

## BRISTOL MERCURY

### 1 October 27 1829

INTELLIGENCE Last week, at Creech St Michael, Somerset, a boy named **Sharman**, the son of a boatman, whilst driving his horse, was so dreadfully kicked in the head that he instantly expired.

### 2 January 19 1833 Monmouthshire

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT On Friday night, the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, about seven o'clock, a boatman of the name of **Thomas Adams**, in the employ of Mrs Ann Prosser, carrier, of Brecon, when in the act of filling the sixth lock on the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal, near Llangunnider Wharf, fell from the upper gate into the water, in the presence of two other boatmen, who, notwithstanding they used every exertion in their power, were unable to extricate him in time to save his life. The unfortunate man has left a widow and three children.

### 3 July 13 1833

PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE A lad named **Noah Tandy**, aged about 18, met with a frightful death on Saturday se'nnight, at the Blockhouse lock, on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The deceased was a boatman, in the employ of Messrs Brown and Son, of Gloucester, and whilst working the boat through the lock he slipped off the bow between the vessel and the wall, by which he was so dreadfully crushed that he survived but a few moments. An inquest was held upon the body before Mr Gwinnell, and a verdict of *Accidental death* returned.

### 4 March 3 1838

INQUEST An inquest was held on Monday before J B Grindon Esq at the Ferry House, Rownham, on the body of a woman of the supposed name of Bendall, which was found that morning floating in the river between that place and Pill. **Abraham Gilmore**, a Pill boatman, stated that on coming up the river in company with his uncle, he perceived the body of the deceased standing nearly upright in the water; they succeeded in towing it to shore. Upon searching the pockets they found three pawnbrokers' duplicates, and a letter in a pocket book; the letter was addressed to "Mrs S Bendall, 3 Corn Street, Bath", and the duplicates were by Bath pawnbrokers, from which circumstances it was conjectured that the body had floated down the Bath river into the Avon; it had evidently been in the water several days, and was attired in a stuff gown, much torn, without bonnet, cap or shoes. Verdict *Found drowned*.

### 5 June 17 1843 Worcestershire

FATAL ACCIDENT AND MIRACULOUS ESCAPE On the evening of Thursday se'nnight, a very melancholy accident happened on the Severn, near Camp-house. Two young men, named William Hobro and William Haskew, started up the river in a small cock boat which Hobro had himself made. At a part of the river called Hallow Sling, a sudden gust of wind caught the sail and upset the boat, and both the young men were precipitated into the water. On rising to the surface the caught hold of the same side of the boat, and this causing it to capsize, Hobro cried out to his companion, "Now, Bill, you must take care of yourself, I can swim". He then made for the shore. Another gust of wind striking against the boat at the moment, Haskew, who had hold of it, was once more immersed, and never saw his companion again. Fortunately a boatman named **Hands**, who was coming down the river, and had been attracted by the cries of the young men, brought his boat up at this moment, and Haskew, who was by this time almost exhausted, was enabled to grasp its side, and being hauled in was thus saved. Poor Hobro was nowhere to be seen, and we believe his body has not yet been found.

### 6 July 29 1843

INQUESTS On Monday (by adjournment and re-adjournment from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> last) at the General Draper, Hotwells, on the body of **Abraham Lavington** aged 11. From the examination of

father of deceased, **John Lavington**, boat owner of Melksham, it appeared that on the 27<sup>th</sup> deceased, a boatman and witness were coming up the river in a canal boat belonging to the latter, when on their getting nearly abreast of the Hotwell-house, they saw the *Rose* steamer approaching. The boat had about 30 tons of stone on board and was down to about 1 1/2 inches from the water in the middle and rather more at the ends; it was about 1 1/2 hour of high water, and there was a very strong current running; when the steamer was within about 100 yards, witness raised his arms and shouted to them to slack their paddles, but he could not perceive that any difference was made; within two minutes the steamer passed at a distance of eight or ten yards, and the waves caused by the paddles filled the boat, and she sank stern foremost; the deceased was drowned; witness thought that if the captain of the steamer had stopped when called to that the accident would not have happened; was sure that he saw him.

Abraham Sage, of Love Street, who was walking on the bank at the time similarly described the accident, but said he did not hear or see any signal made by the last witness.

**John Martin**, a waterman, who was on board the canal boat as pilot, confirmed the owner's statement. The witness admitted that the boat differed in construction from the generality of stone boats, but said he considered her as safe. Considered the meeting a steamer a dangerous thing; more than 20 times, while on board different boats, had he been in danger of being sunk by the surf of steam packets, and he had seen others sunk.

Eliza Hill, wife of a labourer working in Leigh Woods, and Police-constable Bishop, also spoke to having seen Lavington give the signal to the captain to ease the steamer's paddles.

Mt J T Coles, of the Colonnade, proved that the *Rose* worked faster at that time than he had ever seen her before.

Mr T N Watkins witnessed the accident, but did not think that the *Rose* was going faster than steamers usually go; in witness's opinion the captain of the *Rose* could not have seen the accident; saw nothing in the management of the steamer which he considered blameable.

Some other witnesses spoke to the accident, most of whom did not consider that the packet was going faster than normal.

**John Thomas**, a waterman of Pill, who was on board of the *Rose*, heard the captain, just before they came to the Hotwell-house, call out, as a direction to the engineer, "slow", and a little afterwards he said "as slow as you can go"; knew nothing of the accident until three hours afterwards, when he heard of it in Pill.

**William Cox** of Pill was in a boat towed behind the *Rose*; did not hear the men on board the canal boat call out, which he thought he should have heard had they done so.

John McClane, engineer of the steam packet, proved that in about two minutes and a half after leaving Cumberland Basin he received orders, first to "slow" the engine, and then "go as slow as you can", and he obeyed both orders.

Joseph Butt, a fireman, proved that he passed the orders from the captain to the engineer.

Thomas Barnett, the mate, who steered the steamer, stated that he was unconscious of any accident having happened until his return to Bristol four days afterwards.

Joseph Ball, second mate, gave similar testimony.

None of these witnesses heard any signal from a canal boat.

The coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned by the sinking of a canal boat, caused by the surf from the paddles of the *Rose* steam packet; and the jury recommended that the proper authorities be required to fix the speed at which steam packets shall be allowed to go up and down the river".

## 7 November 4 1843

ANOTHER FATAL ACCIDENT NEAR SOMERSET BRIDGE An inquest was held at the Town Hall, Bridgwater, on Saturday last, before J E Poole Esq, borough coroner, on the body of a boat boy, named Henry Fry, 11 years of age, who met his death by the upsetting of a boat on the previous morning. It appeared from the evidence of **Robert Clark**, boatman, that between 2 and 3 o'clock on the Friday morning, Clark, **Isaac** and **Job Trott**, **Thomas Tuttiett** and the deceased were in a

boat on the River Parret, on the Bridgwater side of Somerset bridge. The boat was going up the river in the tide's way, in the middle of the river, Clark having the management, when it struck against a lot of baulk lying three parts across the river from the left bank, and about 30 or 40 yards from the bridge. The boat filled and instantly sunk, when the crew, with the exception of the deceased, jumped upon the baulk and were saved. Isaac Trott corroborated Clark's evidence, and added that there was not room for the boat to pass, and that owing to the darkness and the boat sinking rapidly, they were unable to save the deceased. The timber, it appeared, was lying at the Bristol and Exeter railway company's yard, and intended for their use; but according to the testimony of Mr Richard Down, surveyor, the timber did not actually belong to the company until after it was landed in the yard; he believed it belonged to Mr T B Chanter, until delivered. After the examination of several witnesses, the inquest was adjourned until Tuesday; and has since been adjourned until the 7<sup>th</sup> of November.

**8 May 11 1844 Worcestershire**

**MURDEROUS ATTACK BY A BOATMAN ON THE BANKS OF THE SEVERN** On Wednesday week a most diabolical outrage was committed by a bargeman at Diglis, near Worcester. Two men named **Hailey** and **Bentley**, employed on board the *Prince Charlie*, a barge plying between Ironbridge and Gloucester, had been quarrelling in coming up the river. On arrival of the barge at Diglis, Hailey knocked the other man off the deck into the river. With some difficulty he scrambled to the bank completely covered in mud, when he picked up some pieces of turf and threw them at his assailant. Hailey instantly went down below deck and fetched up a gun, took deliberate aim at Bentley, as he was on the bank, and discharged the contents at him. Bentley was struck in the eye, and immediately fell to the ground. On being taken to Mr Orwin, surgeon, of Bridge Street, it was discovered that although the eyeball had not been forced out, the sight was irrecoverably lost; he was then taken by some policemen to the Infirmary. The brute (Hailey) was shortly afterwards taken into custody.

**9 August 31 1844**

**ACCIDENT** On Sunday morning, the 25<sup>th</sup> instant, as Mrs Bush, who resides on the Quay, oppressed with faintness, was leaving the Floating-chapel, she fell overboard in a fit and cut her head very severely against the Quay wall. Her shrieks having alarmed the congregation, one of the, **Charles Harvey**, a boatman, jumped into the water and kept her up till a rope was thrown him, by which they were both brought ashore. This is the second person he has been the means of rescuing from a watery grave within the last two months. If the Humane Society have any fund, they ought not to overlook C Harvey's meritorious conduct.

**10 December 25 1847**

**FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE** A boatman named **Thomas Hilton** was so mutilated by a party of "navvies" last week, at Shrewsbury, that he afterwards died from the effects of the blows received. Four or five persons have been arrested on suspicion of being concerned in his murder.

**11 November 24 1849**

**SECOND EDITION** A boatman named **Malpas** was accidentally drowned in the Monmouthshire canal on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant.

**12 July 6 1850**

**FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC** Two convicts escaped from Woolwich on Wednesday morning by scaling the dockyard wall during a heavy squall of wind. One of them was **John Griffiths**, boatman, aged 21, convicted of manslaughter at Swansea, in Feb 1848, and sentenced to 15 years transportation. His companion had been recaptured; Griffiths was still at large.

### 13 August 17 1850

DEATH BY DROWNING At an early hour on Thursday morning an event occurred in the Glamorganshire canal, near the Wharf, Cardiff, which excited very melancholy feelings in the minds of the inhabitants of that quarter of the town. We allude to the death of **Joseph Williams**, aged 19, and **Thomas Jones**, aged 18, boatmen, both of whom were drowned in the cabin of a large canal barge. It appears that Joseph Williams, who resides in Cardiff, was in bed in the cabin shortly before eleven o'clock on Wednesday night, when Thomas Jones and a young man named **Lewis Parry** entered it; they also retired to rest. The barge was loaded with railway iron from the Pendarran Iron Works, Merthyr. Lewis Parry says that about midnight he was awoken by finding the water of the canal rushing in upon them. He sprang up, found himself immersed in water, and instantly becoming aware of the dreadful nature of his situation, endeavoured to grope his way out of the cabin; but at that moment he felt one of his companions (Williams) struggling in the water by his side. In a short time the latter sank in a standing position, and his head rested under Lewis Parry's shoulder, thereby saving his life; for by it his (Parry's) face was supported close to the ceiling of the cabin, between which and the water there was a small space, and consequently some air. Parry's face was turned upwards, and his mouth and nostrils were above the water. However, his consciousness quickly deserted him, and he is ignorant of anything that transpired until he found himself in a neighbouring house, to which he had been conveyed. It appears, however, that at half past three on Thursday morning **Daniel Davies**, another boatman, saw the barge on its side – partially under water – and heard someone moaning inside. With commendable promptitude he ran to procure assistance, and returned to the spot in a few minutes accompanied by nine or ten men, who put a rope under the barge to support it, elevated it in the water by means of blocks, and then the side of the cabin was cut open with a hatchet. Lewis Parry was the first who was taken out. He could speak, as he said, "Let me alone here", but it was evident that he was insensible, though he is now nearly recovered. Joseph Williams was the next got out, lifeless, stiff and cold. In a short time Parry was able to speak coherently and said that there was still another man in the barge. Search was then made, and the inanimate remains of Thomas Jones were found. He was in the bottom of the cabin. Deceased are single men. An inquest was held on Thursday afternoon on view of the remains of the ill-fated youths, at the Glamorganshire Hotel, before R Lewis Reece, Esq, coroner, when the jury returned a verdict in accordance with the facts.

### 14 March 15 1851

POLICE INTELLIGENCE **Joseph Wonnecott** was charged with having in his possession deal ends, supposed to have been stolen. The prisoner, who is a boatman, said he had been employed by two men, who had represented themselves as the first and second mates of a vessel, to dispose of the deals, and they had agreed to meet him at the Prince's Street stairs, where he landed them, but they did not come. Remanded till Thursday.

### 15 July 5 1851

A lad named **Williams**, a boatman, aged fifteen years, met with his death by falling down between the wall and a barge which was passing under the North bridge of the Glamorganshire canal on Monday night.

### 16 August 7 1852

#### Gloucester

SHOCKING CASE OF STABBING A boatman named **Rodwell** was on Thursday examined before the Mayor and magistrates of Gloucester, charged with stabbing another man named **Davies**, in a brutal manner. It appeared from the evidence of the witnesses that Rodway, Davies, and another man named Jones, had been drinking at the New Inn beer house, in Quay Lane, Gloucester, from eleven in the morning until five in the evening on Wednesday and, being excited with drink, two of them, Davies and Rodway, had quarrelled and fought. After the first fight Rodway went home and procured a clasp knife, telling one of the witnesses that he had been fighting with Davies, and that he "would go back and cut him up like pork"; and this threat he almost literally fulfilled.

When he returned to the beer house it appeared that he had the knife in his hand, and he endeavoured to excite Davies to strike him, daring him to do so; Davies at length becoming exasperated struck Rodway a blow with his fist, on which the latter immediately stabbed Davies in the face, inflicting a ghastly wound nearly four inches in length, and cutting to the bone of the left cheek and lower jaw. A spout of blood followed the wound, and Davies's clothes were completely saturated. He was conveyed home, where his wounds were dressed, and he is going on as well as can be expected. Rodway was committed for trial.

