



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

Editorial – May 2008

Changing times

It's that time of the year again when more than 1,000 Fed reps descend on an unsuspecting seaside town to put the world to rights. This year Bournemouth plays host to what promises to be a very interesting Police Federation Conference, particularly when Home Secretary Jacqui Smith takes the stage.

Ms Smith has the unprecedented honour of being the only Home Secretary to completely turn her back on the decision of independent arbiters about what constitutes fair pay for police. By failing to fight for a fair pay settlement for police, the Home Secretary has been shown to be nothing more than a nodding dog to the Prime Minister and Chancellor.

I have confidence that despite the anger and sense of betrayal felt by those in the audience, the police officers of England and Wales will continue to behave in the honourable and respectful manner they have throughout this long and bitter dispute. With no advisors to turn to, and no Prime Minister to hide behind, let's see how Ms Smith copes with the reality of her actions. For the last time, after six years leading the Police Federation of England and Wales, national Chairman Jan Berry will have the opportunity to deliver the first blow. Then there's the chance for the Home Secretary to respond, before questions from the floor.

Together with the national General Secretary, John Francis, and national Treasurer, Brian Fenlon, Jan Berry retires from her post at the end of conference. And when history records the last six years of the Police Federation not only will it record that Jan Berry was the first woman to become national Chairman, it will also record that she led the organisation admirably at one of the most tumultuous times in policing.

Whether it was the battle to ensure that workforce modernisation plans retain the constable at the heart of politically independent policing, or more recently, two consecutive years fighting for fair pay, culminating in 25,000 off duty officers marching through the streets of London, the three national principal officers of the Federation were at the helm. I wish them well in retirement and thank them for their relentless dedication and commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of police officers.

Whoever takes over these vitally important positions, one thing is very clear. The fight to protect the Office of Constable and ensure fair pay for the sacrifices police officers make continues.

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Print: Wyndeham Heron Limited, Maldon, Essex

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