

JANUARY 2005 - SUMMARY

The list of gun incidents from January 2005 includes the following:

- There were a number of fatal shootings, all in urban areas - Reading, Bury, Harlesden, Ladbroke Grove, West Norwood. Many of the victims were shot or later discovered in cars. Other serious shooting incidents resulting in injury were reported in Shettleston in Glasgow, Llansamlet in Swansea, Chepstow, Wandsworth and Bloomsbury in London, Leeds, Bradford, Perry Barr and Whalley Range, Manchester, the victim of the latter being a 15-year-old boy.
- A number of armed raids on banks, bookmakers and shops were reported across the country, including in the South Shields area (three raids), Strangeways (Manchester), Coventry, Slough, Crouch Hill (London), Bournemouth, Boscombe, Newton Flotman (Norfolk) and Coleridge (Cambridge). Two women were robbed at gunpoint in their homes, one in Kilburn and one in Merseyside. Another woman was attacked on the street in Sheffield as was a man walking home in Runcorn. In many cases the nature of the gun used is not recorded or known though often given as a handgun, but two cases which came to court in January suggest that at least some of the weapons are likely to have been imitations. These hold ups, which took place in Bermondsey and South Shields, were carried out with a fake Walther pistol and a BB gun respectively.
- Guns were used in two instances of car theft in the West Midlands (Atherstone and Hilton) and one in London (Walworth).
- Pubs featured in three of the incidents, a shooting at a Rotherhithe pub, the closure of a pub in Benchill, Wythenshawe after a loaded handgun and drugs were discovered and the conviction of a pub landlord in Wallsend for possession of an illegal arsenal.
- Two isolated incidents took place at sports events. A man was shot at during a soccer match near Chester and an air weapon was fired during a fracas at a rugby league match in Pontefract.
- Two men who appeared in court during January for airgun offences, in Halifax and Billingham respectively, had psychiatric or mental problems combined with a history of alcohol abuse. Under the circumstances their ownership of airguns should have been a major concern, yet the public was put at risk because of the absence of controls over these weapons .

- Groups of youths displaying imitation guns in public continue to cause alarm to onlookers and prompt armed responses from the police. This month there were reports of incidents in Brighton and on a train near Shepperton.
- Once again there were random incidents involving air weapons and BB guns with attacks on a milkman in Cheadle, a bus in Stoke-on-Trent, a coach in Telford and shots fired at pedestrians in Telford, Norwich and Borehamwood. A motorist on the A46 was threatened by a teenager in another car who pointed an air pistol at him. A boy was charged with threatening a teacher at a Tyneside school with a fake gun. There were also more accounts of horrific injuries to animals caused by the weapons.
- Every so often the public gets a glimpse of how guns can become so much of an obsession to an individual that others are put at risk. In a case that drew parallels with other gun owners, such as Michael Ryan and Thomas Hamilton, who went on to commit atrocious crimes with their guns, David Collins of Easter Ross was jailed for five years. He was a loner who appeared to have no other interest but his guns. Collins had accumulated an arsenal of weapons by the time his family tipped off the authorities after they became frightened when they heard him test-firing the weapons and making threats against potential targets including police, bus drivers and employees of a local company. He was able to obtain his weapons by mail order, after which he modified them to make them more powerful. Mail order represents an inadequately monitored means by which guns can be sold. GCN hopes that the authorities will look carefully at the case of David Collins and act to eliminate this dangerous loophole.

JANUARY 2005 – INCIDENTS

ENGLAND

BBC, 31 January 2005

A man who had been playing football at **Christleton** Sports Club near Chester was shot by a man wearing a mask. The man, who had been sent off the pitch, was sitting in his car when he was shot at three times by a passenger in a car.

icCoventry, 28 January 2005

A car was stolen at gunpoint outside a house in **Atherstone**. The gunmen demanded wallets and mobile phones before forcing the driver and a passenger out of the car which they then drove away.

icBerkshire, 28 January 2005

Two men, one seen pushing a child's buggy, threatened two members of staff of a jeweller's in **Slough** with what is believed to be a gun.

Journal (Newcastle), 28 January 2005

Three armed robberies have taken place in a matter of days in South Shields. Two were on banks (in **Hebburn** and **Jarrow**), the third on a food store in **Hebburn**. (See also *BBC*, 19 January 2005). In the latest a 70-year-old woman was taken hostage by a man who waved a handgun in the faces of staff whilst demanding a large amount of cash.

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle), 27 January 2005

Stuart Ryland, the landlord of a pub in **Wallsend**, was given a three year jail sentence after he was caught with an arsenal of illegal weapons (a shotgun and two pistols), two magazines and cartridges and a quantity of shotgun ammunition.

