

FireFighter

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

August/September 2011

**Thousand
firefighter
jobs cut
See p14**

**I WANT YOUR
PENSION**

See p10





Matt Wrack

We need to be organised



The attacks we are facing are truly unprecedented. In the past we have had battles over pay or pensions and we have had to fight against cuts which threaten our service. But today we are facing all of these at once and we are facing them on a scale never seen before.

Pensions

We know the government wants to increase our contributions, to increase our retirement age (for most) and to reduce benefits. It is blatantly unfair to expect firefighters to pay more, when we already make the highest contributions, when our pay is frozen and when the cost of living is escalating. Expecting firefighters to work longer is wrong. Peak fitness is essential where seconds can cost lives. The public will not want an ageing frontline fire and rescue service.

We need to argue that pensions are part of the covenant with public sector workers for a lifetime of service.

Pensions are deferred pay and we put aside a huge amount to get them. We need to be clear that the government is attacking our pensions to plug its finances and to open up public services to private profiteers. Public sector pensions are affordable and they are sustainable.

Developing arguments

But it is no use simply convincing ourselves. We need hard arguments and evidence

so that we can demolish the case put by government against us. That was the importance, for example, of our recent YouGov survey. It allowed us to present a strong argument which undermined some of the government's claims about the savings they could make by increasing our contributions. We will continue to develop our evidence over the coming period and have several

initiatives lined up.

We also have to ensure that we are ready for any battle that is coming. Our conference in May urged all members to prepare for national strike action – and it increasingly looks like industrial action is going to be necessary. But the vote at a conference or at a committee is one thing – speaking directly to members is another.



LEE MASEY/DEMOTIX/PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

The Westminster government has embarked on a course of attack and confrontation and we need to be ready to respond. But we are in the right and our arguments are correct. Every single member has a role to play

Workplace organisation

One of the great strengths of our union is that we are organised in workplace branches. That means that our structure reflects the structure of our industry. We need to ensure that every single branch – every watch and every workplace – is able to hear the details of what is happening and to vote upon our proposals to fight back. There is a model resolution from the executive council and I urge everyone to read it carefully and to vote on it at your meeting. There is an enormous power in democracy and this battle cannot be the property of the general secretary or the executive council – it must become the campaign of and for all of us.

The pensions attack looks increasingly likely to mean industrial action. But there is also much more we can do. We need to win the public debate. We need to be engaging with local communities and with local politicians. There is a role in this for everyone – from leafleting a shopping centre to lobbying an MP. We are trying to make this simpler and you can e-mail your MP very easily using the FBU website – please do so.

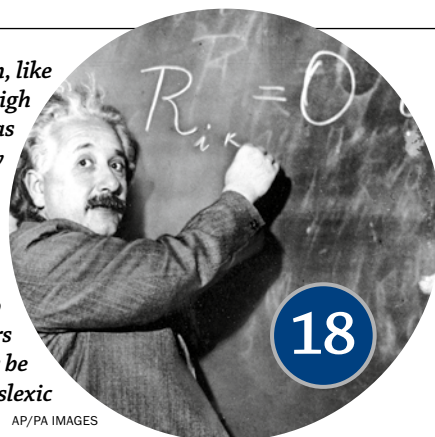
This is going to be a hard fight. The Westminster government has embarked on a course of attack and confrontation and we need to be ready to respond. But we are in the right and our arguments are correct. Every single member has a role to play.

We didn't want this fight. We didn't pick this fight. But we will be ready for it.

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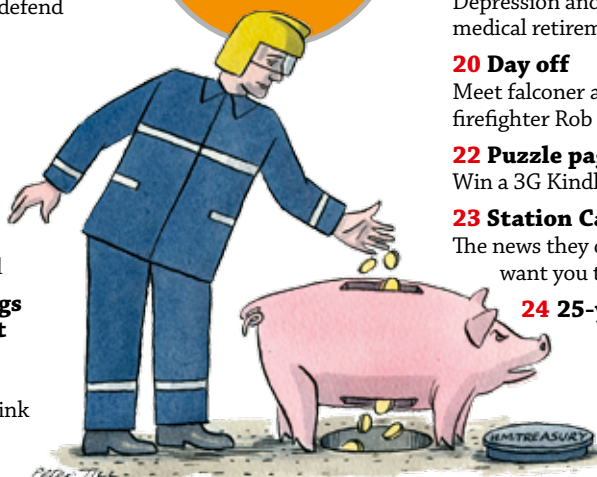
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LETTERS

Campaigning award for SW FBU

The South West region of the FBU has received a top award from the TUC for its campaign against regional control centres. The region was highly commended in the award for campaigning at the South West TUC union rep awards in May.

Joanne Kaye, vice chair of the SW TUC, presented the award to Simon Jones and Diana Wright who are both emergency fire control operators and FBU officials.

The region was recognised for the high-profile and committed part that it played in the union's overall campaign against the FiReControl project. The South West was one of the first areas to have a regional control centre and the union opposed the plans from the outset.

If implemented, the project would have seen the closure of the seven local emergency fire control centres in the region, leading to massive job losses among highly skilled operators throughout the South West, most of whom are women.

The award recognises that the region kept the campaign and the issues in the forefront of people's minds by the effective use of political pressure, media exposure and public campaigning.

Tam McFarlane

FBU executive council member (region 13)



Joanne Kaye (l), vice chair of the SW TUC presents the award to Simon Jones and Diana Wright



ROB BRENNER

The pay freeze was hotly debated at FBU conference in May

Union anger as employers refuse to make an offer

Pay

The Fire Brigades Union is furious after employers failed to make an offer on pay for a second year running. The union submitted a claim for a pay rise for 2011 equal to the retail price index for June this year, as well as registering that pay for 2010 was still unresolved.

But at the recent National Joint Council, the body that sets firefighters' pay, employers responded by stating that once again they were not in a position to make an offer on pay.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "We made very clear to the employers that their stance and the imposed pay freeze was causing increasing hardship among FBU members.

"We outlined these concerns to the employers and explained that we were aware that fire authorities had budgeted for a pay rise last year – a pay rise which was never delivered.

"We also explained that the many new roles taken on by our members had been as a result of the pay and conditions agreement of 2003.

"If the gains in terms of pay are undermined our members would be justified in asking why they should carry on delivering change while suffering falling living standards."

The employers responded to the FBU's comments by suggesting that discussions could commence as soon as possible on pay

for 2012. Wrack said: "We again made clear that the union does not accept that the matter of pay has been resolved for 2010 or 2011.

"Nevertheless, on the understanding that the employers understood this was our position, we felt that those talks should commence as soon as possible. That was agreed by the employers' side. We will be setting up these discussions shortly and will report any progress."

The union's executive council is asking all branches to consider a range of issues, including pay and pensions as the union builds its campaign against the austerity agenda. Wrack said: "I would again urge all branches to continue to meet to consider these multiple attacks.

"There is huge and growing anger in the service as a result of the attacks on our pensions, but we cannot and will not forget that we are also facing this attempt to drive down our living standards by means of a pay freeze."

'We again made clear that the union does not accept that the matter of pay has been resolved for 2010 or 2011'

Tolpuddle is a celebration of the huge amount of good that unions bring to people and communities

www.fbu.org.uk

FBU vindicated on FiReControl

Control

An official report on the failed FiReControl project has endorsed every warning and criticism made by the Fire Brigades Union.

The National Audit Office (NAO) report, *The failure of the FiReControl project*, shows that millions of pounds were thrown away.

The NAO is independent of government and reports to the House of Commons.

General secretary Matt Wrack said: "The Fire Brigades Union was the lone voice highlighting soaring costs, incompetence and delays. The taxpayer is still paying £50,000 a day in rent for the eight empty regional centres built to house the new control rooms.

"Throughout it all, no one listened to

what the professional firefighters and fire control staff were saying. We constantly raised concerns with ministers and civil servants setting out precisely what the National Audit Office has identified.

"Our concerns going back to 2002 were ignored. We were dismissed as ignorant scaremongers."

The FBU expects the current government to learn from the mistakes made and take responsibility from now on.

Wrack said: "We must not have local fire and rescue services, which are already seeing massive budget cuts, having to pay for this mess.

"Central government created this problem and central government needs to pick up the tab."

SOUNDING OFF

Why we go to Tolpuddle

John Drake, South West FBU regional secretary and South West TUC chair

The number of summer "festivals" has grown in recent years. But there is one in a corner of the south west of England that has been going for over 80 years, one that has been attended by future Labour prime ministers and the great and the good of the trade union movement.

