

ACTIVITY: Feeding captive sharks.

CASE: [GSAF 2000.02.14](#)

DATE: Monday February 14, 2000

LOCATION: The incident took place in the pub of the Fountain Hotel in Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, England.

NAME: Paul "Chopper" Smith

DESCRIPTION: He is a 40-year-old male and the Head Chef at the hotel.



Paul Smith

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 67% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon on February 19, 2000.

ENVIRONMENT: The central feature of the pub is a 1,000-gallon salt water aquarium which is home to Miami, a juvenile blacktip reef shark and two bamboo cat sharks.

NARRATIVE: Smith was taking a break from the heat of the kitchen when he decided to treat Miami (who was regularly-fed squid and mussels) to some prawns. "He went berserk as soon as my hand touched the top of the water, and the others soon followed. They must have got a whiff of the prawns. They shot across the tank like bullets," said Smith. "Within a second the water was churning like the shark attack scenes in the *Jaws* movie, and my hand was in the middle of it. Miami did the most damage. He was hanging off my finger and I was howling. It must have given diners indigestion to see blood in the tank," he said.



The shark tank in the Fountain Pub

INJURY: Smith's fingers were lacerated.

TREATMENT: Landlord Russell Allen rushed the chef to hospital, where six stitches were need to repair his injuries.

SPECIES INVOLVED: See above. All three sharks were about 60 centimetres in length.

SOURCE: The Sun newspaper (London), February 17, 2000

NOTE: This is classed as a provoked incident because it involved captive sharks.

When we checked the Fountain Pub's website again some time ago (<http://www.fountain-hotel.co.uk/RestBar.html>), Smith was still Head Chef but there was no mention of Miami or the two bamboo sharks, and the tank's star attraction was Dancer, a leopard shark.

Shark attacks chef in British pub

LONDON, Dec. 14, 2000 (UPI) – a chef was attacked by sharks at a British pub 60 miles from the nearest sea.

Paul Smith was on a work break at the Fountain pub in Tenbury Wells, England, when he decided to give Miami, a black-tipped shark, a special treat of prawns in the 3,000-gallon shark tank in the pub's restaurant.

Miami usually dines on squid and mussels. This time he had prawns, and a nibble of human to chase it down.

When Miami and the two other sharks got a whiff of what was being offered, they charged across the tank toward Smith. "Within a second," the chef said, "the water was churning like the shark attack scene in the 'Jaws' movie – and my hand was in the middle of it.

"Miami did most of the damage," Smith said. "He was hanging off my finger, and I was howling."

Russell Allen, who operates the pub that is just about as far from the sea as you can get in England, took his chef to a hospital. Smith was logged in as the victim of a "shark attack" and was released after getting six stitches to sew up the deep cuts.

"It could have been very nasty," Smith said. "I've learned my lesson. I'll admire them from afar from now on."

Allen recently had the tank installed for the benefit of his customers, who he said enjoyed watching the three sharks – reef sharks can raise 6 feet in length – cavort, especially at dinner time. The accident with Smith has done nothing to change his mind.

Since the shark's arrival, the pub manager said, "seafood sales have gone up 40 percent."