

FireFighter

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

January/February 2011



SAVE OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Firefighters lobby government **See p10**





Matt Wrack

Happy new year – a campaigning new year

I would like to wish you and your families a happy new year – we have an eventful year ahead. As you will see from this issue of our magazine, there is already a huge amount of campaigning work under way.

Our lobby in November saw members from every brigade in the UK attend – the largest such event in recent years. It sent a very clear message to politicians that FBU members are determined to defend our service, our jobs, our conditions and our pensions.

The rally was an opportunity to outline very clearly the case against cuts in our service.

Campaign

Our executive council has held a detailed discussion on the cuts agenda and the challenges it poses for our union. We have never seen such a sustained attack on our service or on our own conditions of service. The campaign to challenge this agenda will need to involve every single member.

It is primarily a *political* campaign since the cuts agenda of the coalition government at Westminster is a *political* agenda.

Our aim in this must be to build a movement on a scale which creates the political pressure for a major shift in policy.

We have outlined in previous editions of *Firefighter* the alternative to the cuts agenda and our aim must be to convince wider and wider layers

of the public that we are right.

But we are also likely to need an *industrial* side to our fight as well. Much as we will try hard to avoid industrial disputes, we simply cannot sit back and allow our employers or the government to dismantle every gain we have made in the past.

The executive council has called on every branch to ensure meetings are held to discuss these challenges. In the next few months we will

be holding open meetings for members all over the UK.

TUC demonstration against austerity

One way we can build this movement against the cuts is by supporting the national demonstration in London on 26 March. This has been called by the TUC to oppose the coalition's austerity measures – including the huge cuts in public services. It is essential

that the FBU has a large attendance on this demonstration. It is our opportunity to be part of building a movement against the cuts and especially in defence of the fire and rescue service.

Brigade committees will be discussing how to maximise the turnout for this important event and I would ask every single member to think about attending and supporting it.

Presidents: goodbye and hello

Bro. Mick Shaw retired from the fire and rescue service at the end of 2010 and is off to start a new phase in his life after 33 years membership.

I have known Mick for a long time – back to when we both had far more hair than we do today.

I would like to thank him on behalf of all members for his contribution to the FBU. Mick began his involvement as a London activist and official, later serving on the executive council and finally as president. He was on strike as a young firefighter in 1977-78 and has been involved in all our campaigns since. I wish him well for the future.

I would also like to congratulate and welcome our new president, Bro. Alan McLean. Alan was previously the executive council member for Region 3 and I look forward to working with him as part of the head office team. He certainly joins at a challenging time.

Happy new year – now let's get to work.

STEFANO ORLANDI



FBU members take the message to Downing Street – the campaign against cuts will be political, but is likely to have an industrial side as well

'The campaign to challenge the cuts agenda will need to involve every single member'

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LETTERS

The most important question

The question why is the most important question. Why did we have a credit crunch? Why are we having a recession? Why did the banks go bust? Why are nations now going bust?

I think I know the answer.

In fact it seems so simple to me, I fail to understand why our political leaders, economists, and media appear to be at a loss. The answer is in the business model employed by the banks, known as the fractional reserve system.

The government took bad loans from the banks and gave the liability for those loans to the public, the taxpayers of today and tomorrow. This left the banks to start again making fresh loans and investments.

But who do they make these fresh loans to? They make them to the governments who now have huge budget deficits because they have back-stopped so many toxic loans the banks have made over the last 20 years.

To add insult to this, the central banks, the biggest criminals involved in this scam, lend overnight to the big banks at percentage rates less than inflation so the investment and high street banks can charge 5, 10, 15, 20% to customers and make staggering profits.

So when you see people in the streets of European cities protesting, it might just be because they are not watching The X Factor, but because they have an idea what is going on. And now so do you!

David Holmes
West Yorkshire

COVER: Prince Philip waves as his car is surrounded by firefighters lobbying parliament.

PICTURE: JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



STEFANO CAGNONI

FBU East Anglia regional secretary Adrian Clarke, left, with members on the 17 November lobby of parliament

FBU threatens action over control attacks

Control

The Fire Brigades Union will use all means at its disposal – including legal action – to defend control members. That is the message from the union after fire authorities launched a wave of attacks, including the threat of control room closures.

In **Suffolk** councillors plan to close and sell the county's emergency fire control room without any public consultation.

The FBU argues that the decision is undemocratic and is calling for full public consultation, so the people of Suffolk can have their say before councillors vote.

Adrian Clarke, FBU regional secretary for East Anglia, said: "The emergency fire control is the starting

place for our response to every 999 call in Suffolk.

"We believe these plans will detrimentally affect the way we deliver our life-saving service and the people and taxpayers of Suffolk should be allowed their say before any decisions are taken.

"They are the ones who will dial 999 next time they are in trouble and it is their lives that will depend on our response."

Cumbria fire control staff have been told that unless they agree to new terms and conditions, including annualised hours and a reduction in the control establishment to only two per watch, then Cumbria control will be outsourced to Cheshire.

The FBU is also aware of threats to the **Isle of Wight** control room.

Scrap FiReControl now

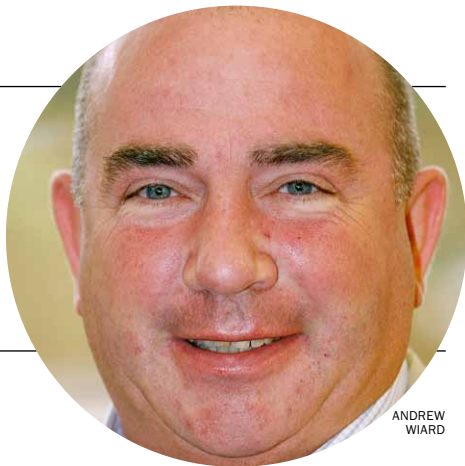
Time's up for EADS – now re-branded as Cassidian – the technology provider of the FiReControl project. Fire minister Bob Neill told the company on 8 November that the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) considered it to be in breach of its contractual obligations. He required it to remedy the position in 20 working days. This deadline has passed and there is no resolution.

The FBU wants to know – why delay any further? The FiReControl project should be scrapped.

Sharon Riley, FBU executive council member for control, said: "CLG now admits that Cassidian is in breach of contract and should waste no time in scrapping the project which has, after seven years, proved to be undeliverable!

"We now need urgent investment in local control rooms at a fraction of the money being wasted daily on the project."

*Jim Barbour:
We will fight
to protect fire
and rescue
budget*



ANDREW WIARD



March against cuts

Humberside

Firefighters marched through Hull on 11 December after Humberside fire and rescue service announced it would cut 170 firefighter job cuts, decimating frontline emergency services.

FBU regional secretary Pete Smith said: "Humberside fire and rescue service has released its draft IRMP for consultation

which threatens public and firefighter safety by the removal of operational firefighters from frontline appliances. This is a dangerous scenario which may ultimately cost lives.

"This attack on operational posts is both unacceptable and unsafe and our members are not prepared to roll over while their safe working conditions are systematically removed."

Firefighters brave snow to lobby for safety

Surrey

Despite freezing winds and snow, around 100 firefighters lobbied Surrey county council as the councillors considered plans to cut fire cover.

Supported by members of Unison and Unite, FBU members expressed anger and frustration at the threat of increased risks to firefighters and the public.

The council's draft integrated risk management plan calls for 36% less fire cover at night and up to 28% less during the day. It was decided without real debate or consideration despite representations from Surrey FBU.

Brigade secretary Richard Jones said: "Surrey firefighters

will be campaigning over the 12-week consultation period to let the public know the truth about how these devastating cuts will affect every resident and business in Surrey – not only financially but also through loss of life, which is inevitable as response times will suffer dramatically."

