

# The Bain Review

www.firetactics.com

## An Open Letter to Sir George Bain

### 4 Person Crewing DANGEROUS for Firefighters!

This website has been purposely non-political in its reporting of the current UK fire service pay dispute. We are strategists and tacticians and it is not our purpose to comment on pay, or conditions of service, for firefighters and we concentrate our efforts into making the job of firefighting safer and more effective for those that undertake such duties. The report published by Sir George Bain on 16th December 2002 is in direct conflict with these principles.

It is beyond doubt that the UK fire service is due for modernization and few will disagree with this fact. However, it is in the way that any potential for reform should occur that is in dispute. Joint emergency services control rooms?

Firefighters with advanced medical training? These are topics I personally introduced to the UK forum through original published articles in the 1970s, having seen the benefits of such advances in the USA and elsewhere. Only a few fire brigades have so far taken the initiative in demonstrating that advanced medical training is most useful to firefighters and the community at large and much can be done in this area.

The report states - *The Cunningham Report (Home Office and Scottish Home and Health Department, 1971) calculated the time spent on fighting fires at between 3 and 10 per cent of a firefighter's total time; In the Line of Fire (Audit Commission, 1995) estimated it as between 5 and 10 per cent.*

Sir George is not telling us anything we don't already know - but is this point relevant? They go on to tell us that the job is only 23rd in line of dangerous occupations but fail to acknowledge that whilst working in that 3-10 percent range it is extremely dangerous! This whole philosophy is ridiculous because it implies the role of firefighting is minor! The annual number of fires is increasing and still forms, by far, the greatest workload for a firefighter in operational terms. If our armies are only fighting wars for 0.000001 percent of their time what should we do with them? Should we harness them as ambassadors to travel the world, delivering anti-war leaflets or should we continue to train them and equip them on a risk-based approach on the potential for war?

41 percent fires - 17 percent special services with an increasing workload. Reducing these statistics at the expense of firefighter safety is an objective - but in reality has anyone managed to do this effectively yet without harnessing the national culture to assist? In Japan yes - it works....in the UK? It has never worked yet!

The report states - *Fire stations are staffed under a system known as 'constant crewing'. Staffing is not reduced at night*



Paul GRIMWOOD

[HOME](#)  
[TEC JARGON](#)  
[CONTACT US](#)  
[LATEST NEWS](#)  
[LIVE FIRE TRAINING - CFBT](#)  
[TACTICAL VENTILATION](#)

[FLASHOVER](#)  
[FLASHOVER - TERMINOLOGY](#)  
[FLASHOVER Q&A](#)  
[BACKDRAFT](#)  
[SMOKE EXPLOSIONS](#)  
[UNDER-VENTILATED FIRES](#)  
[3D WATER-FOG TECHNIQUES](#)  
[FIRE ENGINEERING 3D FOG](#)  
[FIRE CHIEF 3D FOG](#)  
[US NAVY 3D FOG TESTS](#)  
[THERMAL IMAGES OF 3D FOG](#)  
[3D GAS COOLING IMAGES](#)  
[3D PULSING VIDEOS](#)  
[FIRENET UK](#)  
[EUROPEAN LINKS](#)  
[FIRE FLOW-RATES](#)  
[PERU BACKDRAFT](#)  
[HIGH-RISE FIREFIGHTING](#)

[STRATEGY & TACTICS - BLAINA](#)  
[DOWNLOAD LIBRARY](#)  
[KINGS CROSS FIRE 1987](#)  
[NOZZLE TECHNIQUES](#)  
[FIRE MODELING](#)  
[WATER & FIREFIGHTING](#)  
[WEB-SITE DATA](#)

[CFBT OPEN FORUM](#)  
[COMPRESSED AIR FOAM - CAFS](#)  
[BIOLOGICAL & CHEMICAL](#)  
[URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE](#)  
[RAPID INTERVENTION TEAMS](#)  
[CEMAC CRISIS MANAGEMENT](#)  
[SAPEURS POMPIERS](#)

or indeed at anytime, however low the incidence of emergency calls. Working practices state that for 75 per cent of callouts five firefighters must crew the first appliance and four the second and this cannot be varied.

