



Dennis Macnamarra

Saturday December 21st 1867

On Sunday morning last 14th December, the inhabitants of the quiet village of Facit, were thrown into a state of consternation by a rumour, which soon spread to Bacup, that a man had been found dead in the forge of Mr Benjamin Butterworth, blacksmith at Facit. The body proved to be that of Dennis Macnamarra, a native of Ireland, who has for some time resided in Bacup. One of the unfortunate man's ribs had been broken, and on the left side of the face near the eye, there was a contused wound, besides other marks of violence. Information was given to the Police, on the same morning and some men, known as the "Cheapers" in whose company the deceased had been seen on the previous evening, were strongly suspected of being concerned in the affair, and they were consequently arrested.

On Monday six young men named James Henry Harrison, William Samuel Crossley, Thomas Clegg, Greenwood Stansfield, Henry Riley, and John Rushton, were charged with killing Dennis Macnamarra. The deceased was a factory worker, and resided at Bacup. On Saturday night last he came to Rochdale, to Mr Chadwick's pawnshop to release some pledges, a silver watch, and a couple of shawls, before returning home. He took a great deal of drink, and he arrived at the Halfway House Inn Facit, about eleven o'clock. It was alleged that whilst in this house he produced a knife, and for this act the landlord turned him out. After he was put out he was heard by neighbours to call out and moan very much. Information was then given to the police that a body had been found in the shoeing shed at Facit. Mr Watson was going passed the shed at half past six in the morning when he saw something white. Fancying that there was something wrong, he went to the Halfway House, and saw the ostler Greenwood; they then went to the shed and found the deceased dead. They removed him to the inn where it was found he had a contused wound on the left side of his face near the eye. There was also a large scar on the left leg, about four inches long, and inside the left calf a large bruise. After enquiries the prisoners were taken into custody. When asked if they had anything to say by Mr Chadwick the Chairman as to why they should not be remanded. James Harrison replied "No I was there when the row began". William Crossley said "He pulled a knife out to me without my speaking to him". They were all remanded.

The inquest on the body opened on Tuesday morning, at Mr Adam Hills, the Halfway House. Great excitement prevailed throughout the district and large crowds thronged the roads leading to the public house. The jury consisted of fifteen persons, 9 from Bacup and six from the surrounding neighbourhood. Mr Samuel Schofield of Bacup acted as foreman. Mr Molesworth Deputy Coroner presided, and Mr Whitehead Solicitor from Rochdale, watch the case on behalf of the prisoners. Julia Macnamarra, wife of the deceased was the first witness called. She said she was 44 years of age and that she lived at Vale Street Bacup. She had seen and identified the body as that of her husband. He was 45 years of age. The last time she saw him alive was on Saturday afternoon, when he parted from him near the Cooperative Store. About ten minutes to four o'clock. He then went in the direction of Rochdale. He had three purses in his pocket, one containing three pawn tickets, and another a half sovereign, and half-crown. He went to Rochdale to release two shawls, and a watch, which were pledged for 10s 6d. He was quite sober when he left Bacup, he had a walking stick with him and it seems it was broken in the conflict. When part of the stick was produced the witness burst into convulsive sobs.

Thomas Watson 48 said he was a banksman, and that he resided at Facit, On Sunday morning he went to Facit Clough Colliery to fire up, and as he was returning home, about half past six he saw something white in the forge kept by Benjamin Butterworth, there was no door to the forge, He then returned back to the stables of the Whitworth Vale Coach Company and he there saw a man named John Greenwood. He told him that where was something of an unusual character laying in the forge then they both went up calling out several times but getting no answer, Greenwood struck a match and found that it was a body, and on touching it said that it was lifeless and that he would have nothing to do with it and then went away.