He said a horse-drawn fire cart could comply with the proposed response times.

"We think the public will be more interested in our ability to save life and property rather than our ability to comply with this ridiculous paperwork target." He said FBU members would focus on the needs of the community and their own safety.



**The Fire
Brigades
Union is
revamping
its
website.
Go to
www.fbu.org.uk and
follow the
link to the
new site.**

SOUNDING OFF

FBU fights to protect fire service budget

Northern Ireland executive council member Jim Barbour reports on a successful seminar

Politicians from all the main Northern Ireland parties attended a seminar in November organised by the FBU to discuss the fire and rescue service budget.

A leaked document from the service identified cuts of 24.1% over four years. The reality of cuts of this scale would make 40 of the 68 fire stations in the six counties vulnerable to downgrading or closure.

Firefighters warned that cutting the budget will not be an easy option because firefighters will not let it happen.

The assembled politicians – Jeffrey Donaldson of the Democratic Unionist Party, Mitchel McLaughlin of Sinn Féin, Alasdair McDonnell of the SDLP, John McCallister of the Ulster Unionist Party, Stephen Farry of the Alliance Party and Eamonn McCann from the People Before Profit Alliance – took part in a question-and-answer session with 50 firefighters.

General secretary Matt Wrack and national officer Dave Green also attended the very successful seminar. It was well received by politicians, and the FBU has been promised meetings at the highest level.

The union has also had discussions with Michael McGimpsey, minister for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the body responsible for the fire and rescue service.

The seminar followed lobbying of MPs at Westminster during the FBU's national rally on 17 November. FBU members met MPs – including Sinn Féin at Westminster for the first time – and pressed our case in defence of the fire and rescue service.

We will fight to protect the fire and rescue service's budget and, as the Northern Ireland government's overall budget has not yet been set, there is still everything to play for.

Shifts deal vote

London

London firefighters voted before Christmas on whether to accept the recommendations of the resolution advisory panel (RAP) to settle the dispute over changes to shift times.

The voting had not finished when *Firefighter* went to press.

RAP recommended two options:

1. A daytime shift length of 11 hours and a night-time shift length of 13 hours.
2. A daytime shift length of 10.5 hours and a night-time shift length of 13.5 hours, with direct stand-bys up to 7.5 miles for a payment of £35.

The FBU's London regional committee strongly recommended the second option.



Firefighters picket Poplar station in east London

New education website

ULF

The FBU's new education and lifelong learning website has been launched by the FBU's Union Learning Fund (ULF) team and its regional education and learning organisers (RELOs).

FBU national officer Sean Starbuck told a seminar: "The website provides us with the opportunity to showcase our national education programme as well as provide RELOs with a resource to advertise education courses in their own region."

"I hope it will be a vibrant platform for members and officials."

A page for FBU learning centres and lifelong learning means that it is a one-stop shop for all information on trade union education and learning opportunities.

The website is also host to a dyslexia screening tool which, following training of dedicated officials, will be available for members who may wish to undertake an electronic screening process for dyslexia.

FBU ULF manager Trevor Shanahan said: "The website is a great means of informing members what is on offer across a wide range of subject material. It also has a host of links and publications related to learning."

www.fbueducation.org



Asbestos ruling

Mesothelioma

A Court of Appeal ruling that threatens to deprive thousands of asbestos victims and their families of compensation is to be challenged in the Supreme Court. The FBU's lawyers Thompsons are pursuing the appeal.

The Court of Appeal decided, in what has become known as the "trigger issue" test cases, that, in some cases, the employer's liability insurance is triggered not by the exposure to asbestos in the workplace, but by the development of the fatal cancer, mesothelioma, decades later.

If insurance companies get their way, mesothelioma sufferers and their families will face delay and some will be deprived of compensation altogether.

IN BRIEF

Awards for FBU member

Herts FBU member Nikki Harvey and her fire investigation dog CC scooped two awards at the 2010 Comet Community Awards.

Nikki and CC won both the "role model of the year" and the "service to the community" awards, after they were involved



in a number of high profile investigations.

Their evidence proved vital in court and their success in driving down deliberate fire setting has been acknowledged by the chief.

CC is one of only 17 fire investigation dogs in the country and is sponsored by Computacenter, who pay for his upkeep and training

Broken promise on flood duty

After supporting the Pitt review and saying it was in favour of a statutory duty for the fire service to respond to flooding, the government has backtracked.

Defra minister Richard Benyon told MPs in November that: "There would be significant drawbacks to such a statutory duty. Fire and rescue authorities already turn out to flood events, as evidenced by past flood incidents. It is therefore not clear what difference a statutory duty would make."

He claimed a duty would upset voluntary organisations and announced that money already pledged by the previous government to be spent in fire and rescue services, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Red Cross on flood rescue equipment would now be handed out.

NEWS FOCUS

Average response time
two minutes slower
than a decade ago



IAN MARLOW

Government dithering as response times slow

New figures show
why it is time for
national standards

Response times

Firefighters know that the primary purpose of the fire and rescue service is prompt and efficient mobilisation in response to a fire or other incident in order to save lives and protect property. The public agree – lives are saved and serious injuries prevented by rapid attendance at incidents.

There should be howls of outrage at new official figures on response times which continue to show that fire engines are arriving more slowly than used to be the case.

On 10 November fire minister Bob Neill was asked for the latest figures for response times. He told parliament that, for the period April 2009 to March 2010, England's dwelling fire average response time was 7.3 minutes. This compared with 6.5 minutes in 2006 and 5.5 minutes in 1996 according to the CLG report, *Review of Fire and Rescue Service response times*.

This means that the average response time in England is now almost **two minutes slower** than it was a decade or so ago.

The minister also revealed the response times for individual fire and rescue services in England. Most reflect the national trend and show slower response times. A few show small improvements – tiny changes that are statistical noise, not a trend.

Some of the statistics may not be recorded properly, while attendance times for appliances that are mobile (doing community fire safety for example) are not counted. Another limitation is that the figures record only the time taken for the

first appliance to get to an incident.

In other words, the service is probably even worse than the overall figures suggest. When there were national standards, fire and rescue services not only had to record attendance times for the first appliance, but also the attendance time of the second appliance in A and B risk areas, and crewing levels.

The FBU nationally is taking every opportunity, wherever we can, to lobby for meaningful national standards. Members have taken the argument to governments in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast and pressed law-makers to act.

But there is only cold comfort from the Westminster government.

The fire minister told parliament on 10 November that: "The government has no plans to reintroduce national standards for fire and rescue service response times.

"Decisions made by local politicians and practitioners according to local circumstances will be more effective than blanket requirements across the country," he added.

If this is what localism means, the FBU rejects it. We want national standards for attendance times.

**There should be
howls of outrage
at figures showing
that fire engines
arrive more slowly
than used to be
the case**

FBU president Mick Shaw retired in December. Firefighter asked him about his life in the service and the union

STEFANO CAGNONI



A LIFETIME FO

What got you involved in the FBU?



I became interested in socialist politics while I was at school. Prior to joining the London Fire

Brigade (LFB), I had been a member of the train drivers' union ASLEF, where I had taken part in strike action and regularly attended branch meetings. I left the LFB training school in October 1977, aged 19, and within a month I was on strike for decent pay. By the time we returned to work, I had spent four weeks on a fire station and nine weeks on an FBU picket line. It was quite an education.

In London we voted against returning to work, because we were unhappy that we hadn't broken the government's 10% pay limit. However, when we got the pay rises owing to us in years two and three of the deal – and achieved a reduction in our weekly hours from 48 to 42 – we could see we had gained from the strike. We would not have gained those things without fighting for them.

What changes have you seen in the FBU in that period?

I think that the biggest change has been the way that the union communicates with its members and the amount of information that is now provided to members.

