

## **MAY 2005 - SUMMARY**

- **Gun deaths and injuries** - May 2005 began with the news that a man had been shot dead by police officers after the car in which he was travelling was stopped in Edgware: two other men in the car were arrested on firearms charges. At the end of the month a man shot and injured two people in the village of Street in Somerset before killing himself with his shotgun. Other shooting deaths were reported from Southampton, Wood Green, Wigton and Strathaven. The girl who was kidnapped at the same time as the murdered Reading teenager Marie-Ann Leneghan survived after being shot in the head. Shooting incidents that resulted in serious injury also occurred in Enfield Town, Denton Burn, Handsworth, Brixton and Wimbledon and injuries were also sustained by victims during raids in Sutton Coldfield and Bow Common Lane in East London.
- **Armed hold-ups** - Guns were reportedly used in a number of hold-ups and street assaults - in Coventry, Warwick, Sneinton, Sutton Coldfield, Wellingborough, Bedford, West Hampstead, Camden, East London, Gillingham, Roath, Edgeley, Oldham, Carlton Miniott and Telford, the latter two involving raids on homes. As noted above shots were fired and injuries sustained in at least two of the incidents.
- **Imitation guns** - It is possible that the weapons used in at least some of armed hold-ups listed above were imitation guns. Unless the weapon is subsequently found it is often impossible to know whether a real or fake gun has been used. However, there are instances in which an imitation gun is known to have been used, including in an attempted robbery in Ramsgate and a robbery in Edinburgh. Following four trials men have been convicted of carrying out crimes with imitation guns in London, East Grinstead, Chester and Sheffield. In another incident, which began in Potton, a van driver threatened a police officer with a replica handgun.
- The carrying and use of BB guns continues to cause significant problems and a number of victims have been fired at and hit. There is no sign yet that the measures in the Government's anti-social behaviour act, which were supposed to have curbed the appearance of BB guns on the street, have had much effect. Guns were fired at victims in incidents reported from Birtley (where a 6-year-old girl was hit), Hucknall (a 8-year-old boy hit), Penistone (a youngster hit in the face), Old Trafford (teenagers targeted) and Clase in Swansea (12-year-old boy attacked). Police were called to other incidents involving BB guns in Fishponds, Sevenoaks, Barnsley (to a school) and Wisbech Park.

- **Lethal airgun** - Another child lost his life after being shot with an airgun, the result of an "accident" in Conisbrough.
- **Airgun attacks and vandalism** - As with imitation guns there is no indication that the new anti-social behaviour legislation has diminished the number of incidents in which members of the public are attacked with airguns. Reports of victims being hit by shots from airguns during May came from all over the country: Little Common in East Sussex (the alleged perpetrator was a teenager), Archway and Highbury (North London), Little Venice and Paddington (Central London), Telford (three separate attacks), Watergall near Peterborough (the victim and perpetrator were both boys), Wilmslow and Armadale. Other instances in which people, property or cars were apparently targeted by airgun snipers were reported from Wallington (South London), Whitchurch and Glasgow. Men carrying airguns caused alerts in Newport, at an Edinburgh clinic and at the Vale of Leven Hospital, and a Glasgow man pleaded guilty to chasing paramedics whilst armed with an air rifle.
- **Gun thefts** - Another theft of firearms from a parked vehicle was reported, this time from a car in Marske.
- **Gun fanatic** - Mark Dyche, described by the press as a gun fanatic, was convicted of threatening, stalking and murdering a woman after she had broken off their engagement. It appears that in spite of all the threats, a list of which had been sent to the police, Dyche had been able to hold a gun licence.

## MAY 2005 – INCIDENTS

### ENGLAND

*BBC*, 31 May 2005

A man was threatened with a handgun as he left a nightclub in **Wellingborough**. Two men approached him before one pointed the gun at him and demanded money. A phone, jewellery and cash were stolen.

*Journal (Newcastle)*, 30 May 2005

A six-year-old girl was shot with a **BB gun** as she played on her bike outside her home in **Birtley**. The perpetrator was standing only yards from the girl when he fired the weapon. The pellet skimmed past her temple and only just missed her eye.

*BBC*, 29 May 2005

Three men have been arrested in **Fishponds**, Bristol, on suspicion of firearms offences. Officers, who were tipped off by Wiltshire police, seized a **BB handgun** from the car in which they were travelling.

