

A summary of the deaths by drowning in Surrey, from November 2009 to October 2013

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INTRODUCTION

This is an evolving document containing details of the deaths by drowning that occurred within the Surrey area or involved residents from Surrey, during the four years from November 2009 to October 2013 – presented in reverse order.

Information has largely been obtained from local news reports. Links are provided where possible.

SUMMARY

Over the four year period, there were 21 drownings of which 18 took place within Surrey. Three drownings were of residents in Surrey but who drowned in Malta (1) and Spain (2).

Two were victims of crime – killed by their mothers, who left them unattended in their bath. Both mothers were prosecuted and found guilty of neglect. The infants' genders cannot be reported. All the rest of the victims were male.

Other than the infants, all the victims were over 16, and 14 were known to be over 30 years of age. There were 4 further victims whose ages were not determined or subsequently reported.

Thirteen victims died in rivers, three in lakes, and three in the sea abroad. Known contributing factors included alcohol in 6 instances and Facebook in 1.

There was no predominant or substantial context to the drownings. Two victims died when they attempted to walk on ice; one was attempting a rescue; three were swimmers who got into difficulty; three were on powered boats that capsized; two are believed to have committed suicide; one was an experienced and very safety conscious canoeist.

Three victims were attempting to rescue dogs at the time – all the dogs survived, 'rescuing' themselves without assistance.

Drownings happened throughout the year, though 12 did occur between June and October, which might be described as the "summer" months.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH – 25 October 2013

Commented [GW1]: (KT22 8JE, 51.289305, -0.329126)

A 60+yr old male, believed to have consumed 10 pints of beer on the evening of October 23rd, was found around noon the next day in the River Mole, near Thorncroft Drive, in Leatherhead. The paths nearby were slippery and little was known of the victim.

<http://www.dorkingandleatherheadadvertiser.co.uk/UPDATE-Dorking-man-s-body-River-Mole-Leatherhead/story-19997600-detail/story.html>



ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 1 August 2013

Unnamed male victim, 17 yrs old and apparently drunk, attempted to swim across the River Thames while being watched by a female relative. He got into difficulties and two youths attempted to rescue him but without success. River Thames, West Molesey.

http://www.surreycomet.co.uk/news/10589710.Heroic_teens_tried_to_save_man_who_drowned_in_Thames/

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/drunk-swimmer-drowns-crossing-thames-despite-efforts-of-15yearold-boys-who-jumped-in-to-find-him-8743126.html>

<http://metro.co.uk/2013/08/02/hurst-park-man-drowns-crossing-river-thames-in-molesey-3908905/>

ACCIDENTAL DEATH – August 2013

Marcus Hughes-Hallett, 20, of Leatherhead, was swimming in the Santa Marija Bay, off the Maltese island of Comino, on a family holiday last August, when he became trapped underwater while attempting to swim through an underwater channel between two coves.

A confidant and competent swimmer he had been advised not to attempt to do so, but had succeeded once already before becoming trapped. The family were on holiday and renting a boat with a local guide at the time.

http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/local/10835671.High_flying_student_accidentally_drowned_in_Maltese_cave/

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 14 April 2013

A 57 yr old, male canoeist capsized in strong currents in the River Mole at Leatherhead at 4:40pm on Sunday. He was thrown from the canoe and was rescued by two men who linked arms to reach for him. He was properly equipped, wearing a life jacket, and was reported to take safety very seriously.

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/nurses-horror-river-rescue-tragedy-4721459>

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 5 February 2013

A 53yr old man, Tim Waddingham, drowned trying to rescue his dog from a freezing pond at Wildwood Golf & Country Club, Cranleigh, Surrey.

His dog was found by the lake, sitting on some of the owner's clothes, at 9am by his wife when she went to find her overdue husband. Police were subsequently called to the golf course on Sunday after reports of concern for the man. Officers attended the scene along with the fire service, including the water rescue branch and the police diving team. The air ambulance was briefly at the scene but left soon afterwards. The man's body was found and recovered just after 4pm.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2098234/Classic-car-restorer-dies-jumping-freezing-golf-club-lake-rescue-pet-dog.html>



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Commented [GW2]: 51.110689, -0.507016

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 30 November 2012

Police were called to a marina in Chertsey, where a man was reported to be in the water. It is suspected that he fell from his boat. An initial search was launched but called off at 03.30am until the next morning. The body was found at 2pm on the 1st December.

The coroner subsequently established that he had alcohol in his blood. The weather was cold, visibility poor, and the decking was damp and slippery -suspected that he slipped on an icy patch.

Commented [GW3]: (KT16 8LG, 51.38655, -0.4869)

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 19 July 2012

Two men and a teenager in a speedboat were on a test run when it capsized at Manor Park (near Russell Road, Shepperton) at around 6pm on Thursday, July 19. One man (39) and the teenager (18) managed to swim to safety and were rescued by members of the public before fire and rescue teams arrived.

However, the driver of the boat went missing. It was reported that he was not wearing a lifejacket and he couldn't swim.

The body of the missing man was recovered four days after the incident, when police were alerted by a member of the public and a team was sent to a part of the river close to Desborough Island and Thames Meadow just before 11.30am.

The body was recovered by a Sussex Police Specialist Search Unit and taken to St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey.

Commented [GW4]: (51.387705, -0.451308)

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/body-found-after-boat-capsized-4810062>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-18918780>



OPEN - 25 June 2012

A male body was recovered from the water by River Park Avenue, Egham, Surrey. No other information is available.

This is not the first time that a drowning has happened in this location. On 15 August 1965, PC Richard Bond, recovered the body, known as 'Cooper' at 0425 in the night.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history-from-police-archives/RB1/Pt3/pt3Usu60s.html>

VICTIM OF CRIME - 16 September 2011

Mother, Danielle Reeves (24), leaves two young children in the bath, at their home in Caterham, Surrey, while she drinks white wine or vodka, and smokes cannabis. Child, Frankie-Jo Reeves, 12 months old is drowned. She was sentenced to 3 yrs 9 months in July 2012 for manslaughter through gross negligence.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2181071/Cannabis-smoking-mother-24-jailed-leaving-baby-drowned-bath-went-drinking--trying-blame-death-older-son.html>

<http://www.thelawpages.com/court-cases/Danielle-Catherine-Reeves-8601-1.law>

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 20 February 2011

Anthony Daniels (38) was pulled from the water at Littleton Sailing Club, Shepperton. He had drowned and death not treated as suspicious. He was a keen and strong swimmer, but at around 5am on Sunday (February 20) angler Andrew Gray called the emergency services after hearing cries of 'help, help me', from 100 yards into Littleton Lake.

The inquest heard Mr Daniels, from Egham, had gone with friend of 20 years, Matthew Crehan, to another friend's home in Shepperton. The friends drank alcohol there, watched television, and ate a Chinese takeaway. Mr Crehan told the inquest how, having slept for a few hours, he woke to find Mr Daniels heading out to visit another friend who lived nearby, shortly before 1am. He told the inquest Mr Daniels did not seem drunk, but his usual self.

The court heard how the day before he had discussed breaking up with girlfriend of 18 months, Jade Pearce, and that he was perhaps a bit down, but nothing more than normal. Ms Pearce told the inquest that on the Friday before, Mr Daniels had lost 'a lot' of money at Betfred bookmaker in Staines, and had wanted to win it back. He did not discuss his further plans for the weekend.

Pathologist Dr Michael Hall said Mr Daniels' body, which was found fully clothed, showed abrasions and cuts consistent with having walked through the brambles at the edge of the lake. His urine showed traces of alcohol and diazepam, but at levels pathologist Dr Hall described as 'trivial'.

Mr Gray told the inquest that when the Surrey Fire & Rescue boat team arrived on the scene, he had to drive down to unlock a padlocked gate and let them in. It then took some time for the boat to be made ready, during which time he said he believed members of the rescue crew attempted to use boats from the boat club to reach Mr Daniels.