Why on earth should this crewing system be varied? These are established *minimum* standards that serve to improve safety for firefighters. Less fires at night are *larger* fires at night! These demand SAFE crewing levels or firefighters cannot possibly maintain their current standards of effectiveness. The community will suffer as 'offensive' operations become 'defensive' by their very nature. The UK fire service is seen as the role model by many other countries who adapt and follow our operational practices. Has Sir George considered the roles of first arriving crews in making this assessment? Has he reviewed the structure and tactical approaches of a converging fire force? In the 1950s we introduced accountability systems; in the 1970s we introduced Rapid Intervention Emergency Crews; and we are now placing great emphasis on the principles of CFBT and tactical hose-line placements, including support (secondary) lines on the initial attendance. We are also training firefighters in tactical venting actions but the equipment (aerials) necessary to complete such actions early in the attack are being phased out! With the Bain review it looks as though vital links in the manpower structure will affect the way we approach fires in future.

In 1992 I tendered an extensive report (published in FOG ATTACK) that compared the London Fire Brigade (as an example) with other fire brigades around the world. It clearly showed a service that was in decline in terms of manpower and equipment provision. A single London firefighter was seen to be responsible (on average) for every 4,000 citizens and featured poorly in this respect as well as that of *minimum crewing* levels. The reduction in aerial apparatus suggested London offers the least coverage of 26 cities reviewed! This has major implications on how access and venting operations can be put into effect at incidents at an early stage. A government commissioned study had stated that *more* should be done in this area!

Finally, Is Sir George suggesting that firefighters should remain operational to a later age? How is physically fit for the purpose of doing the job defined? In the USA, where firefighters do work on into their fifties and beyond, it is well established that heart-attacks are the biggest cause of firefighter deaths! But then - that might go some way in solving the pensions time-bomb eh Sir George?

'If the BAIN report is anything to go on then 'firefighter safety' at fires will most definitely be compromised....this in turn will force a tactical approach biased towards *defensive actions*....the losses to the community will be obvious....'

Crewing below five firefighters per appliance (engine) means firefighter accountability & safety is compromised and defensive operations are forced upon the initial attendance....this may cost lives!

[UK FIRE SERVICE](#)  
[POSITIVE PRESSURE](#)  
[VENTILATION](#)  
[CFBT - AUSTRALIA](#)  
[FIRE COMMAND & CONTROL](#)  
[CFBT FIRE SIMULATOR](#)  
[SAFETY](#)  
[CFBT and THE](#)  
['REAL-WORLD'](#)  
[ACCOUNTABILITY & ICS](#)  
[OSCEOLA TRAINING](#)  
[FLASHOVER](#)  
[FDNY WTC TRIBUTE - 911](#)  
[GREAT LINKS](#)

## **Comments on 'Bain' by Professor Roger Seifert of Keele University**

Overall the Bain report should be seen as essentially one ordered by government in response to the strike threat. In other words it could never be independent because it is unheard of in industrial relations modern history for such a review to be undertaken with the threat of a dispute when one party refuses to participate. Therefore Bain's position is disingenuous: it is not about the future of the Service in terms of modernisation but about stopping the strike; and as a result his report and its timing have tied the hands of the employers.

In particular the tone of the report uses the language of government reform programmes across the public services rather than being constructive and focusing on the special issues of the fire service. For example the term 'modern' itself is used uncritically -- do we all agree what it means? do we all agree there is only one way to modernize? do we all agree that there is one best practice? do we all agree with the level and method of funding etc? or does modernise under Blairism mean privatise or at least manage the service AS IF it was a private service with customers -rather than what it is, a service with users and potential users?

Paragraph 5 with 'blaming' and para 13 with lists of 'will' and 'must' indicate a paper well beyond the competence of the author.

There is muddled thinking on overtime: firstly the refusal to work overtime is not a restrictive practice as Bain believes but a logical outcome of the original formula - any extra earnings added to overall earnings might reduce next year's basic pay rise. Second Bain wants more family friendly careers etc (para 18) but also wants overtime (para 24, bottom of page 11) which has been identified as a major anti-family activity. Also one calculated to reduce the recruitment of women in particular!

