

BIRTH: 1928 Cowes (IW Registrars ref: C64/E63)

Denys Kenneth Desmond HATCHER (Mother's maiden name SMITH)

BIRTH: Sept ¼ 1928 (General Registrars ref: I.Wight reg dist. vol 2b. page 888)

Denys D. K. HATCHER. (other name SMITH)

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday 23rd May 1946

SAILING TRAGEDY YOUTH'S BODY FOUND

The body of **Denys HATCHER**, aged 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. W.E. HATCHER, of The Lodge, Lushington Hill, Wootton, was recovered from the waters of Wootton Creek on Tuesday evening, and an inquest was held at Ryde last (Wednesday night). The body was seen floating in the Creek by Mr. Dennis JONES.

On May 10th Mrs. DE LANDE LONG, of Lisle Court saw from her bedroom window an overturned boat and four persons in the water. Col. A. DE LANDE LONG rescued three girls, but there was no trace of Denys, who was with them in the small sailing craft.

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday 30th May 1946

INQUEST ON VICTIM OF WOOTTON BOATING TRAGEDY

No One to Blame Says Coroner

A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded by the Island Acting Coroner (Mr. J.G. FARDELL) at the inquest at the Royal I.W. County Hospital on Wednesday week on **Denys Kenneth Desmond HATCHER**, 17 year old shipwright apprentice son of Mr. and Mrs. W.E. HATCHER, of The Lodge, Lushington Hill, Wootton. Denys lost his life in a sailing accident on May 10th, when Col. A. DE LANDE LONG rescued his three companions. Inspector A. BIRD attended on behalf of the Police, and Mr. G.M. RANDALL representing the clerk of the County Council (Mr. L.H. BAINES). MR. A.L. HUTCHINSON (county director of education) was present.

Dr. A.C. LEISCHING said it was impossible to state the cause of death owing to the body's decomposition through immersion. There was no fracture. An inner coat pocket contained a wallet and Post Office Savings Bank book.

William Ernest HATCHER, a gardener of The Lodge, Lushington Hill, Wootton, identified the wallet and savings book as his son's property. His son enjoyed very good health. On May 10th after tea Denys started to get ready to go out, saying he was going sailing with the Wootton Youth Club at Wootton Creek. He left the house about 7 p.m. Witness warned him to be careful. At about 11 p.m. that evening he was told his son was missing as a result of a sailing accident.

Could Not Swim

Denys was the owner of a sailing boat, but had not had a great deal of experience. He could not swim.

Jean Margaret WHITE, single, a shop assistant of 23 High-street, Wootton, a member of the Wootton Youth Club said she arranged to go sailing in the creek on May 10th. She left Fishbourne in the sailing boat at about 7.30 p.m. that evening with Margaret COOPER, Denys HATCHER and Joyce COLLINS. The boat was an open dinghy. She and Denys HATCHER rowed the boat out to the buoy in Fishbourne Pool. Denys put the two sails up. They left the buoy and started to sail up

the creek, with Denys steering and managing the boat. At the corner of Lisle Court, there was a sudden gust of wind, and the boat capsized. Witness was thrown into the water, and on coming to the surface was some distance from the boat. She could not see Denys HATCHER. The next thing she remembered was being picked up by a man in a boat. Replying to Mr. HATCHER, witness said she thought Denys and Margaret were sitting on one side of the boat. She was sitting on the opposite side, but could not remember where Joyce was sitting.

Peter Edwin MOREY, a plater of 4, Eleanor's Grove, Quarr, said the Wootton Youth movement had the use of three 10ft. sailing dinghys fitted with a gaff mainsail and a jib and equipped with a centre-board suitable craft for use in the Creek

Not Overloaded

He was present at Fishbourne Pool before the three dinghy's began to sail, at about 7.30 p.m. He saw Denys there. He told witness he had sailed before, and that he felt quite confident in sailing the boat up Wootton Creek. The wind was in the northeast, a fair sailing breeze, and the dinghys were going up to Wootton would have the wind behind them. He did not see Denys sailing the boat, but saw him endeavouring to raise his sails in the Pool. He had seen Denys sailing in the past, and although he was not in the position to say whether he was competent or not, he appeared to know what he was doing. Witness saw the dinghy after it had capsized and had been pulled into the shore. He did not notice whether the sheet had been made fast. The centre-board was down. Witness told the Coroner he had six years experience in sailing small boats, three of them in Wootton Creek, said one could never be quite certain what the wind was going to do in the Creek. The variations being caused by the high ground on either side. Answering Mr. HATCHER, witness said in his opinion it was not overloading a 10ft sailing dinghy to have four people in it. It tended to make her stiffer than she would otherwise have been, providing the human ballast moved when necessary.

Assumed They Could Swim

In reply to Mr. RANDALL, witness said they assumed as a youth movement that as they lived so near the sea all their members could swim. Denys himself rigged the boat which capsized.

P.C. ADAMS, said that on May 10th in consequence of what he was told he visited Lisle Court. It was then high tide. A search was made for the deceased until darkness fell. The following day a search was held at low tide. On May 13th the Creek was dragged for from three to four hours without success. At about 9.20. p.m. on May 21st he arrived at the Ranalah Works, Fishbourne, recovered the body from the water, and conveyed it to the mortuary at Ryde.

The Coroner said that the deceased belonged to a youth movement which quite properly went in for sailing, a good, clean sport. He was satisfied that the type of boat used was a proper type so long as they sailed inside the Creek, despite the fact that the wind there was inclined to be puffy.

"Foolish"

He thought that perhaps they were foolish to put four people in such a tiny boat, because it did not give the helmsmen an ample opportunity to do what he ought to be able to do. It was clear, continued the Coroner, that the young girl who gave evidence had no experience of boats at all and he had not called the other two girls for the same reason; they knew nothing of what happened. That night there was a reasonable sailing wind, but they must expect puffs in sailing up a narrow piece of water with high ground on either side. When sailing a dinghy it was not unusual to capsize, but one ought not to lose one's life, if proper precautions were used.

Unfortunately it had not been possible to find anyone who saw the occurrence. He thought that as the boat got to the corner at Lisle Court the helmsman, probably taken by surprise, lost control, or, being hit by an extra strong puff and not being really experienced, failed to loosen his

sheet. He thought that probably there was a jibe, and possibly the deceased went under the mainsail, because Miss WHITE failed to see him when she came up. It was possible that the boy lost consciousness in the water, which was probably cold.

In recording his verdict of death by misadventure through drowning when the dinghy the deceased was sailing capsized, the Coroner said he blamed no one for what happened. On behalf of himself, the Police and other officials, he expressed deep sympathy with the father.

The item below happened partially as a result of the drowning incident above, we felt we should include the relevant part of the report.

Isle of Wight Times Thursday 23rd May 1946 - A WOOTTON SHOOTING TRAGEDY

.....Dr. KENNEDY added that he had attended Mrs. de LANDE LONG from time to time for 14 years. She was of a highly nervous disposition. About ten days ago he was in the house on the occasion of a drowning fatality when Mrs. de LANDE LONG fainted and he attended her. He thought the drowning incident seriously affected her.

The Coroner recorded a verdict that death was due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound in the heart at a time when the balance of her mind was disturbed.

Researched & typed by
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