

FireFighter

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

May 2011

**LESSONS
FROM THE
WOOLWORTHS
FIRE**

See p10

**UNITY
MAKES
US STRONG**

FBU members' determination wins another
long fight for justice See page 4





Matt Wrack

FBU continues to represent our members

The political situation may be a difficult one, but the Fire Brigades Union has won some notable successes in recent weeks, which we can be justly proud of. We have shown that when we stand together in unity, we can make progress.

TUC march

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended the demonstrations in London and Belfast on 26 March. It was a marvellous day, with well over half a million trade unionists and their families putting on a remarkable show of solidarity and determination.

The attendance from FBU members was fantastic. The London march saw the largest turnout in living memory from our union at a wider labour movement event. Many have praised the size, discipline and organisation of the FBU section of the march. Many enjoyed our pipe band, from Humberside, who led us around London. There are photos in this magazine and two films on our website.

I am aware that many other members were unable to attend due to work or other commitments. There will be other opportunities at local and national level to stand together and say: No to cuts, No to austerity; Hands off our pensions!

Justice for our officials

In last month's *Firefighter*, we reported that one of the

longest-running miscarriages of justice in fire service history had finally been resolved. West Midlands member, Brother Steve Godward, finally won full reinstatement, back pay and full pension rights from the West Midlands fire service.

I am very pleased to report that we have won a further significant victory against victimisation in the case of Merseyside member, Brother Kevin Hughes.

Kevin was disciplined and sacked on 22 July 2009. This followed allegations relating to an incident outside of work involving an argument about strike-breaking.

The dismissal resulted in industrial action in Merseyside.

The outcome of the action included an agreement that in the event of Kevin Hughes winning reinstatement at an employment tribunal, the fire authority would respect such a reinstatement notice. It is important to note that employment tribunals rarely grant reinstatement orders and regrettably employers frequently ignore such orders.

Kevin has now been reinstated and started back at work. Like the case of Steve Godward, this case has been long and difficult. The FBU has always had confidence in our case against victimisation and I am sure all members will join me in wishing Brother Hughes all the best for his return to work.

Warwickshire

FBU members will have followed closely the developments relating to the fatal fire at Atherstone on Stour in Warwickshire, where our members Brothers Reid, Averis, Stephens and Yates-Badley died in 2007. The union continues to seek justice for our members and to provide legal assistance to their families.

In addition, large numbers of FBU members have been interviewed as part of the police-HSE investigation. As I write, the court case was due to begin on 6 May. This is a very important case and unprecedented in the history of the UK fire and rescue service. Legal advice and representation has been provided or offered through separate solicitors to all members involved.

I recently attended a members' meeting where all these issues were discussed in great detail. I am sure that all members will appreciate the difficulties which are faced in this terrible and tragic situation. I can assure you that every effort has been made to ensure that all those involved have been provided with the best possible support and representation from the FBU and our solicitors and legal advisors.

In addition to legal advice and representation, the union has been undertaking a thorough investigation of the health and safety issues involved in the fatalities. This will be published once completed and when it is appropriate to do so.



The TUC march in London saw the largest turnout in living memory from our union at a wider labour movement event

IAN DAVIES

Contents

Standing together in solidarity

Egypt's
new
workers'
movement
needs our
solidarity

JESS HURD/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



10



Will they ever learn? Lessons like those of the Manchester Woolworths fire of 1979 are being overlooked once again

Features

10 In living memory

The Manchester Woolworths fire of 1979

12 Solidarity with Egyptian workers

Egypt's democratic revolution has inspired a new workers' movement that needs our support

14 Workforce development

Challenges posed by workforce development still at the forefront for the FBU

16 Challenges ahead for control staff

Services jump the gun ahead of government consultation

News

4 Another fantastic victory

Merseyside firefighter reinstated after two years

5 Frontline cuts

West Midlands plans expose the emptiness of politicians' pledges of no cuts to frontline services

6 My journey of discovery

Mike Smith's 31 years of service to the FBU

7 News focus

Your questions about the part-time workers' settlement answered

Regulars

5 Sounding off

What next after the TUC demonstration on 26 March?

8 Aerial ladder platform

Pictures from the TUC march

18 Health and safety

New guidelines could promote risk-taking

19 Legal Beagle

Can an employer forbid access to a work email network?

20 Day off

Andrew Cooper's cycle trip from the Isle of Wight to Gibraltar is dedicated to a great firefighter

22 Puzzles

Win a Dancook barbecue and firepit

23 Station Cat

The news they don't want you to hear

24 25-year badges



Cover picture shows Steve Godward (l), who won his case in West Midlands last month after eight years, with Kevin Hughes (r) from Merseyside, who has won reinstatement after two years.

JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

LETTERS

Thanks for support in my fight for an injury pension

I was a serving sub-officer when I had to retire on ill-health grounds due to depression in 2002. The London fire brigade said this was not due to service, as it was not caused in the execution of my duty.

With the support of the union in London, and especially London regional secretary Joe MacVeigh who assisted and supported me through three medical appeals, I have eventually been awarded an injury pension.

From day one, when I contacted the regional office and Joe got back to me, I felt that I was in good, capable hands.

After retiring in 2002, I lodged an appeal against not being awarded an injury pension. I attended my first medical appeal in 2005 and the board of medical referees decided that the injuries I received were a qualifying injury. London fire brigade started judicial review proceedings to have the board's decision squashed.

Appeal two came in 2008 when the board of medical referees found in favour of the brigade, after changing the wording on why I had to retire from depression to "reaction to change". So it was into the high court this time. The judge reversed the medical board's decision and instructed that a new medical panel be set up.

Appeal three was in December 2010, where the medical board decision was that my permanently disabling condition which ended my career in the brigade was occasioned by a qualifying injury. The board found that while I was carrying out my managerial duties at work all that happened caused my condition and the brigade and management failed to support me.

Thank you the London region of the FBU and all who have supported me.

Ray Jones

OOT member of the FBU

A fantastic victory

Dear Firefighter,

“ It is with great delight and enormous relief, due in no small part to the support that the FBU has given to me and my family, that I am able to write this letter.

My name is Kevin Hughes. I have been a firefighter since 1994 and an official of the FBU since 1999. I am currently the vice chair of Merseyside FBU brigade committee.

Three years ago I was suspended from duty pending a police investigation for an alleged assault in a public house close to my home – an accusation I have always denied.

The next day I provided a statement to the police. They quickly decided no further action should be taken. But then Merseyside fire and rescue service held its own investigation and I would remain suspended from duty. Twelve months later, I was summarily dismissed.

At this point Merseyside FBU members, with the full backing of the executive council, successfully balloted for industrial action in my defence. On the back of that ballot result, a collective agreement was achieved – an agreement that helped get my job back.

