

forgive him. On the application of Mr Supt Hill, the Bench remanded the prisoner till Saturday.

5 29 May 1879 County Police

THE FOWL STEALING AT BROWNHILLS **Thomas and Richard Clarke**, father and son, and **John Lakin**, alias "Forty" of Birmingham, were brought up on remand charged with breaking into a fowl house at Brownhills on the 13th inst and stealing 20 fowls, value £3, the property of Messrs Owen and Smith, farmers. The evidence taken at Shenstone Petty Sessions having been supplemented, the defendants were committed for trial. Thomas and Richard Clark declared they were innocent, while "Forty" pleaded guilty.

6 30 May 1879 County Police

UNLAWFULLY ON PREMISES **William Guy**, of Birmingham, boatman, was brought up on remand and charged with being on the premises of Henry Whitehouse at Walsall Wood on the 18th inst for an unlawful purpose. The defendant, who was found in the act of breaking into the complainant's fowl house, pleaded guilty, and he was sentenced to be imprisoned for 28 days with hard labour, besides having to pay £1 16s 6d costs.

7 1 August 1879 Police News

AN UNGRATEFUL COUPLE **Charles Williams** alias James Gill and "Mucky Jemmy", boatman, Birmingham, and his wife **Mary Williams**, alias Cantrell and Breedon, were charged with stealing, at Walsall Wood, on June 8, one jacket and a pair of boots, value 8s, the property of George Dymock; also some wearing apparel, the property of Richard Richards, living at the same place. The prisoners, who pleaded guilty to both charges, were sheltered from the rain in Richards' house on the night of Saturday June 7th. They slept in chairs by the fire along with George Dymock, a lodger who, being asthmatical, was accustomed to do so. He awoke at four o'clock, when he found the prisoners were gone, and his coat and shoes missing. He awoke Richards, who discovered a shawl, a shirt and a silk handkerchief belonging to him to be missing also. Information having been given to the police, the prisoners were apprehended at Burslem on Wednesday the 23rd July by Mr Supt Hill. The female prisoner was wearing the shawl, which was afterwards identified; and the male prisoner voluntarily pleaded guilty, saying he had sold the other articles. The prisoners, who had been previously convicted, and were wanted on other charges, were committed for trial at the next Quarter sessions.

8 9 January 1880 Alrewas

DEATH BY DROWNING On Monday the 29th ult, an inquest was held at the Swan Inn, Fradley Junction, Alrewas, before Mr W Morgan, coroner, on the body of **Fanny Fletcher**, aged 5, the daughter of **William and Mary Ann Fletcher**. The deceased's father is a boatman on the canal, and on the 26th ult, the boat then being frozen up at the junction, the deceased left with her sister to play on the canal side. She was missed, and on search being made, was found in the canal from 15 to 20 yards from the boat, where the ice was very thin. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

9 29 February 1880 Local and District News

On Tuesday, a shocking occurrence took place at Lea Brook, Wednesbury. A boatwoman named **Eliza Holt** placed her child in a cradle before the kitchen fire whilst she went to the canal for water. Upon returning, she found that fire had fallen into the cradle, and that the child had been roasted alive, and was beyond recognition.

10 13 August 1880 Wolverhampton

LARCENY BY BOATMEN At the Police Court on Wednesday, **Geo Cooper**, boatman, Peel Street, Winson Green, and **Philip Price**, boatman, Winson Green Road, Birmingham were charged, under remand from Bilston, with stealing horse corn, the property of John Kent, and together with **William Godfrey**, boat steerer, Freeth Street, Birmingham, they were further charged with stealing

13 cwt of coal at Lane Head on the 31st ult, belonging to Messrs J and C Abbots, Birmingham. For stealing the corn, Cooper and Price were sentenced to two months hard labour, and to a similar term of imprisonment for the theft of coal. Godfrey was committed for a month.

11 19 November 1880 Walsall

THE CHARGE OF STEALING PIG IRON At the Willenhall Police Court on Monday, **Ernest Worsey**, boatman of Park Brook, Walsall, was again brought up charged with having stolen about half a ton of iron belonging to the London and North Western Railway Company; and Francis Cordell, hawker, Green Lane, Walsall; William Cordell, miner, Long Acre, Walsall; and John Johnson, coal dealer, Long Acre, Walsall, were charged with having received it, knowing it to have been stolen. Mr Vaughan represented Worsey, and Mr John Clarke the two Cordells. The evidence was of an inconclusive character, and after a lengthy hearing, the Bench discharged the prisoners, and stated that Worsey left the court without a stain on his character.

12 19 November 1880 Wolverhampton

ALLEGED ROBBERY OF TIN PLATES At the same court (Borough Police Court), **Henry Green** (29), boatman of 7 Court Horseley Fields, was charged in custody with having stolen a quantity of tin plates of the value of £19, belonging to the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company. Mr H Langman prosecuted. Evidence was given to show that the prisoner was seen on Friday evening to carry some boxes from a boat to a wharf, and the next morning the tin plates were found hidden behind some pipes. Prisoner was remanded until Thursday.

13 26 November 1880 Stafford

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the County Petty Sessions on Saturday, before Messrs B Armitage and F Whitgreave (Magistrates), **John Meredith**, boatman, was fined 10s and costs for cruelly ill-treating a horse by working it while in an unfit state, in Weston-on-Trent on the previous day.

14 6 January 1882 Brownhills

STEALING BRASSES At Stafford Quarter Sessions on Monday, **Henry Turner** (22), boatman, pleaded not guilty to breaking and entering the warehouse of Francis Harry Gordon, at Clayhanger, on the 1st November last, and stealing 33 lbs of engine brasses. Mr Neville prosecuted. About ten o'clock on the morning of the day named, James James, watchman in the employ of prosecutor, found prisoner in the engine house of his master's brickworks, unscrewing the brasses from the engine. Prisoner when he saw witness ran away. A second time he was caught in the engine place and given into custody. Several pieces of brass, weighing 33 lbs, had been removed outside, which were fixed to the engine the day before. Prisoner denied that he was in the engine house at all, but pleaded guilty to being on the premises. He was found guilty and sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

15 24 February 1882 Whittington

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **William Hill**, boatman, Daw End, was summoned for cruelty to a donkey. John Lucas of Burton, an inspector to the RSPCA, said that on the 17th of January, he saw defendant with two donkeys drawing a boat in the parish of Whittington. Upon examining the animals, he found a bad sore on the shoulder of one and the collar pressing upon it. He considered the animal was suffering and unable to work. Defendant gave a wrong address. Fined 2s 6d and costs 9s.

16 3 March 1882 Police News

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **William Smith**, a boatman residing at Oldbury, and **William John Yeomans**, also of Oldbury, a boat owner, were charged on summons with having, on the 14th February, ill-used and permitted to be ill-used, a horse, Inspector Lucas of Burton being the informant, and they were further charged with a similar offence on the following day, when

Inspector Ruane of Birmingham was the informant. The second offence was taken first. Inspector John Ruane said that he was an officer of the Birmingham Society. On Wednesday the 15th, in the evening, he saw a horse attached to a vehicle containing tar or tar water. It was in Lichfield. The horse was very lame in the off fore leg. He examined it, and found an enlargement of the coronet. There was found later a raw wound on the off shoulder under the collar. It was a large old wound with suppuration adhering to the collar. Witness took the horse and boy to Mr Cooper, veterinary surgeon, who pronounced the horse unfit for work. Witness returned with the horse, and saw the defendant Smith at the boat. Witness asked who was in charge of the horse, and Smith said, "I am responsible". When asked if he considered the horse fit for work, Smith said that he could not see that it was lame, but what could he do when he was sent out with it. Witness saw that the name of Yeomans was on the boat, and went on the following night to the house of the defendant. He had to go again on the 17th. He then asked Yeomans if he knew the state of the horse, and Yeomans said, "It has had a sore on the shoulder, but I have had it in the stable for some time, and it got well. I did not know that it was lame". Yeomans added that he had given Smith a breast collar to work it in as it had had a sore. Witness said that would not protect the lameness, and when found, the horse was being worked in an ordinary collar. The horse was in poor condition. In answer to defendant Smith, the officer said it was a sore, not a heat boil. P C Baskeyfield said that on the day in question he saw the horse in Bread Market Street. He corroborated as to the condition of the animal, which was not fit for work. The defendant Smith was in charge of the horse then. Mr Cooper, veterinary surgeon, said that he examined the horse, which was in low condition. There was a wound on the off shoulder. The shoulder was considerably chafed and showed signs of great pain when touched. It was an old wound. There was a bone enlargement on the inside of the off fore foot. The horse when walked was very lame, and was not fit to be worked. Smith made no defence, but Yeomans said that he had seen that the wound was healing up, and the collar had been eased. He did his best to keep the horse in good condition. He expressed great sorrow for the offence, adding that he had given the other defendants instructions to hire a horse if that one should prove incapable of working. The first dated offence was then taken, and Inspector Lucas proved that on the previous day to that referred to by Inspector Ruane, he had found the animal in the same condition, and had complained to Smith about it. The horse was very poor, and from its condition, he told the defendant Smith that it must not be worked. He saw Yeomans on the 17th, and then that defendant said that there had been a small wound when it went away, and he had sent a breast collar for use. On the Friday morning, Mr Yeomans had stated that he had not received the horse back. Mr Barry, veterinary surgeon, had seen the horse. The Bench asked why the two officers had taken proceedings, and it was explained that Ruane had been sent for by some Lichfield subscribers to the Birmingham society. Mr Barry was then called, and corroborated as to the horse not being fit to work at all. The Bench inflicted a fine of 20s and costs in each case on Yeomans and 5s and costs in each case on Smith, making the totals Yeomans £3 12s 6s and Smith £2 2s 6d. The money was paid.

17 7 April 1882

Cannock

At the Petty Sessions on Monday, before Mr R H Briscoe, **William Mortiboys**, boatman, was fined 8s including costs for being drunk in Church Street, Cannock on the night of the 12th of March.

18 28 April 1882

Chase Town

THEFT OF DUCKS AND RABBITS **Isaac Fearn**, boatman, Smethwick, was brought up in custody charged with having stolen ten ducks and three rabbits on the 29th of September 1881, valued at £2, the property of Mr Samuel Nixon, the Miner's Rest, Chase Town. On the following morning, the prosecutor missed the ducks and rabbits from a locked-up building at the rear of his house. The prisoner having absconded, a warrant was issued on the 7th of October, and he was handed over to witness by Inspector Hinton of Smethwick on Thursday the 20th of April. On being charged, he said he did not steal the ducks; the others stole them and brought them to his boat. Previous convictions being recorded against the prisoner, he was committed for trial at the Sessions,

and bail was accepted yesterday.

