

TAMWORTH HERALD

1 28 May 1870

KILLING A PHEASANT At Mr Shaw's office on Thursday the 19th inst, before T Bramall Esq, **Alfred Burford** (15), boatman, was charged with stealing a tame pheasant, value 30s, the property of Sir R Peel. The bird, it appeared, escaped from an enclosure at Drayford Manor on to the canal side near Drayton, where defendant was coming along with his boat. He saw it, and in spite of the remonstrances of a postman named Redfern, killed it and threw it in his boat. He was followed by one of Sir R Peel's gamekeepers who took the bird out of the boat and gave the defendant into the custody of the police at Fazeley. Fined 10s and 8s costs, or 14 days.

2 23 July 1870

Warwickshire Assizes

PLEADED GUILTY **John Lakin**, boatman, stealing 15 fowls, the property of Francis Whitworth at Wishaw, on the 1st of July. Four months imprisonment.

3 5 November 1870

Coleshill Petty Sessions

HIGHWAY **Francis Woodhouse**, boatman, Bedworth, was charged with allowing an ass to stray on the highway at Curdworth on the 17th October. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was ordered to pay the costs.

4 13 January 1872

Swadlincote

Thomas Jones, boatman of Measham, who did not appear, was fined 10s 6d and costs for being drunk and riotous at Measham on the 18th ultimo.

5 20 January 1872

Fradley

A GAMEKEEPER DROWNED – INHUMAN CONDUCT OF A BOATMAN On Saturday night last, David Holt, gamekeeper to Richard Ratcliffe Esq, Walton Hall, was drowned in the canal at Fradley Junction. It appears that Holt was drinking at the Swan Inn, Fradley, on the night in question, and after having had three pints of ale there, left the house at three minutes to ten o'clock in an inebriated state. Shortly afterwards, he was seen by **Edward Till**, who was in charge of a boat plying between Nottingham and Preston Brook, splashing in the canal about thirty yards from the beerhouse ; also by a lad named **Walter Dagley**. Till got a light, and Dagley wanted him to assist in getting deceased out of the water, but he declined, saying that he (Dagley) must go and ask his master, **Thomas Bateman**, toll collector at the Junction. Dagley went for his master, and presently Bateman, along with Mr Brawn, Mr Prince and Mr Green came and got deceased out of the water, but he was quite dead. There is no question but that had Till gone to the old man's assistance when requested, his life would have been spared, and his heartless conduct cannot be too severely censured. Holt was 62 years of age, and leaves a large family to mourn his untimely end.

6 2 March 1872

SHOCKING SUICIDE AT NUNEATON A woman named **Mary Sidwell**, sixty four years of age, committed suicide on Monday night by hanging. Deceased lived in a cottage at Tuttle Hill in the outskirts of the town, and her husband is a boatman, and left home on the previous day to attend to his boat, leaving his wife in her usual state of health. The poor woman was last seen alive at her own house at 7.30 pm on Monday, when she was visited by a neighbour, who had some conversation with her and then left. This woman had occasion to call a second time at deceased's house in about an hour afterwards, and was horrified to find her suspended by a rope from the bannisters of the stairs. The body was immediately cut down, and a surgeon was quickly in attendance, but life was found to be extinct. No cause is at present assigned for the rash act.

7 18 January 1873

Yesterday afternoon, a man named **Edward Thacker**, a boatman of Wolverhampton, was brought

before F Willington Esq, and remanded until Monday next on a charge of stealing at Whittington the previous night a bag containing a bushel of parsnips.

8 12 April 1873

On Thursday, before T Bramall Esq, **Joseph Saxelby**, boatman of Fazeley, for being drunk and riotous on the morning of Wednesday, in the Navigation Inn Yard, was fined 5s and costs 11s 8d, or 14 days.

9 21 June 1873 Shenstone Petty Sessions

Mark Goodyer, boatman, was charged with stealing 50 lbs of coal, on the 30th of May last, from a Wharf, the property of the Brownhills Gas Company. Mr Durance appeared for the prisoner. On the day in question, Ann Wiles saw the prisoner passing the wharf in a boat, and he jumped onto the wharf and threw some coal into the same. PC Giles spoke of going to Pelsall in search of the prisoner. After examining his boat, he could not find any coal corresponding with the coal on the wharf, but apprehended him and charged him with the theft. The Bench thought it a doubtful case, and discharged the prisoner with a caution.

10 21 June 1873 Atherstone

Charles Lee, boatman, was brought up under a warrant on the charge of unlawfully absenting himself from the employment of his master, Mr E C Alkin, stone merchant of Hartshill, on the 13th ult. On defendant promising to return to his work and pay the costs, the charge was withdrawn.

11 5 July 1873 Warwick Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **Walter Jennings**, boatman, charged with felony at Fazeley, was sentenced to six months hard labour.

12 18 October 1873 Swadlincote Petty Sessions

Job Clifton, boatman, was summoned by Sergeant Taylor for being drunk and riotous at Measham on the 4th inst. Fined 10s 6d and costs, or 14 days.

13 18 October 1873 Warwickshire Michaelmas Quarter Sessions

ALLEGED THEFT OF A BOAT AT GRENDON **William Dymock** (41), boatman, was charged with stealing a boat at Grendon on the 15th of September, the property of William Hunt, his master. Mr Dugdale prosecuted. The Jury found that the prisoner had been guilty of a "breach of trust" which the court interpreted as a verdict of not guilty, and prisoner was at once discharged.

14 8 November 1873 County Petty Sessions

John Faricker (11), boatman, hailing from Birmingham, was charged with stealing half a sovereign from Michael Wynne, hawker, Tamworth, at Glascoate. Prosecutor sent prisoner with the half sovereign to get it changed, and he "bolted" with the money. He was traced and apprehended by PC Moss at Bodymore Heath with 8s 6 1/2d in his possession. Remanded to Monday.

15 25 April 1874 Atherstone

Wm Jones, boatman, Polesworth, was charged with assaulting Charles Lees, miner of the same place on the 30th ult. It appears that shortly before eleven pm, Lees, when coming out of the Bull's Head, Polesworth, accosted Jones, and Jones alleged he pulled him backwards. A regular melee followed, sticks and fists being the order of the day. There was a cross summons, and each were ordered to pay a fine of 5s and 18s costs.

