

## Friern Barnet & District Local History Society

*The Morning Post* 12 December 1822

“DEATH OF THE GAS-LIGHT MAN. After the fight, on Tuesday, Tom Hickman, the celebrated boxer, left the ground with Mr Rope, a silversmith, in a gig. At the Swan, at Whetstone, they stopped some time, and after they had left the place, the night became extremely foggy, so as to render the road very difficult. It appears from the account of Mr Leigh’s waggoner, who was coming from town with the waggon, that the gig in which they were, had got on the wrong side of the road, and from the thickness of the fog, neither diver was conscious of the approach of a carriage until they were close upon each other. The gig, endeavouring to regain the right side of the road, ran up a bank, which upset it on the near side, and throwing the parties under the waggon, the wheels went over both their heads, and crushed them to atoms. The whole affair was the work of a moment. As soon as the waggoner could stop his horses, he picked up the men, but life was gone, He then placed the bodies in his waggon, and proceeded to the Swan, at Whetstone, where on his arrival he presented a terrific appearance, his frock being literally soaked with blood, from having been obliged to take the bodies in his arms in getting them into the waggon.”

*Caledonian Mercury* 14 December 1822

“FATAL ACCIDENT. Last night a gentleman, named Lowe, a silversmith, of Aldersgate Street, accompanied by the boxer, Hickman (the Gas-light man), were proceeding with several others in single -horse chaises to town, and all driving at a quick pace, but in regular succession; Messrs Lowe and Hickman seeing, as they thought, an opportunity of passing some of their associates, went out of the line, when their gig came in contact with a country waggon, belonging to Mr Lee, by which they were instantly thrown out, and the wheels of the waggon went over the body of Mr Lowe, and the head of Mr Hickman: both were killed on the spot! They were afterwards taken to the White Hart, at Whetstone, where they now lie for a Coroner’s Inquest.”

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*Morning Chronicle* 7 February 1828:

“LILLIPUTIAN MILL. The fight between the two dwarfs, David Morgan, a Welchman, and Mac Bean, a Scotchman, for five pounds a side, took place yesterday, in a meadow within a short distance of Whetstone, on the Barnet-road, and certainly a more novel exhibition was never before displayed within the ropes and stakes of the P.R. The singularity of the match excited a considerable degree of interest among the outsiders of the ring, and the road was lined at an early hour by the “rag-tag and bobtail” of all classes; but to the credit of the real members of the Fancy, few were present. The men, or rather

“the apologies for men,” were brought down by their friends, the Welchman in a “*Jarvey*”, and the Scotchman in a “*One horse Shay*,” and each seemed equally “magnificent” in his own estimation. A twenty foot ring was formed by the Commissary, with due care, and an additional rope was attached to the stakes so as to prevent the combatants from falling out without some extraordinary mischance. Shortly before one o’clock, the *Bantams* arrived, and soon after they entered the ring; Morgan attended by Harry Jones and a Welsh amateur, and Mac Bean by Bob Clegg and James Ivy. On stripping there was a decided contrast between them, Morgan being thin, but muscular, in perfect proportion, and standing three feet nine inches in height, while Mac Bean was altogether “*Insus Naturae*”, big in the head and body, but singularly short in his arms and legs, and in good truth a libel on the human form; nevertheless she looked strong and vigorous, and from his superior weight and experience – for he had actually fought three times previously at Newmarket – he was the favourite ; his height was three feet six inches, and his weight a full stone more than *Taffy*; he was older too, than the Welshman, for he was thirty-seven, while the Welshman was but five and twenty; and yet the latter, from the singular conformation of his *nob*, appeared to have adopted the perierunium of an old man instead of that of a youthful competitor for pugilistic honours.

On setting-to it was soon seen that the Welshman had the advantage; he was active on his pins, used both hands well; and delivered his jabbing hits right & left, not only with precision, but with singular severity, drawing the *Cork* of Mac Bean, and in fact, making dreadful havock on his features. Mac Bean on the contrary, was slow, timid and powerless in his deliveries, making no impression from the shortness of his arms, and endeavouring by *butting* with his head to make up for the deficiencies of his *mawleys*. In the end, after fighting twenty-seven rounds in thirty-seven minutes, the Welchman was victorious without a scratch, and without a chance for Mac Bean, who at times stood like a post to receive without attempting to return, establishing, it is true, his game; but shewing that he had not the slightest pretensions to boxing celebrity. Taking the affair from first to last, it was a burlesque upon the affairs of the Ring and amused rather from its novelty than from its real interest, for the punishment that the unfortunate Mac Bean received excited general sympathy.

