

FireFighter

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

November/December 2010



Just say NO!

Why firefighters should resist government cuts See p10





Matt Wrack

Stark truth is we have to fight back

WAR – on our public services

On 20 October the Westminster government announced the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Its cuts amount to a wholesale attack on our public services. For working people it means paying more and fewer services.

The government accepts that 500,000 public sector jobs will be axed. Economists estimate that a further 500,000 jobs will go as private sector contracts are cancelled. The whole process is a mechanism to shift wealth away from the majority and into the hands of the tiny minority at the top.

WAR – on our fire and rescue service

Before the general election, David Cameron visited Carlisle fire station. He said he valued the work we do. He spoke of the need to protect frontline services. Those promises have turned out to be completely hollow. Our fire service has not been protected. We face a 25% cut in central government grant, as bad as most other services and worse than many. These cuts will threaten the safety of the public and of firefighters.

It is truly sickening to hear some chief fire officers publicly welcome the cuts as an “opportunity”. These are individuals who have done very well in recent years, whose pay has risen faster than the rest, who have built empires on the back of “modernisation”. These same people now stab our service

and our profession in the back and welcome the prospect of it being decimated by the cuts. They are a disgrace.

WAR – on our pay, conditions and pensions

Fire service employers have already moved quickly to try to impose a pay freeze. We do not know what they will do next year or after that. The CSR talks of the need for pay “restraint”. They clearly intend to drive down the real value of our wages. Nationally, the government is planning further attacks on our pensions. The CSR states that this will include

an increase in contribution rates of 3%.

Locally we expect major attempts to cut jobs. Employers will attempt this by closing stations; by cutting night time emergency cover; by increased jump-crewing; and by introducing more “flexible” duty systems.

Preparing to fight back

The stark truth is that we have to fight back in these circumstances. Our strategy will be to challenge the government politically. We need to win the argument that the cuts are unnecessary. We will work with

other trade unions to win this battle for public opinion. As the cuts become reality, millions of people will turn against the cuts agenda.

Our lobby of parliament on 17 November is an important step in this campaign. We need to demonstrate very clearly that we will defend our service every step of the way.

We also need to be prepared to fight industrially. Nobody wants to see industrial action in our service, but it increasingly looks unavoidable. The alternative is to allow the government and employers to dismantle all the gains previous generations fought for.

I have recently attended a series of meetings with members in various regions. I was extremely impressed with the determination of our members. Our campaign will grow in strength and must involve wider layers of members. We must be ready to fight.

Support London members

I would like to urge all FBU members to support our fight in London against imposition of changed conditions by means of mass dismissal and re-engagement. Our members in London have stood firm against attempts to unilaterally impose shift changes. We will negotiate a settlement to the issue of shift changes, but we cannot accept the dismissal and re-engagement of 5,600 firefighters.

Their fight is on behalf of all of us. I am confident members across the union will give full support.



Matt Wrack (right) joined London firefighters as they walked out over threats to sack them all

Our lobby of parliament on 17 November is important. We need to demonstrate clearly we will defend our service every step of the way.

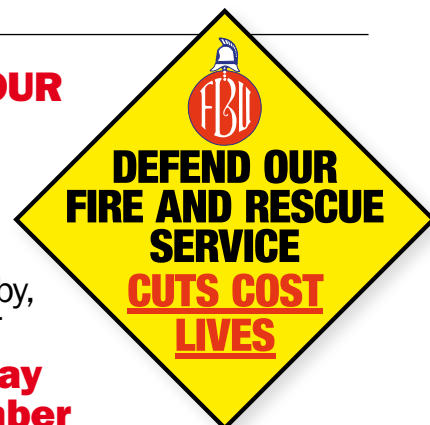
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LETTERS

What unions can achieve

I feel that the time is right for the FBU to instigate a national re-education programme, to imbue members with a fresh outlook on unions and the benefits they can gain.

I took my wife to the pictures to see *Made in Dagenham*, which depicts the 1968 fight for equal pay by women at Ford Dagenham. It shows what trade unionism can achieve when people have right on their side and are willing to stand up to bullying tactics and follow the fight to the end.

So please, to any member who is wavering, remember, you are the union. It is up to you all to make your voice heard. There has never been a more decisive time to stick together and fight any cuts.

Mick King
Region 3

Friendship saves lives

Our teams recently pulled five children from a house fire without harm or injury. A week earlier, our rescue teams went to a traffic accident between two cars full of people, and fortunately no one died.

I mention these incidents only to let you know how our abilities and skills as firefighters developed more and more after the training course we received in the UK last year. We hope to continue our friendship.

Shams Eddin Abu-Ghazaleh
Nablus fire department
Palestinian National Authority

● Read the full letter at www.fbu.org.uk

News

November/December 2010



STEFANO CAGNONI

London firefighters on strike on 23 October

First strikes over mass sackings – more planned

London

London firefighters have begun strike action in a campaign against mass sackings – with the promise of escalating action unless management withdraws its plans to dismiss them so it can enforce shift changes.

Fire Brigades Union members in London walked out for an eight-hour strike on 23 October, with more eight-hour stoppages planned for 1 and 5–7 November, as *Firefighter* went to press.

FBU members voted by 79% for strike action, with a 79% turnout – a magnificent response in the face of management bullying and intimidation.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: “This is a huge vote for strike action. Firefighters hate going on strike – but they hate being bullied even more. This vote

demonstrates that London firefighters will fight these mass sackings every step of the way. The London Fire Brigade now needs to lift the sacking notices and start negotiating properly.”

Before the action began, the FBU had offered to call off the strikes if management would lift the threat of mass sackings. The three-month legal process of sacking the capital’s 5,557 uniformed and 41 non-operational firefighters, instigated by London Fire Brigade commissioner Ron Dobson, ends in November.

At every stage the FBU has called on Dobson to halt the sacking process, which would impose 12-hour shifts. Further action is likely this month.

London firefighters have also been taking action short of a strike, including an overtime ban and a ban on “acting up”, since 24 September.

Big profits for some

Privatisation

When London’s firefighters went on strike, the safety of Londoners was in the hands of private profiteers operating 27 fire engines instead of the normal 169.

Last year AssetCo secured a seven-year deal to provide 700 casual contract staff to the London Fire Brigade. It was claimed this was for emergencies like pandemic illness or flooding.

But the real purpose was to create a strikebreaking force, designed to ensure that London firefighters were always negotiating at a disadvantage.

Since 2001 AssetCo has also had a 20-year PFI contract to own and manage all London fire engines and equipment.

The company increased its profits for the year ending 31 March this year by £10.8m. Reported profits before tax were £12.1m, up from £1.3m the year before.

AssetCo chief executive officer John Shannon receives an annual salary of £300,000 and planned to pay himself an additional dividend of £400,000.

Sean Starbuck:
Pensions are
under attack



www.fbu.org.uk

Campaign against closure of station

North Yorkshire

Firefighters carried a coffin through the streets of York last month to highlight the increase in deaths of firefighters on operational duties and against plans to close the city's main fire station.

Fire Brigades Union members organised the day of protest and petitioning after management announced plans to close and sell off the Clifford Street fire station in the centre of York and build a smaller fire station nearby – taking one fire appliance and the high-reach special out of the city.

Managers also plan savings of £1m

a year for the next four years and are threatening a new duty system and job losses. The union argues that the proposed changes will mean slower response times and put the public at risk.

Ian Watkins, FBU regional chair for Yorkshire and Humberside, said: "We have a management team in North Yorkshire more concerned about building shiny new fire stations than saving firefighter jobs."

"We had a superb turn-out for our protest including a contingent from South Yorkshire. We collected plenty of signatures for our petition. The campaign continues."

SOUNDING OFF

Pensions: Status quo is not an option

Sean Starbuck

The Hutton review released last month sent a clear message on public sector pensions: the status quo is not an option for the future.

The report looked at short and long-term savings, although defined benefit schemes will continue. In the short term, it considered raising employee contributions and cutting pension benefits. In the longer term, replacing final salary schemes with career average schemes and raising retirement ages are under consideration.

The Fire Brigades Union submitted evidence to the Hutton review, pointing out that **firefighters already contribute up to 11% of their salary to their pension**, which equates to around £260 per month in real terms.

We highlighted problems with raising retirement ages due to the physical nature of the firefighters' job and the lack of real opportunities for redeployment.

