

01-06-1983 Blackpool UK – 3 LEOS Drowned – 2 Close Call – Surf Rescue of DOG

Drowning Dog Leads To Death of Four

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1298&dat=19830107&id=WgoQAAAIBAJ&sjid=SI5DAAAIBAJ&pg=5134,582348>



AP Laserphoto

Alistair Anthony drowned trying to save his terrier, Henry. So did three police officers.

Drowning dog leads to deaths of four

BLACKPOOL, England (AP)—Animal lovers want to give a gallantry award to a man who died trying to save his drowning dog—an attempt that claimed the lives of three police officers and nearly killed two others.

The loss of life left police officer Brian Horsfall bitter as he carried the body of the tiny terrier named Henry from the frigid sea where it was recovered Thursday, one day after the drownings.

"This thing should be put in a bloody museum for all the damage and death it's caused," said Horsfall. The bodies of two police officers still are missing.

Henry's owner, Alistair Anthony, jumped into the water and drowned in a bid to save the animal after it was swept off Blackpool promenade in a gale.

Five officers, including a police-woman, plunged into the 20-foot waves to aid Anthony. The woman and two other officers died. One of the survivors' heart stopped and he remains gravely ill. The other was kept under sedation at a hospital for 24 hours.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which was founded in 1824 as the world's first humane society and has Queen Elizabeth II as its official patron, recommended Anthony for a posthumous gallantry award for trying to save his pet.

"He was obviously a very sensitive man and if anything happened to his dog it would be his first reaction to try to save it," said Margaret Bysterbosch, secretary of Blackpool branch of the RSPCA.

No suggestion so far has been made for awards for the officers, but Blackpool Mayor Tom Percival has made a public appeal for funds to aid dependents of the victims.

Horsfall found the dead dog at Fleetwood, eight miles north of here, as 100 police, aided by light aircraft and helicopters, scoured 15 miles of the Lancashire coast in northwest England for bodies of the victims.

The body of police officer Colin Morrison, a 38-year-old married man with four children, was

winched from the sea by helicopter.

The bodies of Anthony, 23-year-old officer Angela Bradley, and 24-year-old officer Gordon Connolly are still missing. Searchers said they had found Miss Bradley's police identification card and her uniform tie, plus a pair of uniform trousers and a police truncheon.

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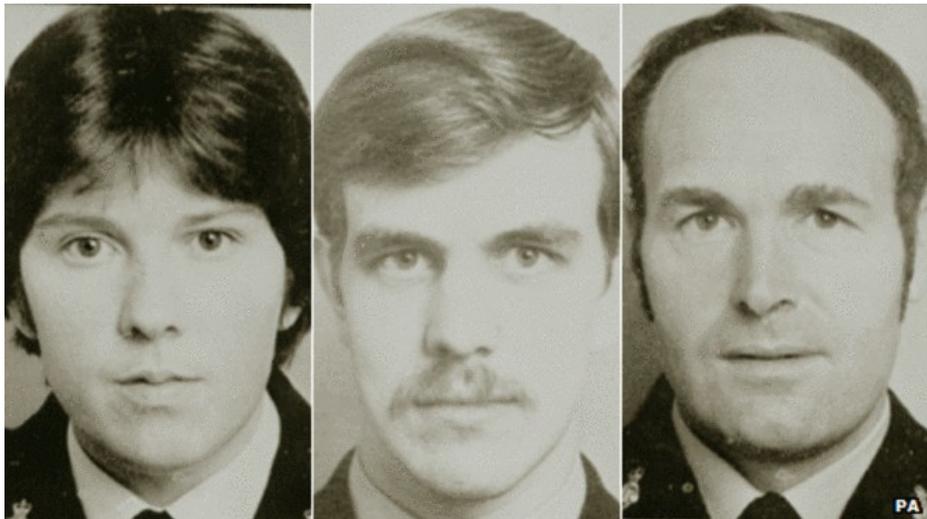
FREDERICK & SOPHIA

Blackpool Police Officers' Drowning Tragedy Recalled<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-20892279>05 January 2013 [Lancashire](#)

On a winter morning 30 years ago, one man's efforts to rescue his pet from the sea set off a chain of events which cost his own life and those of three police officers.

On the anniversary of the tragedy, the heroism of PCs Angela Bradley, 24, Gordon Connolly, 23, and Colin Morrison, 38, is being commemorated in Blackpool with plans for a new memorial to the resort's emergency services.

