

October 15 1858 Birmingham Police Court

TOO MUCH BEER AND TOO MUCH WATER An aged devotee of the “jolly god”, whose appearance indicated that he could scarcely receive too much water in a sanitary point of view, was brought up on a charge of drunkenness, under rather peculiar circumstances. He gave the name of **Edward Glover**, and said he was sixty seven years of age, and a boatman. Police constable Clews (214) stated that he found the old toper drunk in the canal, near Snow Hill, at half past one in the morning, and unable to get out. He had evidently been over head in the water, but seemed to have struggled to a shallow place, where he lay crying for help. Upon help reaching him in the shape of Clews and another officer Mountford (281), the old fellow indignantly rejected the ready aid of a walking stick, but hiccupped an intimation that he preferred lying among the eels until one of his own tools (a boat hook) was procured. After some delay, during which this stickler for business customs lay patiently in the mud and water, a hook was obtained, with which he was literally hooked on to the bank by the collar of his coat. He said he had been a teetotaller for two months, but having had a donkey or two drowned he had taken a little beer to drown his sorrow, and was on the way to his boat when he fell into the water, and was nearly drowned himself. Upon promising to be more careful in future, he was allowed to depart without punishment, the Bench evidently thinking the quantity of water he had taken upon the beer, was a sufficient liquidation of the offence of tippling.

September 17 1860 Dudley Port

DEATH FROM EXCESSIVE DRINKING On Thursday last, at the Wellington Inn, Park Lane, before Mr Hooper, an inquest was held on the body of a boatman, 40 years of age, named **Thomas Winwood**, who died on Tuesday afternoon last. Deceased had been drinking heavily all day on Monday, and also at night, and as he was leading a horse down Park Lane, about two o'clock on the following afternoon, he suddenly fell down in the road, and in five minutes was a corpse. It is stated that during the few minutes intervening between the attack and death of deceased beer actually rushed out of his ears, nose and mouth. The Jury returned a verdict of “Died from excessive drinking”.

August 9 1870 Brierley Hill

ALLOWING DRUNKENNESS **Thomas Harris**, a boatman and publican, of the Bull's Head, Brockmoor, was fined 10s and costs, for allowing five drunken men to remain on his premises. Police-sergeant Breton, who gave evidence in the case, affirmed that one of the men was so drunk that he lay in the empty fireplace, with his head up the chimney.

October 16 1885

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN **Benjamin Millward**, aged fifty five, boatman, who lived at 12 Court, 2 house, Fordrough Street, died on Wednesday morning, at 2 o'clock, from injuries which it is supposed were the result of foul play. It seems that about five o'clock on the morning of the 1st inst, deceased left his home in Fordrough Street to take his boat into the Black Country, being at that time in good health. Nothing more was heard of him until the following Monday, when he returned home with his eyes blackened. He also complained of having pains in his right side. His daughter, surprised at seeing her father return in such a state, asked him how he came by his injuries, and he then said that he had been drinking with a number of other men on the Friday, and that they had had a row. He did not, however, inform his daughter where the affair took place. As the deceased appeared to suffer great pain in his side, a doctor was sent for; but deceased wanted another, so Mr Wilson, surgeon, was called in on Saturday. Mr Wilson examined the deceased, and asked him how he came by the injuries to his side, and deceased repeated the statement that he had first made – namely that he had been in a drunken row with some other men, and had received them then. The doctor asked deceased if he had been kicked, but the latter stated that he did not know whether he had been kicked or whether his injuries were caused by his being knocked down. Deceased was then asked whether he knew the man who had inflicted the injuries upon him, but he stated that he did not, because it had happened in the dark. According to the statements of deceased's daughter, he never stated where the affair took place. Mr Wilson ordered poultices to be applied to the deceased's side, and gave other instructions which were carried out; but notwithstanding this Millward continued in great pain until Wednesday morning, when he died, as is supposed from the result of his injuries. An inquest will be held.

May 27 1887

Tipton

SAD END OF AN OLD BOATMAN Yesterday morning Mr Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Swan Inn, Eagle Lane, Great Bridge, on the body of **Thomas Johnson** (66), a boatman, with no settled abode, but well known in the district. It was shown by the evidence given that the man was a confirmed drunkard, and that on Sunday night he was almost helpless from intoxication. He asked to be put on the right way for Messrs Barrows brickworks, and he was shown the way. On Monday his body was found in the canal near the works. A verdict of “Found drowned” was returned.

October 6 1887

GLEANINGS Shortly before midnight on Monday, **William France**, boatman, Hull, was found lying on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, near Mirfield, with his arms and legs across the metals. Fortunately he was removed before a train came along. He had been drinking, and when sober knew nothing about the affair. He was brought before the magistrates at Huddersfield, on Tuesday, and after being reprimanded was allowed to go.