**17 January 22 1858**

On Monday morning a bricklayer's labourer, named Thomas Greenwood was charged at Manchester with killing **Michael Kerr**, a boatman, on Saturday night. For no better reason than that, both being partly intoxicated they could not pass in the street on Saturday night without accidentally elbowing each other, they came to blows, and went down upon the pavement. Kerr regained his feet first, when the other kicked him in the pit of the stomach, and the blow proved fatal almost immediately. The prisoner was committed for trial.

**18 April 23 1853**

**Richard Pedder**, a boatman aged 40, has been committed to Lancaster gaol for trial on a charge of having wilfully murdered his wife by deliberately shooting her with a duck gun. The scene of the murder was only four miles from Garstang, where a frightful crime was perpetrated last week.

**19 December 3 1853**

**Samuel Williams**, boatman, aged 35, was drowned last week in the Glamorganshire canal.

**20 October 6 1855**

INQUESTS BEFORE BRUGES FRY, ESQ, CORONER At Midford, in the parish of Southstoke, on the body of **Job Alexander**, a boatman of Calne, Wilts aged 45. Deceased was passing along the canal in company with another boatman named **Garraway**, in his usual health, when he was seen to stagger and fall to the ground, and in two minutes was a corpse. He had often complained of pain in the region of the heart. Verdict "Died by the visitation of God".

**21 May 23 1857**

**Cardiff**

INQUESTS On Wednesday evening last, before G Salmon Esq, deputy coroner, on the body of **James Williams**, aged 21, boatman, found drowned in the canal on Wednesday last. The deceased had been missing from his home about a week back. Verdict "Found dead".

**22 August 8 1857**

**Gloucestershire Assizes**

BURGLARY AT TEWKESBURY Thomas Booth was charged with a burglary and robbery at the dwelling house of **Thomas Whitehouse** at Tewkesbury, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. The prisoner pleaded not guilty. The prosecutor is a boatman living at Tewkesbury, and the prisoner is a labourer. About four o'clock on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May Whitehouse went downstairs, and hearing a noise in his cellar, he went there, and saw the prisoner leaving. He followed him over several walls, and ultimately the prisoner got into the river Avon, where he was captured. In his flight the prisoner dropped the prosecutor's jacket, which he had stolen, and he had also stolen some other property. The prisoner told an improbable story that he was on the prosecutor's premises in pursuit of a rabbit which had gone astray. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**23 January 22 1859**

**Gloucester**

FATAL FIGHT A man named **Henry Tummey** was killed in a pugilistic encounter at Forthampton, near Gloucester, on Monday. The deceased was a boatman, and was engaged with three others in bringing a boat down the Severn, when he quarrelled with one of them named **Williams**; they adjourned to a field to fight it out, and the deceased having been knocked down three times, was

unable to get up again, and died shortly afterwards. The body awaits a coroner's inquest.

**24 November 5 1859**

A fine young man named **John Ward**, a boatman on the Avon at Bath, was drowned in that river on Sunday morning. He had been intoxicated on the previous night, and it is supposed had become giddy and fallen overboard. An inquest was held on Monday by Mr Fry, and a verdict of "Found drowned" returned.

**25 July 7 1860 Gloucester**

**SHOCKING RUFFIANISM** On Sunday a boatman, maddened with stolen wine, committed a series of atrocities whilst upon the Hereford and Gloucester Canal at Oxenhall, near to Newent, in this county. It seems that a boat proprietor named **Butler** was walking along the canal when he was met by some children, who ran to him screaming and entreating him to save their mother, who was "being murdered by their father". Butler hastened to the spot, and found a woman, nearly under, struggling in the canal. He succeeded in getting her out, and then her husband, a boatman named **Holloway**, commenced an attack upon him, during which, rushing upon him with an open knife, he inflicted a gash in his throat three inches long and stabbed him in four other places in the neck and face. Mrs Butler coming up to her husband's aid, Holloway hurled her head foremost in the canal. Another woman, who had taken some part in the affair, was also thrown in by the infuriated fellow, who again set upon Butler (who, though profusely bleeding from his wounds, was attempting to draw his wife out of the water) and precipitated him in also. An aged man now came up, but he had no sooner commenced to remonstrate than he too was hurled into the canal. All were, however, got out safely. It has been ascertained that Holloway, who was apprehended on Monday, had been drinking freely of some wine that was being conveyed in casks on board another boat then lying in the canal; and that dragging his wife from her bed, he had thrown her, undressed, into the canal twice before Butler came up. Butler's wounds, though severe, are not expected to terminate fatally.

**26 August 18 1860 Crown Court, Tuesday**

**SERIOUS CHARGE OF STABBING** **Joseph Holloway** (46), a boatman, with a wooden leg, was charged on an indictment with having, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, stabbed and wounded **Charles Butler**, with intent to do grievous bodily harm at Oxenhall. Mr Hill prosecuted, and Mr Powell defended the prisoner. This case arose out of the wine robbery tried on Monday, and the prosecutor was one of the prisoners who were convicted of the robbery. It appears that the prisoner, prosecutor and several other men and women had drunk very freely of the stolen wine. The prisoner knocked a woman twice into the canal, and prosecutor got her out; a third time he knocked her in and, as the prosecutor was attempting to get her out, the prisoner quarrelled with him; they subsequently had a tussle on board the boat of which Holloway had charge, and the prosecutor alleged that the prisoner pulled him on top of him to the bottom of the boat, and there stabbed him in the neck with a knife. The case proceeded at some length, when his Lordship thought the evidence was conclusive as to a misdemeanour, but not of felony. The jury returned a verdict of unlawfully wounding, and the prisoner was sentenced to four months imprisonment.

**27 October 20 1860 Weston-super-mare**

**UNNATURAL TREATMENT OF A CHILD BY ITS FATHER** At the Weston-super-mare petty session on Monday (before J H Thwaites, R A Kinglake and Hugh Rockett Esqrs, Frederick Martill, of Weston-super-mare was summoned by **William Jones**, a boatman, for an assault. Mr T Smith, who appeared for complainant, applied to have the evidence taken down in writing, as he considered the affair would turn out a very serious one. Complainant was then examined by Mr Smith, and stated that on Saturday, the 6<sup>th</sup> instant, he was at the Claremont Hotel, about five in the evening, standing up drinking, when he heard a child crying piteously; he looked out and saw the child, and then went out to it; the child was bleeding at the nose and mouth; it was Mr Martill's youngest child by his first wife, a little boy about seven years old; the servant girl was wiping up

the blood; Mr Martill came out and commenced dragging the child into the house, when he (complainant) asked Mr Martill, "Who struck the child?" observing at the same time that if Martill himself had done it he (Jones) would serve him the same, and held up his fist, when Martill struck him on the temple with a large key which he held in his hand, the key being attached by a deer's foot; the blow divided an artery, and he bled profusely. As soon as the blow was inflicted Martill ran away. Complainant pursued him, got hold of him, and they both fell over a bucket. He should not have interfered had he not seen the child so injured, and well knew the boy was frequently barbarously treated. In reply to Martill, Jones stated he did take off his coat, and might have struck him after he received the blow with the key. **Edward Colston**, a boatman, corroborated complainant's testimony, and stated that when the child came out "he was bleeding like a pig", and he (witness) called the attention of Jones and others who were there to the fact. He knew the child to have been frequently ill-treated, the little fellow would take shelter of a night behind postal pillars, or other out of the way places, and could scarcely be induced to go home, for fear of a beating. Dr Cochran, a physician, of Weston-super-mare, deposed that some weeks since he was paying a professional visit on Weston Hill, when he saw three boys, apparently donkey drivers, dragging a child along the road, and upon making enquiries, he found that the little creature had been "living and sleeping in the woods for three days and nights!" [sensation] and could not be prevailed upon to go home, on account of the treatment he met with there. He (witness) took the child to a house and gave him some food and, naturally feeling for him, afterwards proceeded with him to the child's father's house, it then being ten o'clock at night; the premises were fastened up, and the inmates appeared to have been gone to bed. After knocking some time, a man and a woman came to the door, whom he understood to be Martill and his wife. He remonstrated with them on their neglect of the boy, when the woman hypocritically stated she had been praying for the child; he (witness) said to her, "Don't preach up such hypocrisy". Cross-examined by Mr Martill : I was somewhat warm upon the subject, and I did say "it was a piece of damnable hypocrisy". For the defence, Mr Martill called his servant, Emma Day, who stated that on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> she heard Jones use violent language towards her master, and saw him (Jones) assault him. Cross-examined by Mr F Smith : Never saw the child put in chains. Have seen his legs fastened together with a chain for two hours at a time. It was only a small chain. Have seen him twice so chained. Once for two hours, and the other time for a whole day. Upon each occasion he was placed in a sitting posture. Have only seen his father beat him twice, and that was with a small cane. He was chained up for not going to school. The child was absent for two nights and two days on one occasion, when master and myself went in search of him. A L Jones Esq asked to be allowed to state that he had taken pains to ascertain the facts connected with the case : he believed the child to be somewhat wayward, but thought that Mr Martill had not paid the child sufficient attention, or acted with that kindness and discretion towards him which he should have done. He suggested that the child should be sent off to some school, towards the expense of which J H Smyth-Pigott Esq and himself would willingly contribute. The Magistrates, at this stage of the proceedings, directed the police to fetch the child, and bring him into court. Upon the officer returning with him, he was placed in the witness box. For his age (seven years) he was diminutive, and looked pale and timid, and it was not until the father was requested to move back, and the little fellow was spoken kindly to by the bench, and placed upon the table, that any statement could be drawn from him. It was, however, elicited that he had been subject to the treatment described, such as having his legs chained together, and fastened with a padlock. He was often beaten, and from the dread of such punishment being repeated, he had slept for nights in the woods. **Charles Counsell**, a boatman, deposed that he was in the habit of seeing the boy daily, and knew the acts of cruelty to which he was subjected; he had on one occasion examined the child, and found the whole of its right side "beaten black and blue, and appearing almost mortified". Mr Martill said he hoped their worships would grant him an adjournment, in which case he could bring witnesses who would disprove much that had been stated against him. Mr J Smith said the consideration of the assault could not be adjourned, as that had been proved, but how the Magistrates would act regarding the child was another subject. Mr Martill assured the Bench it was only a slight piece of chain, and that the lad

sat down with a book placed before him. The Magistrates, who evidently felt much shocked at the sickening details, briefly consulted, when Mr Kinglake rose and addressing himself to Martill, said it was one of the most disgusting, cruel and unnatural cases that had ever been brought before them, and was disgraceful to any civilised society ; the Bench had determined that for the present the poor afflicted child should be taken care of, and then would follow a formal and judicial enquiry into the entire case, either at the next petty session to be held there, or at the county quarter session. As regarded the assault on Jones, the magistrates would fine him (Martill) £1 and costs, or in default two months imprisonment. Mr T Smith trusted the bench, having the power to do so, would grant him his costs, which request was at once acceded to. The magistrates arranged that the poor child should be placed under the care of Mr Supt Elms, at Axbridge, and his wife, their worships expressing a hope that, through the press, the matter would be made public, and that some philanthropic individuals would come forward and assist in the child's maintenance and education, pending the inquiry. Mr Rockett and Mr Kinglake at once expressed their willingness to contribute towards such an object, the latter gentleman offering to receive any subscriptions for so laudable a purpose. Subsequently the Magistrates, by the advice of their clerk, John James Esq sent the child Martill, in charge of the police, to its parents. We have been given to understand that the Rev W Hunt, curate of the parish church, having received the father's consent, subsequently took the little fellow to his own house, where he will unquestionably receive every care and attention. The case has excited much interest in the town, many people attributing the cruel treatment the child has received more to the stepmother than to Mr Martill.

**28 March 23 1861**

TOWN HALL, SATURDAY **David Evans**, a boatman from Brecon, was charged with having used a paddle in the Monmouthshire Canal. Defendant, who said he had not purposely offended, was fined 13s 6d.

**29 September 29 1861**

TIMELY RESCUE On Wednesday a boatman named **Wm Winnacott**, residing in King Street, while in the act of stepping ashore from his boat at the steps of Prince's Street Bridge, accidentally fell into the Float. A man named Henry Cole, residing in Back Street, happening to witness the occurrence, caught hold of his smock frock, and with the assistance of another person succeeded in rescuing him from his perilous position. Fortunately he sustained no injury and was enabled to walk home.

**30 October 19 1861**

**Monmouthshire Quarter Sessions**

TRIALS OF PRISONERS **Henry Price**, a boatman, four months hard labour for stealing two iron bars, the property of James Gay of Tintern. John Woodward was acquitted on the same charge.

**31 April 5 1862**

**Gloucester Spring Assizes**

ROBBERY AT STAPLETON **James, alias Thomas Cartledge** 30, boatman, was charged with stealing several articles of wearing apparel, the property of John Mattock, at Stapleton, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1861. Mr Sawyer prosecuted; the prisoner was undefended.

The jury found him guilty, and a previous conviction for housebreaking, when he was sentenced to four years penal servitude, was proved against him in Stafford in 1856, in addition to which his Lordship said he had a record of several other offences committed by the prisoner. He was sentenced to four years penal servitude.

**32 August 23 1862**

**Gloucestershire Assizes**

CROWN COURT, TUESDAY **William Brick**, boatman, charged with altering a receipt for payment of money, was acquitted.



**33 May 21 1862 Cardiff**

**SERIOUS ACCIDENT** A man named **William Williams**, a boatman, was sitting on Cardiff Bridge on Wednesday evening when, by some means or other, he lost his balance and fell over. He was taken up immediately, with his leg broken and other injuries; he was taken to Infirmary, and is progressing favourably.

**34 July 23 1864 Gloucester**

**SUICIDE** On Wednesday a young married woman named **Manley**, the wife of a boatman living in Quay Lane in Westgate Street, went out with her child of two years and told a relation that she was going along by the Severn, whence neither she nor her child would return. Some hours afterwards her child was found crawling upon the steep bank within a few feet of the water, and a crinoline lying near told what had become of the mother. Her dead body was found in the centre of the river. At an inquest held on Thursday, it was shown that she had lived unhappily with her husband, and had quarrelled with her neighbours. One witness said she believed that deceased was insane, as she had sometimes said silly things, and then laughed at them; but another witness opposed to this idea, and the husband said his wife had a very bad temper. A verdict of *felo de se* was returned.