16 18 July 1874 Atherstone

STRAYED Edmund Webster, bricklayer of Polesworth, was charged with allowing his horse to stray, and Thomas Gent, miner of Polesworth, **William Shilcock**, boatman of Coventry, **William**

Cooper, boatman of Brinklow and **William Pready**, boatman of Gloucester, were charged with allowing their donkeys to stray on the public highway in the parish of Polesworth on the 26th June. Pready did not appear, and a warrant was issued for his apprehension. The rest of the defendants pleaded not guilty. The animals were found by PC Dyer on the highway near Grendon, and impounded by him. From the defendants' statements, it appeared the animals were left secure in a field at Polesworth on the previous evening, and must have got through the fences, which were in bad order. Ordered to pay 9s costs.

17 8 August 1874

County Petty Sessions

A JUVENILE REPROBATE Frederick Carthy, a lad of 12, son of a labourer living at Alrewas, was brought up and charged with stealing a pair of boots, the property of **Charles Wall**, boatman, on Saturday the 1st inst. It appeared prisoner, whose family bear a very bad character in the neighbourhood, went to prosecutor's house at Alrewas and asked for the loan of a box of matches, and whilst they were being fetched, he purloined the boots from the coal house. To avoid detection, he hid them in a rick yard where his father was working, and although the latter saw the movement, he made no remark. Prisoner had previously been caught in similar acts, but on his promising to reform, no proceedings were taken against him. Inspector Woollaston stated that the lad could not read, having never been to school. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and was sent to gaol for a month, without hard labour.

18 3 October 1874

Atherstone

A NICE BERTH **John Hemsley**, boatman, Polesworth, was charged with being drunk on the highway at Polesworth on the 18th ult. PS Poultney found defendant lying in a ditch by the roadside, between 11 and 12 pm, in a state of "unconscious bliss" from drink. Fined 2s 6d and expenses 13s 6d, or fourteen days hard labour, in default.

19 30 January 1875

Atherstone

DRUNKENNESS **Wm Hodson**, boatman, Longford, who was *non est*, charged by PC Dyer with being drunk in the public road near the "Chetwynd Arms", Polesworth on the 23rd inst, was ordered to pay a fine of 10s and 13s expenses.

20 8 May 1875

County Petty Sessions

UNPROVOKED ASSAULT **Thomas Wilcox**, boatman of Kingsbury, was charged with unlawfully assaulting **Caroline Clark**, the wife of a boatman, residing at Birmingham, on the 20th April. Prosecutrix stated that she and her husband were in charge of a boat, and were about to pass through the bottom lock at Bodymore Heath, when defendant came up and disputed their right to take possession of the lock before his boat had gone through, when defendant deliberately cut the line belonging to her boat. She remonstrated with him and he then struck her several times, knocked her down and kicked her. Witness also stated that defendant had assaulted her before, and some time back, he was fined £2 and costs for assaulting another person. The defendant, who did not answer, was fined £2 and costs, or two months hard labour.

21 16 October 1875

A second death has resulted from the gas accident at Walsall on the 1st instant. It will be remembered that a boatman named **Nicholls** and his wife were found in bed in an unconscious state, owing to an escape of gas in the house they occupied. Nicholls died two days after the occurrence, but his wife lingered till Wednesday morning last. It is stated that from the time of the accident until her death, she never recovered consciousness.

22 4 December 1875

Atherstone Petty Sessions

ALLEGED INDECENT ASSAULT AT NUNEATON **Thomas Allen**, boatman, was charged on warrant with unlawfully assaulting and ill-treating **Clara Woodward** at Nuneaton in the month of

July 1873. Mr Slingsby (Nuneaton) appeared for the defendant. Prosecutrix is the daughter of **Henry Woodward**, a master boatman living at Nuneaton and is now about 13 years of age. At the time named, the prisoner was in her father's employ, and the offence was alleged to have been committed in a boat at Nuneaton, where the girl had gone to play with some other children. Allen absconded immediately after, and the police only recently got to know of his whereabouts. When apprehended, he had been taken back into the prosecutrix's father's employ. The girl and her mother were the only witnesses called, and in the absence of confirmatory evidence, the case was eventually dismissed.

23 25 December 1875

CUTTING HOLLY At Mr Shaw's office, on Monday, before C Garnett Esq, **John Kimlyn**, canal boatman, employed in boating coal from Messrs Dumolo's colliery, Kettlebrook, to Birmingham, and living at 45 Fazeley Street, Birmingham, was charged with cutting and rooting up a holly tree, value 5s, the property of the Rt Hon Sir R Peel, Bart, MP, on the previous Saturday. About 4.40 pm on the day named, Joseph Bent, gamekeeper in Sir Robert Peel's employ, saw defendant cut down a young holly tree, about 5 feet high and thick with berries, from a hedge on the farm occupied by Mr Clark, and belonging to the Hon Baronet, at Drayton. He was in the act of carrying it off when the keeper apprehended him. Defendant said he was very sorry for what he had done, and would never repeat the offence. The magistrate said he would be severely dealt with if he did. He had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £5, or three months imprisonment but, being of good character hitherto, he would be let off on payment of the damage (5s) and 11s 4d costs.

24 15 January 1876 County Petty Sessions

Zechariah John Parkes, Wednesbury, was charged with stealing a horse, the property of **William Thompson**, canal boatman, Coventry. Mr J Shaw defended. The horse was taken on the night of the 2nd inst, out of the stable of the Swan Inn, Fradley. On the following Wednesday, prosecutor saw it in prisoner's possession at Wolverhampton Market and, after he had sold the animal to a horse dealer for £5, he was given into custody. The defence was that prisoner bought the horse for £2 10s from a boatwoman, and the Bench eventually dismissed the charge.

25 22 January 1876 County Petty Sessions

STEALING A HORSE **Elizabeth Bevan, alias Wood** (aged about 40) was charged with stealing a brown horse, the property of **William Thompson**, boatman, living at Lester Cottages, Coventry, on the 2nd inst, at Fradley near Lichfield. It will be remembered that last Wednesday, a young man named Zechariah John Parkes was discharged on the above charge, it having been satisfactorily proved that he bought the horse off a boatwoman, whose description he furnished the police with. Supt Brown (Burton) prosecuted. Wm Thompson now repeated the evidence given by him on the previous occasion, to the effect that he was at Fradley Junction, with his boat and horse, on Sunday January 2nd, and stabled the latter at the Swan Inn. He left it secure at 8.30 pm, when he shut the stable door, to which there was, however, no lock. He slept in the boat, and on going at 3.30 next morning, he found the horse, and the headstall and bridle with which it was tied, gone. He gave information to the police, and accompanied PS Harrison (Barton-under-Needwood) to Wolverhampton market on the following Wednesday, where he saw the horse in Zechariah John Parkes's possession. He bought the horse about six months ago for £24 10s. It had since broken its knees, but was otherwise uninjured, and he had worked it up to the time it was stolen. Zechariah John Parkes, buckler-maker, living at Kingshill, Wednesbury said, on going home after being out on business on Monday January 3rd, he saw a brown horse standing at his father's door, held by a man named Stanway. It had on a head stall and bridle (produced, and identified by prosecutor). Witness went into the house, where he saw the prisoner. His father said, "John, here is a woman who has got a horse for sale". The woman asked £3 10s, but he said, "It is lame and not worth the money". Mr R Garnett : Were not your suspicions aroused by the lowness of the price? Witness said it was really not worth it. Witness asked her where she had the horse, when she said, "she came from