19 26 May 1882

Ogley Hay

FALSE PRETENCES At the same court (Elford Petty Sessions), **Thomas Thacker**, boatman, was charged with obtaining £3 in money from Thomas Martin on the 11th of April, with intent to defraud. Thomas Martin, Summer Hill, Ogley Hay, farmer, the complainant, deposed that he had known the defendant for some years. He arranged with him in the early part of April to bring some manure, and he was to take in part payment some potatoes, and the remainder in money. It was agreed that the manure should be 6s 6d a ton, and the potatoes 3s a bag. The manure was brought down in a few days, and he took back in the same boat twenty five bags of potatoes. When he had got the potatoes loaded, he handed prosecutor a canal ticket and was paid £3 on account, but no receipt was given. At the time the money was paid, he had not noticed anything wrong. When he went in to supper, he noticed that the figures on the ticket had been altered, and he afterwards made communication with the canal company. They were to settle when he brought the next load down, but witness had not the ticket at the time, so said nothing to him. About ten days afterwards, he asked him to come to a settlement. Witness asked him how much manure he had on for him, and he said 23 tons 10 cwt, and he (witness) answered he should only pay him for 19 tons. Prisoner said, How is that, have you weighed it? Witness said that he could tell that he had not drawn that weight, and defendant said that if he did not pay him, he should put him into the County Court for it. The prisoner, on being asked if he had any question to put said that he was very sorry that he had altered the ticket, it was the first time. Charles Martin, son of the prosecutor, remembered the prisoner bringing the boat load of manure for his father, and was present when the ticket produced was delivered to his father. On the following morning, his father showed him the ticket, and then he saw that the figures had been altered. Thomas Bird, Moxley, agent in the employ of the Birmingham Canal Company, said the ticket produced was made out by him. The figures representing the weights had been altered since he made it out. The figures 24 tons 10 cwt, now on the ticket, were made out by him as 19 tons 10 cwt. Before the ticket was made out the prisoner made a declaration stating the weight of the load was 18 tons, and on weighing the boat, witness found that there were two tons more than the prisoner declared. The prisoner was then further charged, having on the 21st April obtained the sum of 18s 9d from Edward Smith, Cranebrook, by false pretences. The prosecutor said that he had known the prisoner for some years, but had no dealing with him till last April. Prisoner went to his house and he ordered a load of manure, for which he was to be paid ready money. The manure was to be 6s 3d a ton, and it was brought in about three weeks. Prisoner delivered to prosecutor a canal ticket when he delivered the manure. The weight of the manure according to the ticket was 23 tons 10 cwt. Witness paid him £7 3s 9d, for which he received a receipt. Since the summons was taken out against the prisoner, he had been with witness, and asked to be allowed to make the case up and pay the expenses. He was sorry, and he thought it would be a caution to him. He found the ticket had been altered. David Backwith, Goldshill, agent for the Canal Company, said the prisoner went to him on the day in question, and produced the declaration as to 20 tons of manure. He gauged the boat, and found that the weight was correct. When he gave the ticket to Thacker, the figures now appearing as 7 tons 10 cwt, was the figure 4, which had been partly erased and converted into seven. The total had been altered from twenty to twenty three ton; the correct quantity being twenty tons. Prisoner was then committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions at Stafford, on both charges.

20 1 September 1882

At a meeting of the School Attendance Committee, Mr Dakin, the attendance officer for Brewood, reported that in the case of **Reuben Thomas**, canal boatman of High Green, Brewood, whom he had prosecuted for employing his son, a boy aged 12 years, in driving his horse, a conviction had been obtained, the magistrates having fined Thomas 10s and 11s 6d costs, the Chairman (the Rev E J Wrottesley) remarking that this fact could not be too widely known that parents could not employ their children of tender years themselves, any more than they could put them out to work for other

employers.

21 27 October 1882

LICHFIELD POLICE – MONDAY **James Beddow**, boatman, Walsall Road, who was charged by John Lucas, Inspector of the Royal Society, with having cruelly ill-treated two donkeys by working them in an unfit state on the canal side on the 9th inst, was fined 5s and 13s costs.

22 23 February 1883

THE SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC Another case of smallpox has been discovered in Ettingshall Lane, Wolverhampton. The patient, **George Hodson** (22), boatman, was removed to the hospital. This is the only case that has been found in the town since Friday fortnight, and nearly the whole of the local cases which have been in the hospital and Workhouse are being discharged.

23 8 June 1883

Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Wickson**, boatman, Park Road, Birmingham, was charged with cruelly ill-treating and working a horse in an unfit state on April 10th, in the parish of St Michael. Thomas Fair, Inspector to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said shortly after 5 pm on the day named, he saw defendant driving a horse attached to a boat along the towing path of the canal. Defendant was beating it with a stick and forcing it along. He followed and overtook the defendant and examined the horse, and found it very lame in the off fore foot, and quite unfit to work. Defendant told him the horse was his own, and had cost him £8. Defendant promised him not to work the horse, but he afterwards saw him driving it. The boat was loaded with gas tar, and was much too heavy for the horse to draw. John Ruane, Inspector to the Birmingham Society, said he was in company with the last witness. He noticed that the horse was lame in the off fore foot. Defendant was beating it and forcing it along. The horse was totally unfit to draw such a load. The last witness told defendant to take the horse out. Henry Margetts Stanley, veterinary surgeon, Birmingham, said he inspected the horse on behalf of Mr Clayton on the 29th April, and he told Clayton from what he saw that the horse was not in a fit condition for heavy boating work. Defendant, in answer to the charge, denied that the horse was in as bad a state as the officers had stated. He told them that he should stay the night in the neighbourhood, and should start again at 5 pm. **Thomas Clayton**, canal carrier, Saltley, said that the defendant was in his employ, and had been in his father's employ for 29 years. He had always borne a good character. The boat defendant was using was made to carry 32 tons, but on that occasion they had loaded 21 tons. After Mr Stanley's examination, defendant did not work the horse again, and though he had upwards of 80 horses employed, no case had ever been brought against any of his employees. Fined 10s and costs £1 14s,

24 29 June 1883

PERMITTING GAMING ON LICENSED PREMISES At the Walsall Police Court on Monday, William Slater of the Leathern Bottle, Hill Street, was charged with having permitted gaming on his licensed premises. From the evidence given, it appeared that on the 31st of May, a boatman named **George Groves**, from Gloucester, went into the defendant's house at half past ten in the morning, and remained there playing at "don" for ale till about half past four in the afternoon. The landlady was in the room part of the time. A fine of 40s and costs was imposed. The costs were to include 10s for each of the witnesses from Gloucester.

25 13 July 1883

Shenstone Petty Sessions

RUSHALL – UNLAWFUL WOUNDING **Edward Westwood** was brought up in custody charged with unlawfully assaulting **Henry Watson**, boatman, at Rushall. P C Kelly, stationed at Rushall, said he saw the complainant on Tuesday night at the Cottage Hospital, Walsall, and he was not in a fit state to appear. Defendant was remanded in custody.

26 27th July 1883**Muckley Corner Petty Sessions**

RUSHALL – SERIOUS ASSAULT ON A BOATMAN Edward Westwood (15), employed on the canal, was brought up in custody charged with committing an aggravated assault upon **Henry Watson**, a boatman, on June 25th at Pipe Hill. Complainant said he was a boatman living at Rushall, and the defendant had been employed by him about four years and has lived at his house. On Monday the 25th of June, the defendant and himself were working a boat from Daw End to Amington, and defendant began to “leather” his horse over the head with a whip. He told defendant that if he did that he should hit him, and defendant then began to throw stones at him. He went towards defendant and was going to hit him with his hand, and defendant struck him on his right arm with a windlass. Defendant struck at him with all his might, and the blow broke his arm. He told defendant that he had broken his arm, and he replied, “You should leave me alone”. The blow was given him at the six locks, close to Pipe Hill. He went to a medical gentleman in Lichfield, and he bandaged his arm. From that time he had been in the Cottage Hospital at Walsall, and was still a patient. By defendant : He did not kick defendant before he was struck with the windlass. Mr Herbert M Morgan M D of Lichfield, said he was driving along the Birmingham Road about a month ago, over the canal bridge by the Wellington Inn, and a man ran to him from the direction of a towing path, and asked him to go and see a man's arm which had been hurt. He went to a boat in the lock and there saw the last witness. He examined the arm, and found that it was broken near the shoulder. He bandaged up the arm as well as he could, and the man proceeded to Walsall. The blow that broke the arm must have been of great force. P C Kelly, stationed at Rushall, said he arrested the defendant on Thursday the 20th of June and charged him with assaulting Henry Watson and breaking his arm. Defendant replied, “I should not have done it if Watson had not struck me first”. Mr Hinckley said the defendant had been guilty of a serious offence, and he was liable to be sent for trial, but in consideration of his youth, the Bench would deal with the case, and he would be committed to gaol for two months hard labour, and pay the costs, 2s 6d, or undergo a further term of a months imprisonment.

27 24 August 1883**Brownhills**

A NOISY BOATMAN Joseph Emery, an old man 62 years of age, a boatman hailing from Birmingham, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly at Brownhills on the 9th August. According to the evidence of Sergeant Lavin and P C Hodgetts, defendant was discovered in the Chester Road at quarter past eleven o'clock at night, drunk and making use of very filthy language. They ordered him away, but he was very disorderly, and they were compelled to lock him up until next morning. Defendant said he went to Mr Robert's public house with a man who was helping him with his boat at eight o'clock to write a letter. They stayed there from eight till eleven, and all he had was five small whiskeys, the man taking four pints of beer. He denied that he was drunk, and said the police had no business to interfere with him. George Gurney, brass lamp maker of Birmingham, said he had come with the defendant because he was out of a situation. He corroborated the defendant as to the amount of drink they had had at Mr Robert's, and denied that they were drunk. After consultation with his colleagues, Col Bagnall said the decision of the Bench was that the defendant should be fined 5s and costs 14s 6d. If he had to decide the case himself, he should have sent him to prison, but he was alone in that opinion. In his opinion, an example was required to be made of these men who got drunk and went about the streets using foul and disgusting language when other people were in bed.

28 31 August 1883

A CANAL IN FLAMES As a canal boat was proceeding from Bristol to Chippenham along the Kennet and Avon Canal on Friday evening, the boatman was startled by a loud explosion. The cargo comprised eight tons of petroleum and benzoline, and a large box of foreign matches, besides general goods. Immediately after the explosion, the boat was wrapped in flames, and the boatman narrowly escaped with his life to the bank. Several explosions followed as the fire reached other casks, and the boat was quickly burnt to the water's edge and sunk. The fire did not cease, for the

cargo floated, and the canal was literally in flames until a late hour.

29 21 September 1883

THE RECENT SMALLPOX CASES A letter was read from the owner of the canal boat which recently came to Lichfield with three cases of smallpox on board. One of the children affected had died and been buried at the expense of the Union, and the other two children had been attended by the Union doctor. The boat had started from Spon Lane where one child had died of the disease, and two others had been left in hospital at West Bromwich. The owner now said that the boatman had had strict orders to get his boat and the family disinfected at Spon Lane, and that he did not hold himself responsible in any way whatever for what had occurred. He had no objection, however, to lend the boatman the money to pay the expenses incurred. Mr Playfer said he had a strong impression that the local authorities who allowed the boat to come along were in some way responsible. In answer to a question, the Clerk said the expenses at present returned were between £2 and £3, but the ex Mayor said they would be double that amount as the boat had to be disinfected, the clothing of the family destroyed and new clothing provided for them.

30 5 October 1883 Wolverhampton

ATTEMPT TO THROW A POLICEMAN INTO THE CANAL At the Police Court on Tuesday, **Richard Higgins** (37), boatman, 4 Court, Horseley Fields, was committed to gaol for two months with hard labour for assaulting Police-constable Purchase; fined 10s and the costs for assaulting William Mather, a carpenter of Gorsebrook, and further ordered to find sureties to keep the peace for six months on the expiration of his term of imprisonment. On Monday afternoon, the prisoner assaulted Mather, who was painting a bridge over the canal, and when Police-constable Purchase arrived on the scene, the prisoner attempted to throw him into the water.

31 1 February 1884 Cannock

THEFT BY A BOATMAN **John Beddows**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a vest, two handkerchiefs, a whip and other articles belonging to **Edward Turner**, boatman. The prosecutor said he was a boatman and lived on board his craft, which plied on the canal. The prisoner asked him for a job, and he took the latter into his employ. Prisoner slept with the prosecutor on board the boat, and he also provided him with food. Prosecutor had occasion to go ashore, leaving the prisoner on board the boat on the 26th inst. After an absence of a few hours, prosecutor returned on board, and the prisoner was gone and the articles were missing. He gave information to the police respecting the affair. P C Marlow apprehended the prisoner in a common lodging house at Cannock and charged him with the offence. Prisoner said the prosecutor had not given him any money and very little food, and he took the articles as he was hard up. He was committed to prison for seven days with hard labour.

