

Advisor

**Sam Samuels and
Mark Brown on
the importance
of B&EMM**

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

Spring 2008



B&EMM School An education and a half

**APPLY NOW
FOR 2008!**
For an
application form
see back page

Foreword

Sisters and Brothers,

The festive season has passed, so quickly it seems, and the new year of 2008 is upon us. Every minute of every day that passes becomes history that will never be seen again, and this makes it even more important that we make the most of every single day.

Nothing brings this home more poignantly than the death of four firefighters in Warwickshire on 4 November 2007. Michael Nicholas and I were proud and humbled that we were able to attend three of the funerals between us on your behalf, and we both expressed that we hope we never have to go to another turntable ladder funeral again.

2007 was a very important year for me, as more than any year I feel that I learned so much about myself and about a history that was previously mainly unknown to me. The 200-year commemoration of the abolition of the British trade in enslaved Africans has inspired me and the struggles of my ancestors have empowered me to strive to be much more than I thought I could ever be. I have to also pay tribute to Benazir Bhutto, a woman who has inspired me for years. I look beyond the politics and look straight into the eyes of one of the bravest women of my time – in my opinion – an inspiration and a great loss.

New years always present new challenges and 2008 is no different. We have the opportunity to build a movement which will continue to influence the fire and rescue service, not just today, but that will grow

Without struggle
there can be
no progress

in strength so that for years to come it will be remembered for the changes that it made, and for the contributions that those from the global majority made to our service. Yes, our service, because it belongs to us too, and if the fire and rescue service was not so precious to us we would not be

fighting so hard to influence its development.

Any movement such as B&EMM is also precious to our communities. Many of us are involved in causes that are important to us – The 'Not Another Drop' campaign has had enough of the gun and gun-related crime and are doing something about it. Too often it takes a personal tragedy to pry open our eyes to what is going on around us, and to prompt us into doing 'our bit' to change things. Without those who are prepared to stand up and be counted the things that blight our communities will thrive right under our noses.

It is evident that our passion as a people can intimidate and even frighten people who either do not understand or just don't care what we stand for so let me be clear on your behalf.

B&EMM stands for pride. B&EMM stands for improvement.

B&EMM stands for solidarity. B&EMM stands up for you.

'Without struggle there can be no progress' (Frederick Douglass)

Samantha Samuels
B&EMM National Secretary



MARTIN JENKINSON



MARTIN JENKINSON



MARK BROWN

Acting Region 4/South Yorkshire
rep

I am 46 years old and live in Sheffield. I joined South Yorkshire FRS in February 1989. I was previously in the army, a mostly white male environment, and so I didn't think I would meet any problems, which has been true for most

I'm a rep



MARTIN JENKINSON

We had another fantastic B&EMM School last October and you can find out more about it overleaf. But already this year's school is in the process of being prepared. Make sure you don't miss it. Apply now for B&EMM School 2008 by filling in the application form on the back page of this edition of Advisor, and returning it to Sam Samuels (see application form for address) by the deadline of 31 July.

Contents

of my career. But I can recall my first posting was in a town called Barnsley. Growing up in Sheffield there were a few towns where you didn't go out at night and Barnsley was on that list.

So I was a little cautious about what I would face. But it was a good station and a good watch. I am now based in a Sheffield station, Darnall Road, and have been since 1994.

I was first told about the gathering at Wortley Hall by a colleague who saw a notice on the union board and said:

B&EMM stands for Black & Ethnic Minority Members but it also stands for Help, Education, Support and Friendship

'Why don't you go as you are a black firefighter'. As it was close to Sheffield and I was on leave I decided to go. It was a very good experience.

Black people in the fire service wanted to get a national framework in place to help the struggle of fellow union firefighters. That year – 1997 – a committee was formed, and the B&EMM

name was born.

Every year I went to the B&EMM School. I would leave thinking I am going to do something when I get back, but never did.

Then I put myself forward as a branch chair (which I did for a couple of years) and was subsequently approached by the brigade committee to stand for the brigade B&EMM rep.

I agreed. Last year, I put my hand up for acting B&EMM regional rep. I hope I can make a difference and promote B&EMM in all four brigades in my region to the members, supporting and helping those who have problems in their chosen profession.

B&EMM stands for Black & Ethnic Minority Members but it also stands for Help, Education, Support and Friendship.

As I wrote earlier, I was a bit worried about going to Barnsley station but discovered on going there that it was better than I thought it would be. So my message to all B&EMM firefighters is don't wonder what it's like – just get involved. You never know. In fact, I do know you will get something out of it.

4 An education and a half

B&EMM school 2007 saw many new faces as students debated the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and what it meant for now and the future



MARTIN JENKINSON

6 Advancement

Meet Sabrina Cohen-Hatton – 'There should be no such thing as a hard-to-reach community'

7 B&EMM School 2008

Apply now!