*PA News*, 28 May 2005

A man opened fire in the centre of **Street**, Somerset, at 10.30 in the evening. Two people were shot and injured. An hour later the gunman's body was found several miles away at **Croscombe**. Another man has been held by police on suspicion of attempted murder. The police say they are examining "a complex series of events" that led up to the shootings. The dead man has been named locally as Gary Stone who was armed with a shotgun (*PA News*, 29 May 2005).

*Bexhill Today*, 27 May 2005

Police raided a teenager's home after two men reported they had been shot as they passed a group of youths in the street in **Little Common**. Two guns, a gas-powered **air pistol** and another weapon were seized. Both victims felt a stinging sensation and later found that the pellets had drawn blood.

*PA News*, 26 May 2005

Actors involved in the filming of the TV series *The Bill* were reportedly shot at during location filming in a street in **Wallington**, south London. It is believed that two youths may have fired an **airgun** from nearby flats and fled the scene.

*Islington Gazette*, 26 May 2005

A teenager had to have a ball bearing removed from his backside after a teenage gang shot him in the bottom and stole his keys and £10 from his pocket. The **airgun** shooting happened as the victim was walking through an alleyway in **Archway**.

*Enfield Independent*, 26 May 2005

A man was shot four times as he walked along a footpath in **Enfield Town**. A gunman ran up behind him and shot him before escaping on foot.

*BBC*, 26 May 2005

A man armed with a black pistol, believed to have been an **imitation gun**, tried to rob a florist's shop in **Ramsgate**. The owner refused to open the till and told the man to leave. No money was taken.

*Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, 26 May 2005

An **air rifle** was fired at a car parked in **Whitchurch**, causing the rear windscreen to shatter. Police say that two offenders, in their late teens or early 20s, made off in two separate cars.

*BBC*, 25 May 2005

Four teenage boys have been arrested for firearms offences after police found they were carrying **BB guns** in a park area in **Sevenoaks**. The boys' weapons were seized by the police who found one of them was modelled on a shotgun.

*Shropshire Star*, 24 May 2005

Two visitors to the Blists Hill museum in **Telford** were shot in the legs by **airgun** pellets fired from a nearby woodland. It is believed that the shots were deliberately aimed at passers-by.

*BBC*, 20 May 2005

A man has been arrested after a **BB gun** was fired at a group of teenagers, aged between 16 and 18, in **Old Trafford**. A man has been arrested and questioned on suspicion of possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear.

*Hucknall Today*, 20 May 2005

An eight-year-old boy was shot twice in the head with a **BB gun** on a recreation ground in **Hucknall**. The boy was left with a bleeding ear on one side of his head and a red mark on the other. His hair was soaked with blood from his ear.

*Biggleswade Chronicle*, 20 May 2005

A police officer who stopped a van driver in **Potton** and asked him to give a breath test had an **imitation gun** pointed at her. After he produced the replica handgun the driver jumped back in the van and sped away. He was caught in **St Neots** after a pursuit across two counties. A man is due to appear in court on a number of charges including possession of an imitation firearm with the intention of resisting arrest and possession of an offensive weapon.

*Coventry Observer*, 19 May 2005

Anthony McLeod was jailed for a total of seven years after facing charges of attempted murder of a man in **Coventry** in October 2002 and possessing a pistol and live ammunition with intent to endanger life. He had changed his plea to guilty on the firearm charge at a pre-trial review.

*PA News*, 17 May 2005

Two police officers were injured when a home-made firearm they had confiscated from a property in **Kinson**, Bournemouth, went off in their car.

*icCoventry*, 17 May 2005

Two teenagers threatened a worker in a **Coventry** bookmakers with a handgun during a raid. The youths fled empty-handed after the panic alarm was hit.

*Evening Chronicle (Newcastle)*, 17 May 2005

A man was shot in the knee in **Denton Burn** in what is believed to have been a revenge attack. The victim is awaiting the results of surgery to find out if he will walk again.

*BBC*, 17 May 2005

A masked man armed with a gun, believed to be a handgun, abandoned an attempted robbery at an off-licence in **Edgeley**, Greater Manchester, after he was started by an item falling from a shelf.

*BBC*, 17 May 2005

Two men were shot outside a pub in the **Handsworth** area of Birmingham. One victim was hit in the stomach and is in a critical condition, the second was injured in the leg. Police believe that the weapon used was a handgun.

*This is Nottingham*, 16 May 2005

A robber with a handgun hid overnight in a bookmakers in **Sneinton** before forcing staff to open the safe at gunpoint the following morning. He fled with about £600.

*PA News*, 16 May 2005

A man has been charged following the discovery of items believed to be linked to the manufacture of explosives at a house in **Cheslyn Hay**, Staffordshire. The police raid led to the recovery of rifles and pistols.

