

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** GSAF 1923.01.27.a

**DATE:** Saturday January 27, 1923

**LOCATION:** Peppermint Grove, Swan River, Claremont, Western Australia

**NAME:** Charles Robinson (or Robertson)

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 13-year-old male from Scots College.



**BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, January 25, 1923

**ENVIRONMENT:** The incident took place five miles from the river mouth.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 20 feet

**DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:** 25 to 30 feet

**TIME:** Night (19h30?)

**NARRATIVE:** Charles Robinson was attending a picnic party with several others. He had been in the water for 10 minutes and was swimming alone when he suddenly called out, "something has bitten me" and swam ashore. He was assisted from the water, bleeding profusely.



**INJURY:** Fatal. He had extensive wounds on the back of one thigh. The lower third of the posterior of the thigh, including part of the femur, had been removed. There was another wound higher up on the leg and four-teeth marks on the anterior thigh.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** A doctor was on the scene very quickly and the boy was rushed to the hospital where he died two hours later from blood loss and shock.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Not identified

**SOURCES:** The Argus, Monday January 29, 1923, page 8  
Geraldton Guardian, Tuesday January 30, 1923, page 2  
The West Australian, Wednesday February 7, 1923, page 7  
Victor M. Coppleson.W1 (1933), pages 449-457  
Victor M. Coppleson (1958), pages 111 & 241

## SHARK IN RIVER.

### Boy Succumbs to Attack.

PERTH, Sunday. — Charles Robinson, aged 13 years, a student at the Scotch College, Claremont, was bathing in the Swan River near the College boatshed, about five miles from the mouth of the river, in about 25 feet of water. There was a picnic party, including the boy's mother, on the shore. Robinson was bathing alone in the river, about 20 feet from the bank. He had been in the water for about 10 minutes when he cried out, "Something has bitten me," and swam ashore. Robinson was helped from the water, bleeding profusely from a terrible wound at the back of the thigh. The lad was hurried to a hospital, where he died about two hours later of hemorrhage and shock.

## SHARK IN RIVER

### Boy Succumbs to Attack

PERTH, Sunday — Charles Robinson, aged 13 years, a student at the Scotch College, Claremont, was bathing in the Swan River near the College boatshed, about five miles from the mouth of the river, in about 25 feet of water. There was a picnic party, including the boy's mother, on the shore. Robinson was bathing alone in the river about 20 feet from the bank. He had been in the water for about 10 minutes when he cried out, "Something has bitten me," and swam ashore. Robinson was helped from the water, bleeding profusely from a terrible wound at the back of the thigh. The lad was hurried to a hospital, where he died about two hours later of hemorrhage and shock.

*The Argus, Monday January 29, 1923, page 8*

The terrible tragedy at Peppermint Grove, when a Scotch College boy was so badly bitten (presumably by a shark) whilst swimming in the Swan river on Saturday night, that he died two and a half hours later should be taken as a warning by those who go in bathing at Geraldton at night time. The committee of the Geraldton Swimming Club, at its last meeting, had a request from some of its members to provide facilities for night-bathing and refused it on the grounds that the practice was a dangerous one. The lights on the pier are an attraction for fish of all kinds, and where the small fish are the sharks go.

The coroner's verdict in connection with the recent shark tragedy in the Swan River was that the deceased (Charles Robinson) died from shock and hemorrhage through being bitten by a shark.

*Sunday Times (Perth), Sunday February 11, 1923*

*Geraldton Guardian  
Tuesday January 30, 1923, page 2*

## THE SHARK TRAGEDY.

### Inquest on the Victim.

An inquest on the remains of Charles Torqual Robinson (14), who was fatally injured while bathing in Freshwater Bay on January 27, was held before Mr. L. Cullen, J.P., Acting Coroner, yesterday afternoon.