Preston Brook, and her husband had been dead twelve months; that she bought the horse three years ago at Wolverhampton market, and being now in want, wished to dispose of it". After some bargaining, he bought the horse for £2 10s. On the following Wednesday, he took the horse to Wolverhampton market, where he sold it to a man named Haddock for £4 17s 6d. Witness kept the head stall and bridle, which he had since given to PS Harrison. Supt Bowen stated that a description of the woman, as given by the last witness, was advertised in the *Police Gazette*, where it was seen by the Nantwich (Cheshire) police authorities, who had written stating that a woman answering the same description had previously been in trouble on a similar charge there. She was apprehended on the previous Friday by PS Gilbride of Burton. PS Harrison (Barton-under-Needwood) said he went with Thompson to Wolverhampton market on Wednesday January 5th, when he pointed out to witness his horse, the head stall and bridle of which he afterwards found at Parkes's father's home. Witness formally charged the prisoner that morning, when she replied, "I'm sorry I took it. It was through want. I gave the man Stanway, who went with me to Parkes's, 2s of the purchase money, and afterwards 23s more". Prisoner said her husband was alive, but they had lived apart some time. She had two children living. She took the horse through want – having no home, no money and nothing to eat ; and had been much ill-used. Committed to take her trial at the ensuing Staffordshire Quarter Sessions.

26 18 March 1876

HORSE STEALING At the Stafford Quarter Sessions on Monday, **Elizabeth Bevan** (43), described as a "labourer" pleaded guilty to stealing, on the 2nd January at Fradley, a horse, the property of **William Thompson**, boatman. Being an aggravated case, prisoner was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.

27 6 May 1876

Atherstone Petty Sessions

STRAY ASSES **James Parker**, boatman, Coventry, who did not appear, was summoned by Inspector Walker for being the owner of three asses found straying on the highway between Tamworth and Polesworth about 1 pm on the 27th April. PS Poultney, who proved the case, said he had cautioned defendant on the subject before. Fined 7s 6d and 14s 6d costs, or 21 days imprisonment.

28 10 June 1876

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

POLICE COURT **Charles Bennett**, boatman, Aston, pleaded guilty to having, on the 21st April, at Snareston, stolen one linen bag and the sum of £6 2s 6d in money, the property of Mrs Wilkins. Sentenced to three months hard labour.

29 10 June 1876

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

ASSAULT AT NUNEATON **Samuel West**, boatman, Nuneaton, was charged with assaulting Martha Brotherington, wife of a miner, and Sarah Jane Newcombe, single woman, Nuneaton. On the 3rd inst, the defendant and Brotherington quarrelled, Newcombe being present. Words led to blows, defendant striking the complainants several times, felling Newcombe to the ground senseless, without her saying anything to him. Defendant was fined 5s for each case, together with 15s 6d costs, or one months imprisonment in each case.

30 22 July 1876

Kingsbury

DROWNED IN THE CANAL An inquest was held by Mr T Dewes, coroner, at the "Dog and Doublet" Inn, Bodymore Heath, on Monday last, touching the death of a man unknown, apparently about 60 years of age, who was found drowned in the Birmingham Canal on the night of the 14th inst. Deceased was seen to fall into the canal by a boatman named **John Parthop** who was, however, unable to save him. The Jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned". Deceased was dressed in two black cloth coats and vest, dark tweed trousers, black neck tie, half wellington boots (much worn) and top hat ; hair grey, and no beard, and had the appearance of a man well connected.

31 16 September 1876

STEALING A COAT On Wednesday, **Jas Watton**, a boatman hailing from Minworth, Warwickshire, was charged before Mr Bramall with stealing a coat, value 4s, the property of Thos Ball, servant of the Navigation Inn, Fazeley. Prisoner and a companion were stopping at the Inn whilst their boat was loading on the 11th inst, and after they had left, the coat was missed. Prisoner being suspected, the prosecutor, accompanied by PC Hall, followed him to Minworth and found the coat in his possession. He said he had only borrowed the garment and intended returning it. Remanded.

32 9 February 1878 Atherstone Petty Sessions

Wm Bromwich, boatman, was charged with assaulting Mrs Ann Hartshorne, landlady of the Bull's Head Inn, Polesworth, on the 28th ult. Defendant and his brother whilst in the house quarrelled, and whilst Mr Hartshorn was putting the brother out, defendant struck prosecutrix severely on the breast. He had been troublesome in the house before. Fined 10s and costs 17s, or 21 days.

33 30 March 1878 Elford Petty Sessions

"JACK" ON SHORE **Thomas Palethorpe**, boatman, was charged by PC Garratt with being drunk and riotous in the yard of the Navigation Inn, Alrewas. Fined 40s and costs.

34 24 August 1878 Polesworth

ALLEGED HORSE STEALING At the Nuneaton Petty Sessions on Thursday, before Messrs Sale, Shaw and Dugdale, **Henry Dortfield** was charged with stealing a horse, the property of his master, George Jones of Birmingham. George Jones, coal dealer, Birmingham, said he sent defendant, who is a boatman in his service, with a horse and boat to Polesworth, with orders to bring a load of coals back. On Saturday night, when he was due in, his mate reported that defendant had sold the horse for £3 10s to a publican named Tomlinson, at Polesworth, and was spending the money in beer. The horse now in the possession of the police belonged to defendant. To defendant : Did not give him authority to sell the horse. John Tomlinson, innkeeper, Polesworth, said the prisoner came to his house and stabled his horse. He afterwards asked witness if he would buy it, saying that his master had given him leave to sell. Asked the prisoner's mate if he would be doing right to buy it, and he said the master had told them they might sell it for £4. Witness ultimately bought the horse for £3 10s and paid prisoner for it. He left the tackle and said he should be back on Monday with another horse. PC Butlin, Birmingham, said that he arrested defendant in Barn Street, Birmingham, and told him he would be charged with stealing his master's horse. He replied, "When the drink's in, the wit's out". PS Hawkes said he fetched the prisoner from Birmingham. Told him he was charged with stealing the horse. He answered, "I don't know about the horse, the frame was there". Prisoner was committed for trial at the Sessions. Prosecutor asked that the horse might be given up to him. The Bench said that until conviction they had no power to make any order. Prosecutor said he understood that the Bench could make an order at once to restore stolen property. The Bench consulted with the Clerk, and again intimated that they could make no order. The witness Tomlinson asked what he was to do with the horse. The Bench said that if the prisoner were found guilty, the horse would have to be restored to prosecutor. In the meanwhile, Mr Tomlinson had better be careful what he did with it.