There was a second fight for a purse of *Fourteen Shillings!* between a novice named Burke, and Ned Murphy, in which the former, after a scrambling fight, had the advantage. In the fiftieth round, however, it was considered that fifty more rounds might yet be fought, and as the patience of the by-standers was exhausted, it was agreed that the shillings should be equally divided, and thus ended the sports of the day.”

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*Morning Chronicle* 11 November 1829:

“A MERRY LITTLE FIGHT – THE JEWS AT A DISCOUNT. A slashing and interesting little *mill* took place yesterday between Sol Reubens, one of the Twelve Tribes, and Tom Smith, the East-end Sailor-boy, for ten pounds a side. The match was made off hand, and a very short time was allowed to either of the men for training. In point of weight they were pretty much upon a par – about eight stone and a half; but if there was any difference, the Sailor-boy had the advantage. In point of youth and vigour, too, he also had the pull. In despite of these requisites, however, the known game and scientific acquirements of the Jew made him the favourite – a feeling which was confirmed by the knowledge of his having had considerable experience in the P.R. while his protagonist had to make his first appearance. The stake being small, and the friends of the belligerents not being “over well breached, “it was deemed prudent to choose a place of meeting within a moderate distance of “the great village,” and the vicinity of Whetstone was therefor named. The “office” on this occasion having been given by the *initiated*, the morning of yesterday exhibited an extraordinary “turn out” of the minor members of the Fancy, among whom the “Marrowbone” Club were by the far most conspicuous – in fact, we have seldom seen so numerous display of *toddlers*, among whom the *Sheenies* were in strong force – all anxious to witness the prowess of their little champion, and all fairly confident of his success. “So help me Cot,” cried one to the other, “he’s sure to win; the Sailor-poy von’t have a chance; he might as vell expect to be High Priest of the Shinagogue, as to expect to lick Sol.” And so wedded were they to this opinion, that they were betting 6 to 4, and 2 to 1 upon their favourite. They reckoned, however, without their usual foresight, for poor Solly was sentenced to defeat, and overwhelmed his followers in his misfortune.

As the day advance, the crowds on the road to the scene of action thickened, and the usual display of fun and frolic gave spirit to the scene. On reaching the Green Man, in the hollow below Finchley, however, there was a grand halt, and a Council of War was convened. A scout gave notice that there was to be a *tithe* dinner at Whetstone, at which certain *beaks* were expected to be present, whose hostility to the disciples of milling was anything but doubtful. This was a natural source of alarm, especially as at least a *tithe* of the multitude felt, that were justice to have its way, they ought fairly to be rendered in *kind* to the claims of the Church or its supporters. The difficulty, however, was soon got over, by a *cow* well acquainted with the geography of the district, who, leading the motley groups down by the Colney-hatch road, conducted them in a circuitous route to the ground originally intended, about half a mile from Whetstone, thus avoiding suspicion and securing the quiet & uninterrupted termination of the battle. A more masterly and successful manoeuvre has seldom been practised in the field of Mars – for while the town of Whetstone exhibited all the appearance of a Quaker’s meeting, its immediate vicinity was full of noise and bustle.

Soon after twelve, the ring was formed in excellent order, and the forces, upwards of 2000 in number, took up their ground, with a spirit of accommodation

and good humour seldom exceeded upon such occasions. The men arrived at the scene of action in hackney drags soon after, & all being in readiness entered the arena, Sol Reubens taking the lead, and Smith being not long behind. Sol sported a blood red *fogle*, while Smith, true to his colours, displayed the Navy blue. Reubens was waited upon by Nathan and Aby Belasco, and Smith by Harry Jones and McCarthy. On stripping, Reubens showed excellent muscle and good spirits, but he was thin and anything but in “slap up” condition. Smith, on the contrary, looked fresh and well, and had all the confidence of a fellow conscious of his own strength. Still the Jew was the favourite, and the *Sheenies* opened in all directions with offers of six and seven to four, but with few takers.