Cover picture Martin Jenkinson

Published by the Fire Brigades Union, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE . Tel: 020 8541 1765, fax: 020 8546 5187

Design by Edition Periodicals, 241 Ferndale Road, London SW9 8BJ. www.editionperiodicals.co.uk

Printed by Blackmore Ltd, Longmead, Shaftesbury Dorset SP7 8PX



AN EDUCATION



The 2007 B&EMM School was an education and a half. The theme was “The commemoration of the abolition of slavery 200 years on: The Past and the Future”. It was a realisation of where we were, where we are, and where we need to be to inspire those within our communities as members of the British fire and rescue service.

It was good to see many new faces that were happy to take a positive stance and were comfortable addressing the school with fresh viewpoints. Our school was informative as always and very thought-provoking. The inspiration and education came from our guest speakers.

Professor Gus John, author and activist on British race politics, spoke with passion on our need to better engage with our communities to prevent the erosion of our values

and culture. Paul Obina, a Manchester-based scholar, explained the roots and the legacy of slavery, then further challenged our understanding of English literature and its barriers to equality. Paul’s thought-provoking quick fire delivery was truly amazing.

Khi Rafe spoke from a black woman’s perspective on the middle passage. She highlighted the sacrifices and major influences women made in bringing about change: Nanny of the Maroons, Maria Stewart Francis, Ellen Watkins Harper, names that made me reach for the Google button to find out more.

We also found time to listen to Sue Evans, an assessor from the Fire Service college. She delivered a session on the ADC process, demonstrating how to compile a ‘reflective learning log’ enabling us to better understand the new progression process.

Debate ran late into the evening, espe-

It was good to see many new faces that were happy to take a positive stance





PICTURES: MARTIN JENKINSON

AND A HALF

cially following the evening performance. 'Cracking the Whip': highlighting the struggles of a young man in today's society, with its drug and gang culture, who had little respect for his peers. This was prior to being transported back to 18th century slavery, with all the challenges a black man would have come up against. 'Edutainment' at its best and at times uncomfortable.

The school closed on Sunday morning with acknowledgements to those who inspire us to achieve and for the 2007 school it was Carl St Paul, who stands down as B&EMM National Secretary. A massive amount of respect goes to Carl, who has been with B&EMM from its origins. His achievements are too numerous to mention but suffice to say he will be missed. He has handed over the position to the very capable Samantha

I'd like to thank all who contributed to our 'lifting as we climb' culture

Samuels who was elected unopposed.

This year also saw the launch of our Frank Bailey award. Frank, now in his 80s, was one of the first black firefighters who served post-war in London. Frank is an honorary B&EMM who attends every year and participates widely in our school debates.

The school ended on time. Our tight but focussed schedule worked well. Our many students – warm, loud and proud – were a welcome vision.

I'd like to thank all who contributed to our 'lifting as we climb' culture, with a special mention for one of our founder members, daughter Sydney Samuels for her enthusiasm and participation.

Brian Amos, Wales B&EMM rep

→ This school is always over-subscribed, so for those who want to attend in 2008 don't delay.





SABRINA COHEN-HATTON

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton is passionate about promoting race equality in the fire service – from employment practice to the way services are delivered to citizens

“There should be no such thing as a hard to reach community”, says Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, the woman charged with reviewing South Wales Fire and Rescue’s race equality scheme.

South Wales, in common with every other fire and rescue service, has a duty to review race equality every three years under the Race Relations Amendment Act. The review is due to be completed by the end of May.

As a watch manager and diversity projects officer in the service’s equality and diversity department, Sabrina says there is no room for complacency. “It’s vitally important that our community protection and our service delivery reaches all sections of the community, not just the majority.”

Now 24, she has been in the fire service in South Wales for seven years, taken a masters degree in international fire service development and knows a thing or two about outreach.

In August last year she was promoted to the community safety department in Newport following seven years as a frontline firefighter. This scheme is to be funded by the Welsh Assembly and offers disaffected teenagers with a history of truancy a chance to learn firefighting skills, boost their school attendance record and, it’s hoped, avoid going off the rails.

Sabrina currently works one day a week on the scheme. She has since become seconded to the equality and diversity department in the role of diversity projects officer to review the race equality scheme. As part of this, she spent some time consulting with members and groups, hearing how the service delivery can be improved and, of course, listening to the views of firefighters and managers.

Discussion centres on community protection, attracting and developing staff and organisational improvement. There has been widespread consultation, brainstorming sessions and a even a professionally facilitated workshop to help ensure race equality is embedded throughout the service.

