

INTRODUCTION

The end of a holiday dream

It was the morning of Saturday, July 28th, 1973. People throughout the British Isles prepared to leave their homes for a week's holiday in the Isle of Man. Many travelled by boat to Douglas from Liverpool, Heysham Belfast, Stranraer and Ardrossan; some flew into Ronaldsway Airport. Some holidaymakers were already in Douglas since one week had already elapsed of the factory fortnight. More than 40 of these holidaymakers were never to return home. They were to become victims of one of the most disturbing fire disasters in British history: a tragedy that would leave "a permanent scar in the minds of Manxmen" (*Summerland Fire Commission Report*, 1974, Page 82) and a collective sense of guilt on the Island for many years. This book tells the story of how a holiday dream ended in disaster: this is the Summerland story.

A deeply alarming tragedy

Summerland was an indoor entertainment and leisure complex located at the northern end of Douglas Promenade. On the evening of Thursday, August 2nd, 1973, a fire started outside the building and then spread to the interior causing considerable loss of life. The Summerland fire disaster is the worst tragedy in the history of the Isle of Man and left its mark on the whole of the British Isles.

There are five reasons why the Summerland disaster is one of the most alarming tragedies in post-war British history. Firstly, the fire occurred in a seaside holiday resort at the height of the summer season. Many of the dead were holidaymakers from the industrial towns and cities of mainland northern Britain. In one case, five members from three generations of the same family died in the disaster. Secondly, given that the fire occurred in a holiday environment, many children were caught up in the disaster. Thirdly, the fire occurred in a building that was architecturally unique in the British Isles and had been open to the public for only 25 months. Fourthly, Summerland still today remains the second worst loss of life from fire on land in the British Isles since 1945; it is also one of the most rapidly developing fires ever to occur in a public building. Fifthly, the appalling death toll occurred when the building was operating well below its capacity level. If the fire had occurred after dark, it has been predicted that 5,000 people would have been in Summerland as opposed to the 3,000 estimated at the time of the fire. In this scenario, the loss of lives, with the accumulation of panic and stampede, could have increased to more than 100.

It is the third reason that is perhaps the most alarming, and differentiates Summerland from the Bradford City Football Ground (1985) and King's Cross Underground Station (1987) fires. Summerland was not an old wooden football stand or an escalator ripe for replacement, but a new building that had been hailed as marking the dawn of a new era of British leisure architecture. The Summerland concept was new and made the Isle of Man complex unique in a European context. In the words of a promotional booklet, Summerland was "a new concept in leisure" whose innovative design would "set the architectural world alight" (*The Summerland Story*,

1972). Summerland was not merely a horrific fire disaster in a small island community; but a tragedy that had reverberations throughout the British Isles and beyond in the fields of architecture, building design, leisure and public safety.

Despite the large-scale loss of life, Summerland is one of the most forgotten and trivialised disasters in the post-war history of the British Isles. For instance, the Summerland disaster is omitted from several books that claim to list major news stories involving Britons, yet the authors of these books could all find the space to mention the King's Cross fire in London. Would the deaths of 50 people in a fire on the south coast of England have been airbrushed out of the history books? The same geographical bias is seen in the coverage of memorial services to disaster victims. For instance, the national media in Britain practically ignored the unveiling of memorial stones to the victims of the Summerland fire in 1998 and 2013. However, when a memorial was unveiled to the King's Cross dead, it received widespread media coverage. Heather Lee's mother, father and younger sister June died at Summerland. On the BBC's *Inside Out North West* in October 2013, she said:

“It [Summerland] is unknown. Everyone knows about Hillsborough and Zeebrugge. They know about all the other major disasters but not Summerland. I think it is hurtful for the people who have not only lost relatives but the people who survived it.”

Some Liverpudlians affected directly by the Summerland fire are angry at how their plight has been eclipsed by the media focus on Hillsborough. One told me: "We're all fed up to the back teeth of hearing about Hillsborough here in Liverpool, but when you mention Summerland people look at you as if you've got two heads." There is even widespread ignorance about Summerland on the Isle of Man. A student at the Isle of Man College recently surveyed 18-21 year-olds and found those who had heard about the disaster were very much in the minority. Summerland campaigner Mrs Tina Brennen and organiser of a memorial concert in 2014 said (quoted on the BBC News Web-site, 2nd August, 2014):

"I believe there has been a conscious decision to keep quiet about Summerland - we should bring our schoolchildren down here to learn about what happened. But we don't do anything like that, it's just been shoved to the background - I think that is because there is a feeling of shame among the island's older generation."

Book structure

This book is written for the interested general reader. My main objective is to present a large amount of information clearly and as logically as possible. This book seeks to inform the reader about the facts of the Summerland disaster; it is then left to the reader as to what judgments or interpretations are made from the facts and analysis presented. I am not related to any of the persons killed or injured at Summerland; thus, I do not have a personal axe to grind. Indeed, the Summerland disaster happened before I was born in 1974. I would argue that we are all shaped by two sets

of forces: our own personal experiences and the experiences of other people that we read about or see on television, for instance. In the second set of forces, the Summerland disaster has had the greatest impact on my own life. I first became aware of the Summerland disaster at the age of 11 from the book *The World's Worst Disasters of the 20th Century*. I attribute this impact to the fact that the environment in which the Summerland disaster occurred seemed disturbingly familiar in terms of my own life experiences: families with young children in an indoor entertainment centre in a British seaside resort at the height of the summer season. The people who died at Summerland happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time: in the random lottery of life and death, I could have been one of them.

The book begins by describing the families and individuals affected by the fire (chapter 1), with a breakdown by age, sex and region of origin. The chapter concludes by placing Summerland in the context of fire disasters in the British Isles. In chapters 2 and 3, the economic rationale and design logic behind Summerland are analysed. These two chapters provide the necessary economic and architectural background that is essential for understanding the Summerland building. Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the evening of the fire and its aftermath respectively, and consider the allocation of blame and the press coverage of the fire. In chapter 6, the main findings of the *Summerland Fire Commission* (SFC) report are presented in a non-technical manner and their implications for the design and management of public buildings are discussed. The tortuous road to the re-building of Summerland is considered in chapter 7. In this chapter, a comparative analysis of the original Summerland and the re-built structure is conducted to enable the reader to see how the lessons of the disaster were

learnt. Chapter 8 is devoted to telling the stories of some of the people who survived the disaster and how it has affected their lives. In chapter 9, the book concludes by looking at the future redevelopment of the site that saw Summerland – the complex and the infamous name – disappear into history. Thirty-three years after the fire, the Summerland story finally closed in 2006 with the demolition of the new Summerland.

House Style

All the documents and plans relating to the design of Summerland and the fire are in Imperial measurements, and for that reason all measurements in this book will be given in feet and inches. A person's age is given in terms of how old they were at the time of the fire in 1973. The British Isles is a geographical term that encompasses the Isle of Man, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the Channel Islands. Whilst the Isle of Man is part of the British Isles, it is not part of the United Kingdom. Britain will be used as shorthand for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland throughout this book rather than the two-letter abbreviation UK. Unless otherwise stated, references to Britain mean that I am *not* referring to the Isle of Man.

CHAPTER 1
THE SUMMERLAND DEAD AND INJURED

1.1 The number of deaths

The fire became visible inside Summerland at around 8pm on Thursday, August 2nd, 1973. On the Thursday evening, it was not known how many people were dead or missing. Mr Ian Paterson (personal communication) was watching the wrestling at the Villa Marina on Douglas seafront that evening. After hearing several sirens, he went outside to investigate and saw Summerland was on fire. He recalled: “We started getting snippets of what had happened from stunned looking people who were walking in the opposite direction. The reported body count increased as we walked. I remember six was the first report.” Summerland’s floor manager, Mr Laurie Shaffer, put the death toll at six or seven. “8 die in blazing holiday centre”, said the headline in *The Yorkshire Post*, who like all of the other newspapers was filleting the Press Association (PA) copy supplied by local Manx reporters Mr Terry Cringle and Mr Alan Bell. The headline in *The Birmingham Post*, which had a slightly later deadline for its final edition, said: “10 die, 50 hurt as fire sweeps Manx holiday fun centre.” At this early stage, the paper attributed the deaths to Summerland’s roof, which had “collapsed on to about 300 people below.” The *Daily Express* reported that the building “was reduced to a shell in only 12 minutes.”

It was not until the early hours of Friday, August 3rd that the scale of the tragedy began to emerge. At a Press Conference at 12.45am, the Chief Constable of the Isle of Man, Mr Frank Weedon, said: “We have recovered 21 bodies from the building. They are adults and children, and some will be

difficult to identify...Casualties are still being taken from Summerland. Later today the death toll could be higher". At 2am, the police said they thought "there could be a further 20 bodies left in the ruins" (*The Irish Times*, August 3rd, final edition). The search for bodies was called off at 3am until daylight. Speaking shortly after 3am, Mr Weedon said about 30 bodies had been recovered (*The Daily Telegraph*, August 3rd, final edition), but cautioned that the number of deaths could go higher as the building's upper floors had not been searched. It was planned to issue a revised figure at 9am. "It is feared that the death toll could rise as high as 50," said *The Guardian* in its final edition for August 3rd. *The Sun* speculated that "the toll could rise as high as 80". Mr Weedon said:

"This has been a terrible disaster. Nothing like it has ever hit the Island before...All those who died were terribly burned and I cannot even give a breakdown as to their sex, let alone ages. We are going to have a great deal of trouble with identification of the victims...The people in hospital are also adults and children and some are very badly injured."

During Friday, August 3rd the death toll rose steadily, with firemen recovering 46 bodies from Summerland by the day's end. Mr Chris Bates (personal communication), a former Lancashire radio journalist, remembered bodies being visible from the air when he flew into the Island on the day after the fire. The bodies were transferred to the ground floor of St. George's Hall, which was used as a temporary mortuary. Colour photographs were taken of some of the bodies to assist in the identification process. Fifteen post-mortems had been conducted by the end of Friday; 27

bodies had been positively identified by Monday, August 6th. The main causes of death were suffocation, carbon monoxide poisoning, burns and multiple injuries from falling (Hart *et al.*, 1975); post-mortems showed that most victims were asphyxiated first. The police started to compile a list of missing persons. They were assisted by landladies and hoteliers, who notified the police of any guests that did not return to their accommodation on Thursday night; and telephone calls from people all over the British Isles enquiring about relatives and friends known to be on holiday in the Island. Police also stopped Thursday night pictures and read out a list of about a dozen names – most apparently children – that were unaccounted for and may have been in Summerland.

Staff victims

A roll call of Summerland employees at 11am on the Friday morning at the Palace Hotel in Douglas revealed that seven members of staff were missing. There were actually **six** staff fatalities; so one person must have missed the roll call. Miss Linda Fletcher (personal communication), a member of one of Summerland's resident bands *Just Good Friends*, said: "The staff were asked to sit at tables according to which bar we worked in and it then became apparent that many of the bars had no surviving staff."

Among the staff victims was **Mr Mack Keith Maceachern** (23), the Bar Manager, who had worked at Summerland for one year. He went to the doctors three months before the blaze because he had been involved in a fight at Summerland. Mr Maceachern (known to his friends as Mac), a keen rugby player from Castleford in Yorkshire, helped holidaymakers to escape from the fire, but died when he went back into Summerland for a third time

to rescue more of the bar staff whom he was told were still in the building. Mr Maceachern's body was found in a narrow passageway close to the bar he managed. Whilst Mr Maceachern was undoubtedly one of the heroes of the Summerland fire, a police statement given by his common-law wife Jean Friar that appears in Mr Maceachern's inquest file is less than flattering and at times seems to be inappropriate. At the time of the fire, Miss Friar was over six months' pregnant with Mr Maceachern's child. She wrote how they had had "a few rows because of his interest in other women." Miss Friar added: "If I went to Summerland, he always ignored me. He said that he never allowed his business life to become involved in his personal life...He has told various people at Summerland that the baby I am expecting is not his. This isn't true."

Mrs Beryl Hendrick (32) and her boyfriend **Mr Dennis Arthur Sandford** (43) both died in the blaze. Mrs Hendrick worked in the Marquee Showbar on the fifth floor of Summerland. She was born in Mold in Flintshire and lived above the Bengal Indian Restaurant in Douglas. Beryl (whose maiden name was Rowlands) married Peter in 1968, but the couple separated in 1971. Beryl was last seen by Mr John Sanderson, the Disco Manager, "on the back stairs [presumably the NE Service Staircase] between the second and third levels." It is possible that Mrs Hendrick escaped the blaze, but went back into Summerland to find Dennis' son (Alistair Reid, Personal Communication).

