



# Crime and Punishment

## *Minety*

### **Edmund Taylor's Brushes with the Legal System**

On Friday, Edmund Taylor, landlord of the Red Lion Inn, Minety, Wilts, was brought up on a warrant before the magistrates at Malmesbury, charged with assaulting and ill-treating his wife, on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst.

It appeared from the evidence of the complainant, who appeared in court with two blackened eyes, and face much swollen, that the defendant had been in a state of intoxication from the time of his liberation from Devizes gaol, a few days since, up to the time of the assault, when he began to act like a madman, beating and kicking his wife and his aged, infirm mother in a most savage manner.

A warrant for his arrest being obtained, PS Bustard and PC Tibble, after considerable difficulty, succeeded in conveying him to Malmesbury Police Station. On being taken before the magistrates next day, they punished him to the full extent of the law by committing him to the House of Correction, at Devizes, for six months' hard labour, and to be bound in the sum of £50 to keep the peace for six months after the term of his imprisonment has expired. Taylor is a habitual drunk.

*Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 17 July 1862*

### **Murder of an Old Man at Minety**

A case has been in process of investigation by the Malmesbury magistrates during the past week, which involves a charge of wilful murder against a man named Taylor, well-known in the neighbourhood of Malmesbury and Cricklade, and which, whatever the issues of the enquiry, is without doubt an aggravated case of manslaughter, if it should not take the form of a graver charge.

A short distance from the Minety station, on the left hand of the turnpike road leading to Malmesbury, is a small public house, the Red Lion, kept by a man named Wheeler. Some three weeks ago, an old man, unknown to the landlord or any of the neighbours, came to the house in a destitute condition, and was allowed food occasionally from the house, and to sleep in the stable at night, in return for making himself useful about the premises. On the morning of Tuesday, the 4<sup>th</sup> inst., this old man was found dead in the stable, with marks of violence upon him, which indicated that he had been the victim of foul play.

An inquest was held, at which the jury returned an open verdict, but the police, not being satisfied with the result, instituted inquiries, which led to the belief that the deceased had come to his death by violence on the part of Taylor.

It seems that this individual was formerly landlord of the Red Lion, but for some time past has "lived upon his wife," his precise mode of livelihood having been unknown unless to his immediate associates. It is certain, however, that he was allowed by the present landlord of the Red Lion to occupy the clubroom at his house, which served him and his wife for sitting room, dormitory, and all other requirements. He is known as a person of indifferent character, and has been several times convicted of violent assaults, his victims having included both his wife and mother.

It appears that this person returned from Malmesbury on the Sunday night before the death of the deceased in a state of intoxication, and there seems to be pretty strong evidence that he inflicted the blows, which led to the fatal results. He was accordingly apprehended, and the nature of the evidence against him will be gleaned from the following reports of his examination before the magistrates.

Another man named Timbrell, who also bears an indifferent character, has been apprehended likewise, as it appears that he is able to throw a good deal of light on the business, but there seems no ground to suppose that he is actually implicated in the crime. The name of the deceased turned out to be Henry Fullbrook, and it is ascertained that he comes from West Shefford, in Berkshire.

On Monday, Taylor was brought up at the magistrates' clerks' office, Malmesbury, before Sir R H Pollen, Bart., and W Perry Keene, Esq., when the following evidence was taken.

**Henry James Hobbs:** I am a police constable stationed at Minety. On Tuesday morning, the 4<sup>th</sup> last, I received a message from Mr Richard Wheeler requesting me to go to his house at the Red Lion Inn, Minety, about the old man. I accordingly went to the Red Lion Inn, where I saw Mr Wheeler, the landlord. Mr Wheeler said he wanted me to go and look at the old man, as he was found dead in the stable that morning. I went to the stable, and saw the body of the deceased, Henry Fullbrook, which was lying under the manger.

The body was partially warm. The face and hands were stiff and cold. The deceased was lying on his back, with his hands up over his face. One of the deceased's eyes was black, but not so much swollen as it was the day before. I saw the deceased on the previous (Monday) evening, about twenty minutes to six o'clock, in a field near the road at Minety. He was then lying down with his face upon his hands, and fast asleep. I woke him up, and asked him why he was lying there. He told me he had come over there to rest a little. I asked him why he did not get some work to do. He said he was not able to do any work. I then asked him how he came with the black eye, and he told me it was where Taylor had beaten him. I saw the deceased on the previous Sunday evening, and he then appeared to be in good health.