In 2010, an employment tribunal decided unanimously that I was unfairly dismissed. In

February this year, the tribunal unanimously ordered my reinstatement. The fire authority agreed to reinstate me into my former role with no loss of service, pay or pension rights. On 27 March I recommenced operational duties.

This was largely due to the collective agreement, which said management would respect the decision of the tribunal if it was to find for unfair dismissal and order reinstatement.

I have no doubt that none of this would have been possible without the fantastic and unswerving support of my union, the FBU. The messages of support that I received were tremendously uplifting, not only for me but for my family.

Thompsons Solicitors were superb. FBU officials and members in Merseyside have also been fantastic throughout this ordeal, not only in keeping my spirits high, but also because they were prepared to take such drastic action to ensure I got a fair hearing.

Our officials, members and members' services all came together to produce this fantastic victory, not only for this trade union but I believe for the trade union movement as a whole.

Strength in unity

Kevin Hughes



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Kevin Hughes: None of this would have been possible without the fantastic and unswerving support of my union, the FBU

Dave Green: Expose the lie that "the frontline is being protected" at every opportunity

PICTURE: ANDREW WIARD



www.fbu.org.uk

'So much for the promise of no frontline cuts'

West Midlands

The safety of the public and firefighters will be endangered by proposed cuts to frontline fire and rescue services in the West Midlands, the FBU has warned.

West Midlands fire and rescue service cut up to 96 frontline firefighters on 4 April. Some stations will have frontline numbers cut but have to staff the same number of fire engines and specialist rescue vehicles.

FBU brigade secretary Andy Dennis said: "The public will see a major change to the level of service they receive, they will

see the numbers of frontline firefighters cut. They may have to wait longer for a fire engine with the right number of firefighters to arrive to put a fire out in their homes. This is a real postcode lottery.

"The safety of firefighters could be at risk because they will also have to wait longer until more fire engines and firefighters arrive. So much for the government's promise of no cuts to frontline services."

The cuts could also see specialist rescue vehicles take longer to arrive at incidents like rescues from water, major road traffic collisions and rescues from high rise buildings.

Funding course 'invaluable'

Education

FBU officials took part in a pilot course on fire and rescue service funding last month to gear up for campaigning against the cuts.

Sean Starbuck, national officer responsible for education, said: "The course was very well received and the students who attended felt that the insight, information and support given by the course materials and the speakers were invaluable to the role of a brigade and regional official.

"They all reported having a much clearer understanding of the financial and funding issues and felt more confident in challenging them locally."

The course is being repeated again later this month.



SOUNDING OFF

Where next after 26 March?

National officer Dave Green on the next steps

Thanks to all our members who turned out for the TUC demonstration on 26 March – what a colourful, noisy and massive impact we had on a tremendously successful day for the trade union movement.

Since then many people, both within and outside our union have asked – what happens next? There are several things we can all do to keep the pressure up.

- The union needs to ensure that all members are discussing the attacks. Ensure your branch debates the model resolution sent out by the general secretary on 10 February.

- Ensure that your local trades council has a regular FBU presence.

- Lobby your politicians, both local and national – whatever their political allegiance they all need to understand that "cuts cost lives".

- Establish links with other trade unions. The defence of our jobs, pensions and pay cannot be done in isolation from other workers – we are all being attacked. Get your branch to invite guest speakers from other unions so we can hear their experiences.

- Get involved in local anti-cuts groups, which bring together trade unions with other community groups. It is essential that our message to the government is one rooted in broad-based opposition.

- Take part in upcoming events such as festivals, community fairs and fun days.

The executive council is considering options to step up the campaign and our conference in May will debate all the options available in opposing the most vicious attack on the fire service, as well as the wider public sector, in living memory. Keep the pressure up.

Your officials are working tirelessly to defend your own local service and they need to be supported with well-attended and active branch meetings. Expose the lie that "the frontline is being protected" at every opportunity.



The Fire Brigades Union is now on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Go to www.fbu.org.uk and follow the links

'My journey of discovery'



Tribute

Mike Smith, executive council member for Wales, will retire from the service and the union this month. Mike has served as an FBU official for 31 years, as a branch secretary, brigade secretary, regional secretary and since 1995 as an executive council member (with a brief spell as acting national treasurer). He is the longest-serving official sitting around the top table.

Mike first attended conference in 1983 (left) and has been every year since then. This year will be his 29th and last.

A direct beneficiary of the union's commitment to education, Mike passionately believes that the education of union officials is of paramount importance.

He first attended national school in 1983 and in the same year started studying with the Open University. After seven years' hard work, he gained a social sciences degree and went on to gain a masters degree in industrial relations from Warwick University. He describes his studies as a "journey of discovery".

Mike said he will miss the comradeship built up over the years, but he does not regret his retirement with the future looking so bleak.

He wants to thank the members in Wales who have placed their confidence in him over the years and elected him to the position of executive council member.

He said: "It has been a privilege and an honour to represent members at the executive council and I thank them for that." He sent his best wishes for the future to all.

'Sterling work on skills'

Unionlearn

Unionlearn celebrated a decade of work in Cornwall recently and has been a great success. That's the verdict of FBU in the south west of England.

FBU south west official Kevin Herniman said: "Our members and their families have benefited greatly from this project.

"The team in Cornwall

has done a sterling job with many unions and has been successful in getting its members onto different learning agendas. This is more important than ever. With the threat of redundancies on the horizon, union members will need all the skills that they have learnt through Unionlearn to find re-employment.

"Allan Guest is our man in Cornwall for the FBU

and he is doing sterling work. He has to battle all the elements as any courses have to follow shift patterns and the geography of Cornwall."

The FBU was in attendance at the Unionlearn conference in Newquay in March, where the work was officially recognised by all who attended, including unions, employers and colleges.

IN BRIEF

FBU at pensions convention

Retired members Dave Cain and Dave Beverley attended the National Pensioners Convention at Southport in March as part of the FBU delegation.

Dave Cain spoke to a resolution that opposed the government decision to change the index used to uprate pensions from the retail price index (RPI) to the consumer price index (CPI).

He criticised the Hutton report, which will mean a more than 15% cut in the value of future pension benefits. Cain explained the real impact this will have, not only



Dave Cain: value of future pensions could be reduced by 15%

on FBU members who have retired, but also on those who have yet to retire. He outlined the options the FBU is considering to challenge this attack.

Compensation for crushed foot

A retained firefighter whose foot was crushed while on duty has received a substantial sum in compensation. Andrew Murray from Lincolnshire was forced to give up firefighting and his job as a financial advisor after the accident in 2006.

The FBU instructed Thompsons Solicitors to pursue a claim for compensation. Lincolnshire fire and rescue service admitted liability and settled the claim out of court.

Murray said: "I became a retained firefighter as I wanted to give something back to the community. My dream of becoming a full-time firefighter was destroyed by the accident because I'm no longer physically able to do the job."