Mr Malcolm Ogden (41), a drummer with the *Don Taylor Trio*, perished in the fire. The band was in the Marquee Showbar getting ready for that evening's cabaret performance. Mr Ogden had moved to Laxey on the

Isle of Man from Newton-le-Willows in Lancashire in May 1973 with his wife Ann (29) and her two children Colin (10) and Louise (5); Mr Ogden had only married Ann 12 months before the fire at Warrington Registry Office. Mr Ogden had previously worked as a drummer at Wigan Casino and Stockport Anitos. Mr Ogden's body was identified by his brother Brian. The other staff victims were **Mr Allen Barker** (20) and **Mr Sean Kelly** (21) from Warrington (section 1.4). Referring to Allen and Sean, one young female employee said: "I have been up all night looking for two boys from our digs and now there are not here. I know for sure they must be dead."

The outcome of checks amongst hoteliers and staff members, together with people reported missing by the general public to the police, was a list of 52 missing persons who were presumed to have died in the fire (**table 1.1**). "It must be assumed they are likely victims," said Mr Weedon. Given that the police list was compiled within 24 hours of the fire, it was understandable that it contained some errors and omissions. Indeed, the bodies of only 44 of the 52 persons named on the list were recovered from the building. One notable error was Mr Ian and Mrs Margaret Stevenson (who was seven months' pregnant), who appeared on the list despite the fact they were not even in Summerland at the time of the fire. However, a couple with the same surname but from the Scottish town of Kilmarnock died in the fire (Mr Alex Stevenson and Mrs Jean Stevenson), together with assistant transport manager Mr James Bennett (43) and Mrs Beryl Bennett (41) from Southport. Neither of these couples appeared on the original police list.

**Table 1.1: List of missing persons issued by the police on
Friday, August 3rd, 1973**

(Police surgeon and inquest documents have been used wherever possible to correct any spelling mistakes and factual errors in the original police list. The original police list did not give the house numbers of many of the missing persons, but these have been added here for completeness. The ages of Mrs Manning and Mrs Stevens did not appear on the police list.)

Name	Age	Address
Mr Frederick John Allen	60	8, Porth-y-Green, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Glamorgan
Mrs Constance Atkins	46	3, Park View Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham, Yorkshire
Mr William Stuart Aves	18	29, Sittingbourne Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex
Mrs Anne Barber	69	South Ray, Broad Carr Lane, Holywell Green, Halifax, Yorkshire
Mr Allen Barker	20	33, Ronald Drive, Fearnhead, Warrington, Cheshire
Mrs Barket	N/A	Address unknown
Mrs Mary Sarah Boyd	45	4, Jenny's Lane, Ballinderry, Upper Lisburn, County Antrim
Mr Thomas Brady	44	154, Jamieson Street, Govan Hill, Glasgow
Mrs Catherine Brady	43	As above
*Master Vincent Brady	12	As above
Mrs Mabel Alice Buckledee	59	94, Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire
Mr John Millar Carson	62	13, Hillfield Avenue, Walsworth, Hitchin, Hertfordshire
*Mr John Emery	18	Mona Street, Douglas, Isle of Man
Mr Richard Cheetham	52	46, Bracknell Avenue, Southdene, Kirkby, Liverpool
Mrs Elizabeth Cheetham	52	As above
Miss June Cheetham	13	As above
Mr Frederick William Glayzer	49	8, Brendale Avenue, Maghull, near Liverpool
Mrs Olive Bertha Glayzer	49	As above
Miss Andrea Margaret Glayzer	13	As above
Mr William Henry Goldsmith	62	5, Caldercliff Road, Berry Brow, Huddersfield
Mrs Phoebe Goldsmith	60	As above
Mr William Robert Hamilton	30	100, Scrabo Road, Newtownards, County Down
Mrs Beryl Ann Hendrick	32	The Bengal Restaurant, Douglas, Isle of Man
Mrs Anastasia Hughes	48	664, Queen's Drive, Old Swan, Liverpool
Mrs Marcia Hughes	58	22, Derby Lane, Old Swan, Liverpool
Mr Stanley Kellet	37	32, Tiree Crescent, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire
Mr Sean Terence Kelly	21	106, Longbar Lane, Woolston, Warrington
Mrs Elizabeth McKenzie	70	17, Great Junction Street, Leith, Edinburgh
Mr Brian McPherson	N/A	No address known
Mr Mack-Keith Maceachern	23	Lower Oxford Street, Castleford, Yorkshire
Mr Hubert James Manning	46	27, Craster Avenue, Forrest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Mrs Gladys Mary Manning	55	As above
Mr William Morley	19	Tynwald Street, Douglas, Isle of Man
Mrs Betty Ann Moulds	34	Station House, Station Road, Rayleigh, Essex
Miss Beverley Ann Moulds	12	As above
Miss Debra Jayne Moulds	10	As above
Miss Amanda Jean Moulds	10	As above
Mrs Lorna Bryson Norton	35	14, Haywood Avenue, Marsh, Huddersfield
Mr Bernard Malcolm Ogden	41	21, Haydock Street, Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire
Mrs Margaret O'Hara	41	2, North Street, Winterton, Lincolnshire
Miss Tracy O'Hara	10	As above
Miss Julie Panter	14	12, Arnforth Drive, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port

Mr David Piper	17	13, Harrow Avenue, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex
Mr Dennis Arthur Sandford	43	74, Royal Avenue, Onchan, Isle of Man
Mrs Stennings	N/A	Address unknown
Mrs Elsie Stevens	68	44, Sunningdale Road, Hessle, Yorkshire
<i>Mr Ian Stevenson</i>	25	<i>Auchneagh Farm Lane, Greenock</i>
<i>Mrs Margaret Stevenson</i>	23	<i>Auchneagh Farm Lane, Greenock</i>
Miss Jane Tallon	13	48, Springwood Avenue, Huddersfield
Mrs Annie Thistlewood	55	6, Aughton Avenue, Aughton, Sheffield
Mrs Kathleen Wilkinson	56	107, School Road, Beighton, Sheffield
Master Gary Martin Williams	11	35, Rake Lane, Upton, Wirral, Cheshire

Bold font: these people’s bodies were not recovered from Summerland or did not die later in hospital. These persons are not mentioned in subsequent reports and documents about the fire. It is likely these four persons appeared on the police list by mistake. Note the limited detail provided about three of these persons with no address or age, and in two cases no Christian name.

Italics: not even in Summerland at the time of the fire

* Survived

One survivor told an ITN reporter that he had seen “well over 20” bodies. He said: “[The bodies] were just like a tree trunk, that had been smouldered in a fire. You couldn’t identify them, and well it’s gruesome to look at.” Many of the child victims of the fire were so badly burned that their bodies disintegrated when they were handled by firemen. Firemen originally said they had found 51 bodies by the end of Saturday, August 4th, which included multiple bodies that had been fused together (Edward Austin, Personal Communication). However, later that weekend, pathologists attempting to find the teeth of one particularly badly burned body discovered that it was in fact two plastic chairs that had been macabrely welded together into the shape of a human torso by the fire (David Buttery, Personal Communication; corroborated by Isle of Man policeman Richard Davis). The recovery of bodies was completed by 5pm on Sunday, August 5th. “I am satisfied that every body has been removed

from the building,” said Superintendent George Kinrade of the Isle of Man Constabulary in sworn evidence to the Coroner. The figure of 50 was, however, corrected to 48, when further post-mortem examinations showed what was thought to be two bodies was simply debris and not human. “We [the Manx police] are hoping that this [48 dead] is the final tally. Our list of missing persons is now also 48,” said a police statement issued on Monday, August 6th, as detectives eliminated a man that had previously appeared on the list of missing persons. In sworn evidence given before the Coroner on August 9th, Detective Chief Inspector Robert Crompton said:

“Very extensive enquiries have been made since the fire in order to establish all the persons missing, and I am now satisfied by the evidence which will be laid before this inquiry today that every missing person has been accounted for. I heard all the proofs of evidence being prepared.”

Firemen originally thought that two heavily pregnant women had died in the blaze, but their extra bulk was due to heavy coats and handbags (Rob Farrow, Personal Communication). Only 12 of the 48 bodies could be identified by visual inspection by relatives. A policeman said: “God help those who come to identify them. It’s worse than a bloody war.” The 48 bodies were positively identified in about seven days from a combination of sex, approximate age, jewellery (e.g. necklaces, watches), teeth (dentures or dental charts) and operations such as caesarean section and hysterectomy (Hart *et al.*, 1975). Some of the victims were cremated on the Island. Staff at Douglas Crematorium found what appeared to be the remains of

Summerland's plastic Oroglas wall and roof in the oven after the cremations (Sam Webb, Personal Communication).

The death toll increased to 49 when Mrs Frances Mary Allen (54) from South Wales died in hospital in Douglas on August 11th. Sixty-five percent of Mrs Allen's body was covered in burns, almost all the burns being of full thickness; she also had a fractured pelvis and suffered kidney failure. At 3.30pm on Friday, August 3rd, 1973, Mrs Allen was unconscious but later that day she was able to hold a conversation and the doctor thought she would survive her injuries. During her eight days in hospital, Mrs Allen had to have several bottles of blood plasma and was taken to the operating theatre every day for her burns to be dressed. Mr and Mrs Allen had come to the Island for a fortnight's holiday to celebrate their Silver wedding anniversary, and both became victims of the Summerland fire. Mr Allen was a quarryman and Mrs Allen worked as a cook at a junior school; they had one son.

Nearly two months after the fire, Mrs Allison Little (35) from Kilmarnock in Scotland died of bronchopneumonia. Mrs Little was admitted to Noble's Hospital with 52% of her body covered in burns, over half being of full thickness. Allison was transferred to Scotland ten days after the fire, where her condition continued to fluctuate wildly before she died on the evening of September 29th, 1973 (*The Kilmarnock Standard*, October 5th, 1973). Mrs Little had gone on holiday with husband John (a lorry driver) and daughter Kathleen (11). Both were uninjured in the fire.

Fifty people died in the Summerland fire (48 bodies recovered from the building and two deaths later in hospital). Accordingly, the *Summerland Fire Commission (SFC) Report* of May 1974 states: “Of an estimated 3,000 people in the building at the time, the vast majority escaped amidst scenes of panic, but 50 persons – men, women and children – perished” (SFC Report, Page 1). However, documents in the *Manx Museum* and the *Isle of Man Public Record Office* (see letter on page 17) give the number of fatalities as 49 because they omit the death of Mrs Little in Scotland nearly two months after the fire.



Summary Courts' Office *Oik Quaiylyn Briwnys Ghiare*

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08 May 2006

Your Ref:

Dr Ian D Phillips
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B15 2TT

Dear Dr Phillips,

SUMMERLAND FIRE

Further to your letter of the 20th March 2006, we have made inquiries on your behalf with the Manx Museum, who hold many papers on the Summerland fire, and also with the Isle of Man Public Record Office. Both have differing paperwork and each show the number of deaths to be 49.

If you wish to contact these organisations to make further inquiries, the addresses are:

Isle of Man Public Record Office
Unit 40a
Spring Valley Industrial Estate
Isle of Man
IM2 2QS

Manx Museum
Kingswood Grove
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM1 3LY

Yours sincerely,

J P Robinson
Clerk to the Coroner for Inquests

1.2 The myth of the extra deaths

When consulting a range of books, newspapers and web-sites (**table 1.2**), it is surprising how many contradict the *Summerland Fire Commission* and give the number of deaths as either 51 or sometimes as high as 53. Marian Kenny (personal communication), the news editor of *Manx Radio*, claimed: “There is clearly no generally accepted definitive figure ‘out there’ for the number of dead in the disaster – it seems to range from 50 to 53 depending on who you ask.” However, are all of these sources reputable or are some sources repeating other people’s misinformation? In an article to accompany the 20th anniversary of the fire, the *Isle of Man Examiner* (August 3rd, 1993) correctly reported the number of deaths as 50. However, five years later, the same newspaper made different claims in a feature article to coincide with the disaster’s 25th anniversary (quoted in the *Isle of Man Examiner*, August 4th, 1998, page 10):

“Official police figures state that 51 died but other documents suggest the figure was higher. A coroner’s list names 52 dead and it is believed by some that another died later in the UK, bringing the total to 53.”

In addition, *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group*’s house style for many years was to give the number of deaths as “more than 50” when the fire was mentioned in the *Isle of Man Examiner* and the *Manx Independent*. At first sight, the *Isle of Man Examiner*’s 1998 claims seem highly persuasive referring as they do to “official police figures” and a “Coroner’s list”. I sent letters to the Isle of Man Police and Coroner’s Department to determine the veracity of the newspaper’s statements. The police and the Coroner could

not confirm these statements, and pointed instead to official documents held at the *Isle of Man Public Record Office* and the *Manx Museum* that give the number of deaths as 49 (see letter on page 17). The figure of 49 is sourced from the Isle of Man Coroner's Office and is the number of persons that died on the Isle of Man. Mrs Allison Little is omitted from this list because her inquest was dealt with by a coroner in Scotland.

