

Holiday pool horror as British boy, 14, drowns after being sucked into swimming pool pump system

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British schoolboy Nathan Clark, 14, died when he was sucked into the swimming pool pump system at Pattaya Water Park in Thailand

A British schoolboy drowned when he was sucked into a pool's pumping system while looking for his lost goggles. Nathan Clark, 14, was last seen lifting a grille at the bottom of the pool in a Thai water park before disappearing into the pipe below.

His father, Jim Clark, dived into the outdoor whirlpool to save him after Nathan's 15-year-old brother Rhys raised the alarm but could find no trace of him.

Nathan's body finally emerged in the pool's pump room. Engineers opened a water gate there and the body spilled out as Nathan's horrified father looked on.

The tragedy was compounded for the family because lifeguards at the pool at first refused to believe their pleas for help and accused them of 'playing jokes'.

They said such an accident was impossible because the grille, which was a yard under the surface, was locked.

They finally agreed to check the pump room more than 30 minutes after

Nathan was swept into the powerful water pumping system late on Friday.

Yesterday his family told of their horror when they realised workers at the Pattaya Water Park, 85 miles east of Bangkok, did not believe Nathan had been swept into the pool's pipes from the 4ft-square grille opening.

Reconstruction: A man shows how the grille can be opened

Mr Clark, a tunnel engineer, said last night: 'The guards did nothing, not for 30 minutes.

'They would not believe what had happened. When I finally forced them to do something they went to the pump room, opened a hatch and my son's body came out.'

Thai cameramen who had gathered at the scene tried to film Nathan's body on the floor of the pump room. But grief-stricken Mr Clark attacked them, lashing out with a spanner.

Police have ordered him to pay the cameramen £220 in compensation over the incident.

Mr Clark, who works for international tunnel construction firm Robbins, added: 'I was distraught with what had happened. When I saw the intrusive cameramen I lashed out.

'The park has offered compensation. It's not even something I want to even think about at the moment.

'This is not about money. This is not the time to talk about blame.'

The boys, their father and his Thai wife were visiting the water park before they relocated to New Delhi in India, where Mr Clark had been posted.

Reconstruction: It took resort staff 30 minutes to find Nathan's body in the pump system, the opening to which is shown here

Rhys, who recently left school with his brother in Douglas on the Isle of Man, has put the events surrounding Nathan's death on a blog.

He wrote: 'The lifeguard said we shouldn't play jokes like this and dismissed us. My stepmum was begging them to check the pipes.

'They argued back saying it's impossible as the grille was locked. After a full 30 minutes they agreed to check the pipes.

'While they were checking, I went to the ticket booth to make an announcement as to whether anyone had seen him.

'I was coming down the stairs to the main pool when I heard my father shout "No!" very loudly then my stepmother screaming.

Scene of tragedy: Thailand's Pattaya Water Park

'If anyone is to blame it should be me. I should have stopped my younger brother.'

Thai police conducted a reconstruction of the accident at the weekend to discover how Nathan was able to open the

grille.

The tragedy is the latest in a series of deaths in Pattaya.

Geoff Taylor, of St Helens, Lancashire, and his daughters were gored by an elephant at the resort in 2000.

Mr Taylor, then 53, and Helen, 23, were injured, while her sister Andrea, 20, died. He sued and was awarded £15,000 by a Thai court.

In another tragedy, an 11-year-old Danish boy was electrocuted by loose wiring around a hotel swimming pool.