But that didn't put off 10,000 people, including many FBU members, who braved the rain to attend this year's event in July.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs festival has, over the last 15 years, been transformed from a Sunday rally with brass bands and speeches to a vibrant multicultural festival that holds dear traditions from earlier years and mixes them with music, comedy and of course the Workers Beer Company.

The South West TUC, which organises the festival, has seen the numbers attending grow year on year and it is now one of the best festivals of the year. The key elements are there: political debate, radical history, music, poetry and the commemoration of the six labourers from the village who were found guilty of swearing an illegal oath and sentenced to seven years "transportation" to Australia in 1834.

The festival now extends over three days. The highlight is the rally and march on the Sunday when trade unionists from all over the country come to show solidarity and pay their respects to the martyrs, the forebears of our unions today.

There has never been a time in recent history when trade unions were needed more, to protect the vulnerable, to stand up for workers' rights, to protect jobs, pay and pensions. Tolpuddle is a celebration of the huge amount of good that unions bring to people and communities.

This year's highlights included speakers Tony Benn and Brendan Barber and music from around the world including Dorset resident Billy Bragg.

More details:
www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk



Empty but expensive: The North East regional Fire Control Centre in Durham

AssetCo 'monumental blunder'

Privatisation

The Fire Brigades Union is warning of the dangers of privatising public services after AssetCo, the private owners of London and Lincolnshire's fire engines, teetered on the brink of collapse.

AssetCo was granted a stay of execution on a winding up order by the High Court in July, despite having debts of

£140 million. The firm is in danger of liquidation, administration or a takeover by a Saudi-backed Bahraini investment bank.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "It was a monumental blunder to hand key operational assets over to the private sector. When you involve the private sector, you do not know what crisis awaits you in the longterm."

AssetCo's court

appearance came on the day the government launched its *Open Public Services* white paper, which aims to open up public services to privateers and volunteers.

The AssetCo experience underlines the dangers privatisation poses for emergency services. Creditors could seize fire engines and kit and sell them to any fire service in the world.

Union ratchets up action over cuts

Essex

The Fire Brigades Union has ratcheted up industrial action in the long-running Essex dispute over cuts and other imposed changes being forced on fire crews.

The move is in response to management's continued failure to resolve the dispute – further demonstrated by measures imposed by the fire service without agreement to try to plug gaps created by the current industrial action.

The union says there have been continuing reductions in the number of firefighters. These include forced relocations of firefighters and officers across the county to try to plug increasing gaps created by cuts in crews. Firefighters have

also been asked to cover whole 15-hour and nine-hour shifts in addition to their 48-hour shifts. The FBU says this is not acceptable in a risk-critical industry.

FBU national officer Paul Woolstenholmes said: "Our serious concerns about cuts and imposed changes are not going to go away. The industrial action currently in place is exposing the impact of the cuts on the availability of fire appliances."

Further action began on 14 July and includes a ban on non-contractual overtime including working additional shifts to cover for staff shortages and a ban on acting-up to a higher role, new secondary contracts to be individually agreed and a ban on any new temporary promotions to any posts at a higher role.



Essex firefighters will not accept cuts

IN BRIEF

Service in meltdown

The Fire Brigades Union has learned of secret plans to cut Dumfries and Galloway fire and rescue service. It is understood that the service has been asked to produce 5.8% savings over and above the 4.9% already cut this year.

Roddy Robertson, executive council member for Scotland, said: "The service's senior officers are being asked to do the impossible. The risk to the people of Dumfries and Galloway has not changed yet we understand that station closures and downgrading of fire cover and the emergency fire control room are all being considered simply to make financial savings with no consideration of the risk to the public or measurable professional judgement."

County FBU's alternative to cuts

Firefighters from all over Cambridgeshire held a successful meeting last month to discuss the FBU's alternative savings proposals and industrial response to the frontline cuts.

A "very emotive meeting" discussed the cuts, which include plans to close and downgrade fire stations, increased response times, the loss of specialist vehicles as well as cuts in the numbers of firefighters, control staff and officers.

Kevin Napier, Cambridgeshire FBU brigade secretary, said: "We call upon all the local politicians to join us in lobbying central government for extra funding. We simply cannot absorb cuts without directly affecting our life-saving frontline service."

Standards changed by stealth

Plans to transfer all Suffolk's 999 fire service calls to Cambridgeshire will mean changes in the fire service response to 999 calls for emergencies in Suffolk.

Suffolk fire and rescue service has revealed that current fire engine response standards in the county will be changed to fit the systems used in Cambridgeshire, without any prior public or council say-so. The union also fears that Cambridgeshire's fire chiefs plan to make the Suffolk emergency fire control staff redundant.

Andy Vingoe, Suffolk FBU brigade chair, said: "The hidden problems and detailed arrangements associated with this cost-cutting experiment are now being revealed. Our normal response to emergency calls in Suffolk will change by stealth."



The FBU is asking members and friends to lobby their MP against government plans for firefighters to pay more contributions towards their pensions. See www.fbu.org.uk

Alarms 'cannot replace firefighters'

Smoke alarms

A BBC investigation into smoke alarms found that nearly two-thirds of fire deaths occur in dwellings with a smoke alarm and that nearly as many people die in fires in dwellings with working smoke alarms as die in fires where they are absent.

The figures were

obtained through a freedom of information request by BBC Radio 5 Live's breakfast programme.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Smoke alarms help save lives and reduce injuries. But they don't prevent fires, they don't put them out and they don't rescue you."

"Smoke alarms are not and cannot be a

replacement for firefighters. Too many fire services have used the fitting of smoke alarms to justify cuts to their local fire service, and these figures show why that is very wrong.

"It is critical to remember that firefighters rescue over 7,000 people every year from fires. Smoke alarms cannot do that."



Greater Manchester FBU members vote for action on pensions. Thanks to Carl Petch for the photograph

Step up our campaign

Dave Green, FBU national officer, asks members to take action against attacks on their service

The savagery of the attacks against the fire service and those who work in it is clear. We see examples daily in our own brigades of cuts to the service and to our conditions. Pay, pensions and jobs are all under threat.

Every member of the Fire Brigades Union has a part to play in stopping this. We are all members of a branch, a brigade, a region. There is nothing that hammers home more to politicians and members of the public what the effects of the proposals will mean to them and their families than it coming from you – the rank and file who are the backbone of the fire service. It is a powerful message.

So this summer, while the millionaires who make up this government take it easy and plan for their battles ahead, we need everyone to be doing the groundwork:

- Write to your MP – to persuade them

to sign parliamentary early day motions against the attacks and to support our service.

- Parliamentary lobbies – ask your officials about organising a lobby of parliament. We can help arrange this through our parliamentary group.

- Contact your local councillors. Your brigade officials will have lists of councillors who sit on fire authorities and fire boards or who hold a fire service reference.

- Write to your local paper or visit their website and post comments.

While the millionaires who make up this government take it easy and plan for their battles ahead, we need everyone to be doing the groundwork

- Get involved with local community groups. This is a vital link with the people who need us on a daily basis.

- Trades councils are a great way of keeping in touch with other trade unions and hearing about what they are doing or planning. You can get your branch to affiliate to your local trades council and go along. Ask what other unions are doing – can we help?

