



State Library of New South Wales

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: [GSAF 1934.04.01.a](#)

DATE: Sunday April 1, 1934

LOCATION: North Steyne or Manly, New South Wales, Australia.

33°47'S, 151°E

NAME: Leon Ritson Hermes

DESCRIPTION: He was a 15-year-old male.



1934: Manly baths

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was cloudy to overcast day with intermittent showers and the air temperature was 69°F.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, March 31, 1934

WATER CONDITION: The sea was murky and the water temperature 71°F.

ENVIRONMENT: The surf was discoloured with rainwater draining from Manley Lagoon, and a number of channels ran from surf to shore.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 80 yards

DEPTH: Waist deep

TIME: 12h30

NARRATIVE: Leon Hermes was in the front line of breakers when he was attacked. The shark made three strikes. Rescuers used as lifeline as a tourniquet and towels were packed

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into the wounds.

INJURY: Fatal. Lacerated right leg and thigh. He died a few minutes after admission to Manly District Hospital

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified. A 14-foot [4.25 m] shark was seen during the attack and close to shore for 15 minutes afterwards. Efforts to catch the shark were unsuccessful.

SOURCES: The Courier-Mail, Monday April 2, 1934, page 9
Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 233.



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BY SHARK
SURF CHAMPION
BITTEN 3 TIMES
Shocking Tragedy
Near Manly
MATE'S BRAVERY

SYDNEY, April 1.

While swimming in the surf at North Steyne to-day Leon Ritson Hermes (16), the second son of Mr. A. E. Hermes, of 56 Lauderdale Avenue, Manly, was attacked by a shark, and was so severely injured that he died shortly afterwards.

The shark apparently attacked him three times, for the flesh was torn from the ankle, the knee, and the thigh. There have been four shark attacks within the metropolitan area this year, two of them proving fatal. The victim of to-day's tragedy was the junior champion of the North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club. He was a scholar with the promise of a brilliant future, and was a native of Adelaide.

The attack occurred with great suddenness. It was Hermes' custom to go for a swim after attending service at the Manly Church of England, and to-day about midday, after service, he entered the surf with a friend named George Herd, who lives at Middle Head Road, Mosman.

separated by about five yards, when Hermes uttered a cry, and then called out "Shark!" The water almost immediately became tinged with red, and Hermes cried out for help. Herd went at once to his assistance, and saw that his friend had been terribly mutilated.

Mr. J. A. Horniman, a bank manager from Mandurama, who was spending a holiday at Manly, was on a nearer line of breakers, and swam out to render what help he could.

Hearing Herd's calls for assistance members of the North Steyne Club, Frank Woodgate, Jack Mortimer, and Robert Rix rushed in to help in the rescue. Hermes was carried ashore in a state of collapse. He was taken to the casualty room and first aid was rendered. The Manly ambulance had been summoned in the meantime, and made a record dash to the club house. Hermes was taken to the Manly District Hospital, but died before arrival. He lost a great deal of blood.

14FT SHARK SEEN.

By this time the news of the attack had spread, and within a short time a large number of members of the club visited the hospital ready to submit themselves in case a blood transfusion was required. The news of Hermes's death was a shock to everyone.

Herd, a 17-year-old member of the club, of fine physical build, was very modest about his part in rescuing Hermes from further probable attacks.

Constable Wise, of Broken Hill, who is on a visit to Manly, said he saw the shark come in close to the shore about a quarter of an hour after Hermes had been taken out of the water. It was about 14ft. long and was cruising about. He ran into the water with an oar, but as he got near it a boy threw a stone at it and the shark turned and swam rapidly down a channel parallel with the beach. He thought it was the grey nurse variety.

Hermes was also a member of the Balmoral Swimming Club, and had won many prizes for aquatic sport.