Save the Forensic Science Service

Firefighters know the value of the Forensic Science Service (FSS), which plays an important role in arson investigation. So members were horrified by the government's announcement that the FSS would close within 12-15 months, with work transferred to the private sector. The announcement was made without any consultation with staff or stakeholders and has astonished experts across the globe.

Peter Moss, chair of the FBU's officers national committee, has written to Prospect, the union that organises most workers in the FSS, to pledge the FBU's support in defending the service.



Retained firefighter Les Chappell, Marden, Kent, celebrates the FBU's legal success in ending discrimination against RDS firefighters

Part-time workers' settlement - FAQs

After years of concerted effort to achieve equality for firefighters working the retained duty system, the Fire Brigades Union has finished negotiating an agreement to bring parity between wholetime and retained on terms and conditions.

Members should seek guidance from FBU officials and go to the dedicated website to process compensation claims.

These frequently asked questions will help members affected.

1. Where do I find the address for Thompsons Solicitors so I can send them my documentation?

The only documentation that should be used is the forms provided via Popularis. If you have a non-standard claim you will need to provide evidence to substantiate the claim.

Forms and support papers must be sent back to Popularis. Not Thompsons.

Individuals who are found to have valid claim will be contacted by Thompsons and informed of any revised arrangements. Until told to do otherwise, by Thompsons, please send material to Popularis.

2. I have contacted Popularis with some queries and they have said they cannot assist me – is that correct?

Yes it is. Popularis is essentially acting as a "post office". It is processing data making sure the right letters go out to members and then making sure that the responses are sorted and sent on to Thompsons.

3. I have already contacted Popularis and told them that I accept. That's OK isn't it?

Some members have written to say they will accept before they have seen the compensation calculation. Those members must go through the process. Popularis and Thompsons will only deal with correspondence in the prescribed manner. You must use the online system or, if you prefer, the hard-copy form sent to you by post.

4. The biggest question for me is do I have to repay my bounty payments?

Categorically – No! One of the first successes the FBU achieved in the negotiations was agreement that the employer would not try to recover the bounty payments. This agreement has been

reached with the national employers. In addition, agreement was reached that bounty payments will not be recovered by the fire and rescue service as part of the pension arrangements either.

5. The part-time workers' legal challenge was also about pensions. There are no details of the pension arrangements in the paperwork. What's happening with the pensions?

The pension arrangements are being dealt with through separate discussions with CLG. It is a very different process. Once the negotiations finished they need to be written up and passed through the parliamentary process. This was delayed by a number of months due to the calling of the election (when new bills or statutory instruments are suspended). There was a further delay as a result of the talks between the parliamentary parties to form a government and a further delay for the new minister to be briefed on all the live issues on fire service matters. This process is back on track and has been for a while.

 The dedicated website for claims: www.retainedfirefighterclaims.org.uk



VIEW FROM THE AERIAL LADDER PLATFORM





In living memory

Region 5 secretary Kevin Brown recalls the Manchester Woolworths fire of 1979 and reflects on how government may, yet again, be ignoring lessons from that and other fires

Ladders and a hydraulic platform were used to rescue people in the Woolworths fire. Now Greater Manchester fire and rescue service says aerial platforms cannot be considered as rescue appliances

PICTURE: MEN SYNDICATION



The fire at Woolworths department store in Manchester on Tuesday 8 May 1979 was recently the subject of a programme in BBC Radio 4's "In Living Memory" series.

It certainly was "in living memory" for me. I was one of the firefighters who attended. I cannot forget the scene crews were met with at the time. Ten people died. The images from that fire were seen around the world, members of staff trapped behind iron bars at a window on the first floor with thick black smoke issuing behind them.

This was vividly recounted during the programme by people who were working at the store on that day

The disaster led to a major shake-up in UK fire safety laws, after the

investigation revealed that foam fillings in furniture at the store had made the situation much worse.

Why health and safety?

This got me to thinking. For some time now we have heard worrying statements from government, the right-wing press, fire authority councillors and chief fire officers that the emergency services should not be constrained by restrictive legislation, including health and safety.

Bizarrely, at the same time, these people also say they are not advocating a casual approach to, or disregard for, health and safety. Which is it to be?

These same people do, though, advocate a reduction in emergency response standards, whether by weight of attack (numbers of fire engines/ number of firefighters crewing them), or speed of attack (slower attendance times or even "non-blue-light" responses to incidents). To quote the line spun by several councillors: "People who die in fires are already dead by the time the fire service responds."

Legislation

As professional firefighters, we know only too well why we have this "restrictive" legislation. We have seen the Factories Act 1961 (eight killed in a fire at Eastwood Mills, Keighley, Yorkshire in February 1956); the Licensing Act 1964 (19 killed in the Top Storey Club in Crown Street, Bolton on 1 May, 1961; multiple rescues); the Fire Precautions Act 1971 (11 killed, 17 rescued, Rose and Crown Hotel, Saffron Walden, on Boxing Day 1969); and many more legislative measures, most brought together under the Regulatory Reform Act 2005.

Yes, lessons have been learned the hard way. People die, then we attempt to prevent the same thing happening again and again and again.

As professional firefighters, we remember those lessons we have had to learn the hard way, following death or injury to our comrades. Fires at Covent Garden in 1954 and Smithfield Market in 1958 resulted in firefighters being killed and, because of outcry at these deaths, a Home Office committee of inquiry published guidance for the use of breathing apparatus in fire service circular 37/1958. This and subsequent procedures – as well as improvement in breathing apparatus – have evolved to give better firefighter safety.

Lessons learned?

So what improvements have we seen in the modern fire service? Well, no one doubts the value of community fire safety and the fitting of smoke alarms,

but it is a fact that smoke alarms actually only make a difference in about one third of fires to which we are called (*Fire Statistics*, United Kingdom 2008). Furthermore, none other than the Audit Commission have stated that: "Some evidence suggests fire services' CFS work is having a positive impact; but other research suggests that much of the recent reduction in fires and related casualties is the result of legislative, regulatory, and environmental change outside fire services' direct control." (*Rising to the Challenge*, 2008)

But it is also a fact that the intervention resources must be there when needed. On that day in Manchester in 1979, more than 30 people were rescued by the fire service. Some were pulled from the building by BA crews, some were rescued by ladder and some using the hydraulic platform.

Strangely, when Greater Manchester fire and rescue service cut its aerial fleet by half to "improve the service", we were told these appliances could not be considered as rescue appliances.

Greater Manchester fire and rescue service has also cut fire engines. Two of the first six which attended that day are not now crewed at that time on a Tuesday, including one from Manchester Central!

Yet another cut by Greater Manchester fire and rescue service has been to the number of firefighters crewing those

2 of the first 6 engines which attended that day are not now crewed at that time

appliances that are left. The latest lunatic proposal is to crew appliances at four. Quite what a crew does while awaiting the arrival of supporting crews to enable safe BA procedure has not yet been explained.