For *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group's* claims to be correct, three bodies would need to have been incinerated in the fire. Mr John Webb (personal communication), the only surviving member of the Fire Research Station team that investigated the fire, said:

“It is highly unlikely that any bodies were incinerated. While the fire reached a high intensity, it was only of short relative duration. Cremation of bodies needs a persistent high temperature over a period of time as in a crematorium. Evidence of the short duration is the damaged but still standing steelwork; if the fire had been hot enough for long enough to cremate a body, the steelwork would have collapsed... I personally think 50 was the total death toll.”

Table 1.2: The death total from the Summerland fire disaster

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS	
Summerland Fire Commission Report (May 1974)	50
Fire Research Station Report (Silcock, Hinkley and Webb, 1974)	50
Isle of Man Public Record Office document	49
Manx Museum document	49
PUBLICATIONS/SOURCES THAT USE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS	
Manx Radio	50
Douglas Centenary (1996) Authors: Kniveton <i>et al.</i>	50
The World's Worst Disasters of the Twentieth Century (1983) Publisher: Octopus Books Limited	50
Mann Ablaze! A history of the Isle of Man Fire Service (1991) Author: Basnett	50
Harrap's Book of British Dates Author: Castleden	50
Here is the News: A Chronicle of the 20th Century Volume II 1951-2000 Published in 2000, Author: Cringle	50
The Isle of Man: A Social, Cultural, and Political History (1975) Author: Kinvig	Nearly 50
Coping with Crises: The Management of Disasters, Riots and Terrorism (1989), Editors: Rosenthal, Charles and Hart; Publisher: Charles C Thomas	50
That Thin Red Line – Fire: The Case for Self Defence (1976) Author: Barlay	50
“Anger and blame in three technological disasters”, in the journal <i>Stress Medicine</i> (1995), Authors: Solomon and Thompson	49
Britain in the Seventies	49
OBTAIN PUBLISHER DETAILS	
SOURCES CLAIMING THAT MORE THAN 50 DIED	
“Memories of disaster live on 25 years later”, <i>The Isle of Man Examiner</i> , Tuesday, August 4th, 1998	51, 52 or 53
<i>The Isle of Man Newspaper Group's</i> House Style (until February 2009)	More than 50
“Isle of Man's forgotten holiday horror”. <i>The Guardian</i> . Saturday, August 2nd, 2003	51
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	51
Isle of Man Fire Brigade Website (until February 2009) http://www.iomfire.com	51
Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia (until late 2009)	51
“Remembering the victims of the Summerland blaze”, BBC News Website, Sunday, August 2nd, 1998	53

The statement in the *Isle of Man Examiner's* 1998 article that “it is believed by some that another died later in the UK” is bizarre. The death of Mrs Allison Little is a fact (page 15) and not a matter of opinion. Yet, even after including Mrs Little, the number of deaths from the Summerland fire was 50; her death did not bring the total to 53.

In February 2009, *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group* withdrew the “more than 50” deaths claim after I complained that their claims were “plain wrong [and] should be withdrawn”. Two weeks after I sent the letter of complaint, I received an e-mail from an *Isle of Man Examiner* reporter. The reporter Rachael Bruce told me: “We have used these figures for years, but clearly they are wrong.” She could not offer any explanation as to the source of the *Isle of Man Examiner's* 1998 statements that supposedly were based on official police and coroner documents. Despite providing the newspaper with clear evidence supported by several official documents, *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group* failed to publish an unambiguous retraction of their “more than 50” death toll claim. On February 17th, 2009, *The Isle of Man Examiner* ran an article with the headline “**Summerland death toll figure could be amended**” (Bruce, 2009). However, the death toll does *not* need amending but *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group's* inaccurate reporting of it. Even at this stage, *The Isle of Man Examiner* (17th February, 2009) continued to distort the facts to support their false claims about the number of deaths. Bruce (2009: 7) wrote: “The coroner’s report and the official inquiry into the tragedy stated that 50 people died, said Dr Phillips. However, he acknowledged it was possible more people had died weeks, months and years after from injuries sustained in the fire.” This is a misrepresentation of the facts because two people did in fact die after the fire

from their injuries. However, these two fatalities *were already included* in the 50 deaths. Despite the lack of a formal retraction, it is encouraging that *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group* has amended past articles about the fire on its web-site from “more than 50” to 50. It seems that the Manx Press now realises that it has been wrong on this matter for many years even though it does not like to admit so publicly.

There is no suggestion that *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group* set out deliberately to mislead their readers. For whatever reason, inaccurate information about the death toll was disseminated initially and went uncorrected for years.

The Isle of Man Newspaper Group is not alone in claiming more than 50 died in the Summerland fire. However, these grey literature sources, such as newspapers and web-sites (**table 1.2**), have a greater tendency to give the number of deaths as 51 rather than “up to 53”. The most inaccurate source is the BBC News Website, which in an August 1998 article gave the number of deaths as an affirmative 53. This misinformation could be explained by two factors. Firstly, errors can creep in when journalists use cuttings files as the basis for stories (Marian Kenny, Personal Communication). An account of an event can change subtly over time, with every different version written. For instance, the firemen’s uncorrected body count of 51 was widely reported by newspapers in August 1973. However, when the pathologist corrected the number of deaths to 48, this was much less widely reported as the media’s interest in the disaster had waned, with some papers continuing to use the uncorrected figure of 51. If a journalist today prepares a story about the Summerland disaster and only

uses cuttings from the three days after the fire, they would fall into the trap of believing that 51 had died. For example, the *Isle of Man Sunday News* (August 5th, 1973) said 51 had died, but in the following week's edition the figure had fallen to 48. Secondly, it is likely that there is plagiarism going on between these grey sources resulting in the same mistakes being repeated. For instance, in 2009, I discovered two on-line encyclopedias that gave the number of deaths as 51 – the same as what Wikipedia was claiming at the time. Wikipedia then made contradictory claims about the death toll, with the entry's first line still stating 51 died but the number of deaths being correctly given as 50 further down the entry. In 2010, Wikipedia removed these inconsistencies without my intervention and now reports the death toll as 50 throughout.

It is also apparent that similar sources of information often make contradictory claims about the number of deaths. For example, whereas *The Isle of Man Newspaper Group* used the house style “more than 50” until February 2009, one of its columnists - Terry Cringle (who was the first reporter at the scene of the fire) – gave the death toll as a definite 50 in his chronicle of 20th century Manx history published in 2000 (**table 1.2**). Mr Cringle (personal communication), *Manx Radio's* veteran newsman, confirmed that *Manx Radio* has always given the number of deaths on air as 50. *Manx Radio's* news editor Marian Kenny (personal communication) added: “We may, on occasions, have referred to or even reported on, the existence of a difference of views on the matter – but 50 is the figure we use.” Alex Brindley, who presents the breakfast show on *Manx Radio*, carried out research for a possible documentary on the Summerland fire and despite the supposed controversy about the number of deaths “concluded 50

was the most reliable figure”. Commenting on *The Isle of Man Examiner’s* inaccurate statements, Mr Cringle (personal communication) said: “They work to high standards on that newspaper and I cannot understand why they put these [wrong] figures out.”

There are also discrepancies in the death toll reported by the Isle of Man fire brigade. *The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service’s* web-site claimed for many years that 51 died, yet a book about the Isle of Man Fire Service written by a Manx fireman (Basnett, 1991) gave the death toll as 50. *The Fire and Rescue Service’s* website was amended to 50 in February 2009 following my intervention and the Bruce (2009) article.

I strongly believe the belief that more than 50 died in the Summerland fire is a myth that has been perpetuated over the years and repeated without being challenged. I am still trying to ascertain the myth’s origin, but I can categorically rule out *Manx Radio* as the source of this misinformation. *Manx Radio’s* news editor Marian Kenny (personal communication) said: “No one [at *Manx Radio*] can recall being contacted by media organisations seeking information on the death toll. However, any such contact would be referred to Terry [Cringle]”, who always gives the number of deaths as 50.

The “more than 50 myth” may have developed by sections of the media cobbling together seemingly reliable facts that emerged immediately after the disaster but were subsequently disproved. For example, 53 deaths can be arrived at by combining the number of bodies that firemen said they had recovered from the building (51) with the two people who died later in hospital. The fact that firemen said they had recovered 51 bodies was widely reported in August 1973. In the light of this, it is possible that those

sources giving the number of deaths as 51 are using this uncorrected figure. In section 1.1, it was noted that the firemen's claims were later disputed by pathologists who only found evidence of 48 bodies.

There is no factual evidence (e.g. official documents) to support the contention that more than 50 people died in the Summerland fire. In the extremely unlikely event that bodies had been incinerated, one would expect clear evidence from family members or friends along the lines of: "I went to Summerland with X on the evening of the fire, but now X is missing and we have not been able directly or indirectly to identify X at the mortuary." This is not the case, with the number of persons reported missing to the police by August 6th (48) tallying exactly with the number of bodies recovered (48). The possibility of a person being incinerated in the fire and not being missed by at least one other person (with their death not being reported to the authorities) is so unlikely that it must have odds of several million to one.

1.3 The Summerland memorials

1.3.1 The 1998 memorial stone

A memorial stone (**figure 1.1**) was unveiled to the victims of the Summerland disaster on the 25th anniversary of the fire in August 1998. This small stone is in the Kaye Gardens just a few hundred yards from Summerland. It is notable that the stone does not state the number of deaths but uses the phraseology *In memory of all those who lost their lives*. The memorial stones to the Bradford City and King's Cross Fire state the number of deaths. The omission of the number of deaths led some people to believe that the 1998 stone was an establishment cover-up.



**Figure 1.1: the 1998 memorial stone to the Summerland dead
(Photograph by Elaine Anderson)**

In 2012, I wrote to Douglas Borough Council and asked them why the memorial stone does not state that 50 people died. Susan Harrison, Assistant Chief Executive, replied:

“The memorial stone was not intended as a statistical record, but rather a reflection on the tragic loss of each individual that died. The number and the names of the individuals are readily available to researchers elsewhere.”

Mr David Christian, the Leader of Douglas Borough Council, spoke about the logic behind the 1998 stone in an interview with the Isle of Man television service *Manx Net* in 2013. He said Douglas Corporation decided

to erect a “basic stone” because at the time some people were against the names of the dead appearing on the memorial. Mr Christian also argued that the 1998 stone was more in keeping with what he claimed were the simpler memorials of the time.

1.3.2 The 2013 memorial

Over time, the 1998 memorial turned into a public relations disaster for Douglas Borough Council. The most pointed criticism in the public arena came in a Radio 4 documentary *The Summerland Story* (broadcast at 11am on Monday, August 27th, 2012) when a woman seriously injured in the fire denounced the stone as ‘pathetic’ and impersonal. Mrs Ruth McQuillan-Wilson from Belfast added: “It’s not a lot for what happened. I’m not impressed with it at all.” After appearing on the Radio 4 documentary, Ruth told me about her reaction to seeing the 1998 memorial stone for the first time:

“When we went to the memorial, on entering the garden, I had expected it to be in pride of place or at the very least in a prominent position. The statue of the dead poet caught my eye but no sign of the memorial stone. I couldn’t believe my eyes when Stephen and Jenny [the BBC presenter and producer respectively] led me to it. It was so small and at ground level, like a headstone on a grave. I don’t think they could have made it much smaller...It is so cold and impersonal. I’m surprised I was able to speak. My mouth was so dry. I was furious...What took Douglas Corporation 25 years to [have a memorial]? What were they doing before this?”

There was increasing recognition by members of the Council that, to quote the words of Mr Christian, “times have changed” and a more “substantial” and “fitting memorial” was required. Summerland fireman Mr John Skinner was elected to the Council in 2012 and floated the idea of a new memorial in March of that year. By October 2012, a new memorial had become official Council policy only weeks after Mrs McQuillan-Wilson’s critical comments on Radio 4. As Douglas Borough Council wanted to ensure the memorial could be delivered in time for the 40th anniversary of the disaster in August 2013, no public announcement was made until early May 2013. When I asked Assistant Chief Executive Susan Harrison whether the Council’s decision to have a new memorial was an admission that their 1998 memorial was inadequate, all that she would say was: “Times were different back then.”