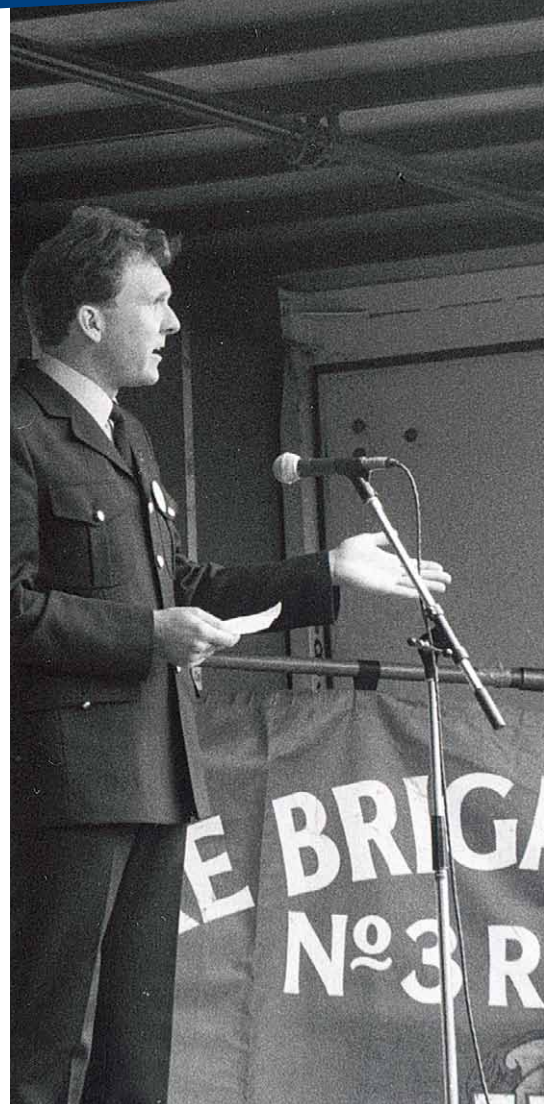
Then we didn't receive *Firefighter* magazine at home, but had to wait to see it at the fire station. There was very little in the way of information directly mailed to members. There was certainly no website for people to go to for the latest developments. I guess the positive side was that people had to attend branch meetings if they wanted to know what was happening.

If I compare the picket lines in London from the 1977 strike with those from the recent London dispute, undoubtedly the biggest change has been the availability of mobile phones. Mobiles mean we can get information out to members across the brigade instantaneously. We used to rely on guys on motorbikes travelling between stations to pass on news.

However, the basics of the union are the same. We are a union that is led by its members and activists, all of whom are or were firefighters. It is our members that give us our strength. The close teamwork of fire crews is reflected in our strong trade union solidarity.

What changes have you seen in the fire and rescue service over that period?

There have been some major changes, both good and bad. Our working hours are shorter now and our pay is better. Our gear and equipment is much better also – we used to be sent into fires wearing plastic gloves and leggings that would melt in the heat. Despite those improvements,



TO
ASS
KING



*Clockwise from left:
September 2010 –
Mick Shaw greets
members who rallied
against plans for
mass sackings of
London firefighters*

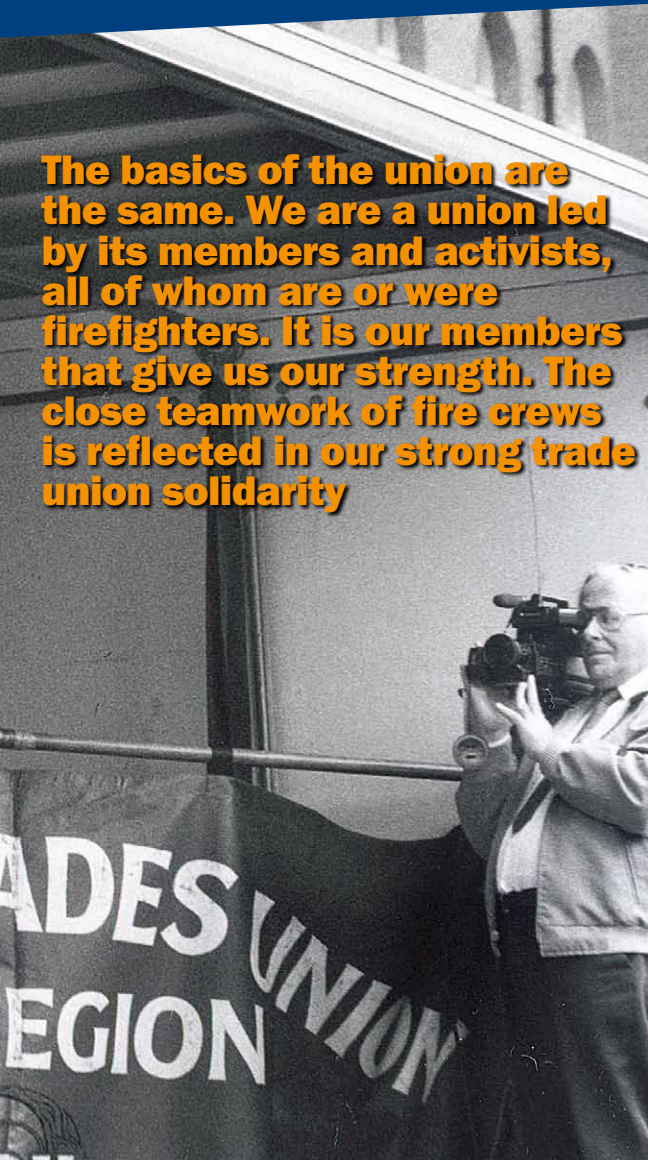
*1988 – Second from
right with, next to
him, Matt Wrack at a
rally to back a health
workers' day of action
for better pay*

*1992 – At an
emergency services
workers' rally*



R THE UNION

The basics of the union are the same. We are a union led by its members and activists, all of whom are or were firefighters. It is our members that give us our strength. The close teamwork of fire crews is reflected in our strong trade union solidarity



firefighting is still a potentially dangerous job and we lose far too many members at fires.

The workforce of the service much better reflects the communities that we serve than used to be the case. I was working in a multi-racial area in East London, yet there were hardly any non-white firefighters. There were no women and anybody coming out as gay would have needed enormous courage. Those things have changed for the better and the union has played the leading role in achieving these changes.

I think the worst change is that the politicians responsible for the service – at both government and local level – have far less respect for the service and the men and women who work in it than they used to. Even during the Thatcher government, we were largely left alone to get on with providing an essential service to the public. Now, with the huge pressure to make cuts, we are seeing a different approach.

How do you see the union and the service developing in the future?

There is no doubt that the next five years will be the most challenging period in living memory. The scale of the cuts could leave the service decimated. Pay freezes mean that public sector workers will be paying for the crisis – caused by the bankers and finance industry – with reduced

living standards. Attacks on pensions exacerbate that.

The FBU has a massive task on its hands in trying to defend jobs, pensions and living standards, as well as the essential service that our members provide.

However, I do not think that we should be fatalistic. Unlike Thatcher, this Con-Dem government does not have a large majority and cannot claim a mandate for what they are doing. In fact, like the case of the Lib Dems on tuition fees, they were elected by promising something else. There is huge and growing anger about what is being done to our public services and at the bankers responsible, who are still paying themselves billions of pounds in bonuses.

I am confident that the Con-Dems can be turned back, but that will only happen if we are prepared to fight to defend ourselves, alongside others.

Now is a time for maximum unity within the union and between unions – in the face of a ruthless enemy. The TUC march on 26 March next year has to be an important step in that resistance. I'm confident that the FBU can turn out thousands of members and the march will be one of the biggest ever seen in the capital.