*BBC*, 16 May 2005

A security guard was shot in the leg during a robbery on a bank in **Sutton Coldfield**. The gunman escaped with an accomplice by car.

*Sunday Sun*, 15 May 2005

Second World War firearms and weapons were stolen from a parked car in **Marske**. Although all the weapons had been decommissioned there is uncertainty over whether they could be reactivated. Among the items stolen was a sten gun.

*Bedfordshire on Sunday*, 15 May 2005

Staff at a **Bedford** travel agents were forced to hand over the contents of a safe after one of them had a gun held to her head by an armed robber.

*BBC*, 15 May 2005

A customer was shot in the stomach when he tried to stop two armed men robbing a pub in **Bow Common Lane**, east London. The victim is critically ill. The robbers who left empty handed had earlier attempted to steal from another pub.

*Shropshire Star*, 14 May 2005

Police were called to a bank in **Newport** after members of the public reported that a man had entered the building brandishing an **air rifle**. The police said that no attempt had been made to rob the bank but that a man had been arrested on suspicion of making threats to kill. He has since been released on bail without charge.

*Marylebone, St John's Wood & Maida Vale Express*, 13 May 2005

A high powered **airgun** was used to shoot a woman as she got out of a taxi in **Little Venice**. A few minutes later an pedestrian was wounded by an **airgun** in **Paddington**. The first victim had superficial wounds to her leg. The pedestrian was shot in the back. He was rushed to hospital where staff removed the pellet.

*Shropshire Star*, 13 May 2005

Two men were shot by snipers with **air rifles** near a school in **Madeley**, Telford. A similar airgun attack is reported to have taken place the previous week.

*Guardian*, 13 May 2005

Mark Dyche, described as a gun fanatic, faces life in jail after a jury convicted him of threatening, stalking and ultimately murdering a woman after she had broken off their engagement by shooting her at point-blank range. The shooting took place near her home in **Alkington**, Derbyshire (see [April 2004 Incidents](#)). After ramming her car off a quiet country road he shot her in the head. The victim had sent police a list of Dyche's threats. According to the *Derby Evening Telegraph* (13 May 2005) Dyche, who held a gun licence, had previously threatened his ex-wife with a gun and a knife. The murder weapon was a Remington 1100 automatic shotgun.

*Chester Chronicle*, 13 May 2005

Paul Newsham was jailed for four months after terrifying families at a hotel in **Chester** by cocking an **imitation silver pistol** before returning it to his waistband. He had initially denied possessing an imitation firearm but changed his plea. The court was told of 28 previous convictions for offences related to the possession of offensive weapons.

*BBC*, 13 May 2005

Two men armed with a sawn-off shotgun held up a security van delivering money to a building society in **Gillingham**. No shots were fired. The robbers made off in a car with a substantial sum of money.

*Islington Gazette*, 12 May 2005

A woman was shot with an **airgun** whilst she walked through a park in **Highbury**. The pellet ripped through her trousers and hit the back of her thigh. She was taken to hospital.

*Evening Gazette (Middlesbrough)*, 12 May 2005

Three men faced firearms charges after their car was stopped by police near **Darlington**. They are alleged to have found a handgun and five rounds of ammunition.

*icCoventry*, 11 May 2005

Three armed robbers were being sought after they stole cash and mobile phones from a taxi driver in **Warwick**. The driver was responding to a pick-up call. When he arrived two men got into the taxi and one held a gun to his head. The second man also had a handgun.

**National Newspapers**, 10 May 2005

The abduction in **Reading** of two girls by a group of six men led to the murder of Mary-Ann Leneghan, who was stabbed in the neck, and the shooting of her friend, who was in a serious condition in hospital under police guard. The girl has now been discharged from hospital. Six men have been charged with the kidnap of the two girls and the murder of Mary-Ann Leneghan, and one of them is also charged with the rape of her friend. A seventh man has been charged with possession of a prohibited weapon (*South London Press*, 3 June 2005).

**BBC**, 10 May 2005

A woman has been arrested on suspicion of murder after the body of a man was found in a **Southampton** flat along with a firearm. Police said the death was believed to be an "isolated incident".

*This is London*, 10 May 2005

Davood Ramezanzadeh was jailed for ten years after he took a bank worker hostage during a hold-up in **Haymarket**, central London, in June 2002. He was armed with an **imitation gun**.

