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Fire Research Note

No.873

FIRE DEATHS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1971

by

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May 1971

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F.R. Note No.873
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SUMMARY

A preliminary survey shows that there were 147 fatal casualties in fires attended by fire brigades in England and Wales during the first quarter of 1971. The corresponding figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland were 31 and 2 respectively. It is likely that because of an industrial dispute involving the fire services these figures are underestimates of the true figures.

KEY WORDS: Fatalities, fire statistics

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FIRE DEATHS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1971

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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 information received by 30th April 1971 and is subject to revision. It is probable that some deaths and injuries are not included because of an industrial dispute involving the fire brigades; as a result the information in this note is not comparable with other notes in the series.

One hundred and forty-seven fatal casualties were reported in England and Wales, 31 in Scotland and 2 in Northern Ireland. Non-fatal casualties numbered 666, 64 and 14 respectively in the same areas.

Tables 1-5 give details of hazards, times of call, sources of ignition, dates of construction, age and sex and causes of deaths. 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	131	13	147	29
IN BUILDINGS Total	124	13	140	29
Industry	4	1	5	2
Distributive trades	2	-	2	-
Financial, professional and miscellaneous services	6	1	7	2
Clubs, hotels, restaurants and public houses	2	1	3	2
Houses - detached or semi-detached	14	2	16	4
- terraced	18	4	23	9
- not stated	43	3	48	8
Flats - in blocks	4	-	4	-
- converted	19	1	20	2
- other or not stated	6	-	6	-
Non-institutional dwellings as part of other occupancies	1	-	1	-
Private sheds, garages, etc.	2	-	2	-
Other	3	-	3	-
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	7	-	7	-
Road vehicles	4	-	4	-
Caravans	1	-	1	-
Other	2	-	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	131	13	147	29
Midnight - 02.59	15	1	16	2
03.00 - 05.59	8	-	8	-
06.00 - 08.59	11	-	11	-
09.00 - 11.59	16	2	18	4
12.00 - 14.59	18	3	23	8
15.00 - 17.59	9	1	10	2
18.00 - 20.59	15	2	17	4
21.00 - 23.59	11	-	11	-
Late call	5	-	5	-
Not stated	23	4	28	9

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	131	13	147	29
Children with fire	3	-	3	-
Crash or collision	1	-	1	-
Malicious ignition, suicide	2	-	2	-
Matches, tapers, etc.	1	-	1	-
Smoking materials	15	2	17	4
Electric - space heating	9	-	9	-
-- wire and cable	4	-	4	-
-- blanket	4	1	5	2
-- other	3	-	3	-
Gas - cooking	4	1	5	2
-- space heating	4	-	4	-
Solid fuel - fire in grate	11	1	12	2
Oil - space heating	5	-	5	-
-- other	1	-	1	-
Other	4	-	4	-
Unknown*	60	8	71	19

*Includes fires reported as "Unknown, pending inquest"

Table 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	131	13	147	29
Pre - 1900	21	1	24	4
1900 - 1909	30	3	33	6
1910 - 1919	6	-	6	-
1920 - 1929	7	1	8	2
1930 - 1939	15	2	17	4
1940 - 1949	4	1	5	2
1950 - 1959	7	-	7	-
1960 onwards	7	1	8	2
Not stated	27	4	32	9
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	7	-	7	-

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	25	3	31	9
IN BUILDINGS Total	22	2	27	7
Medical services	1	-	1	-
Clubs, hotels, restaurants and public houses	1	-	1	-
Houses - type not stated	5	1	8	4
Flats - in blocks	6	1	8	3
- converted	1	-	1	-
- other or not stated	8	-	8	-
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	3	1	4	2
Caravans	2	1	3	2
Other	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	25	3	31	9
Midnight - 02.59	2	1	4	3
03.00 - 05.59	3	1	4	2
06.00 - 08.59	1	-	1	-
09.00 - 11.59	6	-	6	-
12.00 - 14.59	3	-	3	-
18.00 - 20.59	2	-	2	-
21.00 - 23.59	4	1	7	4
Late call	1	-	1	-
Not stated	3	-	3	-

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	25	3	31	9
Smoking materials	9	1	10	2
Electric - space heating	-	-	-	-
- wire and cable	2	1	5	4
- blanket	-	-	-	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Other	1	-	1	-
Unknown*	12	1	14	3

