

ADVISOR

NEW YEAR 2006

**We salute you
Sister Rosa**



Brigade representation – our main challenge for 2006

Dear member,

I hope this edition of *Advisor* finds you and yours in good health, and having enjoyed a nice, relaxing festive period. On behalf of the B&EMM National Committee I wish you a Happy New Year and sincerely hope that all your aspirations are attained.

2005 was no different (than previous years) for B&EMM reps and officials. Our workload is increasing and the numbers of reps/activists are declining. Please seriously consider getting involved in representing our members as there are many issues that we need to resolve and many hands make light work! If we all contribute a little then together we get an awful lot done. Contact myself or Samantha as to how you can help in your brigade on B&EMM issues.

One of our main challenges for 2006 is indeed focusing on B&EMM brigade representation. So many parts of the UK Fire and Rescue Service are now dealt with at a local level and our concerns are included in that. Your employer now has to:

- promote racial equality and good race relations
- recruit and promote more BME staff
- deliver effective training on equalities and diversity
- consider and consult on the impact on BME communities in every IRMP and review regularly
- inform you about their progress on all these issues

B&EMM need 'eyes and ears' in every single Brigade so we can pressure employers to fully carry out their responsibilities. Unless we do, they won't. Their record on our issues has not improved at all. If progression of B&EMM



COVER PICTURE:
KHUE BUI/AP/EMPICS

in the 21st century UK fire and rescue service is important to you then please get in touch. By working together we can make things so much better for all of us and the fire and rescue service generally.

Belated congratulations to all B&EMM who have been promoted within the service under the new IPDS system. Understanding IPDS and acknowledging the opportunity it gives us for progression, is another one of our priorities for this year. We hope to set up a group this year that can offer advice and encouragement on promotion. Having our people within your brigade's decision-making bodies is a must. Please consider your own progression very seriously.

We are currently making plans to improve our communication/information with you. Our website is being improved and hopefully as I write, plans for more pages and a better layout are being progressed. Visit www.fbu.org.uk/aboutus/sections/bemm/ and contact us.

Finally, as you know, our union is undergoing a re-organisation review. Our finances, rules and the way we represent members are being rightly looked at. Your national committee will be submitting a document to that re-organisation report. It will be printed in our next edition of *Advisor*.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and either way, contribute to its contents. Points of view and articles are always appreciated. It is, after all, YOUR magazine and it goes out to B&EMM at home and to our places of work.

Be positive, stay safe!

Respect and dignity for all,

Michael Nicholas
EC member – B&EMMM



ANDREW WARD

Scotland, BEM account for just 0.3% of fire service employees

Union welcomes Scottish fire service race inquiry

B&EMM has welcomed the intervention of the Commission for Racial Equality in pursuing Fire Authorities in Scotland to ensure that they comply with the duty to eliminate racial discrimination, and promote good race relations, announced in the Glasgow Herald 1 October 2005.

B&EMM said it was unacceptable that after 3 years of new race relations duties, Scottish fire and rescue authorities only have 0.3% of their membership from black or minority ethnic communities.

"The Fire and Rescue Service have managed to avoid the limelight that has focused on the Police Service, which led to significant strides being made in the area of recruitment and promotion within the police service.

"Instead the Fire Service are

moving backwards, and will continue to move backwards if the issues around diversity; cultural change; and organisational change are not addressed immediately," B&EMM said.

The Union "is looking forward to working closely with the CRE to deliver the change that is essential if the fire service is to modernise its equality agenda".

The facts are:

- About 2% of the Scottish population is made up of ethnic minorities.
- Public bodies in Scotland had until November 2005 to review their race equality schemes.
- Currently just 0.3% of the fire brigade are from black and minority ethnic minorities.
- 29 firefighters of a total staff of 8241.

FBU condemns decision to allow BNP members to join fire service

THE FBU has condemned the decision to allow BNP members to join Dorset fire service. The union hoped Dorset Fire Authority would agree with county Chief Fire Officer Martin Chapman that membership of the far right party was incompatible with the core values of the service.