I sincerely hope we will not need another government inquiry following firefighter deaths. More than 30 people are alive today who would have perished in that one incident because then we had a properly funded fire service.

At the time of the Woolworths fire we realised that speed and weight of attack are crucial to saving life and protecting firefighters, and we had had a government that supported some accountability and took some responsibility for public services.



WITH THE NEW EGYPTIAN

Egypt's democratic revolution has inspired a new generation. At its centre is a new workers' movement that needs our support

Millions of Egyptians poured onto the streets in January to topple the dictator Hosni Mubarak, who had ruled for as long as most of them had been alive. Tahrir Square in Cairo became "Liberation Square".

As Kamal Abou Aita, president of RETA, the independent tax collectors' union, put it: "I had a feeling of indescribable joy at seeing my lifelong dream coming true. We have been taking to the streets, holding small demonstrations for years, but to see Egyptians taking to the streets en masse, it was a moment of incredible joy."

The revolution in Egypt is probably the most significant event in the Arab world in a generation. Behind it lie years of struggle by workers to organise and build unions.

Old labour front

For decades, only the government-controlled "Egyptian Trade Union Federation" (ETUF) was authorised. Emergency laws and policing by the ETUF made strikes illegal in "strategic" sectors (which included firefighters). Workers could be sacked merely for organising outside the official federation and employers could dismiss workers without giving a reason. Independent workers' organisations were not permitted, though some did gain a foothold.

Despite these anti-union strictures, Egyptian workers struggled for decades to improve their livelihoods. They paid the price of imprisonment, work transfer and even death to make their voice heard. There were martyrs in iron and steel disputes in Helwan in 1989 and in Kafr

Demonstrators in Cairo ride on fire engines during the uprising

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK





WORKERS' MOVEMENT

el-Dawwar near Alexandria in 1994 and strikes in Mehalla el-Kobra in the Nile Delta in 2008.

Out of these battles, workers formed the Centre for Trade Union and Workers Services (CTUWS) in 1990, led by steel worker Kamal Abbas. Despite harassment, arrest and intimidation, it helped workers to assert themselves under the Mubarak dictatorship.

New unions

By the beginning of this year, activists felt the time had come to step up their activity. But none dreamed that they would succeed in overturning the regime so quickly.

Kamal Abou Aita said: "A few days before the revolution on 25 January, myself and the other leaders of the four independent trade unions had already decided to establish a new federation, but

some of us preferred to wait until May Day. When the revolution started, we quickly decided to announce the creation of the new federation on Tahrir Square where we were all gathered on 30 January. We immediately launched a call for a general strike."

He added: "Before the revolution, we were all very afraid, we wondered who would be punished and how. But with the revolution, we felt safer."

First conference

The first conference of the new Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) was held on 2 March in the offices of the journalists' union, next to Tahrir Square.

Tamer Fathy, CTUWS international coordinator, told the Egypt Workers' Solidarity campaign: "It was attended by hundreds of activists from sectors

including the retail tax collectors, health technicians, pensioners, teachers, telecommunications, textile workers, iron and steel and from the industrial regions of Sadat City. The 24,000 workers at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company at Mahalla, in the Nile delta, decided to leave the state union federation and join ours."

The conference demanded that the Egyptian transitional government dissolve the official union federation, hand over its premises and recognise the EFITU. It called on all unions across the world to recognise and support the new independent labour movement.

Since the EFITU was formed, dozens of new unions have sprung up. "The strikes which began before Mubarak fell are still spreading," said Tamer Fathy. "Their main focus is the removal of corrupt bosses linked to the old regime, plus wage rises and permanent contracts for temporary workers.

"The army tried to ban these strikes, but failed completely. Now the authorities are engaged in a cold war against workers, trying to mobilise public opinion, arguing that this is not the time for strike, that we need to build up 'our' economy and so on."

Repression

Fear of repression still hangs over the movement. In a serious development in March, the Egyptian government approved a draft law that would make participating in protests and strikes that "hinder the work of public institutions or authorities during a state of emergency" illegal and subject to imprisonment and heavy penalties.

Now, more than ever, Egyptian workers deserve our solidarity.

***"We stand with you,
as you stood with us"***

The Egyptian workers' movement is reaching out for solidarity. It has already demonstrated great internationalism, sending a message of support to American public sector workers fighting derecognition of their unions in Wisconsin, USA, and to workers throughout the Middle East.

Kamal Abbas, general coordinator of the Centre for Trade Union and Workers Services, said: "I want you to know that we stand with you as you stood with us. We support you. We support the struggle of the peoples of Libya, Bahrain and Algeria, who are fighting for their just rights and falling as martyrs in the face of the autocratic regimes. The peoples are determined to succeed no matter the sacrifices and they will be victorious."

Unions in Britain are supporting the TUC's appeal for Middle East and North Africa workers: <http://tinyurl.com/3o33yzu>

“If you have been promoted and placed on development pay you may be affected by this”

National officer Sean Starbuck says workforce development challenges are still at the forefront for the FBU

The Fire Brigades Union has been heavily involved in workforce development issues in the last 12 months and has been raising concerns in various arenas on several issues.

The biggest single issue seems to be inconsistency of implementation. Every brigade appears to be cherry-picking the parts it wants and ignoring areas that are vital to the successful development of its staff.

The FBU workforce development group has been busy dealing with issues raised at conference 2010, including looking at specialist skills; systems used for the recording of training; concerns about assessment and development centres; transferability; and the length of initial recruit training programmes. This work is ongoing and is very dependent on the information that is supplied from individual brigades.

While all these issues were being progressed, the FBU was handed a great opportunity to make its case when a survey was commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government using the consultancy

Greenstreet Berman to review the current processes for operational training and development in the UK fire service.

The union used this vehicle to hammer home its concerns and the draft report released early in 2011 reflected the concerns that the union has about the way firefighters of all roles and duty systems were being recruited, trained and developed.

The FBU outlined its continued support for the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), but warned that it was destined to fail if it was not applied as a whole and in line with the agreed code of practice.

The FBU interview with Greenstreet Berman outlined all the concerns it has, including those of the delegates to conference and many others that members and officials had raised.

Competence

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has also been looking at workforce development issues as part of its consolidated report based on eight inspections completed in 2009/10. In this report the HSE states: “In our view, the issue of

competence is the biggest single operational safety challenge presently facing the fire and rescue service.” In addition to this statement, the recommendations in the report reflect the majority of the concerns of the FBU.

The inconsistent way that workforce development is being applied across the UK fire and rescue service is a major concern and the FBU feels that many of these inconsistencies can be addressed by having a process whereby the quality of all development programmes is externally assured.