**35 January 14 1865 Merthyr**

**STEALING TEN POUNDS** At the Police Court on Wednesday, before J C Fowler Esq, **David James**, a boatman who had been in the prisoner's dock before, was charged with robbing Mr Stephens of the Three Horse Shoes, in Dynevor Street, of ten sovereigns. It appeared that a few days ago the prosecutor employed the prisoner to assist him in brewing. After the work was over, prosecutor went into the house and fell asleep, resting his head on a table. He had then in his waistcoat pocket a sovereign. Prisoner was in the room when he fell asleep, but was gone when he awoke. The ten sovereigns were also gone. Mr Superintendent Wrenn said he had been informed that the prisoner had shown several sovereigns to a person shortly after the time when he was stated to have left the Three Horse Shoes. Remanded till Saturday.

**36 February 25 1865 Glamorganshire Quarter Sessions**

**EXTENSIVE ROBBERY AT MERTHYR** David Williams, innkeeper; Davis Williams, haulier; **John Williams**, boatman; and Leyshon Morgan, were charged with stealing 112 bushels of oats, 14 firkins of butter, 12 cwt of potatoes, and five sacks, altogether of the value of £82, the property of William Harris of Merthyr. Mr Bowen for the prosecution; Mr Allen and Mr Michael for the defence. It appeared from the evidence of Mr Thomas, foreman to prosecutor, that his master's premises, where the goods were stolen from, had been in an unsafe state. The prisoners were seen by a former servant of the prisoner Williams, the innkeeper, to take goods to his house, the Golden Lion, and subsequently some butter was sold by Williams to several parties at Merthyr and Aberaman on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January last. A policeman stated that he found an empty butter cask in Ann Jones's house. [This woman was also arraigned with the prisoners on a charge of receiving two firkins of butter, knowing them to have been stolen] Witness, on a further search, found some more empty casks in Ann Jones's house. In answer to witness, Jones said she was going to keep a shop, but subsequently admitted that she bought the butter from the prisoners. Mr Superintendent Wrenn stated that he found some oats and a quantity of potatoes in the long room in the Golden Lion. Witness asked the landlord where he obtained the goods and Williams said he had bought them at Cardiff. Witness asked him of whom he bought them, and prisoner's wife said there was no need to say from whom. Mr Wrenn took David Williams into custody, and afterwards continued his search at the Golden Lion, where a great deal more of the stolen property was found. The prosecutor identified as his property the sacks and samples of oats produced, After a hearing of three or four hours the jury acquitted all the prisoners except David Williams, the innkeeper, who was found guilty of receiving, and sentenced to one years hard labour.

**37 July 7 1866**

**Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

SENTENCES OF PRISONERS **James Fowler**, 63, boatman, seven years penal servitude for stealing three tons of coal, the property of W A Jones, his master at Eastington.

**38 October 13 1866**

**Lawford's Gate Petty Sessions**

STABBING AFFRAY IN REDCLIFF STREET At the Police court on Monday, before the sitting justices, Messrs M Castle and R Faidge, a trowman named **Joseph Farr** was brought up in custody, charged with violently assaulting **James White**, by stabbing him with a knife. The injured man is an in-patient at the General Hospital, and is suffering from the effects of stabs in the chest and abdomen. Evidence was taken as to a scuffle having occurred in Redcliff Street, on Sunday morning, between the injured man and the prisoner; and it was deposed that the latter, when he was taken into custody, had in his hand a large clasp knife, on the blade of which there were traces of blood, which appeared to have been recently wiped. After the business at the Council house was concluded, the magistrates, accompanied by Mr Williams, their clerk, proceeded to the hospital and took the disposition of White, in the presence of the prisoner. It was as follows: - "I am a boatman, and live at Widcombe, near Bath. I sail in the Antagonist fly boat between Bath and Bristol. I arrived in Bristol on the last trip on Saturday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of October instant, and in the evening, about nine o'clock, I went to the Little Ship Tavern, in Redcliff Street, to have some refreshment. I had been there about an hour when the prisoner came in, and in the course of the evening other boatmen came in and joined the prisoner and myself. We remained there until twelve o'clock, when it was time to turn out, and we all came outside. There I said to the prisoner, "Do you recollect when you pitched into me at the Plough?" (meaning a row between him and me at the Plough, at Bath), and he replied, "Yes, and we will settle it tomorrow". I said, "We will have it out now", and gave my watch to Winslow to hold for me. We squared off at each other, and closed, and I felt something sharp in the right side, and felt something running. I called out for help, and we struggled and fell together. When on the ground I called out and said he had a knife. I caught hold of it, and my right hand was cut in holding it. I bled from the injury to my side, and became insensible, and don't know what took place afterwards until I found myself in this institution. I cannot state how I got the second cut in the abdomen. I am about 32 years of age and single. The row at the Plough took place in consequence of jealousy about a girl. I am very ill, and in great pain where I have been stabbed. I was sober: Farr was a little the worse for drink". White, in answer to the prisoner, denied having kicked him in the head. The prisoner was remanded for a week.

**39 December 8 1866**

GLOUCESTER An inquest was held on Thursday night on the body of a boatman named **Evans**, who fell in the canal and was drowned.

**40 January 12 1867**

THE SINGULAR CASE OF MANSLAUGHTER AT TWERTON On Friday week Mr Bigg, coroner for Bath, held an adjourned inquest at the Railway Inn, Twerton, on the body of **John James Nichols**, canal boatman, concerning whose death by drowning a man named Mark Summers had, some two or three weeks ago, given himself up to the police, alleging that the missing man had fallen into the water at Twerton during a scuffle with prisoner on the banks of the river. On the body being found an inquest was opened by Mr Bigg on Wednesday when, after hearing the evidence which detailed the circumstances already published, the jury were not entirely satisfied with the alleged confession of Summers, and they expressed a wish to have the inquiry adjourned in order that an application might be made to the magistrates for the production of the prisoner before the jury. The application having been made, the magistrates, through their clerk, declined to allow Summers (who was detained in custody on remand) to appear before the coroner's jury, on the ground that they had no power to make such an order. At the adjourned inquest on Friday, the coroner took the evidence of the police-constable into whose custody the prisoner Summers had been given in Wiltshire, and in summing up the case Mr Bigg shared the regret of the jury that the

prisoner had not been brought before them, in order by any statement he might make to aid in elucidating the peculiar circumstances of the case. At the same time the jury were compelled to act upon the evidence before them, and for the purpose of their verdict he thought they must, under the circumstances, even presume that nothing favourable to the prisoner could be said. The jury deliberated a considerable time, and they twice appealed to the coroner to answer certain questions. At length they unanimously recorded a verdict of manslaughter against Mark Summers, at the same time appending to their verdict the expression of great regret that the course taken by the magisterial authorities had been in some degree prejudicial to the prisoner, in their refusal to allow of his being brought before them. They thought it only fair to Summers that he should have been present during the inquiry.

**41 April 6 1867**

**FATAL ACCIDENT** A shocking event occurred on Wednesday at Somerset bridge near Bridgwater, on the line of the Bristol and Exeter Railway. A woman named **Mary Ann Carey**, the wife of a boatman in the employ of Mr Symons, who lives near the spot, whilst crossing the line stooped to pick up something. Being afflicted with deafness, she did not hear the approach of the up express train, due at Bridgwater 1.35, which knocked her down, the wheels running over her body, which was shockingly mangled. Death must have been instantaneous. The deceased leaves a family of five children.

**42 February 1 1868 Gloucester**

**POLICE NEWS** **Charles Williams**, captain of the trow the *Brothers* was sent to prison for two months, and **Ezra Hathaway**, also a boatman, for one month. **William Goddard**, coal merchant of the Island, was awakened from sleep at midnight while on board a boat at the Quay, and he watched two men in another boat stealing coal from his, and when they hove away he shouted after them. They then appear to have thrown the coal into the Severn. They would not admit their guilt, though they asked that the magistrates should dispose of the case. There were several circumstances tending to prove that they were the robbers.

**43 December 12 1868 Cardiff**

**HOUSEBREAKING** At the Police court, on Monday, before R O Jones Esq and Alderman Alexander, two young men named **William Gould** and **Thomas Evans**, boatmen, were charged with breaking into the premises of Mr Barnett Freedman, outfitter and pawnbroker, Whitmore Lane, and stealing a quantity of clothes. On Sunday night about eleven o'clock, Inspector Glass and Sergeant Cambridge were passing the shop, when they noticed that the bar in front of the window was down and the door partly open, and at the same time their suspicion was further excited by seeing two men run down Bute Street, round the corner of Whitmore Lane. Seeing no one in the shop, they went to the back premises, occupied by a boatman named Evans, and saw Evans and a man named Gould inside examining the contents of a bundle which was lying on the floor. Both prisoners were turning over the goods by the light of a stable lamp. The police then secured them and took possession of all the property. The premises were found to have been entered by means of forcing open the padlock of the door and breaking open the window. Both prisoners were committed for trial at the quarter sessions.

**44 May 15 1869 Merthyr**

**POLICE COURT** **William John**, a boatman, was committed to gaol for two months for assaulting the police. He was being arrested for an assault upon a constable in the cabin of his boat on the canal, when he seized a knife and gave a thrust, which penetrated the officer's clothes, but stopped short of his body. Had the attempt succeeded, the constable would have had a desperate wound in the pit of the stomach.

**45 November 27 1869 Swansea**

**CUTTING AND WOUNDING** At the Police court on Saturday, a boatman on the canal named **Wm Williams**, residing at Pontardawe, was charged with having unlawfully stabbed Daniel Rees, also of Pontardawe. The evidence was to the effect that on Saturday night the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, both men had been drinking in a public house, where a few words occurred between them. Upon leaving the house the defendant stood in front of the prosecutor and said he would have to fight him, or he would watch him on the road home. Both men immediately set to, but after one or two rounds prosecutor felt himself cut in various parts of the head, and the bystanders saw the prisoner throw something out of his hand over the bridge. A search was made, and a knife, covered with blood and the point broken, was found. Prosecutor received a rather severe stab in the back of the neck. The magistrates committed the prisoner for trial, but offered to accept bail for his appearance.

**46 December 25 1869 Gloucestershire Winter Assizes**

**ANOTHER CRIMINAL ASSAULT** **Charles Voyce**, aged 20, a boatman, was charged with having committed a criminal assault on Fanny Davis, at Ashleworth, near Gloucester. Mrs Davis is a married woman. She said that she was walking across some fields to her home, when he accosted her, knocked her down, and effected his purpose. Convicted, and sentenced to six years penal servitude.

**47 November 12 1870**

**THE ALLEGED MURDER CASE AT CARDIFF** The adjourned inquest on the body of **Edward Daly**, a boatman, whose death by drowning, under very suspicious circumstances, has already been noticed in our columns, was held on Tuesday afternoon, the proceedings not being concluded until eight in the evening. Considerable interest was created on its being said that the female prisoner, Margaret Rimmon, had made a statement seriously implicating the male prisoner as having caused the death of the unfortunate deceased. The greater portion of the evidence at this enquiry having already been reported, we only mention in addition the evidence of the female prisoner, who was placed in the witness box. She said she met the prisoner at the Custom House hotel a few minutes before twelve o'clock at night. Both of them, accompanied by deceased, walked down the canal bridge, and immediately afterwards they quarrelled about her, and took off their jackets and exchanged blows. Harding struck deceased first on the forehead. Harding got on his boat, and said to witness, "Are you coming in here or into the canal?" meaning that she should be pitched into the canal. She went into the cabin of the boat. Prisoner said to deceased, "If you come on the boat's head, your life's gone", upon which deceased jumped over to the boat, and a scuffle took place. Harding got hold of the deceased and then loosed him. A few moments afterwards Harding pushed the deceased into the canal. He rose to the surface and said, "George, George", and asked for his hand. Prisoner leaned over the boat, and deceased said, "Never mind, I forgive you what you have done to me: I am going". On hearing the splash in the water she screamed for a policeman, upon which Harding gave her a kick, and threatened if she screamed again he would throw her head foremost into the canal. She then left the boat. The prisoner was committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter.

At the Police Court, yesterday (Friday), before Mr Alderman Pride and E Whiffen Esq, the accused, **George Harding**, was charged on remand with having caused the death of Edward Daly. Margaret Rimmon, the woman who was in custody with the prisoner until she became a witness against him, repeated her former evidence, as given at the Coroner's inquest. Mr Stephens appeared on behalf of the prisoner. Rimmon, it appears, is a married woman, whose husband lives at Treforest. She admitted being in gaol twice, and told another woman that she (witness) was afraid she would be in gaol soon again, for wilful murder. When the struggle took place (she said) between deceased and prisoner they were in the stern of the canal boat, where prisoner used to sleep. Prisoner pushed deceased over the boat into the water. He rose to the surface, and prisoner stooped over the boat, with his hand as if to help him out of the water, but the deceased said, "Never mind: I will forgive you. Goodbye!" Prisoner then said, "The b---- is gone now, and I will have you". Sometime

afterwards (she continued) he said to me, "Do you intend to say anything about Daly being drowned, for if you do, let me know now, for I would rather have your life now, and he hung for the two of you". He threatened her life several times, and she was afraid. P S Hornblow examined, said he took prisoner into custody, when he told witness he had only seen deceased on the night in question, and he (deceased) was very drunk; and if witness would only grapple about a boat's length, near the Custom House, he would find the body of deceased. The evidence of the witness Gulliver was read over, in which she had said that Rimnon said that a brick was thrown at deceased when in the water, but she could not say whether it hit him or not. The prisoner, who declined saying anything, was now committed for trial at the next assize for wilful murder.

**48 January 7 1871**

**Somerset Quarter Sessions**

FIRST COURT **John Adams**, 35, boatman, and **John Staples**, 40 boatman, were indicted for stealing 27 bushels of wheat and 21 bushels of beans, the property of John Warren, corn merchant, at Taunton, on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. Mr Hooper and Mr Barnes were the counsel engaged for the prosecution; Mr R Poole defended the prisoners.

