

GREENWICH

MYSTERIOUS DEATH. - An adjourned inquest was held...at the Eight Bells public-house, on Wednesday afternoon, on the body of Maria Johnson, an aged black woman, the wife of a pensioner of Greenwich Hospital, and residing in Skinner's-court, Church-street, Greenwich...The deceased, it appeared, from the evidence given by the neighbours, a very low and immoral class of people, had on Wednesday week last had a quarrel with an old woman named Humphries...and, as it was alleged, received several violent blows on the head and other parts of her body; her right eye also being blackened. She took to her bed immediately after, and in a few days died...several witnesses stated that the deceased had been violently struck by the daughters of Mrs Humphries...The jury, after expressing their dissatisfaction at the conduct of Mrs. Humphries and her daughters...determined to adjourn for a month, in order to obtain further information on this at present inexplicable affair.

Kentish Independent, 16 January 1847

A newspaper report from January 1847 describing the death of Maria Johnson, an American Black woman who was the wife of a Greenwich Out-Pensioner, John Johnson. She died following a blow to the head during a fight over rent owed in Skinner's Court (near Roan Street). Her death indicates the conditions under which some Out-Pensioners and their families had to live.