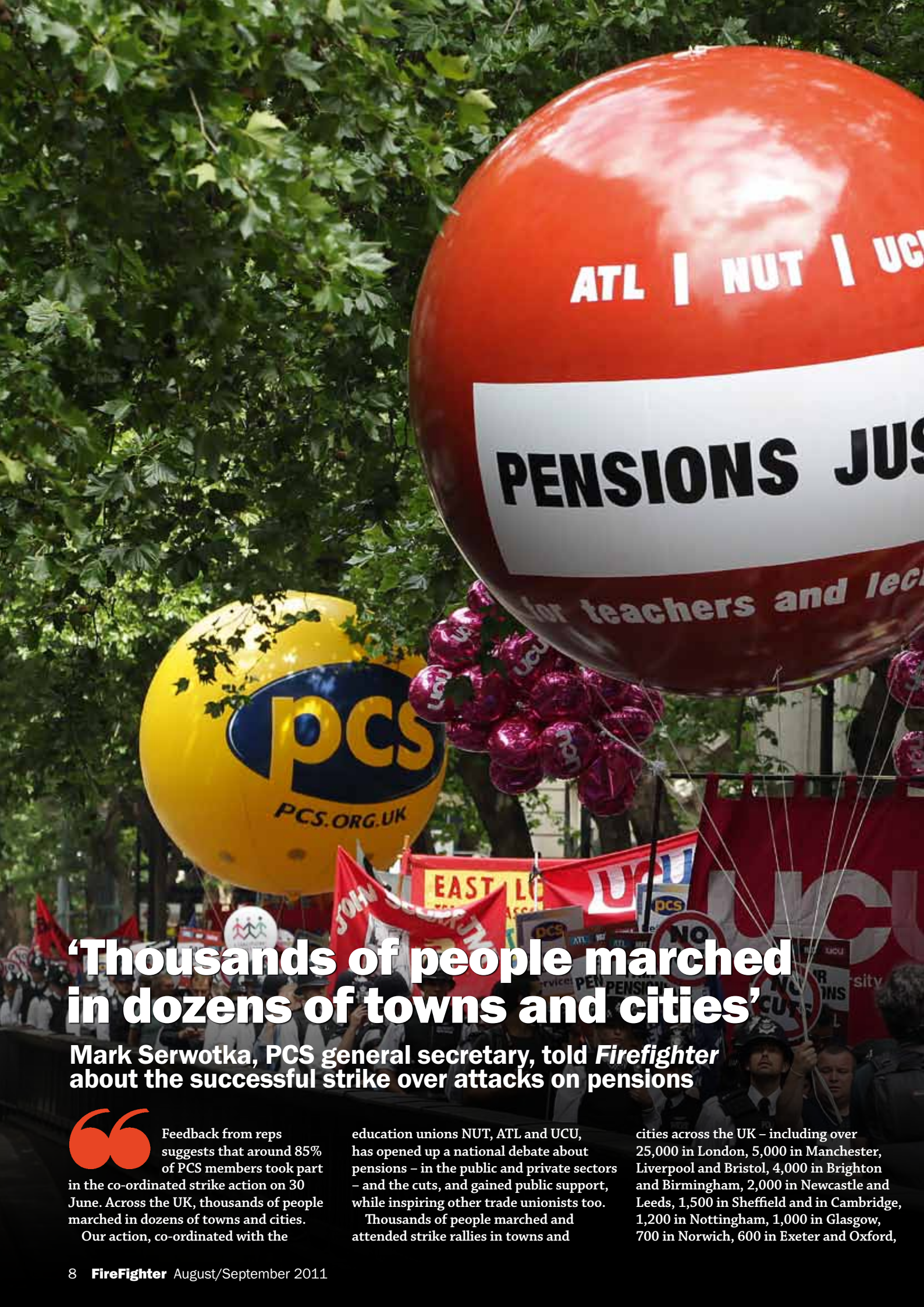
- Plan to attend community events or summer festivals. We can hand out leaflets, flags and other materials.

- Ask your brigade officials how you can help – they will welcome ideas and offers of help.

- Attend branch meetings and read the literature produced by the union. Make your voice heard.

Opposition to the austerity agenda is growing. The cuts are seen by more and more people as unnecessary, unfair and wrong. The coalition is fragile: they have backtracked on a number of issues. We need to keep up the pressure.

Play your part in defending the fire service.



‘Thousands of people marched in dozens of towns and cities’

Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary, told *Firefighter* about the successful strike over attacks on pensions



Feedback from reps suggests that around 85% of PCS members took part in the co-ordinated strike action on 30 June. Across the UK, thousands of people marched in dozens of towns and cities.

Our action, co-ordinated with the

education unions NUT, ATL and UCU, has opened up a national debate about pensions – in the public and private sectors – and the cuts, and gained public support, while inspiring other trade unionists too.

Thousands of people marched and attended strike rallies in towns and

cities across the UK – including over 25,000 in London, 5,000 in Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol, 4,000 in Brighton and Birmingham, 2,000 in Newcastle and Leeds, 1,500 in Sheffield and in Cambridge, 1,200 in Nottingham, 1,000 in Glasgow, 700 in Norwich, 600 in Exeter and Oxford,

VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM

*Public sector workers
march through central
London on 30 June*

500 in Southampton and Plymouth, 400 in Hull, 350 in Northampton, 200 in Middlesbrough, and 150 in Huddersfield.

By supporting the overtime ban which started on 1 July and lasted until the end of the month, members have also made it clear that we are committed to campaigning

for as long as it takes to get the government to negotiate seriously on the key issues of paying more, working longer and getting less in retirement. The overtime ban was as important as the strike because it highlighted how our services cannot function if hundreds of thousands of jobs are cut.

We hope that no further strike action will be necessary, but if the government continues to refuse to negotiate, we are committed to co-ordinating action with even more unions – potentially bringing millions out on strike.



PENSIONS

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The government wants firefighters to pay more, work longer and still get less for our pensions. National officer Sean Starbuck tackles members' questions

What is the government threatening to do to firefighter pensions?

The government announced in the comprehensive spending review last October that all public sector workers – including firefighters – would be expected to pay 3% additional contributions to their pensions. The latest reports suggest that this will actually be 3.2%. The government plans to introduce this change in April 2012.

Is that all they want to do?

The government also wants firefighters to work longer. It also wants all firefighters to get less when they retire. In April 2011 the government changed the uprating for inflation from retail prices (RPI) to consumer prices (CPI), which cuts the future value of pension benefits by 15%. The FBU is leading a legal challenge to this. It will be heard in October. The government also wants to scrap final salary pensions and switch to career-average pensions as part of its plans to scrap existing public sector schemes in 2015 and introduce new ones with fewer benefits.

Why is the government attacking pensions?

The government says that public sector pensions are unaffordable, unsustainable and unfair. Yet even its own Hutton report shows that pension payments as a proportion of national income have peaked and will gradually get smaller

over the next 50 years. The real reason is that the government wants to save £2.8bn and open up the public sector to private firms.

What is wrong with increasing contributions?

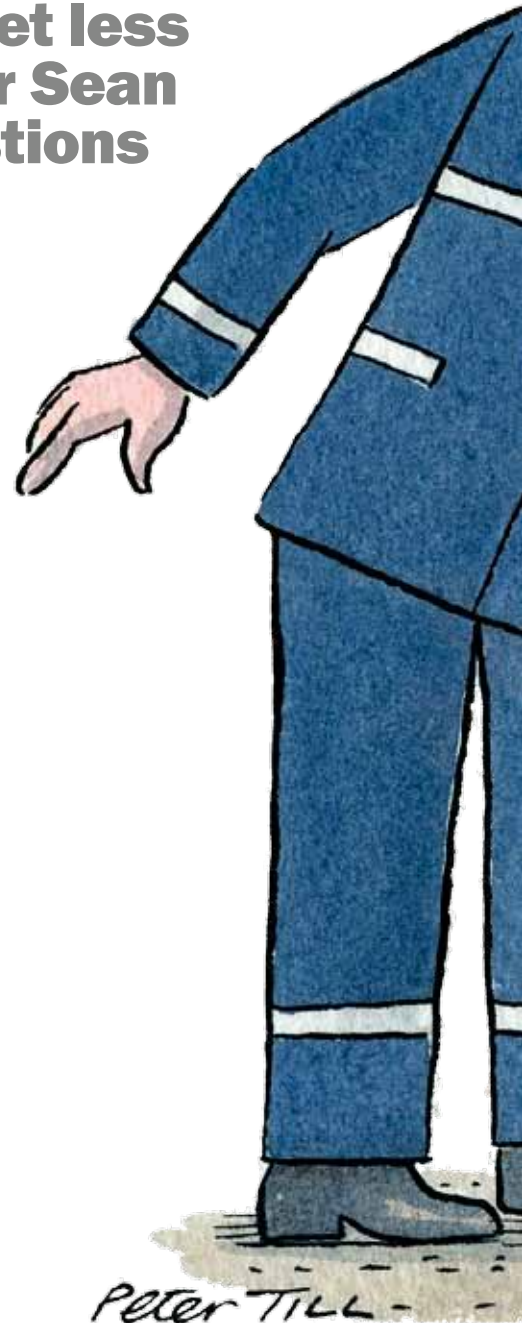
Firefighters pay the highest pension contributions of all public sector workers – 11% for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS), 8.5% in the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) and 7.5% in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

An extra 3% costs every firefighter £70 or more a month or at least £800 a year – much more if they are promoted. Pensions are deferred pay. So this is a 3% pay cut – on top of the imposed pay freeze.