*This is London*, 10 May 2005

Bobby Phipps, who had walked free from jail in Manchester after a mistake over paperwork, was finally jailed for 18 years after a string of attempted murders and firearms offences. In February 2004 he had been released from prison on licence, but in May 2004 had tried to carry out a street robbery in **Rusholme**, south Manchester, whilst armed with a revolver (one victim was hit in the head and a metal fragment had to be removed). He then tried to carry out another robbery on the same night and in August shot a man in the leg after a dispute.

*Shropshire Star*, 9 May 2005

Raiders burst into the **Telford** home of an elderly woman and held her at gunpoint whilst they searched her home.

*Yorkshire Post*, 6 May 2005

Chaudhry Sajad Hussain pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted murder and one of attempting to pervert the course of justice and was given a sentence of 15 years. In February 2004 he had ambushed two men in a car while it was sitting at traffic lights in **Halifax** (see [Incidents](#)). One of the victims ran at Hussain to put him off as he aimed a gun at him. He received a bullet in his right armpit while the other victim was shot in the thigh. The attack was in revenge for a fight outside a nightclub.

*Manchester Evening News*, 6 May 2005

A gunman raided a bookies in **Oldham**, threatening staff with the gun and demanding cash. Staff handed over some money before the man ran off.

*icSouth London*, 6 May 2005

Neale Blackall, who had been sent to prison for five years after police found a prohibited firearm and ammunition at his home in **Croydon**, had his sentence cut by two years on appeal. He claimed he had kept the gun for his own protection after being shot and paralysed in a shooting in 1995. The judge rejected the suggestion that this justified a further cut in the sentence and that self-protection was not a reason for having the gun.

*Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 6 May 2005

A gunman, who had placed a bet at a bookies in **West Hampstead**, placed a pistol at the neck of a member of staff and demanded money. Hundreds of pounds in cash were handed over. Two other men were involved in the raid. An hour earlier an armed man held up a female worker at a cheque exchange store in **Camden** and fled with £1000 in cash.

*Yorkshire Post*, 5 May 2005

Masked raiders armed with a gun and baseball bats tied up a man in his home in **Carlton Miniott**, Thirsk, before fleeing with cash. The victim, who was alone in the house, was beaten with one of the bats when he initially refused to hand of the cash.

*Peterborough Today*, 5 May 2005

A 15-year-old boy shot another boy in the back in an incident in which the youth was firing **airgun** pellets at teenagers at **Watergall, Bretton**. The boy was arrested at the scene on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm.

*Manchester News*, 5 May 2005

Detectives are trying to trace witnesses to sniper-style attack in which a woman was hit in the face, close to her eye, by a pellet fired from an **airgun**. She was walking along a street in **Wilmslow** when she was shot. The victim was left "very shaken" and was taken to hospital to have the pellet removed from her skull. Although they may not be linked to the incident, youngsters as young as seven or eight had been seen with an air pistol in the area.

*icSurrey*, 4 May 2005

Ryan Marshall was warned that he faced a substantial prison sentence after he was convicted of robbery and possession of an imitation firearm. He was one of three men appearing in court following a hold up on a Post Office in **East Grinstead**. Marshall and a second man Shoeb Karim were brandishing **ball-bearing guns** when they entered the post office and demanded money in July 2004.

*Eastern Daily Press*, 4 May 2005

John Higgins and Ricky Rodwell caused an armed police incident in **Wisbech Park** by playing with an **imitation M4A1 carbine** and **Kalashnikov**. They have been ordered to carry out 65 hours unpaid community work after the incident in March.

*BBC*, 4 May 2005

Armed police were called to Edward Sheerien School in **Barnsley** after a youth was spotted firing a **BB gun**. Firearms officers confiscated the weapon. A police spokesman commented "BB guns are seen as toys but it is illegal to take them out in a public place. They can be terrifying."

*Sheffield Today*, 3 May 2005

Police in **Penistone** are searching for a **ball bearing gun** used in an attack on a youngster. A youth, who fired a plastic ball bearing at the boy's face, has been cautioned.

*Sheffield Today*, 3 May 2005

A masked teenager who drove through **Sheffield** pointing a **BB gun** at schoolchildren and a woman has been sentenced to nine months in a young offenders' institute. Joe Barker admitted three charges of possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence. His parents have said they had no idea he could be jailed for his "childish prank" and are calling for the sale of BB guns to be made illegal (*Sheffield Today*, 5 May 2005).

*News & Star*, 3 May 2005

A **Wigton** man was found dead in his bedroom with a head wound and a 12-bore shotgun between his legs. At the inquest the deputy coroner said there was no evidence that the man had been cleaning the gun and the shooting was highly likely to have been a deliberate act.