Express & Star, 27 January 2005

Two robbers armed with what is believed to have been a handgun stole a car from a man outside his home in **Hilton**, near Lichfield. £600 was also stolen in the attack.

Halifax Today, 26 January 2005

Paul Clarkson of **Halifax** who threatened to kill a takeaway delivery driver was given a two and a half year jail sentence. He had appeared with an **air rifle** when the food was delivered and threatened the driver because he was Muslim. Two more air guns, pellets and a gas canister were found by armed police. Clarkson had a history of mental problems and had been drinking at the time of the incident.

Manchester News, 24 January 2005

A milkman sorting out crates in **Cheadle** was shot in the face with an **airgun**. The pellet, fired at pointblank range, lodged in his cheek. Five teenagers produced the pistol and fired without warning.

BBC, 24 January 2005

Nine people were arrested after a police operation involving officers from **Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham** and **Southwark** in which cars were stopped whose occupants were believed to have firearms. One was cautioned for possessing a weapon.

BBC, 24 January 2005

A man was due to appear in court charged with the murder of a man whose body was found in the boot of a burnt-out car in **Bury**. The victim had been shot through the head.

BBC, 22 January 2005

Thieves armed with a sawn-off shotgun robbed a convenience store in **Coventry**.

icCoventry, 22 January 2005

Nadeem Khan was sentenced for 16 years for attempted murder and attacking a man with a claw hammer. His murder victim was shot at in **Wyken** in August 2003 and was hit several times.

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle), 22 January 2005

Claire Withers walked into an off-licence in **South Shields** and demanded some vodka. She was armed with a **BB gun**. She pleaded guilty to one charge of attempted robbery and was sentenced to a two-year rehabilitation order.

Evening Gazette (Middlesbrough), 22 January 2005

Philip Armstrong was spared a jail sentence after two stand-offs with the police at the family home in **Billingham**. In one incident in April 2004 he fired an **air rifle** from his home in the direction of police. After considering psychiatric reports the judge gave him a two-year community rehabilitation order. Affray and possession of a firearm could usually carry an 18-month jail sentence.

South London Press, 21 January 2005

A man fired shots through the window of a pub in **Rotherhithe**. Police searching the surrounding area found a bag containing drugs, an **airgun** and handcuffs.

Highbury and Islington Express, 21 January 2005

A betting shop cashier in **Crouch Hill** was forced to hand over £750 to a gunman who had posed as a customer.

Hampstead & Highgate Express, 21 January 2005

A woman was held at gunpoint whilst two armed men ransacked her flat in **Kilburn**.

BBC, 21 January 2005

An escaped prisoner who said he was armed and was then shot at by police during an incident in **Brighton** has been given a life sentence. Christopher Maitland had fled a young offenders' institute and wanted to commit "suicide by cop". He admitted possessing a firearm and was convicted of using a firearm to resist arrest.

BBC, 21 January 2005

A man and a teenager were arrested after a bus was shot at, probably with an **airgun**, in **Stoke-on-Trent**.

BBC, 20 January 2005

Peter Evans, a reception officer at **Dagenham** police station was jailed for five years for firearms offences after ammunition that had been handed into the station was found in his car. When his home was searched police found several rounds of ammunition and a pistol.

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle), 20 January 2005

A teenager appeared in court charged with threatening a teacher with a **fake gun** at St Edmund Campion School in **Wrenkenton**. The boy allegedly pointed the gun at the teacher who was supervising pupils at break time.

BBC, 20 January 2005

A man with a handgun threatened staff at a supermarket in **Bournemouth** during a robbery. The incident may be linked to a robbery at another supermarket in **Boscombe**.

BBC, 20 January 2005

A man has been charged with conspiring to pervert the course of justice by detectives investigating a fatal shooting in **Bradford** in September. The victim had been found slumped in his car.

BBC, 20 January 2005

A man was arrested following reports of a number of people, including a 14-year-old boy and his friend on their way to school, being shot in **Telford** with an **air rifle**.

BBC, 19 January 2005

A cashier was threatened with a handgun during an armed robbery in **Hebburn**, South Tyneside. The gunman took a bundle of £5 and £10 notes.

BBC, 19 January 2005

Andrew Phillips from **Old Basford** has been charged with several firearms offences after a police investigation into a website call "guns2thugs". Firearms were being imported from Europe through the post. The charges follow a police raid in October (see [Incidents](#)).

BBC, 19 January 2005

Police closed a pub in **Benchill**, Wythenshawe, after a loaded handgun and drugs were discovered. Two men were arrested.

icCoventry, 18 January 2005

A commuter driving on the A46 at the **Marraway Island** was threatened by another motorist who pulled up alongside and pointed a handgun at him through an open window. An 18-year-old has been arrested and two **air pistols** recovered by police, one from a car the other from the arrested youth's home.