Why does the FBU think increasing contributions is self-defeating?

The government says it needs to save around £70m over the next three years. It knows that some firefighters will opt out of their pension scheme if contributions increase. It estimates that for every 1% opting out, it will lose £3.5m. The FBU has argued that if 7% of firefighters opt out over three years, the government will end up with less money than it started with.

The FBU survey (see page 12) found that one in eight of members are very likely to opt out, and more than a quarter say they may opt out. If that is the case,



the government will lose money. That's not even smart economics.

I'm in the NFPS, why should I care about this?

The 3% increase applies to all firefighters, whenever they joined, whatever their age, length of service or duty system. Although the NFPS states that firefighters can work until they are 60, the FBU opposed this when the scheme was established and argues that it is in nobody's interest for firefighters

to be in operational roles at 60. The FBU is campaigning for all uniformed firefighters to retire at 55, in line with medical evidence and public safety considerations.

Why should retained members care about this?

Since April 2006 retained firefighters have been able to join the NFPS – nearly 7,000 are already members. The FBU is negotiating a modified scheme so even more retained firefighters can access a pension scheme with all the benefits of the FPS. These changes will impact on retained firefighters and on future schemes.

How would this affect control members?

Control members in the LGPS scheme will still face an extra £70 a month or £800 a year in extra contributions. Control members also face the prospect of working until the normal retirement age – eventually 68.

How are officers affected?

Officers face extra contributions of around £140 a month – over £1,500 a year more. Officers stand to lose most if final salary schemes are scrapped. The FBU is the only union that stands up for

officers – we have an officers' section and represent officers in all roles.

What is the FBU doing about this pensions attack?

The FBU is doing everything in its power – legally, politically and industrially – to fight this attack.

We are meeting with ministers and civil servants. We have lobbied MPs. We have got expert advice to back up our arguments. We have surveyed members. We are defending all the existing schemes. We want every fire station and every watch to discuss the issues and to support our campaign.

This is not a battle where firefighters are demanding more money. We are fighting to defend what we have earned. The government is not negotiating on the key issues. The FBU believes industrial action – which may result in strike action – is probably necessary to stop this attack. Firefighters cannot allow the government to dismantle our pension schemes.

There is more information on pensions on the FBU website, including all publications, circulars and other materials.

 www.fbu.org.uk
for full details



Hands off our p

A new FBU survey shows disgust with threatened pension changes

Government plans to make firefighters pay more, work longer and still get smaller pensions have been overwhelmingly rejected, a YouGov survey for the Fire Brigades Union shows.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "Firefighters already pay a huge contribution for their pension. The proposals to increase this alongside the other changes are causing great concern and anger.

"These pension changes will be a huge blow to the fire service and risk damaging our operational effectiveness now and in the future. Cuts and a pay freeze are already hitting morale, and the pension changes risk pushing it into the abyss.

"The government need to wake up, listen and change their plans before they do lasting damage."

Plans rejected

More than four out of five firefighters responding to the survey (85%) said the pension scheme was very important in their decision to join the fire service.

Of the major changes proposed by the

97%

97% oppose these plans for firefighters to work until they are 60

91%

91% oppose plans to increase pension contributions

government, 91% opposed plans to increase contributions and 97% of those in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) opposed moves to increase retirement age to 60.

More than nine out of ten (92%) opposed a switch from using the retail price index to the consumer price index as the measure of future pension rises in retirement.

This switch would greatly reduce the value of firefighters' pensions after retirement and is the subject of a high court challenge by the FBU.

More than four in five (83%) opposed the switch to a career average scheme. The opposition is particularly strong among officers who stand to pay a lot more and get a lot less.

Opt out

The survey found that the burden of the changes was so great that as many as 27% were considering opting out of the pension scheme, while 12% said they would be very likely to opt out of the scheme if contributions are raised.

If that happens, the changes would cost the government far more in lost contributions by 2015

pensions!

(£94.5 million a year) and undermine viability of the scheme.

Wrack said: "The savings the government are hoping for are very likely to turn into much higher costs. A sharp hike in already high contributions and the other changes could be the tipping point which will see an exodus from the main pension scheme. The viability of the scheme will be badly undermined, costing even more in the long-term.

"It makes no sense for the taxpayer to be paying more, for firefighters to be paying more and the scheme producing less. The Treasury needs to think again and not take a massive gamble with firefighter pensions and taxpayers' money."

Action

The survey shows that members are angry about paying more, working longer and getting less for their pension.

FBU conference in May agreed to make preparations for industrial action on pensions. The union's executive council is developing a strategy for the next stages of our campaign. The union has circulated a model resolution on pensions and is asking every branch to hold fire station meetings to discuss the pensions attack and what members want the union to do about it.

 **For more details of the survey visit www.fbu.org.uk**

92%

92% oppose plans to switch from RPI to CPI

YouGov survey results

How important was your current pension scheme in your decision to join the fire service?

Very important	58%
Quite important	27%
Not very important	10%
Not at all important	4%
Don't know	1%

To what extent do you support or oppose replacing final salary schemes with career average schemes?

Strongly support	4%
Tend to support	11%
Tend to oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	66%
Don't know	2%
Net: Oppose	83%

To what extent do you support or oppose these plans to increase pension contributions?

Strongly support	3%
Tend to support	5%
Tend to oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	76%
Don't know	1%
Net: Oppose	91%

Would these pension changes affect your decision to apply for promotion?

Very likely to affect my decision to apply	35%
Likely to affect my decision to apply	27%
Unlikely to affect my decision to apply	19%
Very unlikely to affect my decision to apply	11%
Not applicable	5%
Don't know	3%

If the proposal to increase contributions is put into practice, how likely would you be to opt out or stay in the pension scheme?

Very likely to opt out	12%
Likely to opt out	15%
Likely to stay in the scheme	34%
Very likely to stay in the scheme	26%
Don't know	12%

Would you consider changing your vote in a future general election because of the pensions changes discussed in this survey?

Yes, would change the party I support because of the pension changes	59%
No, would not change the party I support	24%
Don't know	17%

To what extent do you support or oppose these plans for firefighters to work until they are 60?

Strongly support	1%
Tend to support	2%
Tend to oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	90%
Don't know	0%
Net: Oppose 97%	

To what extent do you support or oppose using consumer prices (CPI) instead of retail prices (RPI)?

Strongly support	1%
Tend to support	1%
Tend to oppose	10%
Strongly oppose	82%
Don't know	6%
Net: Oppose 92%	

 The total sample size was 7,981 current FBU members currently working in the fire service. The survey ran from 18 May to 17 June 2011. It was carried out online and the figures have not been weighted. YouGov is registered with the Information Commissioner and is a member of the British Polling Council.

Death by a thousand cuts

The Fire Brigades Union has found that around 1,000 firefighter posts have been cut over the last year, with more than 1,300 jobs in the service cut overall. These figures prove that our frontline service has not been protected from the government's spending cuts.

Promise broken

On the eve of the general election, David Cameron visited Carlisle fire station and promised that a Conservative government would strive to protect vital sectors such as the fire and rescue service from spending cuts.

He said: "We want to get money to the frontline. That's what matters. We want a really good fire service but where we can get savings in back-office costs, we should" (*News and Star*, 5 May 2010).

This promise has been shown to be empty.

Not scaremongering

The government is in denial about this firefighter jobs cull. In the House of Commons on 28 February this year, Labour MP Chris Williamson said he feared that 1,000 firefighter jobs could be cut as a result of the budget squeeze.

Westminster fire minister Bob Neill said: "I do not accept the hon. gentleman's proposition at all ... I have pointed out exactly the measures that many local authorities are taking to save money in the back office and to concentrate on

the frontline, and I hope that he will encourage authorities to do the same and that he will not engage in scaremongering."

Asked again on 20 June, Neill said: "The disposition of firefighters is entirely a matter for local authorities." The fire minister has persistently refused to answer questions about firefighter job cuts. So the FBU asked the Labour Research Department to obtain the figures directly from each individual fire and rescue service.

Total job losses 1,348

The figures show that 1,066 firefighters in wholetime, retained and control roles have been cut between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2011. Some 1,348 jobs have been cut across the fire and rescue service (including support staff).