The new memorial in the Kaye Gardens is much larger than the 1998 stone, and consists of three columns of Welsh slate set into a circular plinth (**figures 1.2 and 1.3**). Each column weighs over one ton and required a crane to move it into position. The columns extend around 30 inches below the level of the plinth. The left and right hand columns state the names and ages of the 50 people that died. It is significant that the central column states the number of deaths, a move that could be interpreted as a tacit admission from Douglas Borough Council that the wording of their 1998 memorial was too vague.

The memorial was dedicated at a service held in the Kaye Gardens at 7.45pm on Friday, August 2nd, 2013. At the beginning of the service, the memorial was covered by a purple cloth. The cloth was swept away to reveal a memorial that is a vast improvement on the 1998 one. It provides a more fitting tribute to all those that died as well as setting the historical record straight nailing the misinformation discussed in section 1.2. People with programmes were aware that a maroon would be set off at 8.01pm to coincide with the first 999 call from Summerland, but the noise of the maroon still startled many members of the crowd. The names of the 50 victims were read out. In the Mayor's address, Mrs Carol Malarkey said that the Island would probably never come to terms with the tragedy.



Figures 1.2 and 1.3: The new Summerland memorial
The 1998 memorial stone can be seen in the background of the top
photograph and on the extreme right of the bottom photograph
(Photographs by Ruth McQuillan-Wilson)

1.4 Who were the Summerland dead?

This section will summarise the age, sex and geographical characteristics of the 50 victims of the Summerland fire disaster. It will go on to discuss the families and individuals affected by the disaster. A list of the dead is provided in the appendix to chapter 1.

Age and sex

Female victims (31) significantly outnumber male victims (19). This gender imbalance is particularly noticeable for the fire's 11 child and teenage victims, eight of whom are girls. Victims' ages range from 10 to 70 (**table 1.3**). Two main age groups are disproportionately represented: children and teenagers (under 20: 11 victims) and the middle-aged (40-59: 21 victims). The number of victims in their twenties is comparatively low (three deaths).

Region of origin

Geographically, 42 of the 50 victims were holidaymakers from England, Wales and Scotland (**figure 1.4**). Two people from Northern Ireland died in the fire, but there were no fatalities from the Republic of Ireland or from outside the British Isles. Of the six staff fatalities, four are listed as having addresses in northern England and two on the Isle of Man. Twenty-seven (27) of the 50 victims came from northern England (**figure 1.5**).

The geographic concentration of victims from northern England is logical, given that a tourism report commissioned by the Manx Government in 1971 found that 63% of visitors to the Isle of Man came from that region. More specifically, 51 out of every 100 holidaymakers came from northwest England (Corran, 1977). The Summerland dead thus provide a snapshot of the geography of Manx tourism. If the northern England victims are disaggregated to county level, fifteen of the Summerland dead came from only three counties: Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. Residents of Liverpool, Southport and Warrington were among the victims of the disaster. Ten of the dead came from Yorkshire, including people from Huddersfield, Halifax and Sheffield. Two of the Yorkshire victims (Mrs Ann Barber and Mrs Elsie Stevens) had come to the Island on a Wallace Arnold coach holiday, and were with the other 23 members of the group in the Marquee Showbar when the fire broke out. The remaining victims came from Lincolnshire, East Anglia (Cambridgeshire and Essex); southeast England (Enfield and Hitchin); Scotland (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Kilmarnock); Wales (Cowbridge); and Northern Ireland (County Antrim and County Down).



**Figure 1.4: The geography of the Summerland dead
(Map by Kevin Burkhill, University of Birmingham)**

Numbers denote multiple victims from the same family. The Cambridgeshire fatality (Mrs Mabel Alice Buckledee) is related to the four victims from Essex – hence the arrow.

Table 1.3: Age distribution of Summerland victims

(a) Raw ages

10	10	10	11	12	13	13	13	14	17
18	20	21	23	30	32	33	34	35	35
35	37	41	41	41	43	43	43	43	45
46	46	48	49	49	52	52	54	55	55
56	58	59	60	60	62	62	68	69	70

(b) Age groups

Under 10	0
10-19	11
20-29	3
30-39	8
40-49	13
50-59	8
60-69	6
70 or older	1

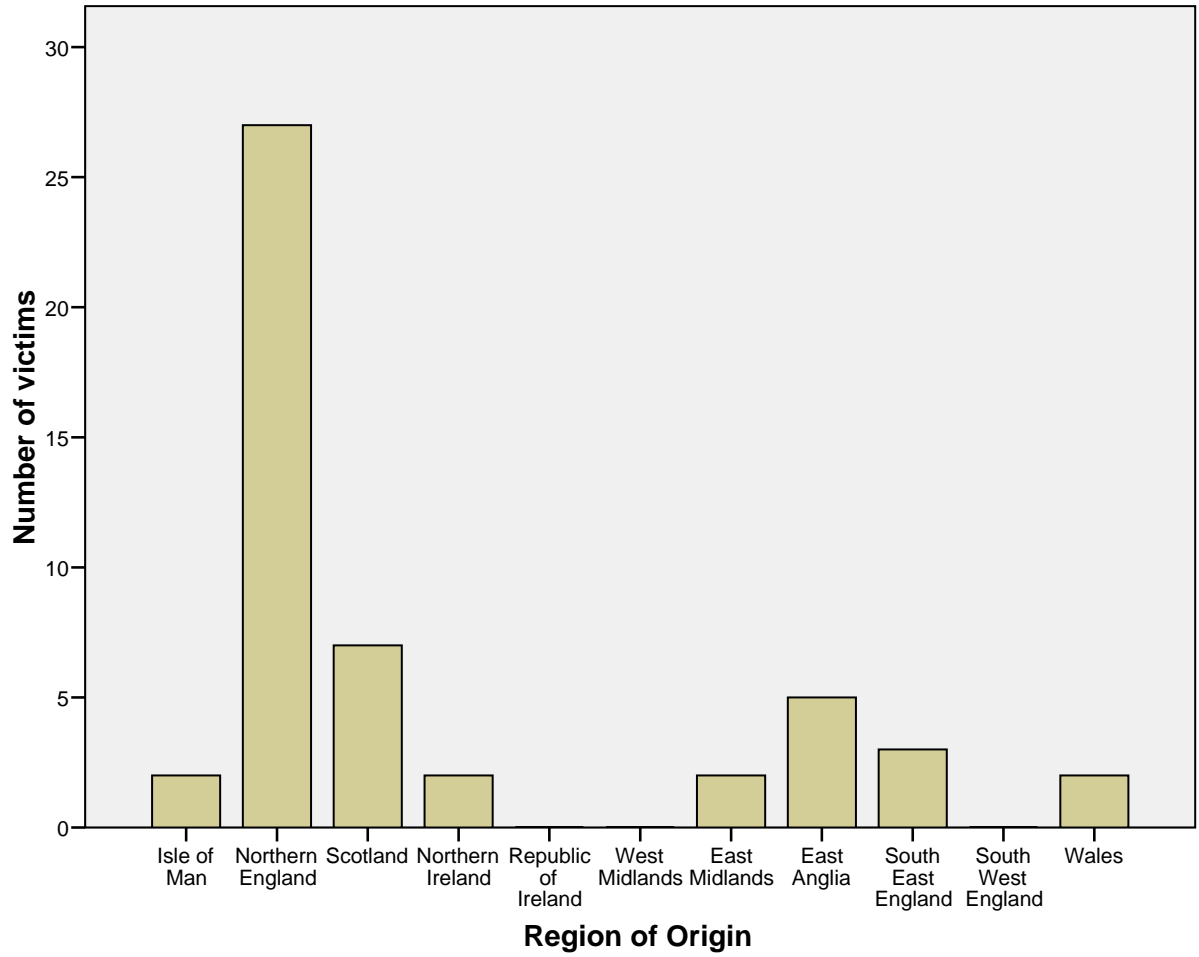


Figure 1.5: Area of origin of Summerland victims

Family groups

The Moulds family

Whilst the disaster disproportionately affected northerners, the worst affected family came from Essex. Mr Edward Alfred Moulds (38), known to his family and friends as Ted, lived in the former stationmaster's house at Rayleigh, and was employed as a train driver on the Liverpool Street to Southend-on-Sea line. Mr Moulds lost five members of his family in the Summerland disaster: his wife Betty (34); his three children including ten-year old twin girls Mandy and Debra (**figure 1.6**), and his mother-in-law Mabel (59), who lived at March in Cambridgeshire. Mr Ralph Bosworth, a fellow train driver who had known the Moulds family for many years, went to the Isle of Man to identify the children's bodies. Despite being twins, Mr Bosworth was able to differentiate between Debra and Mandy's bodies because Debra "was very fat and big for [her] age" whereas Mandy was thin and had more fillings in her teeth. Mr Bosworth said: "The family had been saving all year for the holiday. Mrs Moulds got herself a job so they could make the trip." The family started their holiday on July 27th and stayed at the Cranbourne Holiday Flats. The family was in the Marquee Showbar on the fifth floor of Summerland when the fire broke out. As the family descended the flying staircase, a huge sheet of flame, described by Mr Moulds as "like a blow lamp magnified thousands of times", shot in front of him. As the crowd surged forward, he lost contact with his family. Mr Moulds told *The Rayleigh News Review*:

“The heat was unbelievable. I have worked on steam trains and had my trousers scorched or even set alight by the firebox. But this was something else again. It buckled steel girders in the roof.”

Mr Moulds said the worst aspect of the disaster was a feeling of helplessness. He added: “There was nothing that could be done. A lot of people criticised the fire brigade but by the time I got out, there were already there. So were the ambulances.”

Mr Moulds was seriously injured and was detained in Noble’s Hospital, Douglas for several days; he was subsequently moved to Billericay Hospital in Essex. His condition 84 hours after the fire (8am on August 6th) was described as “very ill, slight improvement”. Five work colleagues of Mr Moulds travelled to the Isle of Man to visit him in hospital. One workmate said: “He is a quiet chap and all he cared for was his family and his garden.” Mr Moulds admitted he was apprehensive about returning to the now empty family home after the fire. After staying with relatives, he sold his house and began afresh at a new house in Rayleigh. A fund was started to help Mr Moulds raise money for the deposit on his new house. Mr Moulds never remarried after the fire, although he did live with a nurse from the hospital. Golf is one of Mr Moulds’ favourite pastimes (Sean Lilley, Personal Communication).



Figure 1.6: Twins Mandy and Debra Moulds

Seventeen children lost one or both parents in the Summerland disaster. Two families lost three persons in the fire: the **Cheetham** family from Kirkby, Liverpool (mother, father and daughter); and the **Glayzer** family from Maghull near Liverpool (mother, father and daughter).

The Cheetham family

Mr Richard (52) and Mrs Elizabeth (52) Cheetham had three children: Mavis, Heather and June. Elizabeth Cheetham was always known to family and friends as Betty. Mr Cheetham was a plastics engineer. The Isle of Man was a regular holiday destination for the Cheetham family. Both Mavis and Heather were married in 1973, and so did not accompany their parents or younger sister June (13) to the Island on July 21st. Indeed, Heather had only been married to Reg Lea for just over six months at the time of the fire. Ironically, Reg had visited Summerland in 1972 with Tony Martin, a qualified builder. At the time, Mr Martin said to Reg: “This place is a death trap. Look at all that plastic.”



Figure 1.7a: Betty and June Cheetham at Summerland in 1972. They are standing on the crazy-golf course just yards from where the fire started.

Heather and Reg were staying at her parents' house to look after Heather's elderly grandmother whilst Richard and Elizabeth were away on holiday in the Isle of Man with June. Ruth Turvey (7) is the daughter of Richard Cheetham's sister Lilly. She told me (personal communication):

“Richard was a very nice and generous man. He made me a crib and a wooden iron...June was very considerate. She used to have a picture of a clown on her bedroom wall. She would turn it round when you entered her room...The disaster ripped the sole out of the Cheethams. Richard's older brother Luke died shortly after the fire.”

The Cheethams' next-door neighbour Mrs Ryan said:

“Mrs Cheetham rang me every night from the Island. She wanted to keep in touch with her mother who also lives in this road. She told me they were having a wonderful time

and that June was really enjoying herself...Everybody knows the Cheethams. They're so polite and friendly, and Mrs Cheetham often helps people with odd jobs. June is a lovely girl, and is always willing to run an errand for one."