**49 June 1 1872**

A SERIOUS CHARGE OF RAPE Charles Matthews, a well known fruiterer, pensioner and Good Templar, of Chippenham, was brought up in custody on Monday, before A B Rooke, Esq and H G Awdry Esq, charged with committing a rape on Anna Maria Matthews, his niece, a little girl eleven years of age. Mr Bartrum defended the prisoner, and Mr Saunders appeared as counsel for the prosecution. The girl stated in evidence that she was the daughter of **Robert Matthews**, a boatman, and the prisoner was her uncle. That on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, during the absence of her parents from home, the prisoner came between eleven and twelve o'clock in the morning to her father's house, there being no one at home except herself and a girl named Jane Dorset, who occasionally assisted her mother. The prisoner first took liberties, pushed her into a chair, and afterwards committed the offence with which he was charged. Prisoner came again, the day after, in the morning, and did the same to her as he had done before, and gave her money on each occasion. The evidence of the witness was corroborated by Jane Dorset, a girl 14 years old, who witnessed the offence committed on Tuesday. She also stated that the prisoner afterwards had connexion with her and gave her money, and also admitted on cross-examination that more than a year ago the prisoner was intimate with her at the Dumb Post, when her sister was present and looked on. Charlotte Matthews, the mother of the girl, stated that on her return home she observed something strange about her daughter, and from the appearance of her clothes made inquiries, when her daughter told her what Uncle Charles had done to her. Dr Spencer proved that the offence had been committed on the girl Matthews, who was still suffering from the effects, and also from the disease which had been communicated to her by the prisoner's intercourse. Mr Draper, a chemist, proved supplying the prisoner with medicine about twelve days ago for a certain disease which he stated to him he was suffering from. The magistrates after hearing the evidence committed the prisoner for trial at the next Wilts Assize. To protect the prisoner against a large crowd of women who had assembled outside the court, he was guarded to the station by a strong body of police. The case excited considerable interest in the town, and the court was much crowded during the hearing.

**50 August 10 1872**

ACQUITTALS FOR MURDER At the Leeds Assize on Wednesday, **John Deacon**, aged 60, a boatman, was tried for the wilful murder of his wife, by shooting her through the head with a six-barrelled revolver. The defence set up was that the pistol had exploded accidentally. The jury took this view, and returned a verdict of "Not Guilty".

**51 June 14 1873**

THROWING BOYS INTO A CANAL On Tuesday, at the Salford Borough Court, a boatman named **Richard Walker**, in the employ of Mr Wilson, manufacturing chemist, near Bolton, was

charged with throwing two lads named John Yates and Henry Baker, into the Bury and Bolton Canal, with intention to drown them. The evidence showed that the lads were in a boat, near Ordsall Lane, fishing with their caps. Whilst there the prisoner jumped into the boat, and pushed them both in the canal. One of the boys was taken out by a man who jumped into the water after him, and when he reached the towing-path he began to vomit blood. The water was seven feet deep. Yates, another of the boys, was sinking for the third time when rescued, and appeared as if he had been thrown against the side of the lock. The prisoner, when remonstrated with, said, "Let the young hounds drown; I am plagued out of my life by them throwing stones". He was committed for trial, but admitted to bail.

**52 June 14 1873 Cardiff**

AN UNCEREMONIOUS PROCEEDING At the Borough Police Court, on Tuesday, before the Mayor, Mr E S Hill, and Mr G Bird, **John Phillips**, a boatman, was charged with attempting to drown a married woman, named **Mary Kane**, by throwing her into the canal on Monday evening. The prosecutrix stated that she was the wife of James Kane, and lived at No 8 Canal-bank. On Monday evening she had been on board the boat *Pembroke*, and was returning to her home when she met the prisoner. He asked her to take a glass of beer, which she refused, at the same time remarking that he "was not of the right colour". The prisoner then caught hold of her throat, and threw her into the canal. Fortunately she had learned the art of swimming, and swam to the bank, where she was assisted out. P C Dicks deposed to seeing the prisoner and the prosecutor talking on the Canal bank, near the Hayes Bridge. They appeared to be intoxicated. The prisoner denied having pushed the woman into the water, and said she fell in while trying to get out of his way. The bench, however, thought it a very serious case, and sent him to prison for four months with hard labour.

**53 August 16 1873 Cardiff**

POLICE COURT **Thomas Dreaney**, a young boatman, was charged with attempting to rescue a prisoner named **Doran** from the custody of the police. Doran, while in a state of intoxication, was walking by the side of the canal and using threats that he would drown himself. The police, for his safety, took him in charge, and the defendant then endeavoured to rescue him. As it appeared to have been done from a friendly feeling towards Doran, who was a fellow boatman, he was cautioned and discharged.

**54 January 10 1874 Neath**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

SALMON ACT OFFENCES **Frederick Leyson**, a canal boatman, was charged with killing a salmon during the fence months, viz, on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult; and Joseph Warlow, a beerhouse keeper, was charged with having the fish in his possession. The bench considered that no offence had been committed within the meaning of the Act, and dismissed both charges.

**55 March 14 1874 Cardiff**

A CARDIFF SHOE BLACK At the Police Court on Monday, a boatman named **George Fight**, in the employ of Mr Crawshaw of the Cyfarthfa Iron Works, was charged with enticing a lad named Bullock from the Havannah Ship School. There was no evidence against Fight, who was discharged; but the boy told his tale. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult, he lost all the money he had earned that day in playing "pitch and toss". Afraid to return to the ship, he started off somewhere – he did not know where – to look for some work for himself. He was only eleven years of age. When near Whitchurch he saw a boy whom he had seen in Cardiff, and told him what he had done. The boy persuaded him to go to Merthyr, and a canal boat coming up the man took him on board, and he arrived at Merthyr late that night. He was told where the works were, and went in the morning and applied for work. He had on the Havannah Ship clothes, but this made no hindrance to him, and he was set to work. Lodgings were found for him by the other boys, and he continued at work earning

enough to keep him comfortable until a few days ago, when a Merthyr Police-constable observed him and he was sent back to the school. He had been well treated, and appeared to be very desirous of returning to Merthyr.

**56 July 25 1874 Cardiff**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY

STEALING COAL **John Perrot**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Mr Stallybrass. On Tuesday week, at night, the prisoner, with another man, was seen by two dock constables removing coal from one barge, which was in the West Dock, to another. They were spoken to, but said that the boat and coal belonged to their master, and they were simply transferring it from one boat to another. It was afterwards discovered that this was not the case, but only one man could be found. When the coal was examined next morning, it was discovered that four tons had been taken out. The prisoner alleged that he was directed by a man named Vickery, who was employed by Mr Davies, to remove the coal from one barge to the other. Sent to prison for four months with hard labour.

**57 January 23 1875 Gloucester**

SHOCKING ACCIDENT A fatal accident happened at Maisemore, three miles from Gloucester, on Monday afternoon. From what we can learn, a boatman named **Yeo** and his wife were descending the Severn in a canal boat. When the water in the river is high, as it is at present, light craft pass over the weir instead of going through the lock. It seems that when Yeo's boat was going over the weir his wife became alarmed for fear she would capsize, and in attempting to jump to the shore she fell into the swollen current. Her body was got out, but not before life was extinct.

**58 January 1 1876 Gloucester**

ANOTHER MAN DROWNED An inquest was held yesterday morning, by Mr Lovegrove, on the body of **George Wells**, 34 years of age. Deceased, who was a boatman, was pushing his vessel with a boathook under the bridge over the canal at Llanthony, when the pole slipped and he fell into the water. The accident happened on Thursday night, and as it was very dark the poor fellow could not be got out until life was extinct. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**59 May 6 1876 Cardiff**

POLICE COURT **John Rees**, a boatman living on the Canal-bank, was charged with violently assaulting and breaking the ribs of Robert Williams, a tailor, living on the Canal-bank. The complainant was sitting in his house on Saturday week, when the prisoner and his brother rushed in. The brother knocked him down, and while on the ground the prisoner kicked him several times and broke one of his ribs. The brother held him on the ground and also beat him. The brother absconded the same evening. The bench committed prisoner for trial at the quarter session.

**60 May 27 1876 Cardiff**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY **Morgan Edwards**, a boatman, living at Newbridge, was charged with working a horse in an unfit state. The animal was drawing a barge laden with coal, but it was too weak to draw the load. It appeared that a man last week was sent to prison for ten days for working the same animal. The Bench sent the present defendant to prison for a month, and proceedings were ordered to be taken against the owner.

**61 July 8 1876 Glamorganshire Quarter Sessions**

FRIDAY **Thomas Williams**, a boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a quantity of old copper, the property of C B Dix, at Cardiff, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. Several previous convictions were proved against him, and he was sentenced to penal servitude for seven years, and seven years police supervision afterwards.

**John Thomas**, a boatman, was found guilty of breaking into the warehouse of Mr Thomas Leyshan

at Neath, and stealing from it a sack, a slop and a cap. Several previous convictions were proved against him, and he was sentenced to ten years penal servitude, and afterwards to five years police supervision.

**62 July 15 1876 Gloucester**

CITY QUARTER SESSIONS **John Barnett**, a boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a chisel and crowbar from Wm Woodcock; to attempting to break into the dwelling of James George Goring, with intent to steal; and to breaking into a building belonging to Wm Preedy, and stealing three bridle bits and curb chain. The Recorder sentenced him to six months imprisonment, and ordered £5 to be given to P C Cole, who arrested the prisoner after a severe struggle.

**63 September 9 1876 Stroud**

SUICIDE Mr Ball held an inquest at Chalford on the body of **Joseph Browning**, a boatman aged 53. The deceased went to bed on Monday night, and about four in the morning his wife missed him, and going downstairs found him hanging by a rope from a beam in the kitchen. A verdict of temporary insanity was returned.

**64 January 27 1877 Newport**

COUNTY POLICE At the County Petty Sessions, on Saturday (before Messrs Gratrex, Cartwright, L A Homfray, Hall and Firbank), Wm Butler was summoned for killing game, without a license, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December last. It was an adjourned case, and Lord Tredegar's keeper (Edward Rowlands) called **Joseph Sanders**, a canal boatman, to prove the charge. After he had been sworn, the witness denied all knowledge of the accused. Rowland deposed that on two separate days Sanders told him, in the High Cross Public House, that he saw defendant shoot a hare and pick it up. He also said the communication was made in the presence of the landlord and another man. The case was adjourned to produce the witness.

**65 May 26 1877 Gloucester**

THE FATAL ACCIDENT AT MAISEMORE Mr M F Carter held an inquest, on Saturday, at Maisemore, on the body of **John Webb**, aged 22, a boatman who was drowned, as stated in our impression of last Saturday. It appeared that after the canal boat was passed through the lock the deceased, who had been on the river bank attending to the line, jumped into the water, and was helped on board by a man who was steering. This man begged him to remain in the boat, but he again jumped into the water, swam in the rear of the boat to Maisemore bridge, and then sank. **Mayo**, captain of the boat, swam to the bank to look for deceased, and then called to the steersman that he was drowned. The lock-keeper, seeing what was going on, threw a line to deceased, but he appeared to be too exhausted to take hold of it. Before throwing the line the lock-keeper called to some men who were on board a barge near, and who must have seen deceased, to bring a boat, but they did not do so. Mayo, **Cooper** (the second man employed on the boat, not the steersman) and the deceased were all the worse for beer. Neither Cooper nor Mayo attended the inquest. The Coroner said it was the most discreditable case he ever heard of, and directed that Mayo and Cooper should be summoned for drunkenness, as if they had been sober no doubt the man's life would have been spared. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased was accidentally drowned.

**66 March 28 1878 Taunton**

John Staples, shoemaker, was bound over to keep the peace toward **Robert Bragg**, boatman, he having threatened to murder him.

**67 April 6 1878 Glamorganshire Quarter Sessions**

**Edward Thomas**, aged 40, boatman, was charged with stealing three deal planks, the property of The Metropolitan Railway Carriage and Wagon Company, at Aberdare, on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1878. He was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months hard labour.



**68 April 16 1878**

**Gloucester Assize Crown Court**

**BIGAMY William Williams**, a boatman, aged 36, was charged with bigamy at Gloucester. He was married at Gloucester in 1869, and had subsequently deserted his wife and three children. Last November he came to Gloucester, became acquainted with a widow named Wells, who had four children, went to live at her house, and having promised her marriage, he slept with her till the banns could be published, and ultimately married her. He was found guilty, but recommended to mercy because of the conduct of his second wife. The Commissioner sentenced him to a months imprisonment.

**69 June 1 1878**

**Newport**

**INQUEST** On Thursday afternoon, an inquest was held at the Queen's Hotel, before Mr W H Brewer, on the body of Richard Walsh, who was drowned in the dock. Alexander William Parfitt, deputy dock master, said a man named **William Davies**, a boatman, called to him, and said there was a man in the dock, on the west side. Witness told Davies to pull his boat to the spot, to endeavour to rescue the man. Davies returned to witness and said the man had sunk. Got the grappling irons, and went to the spot. He lowered the grappling iron gently to the bottom of the dock, and then pulling the line found that he had something heavy on the iron, which proved to be body of deceased. He thought he was dead from his appearance. He laid deceased on his face on the thwarts of the boat, and water ran from his mouth. He and his men got deceased ashore and laid him on the beach, and sent for a surgeon. Proceeded immediately to carry out the rules laid down by the Humane Society. After labouring about half an hour on him breathing commenced. By the time the doctor came he was quite restored. The Coroner thought it a marvellous thing that deceased could be restored, and a great amount of credit was due to Captain Parfitt for the exertions he had gone through in bringing the man to consciousness, but unfortunately he died on Monday. A verdict of "Death from the effects of falling into the dock" was returned.

**70 June 8 1878**

**Stroud**

**ALLEGED SYSTEMATIC CANAL ROBBERY** The magistrates were engaged for several hours on Friday in hearing a series of charges against **William Rice**, a boatman of Chalford, of stealing several sacks of chaff, the property of his employers, the Thames and Severn Canal Company. Mr Taunton prosecuted for the Company; Mr Jackson defended the prisoner. The principal witness was a boy named **George Mills**, 16 years of age, who was employed in the boat which was under the charge of the prisoner. It was proved that it was the custom of the company to supply each of their boatmen with three sacks of food – bran, oats, beans and hay – for a week's supply for the horse, and the stableman deposed that he gave the prisoner three sacks a few days before April 27<sup>th</sup>. Mills swore that the prisoner gave a bag of chaff to **Charles Cox**, the captain of another boat, and Cox gave him a pole. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May the prisoner sold a sack of chaff &c to John Webb, who paid him 3s for it. They reached Brimscombe that day, and took in a fresh supply of food, some of those sacks the prisoner sold to Mr Webb for 3s. At Dudbridge Wm Millard bought a sack of food from the prisoner. Mr Jackson said it was a remarkable thing that the persons whose names had been mentioned had not been called, and he asked for an adjournment for the purpose of subpoenaing them. The bench said they thought there was evidence to justify them in sending the prisoner for trial, but they granted an adjournment.

