed by Earl Dingham from campaign group Not Another Drop. Feedback from the 48 attendees was positive.



Wishing Sister

PEOPLE

It was with some sadness that we were informed that Sis Ruth Winters had stood down as FBU President on 27 February. After five years at the helm of the FBU, Ruth sadly felt that the support necessary for her to carry out the role was no longer forthcoming from head office or indeed the wider membership.

Ruth has always been a great supporter and advocate of B&EMM and our issues in the union movement. She has also always supported black and ethnic minority causes in society. The loss of her wide

B&EMM keeps up momentum

RACE EQUALITY SCHEMES

B&EMM has renewed a call on all 58 UK fire authorities to “work productively” towards achieving the statutory general duties in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

All 58 fire authorities have at last produced race equality schemes, thanks to the efforts of B&EMM officials and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). B&EMM now wants to look at these schemes in detail to ensure that authorities are fulfilling their legal duties and that the schemes have taken into account the views of key stakeholders such as the FBU, as well as to look at ways of improving them.

B&EMM has written to fire authority chairs to ask them for a copy of their most up to date race equality scheme, information on any trade union participation in the process of equality impact assessments and information on consultation methods and those it had consulted.

In her letter, B&EMM chair Samantha Samuels said: “With the introduction of the Disability



Pam Oparaocha, London member

Discrimination Act, it is clear that many lessons have been learned from the years of implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. This has materialised in the fact that disability schemes must be produced with the participation of those who have disabilities.

“We feel that this is ‘best practice’ and should be translated to race equality schemes, and therefore best practice should be that minority ethnic groups, which includes B&EMM, should be considered for consultation as part of the continued improvements to your race equality scheme.”

Ruth Winters well

political experience will, in the short term perhaps, be to the detriment of the FBU as union officials of her calibre do not come along that often.

Ruth’s advice to B&EMM reps and officials over many years has always been appreciated and, more often than not, acted upon. She was, and remains, a staunch supporter of all the sections and our right to a voice and a vote within the FBU. And she has never been afraid to espouse that opinion in any arena.

Ruth respected the position of president and had integrity, acting on behalf of all FBU members throughout the trade union

movement. She was also without a shadow of doubt the most eloquent and knowledgeable FBU official on international issues. Personally, she was and will remain a great friend of mine and the National Committee.

We wish her well as she goes back to the Lothian & Borders fire service. Her experience and capabilities will stand her in good stead whatever she decides to do in the future. On behalf of our members we say au revoir with some sadness, however, the friendship that we have built over many years will be maintained I’m sure.

Michael Nicholas on behalf of B&EMM



STELLA JAMES

Hertfordshire

B&EMM Rep

Stella James, of Blue Watch, St Albans, is Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s first black woman firefighter and also the brigade’s first B&EMM rep. She’d barely stepped into her Union role 15 months ago when a member asked for her advice and support in a case of bullying and – at least as far as Stella and the member were concerned – wrongful suspension. It was a traumatic time for the member but, thanks to Stella and the B&EMM National Committee, the issue has now been resolved.

Stella is keen that no member suffers like this, and recently organised a meeting between herself, B&EMM national reps, and the brigade’s chief fire officer and head of human resources.

“Hertfordshire fire service had an opportunity to learn about B&EMM and to understand that working with us is good for all members. It’s about policies that will ensure all members are treated equally.” Key to this, she says, is sharing information with brigade management on best practice such as the ‘traffic light’ system, a self-assessment process that flags up stress among recruits in training. “When I was training, every day felt like a red light day. Nobody ever asked me how I was feeling. Yet, how you feel affects your performance.”

A central issue in Hertfordshire is recruitment. “Across the county, in certain areas, there are now very significant numbers of ethnic minority people. We only have six B&EMM firefighters. Herts FRS simply doesn’t reflect the community it serves.”

However, Stella was encouraged by the brigade’s first open day specifically for BEM communities recently. “It was really well attended. It was good to hear so many local black and ethnic minority people express an interest in joining the service.”

