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FIRE DEATHS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1970

by

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FIRE DEATHS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1970

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S. E. Chandler

SUMMARY

A preliminary survey shows that 120 persons died in fires attended by fire brigades in the fourth quarter of 1970. Of these 95 were in England and Wales, 23 in Scotland and two in Northern Ireland. Revised estimates for the first three quarters of the year are 302, 180 and 126 respectively, giving an estimate of 728 for the year. These figures cannot be regarded as comparable as industrial disputes in both the post office and the fire brigade have resulted in some dislocation of the reporting procedures.

The worst fire in the quarter involved a collision between two tankers in territorial waters, resulting in 14 deaths.

KEY WORDS: Fatalities, fire statistics

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FIRE DEATHS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1970

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INTRODUCTION

This report is one of a series of quarterly reports giving preliminary information on deaths in fires attended by fire brigades. It is based on reports received by 31st January 1971 and is subject to revision. Because of industrial disputes involving both the post office and the fire brigades, there have been interruptions to the normal flow of fire reports and the figures in this Note are not therefore comparable with those of others in the series. There is some additional uncertainty about the situation in Northern Ireland and there may be deaths arising from riot fires of which the fire brigades are not aware.

Revised estimates for the first three quarters of 1970 show that the number of fire deaths recorded by fire brigades in the United Kingdom were 302, 180, 126 respectively. This report shows that the preliminary estimate for the fourth quarter is 120 giving a provisional figure of 728 deaths in the year, but it is likely that when all reports are received the total will be similar to that in 1969 when there were 861 deaths. Of the 120 deaths reported in the final quarter, 95 occurred in England and Wales, 23 in Scotland and two in Northern Ireland.

The worst fire in the quarter was in a collision at sea between two tankers resulting in 14 deaths. A tenement fire in Glasgow led to the death of four young children. It is also known that there was a hotel fire at Redcar involving four deaths, but particulars of this have not yet been received.

Tables 1-5 give further details of hazards, times of calls, sources of ignition, age and sex and causes of death. Table 6 gives the numbers of fatal and non-fatal casualties in each brigade area.

Table 1A. Hazard in which fire started (England and Wales)

Hazard in which fire started	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	69	12	95	38
IN BUILDINGS Total	57	8	67	18
Financial, professional and miscellaneous services	1	-	1	-
Medical services	1	-	1	-
Houses - detached or semi-detached	5	-	5	-
- terraced	17	6	25	14
- not stated	18	1	19	2
Flats - in blocks	2	-	2	-
- converted	7	-	7	-
- other or not stated	2	1	3	2
Private sheds, garages, etc.	2	-	2	-
Other	2	-	2	-
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	12	4	28	20
Road vehicles	4	-	4	-
Other means of transport	2	2	16	16
Caravans	4	1	5	2
Other	2	1	3	2

Table 2A. Time of call to fires (England and Wales)

Time of call to fires	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	69	12	95	38
Midnight - 02.59	12	2	15	5
03.00 - 05.59	7	2	9	4
06.00 - 08.59	9	1	10	2
09.00 - 11.59	8	2	11	5
12.00 - 14.59	11	3	14	6
15.00 - 17.59	6	-	6	-
18.00 - 20.59	7	-	7	-
21.00 - 23.59	5	2	19	16
Late call	4	-	4	-

Table 3A. Source of ignition of fires (England and Wales)

Source of ignition of fire	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	69	12	95	38
Children with fire	3	1	5	3
Crash or collision	5	2	19	16
Malicious ignition, suicide	1	-	1	-
Matches, tapers, etc.	1	-	1	-
Smoking materials	8	1	9	2
Electric - space heating	5	-	5	-
- wire and cable	3	2	5	4
- blanket	2	-	2	-
- other	4	-	4	-
Gas - space heating	2	-	2	-
Solid fuel - fire in grate	4	1	5	2
Oil - space heating	1	-	1	-
Other	6	-	6	-
Unknown*	24	5	30	11

*Includes fires reported as "Unknown, pending inquest"

Tables 4A. Date of construction of buildings (where applicable)
(England and Wales)

Date of construction	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	69	12	95	38
Pre - 1900	15	4	21	10
1900 - 1909	8	3	11	6
1910 - 1919	6	-	6	-
1920 - 1929	7	-	7	-
1930 - 1939	13	-	13	-
1950 - 1959	3	-	3	-
1960 onwards	4	1	5	2
Not stated	1	-	1	-
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	12	4	28	20

Table 1B. Hazard in which fire started (Scotland)

Hazard in which fire started	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	17	4	23	10
IN BUILDINGS Total	15	4	21	10
Industry	1	-	1	-
Houses - terraced	1	-	1	-
- not stated	2	-	2	-
Flats - in blocks	6	2	10	6
- other or not stated	5	2	7	4
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	2	-	2	-
Road vehicles	1	-	1	-
Other means of transport	1	-	1	-

Table 2B. Time of call to fires (Scotland)

Time of call to fires	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	17	4	23	10
Midnight - 02.59	3	1	4	2
03.00 - 05.59	2	2	4	4
06.00 - 08.59	6	-	6	-
09.00 - 11.59	3	1	6	4
15.00 - 17.59	1	-	1	-
18.00 - 20.59	1	-	1	-
21.00 - 23.59	1	-	1	-