The deceased was about 49 years of age. He complained of pains in the head and body when I saw him on Monday evening, and he told me it was where the prisoner had beaten him. I told him he must have said something to Taylor, but deceased said he was very civil to him. The deceased told me he received Taylor's horse, at the Red Lion Inn, on Sunday evening; that he said to Taylor, "You are home in good time," whereupon Taylor up with his fist and knocked him down.

**Frederick George Lawrence:** I am a surgeon residing at Malmesbury, and am assistant to Mr Jeston. On Tuesday, the 4<sup>th</sup>, I was called to see the deceased.

I found him lying in the stable, at the Red Lion Inn, Minety. Neither the chest nor hands nor any part of the body was warm. It was about twelve o'clock when I saw the deceased, and I should say he had been dead about twelve hours. I found the deceased's knees drawn up, and the left hand resting on the left thigh. Blood and mucus was issuing from the mouth. I also noticed the deceased had a black eye on the right side.

On Wednesday, the 5th inst., I made a post mortem examination of the body. I found that the right eye itself was very much ecchymosed from the rupture of the vessel. The external parts and covering of the eyelids were very much bruised. There was also a large bruise just below the right collarbone. I found no other marks of violence about the man externally. I then proceeded to open the head. On removing the scalp, I found it in a very congested state just over the right eye, and also a similar appearance on the left side of the head. I removed the skullcap and found there was a small clot of blood on the left side, just below the external mark I have referred to. I removed the membrane of the brain, and found a very large clot extending all over the left hemisphere of the cerebrum and beneath the anterior inferior portion of it. It also indented the brain substance. This was sufficient to cause death. I found behind the right eye liquid blood issuing as I tilted out the brain. I found about two drachmas of blood in both the ventricles.

The next witness was **David Timbrell**, who had been brought up to give evidence on a warrant, and who is still in custody. He said: I am a labourer residing at Minety. On Tuesday morning, the 4<sup>th</sup> inst., I heard of deceased's death. I saw deceased at the Red Lion Inn about 4 o'clock on Sunday, the 2<sup>nd</sup>. He assisted me in putting the prisoner's horse in his trap on Sunday afternoon. I saw deceased again on the following (Monday) morning at the Red Lion stables cleaning bits and stirrup irons. I did not see deceased from the time I saw him between 4 and 5 o'clock on the Sunday afternoon, until 6 or 7 o'clock the next morning. I saw deceased had a black eye when I saw him on Monday morning. Deceased was rather deaf. I called his attention to his black eye by putting my finger up to his eye, and he said he had only fallen up against a gatepost or doorpost. I never saw deceased alive after that time.

I called at the Red Lion Inn on my return from Malmesbury on Sunday evening, the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., but I do not remember having seen the deceased. I left the Red Lion about half past 4 on Sunday afternoon, and went to Malmesbury with the prisoner. We returned to Minety about 11 o'clock. I, and the prisoner took the prisoner's horse out of the trap. I will swear I did not see the deceased on the Sunday after we returned from Malmesbury. I did not go home from the Red Lion on the Sunday night, but I slept in the clubroom with Taylor and his wife. Taylor and his wife occupy the clubroom. It was about 11 o'clock when we went to bed.

Wheeler was at the door when I and the prisoner returned from Malmesbury on the Sunday night. The deceased had a black eye on the Sunday afternoon about 4 o'clock, when he put Taylor's horse into the trap. When we returned from Malmesbury on the Sunday night, the deceased was not in the stable. Mrs Taylor brought a lighted candle into the stable. I did not return home with the prisoner from Malmesbury on Monday evening, the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. I parted company with him at Charlton. I rode from Charlton to Minety on Packer's pony. I did not put the pony in, as I was rather "beery." I afterwards rode home on the pony. Packer did not come home whilst I was at the Red Lion on Monday night. I swear that I never saw Taylor strike deceased.

**The prisoner** having been duly cautioned, then made the following statement.

"I had a very bad knee. I was sat in Mr Wheeler's settle on Saturday last (club-night) and there was a kitchen full of people. The deceased and another old man were pushed together. The deceased turned round and hit young Edmund Smart. Young Smart got up and struck deceased and knocked him against the elbow of the settle. That stopped all of it. I went to bed about 10 o'clock on Saturday night.

