**Inigo Sweeney-Lynch, 17, from south London, was just 15-years-old when he suffered 34% burns to his body while exploring an electricity sub-station near the railway.**

It was early June, the end of the school holiday and I was hanging out with friends at Telegraph Hill Park. A girl and I decided to go to a place we sometimes liked to explore – it had warning signs that said Danger of Death but we always ignored that.

We used to call it Danger of Death among our friends. There was a high building – higher than most houses – and we’d climb up and sit on top of it, dangling our feet over the edge.

On the day of the accident, we were looking down onto the electricity sub-generating station and thought it looked like an interesting place to climb into.

I went first and was climbing a wall inside when a surge of electricity hit me. I don’t remember anything about it – one minute I was climbing, the next my friend told me I was slumped over the wall unconscious and my clothes were on fire.

She was outside the compound freaking out but she had the sense to throw a bottle of water at me to try to wake me up. I came to with a jolt and saw I was on fire.

It’s hard to describe the shock – I didn’t know what had happened. I fell about eight feet off the wall into brambles and used my right arm to put out the flames.

My clothes had melted onto my body and I was aware of this incredible pain, but the whole left side of my body was totally numb and I could hardly move.

My friend had yelled to a passer-by on the bridge over the railway to get them to call an ambulance. I knew I was in a bad way and I tried to throw my mobile to her so she could get help, but it hit the fence and fell back my side into the brambles – I tried to reach it but couldn’t.

When the ambulance crew arrived, they managed to wedge the gate open a little but they couldn’t come in because it was too dangerous, so I had to get to them through the brambles.

That was so hard – the left side of my body was like a dead weight, so I dragged myself along using my right arm to hang on to anything I could get hold of – it felt like it took forever. I think adrenalin kicked in because I wasn’t thinking about the pain or my injuries – all my focus was on getting to safety.

Once I reached them, they put me on a stretcher, gave me gas and air for the pain and took me to King’s College hospital. I didn’t really know what had happened – my thoughts were so scrambled but I know I was happy to be alive.

I don’t remember much after that, except I was wrapped in clingfilm and bandages and my mum, dad and teacher were there. My next memory is of being in intensive care at Broomfield Hospital, a specialist burns unit in Chelmsford, Essex.

I wouldn’t be alive without the team of amazing doctors, nurses, physios, and the counsellor. I had three operations to graft skin onto the worst burns, including surgery to cut a piece of my leg and sew it onto my arm where it had burned down to the bone.

The physios had to help me learn to walk again – and that was really tough. I needed something like 8,000 calories a day because my body was using so much energy keeping itself alive and healing.

I had to drink these disgusting thick, salty milkshake things that made me feel sick and I had an intravenous tube that made me retch as well. I remember thinking I’d get fat but then I reckoned I looked so unhealthy that it didn’t really matter.

My scars are pretty bad but it’s not my face and I’m lucky to be alive. Somehow I always believed I would get better – my mum asked me what gave me the strength to think that and I have to say it was ignorance.

I haven’t lost my sense of adventure and I wouldn’t say don’t be adventurous to anyone, but I would say learn from my mistakes – sometimes you just don’t know what you’re messing with.

**Sharon Sweeney, 55, mum to Inigo and two older children**

Inigo, his brother, sister and I had just come back from a family holiday and he was desperate to reconnect with his friends.

I was at home unpacking and washing when my eldest son called to say Inigo had had an accident, had broken his leg, suffered an electric shock and was at King’s College hospital.

I could barely believe my ears – I drove there in a daze, wondering what on earth had happened. It was the day after the terror attacks near London Bridge and the hospital was very busy.

I remember asking about Inigo at reception, I said I thought he’d broken his leg. The nurses looked quizzical, then I overheard a doctor asking someone if they’d seen ‘the electrocution’.

I realised with a sinking feeling it was my son they were talking about.
I was taken to him straightaway, his dad, brother and aunt were already with him.

His entire body was covered in clingfilm and bandages, his hair was burned to a crisp and smelt awful. The weirdest thing was that he was hyper, wide-eyed and slightly crazy. I quickly realised he was on a massive cocktail of drugs to keep the pain at bay.

He was assessed and had 34% burns which meant he needed to be transferred to a specialist burns unit outside London.

He was transferred by blue-light ambulance to the St Andrews unit at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford. Arriving there it was like a scene from a hospital drama – a team of gowned doctors was waiting to receive him and I was taken to a side room while they assessed his injuries.

I couldn’t believe my lovely son was lying on a surgeon’s table in an emergency operating theatre with his beautiful skin burnt to a crisp.

I had flashbacks to him as a baby, plump and perfect. For a long time afterwards, I’d fight back tears seeing small children, I wanted to tell the mums to cuddle them, to always keep them safe.

The consultant came to update me on Inigo’s injuries. He gently explained they were serious and that he’d need a number of operations, but that for now they needed to remove the burnt flesh and allow him time to stabilise.

The days, weeks and months that followed are a blur. The medics were so good, so kind and tried their hardest to make him comfortable any way they could.
He had three operations, the last of which involved microscopic surgery to stitch together blood vessels in a flap removed from his leg to cover the area of his left arm that had been burned to the bone.

I have the utmost admiration and gratitude to the NHS staff who helped Inigo – his recovery is thanks to their hard work and learning and I was also so impressed by his determination to get better.

The first time he tried to walk, the pain was etched all over his face. It took lots of encouragement from the physios to get him to do it again the next day, but he did and every step was like a milestone in his recovery, both physically and mentally.

He has recovered beyond the surgeon’s hopes and while he has lost some movement in his arm and still bears horrific scars, we are so thankful we still have him. It could so easily have been a different, unthinkable outcome.

It’s hard recounting what happened to Inigo – even two years on it still seems unreal and I stop breathing when I think about the horror of his injuries and the agony he suffered.

He knows he was somewhere he shouldn’t have been and I feel guilty to think my son trespassed, but I also know he’s a good lad who made a terrible mistake – one that he will pay for for the rest of his life.

So many teenagers take risks – it’s a part of growing up – but I would urge parents to tell their kids about what happened to Inigo, to warn them never to mess with the railway.

If it makes just one young person think twice about going into a dangerous place or onto the railway, it’s a conversation worth having.