Table 3B. Source of ignition of fires (Scotland)

Source of ignition of fire	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	17	4	23	10
Crash or collision	1	-	1	-
Smoking materials	7	-	7	-
Electric - space heating	2	1	3	2
Other	2	-	2	-
Unknown*	5	3	10	8

*Includes fires reported as "Unknown, pending inquest"

Table 4B. Date of construction of buildings (where applicable) (Scotland)

Date of construction	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	17	4	23	10
Pre - 1900	4	2	8	6
1900 - 1909	2	-	2	-
1930 - 1939	7	1	8	2
1950 - 1959	1	-	1	-
1960 onwards	1	1	2	2
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	2	-	2	-

Table 1C. Hazard in which fire started (Northern Ireland)

Hazard in which fire started	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	2	-	2	-
IN BUILDINGS Total	2	-	2	-
Flats - in blocks	1	-	1	-
Other	1	-	1	-

Table 2C. Time of call to fires (Northern Ireland)

Time of call to fires	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	2	-	2	-
03.00 - 05.59	1	-	1	-
21.00 - 23.59	1	-	1	-

Table 3C. Source of ignition of fires (Northern Ireland)

Source of ignition of fire	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	2	-	2	-
Unknown*	2	-	2	-

*Includes fires reported as "Unknown, pending inquest"

Table 4C. Date of construction of buildings (where applicable) (Northern Ireland)

Date of construction	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	2	-	2	-
Pre - 1900	1	-	1	-
1900 - 1909	1	-	1	-

Table 5A. Sex and age of fatal casualties

Age (years)	England and Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
TOTAL	63	32	14	9	1	1
Under 1	1	1	-	-	-	-
1 - 4	6	4	3	1	-	-
5 - 14	7	1	-	1	-	-
15 - 44	10	2	3	1	-	-
45 - 64	9	8	5	4	1	-
65 - 74	6	4	2	2	-	-
75 and over	10	12	1	-	-	1
Not stated	14	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5B. Cause of death

Cause of death	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
TOTAL	95	23	2
Burns	43	6	1
Asphyxiation	43	9	-
Other	1	-	-
Unknown	8	8	1

Table 6. Numbers of casualties in each brigade area

	Fatal	Non-fatal
UNITED KINGDOM	120	671
England and Wales	95	581
Scotland	23	82
Northern Ireland	2	8

(A) English and Welsh County Borough Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bath	-	2	Newcastle/Gateshead	1	6
Birkenhead	-	8	Newport (Mon.)	-	2
Birmingham	4	56	Northampton	-	1
Blackburn	-	4	Norwich	-	5
Blackpool	1	8	Nottingham	1	8
Bolton	1	7	Oldham	1	3
Bournemouth	-	4	Oxford	-	4
Bradford	1	3	Plymouth	-	1
Bristol	-	8	Portsmouth	14*	2
Burnley	-	2	Preston	1	11
Burton upon Trent	-	1	Rotherham	1	3
Bury	-	2	St. Helens	-	1
Cardiff	-	1	Salford	-	1
Carlisle	-	2	Sheffield	1	12
Chester	-	1	Solihull	-	1
Coventry	-	8	Southampton	-	3
Darlington	-	1	Southend	-	1
Derby	-	7	South Shields	1	2
Dudley	-	7	Stockport	-	1
Eastbourne	-	5	Stoke-on-Trent	1	-
Gloucester	1	2	Sunderland	-	4
Grimsby	1	1	Tynemouth	-	2
Halifax	-	3	Walsall	-	3
Hastings	-	1	Hartlepool	-	3
Huddersfield	1	1	Wigan	1	1
Kingston upon Hull	5	6	Wolverhampton	2	10
Leeds	3	6	York	-	2
Leicester	-	6	Warley	-	1
Luton	-	5	West Bromwich	1	7
Manchester	-	4	Tees-side	2	8
Merthyr Tydfil	-	1			

*Includes 14 deaths in collision at sea in territorial waters

(B) English and Welsh County Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bedfordshire	-	1	Huntingdon/Peterborough	-	1
Berkshire and Reading	-	2	Kent	1	4
Buckinghamshire	-	3	Lincolnshire (Lindsey)	2	3
Caernarvonshire	-	2	London (Greater)	19	176
Cambridge/Ely	3	3	Norfolk	1	1
Cardigan/Carmarthen	-	1	Northamptonshire	1	-
Cheshire	3	4	Northumberland	-	5
Cornwall	-	2	Nottinghamshire	-	11
Cumberland	-	1	Shropshire	-	1
Denbigh/Montgomery	-	1	Somerset	-	8
Derbyshire	-	1	Staffordshire	-	9
Dorset	-	2	Suffolk and Ipswich	-	1
Durham (Co.)	3	2	Sussex, East	1	3
Essex	3	9	Sussex, West	1	8
Flintshire	2	1	Warwickshire	-	5
Glamorgan	2	-	Wight, Isle of	-	3
Gloucestershire	-	1	Worcester City/County	-	2
Hampshire	3	2	Yorkshire (West Riding)	4	20

(C) Scottish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Glasgow	11	57
Lanarkshire	-	2
Central	5	5
Western	-	1
South Western	2	-
South Eastern	2	9
Fife	-	3
Perth and Kinross	1	1
Angus	1	1
North Eastern	1	3

(D) Northern Irish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Belfast	2	8