32 9 May 1894 Hednesford

ALLEGED ASSAULT At the Penkridge Petty Sessions on Monday, Thomas Mayo, coal and timber dealer, Hednesford, was charged, on remand, with assaulting **Jane Harman**, the wife of a boatman, on the 30th ult. Mr C A Loxton defended. The prosecutrix was called upon, but did not answer to her name. Mr Loxton said that a most serious charge had been made by the prosecutrix against his client, and he was prepared with evidence to deny the allegation. The Bench thought it was very wrong indeed of persons to lay such charges and not allow an investigation to be made. Supt Barrett said the police were put to some trouble in apprehending the prisoner through the information given by the prosecutrix. He had been informed that after the remand, the woman had been saying how would the case go if she did not appear. After some observations from the Bench, Mr Perry said the case would have to be dismissed.

33 16 May 1884

THE BIRMINGHAM CANAL COMPANY'S WATER At the Police Court on Monday, **Joseph**

Green, boatman, was summoned for having wasted water, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company. **Samuel Whitehouse**, lock-keeper at the Walsall locks, deposed that on the 4th inst, he saw the defendant take a boat into one of the locks, but instead of drawing the boat into the lock, he opened the bottom paddle before he closed the top one, the consequence of which was the boat was sucked into the lock, and a great quantity of water was wasted. Witness opened the second lock himself, and complained to the defendant, who promised that he would not offend again, but on reaching the third lock he wasted the water again in the same manner as before, and on being spoken to, became insolent, and said he would pass through the locks in that way as often as he liked. The Bench imposed a fine of 20s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment.

34 10 October 1884 Brownhills Petty Sessions

STEALING TURNIPS **William Smith**, Birmingham, boatman, was summoned for stealing turnips, value 6d, on Tuesday last, belonging to Mr Roberts of the Station Hotel, Brownville. Henry Scapegoat said he saw the defendant draw his boat near to the field where the turnips were, get out, and begin taking the turnips. He shouted to defendant, saying, "Hold hard, you have enough". He then gave information to the police, who took defendant into custody. Fined 1s and 10s costs.

35 12 December 1884 Norton

ASSAULT At the Cannock Petty Sessions on Monday, **Richard Sands**, boatman, was charged with assaulting Charles Wright, at Norton, on the 2nd inst. The complainant said he was a boat catcher, and employed at Norton. On the morning in question, the defendant took up a piece of coal and threatened to cut open his head with it. Defendant then used abusive language, and afterwards struck the complainant in the face with his fist. Defendant alleged that he had received provocation from the complainant on several occasions. Defendant was fined 2s 6d and 13s 9d costs.

36 13 February 1885 Mossley

ILL TREATING A DONKEY At the Rugeley Petty Sessions on Monday, **Frederick Crutchley**, boatman, was charged with cruelly ill-treating an ass, by working it while in an unfit state, on the 17th January. Inspector John Jones of the RSPCA of Hanley, said that on the afternoon in question at Mossley, he saw the son of the defendant driving a small, old and very infirm ass, which was attached to an empty canal boat going towards the canal basin. The witness examined the animal and found a wound on the off shoulder, three inches in length and two and a half inches wide, and two on the near shoulder, each of the size of half a crown. The wounds were covered with matter, and also on the collar. The animal had drawn the boat, which previously contained 20 tons of coal, to Fradley. The Bench fined the defendant 20s and costs.

37 12 June 1885 Lichfield County Police

THEFT OF COAL **Joseph Brookes**, boatman, Lawley Street, Birmingham, and **Thomas Billinger**, boatman, Aston, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal, value 6d, at Brownhills on Wednesday, belonging to R T Harding, Brookfield Road, Handsworth. Mr Harding, coal merchant, Handsworth, said he had a boat laden with coal moored on the canal at Brownhills on Wednesday, and he was watching the boat. He saw Brookes steer an empty boat, belonging to Mr J D Mole, Aston, the master of the prisoner, across the canal towards witness's loaded ones, and both prisoners take the coal off. They had taken several lumps when they noticed witness, and Billinger informed Brookes they were being watched, and they moved away up the canal. Witness gave information to the Brownhills police, and prisoners were taken into custody. Superintendent Barrett informed the Bench that the theft of coal on the canal was something alarming, and these steps were taken as a caution to the thieves. The Bench remanded prisoners to Brownhills Petty Sessions, which will be held on Wednesday the 24th June.

38 3 July 1885 Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **Jos Kempson** (28), boatman, coal stealing at West Bromwich; twelve

months imprisonment.

39 17 July 1885

Wolverhampton

AN OFFENDING BOATMAN At the Police Court on Saturday, **William Williams** of the canal boat "Industry", hailing from Thirlwood, Cheshire, was fined 10s and costs for allowing his boat to be used as a dwelling for girls over twelve years of age, contrary to his licence. Mr H Brevitt (Town Clerk) prosecuted.

40 31 July 1885

Stafford Summer Assizes

STEALING AND RECEIVING **Thomas Newton** (52), boatman, was charged with burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house of William Rowe, on May 17th at Tunstall, and stealing a watch, two chains, a petticoat and 1s 6 1/2d. Richard Cartwright (44), labourer; Joseph Potts (30), miner; and Benjamin Wynne (42), labourer, were charged with feloniously receiving the various articles. Newton pleaded guilty. On the day after the prosecutor's house was broken in to, the missing chains were pledged for the prisoners at a Tunstall pawnshop. Search was made, and the watch was found in the house of the prisoner Cartwright. Cartwright denied, when arrested, that the other prisoners were concerned in the matter. The jury convicted the prisoners, and they were all four sent to gaol for six weeks hard labour. Mr Boddam prosecuted.

41 31 July 1885

Wolverhampton

OVERCROWDED BOATS On Saturday at the Police Court, **Joseph Chalmer**, boatman, in the employ of Messrs Turley, Tipton, was charged with infringing the Canal Boats Act, by allowing his boat to be used as a dwelling house for more children than it was registered to contain. He was fined 10s and costs. Messrs **Harris** of Brierley Hill were fined 20s and costs for a similar offence. **Charles Ball** of Turley near Tewkesbury, and **John Knight**, Cookley Ironwork, Kidderminster, were fined 10s 6d and costs and 5s and costs respectively for breaches of the same Act.

42 11 September 1885

Wolverhampton

ALLEGED THEFT OF FISH At the Police Court on Saturday, **John Lyndon** (25), boatman, Middle Row, was charged with the theft of 9lbs of fish, the property of the London and North Western Railway Company. On Saturday morning, two barrels of plaice arrived at the company's station consigned to Mr Smith, and later on it was found that some fish had been taken from one of the barrels. Three plaice were found concealed behind a board, and the spot being watched, the prisoner was captured as he was in the act of fetching the hidden fish away. The Bench committed him for trial at the Sessions.

43 25 September 1885

Acton

A DISHONEST BOATMAN At the Penkridge Petty Sessions on Monday, **William Frith**, boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of trousers, a vest and a horse cloth belonging to **William Griffiths**, boat captain, at Acton on the 14th September. The prisoner was apprehended by P S Price. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and was committed for a month with hard labour.

44 2 October 1885

Cannock

BREACH OF THE PEACE **William Powell**, boatman, and Mary Baggot, married woman, were summoned for committing a breach of the peace in Stafford Road, Cannock, on the 19th September. P C Downs gave evidence as to the offence. The defendants denied the charge. They were ordered to pay the costs and to be bound over to keep the peace for six months in £5 each.

45 26 February 1886

Cannock Chase

PARISH PROSECUTION At the Birmingham Police Court on Monday, **Henry Bond**, a boatman living at Cannock Chase, was summoned for neglecting to support his wife, who was chargeable to the Guardians of the parish of Birmingham. Warrant officer Daniels gave evidence of the woman

being maintained by the parish. Mr Cheston, who appeared for the defence, said that the parties had been living apart for fifteen years, and the defendant said he could prove adultery, but he had not brought the witnesses he proposed to call. An order was made for 3s 6d a week.

46 19 November 1886 Rushall

A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE At the Police Court on Monday, **William Griffin**, boatman, Saltley, was, on the complaint of the Birmingham Canal Company, fined 5s and costs for having, on the 2nd inst, wasted a lock full of water, the property of the company.

47 13 May 1887

ASSAULTING THE POLICE On Monday at the Police Court, before Mr Solly and Alderman Williams (Mayor of Wednesbury), **James Rowley**, boatman of Tipton Green was charged with assaulting Police-constables Cartwright and Southall. Rowley's brother was taken into custody on a charge of misbehaviour, and the defendant rushed at Southall and struck him with a glass bottle. Whilst Cartwright was endeavouring to arrest the defendant, the latter assaulted the officer. The defendant was fined 20s and costs, or in default one months imprisonment.

48 5 August 1887 Crown Court

ROW BETWEEN BOATMEN **Edward Thomas Anslow** (38), boatman, was charged with feloniously wounding **Alfred James Clark**, on July 18th at Penkridge. Mr Stearman prosecuted. Sentenced to six months hard labour.

49 23 September 1887

A sad case of drowning has occurred at Salford. The inquest has been held on the bodies of a boatman named **Holt**, and a woman named **Hoyle**, with whom he had previously cohabited. They had been separated for some time, but the other night they were seen together on the banks of the canal. Both of them were drunk, and they were heard quarrelling; and on the following morning, their bodies were found close together in the canal. It is thought that the woman fell into the canal and that the man, in trying to save her, was drowned.

50 14 October 1887 Bloxwich

PECULIAR CONTRADICTIONARY EVIDENCE At the Walsall Guildhall, Walsall, on Monday, **Thomas Hickson**, boatman, Tipton and Rosannah Bull, married woman, were charged with being drunk and disorderly on Sunday night. The evidence of Police-constables Curtis, Wiltshire and Marshall was to the effect that after 11 o'clock on the night named, Hickson came out of the house of the woman Bull, whose husband left her five years ago, and passed Curtis and Wiltshire in a peculiar manner. The former turned his light on to see who the man was, and the man went back. Soon after, the two defendants were heard in altercation with Marshall and using bad language, and half an hour later, they were creating a disturbance in High Street. The defence was that there was a rapping at the door of Bull's house, and that Hickson jumped up and went out to see who the intruder was. The only persons he could see were Curtis and Wiltshire, and when he went towards them, one of them struck him with a stick, and the other also maltreated him. He then went with Mrs Bull to the police station to make a complaint, and whilst they were there, the constables came in, and after pushing them about, took them into custody. Hickson showed a bruise on his face and a hole in his hat, as evidence of the ill-treatment he had received, and he and the woman declared that they were not drunk. The Mayor said he should like to know why the lamp was turned upon the man. Curtis said he did it because of the suspicious manner of the man, and he never allowed anyone to pass him at night without knowing who the person was. Eventually the cases were dismissed.

51 16 December 1887 Pelsall

AN UNFAITHFUL SERVANT **George Bird**, boatman, Ragged Row, Norton Road, Pelsall, was

charged with stealing coal, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company, on the 8th inst. P C Snow stated that between three or four o'clock on the afternoon of the 8th inst, he was on the Norton Road at Pelsall, when he saw prisoner with a wheelbarrow full of coal. He came from the pathway of the canal with it, and was going in the direction of his house, when witness stopped him and asked him how he came by it, and he replied, "I've had it off the canal, but don't take any notice of it. If my master knows I'll get into trouble". Witness noticed traces of the wheelbarrow on the track, and told prisoner that was not the first he had had, but he replied that it was. Witness took possession of the wheelbarrow and coal, and traced defendant's footprints for about forty yards to the canal path, where he found a quantity of coal had been placed. Defendant then told him it was the second barrow full he had taken, and that the coal had been placed there by another man, who was passing at the time with a loaded boat. He did not know the man, but thought he was one of "Cowen's". Witness then accompanied prisoner to his house, and there he saw a quantity of wet coal similar to that in the barrow, and upon that he took him into custody. On witness's return, he informed an overman of the Company of the occurrence, and afterwards he acquainted Mr Taylor, the person in control of the boatmen. Prisoner was afterwards bailed out. The value of the coal stolen was about one shilling. Defendant pleaded guilty, and elected to be dealt with summarily. The Bench imposed a fine of 5s and 17s 6d costs.

