



**ACTIVITY:** Swimming, splashing and diving into the water

**CASES:** [GSAF 1934.12.23.a & b](#)

**DATE:** Sunday December 23, 1934

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in Horsfield Bay, about a mile from Woy Woy, New South Wales, Australia.  $33^{\circ}29'S$ ,  $153^{\circ}E$

**NAMES:** Roy Inman and Joyce Inman

**DESCRIPTION:** Roy was a 14-year-old male, and his sister Joyce was 12-years-old. They lived at Wordsworth Avenue, Concord, Sydney.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** The weather was unsettled, it was cloudy and storms were passing through the area. The air temperature was 78°F.

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, December 21, 1934

**WATER CONDITIONS:** The water temperature was 70°F.

**ENVIRONMENT:** For some weeks prior to the incident sharks had been seen in the bay and a warning had been issued to holiday-makers not to swim there. Local fishermen "had spent considerable time trying to catch the monsters," according to a press report.

A 10-foot-long jetty near the house where the family was staying was used by the children for fishing. Throughout the day Roy and his sisters, Joyce and 26-year-old Kathleen, had been diving from the jetty into the water.

**DEPTH OF WATER:** 10 feet

**TIME:** 13h00

**NARRATIVE:** The Inman family of Sydney were spending the Christmas holidays on

Brisbane Waters. They arrived on Friday at their cottage, nestled at the foot of a steep wooded hill on Horsfield Bay. On Sunday, Roy, Joyce, their 26-year-old sister Kathleen and some of the children from nearby cottages spent the morning in the water.

The two Inman children finished lunch and went back to play again in the bay. Kathleen intended to join them and had just come to the doorway of the cottage. Their mother was on the verandah watching them diving off the short jetty in front of the cottage.

Roy and Joyce arrived at the end of the jetty a few minutes before Kathleen and decided to hold a diving competition. Joyce dived first and Roy applauded her. Roy teased her, saying he could dive in with less of a splash.

Just as Roy dived into the water, Joyce who was a few feet from the jetty, saw a large black fin a few feet away and screamed. She kicked out, something grazed her leg and she felt a sharp stinging pain. Seconds later, the water was lashed to foam as the shark seized Roy and the boy vanished.

Kathleen had been watching the children from the door of the cottage. Mrs. Inman and Kathleen raced to the jetty and into a boat. As they rowed to where the boy was last seen, he momentarily surfaced.

The shark struck him again and he was pulled beneath the surface. Kathleen frantically probed the water with an oar, hoping it would hit the shark and make it release her brother. Other boats joined them and Constable McKenzie of the Woy Woy police and Sargeant Ravelli and a constable from the Newcastle police dragged the area until 20h00 but found no trace of the body.

**INJURY:** Joyce sustained abrasions to her calf. Roy's injuries were fatal.

**SPECIES:** It was thought that a bull shark was

## BOY CARRIED OFF BY MONSTER

### SISTER'S CLOSE CALL

WOY WOY, Sunday.

A shocking shark tragedy occurred in Horsfield Bay near here this afternoon, when a 14 year old lad was taken, while swimming off a jetty. The body has not been recovered.

Roy Inman, 14, of Concord, was holidaying with his parents and his two sisters. He was swimming in about ten feet of water, when, without warning, the monster made its savage attack.

Shortly after lunch, Roy and his 12-year-old sister Joyce, decided to have a diving competition from the pier, alongside the boatshed in which they were camped. The boy's other sister, Kathleen, aged 26, witnessed the tragedy from the doorway. Joyce dived in first, followed by the boy, who went into about ten feet of water. The boy had just risen to the surface, when the shark made its attack. It flashed past the girl, inflicting a superficial wound on her leg with its fin, and snapped at the boy, who disappeared under the water. He rose to the surface again, then finally disappeared.

Kathleen jumped into a dinghy and rowed about in the vicinity of the jetty for some time, but did not see any further trace of the boy or the shark.

The father, Herbert Inman, also joined in the search, but was equally unsuccessful. A squadron of police from the surrounding districts and Newcastle commenced dragging operations, but at a late hour to-night, had not recovered the body.

It was pointed out by the police to-night that repeated warnings had been issued against swimming in the locality, as it was known to be shark infested.

involved in this incident.

**SOURCES:** Courier Mail, December 24, 1934, page 11; The Canberra Times, Monday December 24, 1934, page 1; Jack Green, pages 10 & 33 corrects earlier accounts that gave the location as Queensland; Victor. M. Coppleson (1958), pages.85-86 & 233; Coppleson Archives, 1223/11, Item 3 Shark Attacks New South Wales.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Richard D. Weeks, Global Shark Accident File



# BOY TAKEN BY SHARK AT WOY WOY

## FIN CUTS SISTER'S LEG

SYDNEY, December 23

Roy Inman (14), of Concord, was taken by a shark at Horsfield's Bay, Brisbane water, about a mile from Woy Woy, before his sister's eyes this afternoon.

The boy's head appeared once above the surface. Then the shark returned to the attack, and he was drawn beneath the water, and was not seen again.

One of his sisters, Joyce, (12), had a narrow escape. The shark brushed against her as it raced through the water, its fin inflicting a wound on her leg. The shark rushed towards her brother.

The tragedy occurred a few seconds after the boy had dived from a short jetty in front of the week-end cottage in which he and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Inman, were staying for the holidays.

His eldest sister, Kathleen (26), was standing at the door of the cottage, watching the children, and saw the tragedy enacted. She made gallant efforts to rescue her brother after the initial attack, but reached the scene too late to render any assistance. The water is about 10ft. deep at the end of the jetty. The two children, after lunch, had gone to the jetty, and the elder sister had retired to the house to get into her swimming costume, with the intention of following them.

### GIRL JUST ESCAPES

Joyce Inman said later that, while they were awaiting their sister's arrival they decided to have a diving competition. She dived first from the end of the jetty. Roy followed.

Just as he struck the water, Joyce

said, she screamed in terror. A black fin cut through the water towards her, and she saw it was a shark. When it darted towards her she kicked out, and felt it graze her leg. She also felt a sharp, stinging pain in her calf. Then she saw her brother disappear in a swirl of foam. She made for the jetty, only a few feet away.

### RESCUE IN BOAT ATTEMPTED

As soon as she heard the child's scream Kathleen Inman saw the fin of the shark. When her brother was dragged under the water she ran down to a small boat which was moored, jumped into it, and pushed off with an oar. She had almost reached the end of the jetty when her brother's head appeared, but the shark returned to the attack, and the boy went down in water tinged with blood.

The girl frantically searched the locality, pushing the oar down into the water in the hope that the shark would release its victim, but in vain.

The police searched unsuccessfully till 8 o'clock to-night for the body.

For some weeks sharks had been seen in the bay, and a warning had been issued to holiday-makers against bathing. Local fishermen had spent some time trying to catch the sharks.

*Courier Mail, December 24, 1934*