Figure 1.7b: Richard Cheetham (*left*) in Second World War RAF uniform; Betty Cheetham (*right*) in Noble's Park, Douglas in 1972

Heather and Reg first heard about the fire when the normal television programmes were interrupted by a newsflash. Heather commented that her parents usually went to Summerland on Thursday night and they usually rang home around 10pm to check on the condition of her grandmother. That Thursday evening there was no telephone call. Reg Lea recalled (personal communication): "It would be impossible to convey the anxiety one feels at a moment like that and whenever either of us sees a number [for relatives to contact] given out on the news, then I know that someone somewhere is going through the same experience and that moment and that feeling comes flooding back." Mr Lea started dialling the emergency number at about



**Figure 1.7c: Heather's wedding day, January 27th 1973
Heather with her parents Richard and Betty (*top*); Heather with her
sisters June (*left*) and Mavis (*right*)**

10.15pm, but he did not get through until 9.30am the following day. He was informed that Mrs Christian, the landlady of the guesthouse where they were staying, had reported the Cheetham family as being missing. Although Heather was in no doubt that her mother, father and sister June had perished in the fire, they were not informed officially of their deaths until Friday, August 10th (eight days after the fire). Meanwhile, Heather and Reg received a telephone call from the Isle of Man Coroner asking for the name and address of their family's dentist to assist in the identification of the bodies of Elizabeth and June (Richard had false teeth). For example, June had one tooth slightly loose and growing over the adjacent tooth. The cause of death in all three cases was burning. What is made even more troubling for the Cheethams is the fact that the family will never know precisely what happened that Thursday evening. Mr Lea said: "My wife has often wondered whether her sister June was with her mum and dad at the time of the fire. This will forever be a cause of anxiety, never knowing if they were together in their dying moments... Time may be a great healer of pain but the pain of such a loss is always just beneath the surface."

When I interviewed Ruth Turvey in August 2013, she recalled what she had been told as a child about the Cheetham's fate in the fire. She claimed that Elizabeth had gone into Summerland to collect bingo prizes and that Richard was initially outside the building. In our conversation, she repeated the line: "A man answering his description was seen rushing into Summerland." Ruth cannot remember who told her these details making it impossible to establish their veracity.



Figure 1.7d: Mavis (*left*) and June (*right*), circa 1971

Heather's sister, Mavis, brought a claim for damages against Trust House Forte (THF) and Summerland Ltd (THF's Manx subsidiary) for the death of her younger sister June. THF was the leisure company that ran Summerland. The case was heard in the Manx High Court on December 15th 1975. The judge was asked to fix the damages at £750 because this figure had been awarded in several similar cases. However, Mr Barry Stanley for the defendant companies said the accepted damages for a child were £500 and not £750. The Cheetham family was eventually awarded £750 in damages, plus £25 special damages, for the death of June on December 23rd 1975. The judge Deemster Robert Eason said the damages were confined to the "loss of expectation of life of a normal child of 13" (*The Times*, 24th December 1975). He said there was no question of claiming for future loss of earnings or other material losses. Deemster Eason said: "These observations...bring this case within its true perspective and show how limited the remedy claimed in this action is, compared with accident claims with which generally the courts have to deal". THF and Summerland Ltd were ordered to pay the costs of the action.

In 2013, Heather returned to the Isle of Man for the first time since the disaster to see the new memorial. She appeared on *BBC North West Tonight* and gave a moving interview on *Manx Net*.

The Glayzer family

Three members of the Glayzer family from Liverpool died in the fire: Mr Frederick Glayzer (49), a primary school headmaster; his wife Olive, a secretary at Cadbury Schweppes; and their daughter Andrea (13), who was in her second year at Ormskirk Grammar School. They arrived on the Island on July 31st. A postcard arrived at the Glayzer's family home on the morning of the fire and was read by their son Nicholas (21). It said: "having a marvellous time." Less than 24 hours later, he was informed that his parents and sister were missing, presumed dead. A neighbour said: "He [Nicholas] is very badly shocked. The card from the family had been posted on the day of the fire and arrived this morning." This was the first time that Mr and Mrs Glayzer had been to the Isle of Man since spending their honeymoon on the Island.

The Brady family

Mr Thomas **Brady** (44), a grocer and restaurant owner in Glasgow, and his wife Catherine (43) of Jamieson Street, Govan Hill, Glasgow died in the blaze. It was originally thought that their youngest son Vincent (11) had also perished (e.g. *The Daily Record* incorrectly reported that Vincent's body had been identified), but he surfaced several hours after the fire. Two boys helped Vincent to escape from the fire, but his parents died because they were upstairs. The couple's three eldest children Joseph (20), John (18)

and Catherine (17), who had not gone on holiday with their parents, flew to Douglas on August 3rd to identify their bodies. Catherine told the *Isle of Man Examiner* in August 1993:

“It is only now I can talk about it. In those days, there was no support group. Nowadays, if there is a disaster, there is usually a link somewhere but we were just left on our own. I am glad now that people do get support. It must be good to talk to people who have had the same experience of a disaster.”

The other married couples that died at Summerland were: Mr Frederick and Mrs Frances **Allen** from Cowbridge, South Wales; Mr James and Mrs Beryl **Bennett** from Southport; Mr William and Mrs Phoebe **Goldsmith** from Huddersfield; Mr Hubert and Mrs Glays **Manning** of Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and Mr Alexander and Mrs Jean **Stevenson** from Kilmarnock, Scotland.

The Huddersfield victims

Four of the fire’s fatalities came from the West Yorkshire town of Huddersfield: one married couple (Mr William and Mrs Phoebe Goldsmith); and a 35-year-old woman (Mrs Lorna Norton) and Miss Jane Tallon (13), who was a friend of Mrs Norton’s daughter Jacqueline.

Mr and Mrs Goldsmith arrived on the Isle of Man on July 22nd, and were staying at the Anfield Hey Hotel. They were last seen on “the balcony” at Summerland. Mr William Goldsmith, a 62-year-old textile

foreman, was identified by his daughter Mrs Joan Ford, a deputy headmistress from Huddersfield. Mrs Goldsmith was a housewife; and 82½p in change was found in her purse when her body was identified. Mrs Ford's sister, Jean Machen, was seriously injured in the fire, with her condition described as "satisfactory" at 8am on August 6th.

Two other Summerland victims also came from Huddersfield: Mrs Lorna **Norton** (35) and Miss Jane **Tallon** (13). Miss Tallon was a friend of Mrs Norton's daughter Jacqueline (13), and went with them on holiday on July 28th. Mrs Norton went up the escalator to the first terrace and then climbed the flying staircase to the Sundome on the second terrace. Jacqueline now describes in her own words what happened next (personal communication):

"My last memory of [my mother] is seeing her going up the escalator waving...Jane and I spent a while looking around Summerland. I am not sure how long we were walking round...but after a while, we went up to the floor where the sun beds were and waited outside for my mum to come out. There were walls enclosing the sun bed areas so you could not see inside so I cannot bear to think what happened in there...There was a balcony railing which overlooked the ground [Solarium] floor where we were watching a man playing an organ.

Then there was a small amount of smoke in the building and people were beginning to look a bit concerned. The man on the organ just shouted for people not to worry and to carry on

enjoying the music. Then suddenly, in a second, a huge ball of dense jet-black smoke rose into the air, the lights went out and it seemed the whole corner of the building went up in a sheet of flame. Of course, the panic was unbelievable. Jane and I were rooted to the spot, and then I ran towards the sun bed area shouting for my mum. Everyone else was running the other way. Jane came and grabbed me and shouted 'Jackie, we've got to get out' and we turned towards the railing but by now there were several people there and we could not get anywhere near the railing. I cannot remember where the stairs were or even if there were any. [The flying staircase was the closest.] We were at the back of people, the smoke was black and thicker than anything you could imagine. It was almost impossible to breathe and the heat was so intense. I remember hopping from one foot to another to try to stop the pain. It just got hotter and hotter. I was wearing nylon tights and a polyester type skirt and I felt them melt on my skin and my hair singe away. There were also little fireballs falling down from the ceiling like rain; it was impossible to get away from them.

The next thing I knew I was waking up on the floor. I was lying down and as I looked around there were just bodies on the floor. I could not see Jane. There was no one standing by the railing and I managed to stand up and had to step over the bodies that were lying there. I still could not see Jane. I

cannot help thinking now that she came for me and I left her behind...some friend!

I threw my bag down and took off my shoes, and climbed onto the balcony railing. I balanced there and looked at the flames behind me and then down to blackness where I could not see anything. My skin seemed to be falling off me. I remember thinking either the fire or the fall would kill me and I just let go. I fell for miles and then I landed on something, possibly a shop canopy or something I do not know but it broke underneath me so it broke my fall. I managed to stand up and saw a small pocket of light in the distance and ran towards it. It led to the outside and someone helped me climb out and then I was alone outside.”

A bath towel, a locker key and three rail/boat tickets were found with Mrs Norton’s body. Jacqueline was still in the Intensive Care Unit of Noble’s Hospital on August 6th. Jacqueline told me in 2013 (personal communication):

“I was severely burned and while I made a good physical recovery, the psychological and emotional scars remain ever forceful at certain times...I cannot bear to see fire even on the television and I experience intense panic if ever I am anywhere and a fire alarm goes off...I have never achieved closure and suspect I never will, though I have no complaints about my life.”

Alan Raper (13) was staying at the same guesthouse as Jacqueline and Jane. He said (personal communication): “I can still feel the anxiety of the morning after the fire when they didn’t appear for breakfast, especially after they had told us they were going to Summerland that evening.” Miss Jane Tallon was the daughter of the town’s Deputy Fire Chief Mr Arthur Tallon. Mr Tallon identified his daughter by a medallion and chain given to Jane by her brother as a Christmas present in 1972. Mr Raper remarked (personal communication):

“I was shown a necklace recovered from a body which I confirmed as the one that Jane had been wearing. That was probably the first occasion when I realised life was for real and that terrible things could happen to ordinary people.”

The South Yorkshire victims

After enjoying a holiday to London together in 1972, Sheffield couples Mr Albert and Mrs Annie Thistlewood went on holiday to the Isle of Man with her brother Mr Harry Wilkinson (an oilman) and his wife Mrs Kathleen Wilkinson. Mrs Annie **Thistlewood** (55) and Mrs Kathleen **Wilkinson** (56) died in the fire; Mr Albert Thistlewood (59), a gardener, sustained first-degree burns and was detained in hospital for several days. Mr and Mrs Wilkinson’s daughter Kathleen was on holiday in Cornwall at the time of the fire and thought it was unlikely that her parents would have gone to Summerland. Kathleen attended the memorial service at which the new Summerland memorial was dedicated in 2013. In a *Manx Net* interview, she said: “He [my father] held a lot back about my mum”. Mrs Thistlewood’s son Robert (27) had moved to Australia in the autumn of

1972 to work for General Motors in Brisbane. Robert had moved inland in July 1973 and his family had difficulty in making contact to inform him of his mother's death. The Isle of Man was a popular holiday destination for Sheffield people. A spokesman for Sheffield United Tours said: "We have been running three coachloads every week including [the Sunday before the fire]."

The third fatality from South Yorkshire was Mrs Constance **Atkins** (46) from Rotherham. Mrs Atkins helped her mother escape the blaze, but then went back to get her coat. Her inquest file states: "She was going back up the stairs towards the deck chairs to collect her coat. She was of the opinion that the fire at Summerland was only small and that she would have time to collect her coat." Mr Atkins was a leading member of the town's Red Cross and did voluntary work twice a week at the general hospital. Mrs Atkins' husband William was an engineering inspector.

The O'Hara family

Mr Maurice **O'Hara**, a central heating engineer from Winterton (six miles to the north of Scunthorpe) in Lincolnshire, lost his wife (Margaret) and daughter (Tracy) in the fire. Tracy had been adopted from an orphanage in Nottingham. The family went into Summerland as two separate groups: mother and daughter, and father and son. The two groups met on the top floor of Summerland (the Cruise Deck), where Mr O'Hara was playing table tennis with his son Simon (11). When the fire broke out, Mr O'Hara and Simon became separated from Margaret (41) and Tracy (10). Mr O'Hara threw Simon over the side of the flying staircase and on to a pile of deckchairs. Simon saw his father being crushed against the side of the

staircase. Mr O'Hara's sister-in-law said: "As he turned round to try to find his wife and daughter, he was caught up in the rush of people panicking to get out of the building and was thrown to the ground. Then I think that as he tried to get up off the floor there was an explosion and he was thrown out of a window." Consequently, Mr O'Hara was admitted to hospital with severe burns to his back, chest injuries and a broken breastbone. He was not well enough to leave his bed until four days after the blaze and even at this stage still required assistance to walk. The Isle of Man Police informed the Winterton family in Lincolnshire that Margaret and Tracy were missing at 4.30am on the day after the fire. They were amongst the last bodies to be positively identified. With his father in hospital, Simon was looked after by his aunty and uncle who had both gone on holiday with the family.