John Greenwood weaver said that he resided at Meadows Cottages, Facit, he went with Watson saw the body knew there was something wrong connected with it and went to get a policeman at Millgate but he being away he went to Bacup to get Sergeant Stuart. Sally Greenwood witness stated that she had seen him the night before; he was very dirty she saw no bruises or blood on him. She had ordered two men called James Lord, and James Rushton to take him outside after he'd said he was going to fire a bullet, though she never saw any pistols.

Alexander Welsh said he was surgeon and had examined the body, On the left leg there was he found a slight lacerated wound about a quarter of an inch in extent at the outer angle of the left eye was blackened. The upper lip was coated with blood, which had apparently, proceeded from the nose. On the left leg there was an abrasion running parallel with the shin bone, about four inches in length. He was of the opinion that those wounds were of recent date. He found that the nose was completely fractured. Dr Wood and himself made a post mortem examination on the 17th at the back of the head they found a occipital protuberance which was no doubt the result of a blow. On removing the scalp, the surface of the durameter was slightly congealed. There was no depression or fracture of the skull, and they did not perceive any injury suffered by the brain on the back of the head. The pia matter was also slightly congested. The brain itself was in very healthy condition. When asked by the coroner for cause of death he said "I am of opinion that the injuries combined resulted from violence that was sufficient to account for death". Dr Welsh carried out a second

examination of the body and I the day after reported to the inquest that he was now more fully able to account for the cause of death. He was now prepared to say that death resulted from congestion of the right lung, and that that congestion was caused by the fracture of the rib opposite. Another witness stated she had heard the deceased calling out " Oh I am killed, I am killed" she opened the door and saw a man laid down sideways in the turnpike. She went to him and at the same time James Lord, clogger came up and they both lifted him up. Other witnesses reported seeing the man kicked and hearing a clatter of clogs as though that of a lot of young men running off. John Fletcher a young man said on Saturday night, a little after eleven o'clock he went into Adam Hill's and he saw deceased there, along with Whittaker Smith, James H Harrison, William Crossley, Greenwood Stansfield, John Rushton Riley and others. He heard someone shout "a knife, a knife" and then William Samuel Crossley jumped upon a chair and kicked deceased in the chest with his clog. He did not offer to strike him back. The waiter on then came in and put the deceased out. He was followed by those named. He then went out and heard some groaning mournfully. The waiter on William Sunderland stated there was no knife in deceased hands only a pipe. The young men followed him out then came back in again shortly, he then heard Harrison say, " We have warned you old --- his hutch aboon a bit", and Crossley said " Aye we have warned you old ---- of an Irishman. Thomas Taylor was the next witness and said he had had a conversation with Crossley they day after, and he admitted they had carried the deceased into the shed where he was found. Another man was arrested by the name of John Robert Whitworth, in all, seven men faced the charges and there were two inquest hearings the second whilst the accused were present. James Harrison and William Crossley were detained for trial at the next assize court the rest of the accused were released.

March 14th 1868 The Manslaughter At Facit

James Henry Harrison, 19 and William Samuel Crossley, 18 were charged with the manslaughter of Dennis Macnamarra, at Spotland, near Rochdale, on the 14th December. Mr Hopwood and Mr Addison Prosecuted, the prisoners were defended by Mr Torr. The deceased was an Irishman, and on the day in question he was on his way from Bacup to Rochdale. He called at the Half way House, known as the Bay Horse Inn, at Facit, and went into a room in which the prisoners and a number of other men were assembled. A quarrel took place, and the deceased showed a knife, whereupon the prisoner Crossley kicked him upon the breast. The deceased was turned out of the house and it is alleged by the prosecution that the prisoners followed him and inflicted injuries which caused his death during the night. He was found dead in a outhouse, early on the following morning. Death had been caused by the pressure of a broken rib upon the right lung. It was proved however that the victim had fallen heavily upon some lavingstones that were set up on edge, near to the public house, and the surgeon was not prepared to sat that the fatal injury had not been caused by that fall. Upon this the judge stopped the case , directed a verdict of not guilty and the accused were discharged. Mr Hopwood intimated that the witnesses for the prosecution had not told the whole truth.

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