

Accident Report from IW Times 27 July 1961 (supplied by Rosemary Smith)

TRAGIC CLIMAX TO HOLIDAY

Ryde Youth Fell from Boat, Drowned

A tragic climax to a holiday on a Norfolk Broads motor cruiser in which a Ryde youth lost his life was told to Mr. Bernard Prior, the Norwich Coroner, on Tuesday.

He recorded a verdict of accidental death on Michael William Jack Truman, an apprentice plumber, of 11a Lower Bettsworth Road, Ryde, who was drowned in the River Yar at Brundall, Norfolk, after falling overboard.

Neither Michael, nor his three Ryde friends who shared the cruiser with him, had experience of this type of craft before.

His companions were Hugh Brougham, aged 17, of 71 Bettsworth Road, Douglas Saunders, aged 19, living three houses away at No 65 and 19 year old Peter Williams of 6 Salters Road.

Douglas Saunders told the Coroner that they were returning to the boat station at the end of their week's holiday on the Broads. Michael Truman was on the back of the cruiser.

Heard a Splash

Witness heard a splash and ran round to see who it was. He took most of his clothes off and jumped in but Michael Truman had gone. His hat was still on the side of the boat.

"Michael used to be able to swim fairly well, but I could not be certain that he was still able to. The others are all swimmers," he said.

Mr C Morgan Hall, Senior Consultant Pathologist at Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, said there was no evidence of the dead youth having hit his head but this was possible.

PC Jack Hutchison said the deck covering the boat was of a non-slip material and he found nothing that might have caused the fall. The body was recovered from 14ft of water nearly four hours after the accident.

"Enormous Responsibility"

Remarking that an enormous responsibility rested with those connected with the Broads holiday industry, the Coroner urged boat owners to do their utmost to inform visitors of the risks there were, and to show that life-jackets were aboard river craft for their safety. The presence of life-jackets was not in itself enough.

Michael, who went to Ryde Secondary School, was a keen sportsman. He had recently recovered from a cartilage operation and was hoping to play football for Binstead next season.

The funeral will take place today (Thursday) at the Zion Chapel, Ryde, at 1.30 pm.

Arrangements have been made by Messrs. H V Taylor and Son.