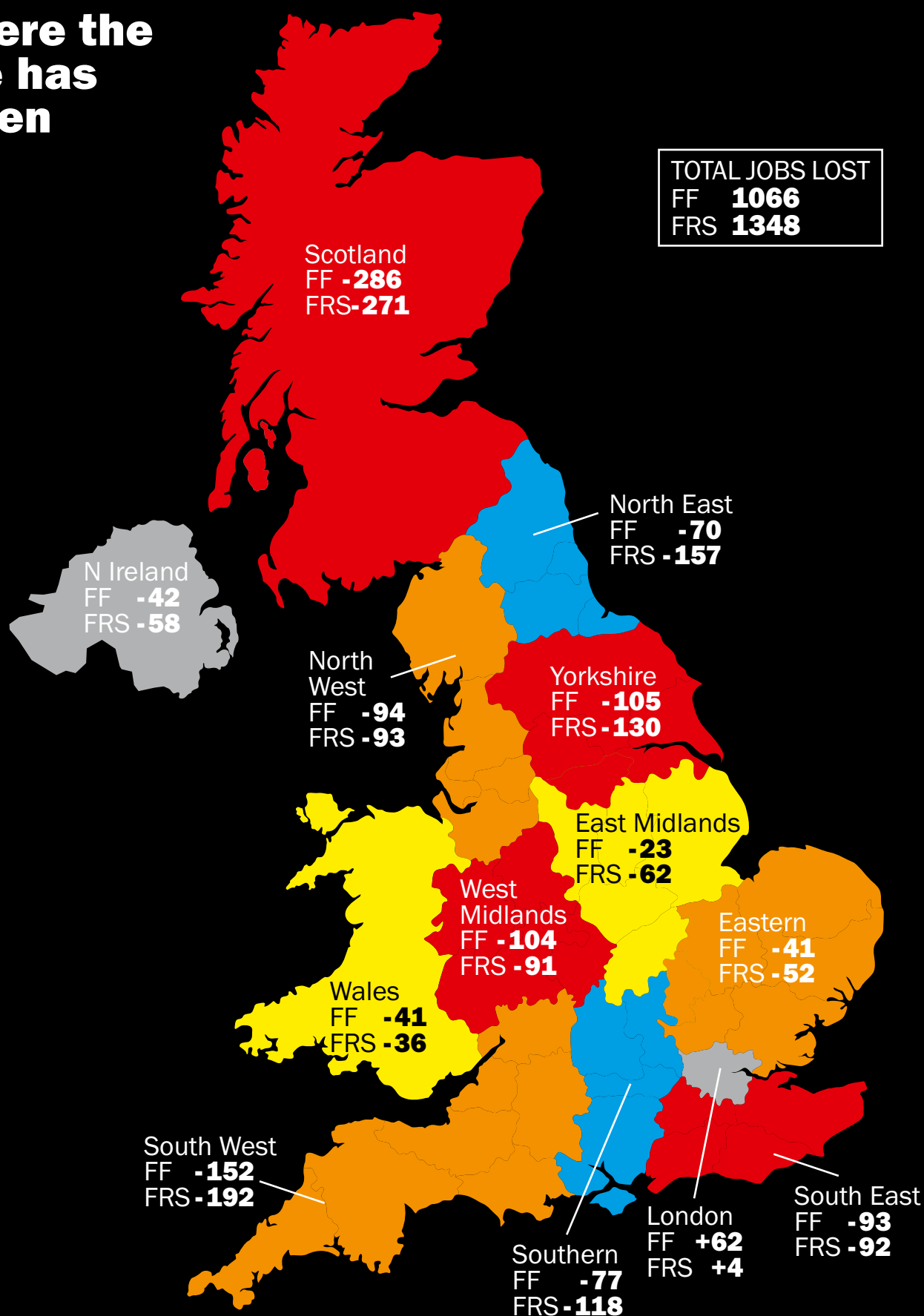
All but one region has seen firefighter posts lost (see map). The exception was London, where management has to contend with the Olympics in 2012. Some regions such as Northern Ireland have since recruited to fill the gap. Others, however, have cut further.

The FBU argues that these job cuts will wreck the fire and rescue service. They will put the public and firefighters at risk. That's why the FBU will oppose job cuts, with all the industrial and political means available.



The full survey is on the FBU website www.fbu.org.uk

Where the axe has fallen



DON'T THREATEN OUR LIBERTIES

The government is threatening to make it harder for unions to take industrial action. The FBU stands up for the right to strike

It is a sure sign that industrial action is effective if the government starts threatening to make it even harder to strike. Successful action in the last few months by Tube workers, teachers, lecturers and civil servants – especially over pensions – has been met with a vicious media firestorm. Firefighters have faced the same slurs every time we have taken action.

The hypocrisy is not hard to see. The government is slashing public services, sacking public sector workers, tearing up pension schemes and freezing pay. Yet it says: “Don’t protest”, “Do as we say” and “You can’t possibly resist”. The Fire Brigades Union disagrees. We stand up for the democratic right of workers to protest, to organise and to take action.

Threats

Some Tory hardliners, like London mayor Boris Johnson, are proposing that strikes should be illegal unless they are backed by a minimum of 50% of those eligible to vote, not just of votes cast. Some want to ban strikes in the emergency services and the transport sector, where the scope for effective action is high. Others are talking about forcing workers to provide a minimum level of service even where they have voted overwhelmingly to strike, so as to “minimise the disruption”.

19%



JOHNSON

*[Voted in by 19% of the electorate]
Make strikes not backed by 50% of members illegal*

It is clear that the government is making plans and has the situation under constant review. Behind them, the CBI employers’ lobbying body and right-wing think-tanks like Policy Exchange are pushing it to obstruct industrial action.

Asked at Westminster on 12 January this year whether he agreed that any union ballot that leads to industrial action should have the majority support of those entitled to vote, David Cameron said he was “happy to look at this argument”, because he did not want to see “a wave of irresponsible strikes, not least when they are not supported by a majority of people taking part”.

Anti-union laws

In April, Tory MP Dominic Raab introduced a private members’ bill at Westminster that would require a majority of union members to vote for strike action for it to be lawful in the emergency services and transport sector. Although the bill was defeated by Labour MPs, it was a warning of what to expect.

The pressure has since come back as unions take action to defend workers’ pensions and jobs. Business secretary Vince Cable warned the GMB conference on 5 June that “should strikes impose serious damage to our economic and social fabric, the pressure on us to act would ratchet up”.





Defend the right to strike

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "We need to stand up for the democratic right to strike. Firefighters and other workers are not slaves. Thatcher imposed the most restrictive anti-trade union laws anywhere in the western world, banning workplace votes and introducing postal ballots to reduce support for strikes.

"We argued at the time these would lead to a lower turnout. Voting in the isolation of your own home is harder than at work with your workmates. It takes more time and effort to check the post and return the ballot paper on time than to vote at work after a discussion.

"They contrived to make workplace democracy more difficult. Now they have the bare-faced cheek to tell us we can only take action if an even higher hurdle is cleared.

"Johnson claims his 50% minimum is 'democratic'. But just 19% of the electorate voted for him as mayor!

"Cameron, Cable and their friends mostly got the support of far less than half of the electorate last year – well below their threshold for unions. I doubt they would get even that now after their performance in government."

CAMERON

[Voted in by 43% of his electorate]
'Happy' to look at banning strikes not supported by 50% of all members

43%



40%

CABLE

[Voted in by 40% of his electorate]
Don't strike, or we will be forced to ban them

Democracy

Compare the dismal votes for the politicians with the whopping 79% yes on a 79% turnout for the London FBU strikes last year – a 62% total figure. Or the 65% achieved by South Yorkshire FBU in 2009. It's clear who's got the democratic mandate.

A survey by John McDonnell MP for the Trade Union Coordinating Group, a group of ten unions including the FBU represented at Westminster, found that only 35 MPs received votes from the majority of their electorate in the 2010 general election. The coalition government – the one that no-one actually voted for last year – is in no position to give lectures on democracy.

Wrack said: "The real reason for the threats is that the government fears a backlash from workers on issues like pensions. It fears unions could lead a revolt to defend public services and public sector workers' jobs. It wants us to shut up and keep our heads down.

"We can't do that. The whole point of unions is to help our members to defend themselves from attacks. We decide these things democratically. The government are the disrupters and the wreckers, not workers. We will take strike action if we have to."

