

02-03-1868 – UK – Henry Madden – LEO Boat Patrol Accident

River Mersey Police

http://www.policerollofhonour.org.uk/forces/england/merseyside/merseyside_roll.htm

PC Henry Madden

Died 3 February 1868, aged 40

Drowned when the police boat in which he was on patrol capsized.

Fatal Boat Accident on the Mersey, Death of Henry Madden River police No1, 1868

<http://www.old-merseytimes.co.uk/HENRYMADDEN.html>

Liverpool Mercury, Feb 4th 1868

Fatal Boat Accident on the Mersey

One Man Drowned, Narrow Escape of Several Officers

Yesterday morning a boat accident, which unfortunately resulted in the loss of one life, and by which the lines of several others were jeopardized occurred on the Mersey. About 9 o' clock the boat of the river police left it's station on the usual round of inspections of vessels which had arrived in the river. The boat was in charge of the coxswain Samuel LITTLER, with home were the following other offices of the river police, who formed the crew – John JONES, Peter BALL, Henry MADDEM, John GILLESPIE, and Willian SHAW.

The men had been on duty for about two hours. There was a strong current running, and they had the boats' sail set, when about 11 o' clock the boat being then in the middle of the river and at a point between Rock Ferry and Tranmere, a squall came on and capsized the boat. The whole of the occupants were thus thrown into the water, and all were in immediate peril. Fortunately the river police boat had been accompanied during the morning by the Liverpool lifeboats No's 1 and 2, manned by their usual crews, who according to their custom were going through their monthly exercise. The lifeboats at the time of the accident were within a short distance of the spot where the boat capsized. The crews immediately hastened to render assistance, and in the most praiseworthy manner succeeded in rescuing all the men and took them onto the lifeboats.

In connection with the rescue a courageous act deserves special notice, one of the lifeboat men Griffiths THOMAS, jumped from his boat into the water and caught hold of a Police-officer who was sinking, and thus saved his life.

SHAW, when rescued appeared so much exhausted buy the immersion that it was deemed the most prudent course to place him on board the Rock Ferry steamer then at hand, which conveyed him to the George's Landing-stage whence he was

immediately transferred to the baths at the pierhead, where a bath and the usual restoratives were successfully applied to him.

The other men were taken in the lifeboats to the Prince's Pier, and were immediately removed to the receiving house, but on their arrival there it was found MADDEN was dead. Prompt measures were taken to promote the recovery of his companions, all of whom (including SHAW) had revived as to be able to return home in the afternoon. Major GREIG and Superintendent RIDE attended at the receiving house and made every provision for the sufferers. The deceased MADDEN, Officer No 1, leaves a wife but no family. He was about 40yrs of age and had for some time been in the borough police, previous to his joining the river police force on its establishment.

The report of the accident created great excitement in the neighborhood of the Prince's Landing-stage and considerable anxiety was evinced to ascertain the condition of the unfortunate men who had narrowly escaped with their lives. Much credit is due to the crews of the lifeboats, as, had it not been for their prompt exertions many if not all of the crew of the boat which capsized would have lost their lives.

One of the river police MACBRIDE, narrowly escaping being with his companions at the time of the accident, he belongs to the boat which capsized, but yesterday had to attend the police-court on duty, otherwise he would have been, no doubt, with the rest of the crew in the boat.

It seems an appropriate occasion to direct attention to a suggested alteration in the means provided for the river police in the discharge of their duty of visiting ships in the river, When the force was established it was noted out that the employment of small boats would not only be an inconvenient but attended with danger to life on the Mersey, and a suggestion was made that a small steamer should be provide for the purpose, that this would be much more convenient and less expensive than small boats. As the river police are liable to be called upon to visit vessels in the river in there most boisterous weather, their occupation as now conducted is not unfrequently hazardous. The Accident which occurred yesterday shows the impolicy of employing boats in such service.

Liverpool Mercury, Feb 7th 1868 **Boat Accident on the Mersey**

On Tuesday Mr Clarke ASPINALL, borough coroner held an inquest on the body of Henry MADDEN, a member of the river police force who was drowned off Tranmere on Monday by the capsizing of a boat. The deceased was 40 yrs old and had been a member of the river police force since its establishment.

Samuel LITTLER, coxswain of the boat stated that on Monday morning he took one of the river police boats. The crew consisted of 6 persons, the deceased being one. When they put off the tide was on the ebb, and there was a good deal of wind.

About 11 they boarded the barque Preston, and on leaving the vessel mad for the Cheshire shore, the boat being under canvas. The mainsail was set, the mizzen reefed. Witness was at the helm. At the time Police-officer No 10 was setting the mizzen a sudden squall broke the fore-sheet rope and carried it away. The sail was at once brailed up. The deceased Police-constable No 1, got up to get hold of the end of the flying sheet, and in doing so slipped on the lee side of the boat. The water immediately rushed over the gunwale and the boat capsized.

No's 1 and 2 lifeboats went to their assistance and picked up the whole of the crew of the capsized boat, They were taken to the receiving house at Prince's Dock, where the deceased died shortly after being admitted. At the time the boat capsized two of the officers were standing up on her, their duty rendering it necessary for them to do so.. Witness had sailed in the same boat with all the sails set in weather quite as rough as that which prevailed on Monday, He considered the accident occurred entirely through the deceased stepping on to the side of the boat.

Police-officer 10 gave confirmatory evidence, and said in his opinion the boats would be better if they were a little higher out of the water, John SHAW, Captain of No 1 lifeboat, stated that one lifeboat picked up 4 men and the other 2. On the way to the receiving house everything was done to restore MADDEN. When witness first noticed the boat capsized, the sail, although brailed up, had filled with wind in the upper part, and that would cause a great leverage upon the boat.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased was drowned by the capsizing of the boat, and that in their opinion the boats should be a little higher out of the water.

The coroner remarked that the thought great credit was due to the crews of the lifeboats for the remarkable promptitude with which they had acted, The jury agreed in that opinion and highly recommended the lifeboat crews for their conduct.