

<http://archive.camdennewjournal.com/news/2013/oct/police-investigate-how-police-officer-and-musician-devoted-soulmates-fell-death-buildi>

(refers to Black Cap pub as part of the sequence of events of the incident that evening)

## Police investigate how police officer and musician - devoted soulmates - fell to death at building site





Pictured from top:

Left: Stuart Meads, devoted to music; Right: Transport Police officer Gavin Brewer. Both fell 20ft at building site

Artist's impression of the finished development in Netley Street

Floral tributes left at the scene

**Published: 24 October, 2013**

**by RICHARD OSLEY and PAVAN AMARA**

AN off-duty police officer and his musician boyfriend – described as devoted “soulmates” – fell to their deaths at a building site after a night out in Camden Town.

Tributes were paid last night (Wednesday) to PC Gavin Brewer, 32, and Stuart Meads, 34, a member of the synth-pop band Trademark, who were found dead at the basement level of a new development in Netley Street in the early hours of Saturday.

#### ADVERTISING

Mr Meads' father Stephen said: “I don't even know where to start. Stuart was the best son you could wish for.”

Police are investigating the theory that a hoarding collapsed when they both leaned on it at the same time.

Officers were called to the street to the sound of arguing, but CCTV footage is understood to rule out initial reports that the couple were fighting. They had been out together at the Black Cap pub in Camden Town earlier in the evening.

The footage, taken from a nearby building, is understood to show the men fall through the capsizing hoarding, plunging around 20 feet to the concrete floor at foundation level. Scotland Yard confirmed it was investigating the circumstances, as did the Health and Safety Executive.

Key lines of their inquiry will include an attempt to establish how sturdy the hoarding was and how much pressure needed to be applied to make it collapse.

The company working on the site made no press comment yesterday (Wednesday) as investigators continued to piece together what happened.

The corner site at Hampstead Road has been the scene of building work for more than a year and it is understood that workers were within a fortnight of removing the hoarding and completing the final fence. A document posted on the perimeter of the site said a hoarding licence is due to expire next month.

Builders have been working on a block of eight new flats, some of which are already thought to have been sold in advance of completion.

Colin Marsh, who manages the nearby Prince Regent Mews housing development, voiced concern at the accident happening on a street "where children come backwards and forwards to school every day".

"Police have to investigate the hoarding," he said.

Stephen Baker, one of Mr Meads' closest friends, said he went "numb" when he was told what had happened.

"I had this weird out-of-body reaction. Time just stopped," he said. "I haven't seen the CCTV but a police liaison officer at the family home on Sunday was saying it didn't look like Stuart and Gavin were leaning on the boards.

"She said it looked like the faintest touch. Then the hoardings collapsed. They weren't pushing it. It could have happened to anyone at any time."

Mr Baker added: "His friends want answers. Nobody will allow his death to be in vain, but his family are so distraught. Gavin and Stuart were soulmates.

"Stuart used to say that he hadn't said that about anybody before. He was madly in love."

A shrine of flowers is mounting in Netley Street, including a bouquet from pupils and staff at nearby Netley School and PC Brewer's colleagues from the Finsbury Park division of the British Transport Police.

One message said: "Race you in heaven." The couple had begun their relationship a year ago.

Camden Council inspectors have visited the scene since the tragedy to ensure all hoardings are safe.

The Town Hall is not required to visit sites for safety checks. A press official confirmed: "Our building control team only become involved if a) a report of an unsafe site is made or b) when an incident occurs."

Post mortems were taking place yesterday with coroner's inquests expected to open later this week.

A British Transport Police spokesman said: "PC Brewer had been with the force for nine years. BTP officers and staff are continuing to support family and friends through this very difficult time."

## **Grieving father: He was the best son you could have asked for**

"I HAVEN'T been able to think since I heard," Stuart Meads' father Stephen told the *New Journal* yesterday.

"Stuart was so loved, he was so talented in many ways.

"Every part of his personality was unique and brilliant, everything was wonderful. There is no one thing I can single out because there was so much.

"It's going to be a really long time until we begin to deal with this. I don't even know where to start.

"He was loved beyond belief by so many. He was the best son you could wish for."

The musician's death was not just mourned by his closest family. Tributes revealed a fun-loving personality and devotion to music that had touched many lives.

Trademark, a band formed with his cousin, Oliver Horton, and Paul Soulsby, had a loyal following. Not just a jobbing backroom band, they released a couple of albums, gigged at festivals and supported The Human League on tour. There was a buzz about their music.

"The Sunday Times listed them [Trademark] as having the album of the week," the musician's friend Stephen Baker said.

"He loved that. He was part of the band for over 10 years and that made his family so proud.

"They didn't believe in covers. They did all the music composition themselves."

In his day job, Mr Meads, who grew up in Egham, Surrey, threw himself into a broadcasting career, working behind the scenes on television shows such as *The Weakest Link* and *Deal or No Deal* and then taking up a role at television studios in Kentish Town, where his brother also works. He had found happiness too in his relationship with PC Brewer, his friend recalled.

"He was madly in love, like a teenager. The sort of love you don't think adults have any more," said Mr Baker.

"They'd had previous heartaches – Gavin was the same – and they had given up on it when out of nowhere he fell crazily in love.

"They were convinced they were meant to be together. Gavin was a very charismatic man."

The police officer had been living in Waltham Forest.

His sister, Michelle Crook, wrote online: "There are no words to describe the tragic news.

"May your soul be rested and may you continue to shine down on us, just as you always shone."