Dr. W. E. Blackall, of Cottesloe, said that on January 27, at about 7.45 p.m., he was summoned to the Scotch College boatshed to attend the deceased, who was thought to have been bitten by a shark. He found the lad lying in his bathers in the shed. The boy was absolutely pulseless and was suffering from intense shock, while it was evident that he had received a severe wound in the leg. A tourniquet bandage was applied, and he was removed to the nearest hospital, where an examination was made. It was found that the lower third of the back of the thigh, including part of the bone, had been completely bitten out. There was another wound higher up on the leg and four-teeth marks on the front of the thigh. Obviously a second bite had been made. The boy remained conscious, but pulseless and almost bloodless, and he died of shock and hemorrhage about two hours after admission to the hospital. Witness had seen shark bites before, and the wounds received by the deceased were practically identical with those made by the shark bites. John Norman Lunt (16), a schoolboy, residing at Claremont, said that on the afternoon of January 27 he accompanied the deceased to the Scotch College boat shed. They were bathing until after 6 o'clock, and then had tea on the bank of the river with other members of their families. Deceased entered the water again between 7 and half-past 7. Witness was then engaged in crabbing at the boatshed landing. About ten minutes later deceased called out "Something has bitten me," and struck out for the landing. Witness lifted him out of the water; saw the wounds on his leg, and carried him into the shed, where he left him with his mother while he went for a doctor. Deceased was less than 20 feet from the landing, in about 30 feet of water, when he called out. No subsequent movement in the water nor any sign of a shark was seen. Constable Lynn said he had been stationed in the Cottesloe district for 17 years, and prior to the present occasion he had never heard any complaints of sharks being in the river. The Acting Coroner expressed sympathy with the relatives of the unfortunate lad, and recorded a verdict that the deceased died through shock and hemorrhage in consequence of having been bitten by a shark while bathing in Freshwater Bay.

## THE SHARK TRAGEDY.

### Inquest on the Victim.

An inquest on the remains of Charles Torqual Robinson (14), who was fatally injured while bathing in Freshwater Bay on January 27, was held before Mr. L. Cullen, J.P., Acting Coroner, yesterday afternoon.

Dr. W. E. Blackall, of Cottesloe, said that on January 27, at about 7.45 p.m., he was summoned to the Scotch College boatshed to attend the deceased, who was thought to have been bitten by a shark. He found the lad lying in his bathers in the shed. The boy was absolutely pulseless, and was suffering from intense shock, while it was evident that he had received a severe wound in the leg. A tourniquet bandage was applied, and he was removed to the nearest hospital, where an examination was made. It was found that the lower third of the back of the thigh, including part of the bone, had been completely bitten out. There was another wound higher up on the leg and four-teeth marks on the front of the thigh. Obviously a second bite had been made. The boy remained conscious, but pulseless and almost bloodless, and he died of shock and hemorrhage about two hours after admission to the hospital. Witness had seen shark bites before, and the wounds received by the deceased were practically identical with those made by the shark bites.

John Norman Lunt (16), a schoolboy, residing at Claremont, said that on the afternoon of January 27 he accompanied the deceased to the Scotch College boatshed. They were bathing until after 6 o'clock, and then had tea on the bank of the river with other members of their families. Deceased entered the water again between 7 and half-past 7. Witness was then engaged in crabbing at the boatshed landing. About ten minutes later deceased called out "Something has bitten me," and struck out for the landing. Witness lifted him out of the water; saw the wounds on his leg, and carried him into the shed, where he left him with his mother while he went for a doctor. Deceased was less than 20 feet from the landing, in about 30 feet of water, when he called out. No subsequent movement in the water nor any sign of a shark was seen.

Constable Lynn said he had been stationed in the Cottesloe district for 17 years, and prior to the present occasion he had never heard any complaints of sharks being in the river.

The Acting Coroner expressed sympathy with the relatives of the unfortunate lad, and recorded a verdict that the deceased died through shock and hemorrhage in consequence of having been bitten by a shark while bathing in Freshwater Bay.

*The West Australian, Wednesday February 7, 1923, page 7*