But Authority members rejected a recommendation to ban the BNP, paving the way for racists to join up.

Martin Chapman told the Authority that:

- Failing to address the issue of staff being members of extreme groups such as the BNP would be in conflict with the duty of the Authority under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- The right to be a member of the BNP must be restricted in order to protect the rights and freedoms of minority ethnic groups.
- The statement proposed by the Chief Fire Officer was lawful and compatible with the appropriate European convention.
- It is vital for the Fire Authority to engage with this issue in order to progress equality and diversity within the service.

Despite all the above the Fire Authority rejected the recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer and refused to back the statement.

It is understood by the FBU that the CFO was subjected to threatening phone calls prior to the meeting. The proposal would have made it abundantly clear that there is no place for bigots and racists in the fire and rescue service in Dorset.

The Fire Brigades Union position is equally clear. There is no place for the fascist BNP in the British fire and rescue service.

John Drake, Regional Official for the FBU in the South West said "Dorset Fire Authority have not only missed a golden opportunity to come to a principled and morally correct decision they have also been bullied by the jackboots of the BNP"

"The FBU applauds the attempt by the Chief Fire Officer to put Dorset Fire and Rescue Service at the forefront of equality issues within the Fire Service but is appalled by the stance of the Fire Authority in failing to agree with their CFO statement on the BNP"

"BNP members have a history of expressing their views with the firebomb through the letterbox, the nail bomb and the boot. They have promoted racially motivated thuggery, not political debate."

FBU Regional Secretary Tam McFarlane said: "Dorset Fire Authority has rejected a statement which was lawful, necessary and had the full backing of both the Chief Fire Officer and the FBU. In doing so they have failed in their lawful duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act Of 2000 and their moral duty towards their staff and the public of Dorset.

"The authority had the opportunity to support the CFO in promoting equality and dealing with racism and bigotry. Instead of seizing that opportunity they have pandered to the repugnant views of the BNP and rejected a modern vision of the fire service based on the values of equality and diversity.

"The message that this decision has sent to minority groups and communities within Dorset is appalling. I urge the fire authority to reconsider their decision and join with the FBU who will continue to press for a total ban of all members of far right organisations, including the BNP, from working within the UK fire and rescue service."

A full report of the FBU's campaign against the BNP, to which B&EMM Secretary Samantha Samuels made a major contribution, appeared in the December issue of Firefighter magazine. A breakdown of fire authorities' policies with respect to the BNP and other racist/fascist groups is available on www.fbu.org.uk/fairnesswork/.

Home Office urged to think again on Macpherson decision

THE FBU has called on the Home Office to reconsider its decision to axe a special committee advising it on how to implement the Macpherson inquiry recommendations.

The FBU's call adds to sharp criticisms of the move from Doreen Lawrence, the National Black Police Association and Association of Police Authorities (ASA), who sit on the 26-strong Lawrence Steering Committee which meets with the Home Secretary monthly. The Association of Police Authorities (ASA) has praised the work of the group as "pivotal" to helping the force tackle discriminatory policing.

Samantha Samuels, B&EMM National Chair, in a letter to the Home Secretary dated Thursday 28th October 2005, said:

"It is no coincidence that [B&EMM] were formed after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and our early development took place during the challenging times before, during and after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

"Since the recommendations of the Inquiry have been implemented through the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 there is no doubt that raising the issues around institutional racism in the Fire Service has become more palatable to some Chief Fire Officers and those who hold the remit of Equalities.

"Unfortunately palatability cannot deliver the values, commitment or actions that we need to see if the Fire Service is to ever fully enjoy the fruits of diversity.

B&EMM told the Home Secretary that race equality has been allowed to slip to the bottom of the agenda as fire and rescue services face major modernisation through legislation which includes the Fire Services Act 2004.