Between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning the deceased came and I opened the clubroom door and sat down on the bed where I was lying. The deceased had a slight black eye, which he showed my wife. Deceased went out of the room.

Sometime in the afternoon of Sunday, I sent down for deceased to come up again. I then told him I wanted him to go up in the lane and fetch my horse down. Deceased went up and fetched it and brought it back. I gave deceased two-pence for fetching the horse. The horse was put in the trap, and Timbrell and I came into Joseph Hanks' at Malmesbury, and at night we returned home again. I should think it was between half past 10 and 11 o'clock when we returned home on Sunday night. Just as we got home Mr Wheeler was upon turning his company out of the house. I believe I helped hitch the horse out of the trap, at least my wife did. I know the horse either went inside the stable or stopped outside. Timbrell pulled off the harness but Mr Wheeler called him a fool. We all went to bed within five minutes after our return home.

On Monday morning I got up about half-past seven or eight o'clock, deceased was then in the stable shining bits or stirrup irons. I helloed and asked the deceased to fetch two or three buckets of water, which he did. I gave him a pint of beer for his trouble. Deceased took the beer in the stable. I never saw deceased after till I saw him dead."

The prisoner was then remanded until Wednesday, before the same magistrates, when the following evidence was given.

**Richard Wheeler:** I am landlord of the Red Lion Inn, Minety. The deceased came to my house three weeks ago last Saturday night. He asked for a pint of beer, which was served to him. When the company had left, deceased said he had no money to pay for a bed, and asked to be allowed to sleep in an outhouse. I told him he could sleep in the stable, and he said he should be very glad.

On the following morning he got up and began to clean the knives and forks and boots and shoes. He asked if he could sleep there again, and I gave him some food. He remained with me, doing various jobs about the premises, till his death, and during the whole of that time slept in the stable.

On Sunday week he was about the stable and premises the whole of the day. In the evening he was sitting with other persons in the house. About 10 o'clock I told the other persons I wanted them to leave, which they did. The prisoner Taylor, who had just returned from Malmesbury, had put his horse in the stable. Timbrell was pulling the harness off the horse; he did not take off the reins. Timbrell and Taylor were both in the stable when I left it. Taylor had some beer, but I don't think he was drunk. I then went in and bolted the door. Deceased and two or three others were in the kitchen. I told them to go out at the back door, which they did, and I locked it. The deceased had not then any black eye, and I observed no mark on him. None of the parties I let out were the worse for drink. I heard no noise afterwards. I did not hear Taylor go to bed - I could not have done so - and I do not know what time either he or Taylor went to bed.

The next morning, about 9 o'clock, I looked through the window, and heard someone ask deceased how he came with a black eye. He replied "I did it in running up against the door post." Deceased saddled and bridled my horse and I came to Malmesbury. I noticed his black eye, but said nothing to him about it, as he was deaf, and I did not see him again that day.

The next (Tuesday) morning, on going into the stable, I saw deceased lying on his back and as I thought asleep. I spoke to him, but he did not answer. I threw some water over his face, but it did not wake him. About nine o'clock I noticed blood and bubbles issuing from his mouth. I then immediately sent for the policeman. Deceased was in the same position as when I saw him first, two hours before.

**The Prisoner:** I did not observe that the deceased had a black eye on Sunday.

**John Embury:** I am a carpenter and wheelwright at Minety. I was near the Red Lion on Sunday evening week about eight o'clock. I met the deceased and the two young Wheelers going in the direction of their house. Deceased then appeared well enough, and had no black eye.

On the Monday evening I saw deceased with Taylor in front of the Red Lion. He then had a black eye – more swollen than black – and I asked him how he came by it. Taylor said deceased kept rubbing up against his (Taylor's) knee, and he hit him. This was all I heard about it. I have never said that I heard Taylor say he would not have hit the deceased for 5s.

**The Prisoner:** I did not hear the deceased say he got the black eye by running up against a doorpost.

**Sarah Packer:** said she was the wife of Henry Packer, of Minety, labourer. David Timbrell had told her that the prisoner Taylor hit deceased such a blow as he never saw in his life. He put up his fists to show how the blow was struck.