35 31 August 1878 Atherstone

THE CASE OF WHOLESALE FISHING With reference to this case, which we reported last week, the *Daily Telegraph* has expressed the following views :-

Unfortunately for all honest anglers, canals are sadly poached. To lay night lines in them is, perhaps, a legitimate mode of sport, although every good fisher regards the thing as a cowardly dishonest instrument. The night line does its fishing itself. Unlike the trimmer, it does not even need to be watched, It is all very well at sea, where you can put down four or five miles of long line, leave them fishing all night, and pull them up in the morning alive with turbot, cod, conger and

gigantic ling and haddock. This is night lining elevated to the height of majesty. It is not, however, of the night liners alone that canal anglers have to complain. Bargemen – perhaps stimulated by Lady Barker's book, and by the impulse given to scientific cookery by the lectures of the learned Mr Buckmaster – have got to understand that *anguilles a la matelotte* are a most savoury dish, and that even rudd and perch, small and muddy as they may be, are very excellent if soused in vinegar or incorporated in a species of hotch-potch or *boullabaisse*. Hence the bargeman, while making his way from wharf to wharf, devotes his energies to angling, and his usual method is to hang from the stern of his boat a species of trawl, with a net of an illegally small mesh, which captures everything which comes in its way. As the barge passes through the canal, stirring up the waters, every fish in its path for the time being is agitated, disturbed, and tossed about in the swirl which is created. Let only a small species of trawl or otter net be dragging some ten yards behind, and the take will be something enormous. In a canal full of fish, a couple of hundredweight of all sizes can easily be thus scoured in a very few hours. Then, too, on Sundays, when work is slack, the astute bargeman, who loves sport, and is also partial to a good dish of fresh fish, devotes himself to “cockanterburying”. “Cockanterbury” is the bargeman's name for *cocculus indicus*. This drug pounded, mixed with paste, and so thrown into the water in small pellets, is eagerly devoured by roach, bream, carp, dace and eels. Its effect is singular. It produces a species of intoxication and paralysis, like that produced in a man by the seeds of the *datura*, or thorn apple. The fish, narcotised and stupefied, come floating to the surface belly uppermost, and can be taken out by the hand or, more easily still, with a small landing net. The strange thing is that their flesh is perfectly wholesome. Then the bargeman uses dynamite cartridges ; and all will be glad to see that the law is occasionally enforced against poachers of this kind. We notice with satisfaction that at Atherstone on Thursday last, **Mr Henry Woodward**, boatman – that is bargeman – was fined ten shillings and costs by the local magistrates for attempting to take fish by means of a net from the Coventry Canal. A gamekeeper stated that he saw the defendant with a large net at the end of his boat. The defendant's answer was that he had spent all his life on canals, and had no idea that he was doing wrong. By way of convincing him that he was doing wrong, and admonishing him not to do so in the future, the magistrates inflicted the modest penalty we have mentioned. Our canals, if properly farmed, would yield a considerable supply of wholesome food. They furnish the legitimate angler with magnificent sport, and we certainly cannot allow what has been well called the “floating population” to dredge them with trawls, and depopulate them with dynamite and “cockanterbury”.

36 8 April 1879

Warwick Assizes

CONCEALMENT AT CHILVERS COTON A very young girl, probably not more than fifteen years of age, named **Phoebe Pearsall**, and a boy apparently thirteen years of age, brother to the girl, and named **Samuel Pearsall**, surrendered to their recognisances on a charge of having unlawfully endeavoured to conceal the body of a female child, to which the female had given birth. Mr Sills prosecuted, and Mr Buszard defended. On the 13th of September last, the two prisoners were in charge of a cabin boat which was then lying in the basin at the Griff Colliery. On the night of that date, a young woman named **Mary Arnold**, who with her brother, **John Arnold**, were occupying another boat in the same basin, heard a noise at twelve o'clock, in consequence of which she got up and went over to Pearsall's boat. She there found the female prisoner rolling about in great pain, and the male prisoner, whom witness described as a “boy”, a-bed. At three o'clock in the morning, John Arnold was up outside his cabin, and while there he saw the male prisoner come out of the cabin, go into the “hatches” and immediately there was a “splunge” in the water. Several days after, the dead body of a newly born child was found in the water near the spot. The female prisoner was then apprehended, and an examination being made, the medical witnesses thought she had recently given birth to a child. The jury acquitted both the prisoners.

37 6 March 1880

Elford Petty Sessions

UNLICENSED DOGS The following persons were dealt with as stated for keeping dogs without a licence :- **William Pailing**, canal lock-keeper of Whittington Marsh, 5s and costs : **John Jones**,

boatman, Alrewas, 5s and costs.

38 5 March 1881

County Police Court

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **George Chilcote**, boat owner of Canal Bank, Bishop's Gate Green, Coventry and **George Wright**, boatman of 3 House, 7 Court, Brewery Street, Coventry, were charged with cruelty to two donkeys at Fazeley on the 21st of February. Inspector Campbell of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said the donkeys were drawing a boat laden with stone. They were in a wretched condition, and Wright was urging them along. They were "nothing but skin and bone", and were so weak that they were scarcely able to walk. Both of them were bleeding from the hind quarters, in consequence of the chafing of the trace-trees, and both had several suppurated wounds on different parts of their bodies. They were totally unfit for work, and were taken to a stable at Fazeley, and fed. PC Betts corroborated, and said he learned that the stone was brought from Manchester. Chilcote was fined 10s and costs, and Wright 1s and costs.