**71 June 11 1878**

**Bath**

**POLICE, MONDAY** A boatman named **Isaac Ladd** was charged with assaulting Esther Wheatley in Southgate Street on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. The parties had cohabited together for two years, but had fallen out, and the prisoner meeting the complainant in Southgate Street on Saturday night knocked her down. Committed for six weeks hard labour.

**72 June 12 1878**

**Stroud**

A BRUTE **William Smith**, a boatman, was charged yesterday morning with assaulting P C Packer, at Chalford. He pleaded guilty. It appeared that prisoner had behaved brutally to his wife, who was in a consumption, and her mother had removed her to her house. While ill in bed there, the prisoner had gone and ill-treated her. A policeman was sent for, and Packer arrived and found prisoner in the bedroom cursing his wife. As soon as prisoner saw him he challenged him to fight, and attacked and assaulted him. The bench sent him to gaol for six months, and said they wished they could order him to be flogged.

**73 June 24 1878**

**Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **William Kirby**, a boatman, was summoned for £3 3s arrears due to the parish for the maintenance of his wife in the union, he having been ordered to pay 3s 6d a week. He was sent to prison for one month.

**74 August 21 1878**

A DIPSOMANIAC What appears to be an almost hopeless case of dipsomania was before the Birmingham magistrates on Saturday. A boatman, 46 years of age, named **William Poole**, was charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct on the previous evening. A Police-sergeant having proved the case, the magistrates clerk said it was useless speaking to the prisoner, as he had previously been convicted in that court no fewer than 95 times for drunkenness. Prisoner admitted the truth of this, and told the bench that during the last 30 years he had spent upwards of £200 in paying fines imposed upon him in the police court. The magistrates said he would have to pay another fine of 20s and costs, or in default go to gaol for a month.

**75 August 28 1878**

**Cardiff**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, MONDAY **Morgan Lewis**, a boatman, was charged with stealing two pairs of drawers from the shop of Mr Benjamin Morris, draper and outfitter, Bute Street. The prisoner was seen to remove the drawers from a hook near the shop door. He was followed by Mr Morris, who stopped him in Millicent Street, with the drawers under his arm. He then offered to pay for them. As he had been several times convicted he was committed for trial at the quarter session.

**76 October 18 1878**

**Glamorganshire Quarter Sessions**

FELONY AT CARDIFF **Morgan Lewis, alias Morgan James Lewis**, boatman, was charged with stealing two pairs of drawers, the property of Benjamin Morris, at Cardiff, on the 24<sup>th</sup> August. He was found guilty and, being proved to have been previously convicted, was sentenced to seven years penal servitude.

**77 December 23 1878**

**Bath**

COURT MAGISTRATES OFFICE, SATURDAY **Alfred Randall**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a horn, value 6d from a boy named William Wren. Mr F S Clark appeared for the prisoner. The evidence showed that the horn was taken from the prosecutor, who was blowing it on the canal; but there was a doubt whether it was not a mere frolic, and the bench discharged the prisoner; but it was proved that he had assaulted Wren, and for this he was fined 5s and costs, or seven days in default.

**78 May 5 1879**

THE CANAL BOATS ACT At Fenton, on Friday, **Thomas Bunn**, boatman, was fined 10s and costs for not registering his boat, which was used as a dwelling house.

**79 May 6 1879**

CRUELTY TO HORSES At the Stafford Assize, on Saturday, before Mr Justice Hawkins, **Henry**

**Theobald**, a boatman, was sentenced to ten years penal servitude for brutally ill-treating two mares, thereby causing their death.

**80 July 4 1880**

**Wilts Quarter Sessions**

SECOND COURT, YESTERDAY **Samuel Redman**, 20, boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, at Melksham, 52lb of coke, the property of the Rev E L Barnwall, from a boat on the Wilts and Berks Canal. Mr Goldney appeared to prosecute. Prisoner made no defence, and the jury, after hearing the evidence, immediately returned as verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced to four months hard labour.

**81 July 20 1880**

**Cardiff**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT YESTERDAY **Daniel Davies**, a boatman, was charged with working a horse in an unfit state. A police-constable saw the defendant in charge of a boat on the canal, laden with pitwood. The horse drawing it was in a very low condition, and its shoulders were covered with sores. Defendant was fined 40s and costs, or to go to prisoner for one month with hard labour.

**82 September 4 1880**

**Bath**

POLICE, SATURDAY *The Widcombe Drowning Case* **Thomas Amos**, a boatman, was charged on remand with causing the death of a boy named Albert Edward Miles by drowning, in the canal near Waterloo Buildings, on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. The evidence was a repetition of that given before the coroner's jury, when the prisoner was committed to take his trial for manslaughter. It will be remembered that the prisoner was in charge of a boat, and had to attend to the filling of the locks. When he reached the last one before coming to the river he was told that Miles had fallen into the lock, and at the same time two lads had jumped in to rescue him. The prisoner gave no heed to the fact, but closed the lock gates and deliberately raised the hatches to fill the lock. The result was that Miles was drowned, and his two companions had a narrow escape from sharing his fate. The prisoner, who had nothing to say in his defence, was committed to take his trial for wilful murder at the Bristol Assize.

**83 October 8 1880**

**Cardiff**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT WEDNESDAY **James Edward Stephens**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a silver watch and chain from the person of a man named David Morris, collier, from Ferndale. Complainant on Saturday went to a beerhouse called the Temple Bar, in Bute Street, where he met the prisoner. Complainant went into the back yard where the prisoner followed him. He then missed his watch. Prisoner ran away but was then apprehended on Tuesday night. As the watch was not recovered, the prisoner was remanded till Monday.

**84 October 29 1880**

**Bridgwater**

COUNTY POLICE, YESTERDAY **George Winslade**, boatman, was summoned by Inspector Aplin, RSPCA, for cruelty to a mare at North Petherton on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant was fined 10s costs.

**85 November 6 1880**

**South Wales Assize**

FALLING AMONGST THIEVES William Powell (19), labourer, Mary Ann Prendergast (15), hawker, Annie Pear (16), hawker, and **George Morgan** (18), boatman, were indicted on a charge of robbing Magnus Jonansen at Cardiff, on the 24<sup>th</sup> October, and stealing a half sovereign, two shillings, a handkerchief, a tobacco box &c. Mr Benson prosecuted; prisoners were undefended. Mr Benson said prosecutor was a sailor, and on the night of the day in question was accosted by the woman Prendergast, whilst proceeding on the way to his ship, lying at Cardiff docks. She asked him to go with her, and after he had accompanied her for a short distance, two or three men came up and knocked him down. They were followed by a girl, who threw a shawl over his head, and his

money and other things were taken from him. The chief witness was a man named Donovan, who proved that the prisoners were amongst those who committed the robbery. The jury found prisoners guilty. Powell, Prendergast and Pear, whose previous character was bad, were each sentenced to two years, whilst Morgan was ordered to undergo 18 months imprisonment.

**86 August 19 1881 Corsham**

PETTY SESSIONS YESTERDAY John Hatherall, a labourer of Chippenham, was ordered to pay **John Iles** of Forham, boatman, the sum of £4 2s 6d, damages and costs incurred by the complainant, Iles, owing to the defendant leaving his service without notice. As the defendant had no money he agreed to return to his work and repay the money by weekly instalments out of his wages.

**87 October 4 1881 Bridgwater**

BOROUGH POLICE YESTERDAY **John Mead**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d and costs for public annoyance in High Street on the previous evening.

**88 November 2 1881 Gloucester Winter Assizes**

BURGLARY **Benjamin Shepherd**, a boatman, and William Daniels, a labourer, pleaded guilty of burglary at the dwelling of John Coombe, at Upton-on-Severn, on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> July, and stealing a gun and a pair of sheets. They said they were drunk at the time, and asked for mercy. As they had already been some time in gaol they were let off with nine months hard labour each.

**89 January 31 1882**

MYSTERIOUS TRAGEDIES Early yesterday morning, a boatman named **George Hardman**, from Todmorden, was found lying insensible on the towing-path of the canal near Rochdale. He was bleeding profusely and died in a few minutes. He is believed to have been murdered.

**90 March 28 1882**

THE DROWNING CASE IN THE AVON Yesterday afternoon, Dr E M Grace, coroner for the Western division of Gloucestershire, held an inquest at the Wagon and Horses public house, Pilemarsh, St George's, on the body of **Charles Little**, aged 24 years, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Gerrish. **Charles Coles** of Hanham, a boatman, stated that for the past five months he and the deceased had worked together on fly boat *Integrity*. They left Bristol on Friday evening with the intention of going to Hanham and staying there. From Bristol up to the Feeder Lock a man named **Adams** had charge of the horse which drew the boat, and the deceased and he were on board, and everything went right until they reached the Feeder Lock. Before coming into the lock the line was taken off the mast, for it was usual for them to go through with the way they got before entering the lock. When nearly through the deceased went to put the line on the mast, but after doing this he by some means lost his footing and fell into the water. Witness ran to the side of the vessel, and putting his leg over the side said, "Catch hold of my leg", but the deceased did not rise after having once sunk. Seeing the deceased sink he ran for a hitcher, but the body was not recovered for some fifteen minutes. He could not tell whether the deceased struck himself when he fell. It was stated that the deceased could not swim. He had been working on a boat for ten years. A verdict "That the deceased was drowned through accidentally falling into the Feeder Lock" was returned.

**91 April 7 1882 Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

THEFT OF FOWLS **John Packer**, boatman, pleaded guilty of stealing four fowls from George Thorn, at Newnham, and was sentenced to two months imprisonment.

**92 April 18 1882 Bristol Police Court**

THEFT FROM A BARGE **James Williams**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Mr Ring. Constable 16, water police, overhauled the prisoner, who was in a

boat, and searching it found 15cwt of coal. Prisoner represented that it had been given him by the master of the trow *Ellen*. The master was called as witness and denied this. Williams pleaded guilty and said it was his first offence. Fined 11s or 14 days.

**93 August 10 1882 Bath**

POLICE TUESDAY **James Mail**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of old rope, the property of John Snuzzle, barge owner, on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst; and John William Pearce, Avon Street, with receiving the same knowing it to have been stolen. Fined 10s 6d or in default 14 days.

**94 September 5 1882 Newport**

POLICE COURT YESTERDAY **Charles Lee**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and begging in High Street, and behaving in a disorderly manner. Sent to gaol for 14 days.

**95 September 15 1882**

A BRUTE At Rowley, **James Moreton**, boatman, was charged on Wednesday with maliciously wounding a heifer belonging to a farmer. On Sunday morning the prisoner went into a stable, and skinned a heifer's tail, and afterwards inflicted other shocking injuries on the hind part of the animal. The prisoner admitted the offence, and said he committed it when drunk. The magistrates characterised the offence as being the most cruel they had ever heard of, and sentenced the man to three months imprisonment.

**96 April 26 1883 Stroud**

DROWNED Yesterday morning, about five o'clock, the body of a man named **Frederick Pearce**, aged about 60 years, was found in the canal. He lived at Randwick, and was a boatman in the employ of Mr Charles Townsend. An inquest is to be held today.

**97 July 10 1883 Bridgwater**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, YESTERDAY **John Mead**, a boatman, was summoned for a like offence. (Drunk and disorderly on Saturday night) Fined 5s and costs, in default seven days hard labour.

**98 August 15 1883 Gloucester**

A MAN DROWNED An inquest was held yesterday on **Raymond Braxton**, boatman, of Maisemore, who fell off his boat into the basin and was drowned. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**99 January 26 1884 Newport**

POLICE COURT, YESTERDAY Enoch Watkins and William Taylor were charged, on remand, with stealing £7 15s from **Samuel Bigmore**, a boatman, living in Upper Marion Street. Bigmore had gone to a beerhouse, where he fell asleep and was robbed. Watkins was discharged and the other prisoner was committed for trial. John Donovan, the landlord of the Cumberland Arms, where the above theft took place, was charged with supplying drink to drunken men, and was fined £2 10s.

**100 February 15 1884 Stroud**

FATAL ACCIDENT Mr Ball, coroner, held an inquest at the hospital on Wednesday on the body of a man named **Henry Winstone**, a boatman, of Cirencester, who died from the effects of an accident. It appeared from the evidence that on Wednesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> instant, the deceased was assisting two men named **Peyton** and **Collins** in unloading a barge load of timber on the canal at Griffin's Mills. They were using a crane on the wharf, and the chain had been put round a large stick of timber weighing about a ton. Deceased was bearing on one end to keep it balanced, when the chain suddenly snapped, and the timber fell on Winstone's leg, breaking his thigh. He was at once taken to the hospital, where he several times said he blamed no one, and it was purely

accidental. He lingered till midnight on Monday, when he died from the shock to the system. The coroner said the only question was as to the fitness of the chain, and whether due care and supervision was used. Mr Hooper, the owner of the crane, said the chain was not his, but as a matter of fact it was used the day before to lift a stick of double the weight. An examination resulted in showing no flaw. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**101 March 20 1884 Bath**

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A BOY Last night the city coroner (Mr English) held an inquest at the Guildhall on the body of Francis Herbert Bailey, aged 15, son of a carpenter living at No 3 Castle View, Westmoreland. The boy had been missing since the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, and his body was found in the Lydney lock on Tuesday. **William Wheeler**, boatman, deposed that he lived at Bankside Cottage, Dolmeads. He was passing along the canal side on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> inst with his little boy. The child called his attention to something on the lock beam, and he found it to be a coat. There was nothing to account for its presence there. David Mizen of the lock house stated that he assisted in taking the body out of the river at eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning. P C North, who moved the body to the Widcombe police station, said the legs were much pressed owing to their having been under the lock gates. Frederick Kite, 22, Fry's Belleview, grocer's porter to Mr Adams, Argyle Street, had known the deceased six months; he was an apprentice at the establishment, and was of a rather reserved disposition, though cheerful when spoken to. He last saw deceased at a quarter to two on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, when he left the shop, and he then appeared as usual. Witness had no reason to suppose that he would do away with himself. Mrs Ann Bailey, mother of the deceased, said the boy was cheerful and, as to his general habits, "all that she could wish him to be". The night before deceased disappeared his father had an accident, which confined him to his bed, but she did not notice that the boy's demeanour was affected by this. Mr E C Hopkins, MRCS, described the post mortem appearance, and said death might have been caused by suffocation by the body falling into mud or drowning. The jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

**102 August 12 1884 Gloucester**

SUDDEN DEATH An elderly woman, named **Elizabeth Harris**, wife of a boatman, has died very suddenly in Royal Oak Yard. As all sorts of rumours were put into circulation respecting the poor woman's death, an inquest was held; but the evidence showed that she had died from natural causes, and a verdict to that effect was returned by the jury.