The FBU stressed that fire service pension schemes have already been reformed – through the Firefighters Pension Scheme in 2006 and the Local Government Pension Scheme in 2008 – and that savings from the reforms will make the schemes affordable and sustainable in the future. The review recognised that, in the long term, the cost of the firefighters' pension schemes will be reduced by a third.

It also acknowledged that **using the consumer price index instead of the retail price index to uprate pensions will save around £1.8bn a year** and represents a long-term devaluation of up to 25%.

The message to members is clear. Pensions are under attack, but the extent of the attack will not be clear until Hutton's final report in spring next year. The campaign will need to involve all sections of the workforce. Every branch should discuss pensions.

Sean Starbuck is an FBU national officer



Firefighters lobbied the council on 11 October

Lobby protests against cuts

Norfolk

Firefighters lobbied Norfolk county council in an effort to halt plans to downgrade the fire service in the county, with 36 job losses.

The lobby was timed to coincide with a cabinet meeting that rubber-stamped £1.5m of cuts already approved by the council's fire and protection overview and scrutiny panel.

The proposals include:

- Reduction of fire cover to Yarmouth and Norwich
- Reductions in frontline fire service resources in rural areas
- Fewer frontline firefighters spread even more thinly across Norfolk.

Over 80% of respondents to a consultation did not support cuts to the fire and rescue service. Although the scrutiny panel modified its original proposals, it ignored the public response.

Speakers at the lobby included Norfolk FBU brigade chair Peter Greeves, region 9 executive council member Keith Handscomb and general secretary Matt Wrack. The speeches were applauded and met with chants of "No to fire cuts".

The protest also heard warnings about the impact on the service of the comprehensive spending review, which could see it forced to cut a further sum of between £3.5m and £5m.



Adrian Brown (left), Kevin Herniman and Nicola Lown at the memorial

Union honours dead firefighters

Memorial

FBU officials attended a "bell ceremony" at the Fire Service College (FSC) on 21 September to celebrate the lives of fallen firefighters.

They were Adrian Brown, FSC secretary, regional official Kevin Herniman and Nicola Lown, FSC chair and safety rep.

Kevin Herniman said: "There is a plaque for each

firefighter who has fallen protecting others and, as we have witnessed first hand, the list is getting longer much quicker than the FBU would like."

The ceremony was made unique by the presence of relatives and friends of Graham Hughes, a Greater Manchester FBU member who lost his life at an incident in 2003 but whose name had not been added to the memorial until now.

"It was good to see so many comrades in attendance at such a solemn occasion," said Kevin Herniman.

"If you have the opportunity to visit the Fire Service College you will find this memorial in the muster bay.

"It is a timely reminder that firefighters risk their lives on a daily basis, while MPs and ministers want cuts across the public sector."

IN BRIEF

Maternity leave improvements

National negotiations regarding maternity, paternity and adoption have led to improvements in conditions of service.

Although there has been no major breakthrough on pay, a number of key conditions of service have been improved.

Some improvements were statutory, including public holiday leave accruing throughout the whole maternity leave period and others were negotiated improvements such as receiving pay for a "keeping in touch" day while on maternity leave.

Isle of Wight, Staffordshire and Avon brigades currently provide 39 weeks fully paid maternity and Shropshire 26. Other services have improved pay.

A joint statement by the national employers and the union has been issued.

Brigade secretaries now have another opportunity to open negotiations with the changes to the Grey Book agreed as a minimum standard.

The FBU policy document, *Negotiating maternity, paternity and adoption rights* and the joint statement should be used in such negotiations. National women's officials are available to assist if requested.

Management throws its weight about

Firefighters from Essex had to gather at a secret location in Basildon after senior management told FBU members at the last minute that they could not use Basildon fire station for a meeting.

Keith Flynn, Essex FBU brigade secretary, said: "We thought senior management would welcome a senior figure like general secretary Matt Wrack speaking about things like joint working with fire authorities by the FBU to ensure essential frontline 999 services are protected.

"This joint approach is clearly not wanted by the Essex management team."

Tell MPs: 'Back this fire safety bill'

Smoke alarms

A parliamentary bill backed by the FBU proposing that smoke alarms be mandatory in all UK rented accommodation is to be considered by MPs.

Torbay MP Adrian Sanders' private members bill – the Protection of Tenants (Fire Safety) Bill – was due to receive a second reading on 19 November. It was drawn up after a fire in Torquay in October last year that killed two children. They lived three miles from the local fire station in a rented house with no smoke alarms.

Mike Burroughs, FBU member and fire safety policy support officer in Devon and Somerset FRS, said: "Surely it is time to strengthen fire safety law. If you feel strongly about this, why not contact your local MP and urge them to support the bill? There is still time to make a difference."



A firefighter outside the house in Torquay where two children died in a fire last year



Your life in their hands

FBU national officer John McGhee examines the threats to firefighter safety

Safety

The government has set up a group to look at the future of the fire service. The Fire Futures Steering Group will consider efficiency and effectiveness; productivity; the role of the fire and rescue service and national interest and localism.

So what is going on? As FBU head office receives news of hundreds more frontline job losses, we need to ask ourselves and our communities what value the government puts on our lives.

More and more appliances are, and will be, turning out with four or fewer riders. Make no mistake – this will lead to more injuries and more deaths as you are asked to be more efficient, more effective and to increase your productivity.

The FBU has long held the view that frontline appliances should turn out with a minimum of five riders.

The union has the task of coordinating

investigations into the death and serious injury of our members. We have found more and more that firefighters are being committed and re-committed (sometimes up to four or five times) to hot fire situations.

This is despite the advice given to the fire service of the dangers of this practice. With smaller crew sizes and fewer frontline

firefighters and managers, it is my view that this practice will get worse. Not just in compartment firefighting, but in all aspects of your work.

We must fight not only to protect our highly valued public service, but we must also fight for our own health and safety.

We do not want to hear another chief officer speak at a memorial event telling the world that it is tragic, but our member died a hero.

We want you, our heroes, to go home after work in the same condition as you arrived in. We must fight to protect ourselves because if we don't, we will be unable to provide the protection our communities expect and deserve from us.

The union is organising a national lobby of parliament on 17 November where you can make contact with MPs and raise this issue.

Remember: the smaller the front line service, the more the likelihood of accidents.