Thousands of FBU members lobbied governments at Westminster, Holyrood and the Senedd in November. Firefighter reports on these magnificent events

FBU TELLS GOVERNMENTS

NO FIR

Westminster

Two and a half thousand firefighters descended on London to lobby parliament on 17 November, in the largest Fire Brigades Union gathering in recent years. Firefighters stopped traffic outside the Palace of Westminster, before marching to Downing Street. It was a graphic demonstration of the union's strength and unity as we head for the difficult period ahead.

Firefighters heard speakers call for united action against public sector cuts. Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the

PCS civil service union, told the lobby his members are 100% behind the FBU in London and nationally.

Public servants like firefighters face job cuts, a pay freeze and attacks on pensions. Serwotka said there was "no case for a single job to be lost, or a single penny to be cut from public services".

He called for public sector workers to take action together, including strike action. "If you never fight at all, you lose every single time," he said.

Katy Clark, Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran, said the Con-Dem government was using the cuts to take

back power from the working class and the poor and to reverse the generations of gains won on their behalf.

John Cryer, Labour MP for Leyton and Wanstead, warned firefighters to be vigilant as the government was likely to extend the anti-trade union laws to handcuff the trade union movement.

Ian Leahair, FBU executive council member for London, introduced Sian Griffiths, who was given a rousing ovation. Sian, a loyal FBU member for 25 years and recently awarded the QFSM, was suspended during the London dispute. She told the audience: "Never be



Firefighters march down Whitehall

ECUTS

victims. Stay strong. Stick together.”

TUC deputy general secretary Frances O’Grady argued that unions need to take the public with them in the campaign against cuts. The TUC demonstration on 26 March would be vital in building a massive coalition against austerity.

John McDonnell MP, secretary of the FBU’s parliamentary group, said the student protests in London were just the beginning of public anger against indiscriminate and unnecessary cuts.



FBU general secretary Matt Wrack thanked members for the “magnificent” turnout. He attacked chief fire officers who had doubled their salaries and built their empires yet failed to stand up for the service.

“Only the FBU will defend the service. We are the voice of the professionals,” he said.

Wrack denounced the privateers, spivs, speculators and cowboys like AssetCo that want to take over the fire and rescue service and run it for a profit.

The general secretary told the lobby that the government planned to rob firefighters of hard-won pensions, demanding that we “pay more, work longer and still get less”.

He warned that gains fought for and won by previous generations were under attack. Nothing is handed out for free – it all has to be fought for and defended. “Get together, get organised – we will not be broken,” he said.

After the rally many members went to the House of Commons to lobby their MPs about the cuts. MPs found themselves harangued and hounded by



firefighters around the corridors of power. The day culminated in an impromptu march to parliament and then to Downing Street by nearly 1,000 members, who were in good voice.

The mood was well captured by FBU B&EMM national secretary Samantha Samuels. She said: "Remember. We are standing on the shoulders of giants who fought for the conditions that we have now, and we must also continue the fight to save our service."

Edinburgh

More than 100 firefighters and control staff converged on the Scottish parliament on 25 November to raise the profile of their campaign to protect the fire and rescue service. As well as concerns around pay and pensions, FBU members highlighted the public safety dangers of cutting this vital emergency service.

With the service already facing a financial squeeze, the FBU has seen proposal after proposal from Scottish fire and rescue authorities to reduce the number of frontline firefighters, fire engines and control rooms. Added to this is the threat of cuts to conditions of service, a four-year pay freeze and proposed increases to the current 11% pension contribution, FBU members had a lot to lobby MSPs about.

The FBU held a short rally outside the parliament, addressed by general secretary Matt Wrack and James Kelly, Labour MSP with the shadow community safety portfolio. Members then made their way to a meeting room that MSPs had been asked to drop in to.

Roddy Robertson, FBU executive council member for Scotland, said: "This proved very successful and allowed our members and officials to make their points about the cuts that we have all seen over the last 10 years and discuss the proposed cuts that are being planned.

"The Scottish parliament goes to election next May and this was an ideal opportunity to raise issues that will become part of the election, including the future of the fire and rescue service in Scotland."

A special mention went to a dedicated member from Highland & Islands, Vicky



Matt Wrack addresses the London meeting



Members wait to lobby MPs



Members head down Whitehall for Downing Street



Ovation for suspended member Sian Griffiths, who told firefighters: "Never be victims. Stay strong. Stick together."

PICTURES: STEFANO CAGNONI



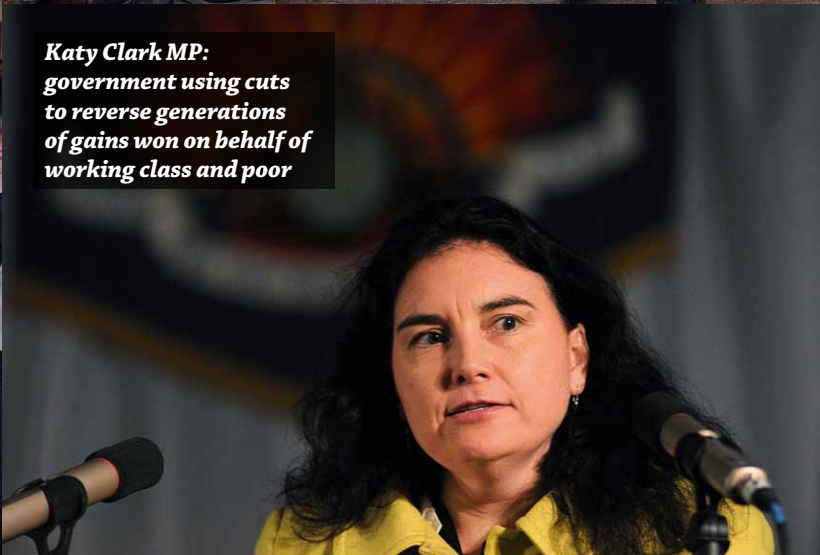
FBU members rallied outside Downing Street



FBU members outside the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh



Katy Clark MP: government using cuts to reverse generations of gains won on behalf of working class and poor



Stonebridge, a RDS member based in Lochcarron on the north west coast of the Scottish Highlands. She travelled by motorbike from Lochcarron to Inverness, 63 miles through the darkness and snow, and then joined the bus with other members to travel 160 miles to Edinburgh – a round trip of 446 miles.

Cardiff

Around 200 firefighters from all over Wales rallied in Cardiff on 17 November to coincide with the announcement of the Welsh Assembly draft budget plan. The demonstration was called to campaign against cuts and to tell Welsh AMs that the Fire Brigades Union will not accept them.

Grant Mayos, FBU regional secretary for Wales, said: "It was essential that we made our presence felt at the Senedd to tell them that we, as public sector workers, will not accept cuts to frontline emergency services in the name of greedy politicians, greedy financial institutions and wealthy bankers who created this financial crisis in the first place.

"Our message was clear, we need investment not cuts!"

He went on: "This is just the start brothers and sisters, and the first of many such rallies and lobbies we will need to undertake in defence of our service in Wales."

Labour AM Alun Davies (Mid and West Wales) spoke passionately in defence of the public sector and its workers and gave a commitment to those gathered that he would fight to protect emergency services in Wales.

Sandy Mewies AM (Labour, Delyn) voiced her concern over possible cuts to frontline services and praised the FBU for its stance.

Brian Gibbons AM (Labour, Aberavon) pledged his support for public services and thanked FBU members from all across the region for attending. The FBU was joined by about 50 members of the PCS civil service union.

Mike Smith, FBU executive council member for Wales, spoke of his fears for the future of our service in Wales and urged members to lobby their Assembly members and local politicians to put pressure on them to protect the fire and rescue service and the people of Wales.