**103 August 30 1884 Chippenham**

POLICE COURT, YESTERDAY **George Baker**, a boatman in the employ of the Wilts and Berks Canal Company, was charged with ill-treating a horse at Bremhill parish the previous day by working the same whilst it was in an unfit state. Prisoner, who pleaded that he took the horse by order of the foreman and after he had pointed out its state to the foreman, was remanded till Thursday next, the magistrates offering to take bail in £10 for his appearance.

**104 December 22 1884 Bath**

WESTON PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY **William Bowler, John Pope, William Gregory, John Bowsher, Thomas Dunn and James Oakley**, boatmen in the employment of Messrs Gerrish and Co (Limited) were summoned for endeavouring to prevent **Thomas Davis**, another boatman in the employ of the same company from working, and also with having used violence, at Weston, on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr Titley appeared for Messrs Gerrish and Co, and said he would withdraw the summons against Thomas Dunn, which was accordingly done. The Magistrates Clerk (Mr Williams) informed the defendants that they could demand to be sent for trial if they so desired, but the defendants preferred being dealt with summarily. Mr Titley said he brought the case under the "Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875" under which act the defendants were liable to a penalty of £20 or three months imprisonment. The prosecutors had determined to reduce the wages of some of their men, and they accordingly caused a notice to be read to that effect. On the

Saturday following a meeting of the workmen was called by Messrs Gerrish, and on the following Monday there was a strike among the men. The prosecutors employed a captain and a second mate to each boat. The reduction of wages affected the "second" man, among whom could be classed William Bowler, John Pope, Thomas Dunn and James (sic) Bowsher. These men seemed very much annoyed because some of the other second men chose to accept the abatement of wages and remain in Messrs Gerrish's employment. Among three men who accepted the reduction was Thomas Davis. The barge *Enterprise*, on the day in question making a journey to Bristol, met some of the men who were on strike. **William Short** was the captain of the boat, and Thomas Davis was the second man. At the Weston lock the defendant named Bowler sprang into the boat and called on Thomas Davis to come out. Some of the other defendants followed, and Davis took an axe to defend himself with, and, in self defence, threatened to kill the first man who came near him. All the defendants made an attack on him, and threatened injury to Davis if they got near him. That was his case for the prosecution. After some evidence, William Short, captain of the *Enterprise*, one of the barges belonging to the prosecutors, said he was in his boat with Davis, and when he reached the Weston lock the men jumped on the boat and began to use bad language and to beat the cabin about with sticks. They threatened Davis and used abusive language. One of them picked up a heavy stone and threatened to send it down the cabin. The stone weighed about 150lb, and would have killed anyone if it had fallen on him. Jas Mitchell, in the employ of the GWR Co, who said he was employed to look after the lock at Weston, corroborated the last witness as to seeing the defendant, near his lock, on the boat *Enterprise*. Thomas Davis said he was second on board the *Enterprise*. On Tuesday morning he was threatened by a gang of men among whom were all the defendants except Oakley. He was told he had to be killed in the morning. Between four and five they had reached the Weston lock in the *Enterprise*, and he saw William Bowler, who threatened to "have him out of it". Prosecutor then seized a hatchet and threatened to chop the legs off the first man who came near him. Bowler tried to reach him with a stick, and Gregory threw a tack pin – a large bar of iron (produced) – into the cabin at him. He produced a large stone and piece of timber which were also thrown at him in the cabin. The defendants said they went to see Davis. They denied doing damage to the boat. The Bench discharged Bowsher with a caution; William Gregory and James Oakley were sent to prison for one month, the chairman remarking they might have caused the death of Davis; and William Bowler and John Pope were both fined £1 and costs, or one months imprisonment. There were three other cases against some of the same defendants, but these were withdrawn. The case created a great deal of interest in court.

### 105 February 5 1885

AN ARREST IN BATH The inhabitants living in and near the valley at Freshford were last week alarmed by loud explosions, the cause of which, as they were unable to explain, caused no little apprehension. On the matter being investigated it was found that a man employed with a canal trading boat had in his possession four charges of dynamite. He had, it is said, obtained them when working at the Severn Tunnel and brought them with him to Bath, where he took up his abode. Captain Sterne, Chief Constable of Wilts, received certain instructions from the Home Office, which he communicated to Superintendent White, of Trowbridge, and in consequence the Superintendent appeared in Bath yesterday. The result of his enquiries was that at two o'clock yesterday afternoon he took into custody **Henry Allen**, a boatman, who is in the employ of Messrs Gerrish and Co. Later in the afternoon he was taken to Bradford-on-Avon and lodged in the cells. The charge to be preferred against him is that he was found in unlawful possession of explosive substances.

### 106 April 20 1885

#### Stroud

DEATH BY DROWNING An inquest was held on Friday night, at the Ship Inn, Wallbridge, on the body of **Eliza Bick**, which was found that morning in the Stroud Canal. From the evidence it appeared she was cohabiting with a boatman named **Levi Lewis**. For a few weeks they had left the house they lived in, and during that time she had been lodging with Mrs Aldridge in Alre Street. On

Thursday night, she said she should join Lewis on the boat, and she left about half past nine with a bundle of clothes for that purpose. She had a pint of beer with Lewis and Mrs Aldridge, and obtained the key of the cabin from Lewis to go on board. He followed about half an hour later, expecting to find her on the boat, but found that the cabin was not unlocked, and he had to get in some other way. The next morning the lock-keeper discovered her dead body in the water, not far from the boat. The key was grasped in one hand; the bundle was in the water near. The evidence negatived the idea that the woman was intoxicated. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

**107 July 31 1885**

EXTRAORDINARY CASE At the King's Arms, Clark Street, St Paul's, touching the death of John Bushell, aged 70 years, a blacksmith who lived at Acton Turville. He left home on Thursday last, for the purpose, it was considered, of going to Bristol on business. **Charles Davis**, a boatman, said that on Wednesday morning he saw a hat on the top of the water in the New Lock, Cumberland Basin. He went to the place and there found a body, which was in an upright position. There was a stick in the right hand and the left hand still tightly grasped a piece of rope which was attached to a baulk of timber. The hat, which was still on the head, was not wet, and although there was 30 feet of water in the lock, the body had not sunk lower than the forehead. He could not give any reason to account for the body being found in the water. William Carney gave corroborative evidence. The body had not been in the water very long. The jury returned a verdict of "Found dead".

**108 September 1 1885 Cirencester**

PETTY SESSION, YESTERDAY **Robert Ridler**, of Chalford, canal boatman, was charged with cruelty to two donkeys on August 18<sup>th</sup> by leaving them an unreasonable time without food. Mr W Pratt, canal superintendent, of Siddington, said the donkeys were left tied up from early Wednesday morning till five o'clock Thursday night at a point on the towing-path where there was no grass. They got entangled with the ropes, and could not move till he released them. Defendant said the donkeys were tied with a 32 feet rope. He also said Mr Pratt gave information out of malice, and in return for an action brought by him in the County Court against Mr Pratt. Defendant was fined 15s, to include costs, or ten days hard labour.

**109 May 7 1886 Chippenham**

PETTY SESSION, YESTERDAY **John Healy**, of Wootton Bassett, boatman, was fined 10s to include costs, for trespass in search of game on land belonging to Sir Henry Meux, at Christian Malford, on the 9<sup>th</sup> April.

**110 August 17 1886 Cardiff**

POLICE, YESTERDAY **James William Davies**, 23, canal boatman, and Grey, 21, a prostitute with whom he lives, were charged with assaulting and wounding Margaret Adams. The bench sent the male prisoner to gaol for a month, and the woman for 14 days with hard labour.

**111 October 5 1886 Bridgwater**

BOROUGH POLICE, YESTERDAY Walter Wood, labourer, Bridgwater, was charged with stealing half a sovereign, the property of **Walter Pocock**, boatman, Boroughbridge, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. The evidence was of a somewhat trivial character, and the defendant, who said it was his first offence, was fined 1s or in default seven days.

**112 December 29 1886**

ROMANTIC CASE – ALLEGED CHILD DESERTION AT CARDIFF At the Cardiff police court yesterday, Harriet Argent, aged 28, of very prepossessing appearance, was charged on a warrant with unlawfully abandoning a child five weeks old in a public road outside Nazareth House, whereby the life of the said child was endangered, on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. Annie Lewis, a widow, deposed



that she first saw the defendant in September last, when the latter called at her house with her servant. She asked for apartments, saying at the same time that she was an actress, and had come from New York. The name that she then gave was Allen. She also said that she was in trouble, and wished to stay over her confinement in witness's house. The rooms were made ready for her, and she entered at once. On Friday November 26, she was confined. On the 17<sup>th</sup> December the prisoner left her with the servant and baby, saying that she was going to London. Witness had not seen her since. Prisoner had every attention paid to her, and seemed to be very affectionately disposed towards the child. **William James Davies**, a boatman living at Blackweir, disposed that on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> inst, he was coming down alongside the canal, and when opposite Rose Cottage a man in the road called to him, and in consequence of what the man said he jumped out of his boat and went to Nazareth House, where he saw a child in a basket just outside the gates of Charity House. Witness took the child out of the basket. [The basket, which was produced, was an ordinary elongated fruit hamper] He conveyed the basket to the house of Mr Williams. There was a small paper parcel in the basket, and there was a milk bottle beside the child, but it was empty when he saw it, and the child was crying bitterly. There was a big woollen shawl, black and white, around it. The baby did not appear any the worse when she got inside the house, but seemed quite comfortable and happy. P C Franklin deposed that on the night in question, from information he received, he went to Blackweir House. The baby was handed to him, and the basket. He took it to the station, and thence to the Union. Yesterday morning he apprehended prisoner. The paper, which was evidently written in a disguised hand, read as follows - "To the good sisters of the House of Nazareth this little orphan is given. May she grow up to be a good girl and so reward them for their care of her. She is harmless. Her father was drowned at sea, and her mother died a fortnight ago. There was no one to care for her. The dying words of her mother were for her dear baby not to go to the workhouse, so I pray you care, from my heart, that the good sisters will have mercy on her and keep her there. The Lord above will look down upon them and reward them." John Pritchard, warrant officer of the Cardiff Union, deposed that on twelve o'clock on Christmas Day prisoner's brother came to the workhouse, and from what he said witness went to the prisoner and told her that from what he had heard she wished to give herself up and take the child from the union. He took her into the office at the workhouse. She said, "I heard that the ladies of the House of Nazareth were in the habit of taking in and bringing up children, and were most kind to them. So the girl and I put the child into the basket, most carefully wrapped it up well, and put it by the door of the convent, and rang the bell. We came back in a quarter of an hour, and the child was gone, and we thought that it was taken into the convent. The girl persuaded me to do it. If it had not been for her I certainly would not have done it." He was not quite certain, but he believed that the prisoner told him that the servant wrote the letter. He heard that the latter was in London on Thursday last. He did not take a note of the conversation. Prisoner made the statement quite voluntarily, and gave herself up voluntarily. Her brother did not come to Cardiff till Christmas Eve, and did not hear of it till then. The child was perfectly healthy, and did not seem the worse. The family desired to take her away on the Saturday. The bench committed the accused for trial at the Assizes; bail being allowed.

### **113     January 13 1888**

**THE EXTRAORDINARY FOG** During the fog at Leeds, yesterday, a boatman named **George Field** fell into the locks, while crossing the river, and was drowned.

### **114     July 6 1888**

#### **Wilts Summer Assizes**

**THEFT OF WHEAT** **Henry Allen**, 38, boatman, was indicted with stealing at Lemington, on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, a quantity of wheat and maize, the property of James Noad and Joseph Noad. Mr Lopes prosecuted, and the Hon Bernard Coleridge defended. Prisoner was tried at the last Wilts Assizes at Devizes, when the jury could not agree and were discharged without a verdict. Prisoner was found guilty, and was sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

**115 July 17 1888**

**Stroud**

At the Police Court yesterday, **Wm Smith**, boatman, of Eastcombe, was charged with stealing cabbages, the property of Joseph Butt and Jesse Davis, on Saturday; also with assaulting P C Simpson while in the execution of his duty. Prisoner was remanded till Friday.

**116 April 12 1890**

**Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

SECOND COURT **Saul Cook**, 19, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing an overcoat and a pair of gloves, the property of Walter Charles Tooby, at Wheatenhurst, on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Grey prosecuted. The prisoner had a very bad character and a long list of "antecedents", and the Chairman said the offence was a very bare faced and deliberate act of dishonesty. He was sentenced to twelve months hard labour and three years police supervision.

**117 July 25 1890**

A boatman named **Thomas Carrington** has died in the Blackburn Infirmary of shocking injuries caused by the kick of a horse. While the horse was drawing a boat on the Leeds and Liverpool canal, near Chorley, the deceased struck it on the hindquarters with his hand. The animal immediately lashed out and battered Carrington in the face with his hoof, inflicting terrible injuries from which he died.

**118 August 9 1890**

**Bath**

At the Bath City police court on Monday morning before Alderman Chaffin and Dr Tuckett, **Frederick Cleverly**, 19, boatman, no home, was charged on remand with inflicting grievous bodily harm on Charles Smale, on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. The bench imposed a fine of 5s to include costs, in consideration of the prisoner having been in gaol for seven days.

