

**Go near electrified rail tracks or overhead cables and the electricity will rip right through you. Your clothes and hair will be set on fire. In a split second your muscles will go into spasm and your bones will snap. Your internal organs will fry in their own juices. The electricity exits your body leaving a large hole and masses of shredded flesh!**



When I first saw Michael, it wasn't my son sitting there. It was like something you see out of a horror film.

He was completely black from head to foot as a result of the electric shock from the overhead cables. He looked like a burnt potato you would get from a fire on Guy Fawke's night.

The smell of burning hair was absolutely horrendous. Seeing him sitting there, it was that bad that I nearly passed out - **that smell will never go away.**

# It cost him an arm and a leg

On his 17th birthday Ben Woods and his mate decided to walk to Darlington. Unbelievably, they decided that they would walk along a main railway track - the East Coast Main Line.

As they walked down one of the tracks they saw a passenger train coming towards them. The driver sounded his horn as a warning.

He then watched helplessly as the two boys stepped out of his way onto the other track and straight into the path of an express train that was coming the other way.

Ben and his friend did not hear the other train. You don't when you're that close and a train's travelling at 125 miles per hour.

Ben suffered devastating injuries to one of his legs and his arm which was torn off. Miraculously he was still alive.

The train just missed his friend who, to his credit, didn't panic and run away, but used his mobile phone to call for help.

Local paramedics arrived and an Air Ambulance was called in. Ben was flown to the nearest hospital for emergency treatment.

## Teenage rail victim's agony

THE parents of a teenager who was seriously injured when he was hit by a train spoke for the first time last night to thank the hospital staff who battled to save their son's life.

EXCLUSIVE BY NICOL BURTON

Last night, his anguished parents revealed that doctors may have to amputate his remaining foot.

Ben's father said: "I spoke to the hospital staff who saved my son's life by stabilising him after he arrived, despite his terrible injuries. We know he will be in hospital for a long time."

Mr Woods thanked the efforts of hospital staff who had tried to establish how and why the youngster, from Banks Terrace, Harworth -

Transport police are still trying to establish how and why the youngster, from Banks Terrace, Harworth - only weeks from his 17th birthday -



**The doctors couldn't save one of his legs because it had been horribly injured in the accident.**

When Ben set off to Darlington on his 17th birthday, he never thought of the possible consequences of walking along the railway line.

He thought nothing could or would

happen to him. At Ben's age nobody ever does.

**This was Ben's story.**

**Don't let it be yours.**

**Don't take short cuts on the tracks.**



- The railways are our country's safest form of land transport - 8 times safer than travelling by road
- Over one billion journeys are made on our rail network each year
- Over 18,000 train services operate on our rail network every day





213 Victim's right shoe found at point ref A56. 150m from body

Nine out of ten people die from the electric shock received when they've got too close to overhead railway power cables - if you do survive you may lose limbs and your body will be scarred for the rest of your life.

# Mirror mirror on the wall

What's it like to live with the consequences of the biggest mistake of your life?

*Interviewer* What happened to the victim?

*Paramedic* There's not very much we can do when the body has been dragged almost 1 1/2 miles. The body was literally cut to pieces.

*Interviewer* As the train driver, what were your feelings?

*Train Driver* It was at night and there was nothing I could do. He was in his teens. Although it wasn't my fault I became an executioner. I can still picture the scene in my mind, even now.

*Interviewer* What was the worst part of the job?

*BTP Officer* No matter how long you've been in the job you never get used to telling parents they've lost a child in an accident. The shock, tears and panic I saw on their faces will live with me for the rest of my life.

"My mum tries to help...when it first happened and I'd just got back from hospital, she'd had all the mirrors taken out of the house, even in

the bathroom...but I would still see my reflection in the windows, even on shiny pans in the kitchen.



My friends used to call round, but we never went out. Over time they stopped coming, although they still keep in touch by phone. I think they're still a bit embarrassed and uncomfortable around me.

I've had months and months of plastic surgery to re-build the damaged tissue on my cheek and part of my nose. I know it can never be the same as it was.

Winter's the best time, because I can cover up the scars with a scarf. They tell me that eventually the scarring will fade and won't be too noticeable from a distance, but every morning when I do look in the mirror, I see pain and an uncertain future staring back at me".

*Jono*