DEFEND OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

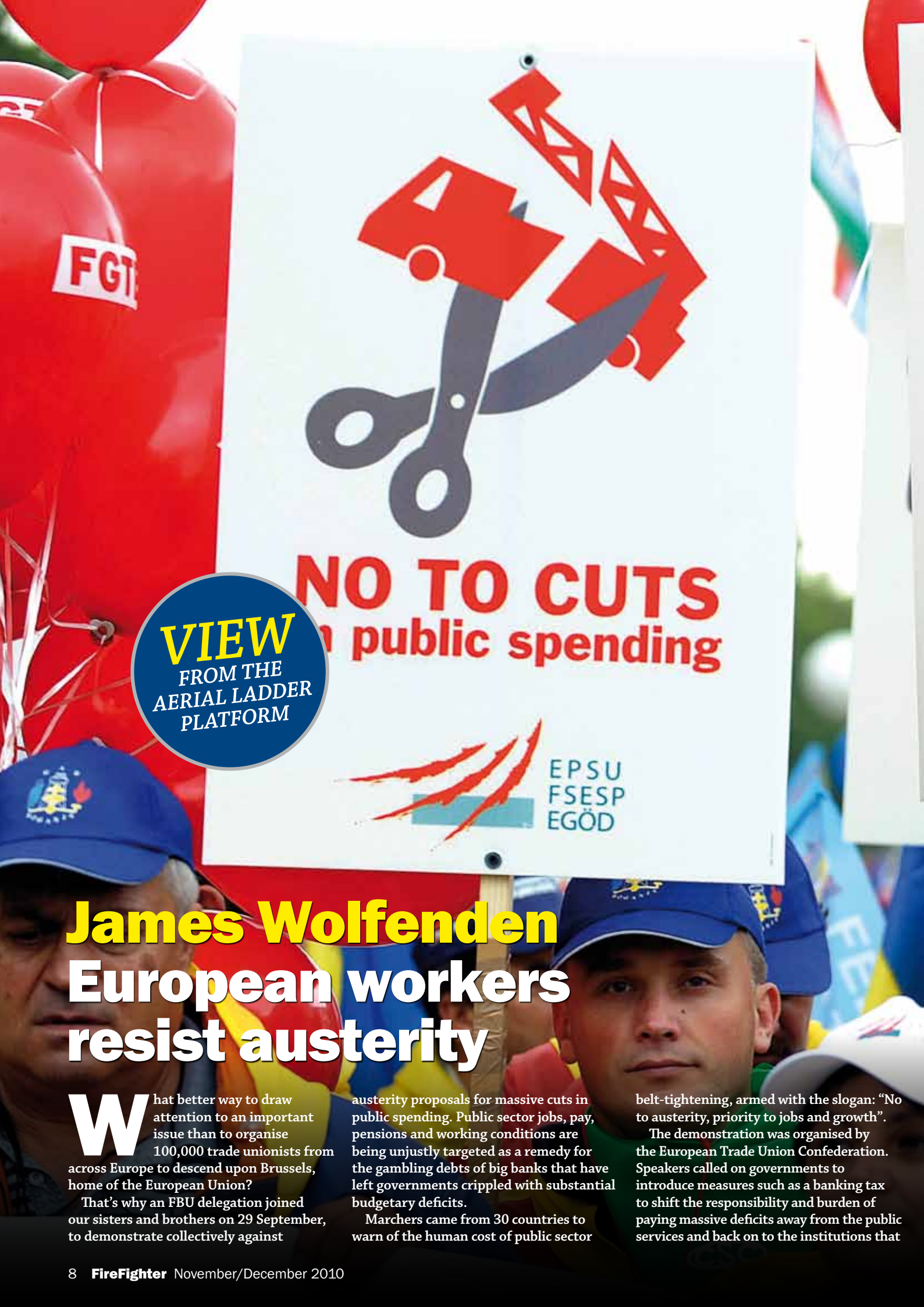
National rally and lobby, Westminster

Wednesday 17 November

Doors to Westminster Central Hall open at 12.00 for a 12.30 start

Lobby of MPs from 2.15





VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM

James Wolfenden European workers resist austerity

What better way to draw attention to an important issue than to organise 100,000 trade unionists from across Europe to descend upon Brussels, home of the European Union?

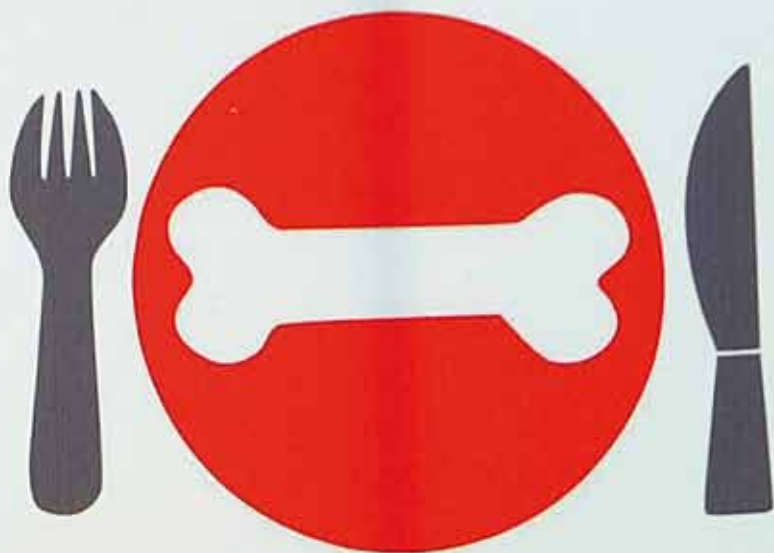
That's why an FBU delegation joined our sisters and brothers on 29 September, to demonstrate collectively against

austerity proposals for massive cuts in public spending. Public sector jobs, pay, pensions and working conditions are being unjustly targeted as a remedy for the gambling debts of big banks that have left governments crippled with substantial budgetary deficits.

Marchers came from 30 countries to warn of the human cost of public sector

belt-tightening, armed with the slogan: "No to austerity, priority to jobs and growth".

The demonstration was organised by the European Trade Union Confederation. Speakers called on governments to introduce measures such as a banking tax to shift the responsibility and burden of paying massive deficits away from the public services and back on to the institutions that



**NO TO
austerity**



EPSU
FSESP
EGÖD



**NO TO CUTS
in public spending**



EPSU
FSESP
EGÖD



caused them in the first instance.

It was an incredibly worthwhile experience (despite the piccalilli sandwiches) which demonstrated the strength of solidarity amongst numerous different European nationalities.

It was a clear demonstration of the injustice and unfairness felt by European public sectors workers who, along with

their families, are being punished for the crimes committed by the small numbers of the financial elite. Despite the diversity of language, nationality and culture, a clear and unified message was delivered, opposing austerity measures and public service cuts that threaten workers across Europe.

It is not unusual for those at the wrong end of the axe to have a much clearer

picture of reality than those who are wielding it, and 100,000 trade unionists representing millions of public sector workers across Europe are better placed than anyone to understand what damage these cuts will inflict.

James Wolfenden is FBU brigade secretary for Buckinghamshire



Now government spending cuts have been announced, we analyse the impact on firefighters and the service

Just say no to this toxic brew

The comprehensive spending review announced on 20 October is intended to lay waste to public services and the welfare state as we have known it. If the government succeeds in implementing its plans, working people like firefighters will pay a heavy price for generations to come.

The government plans to cut £81bn from its spending over the next four years. Its own figures estimate that this will cut half a million jobs from the public sector. Economists and unions believe that at least another half a million private sector jobs would be lost as well because they do work for public bodies. No region is spared. It is estimated 100,000 public sector jobs are threatened in Scotland, 50,000 in Wales and 30,000 in Northern Ireland.

Impact on the fire and rescue service
The planned cuts to the fire and rescue

service are as deep as the Fire Brigades Union had feared. Chancellor George Osborne said in his statement that “we have decided to limit [fire and rescue service] budget reductions in return for substantial operational reform”. This is a triple lie.

First, his *Spending Review 2010* document states that “central government grants to local authorities will be reduced by 25 per cent over the period”. This figure – a cut by a quarter to the grant to fire and rescue services in England – does not spare us. It is a savage cut.

Fire minister Bob Neill said the cuts were “fair” because they are “back loaded”. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) department says this gives “time to make the necessary changes”. In reality it means the first year cuts will not be as bad as what comes after. And it means the cuts pressure will be unrelenting – the government plans

Sharp end of the cuts

*The FBU asked its officials for a round-up of cuts already tabled. Probably the worst region at present is **Yorkshire and Humberside**, where a total of 388 jobs are threatened in the next year alone – over 7% of personnel. Another region at the sharp end of job cuts is **Wales**. With 50 posts going in South Wales and as many as 80 from Mid and West Wales, this is a cut of over 4% this year. In **Greater Manchester**, it has been reported that 150 jobs are threatened – amounting to a 6% cut in jobs this year. In other areas, retained jobs are threatened. Other attacks centre on reduced ridership and worsening shift patterns.*



On the scrapheap: The FBU estimates that around 7,000 firefighter jobs are under threat in the UK

to accelerate from already disastrous cuts that have emerged in recent months. (see box, left)

Second, there are damaging strings. The *Spending Review* document states: "To achieve this level of savings, the fire and rescue service will need to modernise, increase efficiency and deliver workforce reform." This means more of what we have had since 2004. CLG has identified seven areas for this "reform":

- Flexible staffing arrangements
- Improved sickness management
- Pay restraint and recruitment freezes
- Shared services/back office functions
- Improved procurement
- Sharing chief officers and senior staff
- Voluntary amalgamations between fire and rescue authorities.

In fact, the government wants individual fire and rescue services to compete with each other to introduce the most extreme measures, tussling

for an ever-diminishing pot of central funding. The government is also saying to local fire authorities/boards: "You push through the cuts, do whatever it takes, whatever the risks". With council tax frozen next year and council budgets slashed by 26%, they want councils to carry out their own lobotomy.

Third, the government claims the cut is really only half the 25% in real terms, because fire and rescue services are also funded from local council tax. But some fire and rescue services – especially in metropolitan areas – get much more of their income from central government. This means they face even greater cuts, which threaten jobs over the next four years. (see box, right)

The impact on firefighter jobs is stark. The FBU estimates that from these central grant cuts, even without cuts in local revenue (which is highly unlikely), around 7,000 firefighter jobs across the UK are under threat.