THE FIGHT. On coming to the scratch, the position of both men was good, and each looked sweet upon his chances. Little time, however, was lost in reconnoitring – the Sailor Boy having taken his determination, at once bore down and let fly with his left, which was prettily stopped by Sol. With his right the Tar was more successful – this he planted heavily on the Jew’s left eye, and then rattling away in good style, hit up and slogged at the body and head, till in the close the Jew, who made some slight returns, was thrown. In the second round the Sailor Boy was equally on the alert; he commenced by planting his right heavily on the Jew’s body, and then, quick as lightning, popped in his left on his nose. The Jew fought cleverly with him, and made some fair counters, but the Sailor Boy was too quick, braking away, hitting up, and again flooring poor Sol, who exhibited first blood. The odds now came to evens, but such was the general opinion of the Jew’s game, that few were disposed to doubt his ultimate success. In the third round Sol came up full of life, and commenced fighting; the Sailor Boy was ready, and met him with a left-handed job on the head. Sol was boring in to return, but the Sailor Boy slipped on one side, and the Jew fell on his hands and knees. The fourth round was all in favour of Smith, whose superior, as well as whose good right and left hitting up, as well as straight forward, gave him a decided advantage. Reubens retreated fighting to the ropes, but at last fell, the Sailor narrowly escaping hitting him a foul blow as he was on his knees. To the tenth round Smith thus kept the lead, when he received a heavy blow over the eye-brow from Sol’s right, which drew a stream of blood. “All not over yet,” cried the Jews; and Sol again had his backers; it was but a sudden ray of hope, however, for Smith, in the next round, had the advantage in some heavy counter-hits, and the Jew was again prostrate. Smith repeatedly tried to give him a cross buttock, but did not succeed till the 21st round, when he gave him a *burster*. From thenceforth it was seen by those who were not bigoted in favour of the Jew, that Smith must win; but still the Jew came up game and fought the 35th round with unshrinkable courage. His left eye was now closed; his ear severely cut; his nose distilling the purple stream; and his face altogether showing the effects of heavy hitting; added to this, he gradually became weaker, and, in the thirty-fifth and last round, being hit down with a flush hit in the phiz, so as to be reduced almost to a state of stupidity, whilst his antagonist was as fresh as a rose, his seconds, seeing he had not a chance, very properly gave in for him; thus, in thirty-five

rounds and thirty-five minutes, crowning the Sailor Boy with victory, the cheers of his friends.

REMARKS. For a minor fight few have witnessed which have given more satisfaction. Both men fought in a fair, manly style – no shirking or shifting – but right down slashing work. It was obvious, from the fourth round, that the Jew had found his master; and the quickness and precision with which the Sailor Boy used his left and right. As well as took advantage of every opening which offered, astonished those who regarded him only as a novice; he generally made play with his left, which was often open, and did not always reach its destination; but with his right, he is a heavy and decisive hitter, as the poor Jew's body, left eye, ear and *conk* sufficiently proved. The Jew fought in his usual manly style at starting, going right to his man's head; but towards the termination of the battle he became more cautious, fighting on the retreat, and meeting the tremendous rush of Smith in the best way he could. Towards the conclusion of the contest, Smith, under Harry Jones's tuition, gave a terrific butt with his head which catching Reubens on the point of the *smeller*, was anything but agreeable, and hastened the closing scene. It is but due to say the Jew proved himself a game man, but neither his condition nor his strength was sufficient for his gallant opponent, who in this, his *debut*, has established himself as a star among the light weights, and will no doubt soon find a few candidates for his favours.

The ring was uncommonly well kept, and the business of the day throughput was creditably conducted.

The battle money will be given to Smith on Friday evening, at Frank Redmond's, Duke's Head, Loman's Pond, Borough."

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*Morning Chronicle* 23 March 1831:

"THE FANCY. A pleasant little Mill, As the patrons of pugilism would say, took place yesterday at Whetstone, on the Barnet-road, between Jemmy McCarthy and Smith, the East-end Sailor-boy, for a stake of 25/ a side. The weather was the very opposite if the Tuesday preceding, for, instead of rain and gloom, there was nothing but sunshine and cheerfulness. The assemblage of Amateurs, too, was far more numerous, and the "turn out" generally more after the fashion of olden times. The men were pretty much upon a par in point of weight – about nine stone, but McCarthy had the advantage in length. Upon coming to the *scratch* McCarthy was waited upon by Peter Crawley and Sheene, and Smith by Harry Holt and Ned Stockman. In the very first round the Sailor Boy bore down upon his opponent with a determination to do mischief, and dealt him such a tremendous right-handed hit on the ribs that two of them gave way, and were fractured. This proved a fortunate commencement, and for the thirteen rounds which followed, the Sailor kept the "weather gauge" – always had the advantage, and fought with such rapidity, head and fists, that poor *Mac* had not

chance. In twenty-two minutes he was incapable of continuing the combat, while the Sailor-boy had not a mark.