39 7 May 1881

Polesworth

SINGULAR FATALITY On the 26th ult, an inquest was held at the "Royal Oak" Inn, Polesworth, before the deputy coroner (Mr Wilks) on the body of **Isaac Sharman**, a boatman in the employment of Mr C Bassett. From the evidence, it appeared he was, on the Saturday previous, walking along the planks of the boat, when he accidentally slipped and fell into the boat, his head striking on the iron knees. Dr Hales stated the case of death was effusion of blood on the brain, caused by the fall, and a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

40 1 October 1881

County Police Court

Thomas Carter, boatman of Tyburn near Erdington, was summoned for ill-treating, abusing and torturing a horse by working it in an unfit state at Bolehill and Glascote on the 10th September. Inspector Campbell, of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said he was on the canal bank at Glascote, when he saw the defendant with a boy, driving a horse attached to a canal boat towards Fazeley. The animal was suffering from canker in the near fore foot, and the hoof was a mass of corruption. The disease was passing up the fetlock, and the foot was in a most deplorable state. The near hind foot was also in a very bad condition. The animal was suffering great pain. Defendant said he knew the horse had a bad foot, but he was not aware it was so much diseased. The blacksmith told him he had put a boot on it. Inspector Campbell said, but for the leather, the hoof would have split right up. The horse had since been destroyed. Fined 10s and costs (11s).

41 8 July 1882

At Manchester on Friday, a boatman named **Thomas Cox** was remanded for a week on a charge of attempting to murder his daughter, six years old, on Thursday afternoon. Whilst on a boat at Barton, the prisoner quarrelled with his wife and thrashed her very severely. The child gave an alarm, when her father threw her into the river. She was with difficulty rescued, and her father was arrested.

42 21 October 1882

MYSTERIOUS DEATH AT GRENDON An inquest was held at the King's Head Inn, Grendon, on Tuesday, before the coroner Dr Iliffe, touching the death of Thomas Knight, whose body was found in the canal at Grendon on Sunday morning. Francis Knight, wife of the deceased, said that her husband was 43 years of age, was a syringe maker, and had been living at 61 Alexandra Street, Birmingham. Witness had come to Grendon on Friday to pay a visit to her sister. The last time she had seen her husband alive was at New Street Station when she was leaving Birmingham. She had expected her husband to come to Grendon on the Saturday, to stay with her until the following Tuesday. On Sunday morning, she was told that "someone had been found in the canal", and coming down to the King's Head Inn, she found that it was her husband. The deceased had not

given her cause to imagine that he would be likely to commit suicide. When she last saw him, he had no marks on his body that might have proceeded from violence, with the exception of a slight mark on the nose. Deceased was not at enmity with anyone to her knowledge. **Henry Kendall** said he was a boatman, and living at Amscote, and that he was drawing his boat out of a lock on Sunday morning, when he saw a body floating in the middle of the canal, he called assistance, and it was brought to the side. The body was quite stiff. Witness did not know deceased. An umbrella was found on the bank near at hand. Witness did not observe any marks of violence on the face of deceased. **Patience Sweet**, wife of **Joseph Sweet**, miner, and living at Baddesley, had seen the deceased on Saturday night leaning against the wall a short distance from the Atherstone Railway Station. He appeared ill. He asked witness if he was against the shunting, and afterwards walked away, appearing to stagger as he walked. He then turned on the canal side, and witness made a remark to her companion that she was afraid he would be likely to fall into the water and be drowned. It was then about a quarter to nine, and very dark. **Frederick Ford**, hatter, testified to having seen the deceased shortly before eight on Saturday night. He was sitting on the down side of the Nuneaton platform, and when the bell rang for the express train to pass through, deceased jumped up and said it was his train, he was told that it was not, and after that he had stood talking with witness. In the course of conversation, he said he had been ill-used at Coventry, where "five fellows had set upon him, but he would know them again"; and he also said that he "did not know where he had not been kicked". Witness saw 4 or 5 marks on the forehead of deceased. Deceased had told witness that he had been knocked down and (pointing to his watch) observed, this is what they wanted. He appeared to be in a great rage. Witness saw him go to the carriage door of the Atherstone train, and again saw him at Atherstone station, but did not speak to him. Deceased appeared, in witness's mind, to be slightly under the influence of drink, but not to such an extent as to interfere with his walking. **Mr James Miller**, photographer, Atherstone, said that he travelled in the same compartment of the Atherstone train as the deceased, and noticed that he appeared to be in trouble about something, but did not speak to him. Deceased asked the way to Grendon, and was told by a man that there were two ways, one by the road and another by the canal, the man observing that if he took the road by the canal he would be drowned. Witness did not notice any marks on the face of the deceased, and thought that he was not under the influence of drink, but appeared to be in trouble. He walked, when out of the train, perfectly straight. **PC Thomas Salt**, stationed at Atherstone, gave evidence to the effect that about 7 am on Sunday he received information that a body had been found in the canal, and going down to the King's Head Inn, there saw the deceased. No inquiry had yet been made at Coventry respecting the ill-treatment it was alleged that deceased had received there. **Mrs Knight**, recalled, said that the hat produced had belonged to her husband, and she also identified the purse, ring, watch and other articles found upon the body. Deceased had not been in the habit of taking drink to excess. **Dr Hales**, the next witness, said he had examined the body, and described the wounds and scars found upon the face, which he said could not be caused by falling into the water. Death had been caused by suffocation consequent upon drowning. There were no marks upon the body itself. There was one bruise that might tend to stupefy deceased. The Coroner having summed up the evidence, the Jury retired, and shortly after returned with the verdict, that, in their opinion, the deceased accidentally fell into the canal owing to the darkness of the night and while under the influence of drink, death being caused by drowning.

43 25 November 1882

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DRUNK **John Hemsley**, boatman, was charged with being drunk at Polesworth on the 13th inst. Fined 6s and costs 12s 6d.

44 20 January 1883

Atherstone Petty Sessions

THEFT BY A LAD **George Starkey**, a lad, was charged with stealing brasses belonging to the harness of some horses owned by a boatman named **Anson**. It appeared that the horses were stabled at the Chetwynd Arms Inn, Polesworth, on the 29th December, and the brasses were missed in the

morning. A little boy saw the prisoner take off the brasses, and PC Hemming arrested him with the brasses in his possession. The lad admitted the theft, and the charge not being pressed, a fine of 10s was inflicted.

45 24 November 1883

ALLEGED THEFT OF HORSES At the Rugby Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **David Allen**, boatman, Kettlebrook, Tamworth and **William Dipper, alias Draper** of Birmingham, were charged with stealing a black cob value £28, the property of Mr George Taylor, publican of Hillmorton, on the 8th last. The animal was missed from a field, and the prisoners were seen driving it towards Coventry. Allen was apprehended at Kettlebrook and Draper in Birmingham, where it was alleged they had disposed of the horse. Both defendants were committed for trial.