**Timbrell:** You did say you saw Taylor strike the blow.

**Wm Packer,** butcher, of Minety, said on the morning of deceased's death he went into the house of Timbrell, who was a tenant of his, and said to him, "That man that was knocked about is dead." He replied, "Dead, is he?" and witness said "Yes." Witness asked Timbrell how the job happened, to which he replied, "The man came out on Sunday night, and appeared to fall against Taylor's knee. Taylor said, "If you do that again I'll knock you down." Timbrell added that he did not see the blow struck, but said when he saw the deceased, "I would not have done that if anybody had given me a sovereign." Timbrell also told him that on Monday evening Taylor gave the deceased a pint of beer, but he could not drink it.

**John Freeth,** a packer in the service of the Great Western Railway Company at Minety station, said: On Sunday week he was at the Red Lion, when Taylor and Timbrell returned from Malmesbury. The horse they had been driving was put in the stable, and Taylor beat it about the head and legs with a short bludgeon. Mr Wheeler, the landlord, said, "For God's sake don't beat the horse so." Timbrell was more drunk than Taylor. Deceased was then in the kitchen. He had no black eye at that time. The witness added that he had been told by Alexander Hawkins, who slept at the Red Lion on Sunday night, that he heard the deceased cry out in the course of the night – he did not know at what time – "For God's sake don't hurt me."

**The Prisoner:** I was not in the kitchen when deceased was fighting on Saturday night.

**Samuel Westmacott,** of Minety, was next called but merely deposed to seeing Mr Wheeler take a cup of water out of a tub on Tuesday morning, which he said he threw on the face of the deceased, as stated in that witness' own evidence.

The prisoner was again remanded.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 17 August 1863

An old man named Fullbrook was found dead a few days ago in a stable at Minety, and a man named Taylor is now in the custody of the Wiltshire police charged with wilful murder.

A great deal of evidence has been adduced against the prisoner before the Malmesbury magistrates, and the case is not yet closed.

It appears that in the neighbourhood of the Minety station of the Great Western Railway there is a small public house called the Red Lion, and the deceased was engaged at times at the house, for which he received his meals, and was allowed to sleep in one of the stables.

A few mornings ago the deceased was found in the stable dead. Mr Lawrence, surgeon, of Malmesbury, examined the body, and found that there was a severe bruise over the left eye, besides a bruise below the right collarbone; and on a post mortem examination discovered that there were injuries to the head sufficient to cause death. It appears that on the day before the deceased was found dead he was seen by a policeman with a black eye, and when asked how he came by it he told the officer that the prisoner struck him very violently and caused it.

Witnesses have been examined who swear that one night the prisoner returned from Malmesbury intoxicated, and that he struck the deceased a tremendous blow. It also appears that the prisoner has previously been charged with serious and violent assaults, and that, though the coroner's jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased died from injuries inflicted on his person, but by whom and how there was no evidence to show, the police authorities are not satisfied with the verdict, and they have therefore detained the prisoner in custody.

[Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 20 August 1863](#)

### **Committal of the Accused**

The prisoner, Edmund Taylor, a dealer, of Minety, has again been brought before the Malmesbury magistrates, charged with the wilful murder of Henry Fullbrook, of East Shefford, Berks, who was found dead in the stables at the Red Lion Inn, Minety, on the morning of Tuesday, the 4th inst. From the evidence adduced it appeared that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., prisoner returned to his home as usual, drunk, and, without any provocation whatever, dealt the deceased several terrific blows on the head and face. These injuries, it was stated, were sufficient to cause death. On the same night he tied his horse up, beat it in a most shameful and unmerciful manner with a cudgel, and knocked one of its eyes out.

The magistrates then fully committed the prisoner for trial at the next Wiltshire Assizes. He manifested no surprise, but applied for bail. This the Bench declined to accept, at the same time expressing an opinion that the prisoner Taylor was so violent and dangerous a character that he was not a fit subject to be permitted to go at large. PS Bustard was bound over to prosecute, and the other witnesses were also bound over to give evidence.

The prisoner Taylor has several times been convicted of various offences. On the 11th July 1862, he was committed by Sir R H Pollen and Captain Perry Keene, under the Aggravated Assaults Act, for six months, with hard labour, for a violent assault upon his wife, so that he has only been out of prison about six months.

[Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 24 August 1863](#)

## Claims Court

Edmund Taylor, of Minety, dealer, v Charles Hays, of Cricklade, cattle dealer.

This was an action to recover the sum of 8s, being the value of some harness alleged to have been unlawfully detained by the defendant. Defendant said he bought of plaintiff's wife (plaintiff being in prison) a horse and trap and part of two sets of harness, for £2, that he paid the money and took the property away and that he took no more than what he paid for. Plaintiff's wife, on the other hand, said she sold defendant one set of harness only, and that defendant took away two sets. Both parties applied for an adjournment to the next court, for the production of further evidence, and His Honour said that as each party thought the case would be more fairly tried if adjourned, he would grant the adjournment to the 11<sup>th</sup> Jan next, each party to bear his own costs of that day.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 14 December 1863

## Manslaughter at Minety

Edmund Taylor, 30, dealer, was indicted for the manslaughter of Henry Fullbrook, at Minety, on the 2nd August last. He was further indicted for the manslaughter of a man unknown.

Mr Swayne conducted the prosecution; and Mr T W Saunders defended the prisoner.

Mr Swayne, in stating the case, said the prisoner was at first indicted for killing a man whose name was supposed to be Henry Fullbrook, but it had since transpired that that was not his name – indeed they did not even know his real name, and so the second indictment was drawn up. The prisoner it appeared struck the old man in the stable on the Sunday night, and on the Tuesday morning he was found dead. He (the learned counsel) did not impute to him that he intended to kill the old man, but if that blow caused death he had committed the crime of manslaughter.

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OPC Note: There now follows a lengthy report of the evidence given. This is a repeat of that reported on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1863. (See above).

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Mr Saunders addressed the jury for the defence. He considered it was a most trivial case, but the magistrates had committed the prisoner for trial for murder. The bill had been thrown out by the Grand Jury, but the prisoner had been kept in goal since last August. If he were in the wrong he (the learned counsel) thought he had been amply punished. The prisoner had admitted striking him, but the deceased had been fighting with a man named Smart a few days before, and then he received the injuries that had caused his death. He thought the evidence was not sufficient to show that the blow given by the prisoner had caused the old man's death, and therefore they ought to acquit him.

The learned Judge briefly summed up, and the jury acquitted the prisoner.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 4 April 1864

### **Assault and Threat to Murder**

Edmund Taylor, of Minety, recently acquitted at the late assizes for the murder of a man whose name was unknown, was brought up with a warrant, in the custody of PC Hobbs, charged with assaulting and threatening to murder his wife.

The poor woman deposed (reluctantly) that since his acquittal he had led a life of dissipation, and on Wednesday last, after going to bed, he accused her of squandering his money -- used her shamefully by thrusting his elbows into her ribs, and told her he would as soon murder as a -- rook. She was in fear of her life, and left him. The poor woman assured the Bench that during his incarceration in gaol she did her best to provide for her three children, and sent £8 6s to defend him at his trial.

In corroboration of her testimony, Mrs Taylor called Mr Green, the stationmaster, at the Great Western Railway, who deposed that on the morning in question he saw the prisoner in a very excited state, smashing his clock, looking glasses, and other portions of his furniture. He had frequently sheltered prisoner's wife from his violence. The prisoner cried and begged the magistrates to be merciful, but it was of no avail, and as a severe admonition, they ordered him to be imprisoned 12 months, in default of finding two sureties to the sum of £100 each for his good behaviour for the next twelve months, and himself in £100. The bench complimented Mr Green, the stationmaster, for his humane conduct in protecting Taylor's wife and giving such straightforward evidence.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 18 April 1864

### **Death of a Character**

Edmund Taylor, formerly an innkeeper, of Minety, who was imprisoned for brutality to his wife and mother, on several occasions, and who was charged with murdering a decrepid old woman, named Fullford, but was acquitted at the assizes has met with an untimely death, in Wales, whither he had absconded, leaving his wife and family chargeable to the parish.

In playing skittles with a man named Bath, a native of Brinkworth, they quarrelled and fought. Whilst tusselling together, Taylor received a severe blow or hurt, from the effects of which he died the same evening. Taylor could have been apprehended for leaving his wife chargeable, but doubtless the parish authorities wisely thought his room better than his company.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle 17 July 1865