Stella is enjoying being a rep and hopes more will step forward. “When I joined Herts FRS there wasn’t any B&EMM rep, although I had support from brigade B&EMM reps elsewhere. It’s good to feel you are not alone.”

I’m a rep

“Be the change you want to see”: that was the theme of the three-day B&EMM annual school at Wortley Hall near Sheffield, held last autumn. In planning the event it was felt that the delegates had to experience a personal journey over the course of the weekend concluding with a target to achieve in the coming year. This target would be devised by the delegates themselves according to their own tailored requirements – and the B&EMM National Committee would make sure delegates were not going to forget their commitments. Six monthly reminders will be sent to each member.

Events kicked off on Friday 27 October to a pretty full house – the place would have been even more packed, had it not been for the fact that staffing levels with London Fire Brigade meant a number of delegates were unable to

‘We re-evaluated our own personal goals in the form of a “personal contract”. The national committee will send a reminder to members so they can gauge their own progression’

be released from duty. More children than in previous years were brought along by their fathers, a welcome addition to our gathering, although women were yet again thin on the ground.

Executive Council member for B&EMM, Michael Nicholas, opened with a welcome, introductions, a brief outline of the agenda for the weekend, expectations and ground rules, and then I, as National Secretary, gave a report of B&EMM’s work these past two years (there was no school in 2005), focusing on three main issues: Race Equality Schemes; far right membership; and chief and principal officer’s partnership meetings. A closed session for B&EMM-only followed which allowed for an open, frank discussion and debate, and, as it turned out, one that was more passionate and emotional than perhaps ever before.

The heart of the school is the workshops: this year they revolved around the two main themes of Personal Development and Community Development. The delegates had previously indicated which workshops they preferred. Our guests, life coach lecturer Julia Regis and Karen Chouhan, from the 1990 Trust, helped inform discussions.

Julia, in a vigorous and thought-provoking contribution on personal development, centred on the ability to go beyond one’s own comfort zone in order to excel.

She suggested that we need to look outside of the box in order to break through the “glass

Be the change you want to see

B&EMM National Secretary
Carl St Paul reports on the
section’s annual school



WHAT THE SCHOOL IS FOR

The school serves as a vehicle for its members in a variety of ways that brigades around the country need to buy into if they have not already:

- It allows for a support mechanism
- It encourages networking
- It can assist in the process of self development
- It can manifest pro-activity
- It can raise issues otherwise left unaddressed
- It can encourage joint working partnerships with other stakeholders
- It can provide the resolve for those more isolated members to become empowered

ceilings” and navigate around “gatekeepers” that often stand before us.

Karen made many interesting points in her informative, challenging and engaging talk on community development, and none more so than her contrasting of intraculturalism and multiculturalism.

Intraculturalism, she argued, promotes through integral interaction true acceptance of the diverse communities living in Britain today. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, is merely an acceptance that there exists a diverse community without necessarily involving engagement between the communities.

On the final day of the weekend we appraised our journey thus far, re-evaluating our own



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARTIN JENKINSON

personal goals (personal development) in the form of a 'personal contract'. In six months the B&EMM national committee will send a reminder to all those who took part in the workshop so that they themselves can gauge their own progression according to their individual needs.

The weekend had been fairly heavy going in places so we took the opportunity of some mild weather to encourage a "walk and talk exercise" through the impressive grounds of what has been dubbed the Workers' Stately Home. This session enabled delegates and facilitators alike to reflect on the weekend, but also to discuss matters close to their hearts informally in smaller intimate groups.

We then gathered together to assist in formulating the short-term business plan for B&EMM for the coming year. This objective-setting strategy allows members to have

'We formulated a short term business plan for B&EMM, giving members ownership of the way forward and maintaining the accountability of the national committee'

ownership of the way forward for B&EMM and also maintains the accountability of the national committee.

The school rounded off with a special presentation to the National Chair Samantha Samuels in recognition of all her hard work in support of B&EMM issues, while I received a tribute from Deputy Fire Master Wayne McCollin in recognition of being a founder member of B&EMM and its National Secretary for over ten years. I will be stepping down from my position when my tenure is up later this year and I would like to thank Wayne for his kind heartfelt words and to all those present for the resounding applause and standing ovation. I was truly lost for words.





