

Bonfire body mystery

Bail extended for Much Dewchurch three

Thursday 17th September 2009

Three people on police bail as part of investigations into the death of David Langdon, whose badly burned body was found in the remains of a bonfire at Much Dewchurch in August last year, have had their bail extended.

The three are due to report to police again on December 11. A file on the death of 40-year-old Mr Langdon is with the Crown Prosecution Service.

Russell Blackstock

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[Queenstown News - New Zealand](#)

Grim discovery of former Queenstown man stuns British cops.

British cops conducting a long-running investigation into the grizzly unexplained death of a former Frankton resident are hoping for answers within days.

The badly-burned body of David Langdon was discovered lying on a garden bonfire by his girlfriend - at the back of a remote hilltop cottage they shared in Herefordshire, England, on August 14 last year. The grim find was made after Langdon - who used to work in Queenstown - had been missing for 10 days.

Three women and a man were arrested soon afterwards, before being released on bail.

Results of an initial post-mortem were inconclusive and failed to establish a cause or time of death. But as a result of new evidence received, three people were re-arrested in April and bailed until July 7 during an ongoing probe into what the British press has dubbed the "bonfire body" case. *"Three of the original four were re-arrested and bailed after being interviewed by detectives,"* a spokesman for Herefordshire police told Mountain Scene.

Baffled cops have been waiting for the results of specialised toxicology reports to try to resolve unanswered questions such as when Langdon died and whether it was murder, suicide or an accident - the findings are due next Tuesday.

A former Frankton flatmate of Langdon, who shared a house with him for about eight months until April 2007, is "shocked" at the circumstances surrounding his friend's demise. *"David was a very philosophical sort of man who left a good impression here,"* says the pal, who doesn't want to be named. *"He worked in the Queenstown area for about a year in labouring jobs before going back to the UK because his*

mother was ill. He loved New Zealand, and people here who knew him are hoping the police in England finally find out what happened.”

The morning after the body was reported, police cordoned off the cottage, in the village of Wormelow, where Langdon - a landscape gardener and woodsman - was nicknamed Horse. A forensic team also sealed off a house in the nearby village of Much Birch. The property is believed to belong to a couple who were Langdon's good friends. Wormelow locals have been reported as saying the four people initially questioned by cops were all close to Langdon, who turned 40 two days before he vanished.

He was due to have a party to celebrate his birthday at the village pub, the Tump Inn, days after his body was discovered.

At the time, one unnamed resident told a British newspaper: *“Everybody is really shocked and there are loads of rumours flying about.”*

In late August, the case took a new twist when cops issued an appeal for an unidentified long-distance lorry driver to come forward as Langdon may have been planning to hitchhike to Europe.

The officer leading the investigation, detective chief inspector Dave Llewellyn of Herefordshire police, has commented: *“Mr Langdon was a well-known, popular and pleasant man. It's a very unusual case.”*

Langdon is believed to have been finally laid to rest in January near the town of Leominster, Herefordshire, close to the border between England and Wales.

Chance airport meeting for mate

A former Frankton flatmate of David Langdon was the last friend to see him before he left New Zealand - during a chance meeting at Christchurch Airport. The pal, who doesn't want to be named, said a brief farewell to Langdon before he boarded a flight to the United Kingdom in late June 2007.

“I was at Auckland Airport on my way back to Queenstown when I got a surprise call from Dave saying he was returning to the UK because his mother was sick,” says the friend. “We agreed to meet at Christchurch Airport while waiting for our connecting flights. I saw him before he left and he seemed fine but anxious about his mum. Those five minutes were the last I heard of him until one of his other Queenstown acquaintances bumped into me after his body was found and said ‘Have you heard about Dave? Google it.’”

Landscaper on the move

Englishman David Langdon is believed to have arrived in Queenstown with his long-term girlfriend in mid-2006. The pair are said to have run a landscape gardening business in France for 10 years before travelling around New Zealand in a campervan.

After the couple split up for a while, a friend says Langdon moved into a house in Frankton's Alta Place for eight months until April 2007. They later moved back in together at another Frankton address until Langdon left for the United Kingdom in late June 2007 and stayed at a cottage in Wormelow, Herefordshire. She joined him some time later.

They are described as being a "loyal couple".

Langdon had a six-month spell as a labourer for Southern Lakes Fencing, based in Gibbston - before working for Kingston-based civil construction company Wilson Contractors from March 2007 until returning to Britain a few months later.