**119 March 13 1891**

**Bridgwater**

PETTY SESSIONS At the County petty sessions yesterday, before Mr A G Evered (in the chair) and a full bench, **Walter Mead**, boatman, and Henry Crose, labourer, were each fined 6d and 4s 6d costs for neglecting to send their respective children to school.

**120 October 26 1891**

**Bath**

DISTRICT NEWS At the City Police court on Saturday, **George Wheeler**, a boatman of Bradford-on-Avon, was charged by warrant with assaulting Charles John Pope, a little boy aged 5, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. P C Newman proved arresting prisoner at Keynsham police station, where he was detained. He explained that the boy was brought to the Widcombe police station with a very severe mark extending from behind the ear to the mouth. The lad said that Wheeler had done it with a whip. Alfred Ricketts, nine, said he and the injured boy were saying "gee up" to prisoner's horse, when he swore at them and deliberately hit Pope in the face with his whip. Prisoner said he was only hitting the horse. Fined 10s 6d and costs, or 14 days hard labour.

**121 December 12 1891**

LAW AND CRIME At Leeds assize, on Thursday, a Doncaster boatman named **Routlege** was indicted before Mr Justice Wright for an assault upon his paramour, **Elizabeth Holmes**. Accused went home drunk and, pulling the woman out of bed, inflicted a series of terrible wounds on her with a red hot poker. Routlege, weeping bitterly, pleaded drunkenness as an excuse for the crime. The judge said that fortunately the case was almost unheard of in the annals of crime, and he sentenced the prisoner to penal servitude for life.

**122 April 27 1892**

A GLOUCESTER SENSATION Between five and nine o'clock on Monday night the south end of Gloucester was the scene of disorderly and exciting demonstrations. It is alleged that the wife of a boatman had left her husband and seven children and eloped with another boatman. The parties

went up the river together on a longboat, and returned to Gloucester on Monday evening. The boat arrived at the quay about five o'clock, and here a crowd of people gathered and gave the couple an extraordinary reception. Their effigies were strung up to the crane on the quay, and after a quantity of paraffin had been poured on them, were set fire to. The boat was then brought to the locks, the crowd following. Calls were made to the man to turn the woman out, but he stoutly denied that she was on board. A section of the crowd, however, thought otherwise, boarded the boat and commenced a search. Their efforts in this respect were rewarded, the woman being found coiled up in the cabin. On making her appearance on deck, she was "dowsed" with water, her clothes becoming saturated. By some means the man got his boat on the opposite side of the basin, and a cab from Mr Colwell's mews having been procured for them, and which waited near the Llanthony Bridge, the couple immediately jumped into the vehicle, and were driven towards Southgate Street. When the vehicle with its occupants had reached Southgate Street it was met by a number of men and women, who refused to allow it to proceed further. An attempt, in which the windows of the cab were broken, was made to hustle the occupants out, and the cabman, seeing that it was useless to hope to get any "farrarder", took his horse out of the shafts, and left the fly in the centre of the raging mob who made the night hideous by their yells and execrations. A couple of policemen in the meantime appeared on the scene, and they bravely held their ground against the excited demonstrators while they sought to protect the objects of the popular rage from ill usage.

### **123 December 29 1892**

**FATAL ICE ACCIDENTS** A boatman named **Jesse Bowles**, aged 21, in the employ of the Darcy Lever Coal Company, was piloting a coal barge into the Bury Canal on Tuesday when, owing to the slipperiness of the deck through frost, he fell out of the boat on to the frozen surface of the canal. The ice gave way and Bowles was submerged. His body was recovered some hours later.

### **124 November 10 1893 Devizes**

At the borough police court on Wednesday, two men named **Albert Mann** and **William Escott**, the former a boatman employed by Gerrish and Co and the latter the owner of a barge plying on the Kennett and Avon Canal, were brought up in custody, the former charged with stealing and the latter with feloniously receiving, a quantity of fodder, the property of Gerrish and Co, from their stores at Devizes Wharf. P C Webb proved arresting the prisoners, Mann at Bradford-on-Avon, and Escott at Devizes. The former made an incriminatory statement, and the latter accounted for some fodder which was found in his stables, and which was similar to that which had been missed, by saying that he purchased it in Bristol. After hearing the evidence of Mr Dickenson (Messrs Gerrish and Co's manager at Devizes Wharf) and the police, prisoners were remanded, an application by Mr Hopkins, solicitor (who appeared for the defence) for bail being refused.

### **125 November 17 1893 Devizes**

At the Borough magistrates office yesterday **Albert Mann**, boatman, and **William Escott**, barge owner, were sentenced to one months imprisonment each with hard labour, without the option of a fine, the former for stealing and the latter for receiving a quantity of horse fodder, the property of Messrs Gerrish and Co. Mr A G Smith, solicitor of Melksham prosecuted; and Mr T C Hopkins, solicitor of Devizes appeared for the defence.

### **126 December 1 1893 Bridgwater**

At the county police court yesterday, before Mr T P Broadmead (in the chair), Mr G B Sully, and the Rev N H C Ruddock, **George Cotty**, boatman of North Petherton, was summoned by the guardians of the Bridgwater union for neglecting to maintain his four children. Mr T M Reed (Reed and Cook) represented the guardians, and the case was dismissed.

### **127 February 10 1894**

**LAW AND CRIME** At Rowley on Wednesday, **Wm Neat**, boatman, was charged with attempting

to murder his wife. The police stated that it was alleged the prisoner attacked his wife by striking her with a hammer. The injured woman's depositions have been taken, in which she stated that she was injured from head to foot. The prisoner was remanded for a week.

**128 February 22 1894**

**MURDEROUS OUTRAGE** At Old Hill police court, yesterday, **William Neate**, 43, a boatman, was committed to Stafford assize on the charge of attempting to murder his wife, Olive, on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. The evidence showed that the prisoner struck his wife on the head with a hammer, fractured her skull, and broke her collarbone and ribs. The woman's condition grew so dangerous that her depositions were taken.

**129 February 27 1894**

**Bath**

**DISTRICT NEWS** An inquest was held at the Guildhall yesterday afternoon on the body of **George Leonard Hawkins**, aged one year and nine months, who died at 8 Paradise Street on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst. Charlotte Hawkins, wife of **Thomas Hawkins**, a boatman, mother of the deceased, stated that on Friday she left the child in a low infant's chair near the fire in the sitting room, and went downstairs to attend to some domestic duties. Returning a few minutes later she found him enveloped in flames still sitting in the chair. She immediately took the child to the Hospital, where the doctor told her nothing could be done to save his life. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**130 March 7 1894**

**Luke Leek**, a boatman, was on Monday killed by a train at a level crossing in West Bromwich.

**131 March 21 1894**

**Bath**

At the city police court, yesterday, **William West**, 25, boatman of Banbury, was charged with damaging two doors and a window at 20 Little Corn Street, to the extent of 10s, the property of Annie Sturgess. He was fined 5s and costs, and was ordered to pay the damages, or in default seven days imprisonment.

**132 March 28 1894**

**THE SEVERN DROWNING CASE – INQUEST** The City Coroner (Mr C Scott) held an inquest at the Ship Inn, the Quay, Gloucester, yesterday afternoon concerning the death of William Glass, 27, ledger clerk in the employ of Messrs Charley and Smith, fruiterers of Bristol, who was drowned in the Severn on Good Friday through the capsizing of a boat. The proceedings were watched by a solicitor (Mr C G Clutterbuck) on behalf of **Charles Schollar**, the boatman who was engaged to accompany the party from Westgate bridge. Francis Martin Haine, of Windsor Villa, Clifton Wood, Bristol, at which address the deceased had also lived, deposed to proceeding to Gloucester on Good Friday, arriving at 8.15 in the morning, with the intention of going on to Churchdown to visit witness's father. They went to Westgate bridge and hired a boat, in which they proceeded, accompanied by Frank Watson of Bristol and Charles Schollar, a boatman, down the river to meet the "bore". When the "bore" came in sight Schollar took both sculls. The first two or three waves were ridden all right, but at about the fourth they shipped water, and this being repeated at the next the boat went under. Witness went under, but clung to the boat on coming to the surface, and subsequently to an oar. He saw Glass clinging to an oar and swam towards him and gave him a second. Another wave sent them both under again, and when witness rose he could see nothing of deceased. Witness stayed by in the hope that Glass would rise, but he (witness) was eventually picked up by a boat. Glass had told witness he could swim. The boatman, as meeting the "bore" was a new experience to them, had cautioned them to sit still. Charles Schollar said he had been accustomed to the river all his life, and had frequently met the "bore" with parties in boats similar to that used on this occasion – one twenty feet long and four feet wide. He kept the head of the boat straight, but water came in at the "waist". When he came to the surface Glass appeared to be

swimming for the shore “as hard as he knowed how”. Evidence having been given as to the recovery of the body, and in testimony to Schollar's skill as a boatman, a verdict of “Accidental death” was returned, and Schollar was exonerated from all blame.

**133 April 28 1894**

**ACCIDENTS AND OCCURRENCES** At an inquest held at Newport, Salop, on Tuesday, it was proved that a boatman named **James Boden** had died from starvation. He was found lying very ill in the cabin of his canal barge, and removed to the workhouse, where he died.

**134 May 19 1894**

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING** An exciting scene was witnessed near St Augustine's bridge on Wednesday afternoon. A little boy named Frederick Knece(?) aged seven was playing on the Butts, where the improvements in the road are being made, when he fell into the Floating Harbour, Joseph Wintle, of Hanover Street, who happened to be on the *Ocean*, which was unloading on the opposite side of the harbour, plunged into the water and swam out to rescue the boy, whilst **Lewis Miller** of Alderley Lane, Prince Street put off in a boat and rowed towards him. The boatman reached the boy first and took him to the Quay, together with the man who had so pluckily jumped into the water. A large crowd witnessed the occurrence, and Wintle was loudly cheered. The boy, who seemed none the worse for his ducking, was taken to his home in St James.

**135 May 29 1894**

**Bridgwater**

Mr T M Reed, deputy coroner for the borough, held an inquest at Bridgwater yesterday on the body of **James Bennett**, of Arlingham, near Gloucester, mate of the vessel *Sarah*, who was killed by lightning whilst standing under a tree during the severe thunderstorm which passed over Bridgwater on Saturday, **Louis Aldridge**, captain, being injured at the same time. Dr F J C Parsons of Bridgwater deposed to examining the body at the infectious hospital, and expressed the opinion that death was as sudden as it was painless. **George Bale**, boatman, proved hearing cries for help from the captain, and on going to the spot found him lying over the gate in great pain, while deceased was close by quite dead. Portions of their boots and clothing were scattered all around for a distance of 30 to 40 yards. Mr Fredk Symons of Saltlands also gave evidence. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally killed by lightning”.

**136 July 28 1894**

**Stroud**

An inquest was held at Ebley, on Wednesday, on the body of **George Drinkwater**, formerly a boatman and Severn pilot, of Stonehouse, who was found in the Stroudwater Canal on Tuesday, with the legs and one arm tied. A sister of the deceased's, living at Stonehouse, deposed that she saw him two months ago, when he said he would rather drown himself than go back to the Workhouse. The landlord of the Stoke Inn, Stonehouse, deposed that deceased was at his house on Monday night. He remarked that he would not go back to the Workhouse because he did not like the work there. Evidence was given that deceased suffered pain in the kidneys, and also that he was a good swimmer. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased had committed suicide.

**137 November 20 1894**

**Gloucestershire Assize**

**PLEADED GUILTY** **George Patrick**, 38, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing, on 10<sup>th</sup> November, at the parish of St Mary de Grace, Gloucester, a pair of boots, the property of Alfred Charles Lane. Prisoner, who had been in trouble before, was sentenced to four months hard labour.

**138 December 27 1894**

**STRANGE FATALITY** A boatman named **William Bates** on Tuesday met his death at Tyburn, near Erdington in a somewhat extraordinary manner. It appears that, with other men, Bates went from Birmingham on Tuesday morning to fetch a boat which was on the canal near Tyburn. In the course of their progress along the towing-path, the horse of which they were in charge, from some

present unexplained cause, fell into the canal, and in attempting to rescue the animal it was so injured that it had to be destroyed. As far as can at present be ascertained the men then went to the public house known as Tyburn House, where they spent some time, and later in the day Bates left for the purpose of fetching some food from the boat, which was close at hand. Almost immediately afterwards some men who were passing the canal saw Bates in the water, and although he was promptly got out, life was found to be extinct.

**139 March 23 1895**

**TRAGEDY NEAR BIRMINGHAM – SUPPOSED MURDER AND SUICIDE** A sensation has been caused at Knowle, a village about ten miles from Birmingham, by a supposed murder and suicide which has occurred there. On Thursday, Bridget Gavin, a servant employed by Joseph Greaves, a farmer, took out her master's two year old daughter, Violet, for a walk, and subsequently the dead body of the child was found in the Birmingham and Warwick canal by a boatman named **Sydney Harris**, in the employ of the Birmingham Corporation. It was at once feared that Gavin had murdered the child and then committed suicide, for it is alleged she told a young son of her master that neither of them would come back again. The canal was therefore dragged by the police, and after a three hour search yesterday morning they found Gavin's body near where the child was discovered. It is said that Gavin had been accused of theft, and had been threatened with prosecution.

**140 September 28 1895 Gloucester**

Early on Tuesday morning the wife of a boatman **Mrs Ann Elizabeth Ewers** of 3 Vinegar Yard, Clare Street, died from terrible burns received late the preceding evening. She was proceeding to bed with three of her children when the paraffin lamp, coming into contact with the wall of the staircase, was broken, and the woman's clothes took fire. Neighbours rushed to her assistance, but there were burns on every part of the body, and the case was hopeless from the first.

**141 October 5 1895**

**THE LAST 24 HOURS** A great sensation has been caused at Clayton-le-Moors, a township near Accrington, by the news received by a man named **Turner** that he is heir to a fortune of £150,000. Turner follows the occupation of a boatman on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Many years ago his uncle went to Australia gold mining, and it was rumoured in England that he had become enormously rich. Turner's life has been a very hard one, and the news of his windfall was a great surprise. It is stated that a firm of Manchester solicitors have the case in hand.