Eastern Daily Press (Norfolk), 18 January 2005

A robber burst into the post office in **Newton Flotman**, near Norwich, brandishing a sawn-off shotgun. The manageress and her mother escaped but the robber took a large amount of money.

PA News, 17 January 2005

Police are hunting a gang of four men after a man was shot as he sat in a parked car in **Harlesden**. He died of multiple gunshot wounds in hospital.

Leeds Today, 17 January 2005

An **air rifle** was fired from a car at players during a brawl at an amateur Rugby League game in **Pontefract**. Chequerfield fans had invaded the pitch during a match with Bradford West Bowling. The trouble started when members of the crowd chanted racial abuse at a West Bowling player. The match was abandoned and the club have now been thrown out of the competition (*Guardian*, 25 January 2005).

BBC, 16 January 2005

Police are investigating the shooting of two men in West Yorkshire. One man was discovered with gunshot wounds after an incident outside a nightclub in **Leeds**: he underwent surgery for wounds to his shoulder. Another man arrived for treatment at a **Bradford** hospital an hour later. It is unclear whether the incidents are connected.

AOL News, 15 January 2005

A man who was shot in the neck while sitting in a parked car at a busy junction in **Reading** died a few days later in hospital (*Reading Evening Post*, 18 January 2005). The gunman was in another vehicle which drew up alongside the victim's car.

BBC, 14 January 2005

A young woman was held up at gunpoint in **Sheffield** by two men who were trying to steal her handbag. One of the men produced what looked like a handgun.

BBC, 14 January 2005

Seven teenagers were questioned by police after an **imitation firearm** was found in their possession in **Brighton**. Five boys and two girls were stopped following a call from a member of the public.

BBC, 13 January 2005

A gang robbed a woman at gunpoint in **Halewood**, Merseyside after forcing their way into a house. The gang was armed with an **air rifle** and a handgun.

icCheshire, 13 January 2005

A man walking home from a friend's house in **Runcorn** during the early morning of New Year's Day had a handgun pointed towards his face by two men in an unprovoked attack.

Cambridge News, 13 January 2005

A masked gunman grabbed more than £200 from an off-licence in **Coleridge**, Cambridge. The gunman was carrying a black handgun in his left hand.

Manchester News, 13 January 2005

Nine suspects were arrested after dawn raids in **Manchester** and **Trafford** as part of Operation Breakthrough targeted at individuals involved in gun offences. One firearm and ammunition were seized. Five men have now been charged (*BBC*, 15 January 2005).

PA News, 13 January 2005

Four men were injured, three seriously, when a gunman opened fire with a handgun inside a cafe in **Perry Barr**, Birmingham. The gunman escaped on a motorcycle with another man.

Derby Evening Telegraph, 12 January 2005

A mother from **Morley**, Derbyshire, accused of firing a **starting pistol** at her daughter's boyfriend was cleared after the case had been thrown out of court for lack of evidence. She had denied possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear and violence.

BBC, 11 January 2005

Two men are believed to have fired a gunshot while trying to recover an unpaid debt from a householder in **Charminster**. The shot is believed to have come from a handgun.

Eastern Daily Press, 11 January 2005

A married couple walking into **Norwich** city centre were shot at with an **air rifle** from a block of flats. They suffered minor injuries and were left shaken by the experience.

South London Press, 11 January 2005

Clinton Sproul, who held up a chemist's shop in **Bermondsey** with a **fake Walther pistol** in May 2003, has been jailed for nine years. Police had found traces of DNA on the trigger of the gun which was left at the scene. He was convicted of robbery and possessing an imitation firearm.

PA News, 11 January 2005

An elderly brother and sister were found dead with shotgun wounds in an isolated farmhouse in **Owthorpe**, near Cotgrave. Police are not looking for anyone else in connection with the inquiry into the shootings.

BBC, 9 January 2005

An **air rifle** was fired randomly from a block of flats in **Borehamwood**. Three people were hit by pellets. A woman in her 50s has been treated in hospital for a head injury. The *Borehamwood & Elstree Times* (January 14 2005) reported that a fourth victim, a man in his 50s, had been shot in the shoulder and found an airgun pellet lodged in his jacket. They also reported damage to windows and a front door in the area.

Cambridge News, 8 January 2005

A man arrested by police probing the disappearance of a traveller has appeared in court on firearms charges. Christopher Nudds was accused of possessing a shotgun while prohibited at **Litlington**. He was also accused of possessing a single round of .22 calibre ammunition without a certificate.

BBC, 8 January 2005

A shotgun was fired when a man attempted to rob a cash and carry in **Strangeways**, Manchester. Nothing was stolen and no-one was hurt. The gunman escaped in a waiting car.