It is in this area that the FBU has been campaigning for members who have been promoted and then placed



What this could mean to you

The importance of this issue can be demonstrated when examples of how it impacts on salaries are considered:

■ A crew manager who received development pay upon promotion without the independent quality assurance would be underpaid by:

£1,291 per year

(£1,228 for a crew manager in control)

■ A watch manager who received development pay upon promotion without the independent quality assurance would be underpaid by:

£887 per year (£842 in control)

£3,021 per year for a watch manager B post (£2,866 control)

■ A station manager who received development pay upon promotion without the independent quality assurance would be underpaid by:

£1,091 per year (£1,036 in control)

£3,744 for a station manager B post (£3,557 in control)

■ A group manager who received development pay upon promotion without the independent quality assurance would be underpaid by:

£1,257 per year (£1,192 in control)

£4,547 for a group manager B post (£4,320 in control)

■ An area manager who received development pay upon promotion without the independent quality assurance would be underpaid by:

£1,475 per year

£4,767 for an area manager B post

upon development pay. This has been an important challenge and one that FBU members really need to be aware of.

The challenge links back to a National Joint Council circular (09/05), which describes how and when an authority can place a promoted person onto the development rate of pay.

It says that: "Once an authority has had its quality assurance processes verified in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code of practice, it is able to place individuals who have been substantively promoted on to development rates of pay."

In reality, many people have been placed on development rates of pay upon promotion where an authority has not

IPDS is destined to fail if it is not applied as a whole and in line with the agreed code of practice

complied with this position. The FBU is challenging this in many areas.

If you have been promoted and placed on development pay you may be affected by this. You need to contact one of your brigade officials and check if your authority followed the guidelines in circular 09/05.

If they need any further advice they can contact my office on sean.starbuck@fbu.org.uk

The FBU is facing some big challenges over the next few years and it is vital that we continue to make sure that we play our part in ensuring that all our members are given the training they need to maintain their professionalism.



OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND INTO THE FIRE

Sharon Riley, executive council member for control, spells out the challenges ahead

For the last seven years control members have been living under a cloud of uncertainty surrounding their jobs and their futures.

In the current economic climate the threat is now more real than ever for many people as public sector workers bear the brunt of the backlash.

Following the long overdue scrapping of the FiReControl project in December, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) launched a consultation into "The future of fire and rescue control services in England".

As you would expect, the Fire Brigades Union, for so long a lone voice of opposition to the project, has its own ideas on what should now be happening in our emergency fire controls. But we also have to deal with those fire and rescue services that are jumping the gun and exploring options in advance of the consultation process.

What is happening?

On the Isle of Wight the local authority's cabinet has agreed to a scoping study of outsourcing its control to Surrey, with a delegated decision due to be made as we went to press. So much for democracy! The authority has refused to consult meaningfully with the FBU over the plans and members have been treated appallingly by the brigade and by the council.

It is ridiculous to think that mobilising, command and control on the island could be carried out as far away as Surrey and that a reliance on technology alone will deliver the same first-class service to islanders that they currently enjoy. Some 11 Isle of Wight control jobs would go. And this could be the first step to a takeover of the whole brigade.

Suffolk county council has agreed to outsource its control

to Cambridgeshire, with control members in Suffolk being told that from August 2011 they will be employed by Cambridge fire and rescue service. Formal consultation is yet to commence, but around 20 Suffolk control jobs are at risk.

In Nottinghamshire, because CLG has pulled funding, 11 posts in fire control are to go. Some 24 firefighter control operators have been issued at-risk notices.

In Hampshire, eight watch managers and 28 firefighter control staff have been issued with at-risk notices. A staffing review has led to a proposal to lose six firefighter control posts and downgrade the

Fire and rescue services are jumping the gun

structure of the watches from eight watch managers to four and to lose a group manager post. There are also plans for Hampshire to purchase a mobilising system jointly with Wiltshire and Dorset in a tripartite agreement. Day-crewed controls are on the menu.

Easy target

And so the attacks go on, with fire control seen as an easy target to hive off or sell off to save a few bucks. Well, it is not that simple. Fire control is the first intervention in any emergency incident and any delays whatsoever will see the public and firefighters put at even greater risk than at present.

We have seen it all before: total reliance on a computer system to

identify the location, propose the response and weight of attack to an emergency without any consideration of the professionalism, knowledge and unique skill sets of local fire control operators. It took seven years or so for the powers that be to see sense over FiReControl.

Control seminar

On 29 and 30 March this year the FBU organised a control seminar. Its theme was "Handling change and restructuring" and "Organising activists for the future". The seminar was well attended and showed that there is a lot of fight left in our control members and that we are not prepared to roll over and see the excellent professional service we have built up over the years be run into the ground. This is not just a control issue. It is an FBU issue and emergency resolution 2 from conference in 2008 affirms this.

Consultation

The future of control is still unclear, but the FBU has a very definite picture of what it wants to see. The FBU's response to the CLG consultation calls for:

- CLG investment in existing fire controls
- sale of the regional control centre buildings
- maintenance of the current number of controls
- completed delivery of the full Firelink function
- A set of national standards for service delivery, IT and crewing

As we await the outcome of the consultation, one thing is clear: the next few months and years will be extremely challenging for our control members and for the FBU as a whole as the true extent of the cuts starts to hit home.

As before, we are ready to meet these challenges head on and will do all in our power to fight for jobs, for the service, and for public safety.



Health and safety

New guidelines could promote unnecessary risk-taking as cuts bite

The Fire Brigades Union has considered new Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, which attempts to define 'truly heroic' acts by individual firefighters and are concerned that, without further detail, it could encourage unnecessary risk-taking

Heroism in the Fire and Rescue Service, published last month, was published against the backdrop of relentless year-on-year cuts. It attempts to define the "truly heroic" firefighter.

HSE policy

The guidance states: "HSE views the actions of firefighters as truly heroic when it is clear that they have decided to act entirely of their own volition in putting themselves at risk to protect the public or colleagues and there have been no orders or other directions from senior officers to do so and when their actions have not put other firefighters at similar high risk."

HSE will view the actions of individual firefighters as "heroic" when:

- it is clear that they have decided to act entirely of their own volition
- they have put themselves at risk to protect the public or colleagues, and
- the individuals' actions were not likely to have put other officers or members of the public at serious risk.

The guidance states: "In the event of HSE being notified of a serious incident, inspectors may need to make initial enquiries

about the nature of the incident and may need to conduct an investigation of the service's operational arrangements and management of health and safety. If, during this investigation, it becomes clear, however, that the incident involved an act of heroism by individual firefighters, then HSE will not investigate the actions of the individuals in order to take any action against them."

The HSE says such acts of individual heroism are extremely rare. The FBU believes they could become more prevalent as the cuts bite deeper.