Fire and rescue service funding

FRS	Percentage of income from central govt grant	Jobs threatened
Greater Manchester	64	312
Merseyside	62	186
South Yorkshire	61	140
Tyne and Wear	59	147
West Midlands	67	342
West Yorkshire	63	257
Avon	56	111
Berkshire	47	65
Cambridgeshire	48	72
Cheshire	43	86
Cleveland	68	101
Derbyshire	47	96
Devon and Somerset	48	205
Dorset	38	60
Durham	47	61
East Sussex	38	64
Essex	44	143
Hampshire	44	155
Hereford and Worcester	38	67
Humberside	54	141
Kent	42	152
Lancashire	54	162
Leicestershire	55	90
North Yorkshire	44	71
Nottinghamshire	49	103
Shropshire	37	46
Staffordshire	43	86
Wiltshire	40	51
Total		3,572

Sources: Income proportions from Hansard, 14 July 2010: Column 764-765W (county councils and London not available); FRS jobs from CIPFA. Assumes staffing is 80% of total expenditure. Actual capital grant figures for individual fire and rescue services were still not available as *Firefighter* went to press. This means that 3,572 jobs cut from 28 FRSs employing 34,319 people, a 10.4% cut. If this were the case for the 65,179 employed by all 57 fire and rescue services in the UK, it would mean 6,784 jobs under threat from the central grant cuts alone.



Just say **no** to this toxic brew

STEFANO CAGNONI



Impact on firefighters

The impact of budget cuts will also be felt by firefighters in other ways. The government is offering firefighters a toxic cocktail of lower pay, fewer public services, fewer benefits and higher taxes, together with higher pension contributions.

The imposition of the pay freeze is likely to reduce firefighters' spending power by at least £500 a year, even on the assumption of very low inflation (of 2%).

Pay freeze = £500

In its spending review the government announced that all public sector workers will have to contribute 3 percentage points on top of their existing pension contributions, phased in from April 2012. For FBU members, whatever scheme they are in, this amounts to at least another £800 a year – with those in more senior roles expected to pay much more than this.

Additional pension contributions = £800

If this was not bad enough, TUC modelling of the overall impact of the government changes to tax (like increased VAT) and benefits, together with the value of public services in cash terms, loses at least £1,900 a year.

Impact of tax, benefit and public service cuts = £1,900

Overall, individual firefighters will find themselves **at least £3,000 worse off every year** if the government gets to implement its plans.

There is an alternative

There is another way. The perpetrators who are able to pay – the businesses, the banks, the filthy rich who have done well for decades – they should pay for the deficit.

Union research shows that:

- The tax evaded or avoided by the rich amounts to £123bn.
 - Some £18bn could be netted by restoring corporation tax to 1997 levels.
 - The government would get £19bn if the top rate of income tax was 60% (as it was under Thatcher). A 50% tax on all income above £100,000 would bring in £2.3bn.
 - A windfall tax on the richest 1,000 people would net £7.7bn.
 - A "Robin Hood" tax on all foreign exchange dealings in sterling would bring in £3.2bn.
 - An empty property tax could net £5bn.
- There is also some spending we could do without.
- The cost of Trident replacement is £100bn, or £3.3bn a year.
 - The war in Afghanistan currently costs £2.6bn a year.
 - And the government spends £1.8bn on private consultants.

That is why it is vital for members to attend the FBU lobby on 17 November. It is important to lobby councils and fire authority/boards meetings to explain that cutting firefighters puts public safety at risk. Only an active FBU membership can defend the fire and rescue service and, with our sisters and brothers in other unions, defend public services as a whole.

Why I'm going to the lobby on 17 November



**Martin Pottinger,
ONC, North East
region**

Firefighters have seen their conditions of service damaged in the name of modernisation. We have given and, in return, received little or nothing.

Our employers have made no offer on pay for 2010, this in addition to a threatened pay freeze for 2011 and 2012.

Enough is more than enough. It is time to stand up and defend our jobs, terms and conditions and our pensions.

There is no hiding place. Together, united we must make a stand. Attend the lobby and give the message loud and clear – Hands off OUR fire service!

**Peter Hope,
brigade secretary,
Hereford and Worcester**

In the world that we live in today, there is an utter contempt for skill. You ask the people who dig coal, nurses, teachers, firefighters, those who care for the sick, the infirm, the frail, the people who drive trains.

A world where they measure the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

We must realise the techniques used to control us. They're very simple: first is to frighten you; then to divide you; and then to demoralise you.

Speak now. Before it's too late!

**Steve Rawlinson,
borough secretary,
Bexley**

I will be attending the rally to show my total disgust of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority's disregard and disrespect of all who they employ. They have threatened unacceptable shift changes and hidden the real agenda of personnel and appliance cuts, resulting in reduced fire cover.

At this time of industrial action, health and safety has been totally disregarded with ridership and crewing levels being thrown to one side, resulting in delayed turn-out times.

The perpetrators of these gross injustices should receive their just deserts.

THE FARCE OF REGIONAL CONTROL

SCRAP IT!

Ditch FiReControl, says Sharon Riley, FBU executive council member representing control staff

The regional control project is in total disarray. The system being developed is clearly inferior. EADS – the technology firm responsible – has consistently been late and supplied products of poor quality

These are arguments made repeatedly by representatives of the Fire Brigades Union. But they are now being echoed by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and even by the minister responsible. In letters between CFOA and CLG, as well as the minister's public pronouncements, the FBU's concerns have been confirmed again (see box).

Only one conclusion follows. The government should scrap this project now, saving the taxpayer millions and invest in existing fire controls across England.

Lack of faith

Now, due to a lack of investment and maintenance of existing fire controls and a distinct lack of faith in the FiReControl project to deliver on time, if at all, some chief fire officers are making plans to outsource or merge their control function with other brigades.

On 28 July in a memo entitled "Potential Outsourcing of Control to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service" Berkshire fire and rescue service issued a letter to staff stating: "The heightened degree of uncertainty over the regional control project, especially the continuing delays, has meant that we are increasingly concerned about the resilience of our control function." Discussions between Berkshire and Surrey are ongoing and no decision has yet been taken. However, this increases staff anxiety over their future employment.

A few days before an Isle of Wight council cabinet meeting on 14 September, members in control received a copy of a paper on the agenda from their chief which was an outline business case proposal for "potential transfer of fire control and mobilising resources to another fire and rescue service in the

South East". The cabinet subsequently made a decision in principle to look at this option. A scoping study is now under way, but the decision will not return to the cabinet but be made by "delegated decision" – that means just one councillor. There is little or no opportunity for public debate and scrutiny.

In September, Suffolk joined the bandwagon with an options paper. The county has agreed the sale of its control site in a PFI deal aligned to the cut over dates originally planned for regional controls. London has recently told the CLG that unless the department underwrites its costs for the life of the project (an estimated £44m) then the authority will not take part in the regional control project.

Meanwhile nine new buildings costing £13m a year in rent stand idle and rotting.

The FBU has information that money has been made available by CLG to fire and rescue services to pay redundancy in the event of control mergers. This would be better invested in upgrading existing controls and building on their resilience.

The FBU will not sit and watch whilst our firefighter control members' jobs are threatened and the excellent service they provide is carved up. We will do all in our power locally and nationally to defend our service, jobs, terms and conditions.

Our message to the government is: end this waste now. Invest in existing fire controls at a fraction of the cost and with tried and tested technology, in a fraction of the time and with reliable quality.



Parts of the new regional control centre are now out of bounds for repairs



Scaffolding covers the East Midlands regional control centre in Castle Donington. Built at a cost of £14m and handed over in 2008, it has never been used, yet now leaking windows must be replaced, walls replastered and new cladding fixed at a cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds. It is due to house 100 staff, chosen from the 140 working in the five county centres it is supposed to replace.

IAN HODGKINSON/DERBY TELEGRAPH

What the 'critics' are saying

Olaf Baars, CFOA FiReControl lead officer, 25 August 2010

"The CFOA team are becoming increasingly concerned that, since the Minister's speech in Harrogate on 29 June, far from bringing 'clarity and certainty' the project has fallen into total disarray with the greatest levels of confusion and uncertainty that have been experienced since the start of the project.