PHIL RANDALL

VIEW

FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM



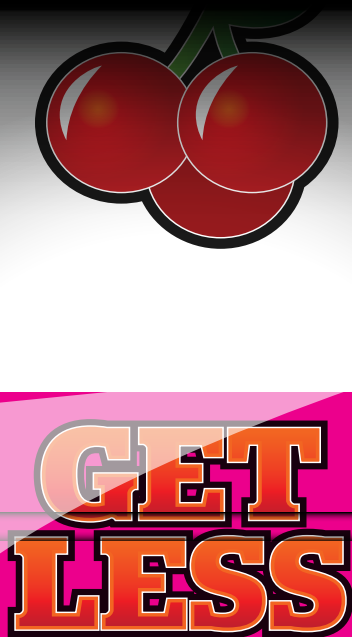
*Scottish TUC demonstration,
23 October, Edinburgh
- a painting by retained
firefighter Vicky Stonebridge*





Gambling with our pensions

Sean Starbuck explains that government plans mean firefighters are expected to pay more but are not told what they are buying



Stakeholders at the firefighters' pension committee received a paper last November that outlined the Treasury's intention to impose a levy on employee contributions across the range of public sector pensions that equates to more than 3% over the next three years. It is completely unreasonable that firefighters are expected to pay more, work longer and get less. We are being told to pay considerably more, and then take a leap of faith that the benefits will be there in the future.

Pay more

Treasury plans would mean that members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS), which already has the highest employee contributions in the public sector, will rise from 11% to over 14% by 2014. A further imposition of tiered contributions is proposed meaning that some senior managers will end up paying 17% in employee contributions.

The New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) does not escape the imposed levy. It will have a 1% rise imposed in 2014 and will also see the introduction of tiered contributions for middle and senior roles, despite already being a 40-year scheme and having an employee contribution rate of 8.5%.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has already seen substantial reform with a new-look scheme introduced in

2008 (Scotland 2009). The new scheme, which already included the introduction of tiered contributions, is still looking at over 3% rises by 2014 and then further proposed attacks on the remaining scheme benefits.

The Treasury say this "cash injection" is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the schemes, until the benefit reforms currently being looked at in the Hutton review are introduced in 2014.

Examples

- *The imposed levy would mean firefighters in the FPS face making contributions of around £330 per month, a rise of over £70, and the prospect of inevitable cuts to benefits being imposed in 2014.*
- *A firefighter (control) in the LGPS, in addition to benefit changes in 2014, would also be looking at an imposed employee contribution rate increase of around £70 per month.*
- *By far the worst hit would be senior managers. With the additional levy, a flexi-duty area manager would pay over £300 extra per month.*

Work longer for less

The FBU is objecting strongly to any proposal to increase retirement ages or to replace final salary schemes with career average ones.

Any proposal to increase retirement ages is ludicrous and nobody has provided any evidence to say that firefighters can maintain operational fitness in the numbers required to show that any such proposal would be feasible.

The government's intention is to create a situation in which firefighters in all roles will be expected to work longer and receive smaller pensions on their retirement, even though they will be expected to pay more for this.

Even the guarantee that accrued pensions will be protected is not accurate, as the proposed change to indexation from the retail price index to the consumer price index will mean that future pensions will be devalued.

The FBU is looking into the possibility of challenging the imposed change in indexing.

Campaign

In November 2,500 firefighters lobbied parliament to protest against cuts in the service. Many took the opportunity to meet their MP and to highlight these attacks on our pensions.

This is the first step in a campaign that the FBU is launching to defend quality public sector pensions. We cannot have a situation where firefighters are forced out of their pension schemes by unacceptable employee contribution levels.

We cannot have a situation where firefighters are expected to pay more for a scheme where unrealistic and unacceptable benefit changes are imposed.

The FBU will continue to fight for the pension rights of its members. The FBU is the only union that can make a difference in the fire service. Others make plenty of noise, but it seems that it will, once again, be left to the FBU and its members to take up this challenge.

Over the next few months the extent of these attacks on our pension scheme will be unveiled and we must be ready to react.

The theme of the Hutton review was affordability, sustainability and fairness. The evidence of it so far, from a firefighter's perspective, is that all it will deliver is a pension scheme that is unaffordable, unsustainable and unfair.

The message from the FBU is clear. We cannot and will not accept these attacks on the pension schemes of our members.

'The best we could

Firefighter looks at the testimony from the London bombings

The coroner's inquests into the 7/7 London bombings began last year. Some 52 people were killed by four bombers on 7 July 2005. Three bombs went off at around 08.50 on underground trains near Aldgate, Edgware Road and between King's Cross and Russell Square tube stations. The final explosion took place an hour later on a bus in Tavistock Square, near Euston.

The inquests are important because, for the first time, they provide the testimonies of firefighters, victims and their families, as well as other transport and emergency workers who assisted with the rescue.

What is clear so far is that firefighters played an irreplaceable role "doing what needed to be done", as one put it: rescuing the injured and tending the stricken. An officer summed it up well: The fire service did "the best we could at that time".

Aldgate

Firefighters were the first emergency service to arrive at Aldgate. Firefighters volunteered to go into the station despite the risk of secondary devices and the possibility of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) hazards.

The firefighters who were first onto the train found "a number of deceased passengers lying on the floor along with body fluids, human tissue and detached limbs strewn about the floor, walls and ceiling of the carriage. There was also a number of living casualties, some still in their seats or on the floor."

Firefighters assisted the injured and helped evacuate the

Coroner's tribute to firefighters at Aldgate

[To McPartland] "Given the publicity that has attached to some parts of the evidence in this inquest, I think it's important to point out that we all know there are many firefighters all over London, all over the country, like you, who that day, and every day, were prepared to put their lives on the line for the sake of others."

[To Jones] "As soon as you realised people were in trouble, you did everything possible to go and help and you stayed in the most appalling conditions until you knew that there was no one

left alive for you to help. I thank you for everything you did."

[To Richards] "Thank you very much for everything you did. You and your crew showed the kind of courage and determination that we've come to expect from the fire brigade."

[To Turner] "I hope the bereaved families gain some comfort from the fact that there were people like you who tried to get to the scene as quickly as you possibly could and did everything that you could while you were there."



JOHN STILLWELL/PA PHOTOS

d do at that time'



JANE MINGAY/PA PHOTOS

train. It was firefighters who improvised stretchers. And it was firefighters who were last out, after an hour and a half in some of the worst conditions they had ever seen. The role they played was generously praised by the coroner, Lady Justice Hallett.

The Aldgate inquest has cleared up one myth spread by the media – that somehow firefighters delayed going on to the train because of safety procedures. The perceived delay was mainly because firefighters attended to the injured coming out of the station when they arrived. As for going onto the track, it was not clear that the power was off when the first firefighters reached the platform. Rightly, officers did not want to see casualties and firefighters electrocuted – only adding to the horror of the incident. In reality, the delay was minimal.

Left: Firefighters bring up injured from Aldgate tube

Above: Injured tube passengers are escorted away from Edgware Road tube station

Below: Passenger Davinia Turrell is helped to safety at Aldgate station



GARETH CATERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES

Edgware Road

At Edgware Road, the first appliance was initially sent to the wrong address, which meant that firefighters did not reach the right tube station until half an hour after the bomb went off.

When firefighters did get onto the train, they found the bombed carriage “was quite extensively damaged with body parts and blood everywhere”. Firefighters improvised a “one-way” evacuation route for casualties through the doors of an adjacent train. They also tended to dead passengers – receiving praise from the solicitor of one of the victims.

There are many lessons to be learned from the 7/7 bombings and some are likely to emerge from these inquests. Above all, firefighters did their utmost to rescue the victims from the worst experience of their lives.