The new statue, which will be on the cliff tops close to where the officers died, will honour all "unsung heroes" killed while doing their jobs.



A memorial service is marking 30 years since three police officers died in the sea off Blackpool

This year's memorial service comes just under a week after Paul Morris, 41, was swept into the sea while walking his dog, two and a half miles away.

Memories of 5 January 1983 are vivid for the colleagues of the officers who lost their lives.

Control room sergeant Jim Burnell, recalled how his team were looking forward to the end of their "early turn" shift when a 999 call just before 14:00 GMT reported a man in the sea near Gynn Square.

"Immediately four patrols with four different officers took off," said Mr Burnell, 81.

"The spirit among those young officers was very, very good - you could trust them to go anywhere and do anything - in fact you sometimes had to put the reins on them when a call went out in case they got in each other's way."

Scottish holidaymaker Alistair Anthony, 25, went into the sea to rescue his Jack Russell dog only to find himself trapped in choppy waters which were being whipped up into crashing waves.

In those conditions the sea has a habit of picking somebody up and throwing them against the sea wall Jim Burnell, Former police sergeant

PCs Bradley and Connolly were among the first to try and rescue Mr Anthony with a promenade lifebelt but the sea was too strong for them and they were swept away.

As the emergency services headed to the scene, road traffic officer PC Morrison, 38, stopped his car and joined the rescue attempt but the heavy sea, reinforced by the strong westerly gale, was too much for him.

The conditions were so bad, the lifeboat from neighbouring Fleetwood took three hours to get to the area and even then it could only get within 68m (223ft) of where the officers had last been seen.

"In those conditions the sea has a habit of picking somebody up and throwing them against the sea wall and then back out to sea and that is exactly what happened to another officer - PC Pat Abram," said Mr Burnell.

Despite being injured, PC Abram went back into the sea to attempt to save PC Morrison but was thrown again at the sea wall.

Back at the control room colleagues were listening with mounting horror.

"The chief superintendent put out an order that nobody else was to go in the water," said Mr Burnell.

Meanwhile, PC Abram had been dragged from the sea after another officer threw him a lifeline.

"Quite coincidentally there was a doctor, who was a cave rescue expert, walking by and Pat Abram will tell you today the doctor saved his life. It was nothing short of a miracle," said Mr Burnell.



Sgt Jim Burnell said the officers who died were due to finish their shift when they answered a 999 call

A Lancashire Police spokesperson said huge lessons had been learned since the incident and officers are advised not to jump into dangerous seas and to wait for more specialised help to arrive.

The idea for a new 999 memorial came from Dana Gledhill, a senior prosecutor with the Crown Prosecution Service, who said a memorial garden to the officers was taken for granted those who do so as a matter of routine," she said.

Mr Burnell said the officers' rescue efforts demonstrated their "remarkable bravlooking "rather neglected".

'Absolutely frightening'

"I've never done anything brave in my life, I'm not expected to put myself at risk, I've never saved any lives and yet we seem to cry".

He said: "It was the kind of incident where you would expect them to do what they did - they were like a family.

"In those conditions those officers must have been absolutely remarkable, there is no other word for it. It must have been frightening, absolutely frightening."

Others to be honoured include Supt Gerry Richardson who was shot dead during an armed robbery in Blackpool in 1971 and firefighter Raymond Laycock who died fighting a fire at the Boots store in Blackpool in 1936.



Not even the lifeboat could reach those in the water

"It is a very simple design, there are four figures linking hands, showing protection service and that they are there to help and when you reach the top you see they are people who could be anybody," said designer Matthew Titherington.

Blackpool Pcs Remembered 30 Years After Sea Deaths

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-20916213>

5 January 2013 [Lancashire](#)

A memorial service has been held to mark 30 years since three police officers died in an attempted sea rescue at Blackpool.

PCs Colin Morrison, Gordon Connolly and Angela Bradley [drowned trying to save a holidaymaker](#) who entered the sea to rescue his pet dog on 5 January 1983.

Their families were joined by members of Lancashire Police past and present and members of the public.

Ch Supt Richard Debicki said the fallen officers made "the ultimate sacrifice". He said: "I know for those on duty, for all the emergency services at the time, the harrowing events of that day are all still too clear.

"One can only imagine how difficult it must have been for them to hear that trusted friends and colleagues had been lost during this dreadful incident.