Sabrina, who describes herself as “Israeli, Moroccan and Welsh”, has always championed the need for racial and religious tolerance. Her father’s parents fled to Israel from Morocco after narrowly escaping from a pogrom that claimed the lives of many of their friends in the late 1940s.

This passion for equality is matched by an impressive academic track record. Her masters degree thesis was based on a comparative study of attacks on firefighters in the US, South Africa, Israel and the UK. A Winston Churchill Trust scholarship paid for travel for which she was awarded a medal at Buckingham Palace by the Queen. She’s also midway through a psychology degree course with the Open University and hopes to move on to a PhD in neuroscience.

It’s all fed through to how she’s tackling the race equality review. “Nothing is based on assumptions. I’m a stickler for objectivity and have tried to apply my past research experience to this project to make it as effective as we can.” Reaching communities is vital. But so is future recruitment.

“I think people from black and ethnic minorities are extraordinarily unrepresented in the fire and rescue service, both in support and operational roles. It’s important that the revised race equality scheme acknowledges this and works towards a better working environment and a safer community for everybody.”

Personal

PROMOTIONS

- Alan Swift – Watch Manager (West Mids)
- Pam Oparaocha – Watch Manager (London)
- Wayne Brown – Station Manager (London)
- Pat Goulbourne – Watch Manager (London)
- Victor Liburd – Watch Manager (Beds)
- Trevor Barnard – Station Manager (South Yorkshire)

CONDOLENCES

- Families of Ashley Stephens, John Averis, Ian Reid and Darren Yates-Badley who we lost in Warwickshire incident

CONGRATULATIONS

- London B&EMM who contributed to the LFB’s ‘In Their Own Words’ publication commemorating Black History Month (Nov 07)

GOODBYE

- Rennick Joseph – retired after 33 years service (London)

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

DIARY DATES 2008

- 18-20 April**
TUC Black Workers Conference (Eastbourne)
- 17 May**
Descendants Ball (Birmingham)
- 20-23 May**
FBU Annual Conference (Southport)
- 24-25 June**
B&EMM National Committee Meeting
- 8-11 Sept**
Trades Unions Congress (Brighton)

STRESSED AT HOME STRESSED AT WORK?

Ring the FBU free confidential stress and support hotline 0800 783 4778

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

0808 100 6061



THOMPSONS SOLICITORS



FBU BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS SCHOOL 2008 10, 11 and 12 OCTOBER 2008

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THE B&EMM SCHOOL?

Fill in the application form over page and send it to the address specified by **31 July 2008**.
Applications will not be accepted after this date.

If you are on duty for any of the three days of the school, apply for those days as trade union leave through your line manager. If you have any difficulties with this please contact your FBU Branch/ Station/Department/Control Rep, or contact your local B&EMM Rep, or contact me at the contact number or e-mail below. **(Leave is usually subject to the staffing levels being sufficient in your brigade/area – so get your request in ASAP.)**

You will be sent confirmation of your attendance at the School by 1 September 2008. (If you do not receive confirmation by this date, contact the B&EMM National Secretary to confirm that your application has been received).

If you require a place for your child/ren in our crèche or young persons' facilities, fill in the form below and return it with your application. Children and youth facilities are provided free of charge by the FBU at Wortley Hall and are staffed by registered child carers.

You are required to attend for three days of the school, and if you cannot you must indicate this on your application form.

Your travel expenses for attending this school will be reimbursed.

You should be entitled to trade union leave to attend this FBU educational school. You will have to apply for this if the school falls on days that you are on duty.

CHILD CARE

Child details – to be filled in by child and carer

Please return this form with your application form by 31 July 2008

What is/are your names? _____

How old are you? (October 2008) _____

Who is bringing you to the school? (Please give full name) _____

Would you like to play in the crèche during the evening as well as the day? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Are you allergic to anything or do you need any medication? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please give details: _____

What games do you like to play inside and outside? _____

Do you have a favourite story book? _____

What is your favourite video? _____

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you, so that we can look after you the best we possibly can?

Carer please sign here _____

FIRE BRIGADES UNION B&EMM SCHOOL 2008

WORTLEY HALL 10–12 OCTOBER 2008

APPLICATION FORM

Please return by **31 July 2008** to

Samantha Samuels, 12 Waterhead Close, Underhill, Wolverhampton, WV10 8NX

FIRST NAME

SURNAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

BRIGADE

STATION

WATCH & DEPT.

UNION No.

EMAIL ADDRESS

CONTACT NUMBER

Have you attended any FBU/B&EMM schools or meetings before? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please specify when and where:

FOR BEDROOM ALLOCATION

YOUR GENDER? ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE

ALL ROOMS ARE NON-SMOKING

Do you have any specific dietary, religious, or access needs?

If yes, please specify your needs:

Do you require child care facilities at the school? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please fill in child care form over page and submit with this application form

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE