

Peter Alan Coupland

Isle of Wight County Press – 17 July 1971

FATAL LUNCHTIME SWIM

NEWPORT MAN'S MISADVENTURE

A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded by the coroner, Mr. J. V. Bullin, at an inquest on Wednesday into the death of Mr. Peter Alan Coupland (23), assistant storeman, on 68, Linden Road, Newport.

Mr. Coupland, who was employed by the Vectis Shipping Company at Newport Harbour, was drowned on July 9th while having a lunchtime swim.

Mr. Eric Richard Blow, crane driver, of 219, Mill Hill Road, Cowes, said Mr. Coupland told him that he was going for a lunchtime swim in the river. When he did not return to work at 2 p.m. Mr. Blow searched for him and found his clothes in a pile at the side of the wharf. There was no sign of him in the water. He reported the matter to the company office and the police were called.

A written statement by Mr. Herbert Crabbe, shore bosun with the company, of 91, Manor Crescent, Newport, said Mr. Coupland had asked him at 11 a.m. that morning if he had anything that could be used as a bathing costume. Mr. Crabbe gave him an old pair of khaki shorts.

P.S. N. J. Langdon said Mr. Coupland's body was recovered from the river bed near the company store at 4.45 p.m. the same day. The officer could find no witnesses who had seen Mr. Coupland swimming in the river. There was only one sign on the quay forbidding bathing. It was an old sign and the writing was faded.

Mr. Byron William Coupland, County Council roadman, said his son was single and lived at home. "He said he could swim, but I am not sure if he could."

Dr. P. D. Swinstead (pathologist) said there was a slight bruise on the left of the dead man's face, beneath the ear. "All the evidence indicated a classical example of drowning."

The coroner said he was satisfied that Mr. Coupland had gone for a lunchtime swim in the river and had drowned. "It does not look the sort of place anyone would want to take a bathe, but I feel the local authority should be asked to have more prominent notices displayed prohibiting swimming."

Transcription by Pamela Cowan for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries
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