Source: All comments are from the coroner's inquests into the London bombings of 7 July 2005. The coroner's inquests website publishes the transcripts: <http://7julyinquests.independent.gov.uk> Future issues of Firefighter will cover the other inquests.

Coroner praises firefighters at Edgware Road

[To Darsley] “I have no doubt that Mr Biddle and a number of other seriously injured passengers are delighted that you didn't wait, that you shrugged your shoulders [at the danger] and got on with your job. Mr Biddle would not have survived but for the prompt attention that the likes of you and others gave to him.”

[To Nunan] “You have heard how much your actions meant

to the family of Jennifer Nicholson. So thank you for what you did.”

[To Anderson] “[You were] another firefighter who shrugged his shoulders at the danger and did everything possible to assist the seriously injured.”

[To Loft] “Thank you for all that you and your colleagues did to evacuate the seriously injured.”

Your health

Heart disease – protect yourself and others



Heart and circulatory diseases cause more than one in three of all deaths in the UK, accounting for around 200,000 deaths each year.

For deaths before the age of 75, heart disease, by itself, is the UK's biggest killer and the most common cause of premature death in the UK.

Firefighters

There are concerns about firefighters and heart disease. Academic research in the United States has shown that almost half (45%) of on-duty firefighters' deaths are the result of coronary heart disease and that most are "work-precipitated".

In the UK, FBU research, published in the report *In the Line of Duty*, found that many of the on-duty deaths listed as natural causes in old HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services reports involved firefighters suffering heart attacks. The union knows of 36 deaths (30% of the total) since 1978 that are attributed to heart attacks. These fatalities took place either at operational incidents or shortly afterwards, or on fire service premises while on duty.

45% of on-duty firefighter deaths in the USA are the result of coronary heart disease and most are 'work-precipitated'

A heavy toll

British Heart Foundation figures show:

- one in five men and one in seven women die from heart disease
- that is around 94,000 heart disease deaths in the UK each year and over 250 every day
- around 2.5 million people are living with heart disease in the UK.

The figures do not include firefighters who died from heart attacks while off duty.

The union wants the issue of heart disease taken seriously within the service.

British Heart Foundation

This year the British Heart Foundation – the leading UK charity dealing with heart disease – is launching its Mending Broken Hearts Appeal.

The charity has been going for 50 years and says this is its most ambitious project ever. It aims to raise £50m to fund vital research to make the first repairable human heart a reality in the next decade. It says people of



all ages will benefit – if they can raise the money.

By investing in research into regenerative medicine, specifically world-leading stem cell



research and developmental biology, BHF scientists believe they will be able to develop the technology to help the heart and circulatory system "heal itself". This would help those suffering with heart failure following a heart attack. This is scientifically achievable and the precedent already exists in nature – zebra fish, for

Mending broken hearts appeal

example, can repair their own hearts.

Research

The research should also help scientists learn how to prevent the development of heart disease, by improving the body's ability to repair itself.

It could help create heart valves from human tissue that would help people with diseased or abnormal valves. Scientists could even learn how to make new blood vessels.

Over the next five years, the BHF aims to attract scientists from around the world to work in this area and to fund two BHF centres of regenerative medicine. It is hoped that within five years early clinical trials to test the results of the research can begin. Within 10 years the BHF hopes to run trials involving large numbers of people so that in a further decade people who are living with heart disease will be able to look forward to a brighter future.

■ For more information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3yomaey>

Legal Beagle

Equality at work

FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
LINE
0808
100 6061

Q I have heard there is a new law that will protect carers from being discriminated against. Is this right?

A The Equality Act 2010, which became law on 1 October, provides protection for those who are discriminated against because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

This means that if a man is refused flexible working to look after an elderly parent, while other workers who do not have to care for an elderly parent have been allowed to work flexibly, then he may be able to argue that he has been discriminated against because of the protected characteristic of age arising from his association with his elderly parents.

Q I have heard that the new Equality Act means I cannot be asked questions about my health at interview. Is this correct?

A Section 60 of the Equality Act provides that an employer may only ask a candidate about

health-related issues in order to help decide whether they need to make reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process; to determine whether or not the interviewee can carry out an essential job function; to take positive action to assist disabled people; and to monitor the diversity of applicants for the job.

The act of asking a question about disability or health, known as a prohibited question, is not in itself a form of discrimination. However, if the employer uses answers given in response to a prohibited question in

their decision to appoint the candidate or not, this may be good evidence in a discrimination claim.

If you are asked a question about your health during a job interview and you are not given the post, you should write to the employer and ask for reasons why you were not selected. You can do this by using the questionnaire procedure that is provided for under s.138 of the Equality Act.

If the reason you were not selected was as a result of an answer to a question in relation to your health, you may be able to argue that

you have been discriminated against because of your disability.

However, you cannot pursue a claim of discrimination against your employer simply for being asked a prohibited question. Only the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the EHRC) has the power to investigate the use of prohibited questions and to take action where appropriate.

Q I have been asked by a male member if he can bring a claim of harassment because he saw a female colleague being subjected to sexist comments by a senior colleague. He says he found this behaviour offensive and that it created a bad working environment. I am not sure if there is anything he can do?

A Under the Equality Act, witnesses to harassment can also bring a claim of harassment, provided that they can show that the conduct was related to a protected characteristic, such as sexual harassment, and that the conduct had the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Your member would also have to be able to satisfy an employment tribunal that it was reasonable for him to hold those views.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

“You can either cope with pressure or you can’t”

Essex firefighter Danny Lawrence won a Commonwealth Games silver medal

Gymnastics

Talk about “retiring” on a high note. Brentwood firefighter Danny Lawrence competed in three world championships and a European championship before returning from the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi with a silver team medal. He was British team captain in the men’s artistic gymnastics event – where elite athletes combine power, skills and artistry.

Now 27, Danny took up gymnastics at nine. He started competing internationally at 16 and in recent years has spent up to 30 hours a week honing his skills in the gym.

International travel comes with the territory, and Danny has competed in many far-flung places – including China, Russia, Turkey and Australia. “It’s a good way to see the world,” he says.

Nothing to complain about in Delhi

Delhi certainly did not disappoint – although before the team set off there was a lot of “bad press” warning that conditions were chaotic and that the site was not properly prepared. Fortunately, this was not what Danny and his team mates found.

“Despite what we’d read, everything was fine. It was a fantastic experience. The monsoon weather had stayed longer than expected, which was the main cause for delays. We had an incredible time and found

nothing to complain about.

“Day-to-day life in the athletes’ village was great. We had full use of whatever we needed, including a 24-hour food court, gym, internet access. Everything was laid on to make our stay comfortable.”

The team knew they would have to get used to competing in the Delhi climate to make sure their performance didn’t suffer.

Sweltering Indian heat

Sweltering Indian heat was very different from the UK climate – and athletes had to make a speedy readjustment. Up against stiff international competition, the British gymnasts knew they needed to put in the best performance possible using the apparatus stipulated in the contest.

The “six pieces” on which gymnasts display their skill and artistry consist of the vault, the “rings”, the “pommel” horse, the parallel bars, the high bar – and, of course, the floor.

Gymnasts follow a code of points, working to a manual mapping out thousands of moves. But within these disciplined constraints, there is plenty of scope for artistry.

Dismounting from the apparatus often consists of complicated moves – from double somersaults to multiple twists.

For spectators and of course the judges, artistic



Danny Lawrence (second left) and his team celebrate England's silver in the men's artistic gymnastics team event at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi. (l-r) Max Whitlock, Steve Jehu, Luke Folwell and Reiss Beckford

PICTURES: STEPHEN POND/EMPICS SPORT



DANNY LAWRENCE

Danny Lawrence, a firefighter at Brentwood in Essex for more than six years, was captain of England's medal-winning men's artistic gymnastics team event at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in India

gymnastics at this level consists of disciplined moves delivered with potentially medal-winning artistry. The stakes are high and there's everything to play for.