52 15 February 1889

THE ROBBERY OF A TILL **James Checkley** (54), boatman, back of Granville Street; **William Lindon**, boatman, 22 Court, William Street, Birmingham; and Henry Evans were charged with stealing about 30s from the till at the Globe Inn, Hednesford, the property of Thomas Brindley, on the 1st inst. Prisoners called at the inn for refreshment, and were left in the room in which the till was, while the landlord's daughter attended to another customer. On her return, she missed the till, and the doors were kept fastened until the arrival of Police-constable Jeffreys. On searching Checkley the officer found 31s 6d in a purse, 13s 6d in loose silver, and 1s 3 1/2d in copper, and a number of checks and some keys which were identified by Mrs Brindley. The Bench discharged Evans, and the prisoners, who reserved their defence, were committed to the Sessions.

53 1 March 1889

CRUELTY BY A BOATMAN On Monday, the Walsall magistrates sent **Thomas Smith**, a boatman living at Smethwick, to prison for six weeks for very callous brutality to a horse which was attached to his boat. The poor animal, which was in bad condition, fell on the canal towing path on the night of the 12th, and was allowed to lie there in the snow and ice utterly uncared for, so far as the defendant was concerned, till Thursday night, when it was killed by the orders of a veterinary surgeon, who had been called in by the police. By that time, it had beat out one of its eyes and gashed its legs in its painful strugglings.

54 14 June 1889

Atherstone Petty Sessions

EMPLOYER AND WORKMAN **William Smalley**, canal boatman, Chilvers Coton, was summoned under the Employer's and Workmen's Act by **Joseph Siah Proctor**, boatman, Nuneaton, for 4s, four days wages from May 20th to June 1st. Complainant stated that defendant engaged him at 6s per week. He worked a week and five days and had only received 5s. Defendant contended that complainant was only entitled to 3s 6d, but he admitted "tapping" him. The wages were agreed to be paid on Saturday night, but on the Friday the complainant demanded 4s and refused to go any further with the boat. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay the claim and also the costs in the assault case.

55 12 July 1889

Atherstone Petty Sessions

A SPORTING BOATMAN **John Hemsley**, boatman, Polesworth, was summoned for an alleged trespass in pursuit of game on the 23rd ult, upon land in the occupation of Messrs Mallaby and Alkin, Grendon. Defendant pleaded guilty. William Riches, gamekeeper, proved the case.

Defendant was fined 10s and 19s 6d costs.

56 11 October 1889 Cannock Petty Sessions

DAMAGING GROWING CLOVER **Alfred Wasley**, boatman (who did not appear) was charged with damaging growing clover, on land in the occupation of Edward Bratton, new Canal Wharf, Hednesford. Police-constable Jeffery said he saw the defendant and another boatman go across a clover field in the occupation of prosecutor. The defendant had got a handkerchief with about a pound of watercress in it. He took the cress off him, and told him he had no right to trespass on the land. Fined 5s and costs.

57 25 October 1889 Lichfield Police

ALLEGED THEFT OF A HORSE Stephen Wood, hawker, 33 Summerhill Street, Birmingham, was brought up in custody charged with stealing, on the 15th inst, a horse value £10, the property of **Charles William Wall**, boatman, Alrewas. Prisoner pleaded not guilty. Prosecutor stated that on October 18th he attended the Smithfield, Greenhill, for the purpose of purchasing a horse at the sale which was being held there. Having purchased a horse, prosecutor discovered that it was not suitable for his purpose and subsequently exchanged with another man. He then took his horse to the Bold Buck Inn, and eventually he was accosted by prisoner, who told him he should like to look at the animal. Prosecutor accordingly took the horse from the stable and ran it up and down the yard, after which prisoner agreed to give him £10 for it. In the Inn prisoner gave him a sovereign and prosecutor handed him a receipt for it which read as under :- "Bought brown cob off Charles William Wall at £10; received £1". Prosecutor took a copy of the receipt. The horse was then taken towards the Smithfield at which place prisoner told Wall he would pay the remainder of the money. Prisoner asked prosecutor if he had any objection to his riding the animal as far as the Smithfield, and prosecutor allowed him to do so, at the same time holding the halter. When near the Smithfield, prisoner suddenly turned the horse round, wrested the halter from prosecutor and galloped away. Wall pursued prisoner on foot to Birmingham, but lost sight of him at Shenstone. Upon arriving at Birmingham, prosecutor gave information to the police, and as he knew prisoner's address, he accompanied two detectives to that place. They then waited until prisoner came home, and as soon as he entered the house, the detectives followed him in, leaving prosecutor outside. Directly afterwards, they called Wall in, and the prisoner upon seeing him exclaimed, "How the ---- did you get here, I should think you have come on some bicycle, haven't you". Prosecutor replied, "No, on foot", to which prisoner said, "And before me on horse back". Upon prosecutor telling him that he had been in the town several hours, prisoner said, "You're a good one, as I have only just returned". Prisoner pulled out of his pocket the receipt the prosecutor had given him, and handed it to one of the detectives, at the same time remarking to prosecutor, "I have bought the cob; you don't think I have stole it, do you? I was going to send for you on Monday, if I could get the money. I have no money and you cannot get blood out of a stone". Prisoner subsequently accompanied prosecutor and the detectives to the police station, where he was taken into custody. Prosecutor had not seen the horse since prisoner went away with it from Lichfield. Superintendent Hernamen (?) at this point applied for a remand until Thursday, which was granted.

58 4 July 1890 Stafford Quarter Sessions

THEFT OF A MULE AT HEDNESFORD **William Tanley** (36), boatman, and **Joseph Hewitt** (35), boatman, were charged with stealing on March 29 at Hednesford, a mare mule, value £7, the property of William Mekins. Mr Pearson prosecuted. William Mekins, coal dealer, Birmingham, said that on the 27th March he sent the two prisoners to Hednesford for some coal. He saw Tanley next on March 31 and asked him where he had been all that time. Tanley said, "Joe has sold the mule". Thomas Sutton, salt hawker, Cannock Street, Hednesford, spoke to purchasing the mule from Hewitt for 19s. Prisoners were found guilty and each sentenced to three months hard labour.

59 1 August 1890**Tamworth County Police**

THAT WHISKEY! **James Ridley** (61), boatman, Leicester, was brought up in custody charged with being drunk and disorderly at the railway station on Saturday evening. Defendant pleaded guilty, stating that he sold a horse at the Fair, after which he drank two glasses of whiskey "which seemed to knock him silly". Mr H Morgan, L and NW Station Master, stated that about 6.40 on Saturday evening, defendant and another man came on to the platform, but as defendant was very drunk, witness refused to allow him to travel by the train. Defendant used very abusive language and had to be forcibly restrained from entering a carriage. Inspector Dodd deposed to cautioning the defendant as to his conduct in the fair. P C Jones proved apprehending the defendant at the station about seven o'clock. Defendant used very bad language and made a rush at Mr Morgan, threatening to "knock him across the ---- rails". Witness then closed with defendant and handcuffed him. Defendant was very violent and had to be conveyed to the police station in a milk float. Defendant now said he did not know what he was doing at the time. He asked the Bench to be as "reasonable" as possible. The Bench imposed a penalty of £1 including costs. When arrested, defendant had £27 in gold in his possession.

60 29th August 1890**Rugeley**

DROWNED IN THE CANAL An inquest was held on Tuesday afternoon, before Mr W Morgan, coroner, at the Britannia Inn, Brereton Road, touching the death of John Keeneham, a miner aged 47, lately residing at the marl pits, Brereton Road, who came to his death on Saturday night by falling into the canal. Mr C Gilbert was foreman of the jury. Mary Keeneham, the widow of deceased, stated that she left her husband at the Globe Inn on Saturday night. He had been drinking and was not sober. She left him to go and do some shopping and when she returned to the Globe Inn, she found he was gone. He did not come home, and she sent someone to look for him. He was very near sighted and could not see his way well, his eyes having been injured by working in the pit. She was out all night looking for him, and the next morning she heard he had been found in the canal. Maurice Saunders, a miner, of King Street, stated that he last saw deceased at 5 minutes to 10 in Albion Street. He was walking pretty steadily, but evidently had had some beer. It was a dark night and he must have missed his way and walked straight into the canal instead of turning to the right. **Charles Edwards**, a dredger working for the North Staffordshire Canal Company, and living at Mossley, deposed that on Sunday morning about 6 o'clock, a boatman, passing his house, told him there was a man lying dead in the canal. He went to the spot taking a boat hook with him, and found the body just by the railway bridge. It was lying face downwards and floating on the top of the water. He got the body out with the hook. Deceased was quite dead and cold. It was not very deep there, but very muddy. He sent for the police, and the body was removed home. Police-constable Hollins, in reply to the Coroner, said that he was called to the spot by the last witness, examined the body, and found no marks upon him. The Coroner summed up, remarking that the probability was that the deceased, while in liquor, had missed his way in the dark and fallen into the canal. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

61 20 February 1891**Rushall**

FRAUDULENTLY REMOVING GOODS Martin Leonard, miner, Walsall Wood, was charged with fraudulently removing his goods on the 31st Jan, and **William Beddows**, boatman, was charged with assisting in the same. Leonard Jackson said that the defendant was a tenant of his, but on the day named he left owing £2, being ten weeks rent, taking his goods at about 8.45 at night. Witness spoke to defendant and told him not to take the goods away, when he replied that he should do as he liked. The defendant Beddows was carting the goods away. The rent was still owing. The case was adjourned for a fortnight to give the defendant an opportunity of paying the rent.

62 6 March 1891**District Petty Sessions – Rugeley**

ROBBING A CANAL BOATMAN Bridget O'Connor, a tramp and woman of bad character, was charged on remand with stealing a purse containing £16 10s, the property of **Joseph Pumfrey**, a

canal boatman of Upton on Severn, at Rugeley on Saturday night, February 21st. The evidence of prosecutor, given at the first hearing of the case, was read over by the Clerk, from which it appeared that the man and woman met near the Globe Inn and went for a walk together, in the course of which prosecutor missed his purse and money, and accused the prisoner of taking it. This she at first denied, but upon his calling for the police, she handed him back the purse and £15 10s, retaining possession of a sovereign. The woman then went away, and upon seeing a policeman, prosecutor told him what had occurred. He afterwards saw the prisoner entering a shop and pointed her out to the policeman, who took her into custody. He had not seen the sovereign since. When he was in the lane with the prisoner and called for the police, a man came up to him, who went off to find one. Another man named Morris then came up and struck him with a rope and said to the woman, "Let me come closer and we will tie the ---- to the rails". He, however, got away from them. Prosecutor, in reply to the prisoner, said that he had offered if the prisoner would give him the money back, he would let her go. She, however, did not give it to him. The prisoner now pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one months hard labour.

63 29 May 1891

Penkridge

KILLING A PHEASANT IN CLOSE TIME **Thomas Ball**, boatman, was charged with taking and killing a pheasant during close time, and **John Swallowood**, also a boatman, was charged with aiding and abetting him. The charge was proved by two constables, and the Bench imposed a fine of 15s, including costs.

64 5 June 1891

Cannock Petty Sessions

WASTING CANAL WATER **James Young**, boatman, was charged with wasting canal water belonging to the Birmingham Canal Company. The offence took place on April 30th at the Churchbridge Docks, and defendant, who pleaded guilty, was fined 2s 6d and 10s costs. Mr Barrow of Birmingham appeared on behalf of the company, and said they did not wish to press the case.