46 5 January 1884

HORSE STEALING At the Warwick Quarter Sessions on Wednesday, **William Dipper** (62), boatman, and **David Allen** (38), labourer of Tamworth, were tried on a charge of having stolen a horse at Hillmorton, on the 8th of November last, the property of George Taylor. Mr Fitzgerald prosecuted, and Mr Pye defended Allen. The two prisoners were seen near the place where the horse was shortly before it was missing, and they had a bridle with them. Afterwards, they were found dealing with the stolen animal. Mr Pye appealed very strongly in favour of an acquittal for Allen, on the ground that he was an honest man, who had been drawn in to assist Dipper, not knowing that he was engaged in a dishonest transaction. The jury found both guilty ; and it was afterwards stated by the police that Dipper's was a very suspicious case, inasmuch as he had been acting as "groom" for Lindon, who had already pleaded guilty to horse stealing, and was awaiting sentence. The Chairman said the court were of opinion that Allen had been entrapped into this affair by Dipper ; and taking into consideration the previous good character he had borne, the sentence in his case would be six months, with hard labour. But for the good character he had up to this transaction, the sentence would have been much more severe. Dipper's was a very different case. It was quite clear he had been engaged with Lindon in a conspiracy for stealing horses in different parts of the country, and he would be sentenced to penal servitude for seven years, with three years police supervision.

47 16 August 1884

Tamworth County Police Court

UNPROVOKED ASSAULT Thomas Carney, an Irish labourer, on remand, was charged with having assaulted **John Davis** of Whittington on the 12th inst. The evidence of the complainant, who is a boatman living at 90 Bridgeman Street, Walsall, was to the effect that about five o'clock on the afternoon in question, he was sitting on a bench outside the Peel Arms Inn, Whittington, eating some bread and cheese, when the prisoner, who had been drinking heavily all the day, came up to him, and without the slightest provocation seized him by the collar and dragged him on his face along the gravel for nearly three yards. His face was dreadfully cut and bruised, and bled so much that he had to have it bound up by the parish doctor. He had previously had a glass or two of beer with the prisoner, but had not given him any provocation whatever.. **George Fisher**, boatman of Whittington, corroborated the complainant's statement. The prisoner did not deny the assault, but pleaded that he was drunk and had been provoked by some of the men with whom he had been drinking, and that at the time he believed the complainant was one of them. The Bench took a lenient view of the case, and imposed a fine of 10s and costs, with the alternative of a weeks imprisonment. The prisoner was then charged with having been drunk upon the licensed premises of the Peel Arms, Whittington and, pleading guilty, was fined 2s 6d and costs, or in default of payment, a further term of 7 days incarceration.

48 3 January 1885

A BOATMAN FOUND DROWNED On Friday morning, a boatman named **Joseph Ratcliffe**, aged 73 years, was taken out of the Macclesfield branch of the Peak Forest Canal at Barnesford,

Marple. He had been missing from home since a late hour on Thursday night. It is not known how he got into the water.

49 28 February 1885 Elford Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO HORSES **John Perkins**, boatman of Burton, was fined 1s and costs of the Court, for cruelty to a horse, by working the same in an unfit state on the canal side between Alrewas and Burton on the 13th of January, Inspector Craigie of the RSPCA proved the case.

50 14 March 1885

MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN A CANAL TUNNEL An extraordinary circumstance occurred early on Saturday morning in the Blisworth Tunnel near Northampton, through which passes the Grand Junction Canal. A man named **Smith** was working a boat for **Mr W E Clark**, a wharfinger of Fenny Stratford, and it was as usual being drawn through the tunnel by a steam tug. When near the end, the man in charge of the tug noticed an unaccountable jerking of the boat, and on returning along the path to ascertain the cause, found that the man Smith was dead. Death was caused, it is supposed, by suffocation, the atmosphere in the tunnel being exceedingly dense, particularly during the early morning, and this density is intensified by the smoke from the tug.

51 1 August 1885 Coleshill Petty Sessions

George Goulding, boatman, Sandy Lane, Birmingham, and **Thomas Wright**, boatman, Tamworth, were summoned by **George Humphries**, canal constable in the employ of the Birmingham Canal Company, for wantonly and wilfully wasting water at the Minworth locks on the 8th inst. The case was proved by the canal lock-keeper, who saw the defendants open the sluices of the upper lock gate before the lower one was closed, thereby causing a considerable waste of water. Wright contended that he was under the instructions of his captain, Goulding, and was fined 1s and costs, Goulding, who did not appear, was fined £1 and costs.

52 10 October 1885 Tamworth County Petty Sessions

GAME TRESPASS **George Griffiths**, a young boatman of Bedworth, was charged by Mr Adam Sillito with trespassing on land in his occupation at Amington, on the 29th September, in pursuit of game. Mr Dewes defended. Mr Roland Sillito, the prosecutor's brother, stated that on the day in question, he saw the defendant in a field at Amington with a dog and gun, and as soon as the defendant saw him, he ran away. Witness gave chase, and caught him as he was getting near to the colliery tramway. Defendant refused to give his name and address, and stated that if he (witness) did not let him go, he would get shot. Witness said he would stop him from shooting him, and endeavoured to take the gun away, but in doing so, the gun broke in two. Information was then given to the police. The Bench fined the defendant 7s and 13s costs, and dismissed a charge of assault preferred by Griffiths against Mr Roland Sillito.

53 27 March 1886 Tamworth County Police

DRUNKEN BOATMEN **Samuel Hopkins**, boatman, from Birmingham, was brought up charged with assaulting William Carter, labourer of Glascote. The defendant acknowledged the offence. Carter stated that on the previous day (Tuesday) at about half past twelve o'clock, he was at work at the Glascote Wharf. The defendant came to the canal side, and spoke to him. Defendant then laid down on the canal side and went to sleep. A lad came by soon after, picked a stone up, and dropped it on the defendant's head. The defendant then got up, began to make a bother, and said either he (complainant) or his mate did it. They told the defendant they did not do it. After dinner, he went to work in the boat. The defendant, with two of his companions, came out of Anchor Inn, and one at a time they went to the wharf where he was working. One of the men asked which it was that dropped the stone, and he and his mate denied doing it. The defendant said he would show which of them dropped the stone, and he at once got into the boat where witness was, and struck him many times, but only once in the face, giving him a black eye. The defendant was not sober. On the

complainant being asked how long the defendant was in the public house, the defendant (interrupting) said he was only there sufficient time to drink a glass of port wine (laughter). The Bench, characterising the assault as monstrous, fined the defendant 5s and £1 1s 10d costs, or in default one months hard labour.