"But it is the pain and loss for the families, who lost their loved ones, that is the greatest and deepest."

The service was held at Gynn Square, close to where the officers went into the sea.



The victims' families were joined by members of Lancashire Police past and present and members of

They were overcome by the strong tide, waves and freezing cold water as they tried to rescue 25-year-old Alistair Anthony, from Glasgow, who also died as he tried to save his Jack Russell.

A fourth officer, PC Pat Abram, was rescued by colleagues who were able to throw a rope around his neck, before he was given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the prom.

During the service a two-minute silence was observed and a bell, donated by Lancashire Fire Service in memory of the fallen officers, rang out for each of them. Local preacher Tom Birch read A Lament To The Absent by Edwin Muir.

Chief Constable Steve Finnigan and members of the fallen officers' families then laid flowers under a plaque at Gynn Square which serves as a permanent memorial to their bravery.



Gordon Connolly, Colin Morrison and Angela Bradley died on 5 January 1983

After the service, local doctor John Frankland, who attended the rescue and helped revive PC Abram, said: "The weather was absolutely savage that night.

"The wind was very strong, the waves were very high, it was cold, threatening. Not the day to be in the sea at all.

"All these people here today, paying their respects to those who died so long ago, shows how deeply that sadness was felt."

A memorial to all emergency service staff who have died on duty will be unveiled later this year.

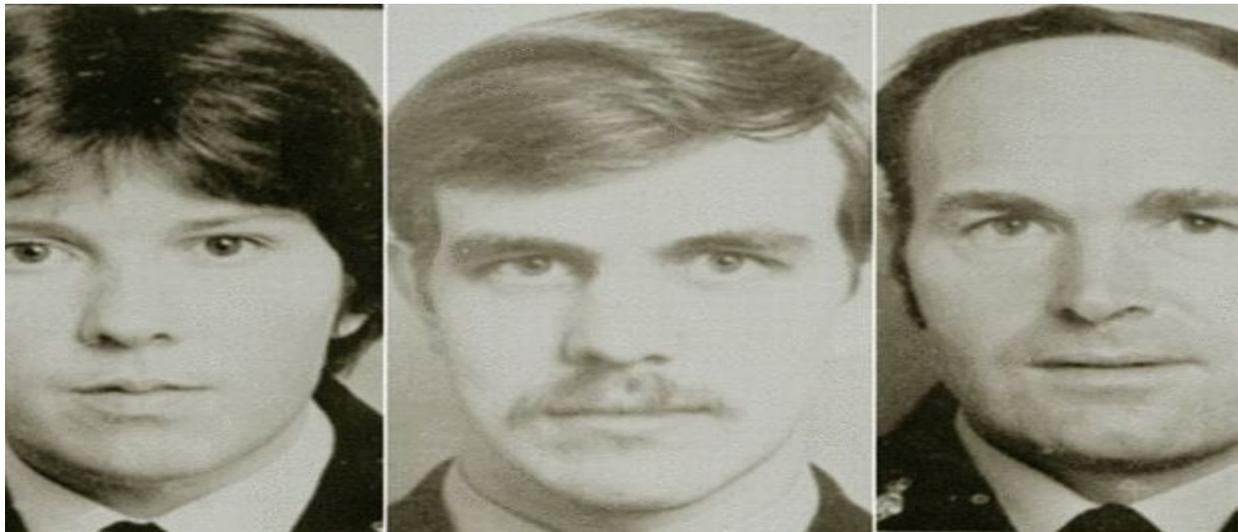
On New Year's Day Paul Morris, 41, died when he was swept into the sea while walking his dog on the town's South Shore.

Blackpool Remembers: The Three Officers Who Died Saving A Man And His Dog

<https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/blackpool-remembers-three-officers-who-17583350>

January 5, 2021 By Dominic Moffitt

ON JANUARY 5, 1983, THREE BLACKPOOL OFFICERS LOST THEIR LIVES TRYING TO RESCUE A MAN AND HIS DOG FROM THE SEA.



The three officers that drowned in Blackpool trying to save a man and his pet terrier.

It has been 38 years since three Blackpool police officers lost their lives saving a man and his dog from drowning.

On this day, in 1983 a Scottish holidaymaker was taking a stroll along the Blackpool coast near Gynn Square.