"We are concerned that, for the first time, there may be an emerging gap between the FiReControl system that the government are willing to pay for and a system that the fire and rescue service would be prepared to accept."

Shona Dunn, director of fire and resilience, CLG 8 September 2010

"Our assessment of EADS's ability to deliver the system is currently causing us concern ...

System definition – The system that EADS appears to be now developing is clearly inferior to the one they promised to supply when they signed the contract...

Functionality – The lack of information coming out of EADS is very worrying ...

Resilience and reliability – We are particularly concerned about the reliability of the system and how service will be maintained should the system fail ... It has now transpired that the system EADS is developing could be down for hours each year and could place significant unplanned additional burdens on RCCs and the FRS ...

Quality of delivery – EADS continue to miss deadlines and supply deliverables that are unacceptable ..."

Bob Neill, fire minister, 4 October 2010 (Hansard 1273W)

"The government are becoming increasingly concerned at the inability of EADS to deliver on its contractual obligations to sufficient quality and time – and we have made this clear to them in no uncertain terms. Products delivered from EADS have consistently been late and of poor quality. Two recent examples are the data toolkit used by fire and rescue services for recording resources and station end equipment in local fire stations. The toolkit cannot capture all the data needed to accurately and reliably route the nearest and most appropriate fire appliance to an incident. The station end equipment – which controls the alerters, doors, bells, etc, in fire stations – failed safety checks at the last minute."

SOUTH WALES FBU SAYS **NO** TO VICTORIAN SELF-ROSTERING

Wales executive council member
Mike Smith explains what happened

MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY



*South Wales firefighters
are determined they will
not be forced back in to
the Victorian era*



Small fire engine 1821-1902.

The FBU has knocked back plans for a Victorian self-rostering system in South Wales, but the threat of further attacks remains very clear. Earlier this year, the South Wales fire authority's draft Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) proposed to introduce "self-rostering" on three stations, at New Inn, Penarth and Maesteg with a fourth "possible candidate" at Ebbw Vale. All these stations are currently shift-crewed on the 9-15 duty system. The union saw the proposal as a major threat to our members' employment conditions, their working lives and their family and leisure time. Minimally, frontline firefighters would have to **double** their current weekly working hours from 42 to 84, with the significant and very likely outcome that this will increase to probably 96 hours or more. The introduction of the duty system would also have meant:

- A total of 48 firefighters posts removed from the workforce;
- Any absences/deficiencies in the minimum crewing levels of five would be maintained by overtime, which would have been paid at the flat hourly rate and would have been a compulsory 24-hour shift;
- Members would, after working a minimum of 84 hours, then

have to work another 24 hours to cover any absences, either through training, annual leave or sickness, resulting in a working week of 106 hours.

In 2010 asking any employee to DOUBLE their working week with more on top is completely unacceptable. It takes the fire service back to the pre-1939 duty systems when firefighters virtually lived on a fire station providing round-the-clock cover with little or no breaks.

Members were very angry at the proposals when they were first published and, after a series of mass and branch meetings, it was agreed that the brigade committee would seek permission from the executive council to hold a consultative ballot of the membership for discontinuous strike action. In the event, it was clear a week before the fire authority meeting that minds were being concentrated and the proposals would be withdrawn. So the ballot result was never "opened", but we are confident that the result would have produced an overwhelming majority in favour of strike action if necessary to defeat the proposals.

The FBU produced a detailed critique of the proposed self-rostering duty system, making it clear that a Victorian duty system has no place in a twenty-first century fire and rescue service. We pointed out that the corporate fire service managers proposing this system would not work such a draconian shift system.

Our response was sent to every member of the fire authority individually as well as every elected member of the ten constituent councils that make up the South Wales fire authority, as well as Welsh Assembly members and MPs. It worked. The fire authority recognised the injustice of asking their frontline staff to work upwards of 96 hours continuous duty and rejected the proposal.

Ambitious target

In its place was a proposal to reduce the establishment in the brigade by 36 posts, by reducing watch strengths but maintaining a commitment to riding five on frontline appliances for 100% of the time, an ambitious target but one that both sides are committed to achieving. This is not a "victory"; jobs will still be lost from the establishment. But in the current climate that is seen as the lesser of the two evils.

To be fair to the fire authority, it is not an aggressive body, it does not seek confrontation and it has huge respect for the service that our members perform. South Wales is not Merseyside and the chief fire officer is not out of the McGuirk school of public sector management. He publicly recognised at the fire authority meeting the unfairness and inequity of the self-rostering duty system.

However, other elements of the RRP still remain, including reviews of second appliances; special appliances; fire cover; the provision of operational tactical managers (officers); middle managers and day duty uniformed structures; and, finally, a review of overtime and out of hours allowances.

All of these "reviews" have yet to conclude and report, but the brigade committee is on the alert for any proposals that will further reduce the frontline service.

One of the lessons to emerge from this "dispute" has been the need to raise awareness among fire authority members that, first, there are limits as to how far you can cut into the heart and core of the fire and rescue service; and second, that if you embark upon a course of action that will worsen our members' conditions of service and seek to double their weekly working hours, then you should be prepared to meet a workforce that will not surrender its hard-won conditions of service lightly.

South Wales FBU will fight to oppose any return to Victorian duty systems.



Your health

Why toxic shock matters



FBU national women's committee secretary Kerry Baigent reports progress on welfare at incidents and highlights a rare but deadly danger

The FBU has been working hard to encourage fire and rescue services to consider the issue of welfare, such as toilets at incidents. For many years firefighters have had to endure a serious lack of dignity and privacy at incidents.

Many members will have heard the horrific account given at FBU conference about one of our women members being forced to change a tampon in the back of a fire engine.

The fire and rescue service can play their part to prevent such situations occurring and we are pleased that some of them are listening to FBU members' concerns.

The union can report that 19 fire and rescue services are providing proper and decent toilet facilities at incidents.

This number does not include those fire and rescue services that think a tent is an adequate provision.

Most of these facilities include sanitary provision and disposal arrangements. It is vital that those services that

have not yet looked at the issue of toilets at incidents do so now.

They also need to take into account the very real dangers of toxic shock syndrome (TSS). TSS is a killer and it is something that we should all be aware of, whether we are women, colleagues at work, managers at an incident or the husband or partner of a woman. It might be your partner, daughter or mother who suffers.

What is TSS?

Toxic shock syndrome is a rare, life-threatening bacterial infection. The bacteria responsible *Staphylococcus aureus* lives harmlessly on the skin and in the nose, armpit, groin or vagina of one in three people.

In rare cases certain strains of these bacteria can produce toxins (poisons) that enter the bloodstream and cause a drop in blood pressure resulting in symptoms of shock.

They begin to damage the tissue, including skin and organs and can disturb many vital organ functions.

Symptoms

Symptoms of toxic shock syndrome include:

- a sudden high fever (temperature)
- vomiting
- a sunburn-like rash
- diarrhoea
- fainting or feeling faint
- muscle aches
- dizziness
- confusion

The condition is more common in young people, but cases have been recorded in people of all ages, including children.

Causes of TSS

What is known is that the bacteria and their toxins can enter through wounds, burns, localised infection, the throat, or the vagina. The toxins are then spread through the skin until they enter the blood.

Once they reach the blood they interfere with the process that regulates the blood

pressure causing it to drop and result in shock-like symptoms. The kidneys are particularly at risk as they filter the waste products from your blood and kidney failure is a common complication.

If you or anyone you know, has some of these symptoms and suspects TSS you should consult a doctor straight away.

With early diagnosis, TSS can be treated with antibiotics to kill the bacteria and other medicines to counteract the symptoms.

There are two important treatments to deal with TSS. These are:

- To fight the infection, and
- To support any functions of the body that have been affected by infection.

Treatment would require admission to hospital and some people would need to be treated in intensive care.

It is important for FBU officials to include TSS in agreements they negotiate on toilet facilities – and use the real health concerns with TSS to persuade brigades to take these issues seriously.



Some fire and rescue services provide proper and decent toilet facilities at incidents

Legal Beagle

Compensation

Time limits

Can I claim?

Q I was exposed to fumes from an unidentified substance in containers at the scene of a fire. I felt sick, giddy and headachy and was off work for a few days afterwards. But I'm still getting symptoms. Can I claim compensation?

