

Mail Online

Girl, 15, has legs amputated following 'horrendous' swing bridge accident

By Daily Mail Reporter
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Jade Smethurst: Trapped against canal bank

A girl of 15 has had both legs amputated after a horrific accident on a swing bridge.

Jade Smethurst was dangling her feet over the side of the concrete and steel canal crossing when it swung shut, trapping her against the bank.

Friends struggled to free her before the emergency services arrived.

Last night, her parents spoke of their 'living nightmare' after doctors were forced to remove Jade's legs below the knee.

Her mother Wendy said: 'None of us is thinking straight at the moment. It is still a nightmare.'

'At the moment she is comfortable and we have not really spoken to her about it. I've not spoken to anybody properly about what happened.'

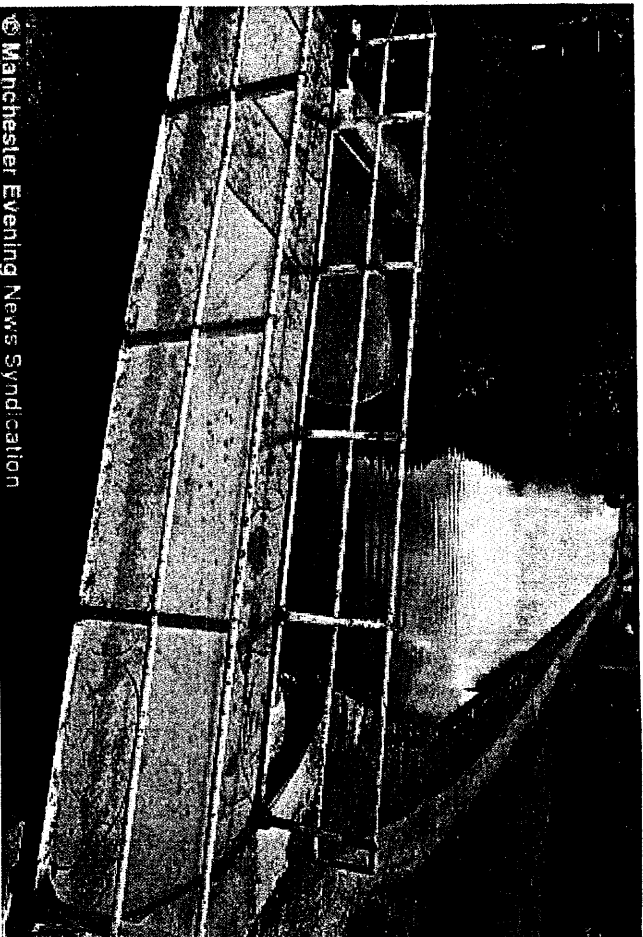
Karen Dean, 49, whose 15-year-old son Garth was with Jade at the time of the accident, said: 'My daughter heard screaming and crying and I went out.'

Jade was crying for her mum and I tried to comfort her. She was conscious throughout and responding as I spoke to her.

'I'm a care worker now, but I've worked in A&E and I have never seen breaks like that. I feared she would lose her legs and said so to a colleague.'

'I've been to see her in hospital and spoken to her, but I don't know if the full impact of what happened to her has sunk in.'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1028955/Girl-15-legs-amputated-following-...> 14/05/2009



The bridge: Investigators are checking whether it was left unlocked or vandalised

They are locked and can only be opened with a special key, which is issued to all boaters.

An investigation has been launched to see if the bridge, which spans the Ashton Canal in Droylsden, Greater Manchester, was left unlocked or if the lock had been vandalised.

Jade, from Gorton, Greater Manchester, was taken to Manchester Royal Infirmary before being transferred to Booth Hall Children's Hospital, where her condition was described as 'comfortable'.

Teachers at Wright Robinson Specialist College, where Jade is a pupil, described her as a popular student who was preparing for her mock exams.

Liz Askew, assistant head of Year Ten, said: 'Jade is very popular with staff and her peers in the year group. She loves textiles and has asked for her work to be brought to the hospital.'

Headmaster Neville Beischer said: 'I've spoken to Jade's parents and they are absolutely devastated and you could sense they are incredibly down.'

'We have a new building that is fully accessible and we hope to see her back in school soon.'

A spokesman for British Waterways said: 'We are conducting an investigation into last Friday's incident and cannot comment until we know exactly what has happened.'

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Sounds like a terrible accident. She was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

- Cheryl, Enfield, England, 24/6/2008 18:30

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I know this canal very well and I've noticed bridges being left unlocked before.

- Stuart, Manchester, England, 24/6/2008 18:01

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