65 31 July 1891

Staffordshire Summer Assizes

ALLEGED CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH AT BREWOOD In the case of Mary Jane Sumner (20), no occupation, and **George Sumner** (30), boatman, who were indicted with concealment of the birth of the illegitimate child of the female prisoner at Brewood on April 21, the Grand Jury ignored the bill, the foreman informing his Lordship that they had examined the six additional witnesses who had been put forward by the prosecution, but they found that they knew absolutely nothing about the facts of the case. There was not, apart from these, in the opinion of the jury, any case. After having perused the evidence in question, his Lordship said it was altogether immaterial, and he should disallow the expenses of these witnesses and of the prosecution so far as they were concerned.

66 23 October 1891

Tamworth County Court

ALLEGED PERJURY BY A PLAINTIFF **George Henry Dennis**, boatman, Burton on Trent v **Frederick Sephton**, boat builder, Polesworth. Claim £17, viz, £12 damages for the detention of a canal boat, and the return of the boat or £5 the balance of its value. Mr R Nevill appeared for plaintiff and Mr Atkins for defendant. Mr Nevill stated that on April 11th, plaintiff agreed to purchase of defendant a canal boat named the *Perseverance*, guaranteed by the defendant to be fit to live in. The agreement for the purchase was that the plaintiff was to pay £4 10s in cash, which he did, and 10s was allowed for an old boat, which left a balance of £8, and which was to be paid by fortnightly instalments of 16s. The plaintiff, his father in law (Thomas Wright) and the defendant and his wife were all present when the bargain was made. Wright stated that if defendant would make the instalments payable monthly, he would agree to that. The agreement was written out by Mrs Sephton. Three weeks afterwards, it was forwarded to the plaintiff, and when it was read over to him, as he was illiterate, he at once stated that it was not the agreement which he signed. His Honour here asked for the agreement, which was handed to him, and after perusing it, he asked

plaintiff if it was his signature. Plaintiff : No Sir. His Honour : You can write your name. Do you mean to tell me that this was not signed by you? Plaintiff : Yes, sir. Mr Atkins : He wrote Wright's name also, and Wright made a mark against it. Plaintiff : I did not. His Honour : I must caution you ; if you are going to mislead me in this way, I must deal with you. Look at these two names, Wright and Dennis. You know your own writing perfectly well ; did you write those names? Plaintiff : I did not. His Honour : Who did? Plaintiff : If you will allow me to speak one word to Sephton - . His Honour : Is that signature (George Dennis) in your handwriting? Plaintiff : No. Mr Nevill said when plaintiff called upon him he told plaintiff what a serious position he was placing himself in by denying the signature. His Honour : I have no doubt that you did everything that was right, Mr Nevill. His Honour then asked plaintiff to write his name on a piece of paper, which he did in a bold round hand, spelling his Christian name "Gorge", which was the same in the agreement. His Honour : I have not the slightest doubt it is your writing. After cautioning you twice, you deliberately swear differently. Plaintiff : Yes, it is not because I am winning or losing. His Honour : I shall hear evidence on this, but I give you fair warning what will happen to you. Is anyone in court who saw him write it? Mr Atkins : Mr Sephton saw him. Mr Nevill : When he came to me, I asked him if it was his writing. His Honour : Mr Nevill, don't imagine that I think you would do anything that was not right. Here is a document signed by three people. It seems to me to be his writing, and if that is so, you have no case. Mr Nevill : After seeing him, I told him to go back to Burton, and I would think it over. I communicated with Wright, who lives at Glascote, and he told me the purport of the agreement. He stated to me positively that it was not the same agreement which was read to him. His Honour : If it is not so, it is a very curious thing how the exact terms, nearly the exact rate of payment got in. Let Wright be called.

Thomas Wright then entered the witness box. His Honour : Just be careful! Who signed your name there (showing him the agreement)? Witness : Mrs Sephton. His Honour : Who signed "George Dennis"? Witness : I can't tell you. I never saw no-one write except Mrs Sephton. I don't know who wrote his name. His Honour : Did you authorise Mrs Sephton to write your name? Witness : I said I would write and she wrote for me. Cross-examined : He was father in law to plaintiff. He had not received a letter from defendant about his liability to pay for the boat.

The defendant was then called. His Honour : Did you see plaintiff write his name on this agreement? Defendant : Yes, I saw Wright make that cross; plaintiff's wife was also present. Plaintiff wrote "Thos Wright" and his own name. My wife wrote out the agreement. Mr Nevill : How was it that that agreement was not handed to the plaintiff? Defendant : He left some papers about some manure and other papers as well, and they were all sent on to him with the agreement by the next post. By the Judge : Two copies of the agreement were made, and both were signed. Mr Nevill : Why was not the agreement given to Dennis? Defendant : It was given to his wife. He wrote his name there. Wright : Dennis cannot write. Defendant : He wrote it distinctly. My wife read it out before he signed it. Dennis has told the biggest untruths! His Honour : Never mind ; that is for me and not you to decide. Answer the questions you are asked, and don't pass judgement on the case ; that is not your province. Mr Nevill : During the time the five persons were present, was a single word said about his hiring that boat? Defendant : Yes. Mr Nevill : Didn't you tell Dennis and others that he had bought it? Defendant : Such a thing was out of the question. Mr Neville : Do you think that a sensible man would pay £5 down, and then if he was in arrears a fortnight he would agree to lose all claim to the boat? His Honour : This is a hire purchase agreement, and has been copied from an agreement drawn up by a lawyer. When the £13 is paid, it would become his property. Mr Nevill : And if he did not pay he would forego all the other payments? His Honour : That is outside the question. Until he pays the £13 it remains the property of the defendant. The main question is, did your client sign this document? If he did, he has no cause of action. Mr Nevill: He states distinctly to me that he did not sign it. His Honour said he was satisfied that the plaintiff did sign the agreement. Apart from all other considerations, he had heard the witnesses, and looking at the whole of the circumstances, and at the writing, he could not imagine that the defendant would go into court and be a party to forging the plaintiff's name to the document. Mr Nevill said he wished to go into the merits of the case. His Honour : No property passes to you

until the £13 is paid. Mr Nevill said that the amount due had been tendered to the defendant, who refused to accept it. Re-examined, the defendant said he wrote eleven or twelve letters to plaintiff before he re-took possession of the boat. His Honour repeated he was satisfied that plaintiff signed the agreement. Defendant denied that plaintiff tendered him any money before he seized the boat. In reply to his Honour, he said the original agreement, from which the one produced was copied, was drawn up by Mr Wilkes of Coventry. His Honour said the agreement provided that if nothing was paid between the execution of the contract and the 28th of May, plaintiff should have no claim to the boat. The witness Wright (recalled) said, in answer to the judge, that he occupied ten acres of garden land, but he had no money in the bank. His Honour said it came back to the point as to whether plaintiff signed the agreement. He repeated that he believed plaintiff did sign it. A written document could not be varied by verbal evidence. He very much regretted to say that in his judgement, the plaintiff and his father in law had come there to commit wilful and corrupt perjury. It appeared to him to be a very bad case of perjury indeed. It was a monstrous thing to suggest that these names had been forged, and there would be a verdict for defendant with costs. If plaintiff escaped prosecution for perjury, he would be a lucky man. Mr Atkins said he might say, in justice to the defendant, that he wrote to plaintiff saying that he might have the boat if the money was paid by August. Mr Nevill retorted that if they had the boat now, they would want a considerable reduction. His Honour then ordered the agreements produced to be impounded by the Registrar, remarking that it was a very serious case.

67 8 April 1892 Cannock Petty Sessions

OBSTRUCTION AND ASSAULT **Henry Tillson**, boatman, was summoned for obstructing the servants of the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company on the 12th ult, and also with assaulting Edward Hall at the same time and place. **Joseph King**, another boatman, was also summoned for assaulting Edward Hall, George Hall, E Butler and John Taylor, who are in the employ of the Canal Company. Mr W Barrow, solicitor of the firm of Messrs Wragge and Co, Birmingham, prosecuted, and in the course of his opening address said that defendants had been guilty of most wilful obstruction and an unprovoked assault, and on behalf of the Company he wished to press the case. Samuel Cooper, employed by the Birmingham Canal Navigation Co, said that on the 12th March, about 6 o'clock in the evening, he was at the Hednesford Basin. There were altogether seven of the Company's men there, and they were engaged in putting down stop planks. To do this, they had occasion to move two boats out of the basin. Just then, Tillson came along and pushed the boat towards where they were putting the stop planks. He had a knife in his hand, and said he would cut out the man's heart who interfered with the boat or him. Tillson in pushing the boat away fell into the canal, and Edward Hall pulled him out, upon which defendant deliberately struck him. King afterwards came on the scene and assaulted Edward Hall, George Hall, Henry Butler and John Taylor. In consequence of defendants' conduct, they were afraid to continue the work. Due notice of the stoppage had been given. Tillson was fined 20s and costs for obstruction, and for the assault 10s and 13s costs. King was ordered to pay 20s and 13s costs.

68 19 August 1892 District Petty Sessions - Atherstone

A DEAR RABBIT **Alfred Lakin**, boatman, Bedworth, pleaded guilty to trespassing upon land at Hartshill, on the 5th inst, in the occupation of Mr C Abell. William Ward, in the employ of the prisoner, said he saw defendant shoot a rabbit, which he gave up when witness spoke to him. Defendant was fined 6s and 13s costs.

69 2 September 1892

THE CHARGE OF UNLAWFUL SHOOTING AT POLESWORTH **Wm Johnson**, boatman, Sandbach, a stolid looking individual with a ruddy countenance and apparently of middle age, was charged by Joseph Harding jun, miner, Polesworth, with having on the 17th ult inflicted grievous bodily harm upon him by shooting him in the hand with a gun. Mr E A Paine (Hanley) defended. Complainant stated that on the date named, between six and seven o'clock, he was standing on the

