

INQUEST: POLICE CONSTABLE KILLED IN MOTORBIKE ACCIDENT

Widow's tribute to an "incredible" husband

The widow of a police officer killed in a motorcycle crash has paid tribute to her husband.

Speaking after an inquest into the death of Pc Phil Tomaszewski yesterday, his widow, Janet, 48, said she was still struggling to come to terms with life without her "incredible" husband.

Pc Tomaszewski died when he lost control of his high-powered motorbike on a country lane close to his home in Long Clawson, near Melton.

The inquest at Loughborough Coroners' Court heard the 48-year-old father of two plunged into a ditch next to Clawson Lane while taking a bend.

He was off duty when the accident happened at 1.20pm on March 18.

Coroner Carolyn Hull recorded a verdict of accidental death after hearing Pc Tomaszewski may have been momentarily distracted by a hi-tech touch-screen satellite navigation system and MP3 music player attached to his handlebars.

Mrs Tomaszewski said her husband of 26 years was a person who was "always on the go".

She said: "He was never happier than when he was on that bike, or walking up a mountain, or sailing a boat. He was always active and never one to stand still.

"As the wife of a police officer, you do dread the knock at the door to tell you something has happened.

"But I'd given up worrying about him. He survived a 500ft fall when he was caught in an avalanche in the Lake District, in 1996, and he cut himself badly with a chainsaw while doing some gardening for a friend.

"He was an incredible person and it's still a bit unreal to think he is no

by **DAN MARTIN**

longer with us. To lose someone that close is the worst thing that can happen. It's like flicking off a switch."

Mrs Tomaszewski and her daughters, Zoe, 25, and Rose, 21, plan to scatter Pc Tomaszewski's ashes at Blencathra, his favourite spot in the Lake District, this summer.

The officer, known to colleagues as Tommo, had been a police officer for 24-and-a-half years and was based at Loughborough police station at the time of his death.

He had been a member of the police's Blue Knights Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club and treasurer of the force's sailing club.

Mrs Tomaszewski added: "I would like to thank his colleagues for all the support they have offered us as well as the emergency services on that day. We all miss him so much."

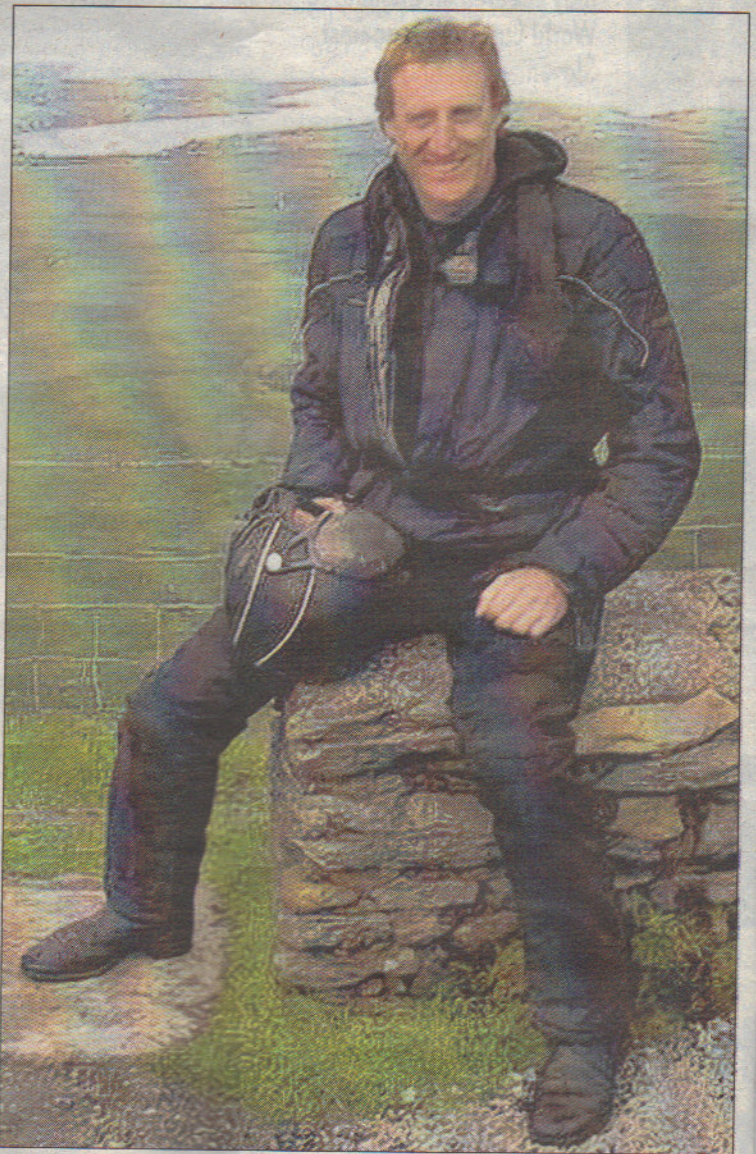
'DISTRACTED'

Police accident investigator Pc James Lawrence told the inquest that there were no faults with Pc Tomaszewski's Yamaha bike.

He said the only possible explanation he could find was that the officer had been distracted by the sat nav, which doubled as a bluetooth-controlled MP3 player.

He said he found a mobile phone connected to a bluetooth device on Pc Tomaszewski's crash helmet but there was no record of it being used at the time of the crash, or before it.

Pc Lawrence said no other vehicle was involved in the accident and though there was not enough evidence to calculate the bike's exact speed, the scale of damage caused to it indicated that he was travelling below the 60mph speed limit.



'WE MISS HIM': Pc Phil Tomaszewski died when he crashed his bike

Fears for local justice as courts face closure