25-year-old Alistair Anthony was taking his terrier Henry along the Blackpool promenade.

Eager to retrieve his ball, the dog had throw himself into the sea and was carried off by the 20-foot waves crashing against the coast.

The next twelve hours would see Alistair and three officers lose their lives with a fourth hospitalised as they tried to retrieve the dog.

To this day it remains the greatest loss of police life to Lancashire officers.
Henry's gambit

It was January 5 when the five-year-old terrier Henry decided that the raging seas off the Blackpool coast would be a perfect place to take a quick dip.

His owner, Alistair Anthony of Glasgow, was holidaying in **Blackpool** and had thrown Henry's ball into the sea, causing the dog to follow his toy and take a dive over the north pier.

Alistair watched in horror as the dog was swept off.

It was a stormy and unstable night in the Irish sea. Two fishermen almost drowned having been thrown overboard a 66 foot yacht and had to be rescued.

The next day 10cm of snow would fall in central Scotland and it was an intense period of cold and dry weather, one of the coldest Januarys on record.



BLACKPOOL drowning victim Mr Alistair Anthony with Henry, the Jack Russell terrier he tried to rescue.

On January 6, in the seaside resort, it was 11C, the wind was battering the coastline and the rain was falling heavily.

It was not a good time for Alistair to take to the waters but, with his dog in such peril, he did just that.

His 52-year-old dad Robert Anthony watched in horror as his son stripped off and then waded into the waters.

Unto the breach

Control Room Sergeant Jim Burnell was eagerly awaiting the end of an early shift at around 2pm on January 6 when he and his team received a 999 call.

Two boys were on the line and explaining to the police that a man had been swept out to sea, having waded in to rescue his dog.

Robert Anthony had originally thrown a life preserver to his son from the promenade but the rope was too short and he had called for two boys to fetch the police.

Jim Burnell dispatched four patrols with four different officers to the scene immediately.

PC's Angela Bradley, 24, and 23-year-old Gordon Connolly were the first to arrive at the scene and tried to use the life buoys on the quay, just as Robert Anthony had done but to no avail.

The trio had little choice.

Bradley, Connolly and Morrison

Police officer Angela Bradley was just 23 in 1983, her colleague Gordon Connolly was just a year older.

Mr Anthony later told the press that he had warned the policeman against the dangers of the raging Blackpool sea, he had seen it sweep his son off, he knew the perils awaiting anyone who braved the waters, but the officers were not to be restrained.

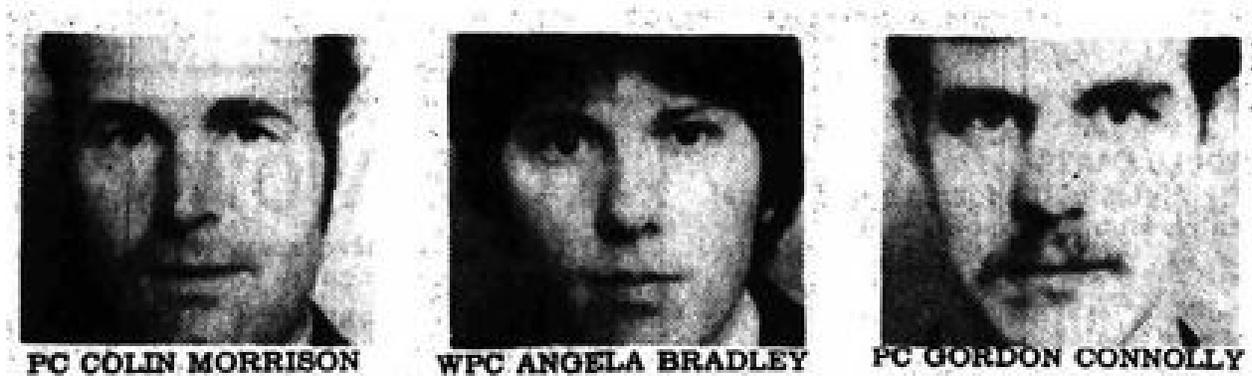
As Mr Anthony said: "They were so brave, they didn't hesitate."

Soon after the two officers sunk into the water it was clear that they had got into great difficulty.

There were 20 foot waves crashing over the pier, so ferocious and rocky that they were pulling the officers under and smashing them against the sea wall. The cold

waters would have caused the officers to tire rapidly as well and as things got worse another officer took to the waters.