**142 January 23 1896**

The body of an old boatman named **Charles Hodgetts** was found in the Birmingham Canal at Heath Town.

**143 April 7 1896**

A boatman named **Hodgkiss** fell upon a bucket of fire on his canal boat at Greet's Green on Saturday. He received terrible burns, from which he died.

**144 May 5 1896 Bridgwater**

**DISTRICT NEWS** **Wm Meade**, boatman, of Barclay Street, was charged with being drunk on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult, and was fined 2s 6s and costs.

**145 June 9 1896 Bristol**

**SAD DROWNING CASE** At the General Hospital, to enquire into the circumstances attending the death of **Robert Brown**, aged 25 years, a boatman who died yesterday. Alice Brown identified the body as that of her husband. **William Spurrell**, 8 Harford Street, Cathay, said that he was engaged as a boatman with the deceased on the barge *Series*. That morning about eight o'clock the boat was

moving up the harbour and Brown was commanding the boat. Another boat (the *Enid*) was being moored, and the captain of that boat asked Brown to fling him a line. Brown, who was standing on the cabin, did so, and in the effort he slipped. He caught hold of the funnel to steady himself, but this not being properly secured gave way, throwing deceased into the water. He sank at once, and did not rise again. Walter Nicholas of 18 Dean Street Bedminster, stated that he was engaged as a seaman on board the *Enid*. Witness was standing on the deck of the *Enid* and deceased, who was standing on the *Series*, was about to fling a rope to him. In doing so he overbalanced and caught hold of the funnel to save himself, but this gave way, and the funnel and deceased went overboard. His legs got entangled in the rope, and he was helpless in the water and sank at once. Witness had seen two or three men drowned in the same manner. The funnels were made to take off and on, and there was no way of securing them. Witness at once dragged the river and recovered the body. P C John Grover, 61A, said that he was on duty on Bristol Bridge that morning, when he heard a cry of "a man in the water". He rushed to the spot, and found the last witness dragging the river, and after about a quarter of an hour the body was recovered. He conveyed the body to the Bedminster mortuary. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned in the Floating Harbour".

#### **146 December 15 1896**

**DROWNING CASE AT SALT FORD** An inquest was held yesterday at the Crown Inn Saltford, before Mr Craddock, coroner, on the body of **William Mees**, who was drowned at Saltford on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. **Joseph Hewer** stated that deceased was a boatman, of Bradford-on-Avon, and was 24 years of age. He (witness) was captain of the boat *Knot*. Whilst proceeding to Bristol they met the boat *Curlew* at Saltford going to Bath. The current was very strong at the time, and when the boats had passed each other the rope of the *Curlew* by some means caught Mees and threw him in the water. He saw him fall in but could render him no assistance as the current was so strong, and neither deceased nor himself could swim. Joseph Haltham said he saw the rope on the *Curlew* catch deceased on the chest and throw him overboard. He could render no assistance. He was 50 yards away when he saw Mees sink, and he could not swim. P C Trebey deposed to finding the body on the following morning about 50 yards from where he was supposed to have sunk. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death" but commented on men being employed at such work and unable to swim, and also not having a sufficient number of hands on board to work the boats properly.

#### **147 January 4 1898**

#### **Bridgwater**

**Charles Robert Tottle**, boatman, of Barclay Street, was summoned by his wife for persistent cruelty, in consequence of which she applied for a maintenance order. The case was adjourned to enable complainant to obtain corroborative evidence as to the cruelty.

#### **148 March 1 1898**

#### **Bridgwater**

**Frederick William Pitman**, boatman of Barry Dock, was summoned by his wife Clara Pitman for failing to maintain her and family. Mr C E Hagon, on behalf of the defendant, expressed willingness to make a weekly allowance, and the case was accordingly withdrawn.

#### **149 March 26 1898**

**THE HANHAM TRAGEDY** On Saturday afternoon, at the Star Inn, Potters Wood, Mr E M Grace held an inquest on the body of the young man named Walter Arthur Clare Fox who, as reported in the Bristol Mercury, was found on Thursday week shot through the heart on the bank of the Avon at Conham.

Emma Jane Fox, mother of the deceased, said she lived in Hanham Road and Walter was her second son. She knew he had a revolver, but that did not strike her as peculiar. Recently he had appeared unhappy, and at times past reason. On Wednesday week he left home about six, she believed to go to Bristol. He came back about eight o'clock and went straight to his room. He had no light and she took him one. She found him with a photo of his sweetheart before him and he appeared to be writing. As she left the room he followed her and went out. That was the last she had seen of her

son.

Florence Adams, daughter of the landlord of the Queen's Head Inn, Hanham, stated that she was in the bar on Wednesday evening between eight and half past, and served the deceased with wine. She knew him, but did not notice anything strange in his demeanour.

**William Edward Shaw**, a boatman living at Hanham Mills, said he knew the deceased by sight. On Thursday week, about 6.45 a.m. he was in a barge coming from Bristol when he saw the body on the side of the river with a revolver lying near the left hand. Fox was quite dead and stiff, and witness sent for the police. He had all his clothes on but his hat, which was a little off, and the opinion witness formed was that he was lying down on the bank when he discharged the weapon. P.C. Pick, in charge at Hanham police station, deposed to receiving information of the discovery. He found on examining the body only one wound – near the heart. He found a six chambered revolver near, containing four cartridges. There were documents in his pocket which discovered his identity, but not his state of mind. The body was quite stiff and cold, and had apparently been there for the greater part of the night. There were evidences of his having tried to get into the water, and he was very wet as far up as the knees.

After a brief consultation in private, the jury expressed themselves satisfied that the deceased committed suicide whilst of unsound mind.

### **150 March 31 1898 Gloucester**

Information was given to **Mr C Edwards**, lock-keeper at Llanthony, late on Tuesday night, that a man had been seen to throw himself into the Severn near the entrance to the locks. The drags were quickly got out, but although operations were carried on for over an hour the search was unsuccessful, and yesterday morning an examination was made round the locks, but as yet no body has been recovered. The woman who gave the information said she distinctly saw the man run down the bank and heard the splash in the water, whilst a boatman named **George Hemmings** also says he saw the man jump in.

### **151 August 29 1898 Gloucester**

At the county police court, on Saturday, **Giles Smith**, boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding Thomas Ball, Edward Evans and John Rice, aged respectively 14, 13 and 12. It was alleged that the boys, who had been bathing in the Severn on Thursday afternoon, were amusing themselves by throwing pieces of clay at passing boats, and that one piece knocked some of the dinner of Smith, who was steering a longboat up the river, off a plate. Thereupon, it was alleged, Smith took a gun and fired twice at the boys, who were all more or less injured by the shot. Prisoner stated that he thought the gun, an old one with two barrels, was broken, and he did not know it was loaded. He did not aim at or intend to hit the boys, and the gun was discharged accidentally, his sole intention being to frighten the lads by presenting the weapon at them. Accused was committed for trial at the next Assize, bail being allowed.

### **152 September 28 1898**

**ATTACKED BY A HORSE** **John Littleton**, a boatman in the employ of the Anderton Company, was on Monday night driving his horse near Preston Brook Tunnel of the Bridgwater Canal, when the animal suddenly attacked him and knocked him down. His horse then trampled upon him. His hand was so mutilated that three fingers have been amputated, and he was otherwise seriously injured.

### **153 October 21 1898 Bristol Police Court**

**STEALING A BOAT** John Darch, 56, was charged with stealing a boat value 16s, the property of William Kendall. **William Davies**, a boatman of Ashton Gate, said that on Thursday the prisoner brought a boat to him at a barge where he was working, and offered to sell it. Witness bought it for 8s. The prosecutor, a haulier of Hanham, said he missed the boat on Friday. He never sold it to



defendant. The Bench sent the defendant to gaol for a month with hard labour.

**154 November 29 1898**

**Bristol Police Court**

ALLEGED THEFT OF ROPE **John Davis**, 67, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of rope, supposed to be the property of Messrs P and A Campbell Limited. F S Bennett, of the Water Police, said that on Saturday evening he was out with another constable in the police boat in Cumberland Basin. When he wanted to land he found a barge obstructing the gangway, and on going to cross over it, he saw a large quantity of rope lying on the bottom of the barge. He could see no one in charge, and he looked over the barge and saw another large quantity of rope stowed in under the forecastle. On going to pull this out he saw the defendant crouched under the forecastle with his coat off. He must have been there at least ten minutes. Witness questioned him as to where he had obtained the rope, and his answer not being satisfactory he was taken into custody. The rope was worth about £2 or £3. It was believed that the rope belonged to Messrs P and A Campbell Limited. Thomas Maclean, manager to Messrs P and A Campbell Limited, said inquiries had been made, and no rope had been missed from any of the company's steamers. The prisoner, who said he had bought the rope from a Norwegian steamer six weeks ago, was remanded until Friday, to enable the police to make further inquiries.

**155 December 1 1898**

SENTENCES OF DEATH At Derbyshire Assize yesterday, before Mr Justice Mathew, **John Cotton**, 66, boatman, was sentenced to death for the wilful murder of Hannah Cotton, his wife, at Bugsworth, near Stockport, on the 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**156 December 3 1898**

**Bristol Police Court**

PROSECUTION WITHDRAWN **John Davis**, 67, boatman answered an adjourned charge of stealing a quantity of rope. The evidence of Sergeant Bennett of the Water Police, given at a previous hearing, was that on the evening of Saturday November 26<sup>th</sup>, he and P C Hatton were in a boat, and landing at Cumberland Basin, had to pass over a barge. There they saw a quantity of rope, and afterwards observed the defendant crouching with his coat off. Asked what was the meaning of the rope being there, he said that was all right, it belonged to him, but the police were not satisfied. Defendant, who owned the barge, was in the habit of attending vessels going up and down the river. Sergeant Bennett now stated the police could not find an owner for the rope, and did not intend proceeding with the prosecution. Mr Robinson (Wansbrough and Co) who appeared for the defence, said the defendant bought the rope. Sergeant Bennett said that the longest piece of rope amongst that found was about 30 fathoms. The defendant was discharged, and on application he was allowed to have the rope.

**157 December 16 1898**

**Taunton**

DISTRICT NEWS Mr Barham, district coroner, held an inquest yesterday afternoon on the body of **Henry Kitchen**, four years old, the son of a boatman living in Coal Orchard, St James's Street. The child was missed on Sunday afternoon, and on Wednesday morning the body was found in the river Tone opposite the County Cricket Grounds. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**158 December 22 1898**

EXECUTION AT DERBY **John Cotton**, aged 66, a boatman, who was sentenced to death at the recent Derbyshire assize for murdering his wife at Bugsworth, near Stockport, on October 26<sup>th</sup>, was executed in Derby gaol yesterday morning. The deceased woman was 36 years of age, and the evidence tendered at the trial showed that jealousy was the cause of the crime. Cotton beat his wife about the head with a poker, fracturing the base of her skull. The defence was that the prisoner had received provocation. Since his conviction the culprit has exhibited the utmost contrition and has paid deep attention to the ministrations of the prison chaplain, to whom he has more than once admitted the justice of his sentence. He received the Holy Communion on Tuesday, and throughout

the day the chaplain was in frequent attendance in the condemned cell. Cotton retired to rest early on Tuesday night, but his sleep was constantly disturbed, and early yesterday morning he again welcomed the presence of the chaplain. He partook sparingly of breakfast, and just before eight o'clock the Sheriff's representatives presented themselves to summon him to his doom. The usual procession was quickly formed, and halfway to the scaffold the party was met by Billington, the executioner, who was assisted in the preliminary process of pinioning prisoner's arms by his son. Cotton, who remained perfectly silent, walked firmly to the scaffold, where the younger Billington strapped the culprit's legs, while the executioner placed the noose around the prisoner's neck. All this was accomplished in a most expeditious manner, and while the chaplain was repeating the words "Remember not the offences of Thy servants" the bolt was drawn and the body disappeared from view. Subsequent examination showed that death had been instantaneous. Although it was not completely light, a large crowd gathered outside the prison to watch the hoisting of the black flag, but no sympathy was exhibited for the prisoner, who boast had been that he had killed two previous wives.

**159 January 24 1899**

**James Crossley**, a boatman, fell down dead at a football match at Liverpool.

**160 January 28 1899 Bridgwater**

**Robert Pocock**, boatman of Borough-bridge, was summoned for drunkenness on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, and was fined 2s 6d and costs.

**161 June 3 1899**

BOATMAN KILLED AT BRIDGWATER On Tuesday an inquest was opened at the police court, Bridgwater, by the Borough Coroner (Mr P O H Reed), touching the death of **Robert Hill**, aged 55 years, a boatman. Mr F W Bishop, solicitor watched the case on behalf of the relatives. It appears that about 8 p m on Monday deceased was about to get on board the vessel *Rolla* at the West Quay by means of a stepping or ladder post, when he was seen by two men named John Durant and Frederick Bawdrip to suddenly fall backwards on to the deck of the *Rolla* several feet below, his head coming in contact with the iron steps of the tiller. He was picked up and taken to the Infirmary by P Cs Norman and Sparkes in an unconscious condition, and died in the institution early on Tuesday morning. At the inquiry on Tuesday evidence of identification was given by George Frederick Hill, son of the deceased, and the proceedings were then adjourned for a week.

**162 June 8 1899 Bridgwater**

The resumed inquest on the body of **Robert Hill**, aged 55 years, a boatman of Moat Lane, who died last week from injuries sustained through falling from a stepping post on the vessel *Rolla*, lying alongside the quay wall, on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult, was held on Tuesday evening by Mr P O H Reed (Borough Coroner). Mr F W Bishop appeared for the relatives. The medical evidence showed that death was due to fracture of the skull, and several witnesses stated that the post was dangerous, one of the steps at the side being missing. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death" and added a rider expressing the opinion that the present accommodation provided was dangerous, and they strongly recommended that rung ladders should be provided.

**163 November 28 1899 Bridgwater**

At the borough police court yesterday, Thomas Irish, seaman of Northgate, was charged with assaulting **George Bale**, boatman. Mr C B Hagon appeared for the complainant, and Mr P O H Reed for the defendant, who was fined 10s and costs.