

30/10/2007

Local News in Reading

Tributes to victim of killer disease



Martin Licence

A WAR games roleplay fan from Caversham who died from Legionnaires' Disease has been remembered by fellow gamers.

Tributes have poured in to the Live Action Role Play (LRP) 'Eventyr' website for Martin Licence who died earlier this month.

Fellow gamers remember him as a "kind, gentle and warm person".

The 36-year-old was found by police in his flat in Queen Elizabeth House, Gosbrook Road, Caversham, on Friday, October 12.

The DEFRA worker was confirmed to have died from pneumonia caused by Legionnaires' Disease. Reading Borough Council is carrying out tests to determine the source of the contamination.

A gamer wrote: "I'm so sorry and saddened to hear of Martin's passing. He was always a kind, gentle and warm person, and a genuine friend to many in the LRP community.

"Should Martin's family come to read these words, please know that he was very much loved and valued by those who gamed with him. Martin, may you rest in peace – you will be deeply missed. Adieu, fellow adventurer."

Other friends posted messages describing "what a pleasure it was to know Martin," and talking about his warmth and wit.

Friends became concerned after Mr Licence pulled out of a war games weekend. His last known conversation had been to tell a friend on Thursday, October 4, he had "flu-like" symptoms he thought he could "shake-off" over the weekend, his brother, Michael, told the Evening Post last week.

Mr Licence is believed to have died between then and Friday, October 12.

The Rural Payments Agency postal clerk is the second DEFRA employee to have worked in the Kings Road offices and die of Legionnaires' Disease in three years.

He leaves his only sibling, Michael, 49, sister-in-law, Sue, and girlfriend of 12 months, Joy Linsdell.

Michael Licence said: "My brother had a number of hobbies. He was heavily involved in medieval war game enactments and often went away at weekends to pursue his hobby."

Mr Licence lived in Reading all his life and left Highdown School in Emmer Green, aged 16, to work at the Rural Payments Agency.

His funeral is due to be held at Reading Crematorium's South Chapel at 1.30pm on Thursday.

Reading Borough Council spokesman Oscar Mortali said: "The council can confirm the interim results show no traces of legionella in the water system at Elizabeth House at the times the samples were taken. These are interim findings however and the council now awaits the final results to confirm these interim findings.

"These are expected in the week beginning Monday, November 5, and the council will again be writing to residents as soon as the results are received.

"The council is also making enquiries regarding control of legionella at the workplace of the deceased as well as other possible sources."

First printed in: Reading Evening Post

Nov 1 2007

By Rose Harland

Legionnaire hunt moves to government offices

A PROBE into a Caversham man's death from Legionnaires' disease switched this week to a government office block in the town centre where a worker died three years ago.

Tests carried out on Martin Licence's flat at Elizabeth House in Gosbrook Road have so far drawn a blank.

Tributes to victim of killer disease UK

But he worked at the Rural Payments Agency in King's Road where another worker, Mackenzie Hutt, contracted the disease in 2004.

The RPA was adamant this week that its water systems would be cleared of blame, but it issued a statement which read: "Our thoughts and sympathies go out to Martin's friends and family at this time."

The statement added: "A programme of regular sampling takes place to monitor and check that RPA's processes are under control in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive Code of Practice."