The lifetime teenage friends from Middlesex

The fire claimed the lives of two lifetime friends from Enfield in Middlesex: Billy **Aves** (18) and David **Piper** (17) (**figure 1.8**). Mr Piper was an apprentice telecommunications engineer with the General Post Office (GPO); and Mr Aves was a clerk at Barclays Bank in Southgate in north London and studied for banking examinations in his spare time. Mr Piper went on holiday to the Isle of Man in 1971 with Mr Aves and his parents. David and Billy returned to the Island by themselves in 1972 and enjoyed themselves so much – "the same piece of mind, the same pleasures" – that they returned exactly 12 months later in July 1973. Billy's older sister Stella (22) said (personal communication): "He was the loveliest kindest gentlest baby brother any one could ever have...He enjoyed fishing and was a keen Tottenham Hotspur supporter." Stella's first husband was a Manxman

whose family ran a market garden in Greeba. They lived on the Isle of Man between 1971 and 1980, and moved into Cherry Cottage in Glen Vine. She gave birth to a baby boy Nicholas Corlett two weeks before the fire (**figure 1.9**). Stella said: “Ironically, his birth was announced at the back of the paper on August 3 when the news of Summerland was on the front” (quoted in the *Isle of Man Examiner*, 29th July, 2013, page 6).

It was around 8.30pm on August 2nd when Stella found out that something terrible had happened in Douglas. Stella said (personal communication):

“My next-door neighbour popped her head in and said ‘I think there’s been an IRA bomb gone off in Douglas. They say it is near Summerland’. I didn’t know my brother and his friend had gone there for the penultimate evening of their holiday, but somehow I knew straight away they were there...My husband and I drove into Douglas to see what was happening. I had a terrible feeling about it...we sat in the hotel in Onchan overlooking the fire (the hotel where my brother and his friend stayed) and sat all night waiting for them to come home which they never did.”

In David Piper’s inquest file held at the Isle of Man Public Record Office, it states that he and Billy left the Palatine Hotel “shortly after 7.15pm”. A hotel employee remembers them saying they were going to have a game of table tennis at Summerland. If they followed this plan, it would have put them on the top floor of Summerland (the Cruise Deck) when the fire started. Billy and David are buried in a joint grave in Marown cemetery on

the Isle of Man. “It was decided that as they loved the Island, that they should be buried there,” Stella told the *Isle of Man Examiner* in July 2013.



Figure 1.8: Billy (left) and David (right): this photograph was taken one day before the disaster (Photograph kindly supplied by Stella Sissons)

Billy’s employer Barclays Bank kindly arranged a flight to take his parents and other relatives and friends to the funeral. Among the mourners was the Island’s fire chief Cyril Pearson. Stella told me (personal communication): “Even now looking at the pictures of Bill and David on the cusp of manhood absolutely breaks my heart.” Devastated at the loss of their own child David’s parents both died within ten years of the fire. Billy’s father Charles was a prominent campaigner for the Summerland victims, and his battle for justice and how he “was thwarted along the way” is described in chapter 6.



**Figure 1.9: Billy with his nephew Nicholas on the day before the fire
(Photograph kindly supplied by Stella Sissons)**

The Warrington flatmates

Among the fire's younger victims were two friends from Warrington: Allen **Barker** (20) and Sean **Kelly** (21). The two men had originally moved to London to find work and shared a flat together; Mr Barker worked as a fingerprinting officer at Scotland Yard for 18 months and Mr Kelly as a bricklayer. Mr Barker was due to start working as a fingerprint officer for the Manchester Police in April 1974. Deterred by the high cost of living in London, they decided to seek summer jobs on the Isle of Man. Sean and Allen lived at a boarding house with three other Summerland employees. Mr Barker worked at a hotel on the Island and as a barman in Summerland; he was working in the Garden Bar on the fifth floor of the complex on the evening of the fire. Mr Kelly started work at Summerland about a month

before the fire, but left after only two days because he did not like it. He was then unemployed for three weeks, but decided to return to Summerland when he was unable to find work in the building trade. It seems that Mr Kelly's evening shift at Summerland started at 7pm because he left for work at 6.45pm on the evening of the fire. Allen, who was the only child of Mr and Mrs Ernie Barker, died just eight days before his 21st birthday. To celebrate his coming of age, Allen's family had intended to hold his birthday party in a ballroom and had sent out invitations to more than 100 people. A few days after the fire, the manager of Summerland telephoned Allen's parents to tell them of their son's heroic actions, which he said had helped to save 17 lives. Mr Ernie Barker told *The Warrington Guardian*: "The fact that he managed to save these people bucked us up a little bit. This was the lad we had brought up and it made us proud." A wreath from Warrington Borough Council in memory of Allen and Sean was placed by the new Summerland memorial when it was unveiled in August 2013.

The Liverpool sisters

The fire claimed the lives of two Liverpool sisters: Mrs Anastasia **Hughes** (48) and Mrs Marcia **Hughes** (58). Marcia was a telephonist at Lyons Maid and was married to John Joseph Hughes. Both sisters had married cousins (hence the same surname); Anastasia had gone on holiday to the Isle of Man with her husband Joseph Kevin Hughes (a clerical officer) and three children, twins Susan and Stephen (10) and Clare (8).

One of the blaze's youngest victims was Gary **Williams** (11) from Upton near Birkenhead. Gary had arrived for a ten day holiday in the Isle of Man with his father (Alan: a tool setter, he suffered severe burns), mother

(Margaret), older brother (Alan, he suffered severe bruising) and sister (Dawn) two days before the fire. The family entered Summerland at 7.15pm. After staying on the main Solarium floor for 15 minutes, they climbed to the television viewing area on the second terrace. When the fire broke out, the family descended by the flying staircase to the fifth floor. Here the family became separated when “a big crowd of people rushed out of the [Marquee Showbar] door and down the stairs”. Neighbours of the Williams described Gary as a “cheery schoolboy who had been looking forward very much to his holiday” (*The Liverpool Echo*, 4th August, 1973).

The first body to be positively identified was Scotsman Stanley **Kellet** (37), an Electricity Board engineer and foreman, from Falkirk. The Kellets usually went on holiday to northern Scotland, but decided to go to the Isle of Man for a change in 1973. Mr Kellet travelled to the Island by boat on the Sunday before the fire, with his wife Betty, son Duncan (13) and daughter Laura, together with his sister Margaret and her 13-year-old son David. Mr Kellet saved his wife and sister, but went back into the building to rescue more people. A close relative said: “As soon as I heard that Stan was missing, I knew he must have gone back for others. It was just like him. He had a great big heart.” Betty and her sister-in-law were “badly bruised by the terrible crush of people” in the fire.

Victims from the Island of Ireland

The two victims from the Island of Ireland came from Northern Ireland. One of the fatalities was Mr Wilbert **Hamilton** (30), a factory worker and lorry driver, from Newtownards; his girlfriend Miss Eileen Ritchie (22) was severely burned on her back and legs, and was detained in

Noble's Hospital (**table 1.4**). Mr Hamilton had been engaged to Miss Ritchie for three years and the couple had planned to marry in January 1974. A neighbour of the Hamilton family said: "It's a terrible thing. Wilbert was one of the best. He was a decent, quiet lad." The other fatality was Mrs Sarah **Boyd** (45), an egg packer from Upper Lisburn. Mrs Boyd's husband Joseph (54), a post-mortem room technician, suffered burns in the fire and was admitted to hospital.

1.5 Who were seriously injured at Summerland?

With the exception of *The Sun* that put the number of injured persons at 90, first press reports (e.g. *The Isle of Man Courier*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Daily Mail*) all state that 80 were injured in the fire, with around 30 being detained in hospital. "At least 30 people were in the Intensive Care Unit of Nobles [*sic.*] Hospital; another 50 were being treated in the casualty ward," said *The Isle of Man Courier* as it cleared the whole of its front page to report on the worst day in the Island's history. The Scottish *Daily Record* newspaper reported that about 40 were "seriously injured". A member of staff at Noble's Hospital said: "There has been a large number of casualties. We are up to our eyes in it." The Island's rural dean Reverend Percy Matthews said: "The hospital staff were rallying round wonderfully."

In a paper in the *British Medical Journal*, Hart *et al.* (1975) provide a more detailed and accurate breakdown of the number of injured, the nature of their injuries and the treatment they received in hospital. Seventy patients with minor burns, fractures, lacerations and emotional stress were treated, allowed home and then followed up as outpatients. Mr Alan Morgan

(personal communication) arrived in Douglas on the Stranraer ferry for a holiday on the day after the fire. He recalled:

“One of my lasting memories was of seeing so many casualties over the next couple of days, walking wounded, lucky walking wounded might be more fitting, with various wound and burn dressings about them, an almost surreal scene with, of course, the terrible backdrop of the destroyed complex.”

Thirty-two patients were admitted to Noble’s Hospital in Douglas. Twenty-four of these 32 casualties had surface burns (especially to the back) (**table 1.4**), three of the burns victims being children; two patients admitted with more than 50% burns subsequently died (section 1.1). Fourteen had injuries to the chest, abdomen or limbs, including three with pelvic fractures, although none of these injuries was life threatening.

Table 1.4:
Degree of burns in 24 patients admitted with surface burns
(Source: Hart *et al.*, 1975, page 257)

Body surface burnt (%)	<10	10-20	-30	40-50	55	65
Number of patients	11	5	4	2	1	1
Outcome	Recovered	Recovered	Recovered	Recovered	Died	Died

The burns victims: a case study

Ruth **McQuillan** (5) from Northern Ireland suffered third degree burns to both her hands and legs in the Summerland fire. She was treated at Noble's Hospital and Dundonald Hospital in Belfast. In a letter, she told me what happened after the fire and the treatment she received.

“I was inside a car – possibly a police car – and I remember looking down at my hands. My fingers looked as if they were webbed, presumably as the skin had melted or perhaps melted plastic had fallen on to them. However, the most horrific thing I remember are my burnt legs sticking to the car's plasticky seats.

Afterwards I remember the horror of the many operations. The black mask over my face particularly terrified me. I have poor veins and had to be cut across the inside of my elbow and the top of my leg for transfusion. Skin was removed from my back and stomach leaving even more unsightly scars to add to those I had already sustained. I had to lie on my front while the grafts healed. I saw a picture of myself in hospital – a five-year-old child with a face the same colour as the sheets and pillow – a pathetic sight. As I suffered full thickness burns down the backs of both legs, I think I must have been wearing shorts at the time. The tendons at the backs of my knees were really badly affected and did not heal well. I remember the torture of physiotherapy and the dread of seeing the physio appear.

When I was growing up, I was told that I would be reviewed at 18, with regard to further reconstructive surgery. I remember the words plastic surgery being used, and in my innocence I thought the doctors would put magic plastic stuff on my legs to cover my scars – how foolish children are!”

Ruth endured “six painful months of skin grafts and physiotherapy, and many more years of torment to follow”. Ruth’s recollections of the fire and its effects on her life are explored in more detail in chapter 8.

Three of the 32 casualties were admitted to the Noble’s Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ITC) with asphyxia. In this group was Graham **Harding** (18) of Douglas, a trainee architect who was working as a part-time barman at Summerland. Mr Harding and another Summerland employee Mr Allen Barker (20) became trapped in a storeroom near the top of the building. To survive the choking smoke they sat under a dripping tap and placed a sports jacket over their heads which they had saturated with water from a sink (Cringle, 2000). Given that Mr Barker died (section 1.4), it was amazing that Graham was found alive by firemen the following day. Graham lost consciousness in Summerland and suffered an apparent heart attack on arrival at hospital; he received treatment for 19 days (Hart *et al.*, 1975). Graham’s uncle was Summerland’s safety officer, who led the staff firefighting party that attempted to extinguish the fire in the burning kiosk (chapter 5). The other two asphyxia patients were discharged from Noble’s Hospital after 14 days and 17 days.