Dyslexia

FBU enables online screening for members

For a member to admit they are dyslexic they need to know they will have support from their union

Trevor Shanahan, the FBU's union learning fund national manager, explains how the union is supporting members

"Dyslexia? Dyspraxia? Oh, I know – that's the kid who can't read, can't spell, can't do their tables ... They use it as an excuse to skip school as often as they can or, when they are at school, disrupt and slow down the rest of the class."

This is the stereotype many of us used when asked what we knew about dyslexia and similar conditions. However, thanks to a better understanding of how dyslexia can affect individuals, and the "outing" of well-known individuals like Richard Branson, Bill Gates, Eddie Izzard and Albert Einstein, it is no longer a commonly held view.

Around one person in ten has some degree of dyslexia and nearly 4% of the population are classed as having severe dyslexia symptoms – that is an awful lot of people. The condition does not discriminate. It affects young and old, male and female. Yet for the majority of dyslexics, it remains "their secret", due to the stigma suffered by anyone who admitted they were dyslexic.

2010 Equality Act

A key turning point in recognising that an individual with dyslexia or some mild dyslexic tendencies should not feel isolated or made to feel "out of place or stupid" was dyslexia's inclusion in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

– now replaced by the 2010 Equality Act.

The FBU's union learning fund (ULF) project team and FBU union learning reps (ULRs) have learnt quickly that dyslexia is as common in the

and rescue service employers (and co-workers) treated them sympathetically and without discrimination.

Since then the number of members who have come forward with issues about dyslexia has increased significantly. It became clear to the FBU ULF project team that we needed to provide proper guidance and advice. This led

other FBU officials.

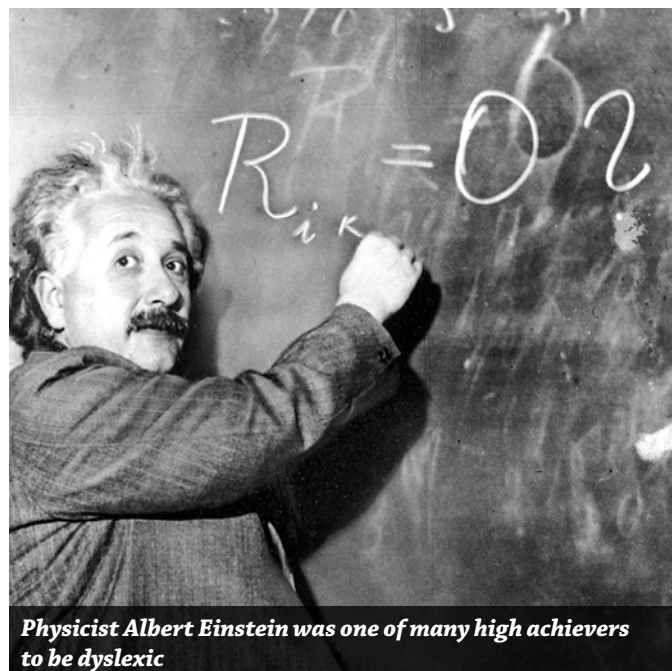
With ULF funding we have been able to purchase access to a screening tool called QuickScan that offers individuals the opportunity to carry out an online dyslexia assessment. It also provides information on the adoption of particular learning styles that may help to overcome learning difficulties. The screening is only the first step and it is important that members know that they will have ongoing support in dealing with any resulting outcomes.

Over 70 members and officials have become dyslexia support advisors, which is tremendous. There are still a number of regions where courses have not taken place, but we hope to rectify that over the coming months.

There has also been a tremendous amount of work carried out in Scotland, which has seen Scottish Union Learning, in conjunction with the STUC, launch its own dyslexia guide.

If you want to find out more about accessing the QuickScan screening tool, or just find out about the FBU's dyslexia guidance document, then log on to the FBU education and lifelong learning website and click on the dyslexia bubble located towards the top of the right hand corner of the home page. You will also be able to find the names and contact numbers of the dyslexia support advisors who will be happy to assist you.

MORE INFORMATION can be found at www.fbueducation.org



Physicist Albert Einstein was one of many high achievers to be dyslexic

fire and rescue service as it is in all other walks of life.

For any member to admit that they are dyslexic (or think they might be), they need to know that they will have support and representation from their union.

In 2009 the FBU launched its *Dyslexia Guidance for FBU Officials and Members* document. This gave our members that vital show of support in ensuring that fire

and rescue service employers (and co-workers) treated them sympathetically and without discrimination.

New FBU course

To support officials, the ULF team wrote a "dyslexia awareness and support" course that is accredited through Leeds City College. The course lasts around six hours and has already been delivered in a number of regions to ULRs and

Legal Beagle

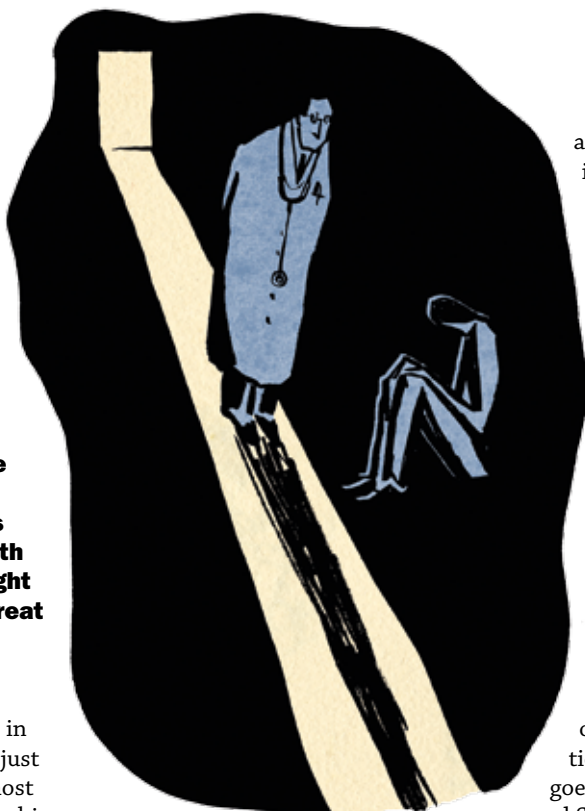
Depression can be grounds for medical retirement

FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
LINE
0808
100 6061

Q I have been diagnosed with depression and have been off sick for several months at a time. My request for medical retirement was refused on the grounds that depression is not recognised under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme as an illness that warrants ill-health retirement. Is that right and do all brigades treat depression in the same way?

A Depression comes in many forms from just feeling "down" to the most severely debilitating psychiatric illness. GPs may diagnose "depression" for conditions that would be described quite differently by specialist psychiatrists. However, it is clear that some instances of depression can render a firefighter permanently unfit for duty and therefore eligible for an ill-health pension (and if there is a work-related cause for the depression, an injury pension too).

If a brigade HR department or a brigade medical adviser/independent qualified medical practitioner says that depression can never count to ill-health retirement, they are wrong and their decision should be challenged if the evidence, including medical evidence, supports the firefighter's position. Not all brigades adopt the crude policy described in the question and



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

ill-health retirements on the basis of depression have been and continue to be awarded.

Q A member has been quite seriously injured due to, in my view, a serious failure in a system of work. They do not want to pursue a claim for compensation against the brigade. What options do I have as a safety rep to have the serious issues in that system of work addressed and how can I make sure that the brigade is legally brought to book so it doesn't happen again?

A The fire service should carry out an investigation into the accident that would involve inspecting the

area or equipment involved, completing an accident report and reviewing any risk assessments of the system of work. If the accident has caused the member to have more than three consecutive days off work they are obliged to complete a RIDDOR (reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations) report that goes to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

As a health and safety rep you have rights under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) to, among other things, carry out your own investigation and inspection, obtain documents from the fire service including risk assessments, previous inspections and previous

accidents and consult with HSE inspectors if necessary. The fire service must give paid time off for you to carry out your health and safety rep functions.

If there was a failure in the system of work, your member may have a good case against the fire service and should contact the FBU legal helpline on 0808 100 6061 to discuss their case with a specialist personal injury lawyer in confidence so at least they know what their options are.

The lawyer will not take any steps unless the member wants them to. They should be aware that court proceedings must be started within three years from the date of the accident so they should get some advice as soon as possible.

If you need any further support you should contact your regional health and safety official.