"Whilst modernising the face of the fire service using many cosmetic alterations, those with



Doreen Lawrence: sharp criticism of move

the role of managing the Fire Service have chosen to ignore the underlying health threat which if not treated will be the disease that kills us.

"Part of the treatment for this disease is consultation (which management still have not a grip of); acknowledgement (that there is a problem in the first place); prevention and treatment.

"You cannot allow the many issues that are still to be addressed to go unheard and you have a responsibility to ensure that you use all means necessary to ensure that the impact of the recommendations from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry are assessed.

Calling on the Home Secretary to give reassurances that "race, the impact of racial prejudice and racism remain high on your personal agenda and that of the Home Office",

B&EMM has called on Mr Clarke to reconsider the proposal to ditch the Committee and, failing that, to publish "proper proposals for managing the vacuum that it inevitably leave."

GOVERNMENT FORCED TO LOOK AT RACE ASPECTS OF EDUCATION REFORM

EDUCATION expert Professor Gus John and activist Linda Bellos were outraged over the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) failure to carry out a race equality impact assessment on its recently-published White Paper 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All.'

Following pressure from the duo, who argued that the government were failing to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, education secretary Ruth Kelly was forced to agree to the study.

Professor John, a former chief education officer, said: "They're either talking about inclusiveness or they're not. We're trying to get the government to take the Race Relations (Amendment) Act seriously."

He said the thrust of Ms Kelly's White Paper – giving schools more autonomy – risks allowing headteachers to ignore black history in the curriculum and pay less attention to combating the underachievement of African-Caribbean pupils.

Nationally, black children are three times more likely to be excluded than white children. In some areas the difference is as much as fifteen times. Three-quarters of African-Caribbeans leave school without the 'basic threshold' of five good GCSEs.

The DfES climbdown comes just days after the Department of Health was forced to apologise following protests that a race impact assessment consultation

over the proposed Mental Health Bill was being slipped through with scant advertising.

Following further efforts by Ms Bellos and Professor John, the Commission for Racial Equality have now agreed to help the DfES carry out the task.



■ Want to know more about racism and black underachievement in school? Try *Tell it Like it is: How our schools fail black children* (Bookmarks, ISBN 1905192061). The book has 31 contributors, a preface by Lord Herman Ouseley, former chairman of the CRE, an introduction by London Mayor Ken Livingstone and a forward from Doreen Lawrence. It contains a series of suggestions which if taken together and applied consistently would make a difference to the apparently intractable problem of race, poverty and educational under achievement often labelled as a "cycle of disadvantage, according to Professor Tim Brighouse, chief advisor to the London Schools Challenge, writing in the *Times Educational Supplement*.

B&EMM school cancellation

Dear General Secretary

The B&EMM National Committee was informed by our EC member that the B&EMM National School 2005 has been cancelled, due to the poor financial circumstances that our union is experiencing.

While we acknowledge the gravity and have some sympathy with the financial situation and the reasons thereof, we cannot accept that the B&EMM School has to be a major 'casualty' without at least seeking realistic, short term alternatives such as:

- a smaller school
- no entertainment
- no extra guests
- a shorter school
- a London venue (as traditionally most of our members are from that brigade)

We could carry on but we would be loath to give you ideas for the future in case you decide to act upon them when the financial situation has eased.

Is it not sad that we are filled with concern that you may well be the architects of the demise of the B&EMM School if not now, but in the future?

We are compelled to ask the following questions of you and the Executive Council who have made, what we feel, is a rash decision:

1. Have you or most of the EC ever attended a B&EMM School?
2. If not, have you any intention of doing so?
3. Are you aware of the realistic benefits in terms of learning, support and encouragement that B&EMM acquire from their schools?
4. Are you aware of how many black reps/officials the FBU have gained as a result of the school?
5. Have you or the National Education Officer compared the success of the B&EMM School with other FBU educational forums or other Black trade union schools?
6. Quite frankly, do the EC care?

It is not our intention to be trite about this issue, but if the answer to the last question is yes, then so shall it follow that the preceding questions should all fall broadly into the yes category. But our guess is that the real answer is no, hence the predicament we find ourselves in currently, and most likely the future.

No doubt the EC will say that 'all of the national education programme has suffered'. Well that's as maybe, but our answer in response to that would be that we do not believe any other FBU school has been as consistently successful in recent times.

Which is why we take the decision as a personal insult on behalf of the members we represent.

We do not believe that alternatives were discussed or that the School was assessed on its merits. Fire authorities have to adhere to impact assessments, as a union we should also do the same!

At a time when union membership figures are dropping and the general apathy of FBU members shows no sign of abating, it will be very difficult to address B&EMM disillusionment with the news that the one thing this union

does exclusively for them has been taken away.

We have asked a number of questions in this correspondence and, we believe, provided some solutions.

Please reply as soon as you can with at least one possible solution that may provide a way forward in dealing with this travesty of a decision.

We look forward to your prompt reply,

Yours fraternally

Carl St Paul

On behalf of the B&EMM National Committee

Tuesday 12th July 2005

Dear Sister Samuels

I am in receipt of your letter dated 27 June regarding the cancellation of the B&EMM School and I fully understand that you have major concerns about this decision.

I can assure you that this decision was taken by the Executive Council after considerable debate. The proposal to which you refer was actually a wider decision to cancel all further national schools for 2005.

Furthermore this proposal was only 1 of 10 options put before the EC. I can assure you that the EC decision was taken in good faith and purely on financial grounds. It has no implications for future years.

Your letter does cause me some concern regarding reporting back procedures. I am sure that a full explanation of the above including the financial situation facing the Union would allay some of your fears.

I shall be writing to your EC Member, Bro. Nicholas to suggest a meeting with the B&EMM Officials to discuss this. Hopefully such a meeting can further address your concerns.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

Matt Wrack

General Secretary

7 July 2005



Celebrating B&EMM's 10th anniversary (not)

It beggars belief that for over two years, our leadership can talk on and on about the need to bring education back to the forefront of our agenda and in the next breath, cut all national schools. If this stuff came from our employers, our leaders would suggest a ballot for strike. Or would they decide that in our current financial situation, we could no longer afford that either! What a fantastic way to celebrate B&EMM's 10th anniversary – with no school!

Mike Ackah

former B&EMM rep, Region 5



We salute you Sister Rosa

THE STORY of Rosa Parks has been told many times. Her place in the folklore of modern black history is up there with the Marcus', Gandhis', Malcolms', Martins' and Nelsons. In fact it's probably quite easy to underestimate the impact that her single act and subsequent resolve had on the worldwide black civil rights movement.

Her act was often seen as an instinctive, spontaneous happening – an act of defiance from a spirited black woman. In fact, Rosa Parks' involvement with the campaign for black civil rights in the USA went back many years before that momentous evening in 1955 on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama.

Born Rosa McCauley in 1913, into a god-fearing family of the American South, where lynchings, burnings and the white-robed and hooded Klu Klux Klan were commonplace, survival rather than civil rights were the maximum aspirations for black people. She attended the Montgomery Industrial School for Girls, where she was taught self-respect and made aware that blacks were entitled to the dignity, opportunities and security that were previously only afforded to whites.

She married Raymond Parks at just 19 in 1932. He was a pioneer of the fledgling black civil rights campaign. In 1943 Rosa became the secretary for the Montgomery branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). At the time the NAACP were the most high profile and prestigious US civil rights group fighting for justice for black people who were victims of rape, flogging and illegal 'tied labour', which was just slavery by another name. Blacks in Montgomery also had to endure the dreaded segregation system operated by the local bus company.

Returning home from her work as a seamstress one winters' evening in February, Rosa and three friends were sitting in the black section just behind the white seats on the bus. The bus was soon standing room only and Rosa and friends were asked to vacate their whole row so that a single white person could sit on it. After a brief argument the three friends agreed but Rosa refused. 'I don't think I should have to move for them,' she told the police officer who came to arrest her. She was promptly remanded in custody, found guilty and fined \$14.