A The key to whether you have a claim is whether it is possible to prove that your employer was negligent in allowing you to be exposed to the fumes. It is also necessary to show that the exposure caused your illness and your ongoing symptoms.

If you went to hospital or to your GP, you will have had tests to try to determine what caused your symptoms. The substance you were exposed to should also have been removed and identified. The incident should have been recorded.

Your brigade should have carried out a risk assessment before allowing you to enter the building. If that was not done, then the brigade is likely to be in breach of health and safety regulations and, if it can be established that it was

the exposure to the fumes made you ill, you may well have a claim for compensation against your employer.

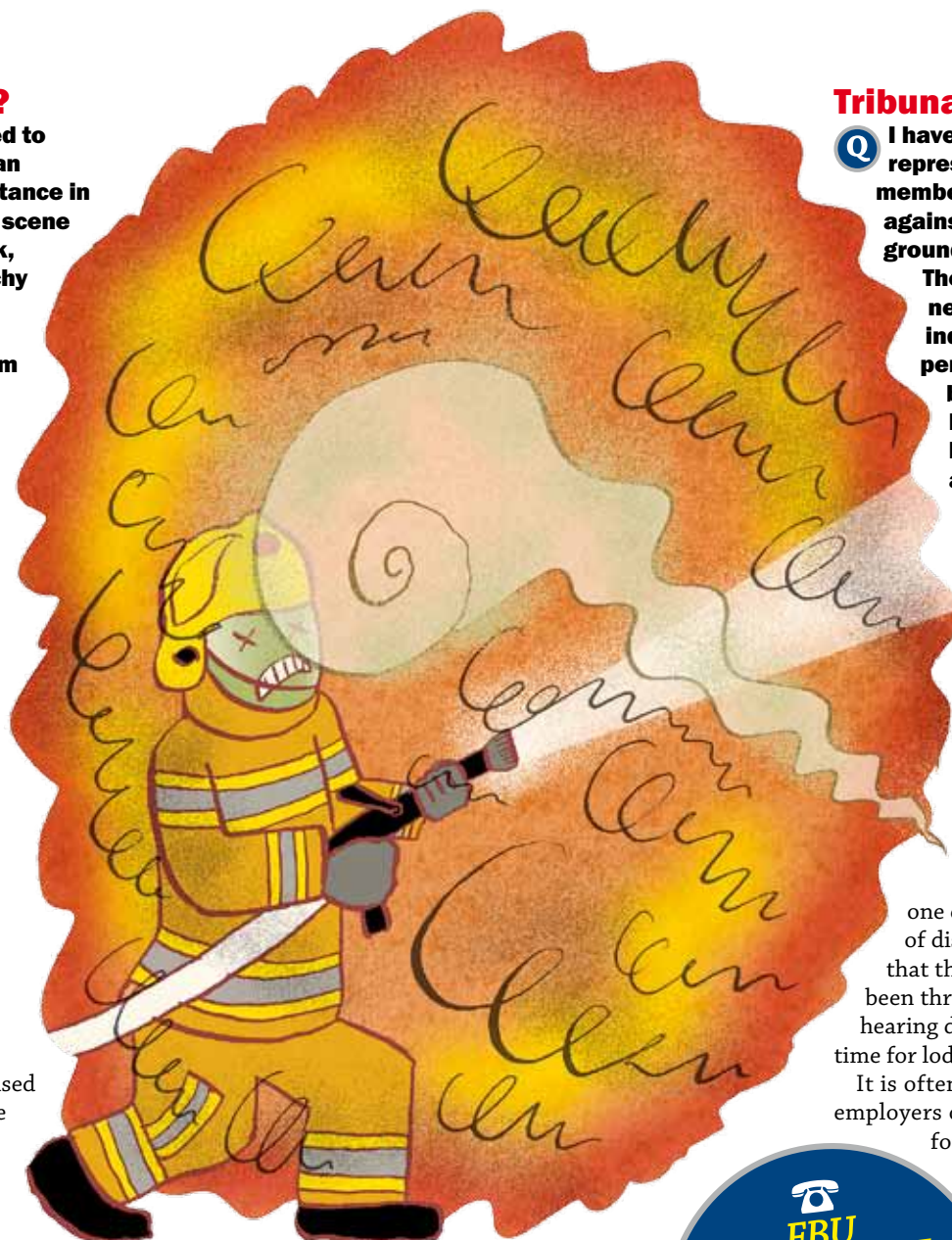
You should contact the FBU legal service as soon as possible so your potential claim can be assessed. You

should also speak to your FBU rep to ensure that the incident is recorded and about your brigade's health and safety practices.

Tribunal time limit

Q I have just represented a member who appealed against dismissal on grounds of capability. The employer had never given any indication that her performance was below standard. I believe that she has grounds for a claim for unfair dismissal, but am worried about the time limits because the employer delayed the appeal hearing.

A The deadline for lodging an employment tribunal claim is three months less one day from the date of dismissal. The fact that the member has been through an appeal hearing does not extend the time for lodging an ET claim. It is often useful to remind employers of the deadline for lodging a claim with the tribunal and to inform them that if they continue to delay an appeal then there will be no alternative but to lodge a claim on behalf of a member.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI



“That pan-fried duck with celeriac mash and figs will just have to wait”

Kevan Downey is part of a firefighters' cooking team

Competitive cooking

Four Stockport firefighters have made it through the first round of The Great Northern Cook Off, a contest that grew out of corporate bonding sessions and ends with a glitzy awards dinner at a swanky hotel.

It's not the first time the Stockport team, known as the "Flametastic Four", have made it through to the Great Northern Cook Off's semi-final – pitting themselves against other work-based teams of four from the North West of England.

Team cohesion

They did it last year – when they were up against lawyers, accountants and bank workers in a contest designed to test team cohesion and bonding alongside cooking expertise and presentational skills.

Last year's rivals included teams from

the North West Development Agency and Coutts /RBS Bank.

Kevan Downey, white watch firefighter and Flametastic Four team member, reckons firefighters could have the edge over desk-bound white-collar teams when it comes to teamwork. But they were also up against a team from Salford City rugby football league who probably also know a thing or two about team bonding.

"This year, we are in it to win it," says Kevan. "Well, you have to want to win, don't you?" he says, adding that the team found it "a lot of fun" competing last year.

Fellow white watch firefighter Darren Bramhall, white watch manager Steve Bullock and Steve Fisher from blue watch complete the team.

The semi-final is in late November. If all goes to plan, the Flametastic Four will be among the five teams who make it through



to the final. Awards for the best team and best chef mentor will be announced at a gala dinner at Manchester's Midland Hotel, hours after the cooking, tasting and judging is over.

It's early days – but things are already looking good for Kevan and the rest of the team. Stockport-based brewery Robinsons – a sponsor of the whole event – has agreed to sponsor the firefighting cooks, impressed by their cooking prowess and their profession.

Last minute

The brewery has also agreed to print beer mats, leaflets and posters to boost fire safety, as they sponsor the off-duty firefighters. Thousands of beer mats with a number people can phone to arrange a home fire risk assessment will be distributed in around 100 pubs.

The Flametastic Four only entered last year's contest at the last minute after another team dropped out. This meant they missed out on some mentoring sessions



The Flametastic Four take part in a publicity shoot at Robinsons Brewery in Stockport



**The Flametastic Four
(l to r): Steve Fisher,
Darren Bramhall,
Kevan Downey and
Steve Bullock**

with a top chef from the region to help teams showcase their skills. Despite this, the Stockport firefighters made it to the semi-final.

Rival teams in this year's semi-final include "GT on the Rocks" – a team from Grant Thornton accountants, "A Salt and Battery" and "The Colander Girls". Working with their allocated chef mentor, they all managed to come up with a three-course meal impressive enough to clear the first hurdle.

"The idea was to replicate what the chef mentor does after agreeing a menu. We had a mentoring session with Marc Mattocks of the Dun Cow at the Cookery School in Altrincham, which all teams are using as a base.

"Guided by Marc, we made goat's cheese with filo wafers, pan-fried mackerel for the main course, followed by poached pear in crème anglaise for pudding. Then Marc treated the four of us to a six-course sample menu at The Dun Cow, which was fantastic.