CARL ST PAUL

Station manager via the targeted development programme

Carl St Paul has spent much of his energy since joining London Fire Brigade in 1987 on the FBU's black and ethnic minority section (B&EMM), for which he has been National Secretary these past 10 years. But Carl is to step down shortly to focus on his career in the fire service, which has taken him to the role of station manager, working as a training review and information officer, (TRIO) part of a six-strong team responsible for training development in the coming years in London.

When he joined LFB, Carl was clear about why: "I wanted to do something completely different, something with job satisfaction,

'More of us need to get into the mindset of wanting to influence change and policy'

but also something worthwhile that would allow me to have a career and give back to society."

Carl served from the same station and with the same watch – North Kensington, Blue Watch – for 14 years. Then, in 2001, came the Ladbroke Grove train crash. "I happened to be at an FBU Fairness at Work seminar and was gutted that I wasn't there with my colleagues. It was then that I thought that it was time to make a move with my career."

Carl began training LFB staff of all ranks on equality and diversity as part of a new department – Training to Succeed – that was pretty unique for the UK fire and rescue service

at the time. "It was also around this period the service acknowledged that a more diverse workforce required a more diverse management makeup," he says.

Out of this came the targeted development programme. Carl was one of two identified LFB staff with management potential invited to take part. The programme saw him do a range of placements in watch manager and then temporary station manager roles in fire safety as well as monitoring staff performance on the incident ground and delivering projects in LFB's strategic planning department.

Following strong passes in all the middle manager's promotional rounds, he was A-listed to the station manager's development role and in February he received news of his new position. Carl doesn't plan to stop here and is looking at a group manager position "in the near future".

While he is well aware of the problems black and ethnic minority employees face, being black hasn't been a barrier as far as he is concerned.

"My ethnic minority status was a source of inspiration to me. I will be one of only three or four black station managers in London and there's not many more higher than that, which just isn't good enough.

"More of us need to get into the mindset of wanting to influence change and policy for the betterment of all, both internally and externally.

"To be role models, especially within our own communities is imperative. We need more black members in senior positions," says Carl.

Personal

SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES

- Dalton Powell – on the death of his father after a short illness
- Patricia Oakley (LFB Equality Manager) – loss of her partner after a long illness

NEW REPS

- Carole Brown – Kent B&EMM rep – thank you and welcome
- Dalton Powell – B&EMM rep region 6 – welcome to the National Committee

B&EMM PROMOTIONS

- Carl St Paul – Station Manager
- Carmen Osborne – Watch Manager (Development)
- Cassius Franksen – Crew Manager
- Catherine Homan – Crew Manager
- Craig Abbott – Crew Manager
- Delroy Bryant – Watch Manager (Development)
- Damian Sue-Too – Watch Manager (Development)
- Edmund Gonzales – Crew Manager
- Gregg Jules – Crew Manager
- Julius Adamu – Crew Manager
- Michael Lewis – Crew Manager
- Mario Kyriakou – Crew Manager
- Phil Goedluck – Crew Manager



Paul Greaves – promoted!

- Paul Greaves – Crew manager
- Paul Fraser – Crew Manager
- Richard Chandler – Crew Manager
- Ronnie Stanley – Crew Manager
- Steve Appleton – Crew Manager
- Steve Harvey – Crew Manager

AND FOR TARGETED DEVELOPMENT ONLY (LFB)

- Daniel Alie
- Narinder Dail
- Pam Oparocha
- Pierre Marsh
- Wayne Brown

CONGRATS

- Dalton Powell – British Masters & World Champion veteran – 100/200 metres
- Tyrone Robinson – Queens Fire Service Medal
- Wayne McCollin – Queens Fire Service Medal

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

- Craig Abbott – whose partner had a baby boy
- Rosalie Jones – who had a baby girl recently

If members have news of congrats and promotions don't be shy about it – please get in touch. Your progress is an inspiration to us all.

Contact B&EMM Executive Council member Michael Nicholas: mickn@fbu.org.uk