Edward Taylor, boatman, of Manchester Street, Birmingham, was brought up in custody charged with being drunk and disorderly in the Watling Street Road on the 23rd inst. There was also a further charge against the defendant for having assaulted PC Davis of the Warwickshire Constabulary, at the same time and place. The accused pleaded guilty to both offences. PC Davis stated that on the night in question, he went to the Navigation Inn, Fazeley, and told the last prisoner that he had a warrant to arrest him. He replied, "I shan't go until you read the warrant". He then took the last defendant to a light so as to read the warrant to him, and whilst doing so, the prisoner Taylor caught hold of him, and pulled him round, and took his stick away. The man was drunk and very disorderly, and swore the constable should not take his companion. The local Staffordshire police were then sent for, and PC Currie took the prisoner into custody. Defendant stated that he did not know what he said or did on the day in question : he was so drunk. PC Currie stated he did not see the actual assault. He was called to PC Davis's aid, and found the defendant very drunk and disorderly. He then took him into custody. The Bench pointed out that the defendant had rendered himself liable to three months imprisonment for resisting the police. They, however, resolved to take the two cases together, and he would be fined 10s and 12s 6d costs, or in default one month's imprisonment.

54 19 June 1886

Atherstone Petty Sessions

KEEPING A DOG WITHOUT A LICENCE **John Hemsley**, canal boatman, for keeping a dog without a licence, was ordered to pay the costs.

55 3 July 1886

Atherstone Petty Sessions

STABBING AT NUNEATON **David Wiles**, canal boatman of Longford, was charged with wounding another boatman at Boon's Wharf near Nuneaton, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm, on the 28th June. Complainant, who lives at Coventry, said he was passing along the canal in his boat, when defendant, who was on the wharf, commenced to insult him, and challenged him to come off and fight. He went off the boat, and gave defendant a blow in the face with his open hand. Defendant then pulled off his belt, with which he struck witness several times. Witness closed with him, and tried to obtain possession of the belt. They fell down, but witness rose again and cut off the buckle from the belt, putting his knife in his pocket again. Defendant then drew a knife, and threatened to stab witness, running at him with a knife in his hand. Witness put up his arm, and defendant drew the knife across his wrist, inflicting the wound from which he was now suffering. As he could not stop the bleeding, and lost a large quantity of blood, he went to Dr Hammond at Nuneaton, nearly fainting from loss of blood before he arrived there. Defendant offered him money to say nothing about it. Arthur Wallis gave evidence in the same terms as that of the prosecutor, and was corroborated by a woman named Woodhouse. PC Munroe proved the defendant's arrest at Longford, and added that the latter admitted the charge, but said he "did it" with the light coloured handle knife. Dr William Hammond said complainant came to the surgery on the evening in question, bleeding profusely from a wound in the left wrist, clean cut, and two inches long, and down to the bone. There was also a wound on the right temple, as well as some lumps and bruises. The wound on the temple was a distinct cut, and was about three quarters of an inch long. It might have been caused by a heavy blow from such a buckle as that produced. Defendant was committed for trial at the Assizes.

56 17 July 1886

Tamworth County Police Court

SAVAGE ASSAULT ON THE POLICE **Thomas Bray**, boatman of Fazeley, was charged with being drunk and assaulting PC John Harris on the Fazeley Road on Saturday last. The defendant admitted the offence of drunkenness, but denied assaulting the police. The officer met the

defendant in the Fazeley Road on Saturday evening in a state of intoxication ; he was very disorderly, and used profane language. When ordered away, he refused, using more bad language, and in consequence he was taken into custody. On finding himself a prisoner, defendant became very violent, and both kicked and bit the constable in the leg. The Bench pointed out the serious offence which the defendant had committed by assaulting the police, but taking into consideration the fact that nothing was previously known of defendant, a fine of 2s 6d and costs was inflicted for being drunk, and the defendant was also fined 10s for assaulting the police.

57 21 April 1888

A MYSTERIOUS CORPSE A strange contradiction has arisen with reference to the body of a boatman that was found in an upright position in the canal at Wolverhampton on Sunday, and was on Wednesday identified by a woman named Green as that of **Thomas Ridmond** of Gnosall. The police at Gnosall have written to say that the Thomas Ridmond, boatman of that place, is alive and well. Meanwhile, the unclaimed body still remains at the mortuary.

58 16 June 1888

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DISGUSTING CONDUCT **John Hemsley**, boatman, was summoned for indecency at the parish of Polesworth on the 26th May. Mary Ann Bird, married woman, proved the offence. Defendant pleaded guilty. He was also summoned for assaulting Mary Ann Bird. To this charge, defendant pleaded not guilty. The assault having been proved, Supt Hannah stated that Hemsley had been before the Bench on several previous occasions for drunkenness. The Bench said the circumstances of the case showed that defendant was a man of foul habits when drunk, and they therefore sentenced him to one months imprisonment for each offence, to run concurrently. If charged with a similar offence again, he would be sent for trial.

59 15 June 1889

Atherstone Petty Sessions

A LARGE SALARY? **William Smalley**, boatman of Chilvers Coton, was summoned by **Joseph Siah Proctor** of Tuttle Hill, for payment of the sum of 4s for four days wages. He was also summoned for assaulting Proctor. Complainant said he worked for defendant for a week and four days, and was to have received 6s a week, but only received 5s altogether. He applied for the balance, which was refused, and the defendant also struck him twice. The Bench considered the claim made out, and ordered the 4s to be paid. In regard to the assault, they did not convict, but ordered defendant to pay the costs.

60 13 July 1889

Atherstone Petty Sessions

GAME TRESPASS **John Hemsley**, boatman of Polesworth, was charged with committing a game trespass at Grendon on the 23rd June. William Riches, gamekeeper, stated the facts, and said he knew defendant to have similarly offended on previous occasions. When accosted, he had a loaded gun in his possession. He begged very hard to be let off, but witness said he would be summoned. Defendant said his wife was ill, and he went out to get a rabbit for her. He was fined 10s with 19s 6d costs. A fortnight was allowed for payment.

61 8 March 1890

Tamworth County Police

A BAD RECORD **John Hemsley**, boatman of Polesworth, was summoned for drunkenness at Glascote on the 23rd ult. Supt Hannah submitted to the Bench a list of eight previous convictions for various offences against the defendant, and he was now fined 10s and costs, amounting to £1 2s 6d. The money was ordered to be paid within a week.

62 2 August 1890

Tamworth County Police

THE DRINK **James Ridley** (62), boatman, Leicester, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at the railway station on Saturday evening. Defendant sold a horse at the Fair, after which he drank two glasses of whiskey "which seemed to knock him silly". The Bench imposed a

penalty of £1 including costs. When arrested, defendant had £27 in gold in his possession.