"Now we've got the ingredients list for

KEVAN DOWNEY

Kevan Downey from white watch at Stockport fire station is part of a fire service competitive cooking team – the Flametastic Four. But the team sticks to lasagne or curry when cooking for the station.

the next round and are looking forward to some mentoring sessions to get us ready."

The list of ingredients to be used for starter, main or dessert includes guinea fowl, monkfish, rhubarb, damsons and "Ginger Tom" – a speciality brew from Robinsons. Carrots and parsnips can also be used – but only in one dish.

Mystery bag

The five teams who make it through to January's final will be given a budget to devise a main course. When they arrive at The Cheshire Cookery School, finalists will be handed the menu for a starter and a mystery bag for dessert.

All three dishes will be "presented

against the clock". They will then be blind tasted by a panel of judges, headed by two-star Michelin chef Michael Caines.

Then, it's off to the awards ceremony. As well as top awards for teams and chef mentors, there are plenty more awards up for grabs. They include "The Scourer Pad Award" for the most burnt items, the "Fabulous" award for the best dish and the "Beans on Toast Award" for the most enthusiastic team.

So, there's obviously everything to play for. Kevan says the organisers have been keen to work around the shifts the team works – though it can mean the firefighters have to bail out sharpish after a cooking session to get to nightshift on time.

Meanwhile, the dishes the team knock up for the station have not changed that much since they started competing.

"It still tends to be lasagne or curry," Kevan confides. "That pan-fried duck with celeriac mash and figs – the dish the team cooked up last year – will just have to wait until days off."

Prize Quiz



Win a Christmas hamper

To win a Christmas hamper please send your answers to the prize quiz by 15 December 2010 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Nov/Dec 2010), 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 Who took over from Sharon Osbourne as a judge on the panel of *X Factor*?

- A Cheryl Cole
- B Dannii Minogue
- C Kimberley Walsh
- D Katy Perry

2 Who won last year's *X Factor*?

- A Shayne Ward
- B Leona Lewis
- C Jedward
- D Joe McElderry

3 Who was the main presenter before Dermot O'Leary?

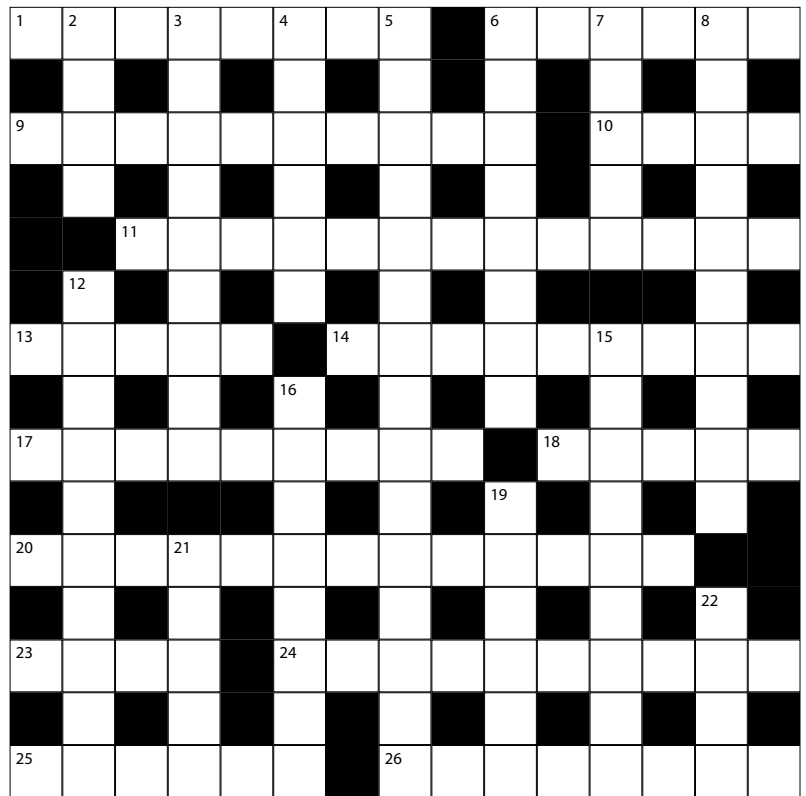
- A Kate Thornton
- B Fearne Cotton
- C Davina McCall
- D Konnie Huq

4 Cheryl Cole found fame on a similar programme to the *X Factor* called ...?

- A Popstars The Rivals
- B Pop Idol
- C Fame Academy
- D Britain's Got Talent

5 What does JLS stand for?

- A Just likes singing
- B Just likes swinging
- C Jack the Lad Swing
- D Jules x 2, Larry and Sam



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1** Puerile (8)
- 6** Tried out, examined (6)
- 9** Mischief-making Irish fairy (10)
- 10** Puts bum on seat (4)
- 11** (Episodes of) abnormally high blood pressures (13)
- 13** A 25 expects a big one (5)
- 14** High-pressure streams of liquid – we see them often! (9)
- 17** Feathered warblers (9)
- 18** Player on stage (5)
- 20** They take pictures (13)
- 23** Swedish songsters, whichever way you look at them! (4)
- 24** Army rank (10)
- 25** One who makes money by handling other people's (6)
- 26** Charges for, or imperial measures, especially of carpet or material (8)

DOWN

- 2** Achilles' weak spot (4)
- 3** Tory peer undermining our 5 (4,5)
- 4** There are 36 to a yard (6)
- 5** Essential aspect of our workplace wellbeing – under attack by 3 (6,3,6)
- 6** Occupied by rent-payer (8)
- 7** Japanese style of fish cuisine (5)
- 8** End of a species (10)
- 12** Bigotry towards gays (10)
- 15** Tropical tree with lilac flowers, fern-like leaves and perfumed wood (9)
- 16** Opposite of plural (8)
- 19** Paler (6)
- 21** Express gratitude (5)
- 22** Joint between upper and lower leg (4)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution October

October quiz answers

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

Winner of the August/September quiz

Paul Kitching, East Sussex



SUZAN/EMPGS

Station Cat

McGuirk sorry – but only for the language

CFO has a way with words

 Merseyside chief fire officer Tony McGuirk says he's sorry for calling public sector workers, including his own Merseyside firefighters, "bone idle". But the apology comes in a **curious form of words**. He says he "used language which in retrospect I now regret". So it's the language, not the sentiment, he's sorry for. If he'd said the same thing a bit more diplomatically, everything would be fine. How about: "Merseyside firefighters appear to have a marked aversion to work of any kind." Or, in stand-up comic style: "I wouldn't say Merseyside firefighters are idle, but I trod on one yesterday because I mistook him for a slug."

It's the way they tell 'em

 Mr McGuirk's comments were made at a conference of the Reform Group, whose website says it "works to promote the values of One Nation Conservatism".

They were picked up weeks later, during the Trades Union Congress, by the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph*. There was a significant difference between the two papers.

The *Mail* reported a substantial chunk of the comment from FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, quoting him as saying: "It's very easy for people who do not risk their lives fighting fires to sneer at people who do. Mr McGuirk

is among the highest paid fire chiefs in the country, getting more than £200,000 a year. He is massively overpaid. **For that money we could get six fully trained firefighters**, which would be a much better use of scarce resources."

The *Telegraph* ran almost 500 words of Mr McGuirk's attack on his firefighters but could not find space for a single sentence in their defence from the firefighters' union.

Relationship counselling

 The day the story appeared, the *Telegraph* journalist who wrote the story, Christopher Hope, was taken to task for not including Matt Wrack's words by the acting FBU press officer Francis Beckett.

Mr Hope was apologetic that they had not appeared. "Please tell Matt, I value my relationship with him and the union," said Hope to Beckett.

A couple of days later, Hope wrote a comment piece calling McGuirk "a hero" whose comments "prompted howls of anguish from the Fire Brigades Union". If he really valued the relationship, it would have been very easy for Hope to include the FBU response in his piece.

Blame it on the media

 Before we leave McGuirk and Hope, it's worth mentioning that while Hope thinks McGuirk is a hero, his admiration appears not to be returned. McGuirk's apology ends: "The media have focused on that element of my presentation as you would expect."

Tony McGuirk: It's not what I say, it's the way that I say it



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



IAN HODGKINSON/DERBY TELEGRAPH

No-go area: The building leaks, but there are crisps in the canteen and a choice of uniforms

EADS they win, tails we lose

 The regional control centre building at Belmont in Durham, which is intended to replace the four local fire service control rooms, was supposed to be live and delivering a more efficient and resilient service to the public by 2007, at an original cost of £100m.