Her act of defiance would mark the start of the civil rights movement, Afro America's struggle for equality, and would make the name of Rosa Parks famous around

Michael Nicholas, EC member for
B&EMM, pays tribute to the woman
whose single act of defiance to
segregation gave rise to the biggest
Black protest movement in US history

the world. Rosa appealed against her fine and conviction, giving a brave band of civil rights lawyers an opportunity to attempt a breach in the segregation legislation. Meanwhile, the black folks of Alabama took their lead from Rosa's action and began an organised boycott of the bus company's vehicles for which over a hundred were arrested. Many, many more, including Rosa, lost their jobs but the protests continued. The Montgomery Improvement Association was born and its first leader was a young guy by the name of Martin Luther King Jr. Rosa's appeal was upheld, although the NAACP was crippled by a host of local court orders.

Segregated seating was soon declared illegal by the US Supreme Court, and in December 1956, that order was delivered to the Montgomery city authorities.

For the woman at the heart of all this, the consequences were severe. Rosa was constantly harassed, threatened and permanently unemployed. Her husband Raymond was sadly driven to a nervous breakdown from which he never truly recovered. In 1957 the Parks moved to Detroit. A city of the industrial America with its large, urban black population, the opportunities for a fresh start were apparent. Rosa gradually resumed her working life – as a seamstress and then in the office of a Democratic Congressman.

Times may not have changed greatly in the South but across the rest of the US things were changing – and quickly. Rosa became a role model and, in time, a national heroine. Streets and shopping centres would be named after her and Presidents would invite her to the White House. Rosa continued to support the black cause with undiminished knowledge and energy. She once admon-

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ished George Bush Snr for his leadership saying “instead of having better ceremonies, we need better programmes”. Who knows what she thought of the present incumbent in the White House?!

By the mid 90s the US debate on race had moved on and the political chattering classes had decided that policies like affirmative action had become too favourable to blacks and other minority races. American blacks had become synonymous with violent crime and Rosa was to have first hand experience of this unfortunate evolution. A young black man mugged her, stealing a few dollars and injuring her so badly that she was hospitalised for a short period.

The brave black women who initiated the biggest black protest movement in US history was battered but unbowed and continued to live her life to its fullest potential. She was a true inspiration to all who believed and fought for equality and justice for the marginalised, oppressed and the poor.

We Salute You Sister Rosa – May You Rest In Peace Always

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, born 4 February 1913 in Tuskagee, Alabama. Died in Detroit 24 October 2005.

Rosa Parks sits in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, after the Supreme Court ruled on December 21 1956 that segregation on the city's bus system was illegal. She had been arrested on December 1 1955 for refusing to give up her seat in the front of a bus in Montgomery.

BLACK PEOPLE LOOT, WHITE PEOPLE FIND STUFF!*

TWO PICTURES published after the New Orleans floods had captions which posed a striking question about the difference between “looting” and “finding”.

The pictures were taken after the hurricane which devastated three southern states continued to afflict flooded New Orleans.

The first picture and caption, shows a black resident wading through chest

deep water “after looting” a grocery store. But a second picture shows two white residents again wading through chest deep water “after finding” bread and soda in a local grocery store.

What's the difference? We guess all three people are desperate to drink and to eat.

■ “Black people LOOT, white people FIND stuff !!!” (*Black American comedian Chris Rock)



CAPTION 1: “A young man walks through chest deep flood water after **looting** a grocery store in New Orleans on August 30 2005



CAPTION 2: “Two residents wade through chest-deep water after **finding** bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area on August 29 2005”

Careering ahead

The Integrated Personal Development System. What's it all about? Patrick Goulbourne, Crew Commander at London Fire Brigade, explains.