Mac was taken from the ring with the consolation of three broken ribs, while the Sailor-boy was “all alive and kicking” – justifying the confidence of his friends, who had backed him at six to four on entering the Lists. There was a second fight between two outsiders, named Mike Cokely and Paddy Nowlan. The latter a perfect skeleton, and “prigged”, as the *cognoscenti* said, “from a bone yard.” They fought seventeen minutes – boney giving way to flesh, and Paddy’s *grinders* leaving off candidates for a sinecure in his breeches pocket; for they were as loose as the vane of a weathercock.

The sports of the day went off “most agreeably,” and good humour prevailed throughout. A “Love Feast” among the Primitive Methodists could not have been conducted with more order and regularity; and the *Beaks*, had they witnessed the “gathering,” would have said it was a pattern for the most fashionable routs of our Aristocracy.”

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*The Morning Chronicle* 13 July 1833:

“THE LATE FATAL FIGHT AT WHETSTONE. Yesterday afternoon an inquest was held before Mr Stirling, at The Green Man, Whetstone, on the body of Edward Thompson, aged 20, who died two days after a fight, in which he had been engaged with Michael Murphy. The body presented a dreadful appearance, being covered with bruises, and the hands being swelled to an enormous size. The first two witnesses examined were, Mr Evans, assistant to Mr Hammond, surgeon; and Mr John Harrison, a medical man, residing at Whetstone. They attended the deceased on Tuesday evening, and found him nearly insensible. He was severely bruised, and there was an extensive wound on the back part of his head. A quantity of blood was taken from him, and every remedy applied, but he gradually sunk, and expired at one o’clock on Thursday morning. They were of the opinion he died from an injury to the head.

Frederick Tomkins, a carman, at Paddington, deposed to being present at the fight on Tuesday. After the third round the deceased appeared to be the stronger man, and it was generally thought he would be the winner. A number of Irishmen, who appeared to wish Murphy to win, were present, and after the third round they made use of their sticks and whips in a very brutal way and knocked down several by-standers. Some person threw a large glass bottle into the ring as the deceased was falling. The fight continued amidst much confusion. In three-quarters of an hour Murphy, while on the knee of his second, Thomas Reidie, exclaimed, in a faint tone, “I’ll have no more!” Ned Murphy, his brother, said, “Fight on; you can whack two such men as him.” Murphy was then taken up to the mark. Witness remarked that the deceased had won; upon which witness was struck down by a blow on his head, given him by an Irishman, and while on the ground he was dreadfully kicked; on recovering his senses and getting up he found the deceased still fighting. In the last round that

was fought, Murphy struck the deceased on the forehead, which knocked him backwards, and he was then carried out of the ring bleeding profusely from the mouth; the deceased's seconds got desperately assaulted by Murphy's friends.

George North, farrier, Paddington, corroborated this evidence, and added, that during the second round he saw a man, whose name he understood to be John Lane, strike the deceased twice on the back of the head with a large stick; and in the last round, he saw the same man kick the deceased in a dangerous part of his body.

The inquest was then adjourned, that the surgeons might make a *post mortem* examination, and further evidence be procured. It was stated that it had been rendered necessary to place armed men in charge of the body, to prevent it being forcibly taken away by a number of men."

*The Morning Post* 10 September 1833

"Thomas Read and Michael Maloney were indicted for the manslaughter of Edward Thompson at Friern Barnet, on the 9th of July last.

John Harrison, a surgeon at Whetstone – On the 9th of July Edward Thompson was brought to his house insensible about four o'clock in the afternoon. Was dreadfully bruised on the head, chest, arms and left groin, and a few small punctured wounds on the instep. Witness bled him, opened an artery in the temple, and applied leeches. In an hour after he again bled him, and placed an embrocation on the chest. He was afterwards removed to the Green Man. These measures relieved the sufferer and enabled him to breathe freer, but did not render him sensible. Witness applied a blister to the back of his neck, and gave him calomel, but all was of no use, and the patient died on Friday. Could not judge of the instrument by which the bruises were made in the head from their appearance. The bruises in the head and chest were not of a nature to cause death. Mr Evans, another surgeon, attended with the witness at the *post mortem* examination. On opening the skull the *dura mater* was perfectly healthy. There was a great quantity of extravasated blood. On removing the coagulum four vessels were found burst, three on the right edge and one on the left hemisphere of the brain, which was of itself perfectly healthy. The skull was not the least fractured. The heart, lungs, and liver were all perfectly healthy; the bowels and groin had not been ruptured. The cause of death, in witness's opinion, was a fall, which ruptured the blood vessels in the brain. The blows that occasioned the bruises on the head would not have occasioned the rupture.