Bull's Head Bridge at Polesworth, when a man asked him for some matches. He had hardly complied with the request when he felt something strike his right hand. He heard the report of a gun at the same time. He saw defendant fire it from the cabin of a barge. He had not previously spoken to defendant, who was about a boat's length from him. He subsequently reported the matter to the police, and Dr Smart extracted two shots. He was unable to work for a week. Cross-examined : Defendant appeared to discharge the gun without taking aim. In his opinion, defendant discharged the gun more with the intention of frightening persons than of doing them an injury. He thought the shots struck the wall of the bridge and glanced off onto his hand, otherwise they would have gone through it. By the Bench : His hand at the time was almost on a level with his face. He thought defendant pointed the gun at him. Cross-examination continued : Defendant was a total stranger to him. He had only been on the bridge about two minutes before being shot, and could not say whether anyone had previously been chaffing defendant. He had no desire to press the charge. By the Clerk : The impressions of about 28 shots were found on the white stone cap of the bridge. Joseph Harding, father of complainant, who gave his evidence very reluctantly, said he saw defendant fire the gun. Defendant appeared very excited and agitated. There were five persons standing on the bridge at the time. Defendant's boat had been fast, and witness released it. Defendant, who appeared to have been drinking, said, "I'll shoot them when I get to the bridge". Mr Paine said he would admit that defendant fired the gun, but denied he had any felonious intent. He submitted that no jury would convict on complainant's evidence. The gun (produced), Mr Paine said, was old and worthless, and was purchased by defendant for 5s. He would admit that defendant loaded the gun and replaced it in the cabin. In his opinion, it was a case for compensation and compromise. The Bench having consulted decided that the case should proceed. Dr Smart, Polesworth, deposed to extracting two shots (produced) from complainant's right hand; one was embedded in the knuckles and the other in the middle finger below the first joint. Both shots ran about an inch under the skin. Cross-examined : In his opinion, the shot had first struck a hard substance such as a brick or stone before entering complainant's hand. William Clements, miner, said complainant had just given him a match when defendant fired the gun. He had not heard defendant say anything. The gun was pointed in their direction and he "bobbed" behind the wall. He called out to defendant, "You want a brick dropping on your head". [Laughter] Cross-examined : He heard a lad shout at defendant. He did not know that boatmen had complained of things being thrown at them from the bridge. He thought defendant merely meant to frighten them. Defendant was a perfect stranger to him. Police-sergeant Court, stationed at Polesworth, said he went to (Pooley?) Hall Colliery in search of defendant, and told him to bring his boat to the side of the landing stage, which he refused to do, and witness made the horse do it. Defendant asked what he wanted and he replied that he would tell him when he came to the side. Defendant then went into the cabin, saying, "You'll see, you ----". Witness subsequently arrested defendant and found the gun (produced) in the cabin. In reply to the charge, defendant said, "I don't know what made me do it, I was aggravated". The gun, which was loaded, contained five drachms of powder and one and a quarter ounces of shot. Defendant was the worse for drink at the time. This concluded the case for the prosecution. Defendant, who wished to make a statement, said his boat got fast with others that were almost across the canal, which had got loose from their moorings and caused a complete block. He fetched his horse back and pulled the boat astern to its right side. Whilst this was going on, there were eight or ten men standing on the bridge. As soon as he started the horse, the men shouted and stopped it. The more he asked the men to stop shouting, the more they did it, and kept him in that condition for twenty minutes or half an hour. He asked if they had not better sense. When he got at liberty he called out, "I'll shift you when I get towards the bridge", and drew the gun from the cabin and fired towards the bridge in order to frighten them, because he was afraid that they would drop something on his head as he went under it, as had been the case before. He took no proper aim at anyone and did not intend to do them any injury. George Scott, sanitary pipe maker, gave evidence bearing out defendant's story. Defendant did not put the gun to his shoulder, but merely pulled the trigger whilst the muzzle was pointed in the air. Before defendant fired he heard him say, "I'll make you shift when I get to the bridge". He thought defendant meant to

frighten the men. Defendant was a stranger to him. The Bench committed defendant for trial at the next Quarter Sessions, and allowed bail himself in £20 and two sureties of £10 each. Messrs F Sephton and J Crowshaw were the sureties.

70 17 February 1893 Atherstone

SAD DEATH OF A BOY On Saturday Dr Iliffe held an inquest at the Bulls's Head Inn upon the body of **William Mott** (14), who was drowned in the canal on the previous Thursday. It transpired that deceased was employed by a boatman named **William Bash**, of Black Delph, Brierley Hill, and on Thursday evening, whilst preparing the second lock at Atherstone in order to allow the canal boat to enter, the deceased somehow fell into the water unobserved, and was drowned. It is supposed that deceased had opened the lock gates and that in attempting to cross he slipped and fell. The body was recovered by George Atkins, canal night clerk, and others. From inquiries instituted by Superintendent Hannah, it was found that deceased originally came from Tipton, where he either ran away or was deserted by his father. In September last he was living with his mother at 122 Francis Street, Burton on Trent. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

71 21 April 1893 Cannock Petty Sessions

THEFT OF TOOLS **Edgar Smith**, boatman, was charged on remand with stealing a fork and shovel at Brewood on the 12th inst, the property of Josiah Edwards. From the evidence of a witness, it appeared that on Wednesday, prisoner was seen to leave a boat on the Staffordshire Union Canal and go to a dung heap and take the tools therefrom. The witness followed the prisoner to Brewood bridge, where he saw Police-sergeant Whitehurst to whom he gave information. The officer apprehended prisoner and charged him with the offence. The tools were afterwards found in the bottom of a boat on which prisoner was engaged. He was sentenced to two months hard labour.

72 3 November 1893 Cannock

ASSAULT At the same court, **Thomas Millington**, collier, Cannock, charged **James Wood**, boatman, with assaulting him on the 18th ult. Complainant stated that he was a boat loader at Hawkins Colliery. About 4 pm on the day in question, defendant picked some of the best coal and began to load his tub. He said to him, "You must not take the best coal", and defendant then struck him twice. By the Bench : He did not strike the defendant. Thomas Smith, labourer, Bridgetown, said he saw defendant assault complainant. Benjamin Fellows, foreman at the wharf, said he saw defendant knock complainant down. He went to the defendant and said, "What is the matter?" and defendant replied, "I'll obey you, but not him". Defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs.

73 12 January 1894 Tamworth County Petty Sessions

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION **Joseph Cheveler**, boatman, Fazeley, and Thomas Bartram, labourer, Wigginton, were summoned at the instance of the School Attendance Committee of the Board of Guardians for neglecting to send their children regularly to school. An attendance order was made against Cheveler, and the other case was dismissed.

74 12 January 1894 Brownhills

CRUELTY CASES At the Police Court on Wednesday, **Henry Young**, boatman, Small Heath, Birmingham, was charged at the instance of Inspector H E Osmond, RSPCA, with working a horse whilst in an unfit state on December 7th; and John Sheldon, coal dealer, Brierley Street, Birmingham was summoned for causing the same to be worked. Defendants pleaded not guilty. Inspector Osmond, stationed at Wolverhampton, said in the first place he wished to explain that his chief witness had died since the summons had been issued. He was in charge of the boat which the horse was drawing, and he had made certain statements to witness. With regard to the circumstances of the case, witness said that on 8th December he received a communication from the police at Brownhills, in consequence of which he came over, and in company with P C Haywood went to Hammerwich. He there saw a horse in a stable on the canal side. The animal was standing

on three legs, being unable to bear any weight on the near hind leg. Upon examination, he found that the animal was excessively lame and was quite unfit for work. In answer to questions, Young admitted that the horse had drawn an empty boat from Birmingham on the previous day. He said he had been ordered to work the animal by Sheldon, the owner. On December 10th, witness saw the latter at his house in Birmingham, and he then admitted that the horse had been lame for a long time. P C Haywood, stationed at Chasetown, gave corroborative evidence and added that the horse was destroyed on the day after the Inspector's visit. The Bench considered the case proved and fined Sheldon 2s 6d and 11s 6d costs. In the case of Young, he was ordered to pay 8s costs only, as he was acting under his master's orders. **John Hughes**, boatman, Bordsley Street, Birmingham, who did not appear, was charged with working a horse whilst in an unfit state on December 8th; and **William Godfrey**, boatman, Monument Lane, Birmingham was charged with causing the same to be worked. Defendant pleaded not guilty. P C Elks, stationed at Chasetown, deposed that on the 7th ult about 7 pm, he saw a grey mare lying in the stable at Chasetown Wharf. Witness got the animal up and saw that it was very lame on the near fore leg. About 12 pm the same night, in company with PC Haywood, witness again visited the stable and found the mare still there. At 11 am on the following day, witness met the defendant Hughes on the canal side. He was in charge of the mare witness had previously seen in the stable, and which was attached to a boat. Hughes was driving the animal and Godfrey was steering the boat. PC Haywood, who was present, asked Hughes why he was working the mare while in such a condition, and he replied that the animal was not so bad and had only been lame about 12 months. The mare was afterwards taken back to the stables and Inspector Osmond was communicated with. Inspector Osmond was called and stated that when he saw the mare, he considered it was totally unfit for work. The Bench fined defendants 2s 6d and costs each, the Chairman remarking that if Hughes had attended the court he would probably have had only the costs to pay, but by absenting himself, he was guilty of contempt of court.

75 16 February 1894

Brownhills

CRUELTY CASES At the same court (Petty Sessions), **James Moss**, boatman, Aston Road, Birmingham, was charged with working a horse whilst in an unfit state at Brownhills on the 16th ult. PC Moyle, stationed at Brownhills, stated that on 16th January about 7.30 am, he overtook the defendant in charge of a horse and boat near the Anchor Inn, Brownhills. Defendant was steering the boat and a lad was driving the horse. Witness noticed that the horse was walking very lame and he stopped it and examined it. On its back, underneath a strap, he found a raw wound. The animal was very lame in both hind legs which were swollen above the fetlocks. Defendant said this was only a humour, but he was not going to bring the horse again. It was an act of cruelty to work the horse in that state. Inspector Osbourne, RSPCA, said he visited Brownhills on the 15th ult and saw the horse in question. He found it very lame on both hind legs and in such a condition that it was unfit for work. Defendant was fined 1s and 10s costs.

76 27 April 1894

Atherstone Petty Sessions

THE ASSAULT ON A GAMEKEEPER **Richard Hone**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned on remand to answer a charge of assaulting William Ward, gamekeeper, Hartshill, on the 7th inst. There was a cross-summons charging Ward with assaulting Hone. The evidence given at the last hearing was read over by the Clerk (Mr Armishaw). Hone, who did not appear, was sentenced to a months imprisonment. Ward's costs were remitted.

77 15 June 1894

Cannock Petty Sessions

CRUELTY CASE FROM CHURCHBRIDGE **William Brookes**, boatman, Winson Green, Birmingham, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state on the 25th ult, and **Joseph Brookes**, his father, was charged with causing the same to be worked. PC Rudd, stationed at Wyrley, deposed that on the 25th ult about 10.30 am, in company with PC Mountney, he saw William Brookes working a grey mare which was attached to a boat load of coal on the Birmingham Canal at Churchbridge. Witness stopped defendant and examined the horse. He found

two raw wounds on the off shoulder, about one inch in diameter. There was another on the top of the neck, about two inches in diameter. They were each being rubbed by the collar, and blood was oozing from the wounds. There were also raw wounds on either side of the nose, which were being rubbed by the bridle. Witness asked defendant how it was he was working the horse in such a bad state, and he replied, "I thought if I padded the collar, it would not matter". Witness asked who the horse belonged to, and he said his father, Joseph Brookes, and that he knew about the wounds. PC Mountney corroborated. Inspector Osbourne, RSPCA, said that on the 28th ult, he went to the elder defendant's residence at Winson Green, and saw him at the door. He asked him if he was owner of the horse in question, and he replied, "Yes, I am; my son was working it". Both defendants afterwards accompanied witness to the stables where the horse was, and witness examined the animal. Witness then corroborated PC Rudd's evidence as to the wounds. Defendants were fined 20s and 12s 2d costs each; in default one month's hard labour.

78 29 June 1894

Lichfield County Police

DRUNKENNESS **George Clarke**, boatman, Alrewas, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Alrewas on the 16th inst. Defendant pleaded guilty to being disorderly, but not drunk. PC Murray gave evidence in support of the charge, and said that defendant threw a kettle of boiling water at him. Defendant called John Pickin, labourer, Alrewas, who gave evidence on his behalf. The Bench fined defendant 19s and costs.

79 6 July 1894

THE HARTSHILL ASSAULT CASE Jas Ison jun, quarryman, Hartshill, was summoned on remand with assaulting **Mary Ann Hone**, married, Banbury, at Hartshill on the 26th May. Mr A Sale defended. Complainant is the wife of a canal boatman, plying between Hartshill and Banbury. She alleged that on the night in question, upon leaving a public house, defendant followed and indecently assaulted her. Since the assault, defendant had offered her 5s to settle the matter. In cross-examination, she stated that her husband had been sent to prison for a month for assaulting her. James Lee and Matilda Lee, man and wife, Baddesley, who were at Hartshill on the night in question, said they heard a woman shouting in a lane leading to the canal. Complainant was excited and her apron was covered with mud; she, however, made no complaint to them, except that defendant had hurt her wrist. In cross-examination, the latter witness said complainant subsequently told her that she must summon defendant or her husband would murder her. Complainant also told her that defendant had offered her 5s but that she would not settle the case under 10s. Mr Sale, addressing the Bench, said defendant had known complainant for some time, and on one occasion protected her from her husband's violence. It was very singular that she made no complaint to the Lees if an assault had been committed. He alleged that complainant drank with defendant in the public house, and invited him to accompany her to the boat in order to assist in carrying her grocery parcels. He also asserted that complainant's husband had a grudge against defendant because he had told the police of his whereabouts when he absconded in order to avoid arrest. He denied absolutely that any assault had been committed. PC Blower said he had known defendant for 15 years and had always found him a steady and well conducted man. The Bench, having retired, considered that an assault had been committed, although not of a very serious nature, and defendant would be fined £2, including costs.