Table 1.5: People detained in Noble's Hospital
List issued by the Manx Police at midnight on August 3rd, 1973
Later documents were used wherever possible to correct mistakes
in the spelling of people's names and addresses
(Bold font: died subsequently)

Intensive Care Unit	
Mrs Frances Mary Allen (54)	8, Porth-e-Green Close, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Glamorgan
Mrs Allison Little (35)	23, North Hamilton Street, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire
Mr Eric Taylor (born 1922)	35, Falcon Cliff Court, Douglas: organist in the Marquee Showbar
Mrs M Thompson	East Street, Scotstoun, Glasgow
Casualty Ward	
Mrs Catherine Bain (b 1911)	4, Kirk Street, Leith, Edinburgh The sister of Mrs Bain (Elizabeth McKenzie) died in the fire.
Mr Joseph Boyd (54)	4, Jenny's Lane, Ballinderry, Upper Lisburn, County Antrim
Mrs Doreen Foote (43)	245, Moira Road, Lisburn, County Antrim
Roy Foote (8)	245, Moira Road, Lisburn, County Antrim
Mrs Dorcas Heppenstall (b 1915)	86, Woodman Avenue, Huddersfield
Mrs Lilly McIntyre (49)	5, Reelick Avenue, Knightswood, Glasgow Broken arm and leg
Jacqueline MacDonald Norton (b 1959)	14, Haywood Avenue, Marsh, Huddersfield
Lynda McQuillan (2)	10, Hart Terrace, Colcavey, Hillsborough, Ulster
Muriel McQuillan (35)	10, Hart Terrace, Colcavey, Hillsborough, Ulster
Ruth McQuillan (5)	10, Hart Terrace, Colcavey, Hillsborough, Ulster
Mrs Jean Machen (b 1947)	13, Westbrook Drive, Waterloo, Huddersfield Her mother and father Mr and Mrs Goldsmith died in the fire.
Mrs Irene Marks (49)	46, Carnbrae Avenue, Newton Breda, Belfast, Ulster
Mr Edward Alfred Moulds (b 1935)	Station House, Station Road, Rayleigh, Essex Wife, three children and mother-in-law all killed in fire
Mrs Ellen Palfrey	19, Wuring Avenue, Parr, St Helens, Lancashire Had only been in Summerland for five minutes when the fire started.
Anne Quirk (16)	6, Brynn Street, St Helens (Sister of Joyce Quirk) Suffered burns to her legs and a back injury
Joyce Quirk (19)	6, Brynn Street, St Helens (Sister of Anne Quirk) Suffered burns to her hands, legs and body
Miss Eileen Vera Ritchie (22)	113 Dorrageh Road, Comber, County Down, Ulster (her boyfriend Mr William Hamilton died in the fire)
Mrs Pauline Wynne-Smythe (30)	17, Head Road, Douglas, Isle of Man
Mrs Isobel Stewart (68)	21, Hadlow Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire

Mrs Elizabeth Treasure (25?) (b 1947)	419, Fairoak Road, Southampton
Mrs Hilda Wharton (b 1935)	644, Burnley Road, East Whitwell, Rossendale, Lancashire
Mr Alan Williams (b 1936)	35, Rake Lane, Upton, Birkenhead, Wirral
Mrs Rosalind Eileen Wilson (45)	6, Sycamore Drive, Jordanstown, County Antrim

Admitted to hospital after midnight on August 3rd, 1973 or did not appear on the original hospital list released to the press	
Mrs Mary Carson (56)	13, Hillfield Avenue, Walsworth, Hitchin, Hertfordshire Her husband died in the fire.
Mr Graham Harding (18)	15, Norwood Drive, Douglas, Isle of Man
Mr Maurice Francis O'Hara (43)	2, North Street, Winterton, Lincolnshire, Mr O'Hara's wife and daughter were both killed.
Mr Albert Thistlewood (59)	6, Aughton Avenue, Sheffield Mr Thistlewood's wife died in the fire.

*The author has been unable categorically to confirm the identity of the 32nd person admitted to hospital; however, it can be stated that this person was discharged from hospital before August 6th. The 32nd person could be Mr Peter Bain (the wife of Mrs Catherine Bain) or Mrs Bain's brother John Smith (*The Scotsman*, August 4th 1973). *The Liverpool Echo's* (August 3rd 1973) list of injured persons includes James Hicklin from Douglas, so Mr Hicklin could be the 32nd seriously injured person.

The geography of the injured

Around four hours after the fire, the Manx police issued a list of people detained in Noble's Hospital (**table 1.5**). The list names only 27 of the 30 casualties then admitted (Mrs Carson and Mr Harding did not arrive at hospital until August 3rd) because the identities of three of the injured persons were unknown in the immediate aftermath of the fire.

The gender imbalance of the Summerland dead (Male = 19, Female = 31) becomes even more marked amongst the injured: of the 31 known seriously injured persons, 23 (74.2%) were women. Ten came from northern England and nine from Northern Ireland (**figure 1.10**). It is

noticeable that three people came from Huddersfield; four victims of the fire also came from the same Yorkshire town (section 1.4). Northern Ireland accounted for the second highest number of injured persons, with three of the nine injured persons being from the **McQuillan** family from Hillsborough. Ruth McQuillan (5) was the most seriously injured and suffered third degree burns (see earlier section on the burns victims). Her mother Muriel (35) had burns on the bottom of her legs, whilst Ruth's sister Lynda (2) and father Sammy suffered only superficial injuries. Amongst the injured were two distant relatives of the McQuillan family, mother and son Dorren (43) and Roy **Foote** (8). Roy's family in Northern Ireland initially thought that he had sustained serious injuries. However, Roy had only a short stay in hospital and, within days of the fire, he was pictured in a newspaper enjoying an ice cream. Four of the injured came from central Scotland (Edinburgh and Glasgow); the only Welsh person named on the list (Mrs Frances Mary **Allen**) died later in hospital on August 11th. Excluding northern England, the other English persons detained in hospital came from Essex (Mr **Moulds**, see section 1.4) and Southampton. Like the Summerland dead, none of the named injured persons came from South West England or the Irish Republic.

The Summerland disaster disproportionately affected holidaymakers rather than residents of the Isle of Man. The three islanders seriously injured in the fire were all members of staff; and included Mrs Pauline **Wynne-Smythe**, who was the brave manageress of the Marquee Showbar (chapters 6 and 8). Thus, using the list of 31 injured persons, no islanders (excluding staff) died or were seriously injured in the fire. This was to be expected because Summerland catered largely for the tourist.



Figure 1.10: Men, women and children seriously injured in the fire and admitted to Noble's Hospital
(Map by Kevin Burkhill, University of Birmingham)

Numbers denote multiple casualties from the same family. The two persons who died in hospital are not included on this map; see figure 1.4. The author has been unable affirmatively to establish the identity of one of the 32 injured persons.

Many local people have told me that they only tended to visit the building when they had visitors over from Britain.

By the end of Friday, August 3rd (i.e. around 24 hours after the fire), 29 people were still in hospital, some critically ill with severe burns.

Mrs Mary **Carson** (56), whose husband died in the fire, became progressively wheezy on the day after the fire and was admitted to hospital on the Friday afternoon with bronchial pneumonia. Mrs Carson had a recent history of chest trouble after suffering from influenza in 1971. She was discharged from hospital after 14 days.

By Saturday evening, two of the 29 remained critically ill and nine very ill. Twenty-five casualties were still in Noble's Hospital at 8am on Monday, August 6th (i.e. around 84 hours after the fire) (**table 1.6**), of which 19 appeared on the original police list issued at midnight on August 3rd. The six persons still in hospital but not named on the original police list included Mary Carson from Hitchin in Hertfordshire (whose husband died) and Albert Thistlewood from Sheffield (whose wife died in the fire). The other injured persons not named on the original police list came from Douglas, Hillsborough in Northern Ireland, Lincoln and Birkenhead on the Wirral. The number of persons in hospital dropped to 21 on 9th August and then to 19 on August 13th; five of the injured persons (Miss Jacqueline **Norton**, Mrs Ellen **Palfrey**, Miss Anne **Quirk**, Miss Joyce **Quirk** and Mr Alan **Williams**) were flown to Liverpool so that they could be closer to their relatives. Mr Williams' burns were so severe that he remained in hospital for over four months until December 5th 1973. He was the last patient of the 32 seriously injured persons to be discharged.

Whilst some of the English casualties were flown home, many people from Northern Ireland had to struggle home on the ferry. Seriously injured Ruth McQuillan recalled (personal communication): “We had to endure a long painful boat journey [back to Belfast] in agony accompanied by a very kind lady, Winnie Woods, a Red Cross nurse. I remember her well.”

Table 1.6: Condition of casualties detained in Noble’s Hospital, Douglas approximately three and half days after the Summerland fire (at 8am on Monday, August 6th)

Critical	1
Very ill, slight improvement	8
Poorly, slight improvement	1
Improving, satisfactory	1
Fairly satisfactory	2
Satisfactory	12

1.6 Summerland in the context of fire disasters in the British Isles

The following discussion will place Summerland in the context of fire disasters in the British Isles since 1900 (**table 1.7**). An arbitrary threshold of 30 deaths is used to define a disaster. The *Summerland Fire Commission* (SFC) states that the Douglas fire “was the worst peacetime fire disaster in the British Isles since 1929 [i.e. for 44 years]” (SFC Report, Page 1). The Commission uses the qualification *peacetime* because around 50 people died in a fire at a Huddersfield clothing factory in October 1941. The fire at the town’s H Booth and Son Wholesale Clothiers spread rapidly because of the building’s wooden design, with a strong draught sucking flames up the staircases. Most of the victims were “young girls”, who faced no option but

to jump from the building's second storey when the factory's main staircase collapsed. Of the 47 known victims of the tragedy, 43 were buried in a common grave. However, the coroner's office said three males and 23 females were still missing or unaccounted for.

At the time, Summerland was the worst fire disaster in the British Isles since the Second World War. More than 40 years on, the Summerland tragedy remains the second worst loss of life from fire on land in the British Isles since 1945: only the death toll of 56 at Bradford City Football Ground on the afternoon of Saturday, May 11th, 1985 was higher. When Summerland is compared to other British and Irish fire tragedies since 1945, the closest parallel is seen with the Stardust nightclub fire in Dublin in the early hours of Valentine's Day 1981. Forty-eight people died and 120 were injured in the fire, which was the worst disaster in Dublin's history. The fire was started by an unidentified person slashing a seat and setting fire to it with a match, cigarette or newspaper. The Dromcolliher cinema fire in September 1926 also claimed 48 lives and is the only other Irish fire disaster since 1900. As the village of Dromcolliher had no public hall, films were shown in a large loft over a garage. The wooden loft had only one entrance, which was reached by climbing a ladder from the floor of the garage. There were around 150 people in the loft on the night of the fire, including many women and children. The fire was caused by a lighted candle falling on to exposed film reels. The projectionist tried to throw the film out of the window, but other objects on the table with the candle and the reels of film caught fire.

Thirty-nine people died in a fire at a lodging house on Watson Street in Glasgow in November 1905. The building, which consisted of three main storeys and two smaller flats on the fourth and fifth floors, accommodated 368 of the city's poorest men. The fire started at around 6am on a Sunday morning in a fourth floor flat. Whilst some of the men in these flats escaped by climbing on to the roof, several died as the staircase became blocked with flames and smoke.

Two of the four twentieth century fire disasters in southern England occurred in psychiatric hospitals. One of these tragedies happened at Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum in north London in January 1903. The fire destroyed five temporary wards housing 330 inmates that had been erected seven years before the blaze. The fire started shortly after 5.30am, when a night nurse noticed smoke emanating from a storeroom where patients' clothes were kept. The fire fanned by strong winds spread rapidly because the buildings were erected on timber frames and the wards were linked by an open passage. Just over a year before the Summerland disaster, 30 mentally handicapped male patients died in a fire started by a patient at 2.55am at the Coldharbour Hospital in the north Dorset town of Sherbourne. The victims of the fire were "severely subnormal", with mental ages of seven or younger and died in their beds. The public inquiry criticised hospital staff for being absent from the ward for too long; in addition, lax procedures allowed patients to mix with others on another ward that had access to matches. The Summerland fire received far more press coverage than the Coldharbour Hospital fire.

There were two fire disasters in London in the 1980s. Whilst the fire on the Piccadilly line escalator at the King's Cross Underground Station in November 1987 is recalled by most people and receives by far the most media attention of any post-war British fire disaster, a fire at two illicit Soho clubs in August 1980 has largely been forgotten about. The fire swept through the Rodos and Victor Gonzalez clubs in Denmark Place, an alley off the Charing Cross Road at 3.30am on a Saturday morning. The drinking clubs were popular with Spanish-speaking nationals, especially Colombians, and admittance was only granted to people known to the owner. Indeed, the front door of the building housing the clubs was always kept locked. They had been reports of drug taking, prostitution and illegal drinking at both clubs before the fire. It immediately became apparent that the fire was deliberate, with eyewitnesses reporting a strong smell of petrol everywhere. Some of the victims were illegal immigrants without documentation. Several theories circulated about the motivation of the arsonist, ranging from gang rivalry over protection money, drugs disposal and prostitution. These theories were all eventually dismissed and it was found bizarrely that the arsonist had been motivated by nothing more than an argument over the price of drinks in the club. John Thompson (42) took his revenge by pouring petrol through the building's letterbox and setting it alight.

It is encouraging to note that more than 28 years have elapsed since the last fire disaster in the British Isles.