The TUC's Brown Book is a useful summary of your rights as a health and safety rep and the duties of your employer. It can be downloaded at www.tuc.org.uk/extras/brownbook.pdf

HSE budget cut by more than a third

The government recently announced a 35% cut to the HSE budget that will mean fewer HSE investigations, inspections and prosecutions of employers who do not meet their health and safety obligations. That, combined with proposed legislation for

employers only to have to report injuries to the HSE if the employee has seven days off work after an accident, means that employers are likely to become less accountable – making the role of the health and safety rep even more important.

“She could easily crush my hand”

Rob Evans from Wiltshire fire and rescue service is a keen falconer with ten birds of prey

Falconry

Whatever firefighting shift he's on, Rob Evans knows he must find time to feed ten hungry birds of prey each day at a farm five miles from his home.

Rob, blue watch crew manager at Chippenham in Wiltshire, has been fascinated by birds since boyhood when his father, a keen ornithologist, first took him on nature walks. Under his father's guidance, songbirds even fed from young Rob's shoes.

Later, Rob developed a fascination for birds of prey and started reading up on how to handle them. Ten years ago he decided to go for it and bought his first bird. "It was a mid-life crisis," he jokes. If so, he turned a crisis into an opportunity and hasn't looked back.

Wings and Talons

Rob used his knowledge to develop Wings and Talons which promotes conservation through education and giving people the chance to experience birds of prey close up, to handle and even to fly them. He runs falconry experience days for people keen to learn all about the birds' habits and hunting skills.

He also gets out and about a lot. Throughout the summer, he will be found with selected birds demonstrating their skills at village fetes and garden centres. He also gets invited to bring birds into schools

and is a popular booking with residents at old people's homes.

The satisfactions are, Rob says, enormous. There is nothing quite like the exhilaration that comes from flying a bird and seeing it "return to you to feed of its own volition". It doesn't just happen of course – there's a lot of skill and training involved. A lure – a leather pad with bait – is used to establish the pattern and build the relationship between bird and trusted handler. Birds can become "fully imprinted" on their handlers once routines and trust are well established.

This is the kind of relationship Rob has been keen to build with his birds. The fearsomely powerful European eagle owl is now fully imprinted on Rob. "She's got enough grip strength to crush a fox's skull", he says. "She could easily crush my hand, but she can stand on my bare arm. She sees me as mum, dad and food provider. And when she's hormonal she can even see me as her partner".

First aid

Despite being imprinted, the bird, like all birds of prey, needs careful handling – and, says Rob, a first aid course is "a must" for anyone wanting to become a falconer.

"I've been bitten by a barn owl and footed by a buzzard – they kill with their feet. The beak on a bird of prey is basically a hooking, ripping tool. So you have to know what you're doing.



Rob with his eagle owl Bob

"A bird of prey's mind set is quite simple. It will react to movement and sound and it has an instinct to hunt, kill, breed, sleep and ultimately survive. The fight or flight reaction is instinctive."

Rob has a variety of species: a buzzard – the most common bird of prey in Britain – two Harris hawks, a kestrel, a lanner falcon, and a peregrine falcon – "the fastest bird in the world" – on long-term loan.

Then there are the owls. The Bengal eagle owl is smaller and more "user friendly" than the fearsome European eagle owl, with its massive wing span and power to swoop down from the skies to nail prey. A little owl and a brown owl complete the set.

Rob doesn't have favourites,





ROB EVANS

Chippenham blue watch crew manager Rob Evans works as a volunteer for the Hawk and Owl Trust and promotes conservation through education and giving people the chance to experience birds of prey close up

appreciating each of his birds for their distinct qualities, citing the age-old view that “it’s falcons for speed, hawks for strength and owls for stealth”.

Respect

Rob has great respect for his birds and the countryside – an attitude he is keen to

share with those who encounter birds of prey up close for the first time. “We should never forget that we are all being allowed to enter their world and that they are all birds of prey, not pets.

“They are signs of how our environment is doing. If there are plenty of birds of prey species around, we have a

balanced habitat.”

Rob works as a volunteer for the Hawk and Owl Trust and, through Wings and Talons, promotes bird of prey boxes to provide places for dislodged wild birds to nest in. They can be installed in trees that have been felled or new barn conversions. Through links with specialist vets, he is also ready to assist if anyone comes across injured birds of prey out in the wild.

Rob does not breed his birds of prey, though he knows a bit about how it’s done. Mating rituals are hard-wired. “Female birds always shake their tail feathers – males stick their chests out and strut around trying to attract a mate by displaying their plumage. It’s a bit like the dance floor,” he says.

And what do Chippenham blue watch members think of his hobby? “They take the mickey, obviously,” says Rob, who is, after all, crew manager.

‘She sees me as mum, dad and food provider. And when she’s hormonal she can even see me as her partner’



ROB EVANS

Prize quiz



Win a Kindle 3G

To win a Kindle wireless 3G please send your answers to the Prize Quiz by 30 September 2011 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Aug/Sept 2011), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 Which African country, formerly named Upper Volta, was renamed in 1984?

- A Togo
- B Benin
- C Mali
- D Burkina Faso



2 What is the southernmost tip of Greenland called?

- A Cape Farewell
- B Cape Verde
- C Cape Colony
- D Cape Alexander

3 Which street in London is synonymous with British journalism?

- A Lombard St
- B The Strand
- C Fleet Street
- D Sloane Street

4 Which of the world's oceans is the smallest and shallowest?

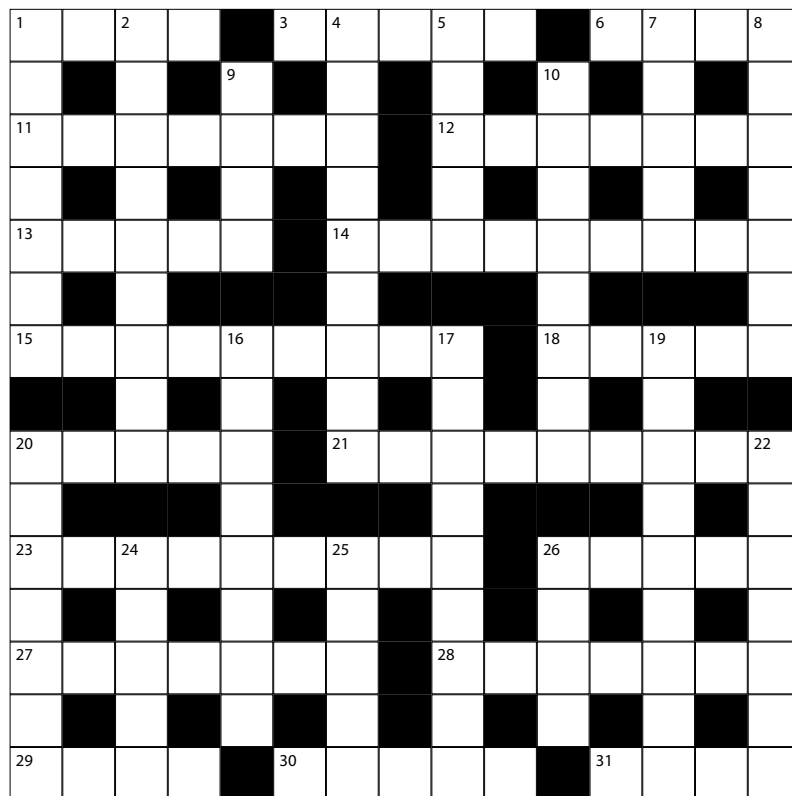
- A The Arctic Ocean
- B The Indian Ocean
- C The Atlantic Ocean
- D The Southern Ocean

5 Which of the following countries was not part of the former Yugoslavia?

- A Herzegovina
- B Montenegro
- C Slovenia
- D Slovakia



SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1** Method of encryption (4)
- 3** Eastern English county (5)
- 6** Discover (4)
- 11** Privateer 'owner' of London fire appliances (7)
- 12** Mischievous little creature said to interfere with machinery (7)
- 13** Vegetable to cry over? (5)
- 14** Rock, often tan coloured and used for building (9)
- 15** Venue of 2011 FBU conference (9)
- 18** Frequent (5)
- 20** Long, pointed weapon (5)
- 21** Monks' home (9)
- 23** Often attends alongside fire appliance (9)
- 26** Laughing animal? (5)
- 27** 31, as a dodo? (7)
- 28** Rock containing ferrous metal (4,3)
- 29** Wind-blown heap of sand (4)
- 30** Britain's only venomous snake (5)
- 31** Not alive (4)

