

April 27 1866 **Aston Police Court**

OBSTRUCTING THE CANAL **William Stokes**, boatman, was charged, under a warrant, with causing an obstruction on the canal. Mr Evans, Solicitor to the Birmingham Canal Navigations, prosecuted, and said the information was laid under the 150th section of that Company's Act of 1835. A summons, returnable on the previous Thursday, was issued, but the defendant not appearing to it, the present proceedings were taken. Mr Evans briefly stated the facts of the case, and said he was sorry that proceedings were obliged to be taken against the defendant, who, he believed, was a respectable man. The company did not often appear in Court in that capacity, but were, in this instance, driven to it as an example to others. - John Rymill, engineer to the Company, stated that he was standing by the upper lock at Witton, on the 19th of March, when he saw the defendant, who was leading a horse, drawing a boat filled with coke, and another man named **Higginson**, in charge of an empty boat, racing to get to the lock. They came up to the lock's mouth at full speed, and at the same time. The boats became jammed in the narrow part, and neither would give way. Witness said, "You had better settle it between you, as I shall notice the time". They did not settle it, however, and remained there impeding the traffic from seven o'clock until after ten. At a quarter past nine, there were thirty three boats waiting to go down. They (the defendant and Higginson) withdrew their boats to allow the up boats to pass, but immediately afterwards resumed their old position. In cross-examination, witness said there were two men to each boat, and another man was steering the boat to which the defendant belonged. The section of the Act directed proceedings against "the person having the care" of the boat, and as the defendant evidently was not in charge of the boat, the Bench had no alternative but to dismiss the summons, intimating to Mr Evans that the wrong man had been summoned.

October 10 1867 **Birmingham Police Court**

ATTEMPTING TO PASS COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTE Edward Bryan (54), no fixed residence, labourer, and **Henry Green** (20), no fixed residence, boatman, were charged with attempting to defraud Mr Edwin Bartlett, clothier, 18 High Street, by giving him a note purporting to be for £5. The prisoner Green went into Mr Bartlett's shop on Tuesday, and asked to see some coats. Several coats were shown him, and he picked one out, the price of which was to be 24s 6d. He tendered a note in payment, purporting to be a bank note for £5, and said he wanted change for it. Upon the assistant who showed him the coats looking at the alleged bank note, he found that it was a note which had been issued by Mr George Keal, hatter, Snow Hill, headed "House of Justice", and was as follows:- "Promise to pay any person, on the undermentioned dates, the sum of £5, if he can produce superior hats. April 1st 1867". The note was shown to Mr Bartlett, who sent to the Detective Office, Moor Street, for Inspector Kelly. In answer to questions put by that officer, as to where he got the note from, the prisoner Green gave very contradictory replies. Kelly took him into custody, and upon their arrival at the station Green said he received the note from a man who was standing in High Street. Kelly immediately went into High Street, and found the prisoner Bryan, who admitted having given the note to Green, and stated that he was in a public house in Broad Street, when he picked a purse up which contained the note. Bryan said "You (meaning the prisoner Green) are as guilty as I am, and we are both guilty". Upon the prisoners being called upon for their defence, Green said Bryan called him out of the public house and said he had found a purse, and there was a £5 note in it, and he asked him to go and buy him some clothes with it. He was unable to read himself. Bryan said he had never had the handling of a £5 note before in his life, and did not know that it was not a genuine note. Both prisoners were committed to the Sessions.

May 11 1871

MUCH TOO SMART While a boatman's wife, named **Martha Wood**, was commiserating with a woman on the loss of her nephew, lately drowned at Manchester, the woman picked her pocket of £4 10s. The thief has been sent to gaol for three months.

May 18 1872

KINGS HEATH POLICE COURT At the Kings Heath Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs T Lane, F Elkington, and J F Swinburne, **John Flavell**, labourer and boatman, of Northfield, was summoned for creating a disturbance, during divine service, in a chapel at Bartley Green. Mr Warne, schoolmaster, said that on the 30th of April the defendant entered the chapel while Mr Wild, the minister, was preaching. He made several loud remarks in answer to the preacher's statements, and also told his wife, who was sitting by him, in very offensive language, to go home and get his supper. Mr Wild discontinued his discourse, and persuaded the defendant to leave, which he did. Defendant did not appear, but the service of the summons having been proved, the Bench imposed a fine of 20s and costs, or in default a month's imprisonment.

February 5 1885

ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF DYNAMITE A canal boatman named **Henry Allen** was apprehended at Bath, yesterday afternoon, by direction of the Home Office, for having a quantity of dynamite in his possession unlawfully. A few days ago an alarm was created near Freshford by an explosion on the banks of the Kennet and Avon. It was afterwards ascertained that a boatman in the employ of a local firm of canal carriers had possession of explosives, and was heard to state that he had secured them from the Severn Tunnel Engineering Works. Allen was arrested in pursuance of enquiries, and will be charged before the Bradford-on-Avon magistrates today with the illegal possession of dynamite.