The risks of cuts

Firefighters are dedicated to saving lives – and are hard-wired to do so. But the government's cuts are already increasing risk on the fire ground.

Firefighters are not expendable. Fire and rescue services are already:

- reducing the number of crew on fire engines
- reducing the number of fire engines sent to incidents
- reducing the number of fire engines and fire stations on their patch
- increasing the time allowed for appliances to attend incidents.

Because of these cost-driven practices, crews are attending incidents later with insufficient firefighters to deal safely with whatever they find on arrival.

FBU view

Matt Wrack, FBU general

secretary, said: "I welcome any moves to stop the prosecution of individual firefighters who carry out their actions on the incident ground with the best of intent. This needs to be balanced by fire and rescue services being held to account for their policies, which we believe lie behind this increased risk of individual heroism."

He added: "The HSE says that fire and rescue services need to manage all foreseeable risks effectively and to review their operational procedures in the light of experience. This is not always happening."

"The government's relentless cuts agenda means that fire and rescue services will have fewer resources for dealing professionally with incidents when things do not go to plan. The service is being cut to the bone."

The FBU continues to work closely with organisations responsible for safety in the fire and rescue service, including HSE and the chief fire and rescue adviser.

HSE already recognises that the fire and rescue service is a hazardous industry and that the emergency planning process (inherited from the last government) is flawed.

A key issue is that risks are foreseeable. Suitable risk assessment should mean that acts of "heroism" are unnecessary in a properly managed and resourced fire and rescue service.

 *Heroism in the Fire and Rescue Service* is on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/services/fire/heroism.htm



Firefighters are not expendable

Legal Beagle

Locked out of email network



Q Can an employer prevent a safety rep from using the email system to send emails – such as notification of inspection of workplaces – into the authority network from a union account? I am unable to send emails from my union account into my authority's network and this affects my ability to carry out my duties as a union safety rep, including representing a member at a disciplinary hearing/interview.

A An employer would normally have complete discretion over which emails it permits its network to receive unless there is some legal duty on the employer to accept or allow the spread of information.

Here, it seems that the employer's refusal to accept emails affects your ability to represent your members because it makes it difficult for you to give notice of inspection. In general terms, you must go back to your rights under the Safety Reps and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

The regulations and guidance attached are well set out in the TUC's "Brown Book" which every safety rep should have.

Regulation 5 governs inspections of workplaces (other than those following a particular incident) and the duty on the safety rep is to give "reasonable notice in writing" of an intention to inspect.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

If there is a problem with email, you could always post your notice to the employers.

A letter saying that the current policy is preventing you from carrying out your statutory safety rep duties might also help encourage the employer develop a more balanced policy.

Q I am getting divorced and want to come to an arrangement with my wife about supporting our three school-age children. Do we have to do this in a formal way? The children are going to live with her. How much should I be paying?

A The Child Support Agency uses a formula to

calculate how much should be paid. For an estimate of how much you are likely to pay, call Child Maintenance Options on 0800 988 0988.

A free form that will help you to set out a private maintenance agreement in writing is available from a government website: www.cmoptions.org.

If you think that it will be difficult to come to an private arrangement, or you find that the agreement breaks down, either of you could ask the Child Support Agency to take the case on. Its service is free. You can contact the CSA on 0845 713 3133.

It is possible to ask the courts for an order for maintenance as part of the divorce process. There will be

legal costs. During the first 12 months of the order, you cannot ask the CSA to put an arrangement in place for you.

Q A bank or building society informs a customer that they have overpaid on a loan and refunds that overpayment. After a period of time the lender contacts that customer again, saying that they have defaulted on the loan. What rights, if any, would the customer have to request that the lender provide documentary evidence to support its case before the customer has to return the "missed payment"?

A Most credit agreements are covered by the Consumer Credit Act 1974. If this loan was covered by the act, it will be a "regulated agreement" and you will have the right to be sent a statement on request.

You may have to pay a small fee to cover the cost of this. If the documents show that the default was due to an incorrect refund, you may consider using the lender's internal complaints procedure.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you could refer the matter to the Financial Services Ombudsman on 0800 023 4567.

The ombudsman is unlikely to uphold your complaint unless you can show that it was reasonable for your rely on the mistake of the lender.

“It’s a great team effort dedicated to the memory of a great firefighter”

Andrew Cooper from Isle of Wight FBU joins a very special cycle challenge

Charity ride

It could be seen as the Big Society in action – but a marathon sponsored cycle ride spearheaded by firefighters on the Isle of Wight owes nothing at all to David Cameron.

It has only been held twice before. But the Square to Square Charity Cycle Challenge has already been embraced by islanders as a developing tradition – bringing people together and giving a big boost to local causes.

“SQ2SQ” involves cyclists and support crews travelling from St Thomas’s Square, Newport to the heart of a chosen European city in a fortnight. There are no rest days. This gruelling team challenge takes place every three years and the SQ2SQ 2011 team is off to Casemates Square in Gibraltar come October.

The ride has a track record of raising impressive amounts of cash.

And it is worth spelling out just how impressive. In the 2005 inaugural ride, the team cycled 1,014 miles to Prague in 14 days, raising £10,000. The 2008 team notched up 1,488 miles cycling to Vatican Square, raising an

astonishing £76,500 for charity.

So when the SQ2SQ 2011 team sets out on its 1,400-mile journey from the Isle of Wight bound for Gibraltar in October, they should get a good send-off. This year, children, teenagers and babies on the island will benefit from the team’s exertions. The IOW Young Carers Support Project and Barely Born – the intensive care neonatal unit at St Mary’s Hospital – will split the bulk of cash raised.

Paul Fletcher

SQ2SQ 2011 is “dedicated to and in memory of” Paul Fletcher, IOW crew

manager, FBU regional chair and award-winning union learning rep, who died while at work two years ago. “Paul was a human dynamo. He got things done and was an inspiration to many,” says SQ2SQ organiser Andrew Cooper.

Andrew, an FBU rep and control watch manager, took part in SQ2SQ 2008 and is now a full-on cycling enthusiast, training hard for Gibraltar alongside the rest of

the team as *Firefighter* went to press.

Sponsorship to cover costs is coming in from local and national businesses, despite the squeeze on budgets. John



ANDREW COOPER

Control watch manager and FBU rep Andrew Cooper is organising a marathon cycle ride from the Isle of Wight to Gibraltar – raising money for local charities and remembering a former FBU regional chair

Peck Construction Ltd – an island-based company – was named as the first “Gold Partner”.

The FBU has put in £1,000 to help sponsor the team’s cycling kit – the union’s logo will be prominently displayed on the front of team shirts.

Andrew is upbeat about meeting sponsorship targets – and grateful for the support the challenge generates among the island’s residents and businesses.

“The previous challenges have been extraordinarily successful and have captured the imagination of island residents who have helped to fund raise for the appeals”, he says. “It’s an endurance challenge.”