THE Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) has been around for some time now. As fire and rescue services around the country assimilate into rank to role, the application of IPDS is now part of the day to day working of all roles within the UK fire and rescue service. You can apply through individual brigades with the first step normally entailing an ADC (Assessment and Development Centre). The information gained from such an enquiry will be a useful preparation for any individual's application.

When IPDS is applied correctly it should assist in developing candidates by the submission and assessment of evidence of completed tasks over an agreed period of time. This not only applies to operational tasks but anything included for a particular candidate's role. This can include liaising with the public or other agencies, community groups, recruitment, mentoring and many other areas where fire and rescue services are participating with the community in public safety. Roles that candidates work towards are generic, but within the generic role are specifics that candidates should achieve. The generic roles are all now national standards with the UK Fire and Rescue Service. But the specifics can vary



depending on the local fire service needs.

The fire service has historically measured operational ability through examinations provided by the Fire Service Examination Board. Content is provided by Manuals of Firemanship, that were later superseded by Fire Service Manuals. These can be found at www.tso.co.uk or your brigade library. The manuals were then bolstered by brigade Orders or Standard Operating Procedures. Even under IPDS, this knowledge is still invaluable, relevant and now more importantly measurable over a period of time rather than two one-day examinations. Controversially, the daunting task of learning bibliography for an examination is now gone but do not underestimate the importance of this knowledge in anyone's development. The Fire and Rescue Act 2004 greatly widened the operational remit of fire and rescue services. This has been assimilated into the roles that have to be performed and maintained.

With the expansion of these roles it may seem like there is a huge volume of work and evidence to complete. But development can take 18-24 months to achieve. Application is of great importance. To ease the process, do not forget that many initiatives that you may have participated in and overlooked could be the quality of evidence required to become competent and be signed off as completed by your assessor.

■ For more on IPDS contact your local Brigade or visit www.ipds.co.uk. See also the FBU website www.fbu.org.uk/workplace/.

PERSONAL

SYMPATHY and CONDOLENCES

To the family of FBU rep – Barry Foster (Lincs) who sadly passed away.

To our dear member Rassiah Armstrong and family who lost Romel aged 1yr and 11 months after a brave fight against lifelong illness.

To Carl St Paul and family on their recent bereavement

GOODBYE

Former Deputy Chief Officer Jagtar Singh (Luton and Beds). Thanks for all you have contributed to the B&EMM cause in your long and distinguished career.

CONGRATS

Patrick and Vicky Goulbourne on the safe arrival of their first child – Lewis

Nick Ferguson and family on the newest addition to their family – Elliot.

B&EMM PROMOTIONS

David Cass Williams – Area Manager (D.O) – Fire Service College

Sanjay Prasad – Station Manager – London

Tyrone Robinson – Watch Manager – London

Del Richards – Watch Manager – London

Carl St Paul – Watch Manager – London

Brian Amos – Watch Manager – South Wales

Pradeep Verma – Watch Manager – Notts

Karen Edwards – Watch Manager – Essex

Ajimal Khan – Watch Manager – Suffolk

Andrew Thomas – Crew Manager – London

Rodney Vitalis – Crew Manager – London

Ted John – Crew Manager – London

Les Bowman – Crew Manager – London

Shaygun Botu – Crew Manager – London

Steve Johnny – Crew Manager – London

NEW B&EMM REPS

– a warm welcome to your new roles

Sheldon Fenning – Northants

Dalton Powell – Notts

Ben Fawcett – Cambs

Glenn Saunders – Suffolk

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 with the details on mickn@fbu.org.uk

Don't forget to inform your membership secretary of any change of address and write to FBU head office with any changes to next of kin and nominations of benefits.

DIARY

JANUARY

25 and 26 – B&EMM reps/activists seminar @ Wortley Hall, Sheffield.

FEBRUARY

14 -16 – FBU Executive Meeting @ Head Office
18th – Unite Against Fascism conference @ TUC, Congress Hse, London

MARCH

1st – B&EMM National Committee meeting – venue TBC

APRIL

7-9 TUC Black Workers conference – Eastbourne
B&EMM EC member election