*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	25	3	31	9
Pre - 1900	1	-	1	-
1900 - 1909	8	2	13	7
1910 - 1919	1	-	1	-
1920 - 1929	1	-	1	-
1930 - 1939	3	-	3	-
1950 - 1959	1	-	1	-
1960 onwards	2	-	2	-
Not stated	5	-	5	-
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	3	1	4	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	-
House - type not stated	2	-	2	-

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	-
09.00 - 11.59	1	-	1	-
12.00 - 14.59	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	-
Electric - space heating	1	-	1	-
Unknown*	1	-	1	-

*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	Not stated	Male	Female	Male	Female
TOTAL	67	75	5	21	10	-	2
Under 1	2	4	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 4	8	7	1	9	-	-	1
5 - 14	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
15 - 44	10	6	-	4	2	-	-
45 - 64	12	14	-	4	3	-	-
65 - 74	13	12	-	2	-	-	1
75 and over	15	30	-	1	5	-	-
Not stated	6	1	3	1	-	-	-

Table 5B. Cause of death

Cause of death	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
TOTAL	147	31	2
Burns	46	10	1
Asphyxiation	51	9	-
Other or unknown	50	12	1

Table 6. Numbers of casualties in each brigade area

	Fatal	Non-fatal
UNITED KINGDOM	180	744
England & Wales	147	666
Scotland	31	64
Northern Ireland	2	14

(A) English and Welsh County Borough Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Barnsley	-	2	Luton	-	2
Bath	-	1	Manchester	-	8
Birkenhead	4	5	Merthyr Tydfil	1	1
Birmingham	4	86	Newcastle/Gateshead	-	1
Blackburn	1	4	Newport (Mon.)	-	8
Blackpool	-	8	Northampton	-	5
Bolton	2	14	Norwich	-	4
Bootle	-	1	Nottingham	1	11
Bournemouth	1	1	Plymouth	2	12
Bradford	3	21	Preston	1	6
Brighton	-	-	Rotherham	-	2
Bristol	1	5	Sheffield	2	4
Burnley	1	1	Solihull	-	2
Burton upon Trent	-	4	Southampton	-	1
Coventry	1	4	Southend	1	-
Darlington	-	1	South Shields	-	4
Derby	1	4	Stockport	-	5
Dewsbury	-	1	Stoke-on-Trent	1	4
Dudley	2	9	Sunderland	-	8
Eastbourne	-	2	Swansea	2	2
Exeter	-	1	Tynemouth	2	-
Gloucester	-	2	Walsall	-	2
Great Yarmouth	-	1	Warrington	-	1
Hastings	-	1	Hartlepool	1	-
Huddersfield	-	2	Wolverhampton	-	18
Kingston upon Hull	1	14	York	-	2
Leeds	5	3	Warley	-	2
Liverpool	4	-	West Bromwich	2	12

(B) English and Welsh County Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bedfordshire	1	5	Kent	2	12
Brecon/Radnorshire	-	1	Lancashire	6	2
Cambridge/Ely	2	6	Leicester/Rutland	-	1
Cardigan/Carmarthen	1	2	Lincolnshire (Kesteven)	-	1
Cheshire	1	9	London (Greater)	33	184
Cornwall	2	3	Norfolk	4	-
Cumberland	-	1	Northamptonshire	1	8
Denbigh/Montgomery	1	2	Northumberland	3	9
Derbyshire	1	3	Nottinghamshire	4	2
Devon and Torbay	2	-	Shropshire	-	15
Dorset	1	1	Somerset	3	5
Durham (Co.)	1	1	Staffordshire	1	-
Essex	2	9	Suffolk and Ipswich	3	6
Flintshire	2	3	Sussex, East	2	17
Glamorgan	-	4	Wight, Isle of	-	2
Gloucestershire	1	1	Wiltshire	3	-
Hampshire	3	1	Worcester City/County	3	3
Herefordshire	-	1	Yorkshire (North Riding)	1	-
Hertfordshire	2	-	Yorkshire (West Riding)	7	19
Huntingdon/Peterborough	1	2			

(C) Scottish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Glasgow	10	27
Lanarkshire	5	2
Central	1	1
Western	1	4
South Western	2	4
South Eastern	2	18
Fife	1	3
Perth and Kinross	2	-
Angus	1	5
North Eastern	4	-
Northern	2	-

(D) Northern Irish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Belfast	2	14