But the island is not immune to the chill winds of austerity – or bad policy decisions. Regional control centres may have been killed off – but Andrew's job and those of colleagues are under threat from plans to move control from the Island to Surrey, selling residents, tourists and firefighters short.

'Big Society'

Andrew is playing a high-profile role in the fight to keep control on the island – and thinks it's a bit rich that David Cameron is claiming the "Big Society" as his own. "The Big Society has been happening for years," says Andrew, gearing up for SQ2SQ



Andrew (fifth from the left, back row) and the team

2011, drumming up sponsorship and organising training sessions. "It happens when people get together and do things that make a difference to their communities. David Cameron's policies of cutbacks and job losses are ripping the heart out of communities."

A great deal of work has gone into getting sponsors, planning the route and getting in shape for the ride. SQ2SQ 2011 was officially launched by the Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, giving it the island's official stamp of approval.

"It's a great team effort dedicated to the memory of a great firefighter. It's an endurance challenge, but it's achievable if you put the work in," says Andrew.

Wholetime, retained and control firefighters from the island are taking part. Paramedics and students have also signed up for the ride.

The challenge team are certainly no slouches when it comes to spreading the word and raising awareness. There's a Facebook page, a JustGiving link and even a promotional video. Team members are visiting schools to show how SQ2SQ 2011 links into the national curriculum – through health, fitness, languages, geography and road safety.

Last time round, in 2008, the team

Previous challenges have been extraordinarily successful and captured the imagination of residents

visited 36 school assemblies on the island, seeing around 15,000 pupils, from primary school through to sixth form. Talk about inclusive.

And when it's all over for the next three years, children, young people and premature babies on the island stand to benefit as the sponsorship money comes in.

And, let's be clear, David Cameron has absolutely nothing to do with it. In fact, it's worth noting that the IOW Young Carers Support Project learnt recently that its budget was being slashed.

Prize quiz



Win a Dancook 9000 barbecue and fire pit

To win a Dancook 9000 barbecue and fire pit please send your answers to the Prize Quiz by 31 May 2011 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (May 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 Where does the oldest tennis tournament in the world take place each year in June?

- A The Hurlingham Club
- B Wimbledon
- C West Side Tennis Club, Forest Hills
- D The Arthur Ashe Stadium, Flushing Meadows



PA PHOTOS

2 Henley Regatta, which takes place each year in July, first took place in what year?

- A 1868
- B 1875
- C 1839
- D 1889

4 Established in 1947, the world's largest arts festival takes place in which city?

- A London
- B Paris
- C Rome
- D Edinburgh

3 Which of the following carnivals does not take place before Lent?

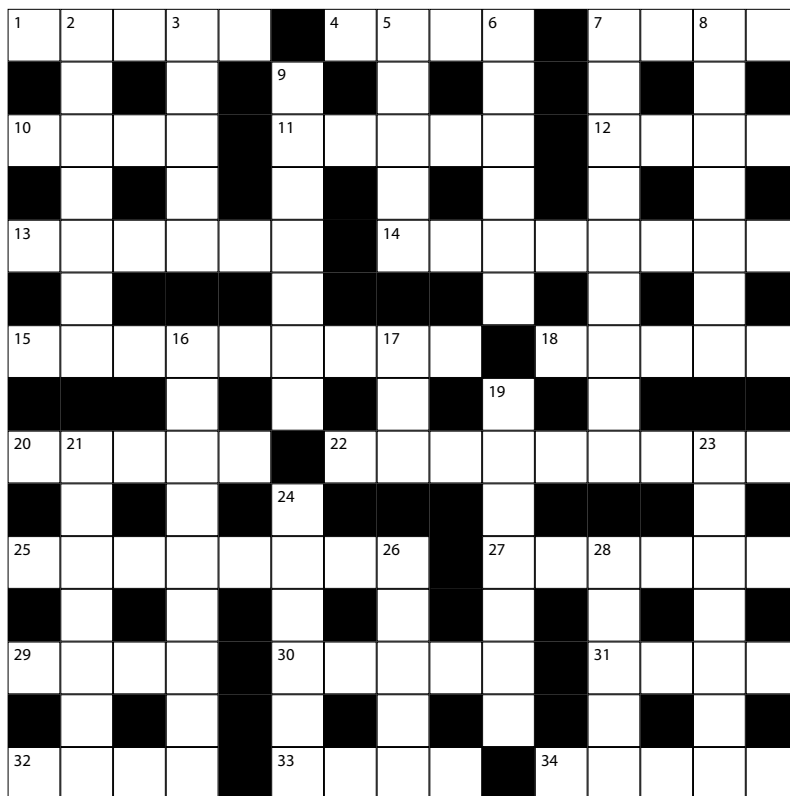
- A Mardi Gras
- B Notting Hill Carnival
- C Rio Carnival
- D Venice Carnevale

5 Which of the following summer events is associated with Stonehenge?

- A Summer solstice
- B The Proms
- C The Royal Air Tattoo
- D Trooping the colour



PHILIP WOLNUT/REPORTAGE/REDFERRE.COM



CROSSWORD

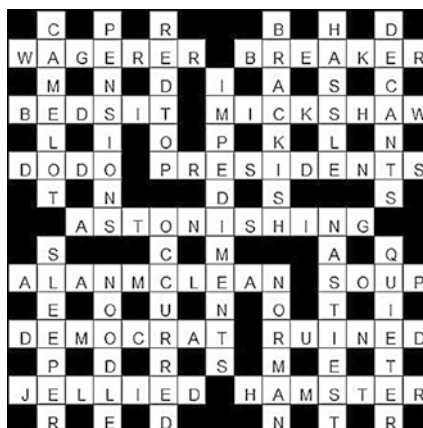
ACROSS

- 1 Painter (of pig meat?) (5)
- 4 Mark left by injury (4)
- 7 Face covering (4)
- 10 Imitation (4)
- 11 Not big (5)
- 12 Usually large-petalled, perfumed, bulb-forming flower; girl's name (4)
- 13 Discuss(ion) – possibly heated (6)
- 14 Our deferred wages – under attack by the ConDems (8)
- 15 Analyse; make judgement on; find fault with (9)
- 18 One who makes bread and cakes (5)
- 20 Fighting dog?! (5)
- 22 All new homes in Wales will get one of these life-savers (9)
- 25 Balm (8)
- 27 Nut (6)
- 29 Of sound mind (4)
- 30 Angry (5)
- 31 American car? (4)
- 32 Raise up – and don't get stuck in one (4)
- 33 Repair (4)
- 34 Unseeing (5)

DOWN

- 2 Not a pro (7)
- 3 Musical drama (5)
- 5 One doesn't want to see one of these on one's wheels (5)
- 6 Court judgement (6)
- 7 Several items wrapped together at point of sale (9)
- 8 Golden lack of noise? (7)
- 9 Troubled privateer 'owner' of London's and Lincolnshire's appliances (7)
- 16 Course of action or medication to tackle illness or injury (9)
- 17 Plant's 'juice'; drain (3)
- 19 Place to exit if you don't like the heat (7)
- 21 Paper-folding art (7)
- 23 Football's toffees – or mints? (7)
- 24 Gender discrimination, in short (6)
- 26 Mark, creator of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn (5)
- 28 Slug with home on its back (5)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution April

April quiz answers

- 1. What year was the first rugby World Cup? **A.** 1987
- 2. What country did David Campese play for? **B.** Australia
- 3. Which team won the 2010 Emirates Airline London Sevens? **B.** Australia
- 4. What country traditionally dances the haka prior to playing a rugby game? **D.** New Zealand
- 5. What country beat England and their chance for a grand slam at the 2011 six nations championship? **C.** Ireland

Winner of the March quiz
Dave Atkins, Yorkshire

Station Cat

What is it with these dodgy companies?