Road traffic officer PC Colin Morrison stopped his car and decided to join the rescue attempts, joining his colleagues in the water. The 38-year-old was married with four children.



Three officers who lost their lives trying to save Alistair Anthony.

Robert Anthony described the scene: "The current was so strong they couldn't get back. It was like a bad dream.

"All I could see was the three of them bobbing around in the water and there was nothing I could do."

At this point the conditions were only getting worse. A strong westerly gale was whipping up the sea into a frenzy and conditions were so bad that the lifeboat from neighbouring Fleetwood took three hours to get to the area.

When the vessel reached the area it could only get within 68m of where the officers had last been seen. It was next to useless and would be heavily criticised in the press with the RNLi chairman highlighting the boat's limitations as in 1979 the old style boats had been replaced with a self righting, inflatable, boat. He would slam the new style boats saying they were providing only "half a service."

What happened next only deepened the three year lifeboat argument.

"Like a trout on the end of a line."

Two more officers bravely threw themselves into the water hoping to locate and rescue their fellow officers as well as Alistair Anthony, all of which had now slipped out of sight.

Martin Hewitson and Patrick Abram both took the plunge, meaning five officers were now in severe mortal peril.

The waves were pulling both men under and were so aggressive that the duo couldn't get anyway near the three other officers.

Abram was eventually pulled to safety but the three other officers, plus Alistair Anthony and the dog, were long gone. It was struggle to get Abram out of the water, the 26-year-old was unconscious and had a life saver wrapped about his neck.

There were fears that if he was pulled from the waves the ropes would strangle him but the rescuers had little choice but to go ahead.

Abram's heart had stopped and he required CPR and the kiss of life to be resuscitated.

He was described by his colleagues as looking like: "a trout on the end of a line," when he was rescued.

Courage of five in sea horror



PATRICK ABRAM

Patrick Abram needed resuscitating after he was pulled from the water.

There happened to be a doctor, who was also cave rescue expert, walking by the scene and was able to perform life saving acts on the man, reviving him.

Abram was later taken to Blackpool Victoria Hospital's intensive care unit and was listed as "critically ill."

Hewitson, was the officer out of the five who entered the seas, to stagger out of the water unaided.

He was also put in hospital and had to be sedated.

It was around this time that the chief superintendent forbade any other officers from entering the water.

The order drew the curtains on a tragic, farcical event that could have so easily been prevented or remedied. A complete loss of life and a waste of humanity.

Aftermath

PC Morrison's body washed up on the sands of Blackpool beach that Wednesday night.

Several days later the body of Henry the Terrier washed up in Fleetwood, along with Angela Bradley's warrant card and tie. Some police trousers and a truncheon also washed up on the beach.

On Friday, January 14, the body of Alistair Anthony, the dog owner who had started the whole affair was found on the sandbank of the River Wyre by a police helicopter.

On Thursday, January 27, when PC Connolly's body washed up on Fleetwood docks. PC Angela Bradley and her colleague PC Morrison were never found.

PC Abram was too ill to attend the inquest made into the disaster. His colleague PC Hewitson later spoke in tones of terror about the ordeal.

"It is a miracle anyone got out of there," he told the Liverpool Echo in 1983.

"I don't know how I kept my feet. We were all being crushed by the tide, and I was lucky to get out.

"We were being battered against the seawall and it was just by the grace of god that I managed to get out of the water.

Body recovered

THE body of Constable Gordon Connolly (24), one of four people who died in the Blackpool drowning tragedy three weeks ago, was recovered from Fleetwood docks last night.

"We were being dragged along, it was like being dragged along by a car."

Lancashire Deputy Chief Constable Brian Johnson was one of the first people to pay tribute to the fallen officers.

He told the press: "We are all stunned and shattered."

"These youngsters showed exemplary bravery by being prepared to enter the sea in such appalling conditions."

The disaster struck home to Blackpool and the seaside resort rallied round the dead whilst demanding answers.

More than £70,000 was raised for the families of the victims after the Blackpool mayor (who put in £500 himself) launched an appeal fund soon after the tragedy. The Liverpool Echo reported that a 93-year-old widow from the town had donated her entire Christmas pension to the fund.

Liverpool and Manchester United played separate charity games to raise money for the appeal with Bobby Charlton starring for United against Wigan.



Illustration 1: The statue erected in memory of the fallen from January 1983.