DOWN

- 1** Leather used by window-cleaners (7)
- 2** Without means of subsistence (9)
- 4** Icy tempest (9)
- 5** Encourage (3,2)
- 7** Round dwelling - shelter from 4? (5)
- 8** Dank cellar cell? (7)
- 9** Cameron's posh school (4)
- 10** The government wants us to pay more for them (8)
- 16** Athletic leaping of fences (8)
- 17** Variety of citrus fruit (9)
- 19** For that reason (9)
- 20** Marine vegetation (7)
- 22** December 31 or, for accountants, March 31 (4-3)
- 24** Passed by athletes, waved by conductors (5)
- 25** Taken into account (5)
- 26** Horny tip of ungulate animal's foot (4)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution June/July

June/July quiz answers

- 1.** B - Amnesia
- 2.** C - Diana Rigg
- 3.** D - Milkman
- 4.** A - Tape recorder
- 5.** A - Ralph Fiennes

Winner of the May quiz

John Harvey, West Midlands

Station Cat

Incompetence leads to promotion

Yes, Minister. John, now Lord, Prescott won't be carrying any cans for the FiReControl fiasco

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



Heads will not roll

 To the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee to watch the slaughter of Communities and Local Government (CLG) officials over FiReControl. MPs wanted to know why local fire stations were threatened with cuts or closures for the lack of a few thousand pounds while CLG had wasted £500 million.

Why were so many consultants paid so much for so long for such useless advice? Did anyone say "No, minister"?

Never, one MP thundered, had the committee seen such incompetence. And on CLG's leadership skills over the fire service – "lions led by donkeys".

And any heads going to roll over this fiasco? Certainly not Prescott, the donkey in chief, he's now Lord Prescott.

The civil servants who oversaw this calamity, did they suffer? Sadly not – two had retired and two had been promoted. Yes, promoted!

Where did it all go wrong?

 How did it all go wrong with FiReControl? It started with a department with no knowledge of the fire service, run by civil servants with no knowledge, advised by consultants with no knowledge.

Then they excluded all the existing and experienced suppliers of fire control systems and opted for EADS, who had never fitted a fire control system

anywhere in the world. All overseen in the early years by Prescott.

How did it all go so badly wrong? It's a mystery ...

And another thing ...

 ... and so is Firebuy, set up by CLG as a central purchasing body to save the fire service millions. Ministers had assured the CLG select committee it would definitely save money. And it did! It saved £6 million. Fantastic it worked!!

But only if you ignore the fact that it cost £17 million. That's a loss of £11 million.

Is there an Alan Sugar "You're fired!" moment for this one as well? In the strange world of Whitehall, it's another verdict: "What a mess, huge losses. You're promoted! Get out of my sight."

Gordon's gift for the fat cats

 Remember the private finance initiative (PFI) and public-private partnerships (PPPs)? They were Gordon Brown's scam for getting big construction companies to put up public buildings, including fire stations, and lease them back to the government or the local council, allowing the companies to make massive profits on their investment from the taxpayer. They enabled a few people to get very rich indeed at our expense. Now these people are making oodles more money by selling on the debt, says a report from

the European Services Strategy Unit, which examined 154 projects and found that banks and builders made £518million in profits in this way. The total raked in is probably more than £2 billion, and the average profit margin on PFI equity sales was more than 50 per cent. The report's author, Dexter Whitfield, told BBC Radio 4's File on Four programme: "It's a wealth machine. It's not necessarily printing money, but it's virtually that, given the scale of these profits."

A chief officer writes

 It's not every day a chief fire officer writes to the local paper to demand that it stops listening to the Fire Brigades Union. But in Essex, David Johnson is getting desperate. "I have always held your publication in high regard", he writes plaintively to the editor of the *Basildon Echo*. "I would simply ask that you place the same evidential requirements on the FBU when they make statements, in doing so we may be able to prevent the routine and incessant criticism of our service and our good employees and firefighters who day in, day out, seek to protect our communities."

Only himself to blame

 So which slimeball has been criticising Essex firefighters? No one, actually. But some Basildon firefighters have expressed their unease about Mr Johnson. They wrote to local councillors about the contrast between their CFO's desire to

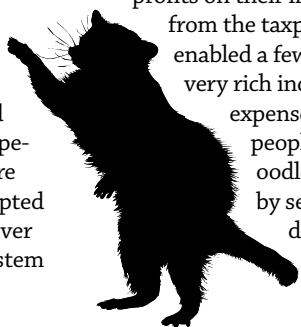
cut the frontline firefighting service, and the lavish spending on himself, including charging the fire authority £30,987 to relocate to a home which isn't even in Essex. Mr Johnson tried disciplining them for it, claiming (wrongly) that the letters were defamatory. That's when the story hit the local newspaper. He only has himself to blame, really.

As I was saying

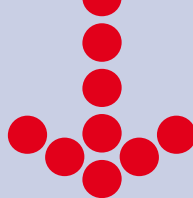
 Back in March I promised to tell you how Tommy Meyers, the son of FBU member Tony Meyers of Bromley fire station came to be bitten on the face by a police dog. Young Tommy was then awaiting trial. Now he has been acquitted on all charges, I can tell you the horrible story.

PC Jonathan McHugh of British Transport Police wanted to arrest Tommy for assaulting him (Tommy says he didn't). Tommy was handcuffed and thrown on the ground and a dog handler, Jamie Gilson, deliberately deployed his dog, which bit fiercely into Tommy's face, embedding its teeth millimetres below his eye, and just behind his ear.

They took him to the hospital, where 30 stitches were put into the wounds and antibiotics dispensed. Then they took him to the police station, where he was not allowed the antibiotics or painkillers until about 10.30 the next morning. By that time the antibiotics were not effective, and two days later an operation was needed to prevent the infection spreading to his lungs and killing him. He has permanent nerve damage.



25-year badges



Dai Davies (l), Swansea fire safety, receives his 25-year badge from region 8 officers rep Rob Martin



Dick Sedgwick (l), green watch, Whitehaven, Cumbria, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety co-ordinator Ade Kevern



Dave Faragher (r) red watch, Whitehaven, Cumbria, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety co-ordinator Ade Kevern



Tom Finney (centre l) and **David Wood** (centre r), blue watch, Bolton North, receive their 25-year badges from fellow watch members James Bracegirdle (l) and Kevin Haslam (r).



Tony Heselton (r), High Wycombe, receives his 25-year badge from branch membership secretary Gordon Richardson



Colin Bibby (l) red watch, Kirkby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety co-ordinator Gary Bennett



Terri Seaber (l) fire control, Hinchbrook, Cambridgeshire, receives her 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Alan Loy (l) blue watch, Kirkby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety co-ordinator Gary Bennett



Trevor Pusey (r), green watch, High Wycombe, receives his 25-year badge from branch membership secretary Gordon Richardson



Gary West (l) Fulwood, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from region 5 regional chair Ian McGill. Looking on, members of group one, Fulwood



Paul Brookes (l) red watch, Preston, receives his 25-year badge from Lancashire brigade chair Kevin Deacon

FBU regional offices

REGION 1 Scotland

52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow,
Scotland G1 4AA
0141 221 2309, 01rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 2 Northern Ireland

14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn,
Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ
02892 664622, 02rs@fbu.org

REGION 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team Valley,
Gateshead, NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142, 03rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 4 Yorks and Humberside

9 Marsh Street, Rothwell,
Leeds, LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000, 04rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 5 Greater Manchester, Lancs, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire

The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St,
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400, 05rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 6 Derbys, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants

Little Dennis Street South (above
Dawsons), Nottingham NG2 4EU
0115 947 2042, 06gen@fbu.org.uk

REGION 7 West Mids, Staffs, Warks, Hereford & Worcester, Salop

195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill,
West Midlands, B64 6HE
01384 413633, 07rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales

4 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed,
Bridgend, CF35 5LJ
01656 867910, 08rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 9 Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk

28 Atlantic Square, Station Road,
Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521, 09rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 10 London

John Horner Mews, Frome Street,
Islington, London, N1 8PB
020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

REGION 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex

Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way,
Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
01273 309762, 11rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 12 Bucks, Berks, Hants, Oxon, Isle of Wight

FBU Regional Office, The Merlin
Centre, Unit L, Gatehouse Close,
Aylesbury HP19 8DP
01296 482297, 12rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 13 Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset

158 Muller Road, Horfield,
Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin

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

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE 0808 100 6061

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues.

For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

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