Cross-examined by MR PHILLIPS – Did not think the violent exertion of a person fighting would have burst the blood vessels. Would not undertake to say it would not. If the vessels had been ruptured by a fall it must have been a violent one, and there were no marks on the head showing that he had had such a fall. Was neither a member of the College of Surgeons or Apothecaries' Hall. Was an apprentice to an apothecary at Chertsey. Being no surgeon, opened both the temporal arteries.

By MR CLARKSON - Had had a good deal of experience in *post mortem* examinations. Has not attended a *post mortem* examination in the last two years. Thought he had never had the examination of a subject before in which the vessels of the brain had been ruptured. Had read several treatises on the subject, but could not name them. Had not any at home. Had not referred to any work on the subject of the brain to strengthen his conclusions as to the cause of Thompson's death. Had read works relative to the rupture of the larger vessels, but not the smaller, but did not think the latter vessels so likely to burst from the excitement as to the other.

Mr Justice PATTESON – Had never been called in to prescribe for diseases in cattle.

Mr CHARLES JAMES COX, apprentice to Mr Hammond, a surgeon at Whetstone – I saw Thompson before his death at Mr Harrison's (the witness here described the injuries in a similar manner to the last witness). Though that the injury must have been made by a full blow from a flat weapon, and not by the fist.

By Mr BODKIN – Knew nothing of the last witness Harrison, except that he practised at Whetstone as long as he had been there. Mr Harrison was incorrect when he stated that the wounds in the head were not sufficient to cause the rupture of the vessels. Was surprised to hear Mr Harrison say so. He could not ascertain whether the skin was discoloured or not, in consequence of the hair on the head; there was a very great swelling. Thought it injudicious and dangerous to take away so large a quantity of blood as Mr Harrison had taken from the deceased.

By Mr CLARKSON – Did not think a fall on soft grass would have produced the swellings on the deceased's head.: a fall on a large round stone might cause it. Did not think the hand hard enough to produce such effects. The remedies applied did not hasten death. Had not studied much with respect to the brain, and his judgement, therefore, was very frail upon the subject.

Frederick Tomkins deposed to having been present at the fight. The witness described it to have been conducted with fairness until the spectators, particularly the friends of Murphy, broke into the ring. Sticks were then thrown into the ring, in the way of the men who were fighting, to throw them down, and a glass bottle was also thrown into the ring in their way. Read, the Prisoner, acted with the greatest fairness. He used no bad language, he had never seen a second act more fairly. Witness saw the Prisoner Maloney with a stick, which he held with both hands, and pushed the crowd back. Several other witnesses deposed to the same effect.

Robert Puvis was present at the fight and saw a disturbance after the third round. Several people fell before Thompson with intent to throw him down. He saw Maloney strike Thompson over the head. This was in the fourth round. There were several near with whips and sticks. The Prisoner Maloney was the



man he called Lane before the Coroner. He called out "Shame", and a person named Hands knocked him down.

Cross-examined by Mr PHILLIPS – Maloney was in the ring, and persons might have seen him. Maloney was beating out the ring, and in doing so struck Thompson, but he did not fall, nor did he seem to take notice of either blow.

The case for the prosecution having closed.

Read said he had unfortunately been a second to one of the combatants and had done everything in his power to preserve order. The ring was, however, broken in, and he was unable to carry his intentions into effect. In fact Murphy by his advice would not have given in, but the crowd would not let him.

The Prisoner Maloney said: "My Lords, I never, I declare in the presence of Almighty God, kicked or struck any man. In fact, I was in a cart best part of the time."

A very considerable number of witnesses were called in the behalf of Maloney, who swore positively that they did not see him (Maloney) strike the deceased or anyone else.

On the part of Read several witnesses were called who gave him a very excellent character.

Mr Justice PATTESON having summed up on the evidence., the jury retired for twenty-five minutes, and on their return found Maloney *Not Guilty*, and Read *Guilty of Manslaughter*.

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Source: British Newspaper Archive

Researched by Nick McKie

Transcribed by David Berguer

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