FBU
protest
outside an
AssetCo
AGM

JESS HURD/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



Curse of Coleman

 The curse of Coleman has fallen upon the London Borough of Barnet, where Brian Coleman, chairman of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, comes from and where his friends run the council.

Councillors hired a company called MetPro Rapid Response Security, which has gone bust owing £400,000. A former director has admitted equipping his staff with concealed CCTV cameras to spy on residents.

Local newspaper the *Ham and High* reports that, despite heavy police presence at a budget-setting meeting on 1 March, seven MetPro officers wearing hidden cameras were guarding the public gallery and stopping residents from entering the building.

The company went bust at the beginning of the month and was put into liquidation owing £250,000 in unpaid taxes – but the same security officers have been working in Barnet under the new name of MetPro Emergency Response and still boast close links and endorsements from Coleman's friends on Barnet Council.

Stan Davison, 85, who runs a 55-plus group in Barnet, told the *Ham and High*: "I am old enough to remember the Blackshirts in the 30s and they reminded me of them – those uniforms were designed to intimidate."

"Black shirts, black trousers, black belts and big black boots. I had no sense of being involved in a democratic occasion whatsoever."

Friends like these

 To London firefighters it will all sound depressingly familiar. For MetPro Group read AssetCo, a company in serious meltdown, whose demise is expected daily.

There are differences, but we do know that when the company was brought in to try to break last year's London firefighters' strike, many AssetCo people came onto the streets in balaclavas.

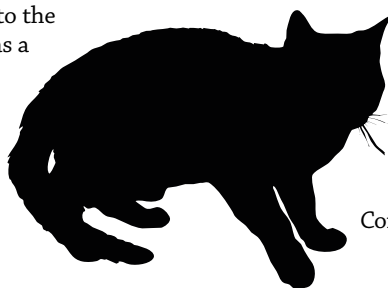
We also know that AssetCo has a contract to help the army of the United Arab Emirates.

What is it about Coleman, his friends and dodgy companies with dodgy security connections and an aversion to paying their taxes?

PR cat-astrophe

 Yes, it's true that five fire appliances and more than 20 firefighters were sent to rescue a cat from a roof in Leiston, Suffolk. Station Cat took a close interest in the creature's welfare, for obvious reasons – if we can't look out for fellow moggies, what's the world coming to?

All the same, it seemed excessive to despatch crews from Leiston, Bungay, Felixstowe and Bury St Edmunds. The Leiston crew rescued our brother puss, the other crews were stood down, and it got into the press and was a PR disaster for the fire authority.



Apparently, Suffolk FBU folk have been telling their management for months that this was a presentational disaster waiting to happen. An officer should be sent out to assess the situation before crews are despatched, they say, and in future, that's what will happen.

There's a serious side to all this fun. Management and politicians want to get rid of 36 of Suffolk's 253 firefighters – and local media think this is a wonderful time to show that you can cut numbers without doing any harm.

Actually, it proves the reverse. If something serious had happened while those 20 firefighters rushed to rescue this cat, they would have struggled to cope, says brigade chair Andy Vingo.

Zero sum game

 The Conservative MP for East Cambridgeshire, Steve Barclay, wants to know why the county's chief fire officer has to be paid £190,000 a year and his three deputies between £130,000 and £150,000 apiece. You can see his point, when Cambridgeshire's fire service is talking about closing a fire station to save a miserable £100,000, and getting rid of a fire engine which costs a paltry £80,000.

Here's the reply:

"Our chief officers are paid well but run a fire and rescue service recognised by the Audit Commission and

by peers from other fire and rescue services as performing exceptionally well. CFRS is also the lowest cost fire service in the country, per head of population – the senior management team have been reducing the overall costs of the service and will continue to do so."

To put it another way, they're worth the money because they've identified a fire station they can close and save £100,000, and a fire engine they can decommission to save £80,000. That – if the Cat's maths are up to scratch – means that they have only got to find another £430,000 of frontline services to cut, and they've saved the whole of their joint £610,000 salary bill. Well done that chief officer.

On message

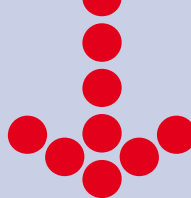
 Mr Barclay is also querying the expenditure of £300,000 a year on a public relations department. But, says the fire authority, the PR people do more than just talk to newspapers.

The department "plays an important part in delivering community safety messages to local communities through a number of different channels, with the aim of reducing fires and other emergencies and related deaths and injuries."

"They also have responsibility for internal communication, design, print management, campaigns, the website, social media, marketing, event management, photography, consultation and community engagement."

Does that make them worth three fire stations?

25-year badges



Michael Green (l) receives his 25-year badge from West Midlands membership secretary Pardeep Raw



Dave Benham (l) West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Andy Archer



Andrew Burley (l) receives his 25-year badge from West Midlands membership secretary Pardeep Raw



Steve Murch (l) Plympton station, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Andy Gould



Ian Morton (l), Greenbank station, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset membership secretary Andy Gould



Jimmy Howarth (l) red watch, Kirkby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety coordinator Gary Bennett



Andy Olliver (centre, r) receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire membership secretary David Williams



Steve Ebanks (centre, r) receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire membership secretary David Williams



Colin Mitten (r), Knightswood station, Strathclyde, receives his 25-year badge from branch official Joe Dolan



Eddie Greenhead (r), green watch, East Greenwich, London, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



FBU national officer **Paul Woolstenholmes** (back row, right) receives his 25-year badge from FBU president Alan McLean. Looking on (l-r) Rose Jones, EC region 7; Pete Wilcox, secretary region 3; Ian Murray, EC region 4; and Warren Gee, national treasurer and EC region 5.

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.

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

REGION 6 Derbys, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REGION 10 London

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

REGION 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex

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

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

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

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

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.