80 21 December 1894

Cannock

THEFT OF A HORSE RUG At the Penkridge Police Court on Monday, **John Butler**, boatman, Birmingham was charged with stealing a horse rug valued at 5s, the property of Joseph Sellman, undertaker, Cannock, on the 19th of December. Prosecutor stated that on that day he was driving a waggonette between Hednesford and Cannock. On arriving opposite the Globe Inn, witness and the passengers got down and entered the public house where the defendant and two other men were drinking. The prisoner got up and went out. In about five minutes, witness followed him, and though the horse rug was on the horses when he went in, it was gone when he came out. **Thomas**

Avery, boatman, Tewkesbury, said he saw the defendant searching the waggonette on the day in question. There was no horse rug on the horses when this was taking place. He did not see the defendant take the rug. PS Banton stated that when he arrested the defendant, he said, "He (meaning the last witness) did not see me take the rug. I never had it". The defendant was fined 20s and costs, or in default 14 days hard labour.

81 14 June 1895

Leacroft

THEFT OF COAL At the Cannock Petty Sessions on Monday, **Samuel Jesse Bowen**, boatman, Greets Green, West Bromwich, and **Arthur Parkes**, a youth (14) of the same place, were charged with stealing 4 cwts of coal, the property of Messrs Bagnall and Sons of Wednesbury, on the 30th of May. PC Gunn stated that on the date in question he was on duty, in company with PC Rudd, at Leacroft near Kingswood Bridge, when he saw a boat laden with coal travelling from Hednesford towards them. When near the bridge named, both defendants commenced to throw coal on to the embankment. Some of the coal fell into the canal. He went up to Bowen, and asked him what he meant by throwing the coal off, and asked him if his master knew what he was doing. He said that the boat leaked. Witness charged the two defendants with stealing the coal, and took Bowen to the Cannock Police Station, where he was locked up. Afterwards he returned and took Parkes into custody, and then took possession of the coal, which he weighed, and found that it turned the scales at 3 cwts 6lbs. He estimated that the coal which fell into the water made the amount up to 4 cwts. PC Rudd gave corroborative evidence. Ed Esson, clerk in the employ of Messrs Bagnall and Sons of Wednesbury, stated that on the day in question a boat was travelling between Hednesford and Wednesbury in the charge of Bowen. The value of the coal was 1s 3d. The defendant Bowen pleaded guilty. The Bench remarked that had there been a previous conviction, they would have sent the defendant to prison without the option of a fine; as it was, a fine of 20s and costs would be imposed. As to the boy Parkes, the Bench had taken into consideration that he might have acted under the orders of Bowen, and he would be dismissed with a caution.

82 21 June 1895

Cannock

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN An inquest touching the death of **John Gosling** of Smethwick, Birmingham, who suddenly dropped and expired on the Birmingham canal side at Leacroft, Cannock, on Friday, was held at the Workhouse on Monday afternoon, before Mr W Morgan, coroner, Stafford. John Gosling, 14 1/2 court, Bagott Street, Birmingham, gave evidence identifying the body as that of his son who, it appears, had served a number of years in the army, most of which were spent in India, having only returned some eighteen months or two years ago. He did not know the exact age of the deceased, but thought he was about 32. **Benjamin Millward**, boatman, deposed that on Friday, about 7.20 pm, the deceased was driving a horse along the Birmingham Canal at Leacroft which was attached to a boat of which he (witness) was steersman, when in the act of striking a match to light his pipe, the deceased fell backwards and expired without a moment's notice. The doctor was at once sent for, but life was pronounced extinct. The body was afterwards conveyed to the Workhouse. Dr Riley, medical practitioner, Cannock, gave evidence to the effect that he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, and found that death had resulted from an effusion of blood at the base of the brain. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

83 16 August 1895

CRUELTY TO A HORSE On Monday at the Police Court, **Thomas Reading**, canal boatman in the employ of Messrs Hunt and Son, chemical manufacturers, Wednesbury, was charged with having cruelly ill-treated a horse at Penkridge Lock on July 14th. Evidence was given that the defendant lashed the horse with a whip, the witnesses stating that they considered the defendant whipped the animal unmercifully, causing it to fall from exhaustion, and inflicting wounds upon it. Police-constable Foxhall stated that when he spoke to defendant, he said he had received orders to either kill or cure the horse. Defendant said that the horse was obstinate, and that his chastisement

was not excessive. The Chairman said it was a gross case, and defendant would have to go to prison for a month, without the option of a fine. Defendant was further charged with having wasted canal water by opening the paddle of the bottom gates of Penkridge Lock before closing the top gates, and he was fined £1 and 9s costs.

84 6 September 1895

SAD DROWNING CASES Early on Monday morning, **Thomas New**, son of Charles New, boatman of Lawton, Cheshire, met with his death by drowning in the Staffordshire Canal near Preston Brook. They were passing under the tunnel when the boy fell overboard. His mother and another person tried to save him, but without success. His body was found subsequently, and conveyed to Preston Brook to await an inquest.

85 1 May 1896

Leacroft

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, **Henry Nott**, boatman, Kidderminster, was summoned for working a lame horse on the canal side at Leacroft. The case was proved by Inspector Jones of RSPCA. Defendant received a good character, and was fined £1 including costs.

86 15 May 1896

Brownhills Petty Sessions

HEAVY FINE FOR RECEIVING STOLEN COAL **John Moore**, boatman, 385 Long Acre Street; **John Murphy**, boatman, 51 Argyle Street and **Frank Clements**, labourer, 7 Company's Row, all of Birmingham, were brought up in custody charged with stealing on the 9th inst 40 lbs of coal, value 6d, belonging to James Mole, Birmingham; and Jane Ghilks, wife of John Ghilks, Newton Brownhills, was charged with unlawfully receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. Mr Ashford of Birmingham defended the male prisoners. PC Moyle stated that on the 7th May about 2.50 pm, he was on the highway leading from Brownhills to Newtown. When he got near the prisoner Ghilks's house, he saw her talking to a boatman on the canal side. She went along the towing path towards the bridge which crosses the railway. There was a boat laden with coal coming towards the bridge from Chasetown Colliery Wharf in charge of two other men. When the boat reached the bridge, the man who was talking to Ghilks pulled some coal off and threw it onto the tow path. The three men then went on with the boat, and Ghilks went to her house. He could not swear to prisoners, but he believed two of the men were Moore and Murphy. Subsequently, Ghilks came back and picked up the coal, whereupon witness jumped over the hedge and ran towards her, saying, "Hello missus, you are at the old game again". She exclaimed, "Good God, master, you've copped me then have you", and added, "But I did not pay for it, one of the men told me he would put me a bit of coal on the aqueduct". Witness then took the coal (produced) from her, and afterwards went to the police station and obtained the assistance of Sergt Hollins and PC Jeffery. Witness and Jeffery went in pursuit of the boat which they stopped at the Anchor Bridge at Brownhills. All three prisoners were with the boat, and when witness told them he should lock them up for stealing coal, they denied the offence. Prisoners were subsequently taken to the police station. Afterwards, witness went in company with Sergt Hollins and PC Jeffrey to Newtown and arrested Mrs Ghilks. Sergeant Hollins gave corroborative evidence as to conversations which took place at the police station, when prisoners were charged. Mrs Ghilks, pointing to Moore, said he told her that there were some chips of coal on the aqueduct which she could have if she liked to fetch them. Moore admitted that he said this, and Ghilks further admitted that she fetched the coal. James Mole, coal merchant, Longner Street, Birmingham, was sworn, and stated that Moore and Murphy were in his employ, but Clements had not worked for him for about twelve months. The two former were sent out in charge of a boat to the Cannock Chase Colliery Wharf, and he could not say what brought Clements there. Cross-examined : He examined the boat on its return, but there was nothing to show that any of the coal was missing. Moore had been in his employ for 15 years, and he had every confidence in his honesty. He had always found him perfectly trustworthy, and he hoped his innocence would be established. Mr Ashford contended that the coal which was

picked up by Ghilks came from a preceding boat, and when Moore saw it, he shouted to the woman telling her about it, probably thinking it would do her good. No coal whatever was taken off prisoners' boat, and he submitted that there was no evidence to prove that an offence had been committed. Thomas Ghilks, son of the prisoner Ghilks, was called, and stated that he saw prisoners go along the canal on the boat, but he saw no coal taken or thrown from the boat. He did not see anything further until someone came and told him that "Mr Sunlight" had come. [Laughter] His mother was afterwards taken into custody by the constable. Mr Ashford said that inasmuch as Moore bore such an excellent character, Mr Mole hoped that the Bench would deal with him under the First Offenders' Act, and likewise treat Murphy with leniency. The latter had certainly been previously convicted, but for the past five years he had been employed by Mr Mole and had done his best to redeem his character. The Bench thought there could be no doubt about the coal being put off the boat, but considering the good character which Moore had received from his employer, they should deal with him under the First Offenders' Act and bind him over in his own recognisances to come up for judgment when called upon. He would also have to pay the costs. Clements would be similarly treated, and Murphy would have to pay 5s and costs, the Bench, whilst recognising his recent good character, being unable to overlook the fact of his having been previously convicted. With regard to Ghilks, she was an old offender, and as previous convictions of 20s and 40s and costs appeared to have made no impression upon her, she would now be fined £5 and costs. The costs in each instance amounted to 18s.

87 31 July 1896

Rushall

THEFTS BY A BOATMAN **Thomas Print** (22), boatman, 136 Lupin Street, Birmingham, was charged on a warrant with having stolen a silver watch and chain of the value of 11s, and a knife of the value of 1s 6d, the property of **William Riley**, boatman, Thimblemill Lane, Aston; also £1 5s, the money of **John Ballinger**, boatman, of the same address. Evidence was given that the prosecutor and prisoner went to sleep in the cabin of a canal boat at Daw End on the night of Saturday the 11th inst. Next morning, prisoner and the various articles mentioned were missing, and information was accordingly given to the police, with the result that the prisoner was arrested in Birmingham. PC Lovatt said prisoner, when being taken by him to Stafford, asked how he got possession of the watch, remarking, "I pawned it, ripped the ticket up and threw it away". He now pleaded guilty, and stated that he was sorry for what he had done. He was in beer at the time, and did not know till he woke up the next morning that he had taken the things. He offered to pay back everything which was due to the prosecutors if the Bench would give him another chance. The magistrates, however, pointed out that he had a bad record – five previous convictions in Aston – and they committed him for three months imprisonment with hard labour.

88 14 August 1886

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BAD LANGUAGE **William Wilkinson**, boatman, Polesworth, was fined 10s and 10s 6d costs for having used obscene language on the 25th ult, as deposed to by PC Spraggitt.

89 14 August 1896

Brownhills Petty Sessions

DRUNK IN CHARGE **George Beck**, boatman, was charged with being drunk while in charge of a horse and boat on the 19th ult. PC Williams and PS Hollins proved the case, and defendant was fined 1s and costs.

90 30 October 1896

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

COMPULSORY EDUCATION **Thomas Spilsbury**, boatman, was summoned at the instance of the Glascote School Board for having neglected to send his children regularly to school. Attendance order was made.