Preparation is all. "We flew out a week before we competed," says Danny. "We knew we would feel rubbish for the first few days, getting over the flight and trying to adjust to the hot weather – as well as training twice a day to prepare for the competition. Gymnastics is a very precise sport – which is why you have to train for up to 30 hours a week.

"But all that training can't prepare you for the mental battle of such a big competition. Trying to calm your nerves when you compete can be a challenge in itself. You can either cope with the pressure or you can't." As history shows, Danny and his team mates could.

"We had a trial run two days before the competition, testing out all the kit. It went really well. Once you get past this, it's just a case of keeping your nerve and keeping our bodies ready for the real thing.

Awesome reception

"Fortunately, it all went superbly on the day and we won ourselves a silver team medal, narrowly missing out on the gold. It was a fantastic feeling. We all achieved together as a team and I personally felt honoured and breathed a huge sigh of relief as I was team captain.

"The reception we all received on returning was awesome. For me it was like the final curtain call – so a great way for me to respectfully retire from the sport, going out with a bang".

Danny's colleagues at Brentwood fire station, where he has worked for the past six and a half years, have always been supportive. "They seem to think it's quite cool," he says.

Danny has always considered himself a gymnastic all-rounder. "I've always been a six-piece man", he says. But, if pressed, he admits that the high bar is probably his favourite piece of apparatus. The high bar allows for spectacular dismounts – releasing the momentum built up from swinging around the bar.

Don't expect Danny to give up the high bar or the vault in his "retirement". He still expects to get back into the gym – but not to compete internationally.

He hopes to pass on his knowledge and enthusiasm to young gymnasts by taking up coaching. He is also well placed to train as a judge. When elite sportsmen "retire" at 27, there's still a lot to play for.



Danny in action on the parallel bars: Dismounting from apparatus often consists of complicated moves – from double somersaults to multiple twists

Prize Quiz



Win Bose headphones

To win a pair of Bose AE2 headphones please send your answers to the Prize Quiz by 28 February 2011 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Jan/Feb 2011), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 China delayed ongoing trade talks with what country as a result of awarding the Nobel peace prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo?

- A Sweden
- B Norway
- C Denmark
- D Finland

2 Of the following, who was not present as an ambassador in the 2018 World Cup bid?

- A David Beckham
- B Vladimir Putin
- C Andy Anson
- D Sir Bobby Charlton

3 Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, was arrested in London over charges that originated in

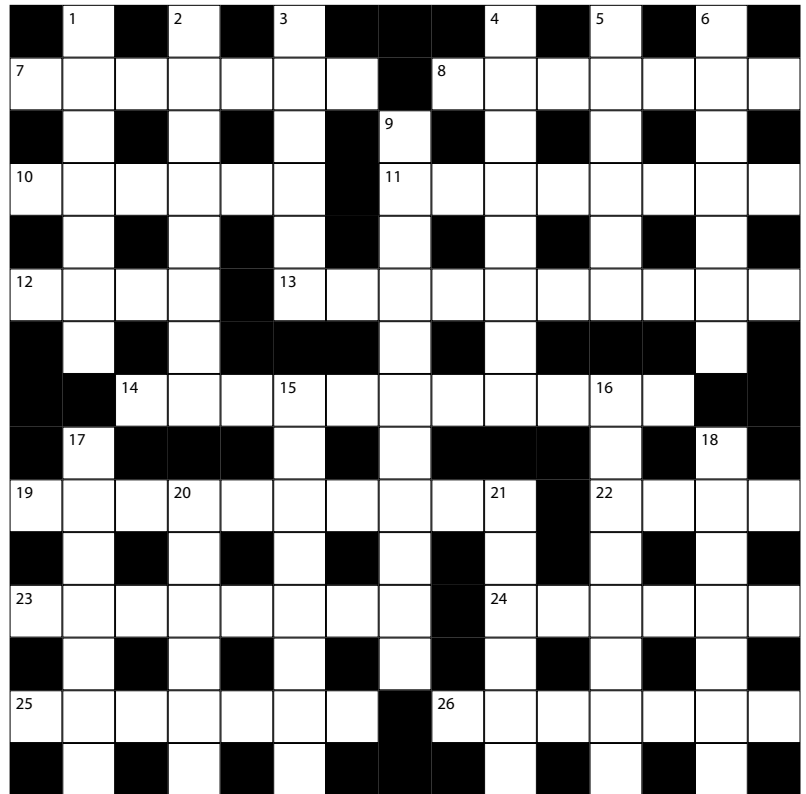
- A United States of America
- B Sweden
- C Norway
- D France

4 In order to cut government borrowing, Spain is selling a share of El Gordo to private investors. El Gordo is

- A A large bronze statue in Valencia, famed for its healing powers
- B A Barcelona museum devoted to culinary excess
- C The Christmas lottery
- D A nickname for Real Madrid's football stadium the Bernabeu

5 According to US State Department cables released by WikiLeaks, which country was described as a "virtual mafia state"?

- A Italy
- B Venezuela
- C Russia
- D India



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7 Live with (7)
- 8 Not artificial (7)
- 10 The workers' weapon when all else fails (6)
- 11 Breathing out (8)
- 12 Document that allows one to enter or leave a country (4)
- 13 Drawn out (10)
- 14 What we all need to do on March 26, to defend 5, 23 (11)
- 19 Five-discipline athletics event (10)
- 22 Lake, especially in the Lake District (4)
- 23 See 5
- 24 19th-century French-Polish composer (6)
- 25 Compare the what? Ah, simples! (7)
- 26 Said (7)

DOWN

- 1 Noses should have one on each side (7)
- 2 Steer or plot a way through (8)
- 3 Nasty multi-vehicle RTA, often on motorway (4-2)
- 4 One who collects (food) – goes with hunter (8)
- 5, 23 What we need to 14 on March 26 to protect (6, 8)
- 6 Usually two-dimensional visual artist (7)
- 9 Unforgiving, without let-up (11)
- 15 Optometrist (8)
- 16 Bearing permanent skin decorations (8)
- 17 Sporting judge – you'll need two to get the job! (7)
- 18 Targeted: what all fire-fighters should be! (7)
- 20 Boozier (6)
- 21 Main slogan when we 14 to save 5, 23 on March 26 (2, 4)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution November/December

November/December quiz answers

- 1 A
- 2 D
- 3 A
- 4 A
- 5 C

Winner of the October quiz
Charles Brimecombe, Anglesey

Station Cat

Millions for spin – cuts for the frontline



*Brian Coleman:
isn't it time he
had a rest?*

Access all areas

 During the two recent one-day strikes in London, the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Sun* seemed to have unfettered access to the staff records kept by London Fire Brigade. They were able to regale their readers with details that could only have come from personnel files. How did they get them? Station Cat thought it was time to take a look at the LFB's press office, and is still reeling ...

PR millions

 The "supplies and services" budget for the London Fire Brigade's public relations department – not including any salaries at all – is a staggering £567,197. That's more than half a million pounds a year on buying paper clips, lunching contacts, running PR events, that sort of thing. And that's before they start paying the salaries of the 27 staff, who seemed to be deployed pretty well full time during the recent dispute rubbishing in the press the firefighters the brigade employs. The top dog in this PR outfit gets £90,000 in salary alone, before you start bothering with his pension contributions. His two deputies are on a scale which gives them a minimum of £54,910. That's over a million pounds every year going into trying to make chief fire officer Ron Dobson look good and the firefighters who work for him look bad. No wonder they're having to shut fire stations and get rid of fire engines and firefighters.