Commented [GW5]: (51.435184, -0.522742)

Commented [GW6]: TW17 ONF 51.397475 . -0.47447

During the inquest, Mr Daniels' mother, Celia Rogerson added: "There's a health and safety issue. Is somebody going to look into what else could have been done? If he could stay alive in the water for 20 minutes, crying for help, then surely somebody could have got to him in 10 minutes? He never swam in open water, only in pools, he would not have got into a dirty lake."

Karin Englehart, Deputy Coroner for Surrey, questioned how it had taken 22 minutes for the Surrey Fire & Rescue boat to be launched. Summarising, Dr Englehart said: "There is no evidence to suggest he intended to end his life and therefore I'm giving a formal verdict that he died as the result of an accident."

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/shepperton-lake-death-man-cried-4814484>

ACCIDENTAL DEATH – 2 January 2011

Two men who drowned when the motorised boat they were in capsized in the River Thames at Weybridge, died as a result of an accident, a coroner has ruled.

Dr Rex Walford (76), a Cambridge University professor, was found dead on January 30, weeks after he fell into the water, by a fire safety officer who was called out to the river by an Elmbridge Canoe Club member. The inquest into the 76-year-old's death, and the death of Keith Lowde, 66, a music business tutor at the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) in Guildford, was held at Woking Coroners Court on Tuesday July 19. Mr Lowde's body was pulled from the river on Monday Jan 3.

On January 2, a New Year's lunch was held at Mr Lowde's home on Pharoah's Island, near Shepperton, which can only be reached by boat. The party was attended by 12 friends, including Mr Walford who decided to leave at about 7pm with his wife. They were joined on the boat by Stewart Mison and his wife, and Mr Lowde and his wife Jenny, so they could be taken back to their cars on the dry land.

Giving evidence at the inquest, Mr Mison said: "The boat had probably only gone five or six metres and water was going over my feet. Keith attempted to turn the boat back to the island. The boat just turned over. It was just so cold."

Headley Finn, who lives on the island, also attended the party. He said: "Most people 90% of the time go across on their own boats." Describing the type of boat Mr Lowde owned, a Dory, he said it was a very stable boat that was used as a rescue boat by sailing clubs and was considered to be unsinkable. Mr Finn left the party at about 7pm but as he walked into his house he heard someone calling out for his help. On arrival at the riverside he could see with his torch an upturned boat, and managed to rescue four people.

Deputy coroner Karin Englehart said: "You are to be highly commended for what you did."

Mr Finn said the water was travelling faster downstream than usual.

Giving evidence, Detective Inspector Nicholas Hemmant, who looked into the circumstances of the incident, said the officers and paramedics dispatched to the incident borrowed a boat from someone on the land side. He explained: "It very quickly capsized. They managed to scramble to the bank."

He found no third party involvement. He discovered, after speaking to the manufacturer of the boat, that it was designed for up to four people. There was also an additional bench on the boat, and it was the manufacturer's view that it would have made it unstable. DI Hemmant said the bench may have been a contributory factor. He added: "We found no issue with the boat at all in the sense

of damage or that it had been breached in any way.” He said the fast flowing river and the load on the boat were contributory factors.

A doctor gave the cause of death as drowning.

Summing up, Dr Englehart said: “Both Keith Lowde and Rex Walford died as a result of an accident.”

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/bench-may-contributed-river-thames-4814465>

ACCIDENTAL DEATHS - 20 October 2010

Two men who drowned in the River Thames at Penton Hook Lock, nr Staines, in Surrey after they jumped in to save a pet dog have been named by police.

The body of Kadir Shillingford, 25, a keen rugby player, was recovered on Wednesday 20th.

Searches for Mr Coy were called off after dark but resumed at first light and that of Ian Coy, 19, was recovered on Thursday 21st afternoon.

