



Canal &
River Trust

Keeping people, nature & history connected

20 JUN 2016

14th June 2016

Mr David Urpeth
HM Assistant Coroner
The Medico-Legal Centre
Watery Street
Sheffield
S3 7ET

Dear Mr Urpeth

Re: Adam Ben Miles (deceased)

Thank you for your letter and report of the 5th April 2016 regarding the inquest into the death of Mr Adam Ben Miles. On behalf of the Canal & River Trust ('the Trust') I would like to offer our sincere condolences to the family of Mr Miles.

I understand that in your report, under paragraph 7, schedule 5 of the Coroners & Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 & 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2103 addressed to Canal & River Trust, Station House, Milton Keynes, you have specifically asked for a review of the following matters of concern:

- That smokers were allowed to smoke outside the hotel near the canal;
- There wasn't any rails or other effective barriers to segregate drinkers from the danger of the canal;
- That the canal didn't have any means of escape for anyone who fell in.

On the 3rd May 2016 one of the Trust's safety advisors visited Victoria Quays and its immediate surroundings. Together, he and I have reviewed the matters of concern outlined above and conducted a risk assessment. During the risk assessment we applied the Trust's guidance on the appropriateness of segregation of the public from the canal basin, rescue equipment (such as a life rings and escape ladders), and the ability of a person to 'self-rescue'. We came to the following conclusions:

Canal & River Trust First Floor North Station House 500 Elder Gate Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

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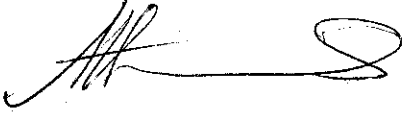
Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB


- The proximity of smokers and drinkers from the hotel to the canal. We believe that moving the smoking area from the rear of the hotel to the front will significantly reduce the risk of hotel customers unintentionally being in close proximity of the canal.
- Effectiveness of barriers. The level of segregation at Victoria Quays necessarily varies because this is dependant on the activity in the different sections of the canal basin and the land immediately adjacent to the canal. We have reviewed this situation and believe it is appropriate for the intended use of the basin and its surroundings, which remains very much an operational waterway. The chains and barriers have difference purposes: the chains are for demarcation only (and primarily for vehicles at that), and they are not intended to exclude people from accessing the waterway because e.g. boaters are allowed to moor in this area; the barriers are intended to exclude people from the edge of the waterway and appear to do so adequately. We also believe lighting in the canal basin is sufficient and we note it is augmented by the lighting on adjacent land.
- Means of escape for anyone who fell in. At the time of the incident, there were (and still are) two escape ladders provided in the basin, leading from the water. The ladders were positioned so that they will not be obstructed by the boats mooring in the basin. Importantly, the 'freeboard' edges of the basin are also maintained at a height of approximately 400mm from the level of the water itself to allow 'self-rescue' in circumstances where a person who falls into the water is capable of staying afloat. Life rings are also located at intervals around the basin for persons who need assistance to float, in accordance with national guidance. However, we have reviewed the number and positioning of the existing life rings and propose to place two additional life rings on the side of the basin closest to the hotel, purely as an additional precautionary measure.
- We have reviewed the safety signage and whilst we believe it was adequate according to our usual standards and national guidance, we propose placing additional "Danger deep water" signs at locations around the basin because, unlike the canal, which is typically 4-5 feet deep at the edge, the basin is some 10 to 12 feet deep.

Overall we believe these additional measures will further reduce the risk of further tragedies. We will continue to review our risk assessments and national guidance which should identify if further measures are required, in which case appropriate action will be taken.

If you require any further information please contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a small circle.


Head of Health and Safety
Canal & River Trust