South London Press, 8 January 2005

A man was robbed of his car by carjackers armed with an automatic pistol in **Walworth**. The driver and his friend were ordered from their parked car before the robbers sped off in the car.

South London Press, 7 January 2005

A man was pistol-whipped when a gang of three robbed three men near a fast food outlet in **Walworth**.

Staines Guardian, 6 January 2005

A gang of youths sparked a high-level police operation after they were seen carrying a suspected handgun on a train to **Shepperton**. A distressed passenger raised the alarm by telephoning the police. The weapon was a **BB gun**, and a further two BB guns were recovered from the gang.

BBC, 5 January 2005

A 15-year-old boy was being treated for gunshot wounds. He was a passenger in a car when he was shot at with a handgun by one of three or four men in another car in **Whalley Range**, Manchester.

Shropshire Star, 4 January 2005

A coach driver escaped injury when a missile was fired through his windscreen as he left a **Telford** depot. It is believed that an **air rifle pellet** shattered the windscreen.

PA News, 4 January 2005

An Israeli who claimed to have forgotten that he had brought a loaded handgun to Britain whilst on holiday has appeared at Isleworth Crown Court. The gun was detected when his rucksack was fed through an X-ray machine at **Heathrow Airport**.

Evening Standard, 4 January 2005

In addition to the incidents in **West Norwood**, **Wandsworth** (see below) and **Brockley Cross** (see [December 2004](#)) the paper reports a shooting in **Thornton Heath** (which may be linked to the West Norwood murder) and another gun murder in **Ladbroke Grove**, where the victim was shot on a walkway. Trident detectives are investigating the murders. A man was also injured after a series of shots were fired in **Bloomsbury**: he was driven to hospital by his girlfriend.

PA News, 3 January 2005

Two women were shot in the face when a gunman opened fire in a nightclub in **Wandsworth**. The two, whom police believe were innocent bystanders, were taken to hospital where they were in a stable condition.

BBC, 2 January 2005

A man was arrested in **Rugby** on suspicion of making threats to kill. Police were called to an address following reports that a man, armed with a firearm, had made threats of violence. A firearm was recovered, but no shots were fired.

BBC, 1 January 2005

A man found shot in a car in **West Norwood**, south-east London, died half an hour after being discovered by police. Police believe he may have been shot elsewhere.

SCOTLAND

Scotsman, 27 January 2005

David Collins was jailed for five years after his family had tipped off the authorities about his gun collection. They had become frightened when they heard him test-firing weapons and making threats against potential targets. Among the weapons recovered from Collins house in **Milton**, Easter Ross, were revolvers, a sawn-off **air rifle**, a predator rifle and a deactivated sawn-off shotgun. He had bought the guns by mail order and modified them. The conversions he carried out meant they should have had firearms certificates.

icPerthshire, 20 January 2005

A man who was shot in the head in his home in Shettleston, **Glasgow**, was in a critical condition in hospital.

BBC, 14 January 2005

A man was seriously injured by a police marksman in **New Gorbals**, Glasgow. Accounts suggest the man went down on one knee at the time as though about to shoot officers who had been following him from Bridgeton. The injured man has now been charged with firearms offences (*PA News*, 18 January 2005).

Evening Times, 13 January 2005

David Johnstone has been charged with brandishing an **air rifle** at a woman at a house in **Kilmarnock**.

WALES

Western Mail, 27 January 2005

Armed police sealed off streets on the outskirts of Swansea and were searching for a handgun in response to a shooting in **Llansamlet** in which a man was injured in the leg. The victim underwent surgery and was said to be in a stable condition. Three gunshots were heard.

BBC, 15 January 2005

Three firearms (a revolver, a shotgun and a rifle) and a quantity of what police believe to be drugs were seized during a series of raids in **Rhos** near Wrexham. Police were seeking two local men in connection with the seizures.

BBC, 7 January 2005

A man has been remanded in custody charged with attempted murder and firearm offences after a pensioner was shot at her home in **Chepstow**. The victim suffered minor chest wounds.

INCIDENTS INVOLVING ANIMALS

Yorkshire Post, 20 January 2005

An 18-year-old tabby cat was almost certainly shot dead with a **ball-bearing gun**, according to his owner, after he was found with a gaping wound in his left side. It is believed that teenagers who had been hanging around the area in **Rotherham** may be responsible.

PA News, 10 January 2005

Vets saved the life of a cat shot with an **airgun** and left hanging by one leg from railings in **Plymouth**. Airgun pellets were found in his left shoulder.

Macclesfield Express, 5 January 2005

A tiny pedigree dog from **Bollington** was almost blinded when it was shot at with an **air rifle** for the second time in a month.



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