**Table 1.7: Fire disasters in buildings on land* in the British Isles
since 1900**

Location	Date	Number of deaths
Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum, New Southgate, London	Tuesday, January 27th, 1903	52
Lodging House, 39 Watson Street, Glasgow	Sunday, November 19th, 1905	39
Dromcolliher Cinema, County Limerick, Republic of Ireland	Sunday, September 5th, 1926	48
Glen Cinema, Paisley, Near Glasgow	Tuesday, December 31st, 1929	71 children
H Booth and Son Wholesale Clothiers, Huddersfield, Yorkshire	Friday, October 31st, 1941	Around 50 47 victims buried
Coldharbour Hospital, Sherbourne, Dorset	Wednesday, July 5th, 1972	30
Summerland entertainment and leisure complex, Douglas, Isle of Man	Thursday, August 2nd, 1973	50
The Rodos and Victor Gonzalez clubs, Soho, London	Saturday, August 16th, 1980	37
Stardust Nightclub, Dublin, Republic of Ireland	Saturday, February 14th, 1981	48
Bradford City Football Ground, West Yorkshire	Saturday, May 11th, 1985	56
King's Cross Underground Station, London	Wednesday, November 18th, 1987	31

*This definition excludes the Piper Alpha oilrig explosion of July 1988; and the fire on a plane at Manchester Airport in August 1985, which is counted as an aviation disaster.

1.7 Summary

Fifty people were to die as the result of the fire that raced through the Summerland entertainment centre at Douglas, Isle of Man on Thursday, August 2nd, 1973. Summerland is the worst tragedy in Manx history and remains the second worst loss of life from fire on land in the British Isles since the Second World War. Forty-eight bodies were recovered from the building and two people died later in hospital, bringing the total number of deaths to 50. Statements claiming that 51, 52 or 53 died are not substantiated by any factual evidence or official documents. The main causes of death were suffocation, carbon monoxide poisoning, burns and multiple injuries from falling. The dead comprised 44 holidaymakers and six members of staff; around half came from northern England, with a notable concentration from Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Most of the victims were children and teenagers (under 20) and the middle aged (40-59). The families worst affected were the Moulds from Rayleigh, Essex (five deaths); the Cheethams from Kirkby, Liverpool (three deaths); and the Glayzer family from Maghull near Liverpool (three deaths). One hundred and two persons were injured (two died later). Thirty-two of the 102 were seriously injured and detained in hospital; 24 of these had surface burns and 14 had injuries to the chest, abdomen or limbs, including three with pelvic fractures. Nineteen people remained in hospital 11 days after the fire. Most of the persons seriously injured came from northern England, Northern Ireland and central Scotland. The remaining 70 casualties were treated on the night of the fire for minor burns, fractures and lacerations, allowed home and then followed up as outpatients. More women (31) than men (19) died; nearly three-quarters of those seriously injured were female.

APPENDIX

SUMMERLAND FIRE DISASTER: LIST OF FATALITIES

(A) BODIES RECOVERED / POST-MORTEM LIST (48)

Name	Age	Address	Body identification Cause of death Other details
Mr Frederick John Allen	About 60	8, Porth-y-Green, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Glamorgan	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning
Mrs Constance Atkins	46	3, Park View Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham, Yorkshire	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Carbon monoxide poisoning Identified by husband
Mr William ("Billy") Stuart Aves	18	29, Sittingbourne Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Identified from silver necklace, a St. Christopher medal and a gold signet ring with a large black stone bearing the initials SJ. Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning A bank clerk. His best friend Mr David Piper also died.
Mrs Anne Barber	69	South Ray, Broad Carr Lane, Holywell Green, Halifax, Yorkshire	Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning She was on a week's holiday. Switchboard operator at Leeds City Police Mrs Barber's husband (Peter) was a garage works manager. She had four children; body identified by son.

Mr Allen Barker	20	33, Ronald Drive, Fearnhead, Warrington	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>Died whilst in the same room as Graham Harding who survived by sitting under a dripping tip and soaking his jacket in water</p>
Mr James Hewitt Bramhall Bennett	43	<p>15, Albany Road, Southport, Lancashire</p> <p>Was born in Galashiels in southern Scotland</p>	<p>Not on list issued by police on August 3rd; post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Wife also died in fire</p> <p>Identified by brother. He was wearing distinctive swimming trunks with a pattern of silver dolphins on a black background.</p>
Mrs Beryl Bennett	41	15, Albany Road, Southport, Lancashire	<p>Not on list issued by police on August 3rd; post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Husband also died in fire</p>
Mr Thomas Brady	44	154, Jamieson Street, Govan Hill, Glasgow	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Body identified by son Joseph. He had dentures marked with the letter B.</p> <p>Wife also died in fire</p>
Mrs Catherine Brady	43	As above	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide in lungs</p> <p>Identified by son; husband also died in fire</p>

Mrs Mary Sarah Boyd	About 45	4, Jenny's Lane, Ballinderry, Upper Lisburn, County Antrim, Northern Ireland	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning
Mrs Mabel Alice Buckeldee	59	94, Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire	Post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning She was wearing a plastic raincoat at the time of the fire. Her daughter (Mrs Betty Moulds) and her three grand-daughters were also killed in the fire
Mr John Millar Carson	About 62	13, Hillfield Avenue, Walsworth, Hitchin, Hertfordshire	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Body identified by son. He was staying with his wife at the Empress Hotel. Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning
Mr Richard Cheetham	52	46, Bracknell Avenue, Southdene, Kirkby, Liverpool	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Body identified by son-in-law; also saw his keys. Wife and daughter were also killed in fire
Mrs Elizabeth Cheetham	52	As above	Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd Severe burns Husband and daughter were also killed in fire

Miss June Cheetham	13	As above	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Mother and father also died in fire</p> <p>Notebook and purse on body</p>
Mr Frederick William Glayzer	49	8, Brendale Avenue, Maghull, near Liverpool	<p>Post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Wife and daughter were also killed in fire</p>
Mrs Olive Bertha Glayzer	49	As above	<p>Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia and burns</p> <p>Body identified from dental charts</p> <p>Husband and daughter were also killed in fire</p>
Miss Andrea Margaret Glayzer	13	As above	<p>Age wrongly given as 12 on police list; post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia and burning</p> <p>Mother and father also died in fire</p>
Mr William Henry Goldsmith	62	5, Caldercliff Road, Berry Brow, Huddersfield, Yorkshire	<p>Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia following severe burns</p> <p>Body identified by his daughter, who saw his small gold ring</p> <p>Wife also killed in fire</p>

Mrs Phoebe Goldsmith	60	As above	<p>Post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Husband was also killed in fire</p>
Mr William Robert Hamilton	30	100, Scrabo Road, Newtownards County Down, Northern Ireland	<p>Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd</p> <p>Burning and carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>Identified by his mother</p> <p>Had a gold signet ring</p>
Mrs Beryl Ann Hendrick	32	Flat above the Bengal Restaurant, Douglas (and before that of 74, Royal Avenue, Onchan, IoM)	<p>Mrs Hendrick's body was initially wrongly identified on August 3rd as being that of Mrs Lorna Norton (both women were in their early to mid thirties).</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>Body identified by brother</p> <p>Ran a bar in Summerland</p> <p>The girlfriend of another Summerland victim Mr Dennis Arthur Sandford</p>
Mrs Anastasia Hughes	48	664, Queen's Drive, Old Swan, Liverpool	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Identified from gold, five stone peridot ring and blue leather handbag containing a watch</p> <p>Her sister Marcia also died</p>
Mrs Marcia Hughes	58	22, Derby Lane, Old Swan, Liverpool	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Identified from watch</p> <p>Her sister Anastasia was also killed (see above).</p>

Mr Stanley Wyllie Kellet	37	32, Tiree Crescent, Polmont, Falkirk, Scotland	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning Body identified by wife
Mr Sean Terence Kelly	21	106, Longbar Lane, Woolston, Warrington	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning
Mr Keith Baldwin Maceachern	23	Lower Oxford Street, Castleford, Yorkshire (but at the time of the fire was living at 'Swiss Villa', Switzerland Road, Douglas)	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Summerland's bar manager
Mr Hubert James Manning	46	27, Craster Avenue, Forrest Hall, Newcastle- upon-Tyne	Post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Wife was also killed in fire Mr Manning worked as a shot blaster and was on a week's holiday
Mrs Gladys Mary Manning	55	As above	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Asphyxia and burning Husband was also killed in fire
Mrs Elizabeth McKenzie	70	17, Great Junction Street, Leith, Edinburgh	Post-mortem examination carried out on 3rd and 4th August Asphyxia and burning Identified by her cousin Had a gold charm linked bracelet Was on a fortnight's holiday Mrs McKenzie was the widow of Lewis McKenzie (a master painter)

Mrs Betty Ann Moulds	34	Station House, Station Road, Rayleigh, Essex	Christian name wrongly given as Elizabeth in list issued by police on August 3rd; post-mortem examination conducted on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning
Miss Beverley Ann Moulds	12	As above	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Cause of death: burns Mother, grandmother and her two sisters were all killed in the fire
Miss Debra Jayne Moulds	10	As above	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Twin of Miss Mandy Moulds
Miss Amanda Jean Moulds	10	As above	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Twin of Miss Debra Moulds
Mrs Lorna Bryson Norton	35	14, Haywood Avenue, Marsh, Huddersfield	Body initially wrongly identified as Mrs Beryl Hendrick Correctly identified and post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Had been sunbathing and so had a pink bikini under her clothes A friend of Mrs Norton's daughter (Miss Jane Tallon) was also killed in the fire Mrs Norton was legally separated from her husband Denis John Norton at the time of the fire.

Mr Bernard Malcolm Ogden	41	21, Haydock Street, Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire (but at the time of the fire was living at 'Sea Level', Laxey Beach, Laxey, IoM)	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>Body identified by brother</p> <p>Summerland's resident drummer</p>
Mrs Margaret O'Hara	41	2, North Street, Winterton, Lincolnshire	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Identified by sister-in-law</p> <p>Daughter was also killed</p>
Miss Tracy O'Hara	10	As above	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Identification assisted by twisted and uneven teeth on the left-hand side of her mouth and a plastic key ring</p> <p>Mother was also killed</p>
Miss Julie Panter	14	12, Arnforth Drive, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Positively identified by one thin silver bracelet, one V shaped ring and one thin metal ring.</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and burning</p> <p>Julie was the daughter of Victor John Panter (a chauffeur). The family left their hotel to go to Summerland at 6.20pm.</p>

Mr David Piper	17	13, Harrow Avenue, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>His friend Mr William Aves was also killed in the fire.</p>
Mr Dennis Arthur Sandford	43	74, Royal Avenue, Onchan, IoM	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd</p> <p>Body identified by his brother, who recognised his gold watch</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>Bar worker in Summerland The boyfriend of another Summerland victim Mrs Beryl Ann Hendrick Age given as 44 in police list issued on 3rd August</p> <p>Former manager of Nursery Hotel, Onchan</p> <p>Had lived on Island for about 18 months</p>
Mrs Elsie Stevens	About 68	44, Sunningdale Road, Hessle, East Yorkshire	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning</p> <p>On a Wallace Arnold coach holiday Body identified by fellow holidaymaker George Gibson</p> <p>Mrs Stevens was the widow of Stephen Stevens, a retired bank manager</p>
Mr Alexander ("Alex") Gibson Stevenson	35	128, Cameron Drive, New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock, Scotland	<p>Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th</p> <p>Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning</p> <p>Wife also killed</p>

Mrs Jean ("Sheena") Nichol Davis Stevenson	33	128, Cameron Drive, New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock, Scotland	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Mrs Stevenson had had his appendix removed Husband also killed
Miss Jane Tallon	13	48, Springwood Avenue, Huddersfield	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Identified by medallion and chain Daughter of Arthur Tallon, Huddersfield's deputy fire chief She also knew another victim – Mrs Lorna Norton
Mrs Annie Thistlewood	55	6, Aughton Avenue, Aughton, Sheffield	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 3rd Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning Identified by son. Was wearing a gold watch
Mrs Kathleen Wilkinson	56	107, School Road, Beighton, near Sheffield	Post-mortem examination conducted on August 3rd Burning and asphyxia Related to Mrs Thistlewood
Master Gary Martin Williams	11	35, Rake Lane, Upton, Wirral, Cheshire	Post-mortem examination carried out on August 4th Asphyxia due to carbon monoxide poisoning and severe burning

(B) DEATHS IN HOSPITAL (2)

Name	Age	Address	Body identification Cause of death Other details
Mrs Frances Mary Allen	54	8, Porth-y-Green, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Glamorgan	Had come to Island to celebrate Silver Wedding Anniversary Died early on August 11th 1973 in Noble's Hospital, Douglas from 65-70% burning, a fractured pelvis and kidney failure Husband also died Body identified by brother
Mrs Allison Little	35	23, North Hamilton Street, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire	Died on September 29th 1973 nearly two months after the fire