There are some odd comments on the government's public sector pay policy. Para 24 bottom of page 11 again talks of "compromising pay comparability" (totally unclear what this means) and later on para33 we are told that more pay can only come with "efficiency savings". We know from elsewhere that government has paid more to other groups in the public sector without such links, and also it is unclear what an efficiency saving is unless he means a saving by employing people at lower costs.

On pay -- much has been made of the going rate in the public sector being what it is and higher than in the private sector. Private sector earnings on average have risen faster than public sector earnings for the last ten years and more and are currently again higher. So the few months when this was not happening was a blip caused by fall out from millenium bonus payments being one off boost to private earnings (remember the figs are year on year % increase). More importantly these averages disguise a vast range of increases across sectors and occupations etc.

The section on negotiating strands is naive and mischievous - a pathetic attempt along with the timetable etc to look as if

Professor Bain is in charge.

The final sentences sums up the extent to which the Review is aping government opinion and is clearly part of the negotiating process rather than independent from it.

I am sure the several technical errors will be picked - such as suggesting that extra pay for a specialist skill such as driving should only be paid in London (therefore it is a weighting for area not a skill reward etc).

I refer you to "The Hunting of the Snark" by Lewis Carol. The search for the snark is lead by a Bellman who rings his bell when wanting to be heard. He keeps repeating himself as he says "what I tell you three times is true" - in other words just because Bain says he is independent does not make him so, and just because he says we all want modernisation does not make it so.

## **Channel 4 News Obtain a Leaked copy of the Report the UK Government do not want YOU to see!!**

Britain needs a major increase in both fire crews and fire engines - that's the advice contained in a major report compiled over three years but so far left unpublished by the Government.

Now Channel Four News can reveal that the so called Pathfinder document suggests some brigades should double in size to improve their fire fighting capabilities. Pathfinder is potentially embarrassing for the Government because it appears to contradict the official Bain Review.

Earlier this week, it suggested that firefighter numbers could be CUT. Our Business Correspondent Jonathan Rugman has this exclusive report. The report the Government apparently didn't want you to see - due out last April, but never published; the report we asked the Deputy Prime Minister for on Monday, which his office said they would give us some time next year, once they'd had a chance to rebut it. The Pathfinder report gathered information from 11 fire brigades across the UK over three years and looked into how to reduce fire deaths, which average 650 a year. Among the findings leaked to us, that "Metropolitan brigades needed a 50% increase in applicances" that means more fire engines rural brigades also need more engines and more full time crews, while "some brigades estimate that they would need to increase in size by a factor of 100%."

And the stark conclusion that: "...if the present findings of the brigades... were adopted, the increased number of appliances and crew would result in a significant increase in the cost of running the brigades." Pathfinder flies in face of the findings of Monday's Bain review which outlined an agenda of re-organisation and cuts, implying that 1,500 jobs a year would have to go in a modernisation programme.

On Monday Sir George called Pathfinder "fundamentally

flawed" and its not even mentioned in his report. But the union smells a Government cover up. A spokesman for the Bain review insisted tonight that it had looked at the Pathfinder report, which is not what Sir George Bain told the press on Monday. The spokesman said it was wrong to assume, as Pathfinder does, that sending more people and engines would reduce fire deaths and that preventing fires in the first place was far more important. But this is a row not just about how best to reform the fire service, but about how open the Government is being in that debate.

[COST EFFECTIVE FIRE COVER - IS IT REASLISTIC?](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE 150 HSE PAGE PATHFINDER REPORT HERE](#)

[VISIT THE FIRE COVER REVIEW \(PATHFINDER\) WEBSITE HERE](#)

[THE BAIN REPORT AVAILABLE HERE](#)

[NEW YORK FIREFIGHTERS FACING SIMILAR CUTS HERE](#)

UK FORUM DEBATE [HERE](#)

US FORUM DEBATE [HERE](#)

Paul Grimwood

December 2002

Hit Counter