91 30 October 1896

Cannock

At the Petty Sessions on Monday, **Thomas Goodwin**, boatman, no fixed residence, being in

possession of three young thrushes on June 19th last, contrary to the Wild Birds' Protection Act, also giving a false address, namely Sneyd Lane, Bloxwich. PC Gunn and PS Gibbs proved the charges. Defendant was fined 6s 6d costs in the first case, and 1s and 13s 6d costs in the second case.

92 13 November 1896 Cannock

CRUELTY CASE **William Horton**, boatman, Kinver, was summoned for working a gelding whilst in an unfit state on the canal side at Leacroft on the 18th ult. PS Gibbs of Bilston proved the case, and said the horse was in poor condition and very lame. Defendant was fined 20s and 16s 6d costs, or twenty one days.

93 23 June 1898

ALLEGED ASSAULT AT ROTHERHAM A Sheffield man named **Thomas Oldfield** was charged on warrant at the Rotherham Police Court yesterday, with having assaulted a youth named **Charles Brookes**, a boatman's assistant. According to Brookes's story, at 1.30 or 2 o'clock on Tuesday morning, he was in the forecastle of a barge which was lying in the wharf at Rotherham, when the skipper called for help. He saw the prisoner coming through the hatchway. He cried, "Hallo, what is to do", whereupon prisoner collared him and threw him into the forecastle. Although he could not see the prisoner's face, he had no doubt as to his identity. The magistrate (Dr Knight) granted a remand on the application of the Chief Constable.

94 13 January 1899 Penkridge

ROBBING AN EMPLOYER **Wm Mason**, a boatman, was charged with stealing 2 cwt of coal, value 1s 6d, the property of Leonard Thos Law, coal merchant, Compton; and Henrietta Cox and Emily Rose Belcher, two girls, were charged with receiving the coal knowing it to have been stolen. It appeared that on January 2nd, prisoner was in charge of a boat load of coal at Wedges Wharf, when he threw a quantity off, and it was placed in barrows by two girls and taken away. Joseph Burgess said it was a common occurrence at the place named for coal to be thrown off the boats, and that was why the place was watched. Prosecutor gave Mason a good character, and asked for him to be leniently dealt with. Prisoner had been in his employ about five years, and he was willing to take him back, as he had expressed contrition for what he had done. Mason was fined 20s and costs, and the girls were ordered to pay the costs, and come up for judgment if called upon.

95 20 January 1899 Bridgtown

DRUNK At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, **Thomas Cown**, boatman of Littlewood, Cheslyn Hay, for being drunk on Thursday the 12th inst in Cross Street, Bridgtown, was fined 1s and 7s costs.

96 27 January 1899 Atherstone Petty Sessions

COWARDLY ASSAULT **Wm Bromage**, boatman, Coventry, was summoned to answer a charge of having assaulted **Geo Wildsmith jun**, boatman, Coventry on the 22nd ult. Mr R Fielders prosecuted and Mr Maddocks (Coventry) defended. Complainant, a youth, stated that he was in charge of a canal boat at Grendon Lock, when defendant tried to enter first. He remonstrated with defendant, who struck him on the head, knocking him down. Cross-examined ; He denied that he aggravated defendant or used bad language. Defendant denied the charge, and called a lad named Heath, who gave evidence on his behalf. The Bench, however, believed complainant's version, and fined defendant 10s and 22s 6d costs.

97 27 January 1899 Wolverhampton

WIFE DESERTION **Edwin Williams**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged before the Wolverhampton County magistrates on Monday with deserting his wife and child. Prisoner, who was arrested at Rushall, was sentenced to a months hard labour.

98 16 June 1899

Brownhills Petty Sessions

THE DRINK **Albert Beddowes**, boatman, Walsall Wood, pleaded guilty to being drunk on June 3rd in the Walsall Road, Shire Oak. PC Williams stated that he found defendant asleep and drunk on the footpath at Shire Oak. Fined 2s 6d and 6s 6d costs.

99 7 July 1899

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN AT HOPWAS **Jas Parker**, canal boatman, Birmingham, pleaded not guilty to a charge of assaulting **George Dennis**, canal boatman, Burton on Trent. The boats were moored in the canal at Hopwas. Between eleven o'clock and midnight, Dennis was preparing to leave the wharf with his boat, and when on the bridge near the Chequers, defendant said, "Can't we leave as well as you", to which he replied, "There is plenty of room for both". Defendant, who was in his stocking feet, challenged him to fight, and struck him in the abdomen, rendering him unconscious. He believed defendant struck him with an iron bar which he had in his hand, but he could not be certain about it. His mate was with him. He had since been an out patient at Burton Infirmary. He gave defendant no provocation. Defendant was drunk, and also jealous because a man had said to him (complainant), "One boatload of your manure is worth two of his". **Wm Rudgard**, boatman, said defendant struck complainant with his fist, and knocked him down, and kicked him whilst on the ground. By Dr Joy : He did not interfere because they were "one and one". [Laughter] Complainant was unable to proceed with the boat. Chas Taylor, goods porter in the employ of the London and North Western Railway, Tamworth, living near the canal, said he was in bed when he heard a disturbance. He got up and witnessed the assault. Defendant used bad language. Witness went for the police. It was a moonlight night. Defendant, who elected to be sworn, asserted that complainant struck him the first blow, knocking him down and falling upon him. Defendant also knocked one of his teeth out. He came out of the cabin because he heard a noise in the stable and went to look at his horse. **George Berry** (17), a youth, corroborated defendant's story, but admitted that he did not get out of the cabin until ten minutes after the row began. The Bench considered it a gross assault, and fined defendant £2 4s 6d including costs; in default seven days hard labour.

100 7 July 1899

Bridgtown

At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, **Joseph Allen**, boatman of Walsall Road, Bridgtown, was fined 1s 6d and 5s 6d costs for disorderly behaviour.

101 14 July 1899

Atherstone Petty Sessions

HORSE UNFIT TO WORK **Edward Howell**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state at Polesworth on the 28th ult. PC Spencer said that the horse was drawing a canal boat laden with coal. The animal was in poor condition, very lame, and had two raw wounds on its withers. Sergeant Harrison corroborated. Defendant was fined £1 and 11s 6d costs.

102 22 September 1899

Rushall Petty Sessions

THE WALSALL WOOD TRAGEDY **Thomas William Barnes** (20), boatman of New Buildings, Spring Road, Birmingham, was charged with unlawfully causing the death of **Thomas Bowdler**, another boatman, late of Clark Street, Icknield Port Road, Birmingham. Mr J C Pritchett, instructed by Mr J W Phillips (Birmingham) represented the accused. The evidence given at the inquest was repeated, and prisoner, who reserved his defence, was formally committed for trial to the next Staffordshire assizes and admitted to bail, himself in £50 and two sureties of £25 each.

103 27 October 1899

Cannock Petty Sessions

OBSCENE LANGUAGE **William Lindon**, boatman of Birmingham, was fined 2s 6s and 8s 6d costs for using obscene language.

104 3 November 1899**Bridgtown**

On Monday afternoon, Mr S W Morgan held an inquest at the White Lion, Bridgtown touching the death of **Edward Bowdler** (41) who is supposed to be a native of Wednesbury, and **Charles Baker**, who is supposed to belong to Bradley near Bilston, who were found in the canal near Leacroft on Saturday last. The evidence given by William Bird and Sarah Bird showed that the two deceased boatmen were last seen alive at 9.10 pm on the 9th ult. At that time, they were advised to reach their destination near the canal side by going along the Leacroft Lane instead of the canal side. Nothing more was seen of them until Saturday about 2.30 pm, a boatman named **John Causer** found the gates of lock No 13 were fouled, which he found was caused by Bowdler's dead body. A man named Joseph Allen found the other body. They sent for PC Parkes and the bodies were removed to the White Lion Inn, The landlord said the men had been at the White Lion, but were all right when they left. It was a very foggy night. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

105 17 November 1899**Acton Trussell**

At the Penkridge Police Court on Monday, Herbert Wilcox, landlord of the New House Inn, Acton Trussell, was charged with permitting drunkenness on his licensed premises, and George Cook, farmer, Acton and **Noah Howell**, boatman, were charged with being drunk on licensed premises. Mr H H Jordan appeared to prosecute, and Mr P Burke defended. PC Elks stated that at 3.45 pm on the 30th ult, he visited the inn and there saw the defendants Cook and Howell, and Cook appeared to be drunk. Wilcox was in the taproom. Witness left the house and watched until ten o'clock, and then saw Cook being led out of the house, and shortly afterwards Howell came out staggering and fell down on the towing path. Witness went into the house and informed Wilcox. For the defence, witnesses were called to show that the men were not noticeably drunk. The Bench fined Wilcox £5 and 7s 6d costs and endorsed his licence. Cook was fined 5s and 6s 6d costs, and Howell 1s and 9s 3d costs.

106 24 November 1899**Bridgtown**

At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, **Joseph Allen**, boatman of Walsall Road, Bridgtown was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Joseph Turner, stallman, of the same address, stated that on the 4th inst at 5.30 pm, he saw the defendant on the Watling Street Road with a piece of fried fish in his hand. Defendant said, "Take this you ---, you are not going home until you have had some of it". Witness declined and thereupon the defendant pushed it in his face and afterwards struck at him, but missed him and fell to the ground. The defendant pleaded guilty but said he did not remember. A short time before, he had been upset by pulling two bodies out of the canal, which had been in nineteen days. He had not been able to retain anything on his stomach since, and a very little beer upset him. The defendant was fined 18s including costs.

107 12 January 1900

CRUELTY TO A BOAT HORSE **James Darley**, boatman, Banbury, was charged with cruelty to a horse for working it whilst in an unfit state at Atherstone on the 28th ult; he was further charged with violently beating the animal. Defendant pleaded guilty to the first charge, adding that he was very sorry. Mr A Sale deposed that the boat, which the horse was drawing, was fast in the ice in the canal. It could only move it about a boat's length and a half in about an hour. The horse struggled well for more than an hour, during which defendant struck it across the head several times. Witness sent one of his sons to remonstrate with defendant, and also informed the police. Mr Ison, veterinary surgeon, who subsequently examined the horse, said he found several wounds upon it. The owner of the horse informed the Bench that defendant and his father had worked for him and his father for a period of sixty years. The horse had not a blemish upon it when it left Banbury. Defendant was fined £2 and 22s costs. Mr Sale said he brought the matter forward as a public duty. The Bench expressed their thanks to him.

108 21 September 1900

Rushall Petty Sessions

ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN **Albert Whitehouse**, 20 Horton Street, Whitehall Road, Tipton, and **George Bevan**, near Wealthouse Ryders Green, West Bromwich, were charged with assaulting Thomas Hale of Great Bridge. Complainant said that on the 28th August he was on the tow path of the canal at Pelsall when he met the defendants, who appeared to have had beer. Whitehouse assaulted him and they threw some of his clothes into the canal. Whitehouse was fined £1 3s 9d, inclusive of costs, but Bevan was discharged.

109 2 November 1900

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BAD LANGUAGE **William Garnatt**, boatman, Polesworth, who did not appear, was summoned for using profane language in the Tamworth Road, Polesworth, on the 24th ult and, on the evidence of PS Harrison, was fined 12s including costs.

110 30 November 1900

Lichfield Police

ASSAULTS Five defendants, John Palin, Annie Candlott, Ann Johnson, Hannah Newton and Elizabeth Nickson were summoned by **Thomas Palin**, boatman, Alrewas, for assaults. The complainant said that on the 8th of November the defendants, who were related to him, set about him outside the Navigation Inn at Alrewas, and struck and kicked him. His face was very much bruised as well as other parts of his body. They were all on the top of him at once. PC Morrey said that when the complainant came to him, his face was covered with blood. John Palin was fined 5s and costs 10s 6d; Hannah Newton 2s 6d and costs 10s 6d; and the other defendants were ordered to pay the costs. All the defendants were bound over in the sum of £5 to keep the peace for six months.