*BBC*, 3 May 2005

A 12-year-old boy from **Conisbrough** has died after being shot in the eye while playing with a friend in a house. In what was being described as a "tragic accident" he was shot with an **air rifle**.

*Telegraph*, 2 May 2005

Four armed muggers shot a man at point-blank range as they tried to steal a necklace from him outside a fast food outlet in **Brixton**.

*BBC*, 1 May 2005

A man was shot dead in a car in **Wood Green**, north London. It is believed that the victim was in his car when he was surrounded by up to six youths and then shot. The suspects were seen running away.

*AOL News*, 1 May 2005

A man was in a serious condition after being shot in a nightclub in **Wimbledon**. Police have arrested two men, one of whom threatened police officers with a gun prior to his arrest (*Telegraph*, 2 May 2005).

*AOL News*, 1 May 2005

A man was shot and killed by the police after officers stopped a car in which he was a passenger in **Edgware**. He was seen to be holding a firearm. An investigation was launched into the shooting by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Three guns have been recovered from the car and two other men arrested on suspicion of possession of a firearm (*Telegraph*, 2 May 2005). In court it was alleged they were in possession of a Colt self-loading pistol and blank and gas-fired convertible weapons with intent to endanger life. Other charges related to the possession of a blank Rika pistol and a blank key-fob style firearm (*This is London*, 2 May 2005).

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## SCOTLAND

*Evening Times*, 24 May 2005

James Myres chased after two paramedics who had come to treat him at his **Glasgow** flat. He was holding what the paramedics believed was an **air rifle** after earlier spotting the weapon in his bedroom. Myres pleaded guilty to three breach of the peace charges.

*icDumfries*, 17 May 2005

The body of a man, missing from **Strathaven** since January, was found with gunshot wounds in a remote building refuse site.

*BBC*, 16 May 2005

A woman jogger is thought to have been shot in the head by an **airgun** pellet, according to police. The woman was running in **Armadale** when she was struck behind the right ear. It is believed the shot came from a car.

*BBC*, 15 May 2005

A man threatened a shop cashier with a **plastic gun** during an incident at a shopping mall in **Edinburgh**. He entered the shop and pointed the gun at the cashier before demanding money. He made off with £250.

*icDunbartonshire*, 11 May 2005

Andrew Foy walked into the **Vale of Leven Hospital** with an **airgun** in a bid to be readmitted to a psychiatric ward. He apparently did not threaten anyone or brandish the gun. Foy was fined £150.

*Evening Times*, 11 May 2005

A vandal armed with an **airgun** went on a wrecking spree, shooting at a string of glass bus shelters. In all 25 bus stops were damaged across the south side of **Glasgow**.

*BBC*, 2 May 2005

Two men were detained after an alert involving a man feared to be armed with a handgun inside a medical centre in the **Gorgie** area of Edinburgh. Tests were being carried out on a weapon to establish if it is a real firearm. It proved to be a gas-powered **air pistol** (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 3 May 2005).

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## WALES

*Western Mail*, 28 May 2005

A 12-year-old boy was attacked by three teenagers who fired pellets at him from a **replica gun** and then threw a stone. The victim, who needed to go to hospital for checks, was returning home from school in **Clase**, Swansea.

*South Wales Echo*, 17 May 2005

A robber emptied the safe of a snooker hall in **Roath**, Cardiff, after claiming to have a gun and threatening the manageress.

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## INCIDENTS INVOLVING ANIMALS

*Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 25 May 2005

A family pet looks likely to lose its eye after it was shot with an **air rifle**. The cat was attacked in **Crosland Moor**. He was discovered to have been attacked when he returned home with his eyeball was hanging out and his eye was pouring with blood. The pellet had penetrated his eye and lodged in his jaw.

*Shropshire Star*, 24 May 2005

A member of the public reported seeing two youths firing an **air rifle** at ducks on a pond in **Dawley**, Telford.

*Peterborough Today*, 2 May 2005

A swan and two of her unhatched eggs were shot with an **air rifle** in an attack in Eye Green Nature Reserve at **Eye**. The swan died after she was shot through the neck. The remaining four eggs will now be unable to hatch. The attack was described as calculated and deliberate by an RSPCA inspector.

*This is Local London*, 1 May 2005

A **Winchmore Hill** vet has warned pet owners to be on the look-out for youths taking pot shots at pets after a spate of **airgun** attacks on cats. The vet operated on two cats within hours of each other: both were found with pellet wounds.



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