



# CORONERS INQUESTS



## James Bennett

An inquest was held at the Council Chamber, on Monday evening last, before Mr. Wilson, the coroner of the borough, on the body of James Bennett, an old man, of Bodenham, near this city, who fell into the water at the bottom of Exeter Street on the Saturday evening preceding. The accident was observed by two little boys, who were passing at the time, and who were most diligent in their endeavours to get assistance; but we regret to have to record the most disgraceful conduct on the part of a person named William Atkins, a drowner, of Harnham. He was passing directly after the accident occurred, and to the entreaty of the boys, that he would get the old man out, exclaimed, "Who the hell is to pay me for it?" and walked on without rendering the least assistance. Mr. Walker, of the Three Crowns Inn, passed by shortly afterwards, and, with Mr. J. R. Bonnet and others, succeeded in getting the deceased out, and conveyed him to the Crown and Anchor Inn, where, however, he shortly afterwards expired, from the combined effects of exhaustion and the cold. The conduct of the little boy Edmund Young, who also gave his evidence remarkably well, was such as to call forth the marked approval of the Coroner and Jury, whilst they expressed their disgust at the brutal conduct of the man Atkins.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Monday 23 January 1837**

### **OPC Note:**

**DROWNER** (Also known as a Waterman) - A man who understood irrigation. He was appointed to control the watering of the common water meadows, especially in Dorset, Wiltshire, Avon and Hampshire.