Move it on up

 It turns out that Richard Stokoe, the £90,000-a-year head of communications for London Fire Brigade, thinks the FBU's proposed Bonfire Night strike in London was a good idea. He told the PR person's trade magazine *PR Week*: "Bonfire night threats of strikes did more for cut-through into the political and media world than the strikes they had held in the three weeks before their announcement. Yes, there were lots of anti-noises, but it certainly moved it much further up the political agenda." He's right, of course – when London firefighters behaved nicely, and negotiated peaceably, they were being trashed by their bosses, the odious chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, Brian Coleman (aided, it has to be said, by the vast, inflated and hugely expensive PR department run by Mr Stokoe.) When they talked of a strike on November 5, the political establishment sat up and listened.

Oh brother

 One of the details leaked to selected newspapers was that a large number of London firefighters don't live in London. The union was able to show that this is because they can't afford London prices. Oddly, no one mentioned that Gary Dobson, brother of chief fire officer Ron Dobson and one of the many LFB people on six figure salaries, lives (and plays golf) on the Isle of Wight.

Sticks and stones

 One of the good things to come out of the London strike was the much higher profile obtained by councillor Brian Coleman, chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The more Coleman went on television and insulted London firefighters, the better. He's like Pooh Bah in *The Mikado* – he was born sneering. The Cat ordered up a celebratory bowl of cream when it heard that Coleman's bile had burst its banks, and he had said: "The union are thoroughly unpleasant and nasty lot – they always have been ... You just have to stand up to thugs and bullies ... Most of the union officials, if they had half a brain cell, they'd be dangerous. Most of them are thick, can't string a sentence together and frankly are incoherent. We have to break the FBU frankly ..." Then he went on LBC with James O'Brien and spent a cringingly embarrassing hour being exposed on live radio. At one point he walked out of the studio, then went back in again.

Taxi for Coleman!

 Unfortunately, all this fun doesn't come cheap. Coleman pulls in £128,864 a year from the taxpayer for sitting on committees. On top of this, he claims thousands of pounds a year for cabs – more than £10,000 in 2006-7. He claimed a £119 taxi fare to the Fire Service Awards Ceremony in May 2009, £143 to attend Westminster's Lord Mayor's reception for the Lord Mayor of

London, and £140 for a taxi to take him and his mum to the 2010 firefighters' service of remembrance at St Paul's. The taxpayer is his main cash cow, but he's also indebted to AssetCo, the private company which has a £9 million a year contract with his Authority, to the tune of four dinners and a £350 Harvey Nichols hamper.

It's time to go

 Entertaining though it is, it's probably not very responsible to let this greedy clown go on chairing the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, so the Cat will be supporting former Labour MP Andrew Dismore's campaign to unseat him as a councillor in May.

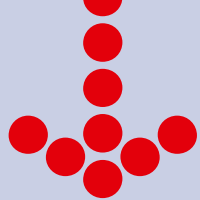
Risk assessment

 Firefighters in Whitehall to demonstrate against the cuts found themselves surrounding Prince Philip's car. The prince smiled and waved at them. He couldn't, of course, see the back of his car as he was driven away, but everyone else could: it bore two prominent



stickers saying "cuts cost lives". Shouldn't the Metropolitan Police have done something? They thought about it. A police officer was overheard running along shouting into his radio: "I've done the risk assessment. There are 2,000 firefighters and two of us, so I'm off."

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



25-year badges



Tony Allen (r), red watch, Lowedges, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Martin Farmer



Willy Bebb (r) city centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Brian Hurst following a fire at a disused school



Colin Bowman (l), Tyne and Wear HQ, receives his 25-year badge from officer rep Richie Tough



Steve Brinkley (r), Union Learning Fund project support organiser, receives his 25-year badge from Suffolk brigade secretary Steve Collins



Ian Burns (l), South Lanarkshire HQ Strathclyde, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Miller (since retired)



Kevin Butler (l) receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams, Dorset with Martin Beevers (far left) and Dan Wigley (far right)



Gregg Cox, (r), blue watch, Hendon, London, receives his 25-year badge from Barnet borough secretary Greg Edwards



Dave Day (l), blue watch, Rayleigh Weir, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Mark Kinsalla



Kevin Dodds (r), Sunderland central, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Eddie Harrison



Jess Eckford (r) Strathclyde HQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Miller (since retired)



Cliff Martin (r), red watch, Dagenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Graham Beers



Glenn Harrison (r), white watch, Keighley, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jim Davies



Tommy Hern (l), green watch, Rayleigh Weir, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Mark Kinsalla. Looking on: (l – r) Paul Jones, Richard Blakeborough, Sy Artus, Nigel Davidge, Kim Polley, Luke Hardy, Mark Crouch and Tony Vickress



Ronnie Goldwater (l) Fairweather Green, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from Bradford divisional secretary John Rankin with blue watch looking on



Andy McCafferty (r), Strathclyde HQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Miller (since retired)



David Middlemiss (c), green watch, McDonald Road, Lothian & Borders, receives his 25 year badge from membership secretary Bob Thomson. (back l-r) Tony Duncan, Bob Thomson, David Middlemiss, Steven Latimer, Fraser Monaghan; (front l-r) Craig Wilson, Calum Murray



Steve Miller (r), blue watch, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Aston Everett



Ted Moss (r), red watch, Hendon, London, receives his 25-year badge from Barnet borough secretary Greg Edwards



Paul Moth (l), blue watch, Rayleigh Weir, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Mark Kinsalla



Joe O'Keeffe (r), green watch, Keighley, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jim Davies



Julian Saunders (l), red watch, Lowdges, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Stuart Thompson



Paul Tait (l) Newcastle North, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Colin Tucker



Gary Wallace (r), South Glasgow, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Miller (since retired)



Chris Wallis (l) and Chris Cage (r) receive their 25-year badges from Suffolk brigade secretary Steve Collins



Ian Wood (l) and Gordon Smith (r), Tyne and Wear, receive their 25-year badges from officer rep Steve Clark



Martyn Anderson (l) receives his 25-year badge from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais

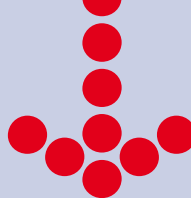


Doel (Jack) Akwala (l) receives his 25-year badge from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais on a picketline



Keith Warrick (l) white watch, East Greenwich, London, receives his 25-year badge from Lewisham borough branch rep Adam Andrews with white watch members looking on

25-year badges



Stuart Wilson (r), red watch, Gipton, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Glyn Kelly



Nev Brookes (l) white watch, Worcester, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Pete Hope



Tim Gibson (l), Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch health and safety rep John Ripley



Bob Wilkins (r) Bridgwater, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from region 13 EC member Tam McFarlane



Andy Isherwood (r) red watch, Longton, receives his 25-year badge from Staffordshire brigade secretary Graeme Mcleod



Grant Lewis (r), Bridgwater, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from region 13 EC member Tam McFarlane



Paul McMillan (l), health and safety co-ordinator Hampshire, receives his 25-year badge from Hampshire officers' chair Gary Jackson



Phil Wilding (r), Chester fire safety department, receives his 25-year badge from Chester FBU branch chair Dave Doneo with members of Chester blue watch and fire safety looking on



John Hoggarth (l), Frizington, West Cumbria, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety co-ordinator Ade Kevern. Looking on: (l to r) Ryan Park, Mark Troughton, Dave Currie, Adrian Banks and Bruce Taylor



Tony Margetts (r), Bridgwater Fire Station, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from region 13 EC member Tam McFarlane



Clive Symonds (r) green watch, Droitwich, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Ian Grant

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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 photographic prints or digital picture 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.