Following numerous delays, a budget that is spiralling out of control and a whole raft of IT problems it has become apparent that **the latest go-live date of June 2011 is unlikely to be met** by the main contractor EADS.

And when it does go live, it will still be lousy value for money. North East regional FBU secretary Pete Wilcox says the project is now expected to cost the four local North East fire and rescue services £600,000 per year more than what the current local control centres cost.

Never mind the IT, feel the uniforms

 FireControl is in even worse trouble in the East Midlands. Emergency repairs are

under way on the £14m building – and it's never been used.

It needs leaky windows replacing, walls replastering and new cladding. It's surrounded by scaffolding and 40 building workers are trying to put the place right. **It will take months, and cost hundreds of thousands**, according to local newspaper reports.

The inside looks great, apparently – futuristic and gleaming – but, it seems, nothing in it works.

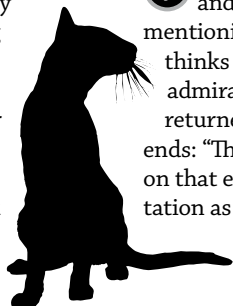
If it were in Scotland it would be called Disneyland – "this disnae work, that disnae work".

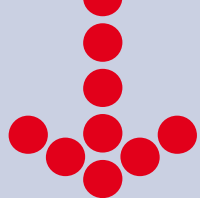
If and when it opens – and there is still some doubt – it will take calls for brigades in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

But for now, all that's open is the staff canteen, which is selling crisps, chocolates and sandwiches to a skeleton staff.

However, some progress has been made. **Two uniforms have been created, and potential workers quizzed on which one they prefer.**

That really does sound like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.





25-year badges



Jim McElhinney (r), SHQ ops planning department, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade secretary Trevor French



Dean Greenway (l), Cumbria brigade chair, receives his 25-year badge from region 5 secretary Kevin Brown



Billy Speedy (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Alan Davies (l) and Sam Kazmanli (c) receive their 25-year badges from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais



Chris Scrimshaw (r) receives his 25-year badge from Tynemouth branch chair Andy Clarke



Paul Dobson (r), red watch, Birtley station receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Alan Robson



Jeff Crane (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Roy Greatorex (l), Welshpool, receives his 25-year badge from Mid and West Wales membership secretary Lawrence Larmond



Ged Phelan (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Brian Delorey (l), Fife HQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Scott McCabe



Dave Kaye (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Steve Crooks (l), green watch, Poole, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Ray Jones (l), Dorset training centre, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Andy Gwatkin (r), fire safety, receives his 25-year badge from South Wales officers' branch rep Vaughan Jenkins



Stuart Jeneson (c), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams with white watch, Redhill Park



Kevin Dockley (r), Woking, receives his 25-year badge from Surrey vice chair Brian Stokes



Paul Ripley (r), Barrow-in-Furness, receives his 25-year badge from Cumbria brigade chair Dean Greenway



Alan Wakefield (r), Barrow-in-Furness, receives his 25-year badge from Cumbria brigade chair Dean Greenway



Brian Weaver (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Keith Evans (r), Barrow-in-Furness, receives his 25-year badge from Cumbria brigade chair Dean Greenway



Eugene Flynn (r, front), green watch, Kentish Town, London, receives his 25-year badge from Camden borough rep Ben Sprung



Dave Passmore (r), Paignton, Devon, receives his 25-year badge from Torbay area rep Andy Gould



Andy Davis (l), green watch Springbourne, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Graham Blore (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Members of Lancashire officer branch (l-r) **Ian Potter, Dick Stott, Warren Hessey and Steve Crook** all receive their 25-year badges from ONC chair Peter Moss (c)



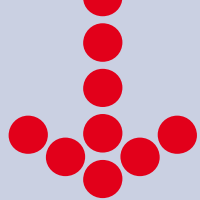
Andy Simpson (r), Sidcup, London, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Simon Blake



Peter Young (front, l), blue watch, Motherwell Strathclyde receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Paddy McGonigle. Looking (l to r) are Stevie Angell, Paul Nolan, James Monaghan, Grant Allan, Mick Howley and Davie Howieson



Tayside held a presentation for members receiving their 25-year badges from **Jim Malone** (region 1 H&S). (l-r) **Ralph Norrie** (brigade treasurer) **Ewan MacIntosh, Grant Christie** (both station 11), **Doug Cook** (DLO), **Gordon Bremner** (station 2), **Dave Stapley** (HQ) **Ewan Myles** (station 11) **Jim Malone, Doug Winton** (station 11), **Jim Pearson** (fire safety)



25-year badges



Davie Grainger (l), white watch, Kirkcaldy, Fife, receives his 25-year badge from Ralph d'Inverno



Rick Nichol (l) and Keith Newnham (c) receive their 25-year badges from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais



Niel Cowan (r), white watch, Glenrothes, Fife, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Phil Mackie



Andy Hawley (r), green watch, Darnall Road station, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Matt Winslow



Steve Harman (r), Lancashire brigade secretary and regional official, receives his 25-year badge from Nick Kemp, Great Harwood



Carl Parry (r) orange watch, Brierley Hill, West Mids, receives his 25-year badge from region 7 secretary Chris Downes



Keith Barnes (l), Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Andy Mill (r), white watch, Methil, Fife, receives his 25-year badge from Mike Forgan



Mike Doherty (r) receives his 25-year badge from Fife brigade secretary Scott McCabe



Don Stirrup (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



John Callaway (c), orange watch, Dudley, receives his 25-year badge from Dudley branch secretary Stuart Henley with members of blue watch Dudley



Owen Lewis (r), Swansea Central branch, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Lawrence Larmond



Mick Gurr (l, front), blue watch, Godstone, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Dave Herpe. Looking on: (l-r) Dale Kimber, Dennis O'Connell, Richard Peters, Mark Richardson and Tim Barnes



Barry Johnson (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Sean Magee (l), headquarters, Humberside, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Keith Evans



Bob Gardner (l), Tunbridge Wells, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Keith Ward



Granville Harris (l) and Alan Taylor (c) receive their 25-year badges from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais



Gordon Walker (r), Neath H&S rep, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack with brigade chair Gareth Lewis (l)



Brian Hand (c) Brierley Hill, receives his 25-year badge from Stuart Henley (2nd r) with blue watch, Dudley



Dave Challinor (l), Welshpool, receives his 25-year badge from Mid and West Wales membership secretary Lawrence Larmond



Mark Cotgrave (c, l), Birkenhead, (now retired) receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Eddie Tate



Gary Jackson (l), Hampshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Paul Trew



Col Voiels (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts

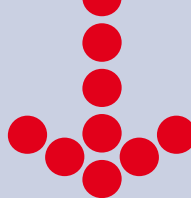


Nick Newman (c, l), Dudley, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Stuart Henley alongside blue watch members



Nick Kemp (l), Great Harwood, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Harman

25-year badges



Adrian Pearce-Naylor (l), Highfields, Nottingham, receives his 25-year badge from region 6 EC member Dave Limer



Mick Petrie (l), blue watch, Halesowen, receives his 25-year badge from Dudley branch secretary Stuart Henley



Steve Polly (l), Morriston, Swansea, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



John Russon (2nd l), Lawrence Ellerby (2nd r) and Brian Poole (r) receive their 25-year badges from brigade chair Steve Morris (l) and brigade secretary Matt Lamb (c), region 7



D Saunders (l), E James (2nd l) and M Hughes (r) receive their 25-year badges from Llandrindod Wells branch rep Simon Barker



Mark Blomfield (r) receives his 25-year badge from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais



Col Edmonds (l) receives his 25-year badge from Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Kevin Belsey (r), Sittingbourne, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jim Green



Steve Parker (l) Thurrock, Essex community safety, receives his 25-year badge from region 9 officers' national committee rep Mick Osborne



Lawrence Larmond (r) brigade membership secretary, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from FBU general secretary Matt Wrack with brigade chair Gareth Lewis



Paul Dewick (c) red watch, Darnall Road station, South Yorkshire receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Matt Winslow with red watch colleague Richard Plumpton

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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.