

Tributes paid to the life of Robert

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

THE BODY OF missing University of York student Robert Davies, 20, has been found in the River Ouse according to police sources, though it has not yet been formally identified.

The body was discovered by a member of the public on October 1 near the A64 road bridge just outside York. Inspector Nigel Slater said: "We now believe that the body recovered from the River Ouse is that of the missing Yorkshire student Robert Davies. A post-mortem examination has been completed and while the cause of death is still to be ascertained it is not believed to be suspicious." A formal identification of the body has yet to take place and may not be possible until sometime next week, according to police.

Davies' family and friends have begun arrangements for a funeral, which will take place in Bury, his hometown outside Manchester, on either October 12 or 15. The University has arranged a coach to take students wishing to attend and return them to York later that night.

The discovery of the body comes at the end of an eight-day search for the third-year Chemistry student, who went missing after a night out with friends on Saturday, September 22. Both the River Foss and the River Ouse were searched by police and fire crews. An RAF

helicopter was brought in to aid in the search.

The tragedy comes just under a year after the death of third-year Archaeology student Robert Ailwood, 22, who drowned in the River Foss after a night out with friends in York. An inquest later found that Ailwood's death was alcohol related.

Davies was last seen by door staff outside Ziggy's nightclub on Micklegate at approximately 12.38 am. Davies, who had been previously been drinking in Monty's and the Priors, was refused entry to the club on grounds of intoxication, according to Ziggy's management. Police confirmed that they had reviewed the footage taken from the nightclub's cameras and agreed with the door staff's assessment that Davies was heavily intoxicated. One of Davies' friends was taken away in an ambulance, according to door staff.

In the footage, Davies is seen arriving at the club with a glass taken from the previous bar. The glass was later found by police further down Micklegate, according to Ziggy's management. Police have refused to comment on this detail, saying it is part of an "ongoing investigation."

Before attempting to enter the nightclub, Davies had told friends that he intended to return to his house on Heslington Lane, where he never arrived. A police spokesman said: "His normal route would have taken him over Ouse Bridge

to King's Staithe, along the River Ouse to Fulford Road and on through Hospital Fields or Maple Grove to Heslington Lane." Police hypothesised that he may have gone to another bar instead of returning straight home.

Davies' parents held an emotional press conference on September 28, several days before the discovery of the body. Davies' mother Kim said: "He was on top of the world. I want to appeal to anyone who thinks they might have seen him to contact us. I want to hold my son again, I want him back." She added: "It's as though he has just been plucked...just taken."

A co-ordinated search of the University by police and ground staff checked over 4,000 rooms to see if Davies had returned to campus to seek shelter. Members of the public were also urged by police to check their sheds and gardens.

Davies' family has prepared a statement but will not release it until the body of has been formally identified. The University has released a statement saying "Although there has been no formal identification as yet, we understand that the indications are that the body discovered in the River Ouse is Robert's. Our thoughts are with his family at this extremely distressing time. The Department of Chemistry, and the University as a whole, is offering support to his friends here." YUSU has prepared a statement but have declined to release it until the body has been formally identified.



Robert Davies was last seen outside Ziggy's nightclub early on September 23. The last images of him, captured on CCTV outside the club, are shown below.

Parents of Robert Davies thank students for their help in search

THE PARENTS OF missing University of York student Robert Davies have thanked students for their help in searching for their son.

Using a Facebook group entitled 'Find Rob Davies', which now has over 2300 members, the missing student's friends organised volunteers to walk around York with pictures, appealing for information.

Over 40 students joined the September 29 search, designed to catch regular drinkers and club-goers who might have seen Davies the previous week. A number of

Davies' friends from his hometown of Bury travelled to York to take part.

Davies' father, Tony, expressed his gratitude to students saying "We're overwhelmed by the messages of support that we continue to receive, and are so grateful to Rob's friends for giving their time on Saturday night to circulate his picture around the pubs and clubs."

Third-year Chemistry student James Koziaryn, one of a number of students who helped to organise the search, said: "It was great to see so many people turn out to try and help

us find Rob. It shows how much people care about him and how much we want him back."

The search yielded a number of reported sightings, including a claim that Davies had been seen as late as Tuesday night. The witness said he saw someone who resembled Davies banging bottles together near the river, close to Skeldergate. Other reports from witnesses put Davies near Reflex at around 1 am on the morning he went missing. The police have been unable to substantiate any of the reports.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- September 14 - Davies returns to York.
- September 22 - Evening: Davies goes into town with friends.
- September 23 - 00.35: Davies tries to enter Ziggy's nightclub but is turned away by doorstaff. This is the last confirmed sighting of him.
- September 23 - Afternoon: Davies' housemates report him missing to the police when he fails to return home.
- September 24: Police and fire crews search the River Ouse. Davies description is circulated by police.
- September 26: RAF Sea King Helicopter joins the search.
- September 28: Davies' parents hold a press conference appealing for information.
- October 1: Body found in the River Ouse.
- October 2: A police source confirms the body is Davies