They were recovered from by a dive team from Sussex Police. Surrey Police said the incident was not being treated as suspicious and no third party was involved.

The young men had been walking by the Thames with their dogs when one of the animals got into difficulty in the water. As the dog struggled against the current, its owner leapt in to try to save it.

Passers-by watched in horror as the pair, both from Staines, West London, disappeared beneath the torrent and failed to resurface. The dog, an American Staffordshire terrier called Bailey, scrambled on to the bank unhurt.

<http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-11609480>

ACCIDENTAL DEATHS - 7 September 2010

A father and son from Cobham have drowned off the southern coast of Spain. The bodies of Robert Wells, 75, and Jonathan Wells, 45, were found in the sea at Almunecar on the Costa del Sol on Tuesday afternoon. The younger man was reportedly trying to rescue his father after he had got into difficulties in the water. A Foreign Office spokesman said: “We can confirm the death of two British nationals in the region of Granada on September 7.

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/cobham-father-son-drown-sea-4818255>

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 8 August 2010

David Agnew (64) was found drowned in the River Mole within the grounds of Leatherhead Crematorium. A few hours beforehand he had been served with divorce papers. No suspicious circumstances.

<http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-11637538>

http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/local/topstories/8344816.Man_found_in_river_had_drowned_post_mortem_reveals/

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 2 June 2010

The body of a 29yr old male apparently under the influence of alcohol, was found in mud in the dock basin of the River Hull, a tributary to the Thames, off Church Street, Staines.

Commented [GW7]: (TW18 4AA, 51.43444, -0.51473).

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 5 Mar 2010

A male body was discovered in the River Wey, in the Bellfields area of Guildford. Police say the death is not being treated as suspicious.

Commented [GW8]: (KT18 5BY, 51.305481, -0.238249)

ACCIDENTAL DEATH - 7 January 2010



Philip Hughes, 44, was walking across the frozen Wharfenden Lake, at Lakeside Club, Frimley Green, in the early hours when he fell through the snow-covered ice to his death.

In a subsequent hearing at Guildford Crown Court on July 1 revealed the club has subsequently failed to display adequate safety warnings about the lake in and around the guest rooms where Mr Hughes was staying. BPL was fined £85,000 and ordered to pay £36,000 in court costs after pleading guilty to two charges of failing to discharge its duty of care to its employees.

Bob Potter Leisure (BPL) branded the prosecution as 'wholly unnecessary'. In a statement later issued by the group via the Surrey Heath Residents Network, they said the incident was a prime example of personal responsibility being placed on businesses rather than the individual.

“Everyone is aware of the cynical way health and safety laws are being manipulated”, it read. “The deceased person had been to the Lakeside several times. On this occasion, he had gone without sleep for more than 24 hours and was grossly over the legal drink-drive limit before he was recovered at 11am. We are deeply sad for the family’s loss.

“The company had to make a commercial decision in pleading guilty to breaches of health and safety regulations to avoid further expense and time but maintains this prosecution was wholly unnecessary”.

It added that BPL was committed to safeguarding the welfare of all customers, staff and contractors, and that in more than 40 years of operation this was the first time there has been criticism of the business leading to a prosecution.

The court heard health and safety inspections at the Lakeside, dating back to 2008 resulted in the club being instructed to provide adequate warning signs regarding the lake. However, the only signs put up were said to be laminated pieces of A4 paper, which were later found during a 2009 inspection to be lying on the ground.

Prosecuting, David Travers said BPL had displayed a ‘striking and persistent failure’ to meet demands and suggested, had adequate assessment been carried out, Mr Hughes’ death could have been prevented.

<http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/local-news/firm-says-lakeside-club-death-5133903>

VICTIM OF CRIME - 18 December 2009

Mother, Shannan Woods (19), of West Molesey, leaves her baby in the bath while she checks her Facebook account. She was given a suspended sentence and a 12 month supervision order. The verdict was child cruelty by neglect.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1363048/Teenage-mum-escapes-jail-baby-drowned-bath-checked-Facebook.html>