63 23 August 1890

EXTRAORDINARY HOMICIDE BY A BOY On Tuesday, Mr John Booth, coroner for North Staffordshire, held an inquest at Stoke on Trent on the body of Isaiah Potter, son of Phoebe Potter, who was alleged to have been pushed into the Newcastle branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal by a companion and drowned. The evidence adduced was of a somewhat extraordinary character, and from it, it appeared that on Sunday afternoon, the deceased, with Johnny Noakes, Willie Poole and another boy, were out together. They walked on to the towing-path of the canal, when Johnny Noakes pushed deceased into the water, and he was drowned. The three boys, when their companion disappeared in the canal, proceeded to the house of the deceased's mother, and told her that her son was drowned, adding that Noakes had pushed him into the water. On being questioned, Noakes admitted that this was so, and at once conducted the mother to the spot where the occurrence took place. The body was subsequently recovered by the father of the boy Poole. Several of the witnesses were questioned by the coroner as to whether Noakes had ever before been known to push children into the canal, and it was alleged by them that on several occasions he had pushed boys into the water, and that in one instance the child had a narrow escape, being rescued by a boatman. The boy Noakes was called before the jury, but refused to answer any of the questions put to him. Mrs Noakes was examined, and cautioned by the Coroner to be more careful with regard to her boy. The Coroner added that he had given instructions to the police to at once report any further suspicious cases, whether fatal or otherwise, to him, and he would obtain a special order from the Home Secretary to deal with the lad. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased was pushed into the canal by Johnny Noakes, a boy of the age of 4 1/2 years, and was drowned, and they strongly recommended that the coroner should write to the Home Secretary on the subject at once. A jurymen said that the homicidal tendency of the boy was a growing one, and there was a general feeling that he ought to be placed under proper control.

64 13 September 1890

SUDDEN DEATH AT HARTSHILL Dr C W Iliffe (coroner for North Warwickshire) held an inquest at the Malt Shovel Inn, Hartshill, on Wednesday morning, touching the death of **William Watson**, a boatman. Mr W Perkins was chosen foreman of the jury. **Caroline Watson**, wife of deceased, said her husband was 71 years of age. For some time past, he had complained of pain under the heart, and on Sunday complained of feeling unwell. At 6 am on Monday, witness got up and made him some tea. Deceased then got up and went outside into the garden. Witness and her daughter-in-law followed him, and he said he felt very ill. She gave him some brandy, but he never spoke again. He was very pale at the time, but witness had never known him to have a fainting fit before. He was a stout man. It was about 7.15 or 7.30 am when he died, and she at once sent for Dr Herring and the constable. Dr Herring (Atherstone) said a messenger informed him of the case, and he called to see the body about one o'clock. As the result of a careful examination, he was of opinion that deceased died from fatty degeneration of the heart. PC Blower spoke of being called in to see the body. As he came away, Mrs Watson said, "He hasn't been poisoned". Mrs Watson (recalled) said she did not know what she was saying at the time, she was so much upset by the death of her husband. The Coroner said there was no doubt that death resulted from "natural causes" and the jury returned a verdict to that effect.

65 18 April 1891

On Saturday afternoon, a boatman named **John Lee** discovered the dead body of a woman in the canal near Tindal Street bridge, Birmingham. He communicated with the police, and the body was removed to the mortuary at Kenion Street, and was subsequently identified as that of Margaret Palmer, aged about thirty six, of no fixed address.

66 23 May 1891

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

DAMAGING A FIELD **George Wildsmith**, boatman, Bishopgate Green, Coventry, was summoned on the information of Thomas Moore, gamekeeper to Mr H Townshend, for maliciously damaging a field in the occupation of John Henderson at Caldecote on the 15th inst. Mr Bland appeared to prosecute on behalf of Mr Townshend. Thomas Moore, the keeper, said he was watching near the Spring Wood, in company with Letts, on the night in question. The wood abuts on a field adjoining the canal. They heard a boat come along, and soon after heard the thorns being pulled out of the hedge. Four donkeys were then turned into the field, after which the thorns were replaced. Some time after, witness and Letts proceeded to the boat, which they found was closed up. They called and the defendant came out. He professed to wonder where the donkeys were, but witness told him he knew they were in the field. One of the animals was fastened by a rope tied to a stake in the hedge. They were in the field about three quarters of an hour. The defendant gave the name of William Bates, alleging that the boat, which bore that name, was his own. The witness Letts gave corroborative evidence. By defendant : He did not see the defendant remove any thorns. **William Brooks**, called by the defendant, stated that he tethered the animals on the towing-path while he and Wildsmith went into the cabin for supper. The animals got into the field themselves. Witness could swear that he never touched the thorns. Cross-examined : He had been before the magistrates on several occasions, always over a little drop of beer. He had also been up for desertion. By defendant : You did not touch the donkeys that night. You could not get out of the boat. The Bench considered the defendant guilty of a barefaced piece of trespass. He would be fined 10s and 23s 6d costs.

67 18 July 1891

Tamworth County Court

DENNIS V KINSON In this case, **George Henry Dennis**, boatman of Burton, sued Samuel Kinson, market gardener, Tamworth, for £1 12s 10d, balance in respect of manure supplied. Mr M G Atkins appeared for defendant. After hearing the case, His Honour gave a verdict for plaintiff, ordering the money to be paid in fourteen days.

68 25 July 1891

GIVING HIS LIFE FOR HIS CHILD On Thursday evening, Mr Tibbets, deputy coroner for Cheshire, held an inquest at Acton Bridge on the body of a canal boatman named **Arthur Fellows**. While turning round on the boat, Fellows's little boy fell overboard. Without a moment's hesitation, and knowing he could not swim, Fellows sprang after him. He made one endeavour to grasp the child, and sank immediately. The child floated and was rescued, but the father was drowned. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned while attempting to save the life of his child" was returned.

69 8 August 1891

Tamworth Borough Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Wilkinson**, boatman, Bedworth, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on Lady Bank on the 3rd inst. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Onions said about 5.45 pm, he was on duty on Lady Bank, and there saw the defendant drunk. He was making use of very bad language, and refused to go away when requested to do so. In consequence, witness brought him to the police station. Defendant was very violent when in the cell, and broke some of the windows. Defendant said he met some friends at the sports, and got a drop too much. Fined 5s and costs.

70 3 October 1891

Henry Hodson, boatman, who has already been ten days in prison, has been sentenced by the Bicester magistrates to incarceration for a further twenty one days for having cruelly ill-treated a boy, aged six years, by repeatedly beating him, and by frequently plunging him into the canal at Somerton.

71 12 March 1892

Tamworth County Police

“SOMETHING WITH WHICH TO DRESS HIS MUTTON” **Edward Smith**, canal boatman, was charged with stealing nine Swede turnips, value sixpence, the property of Mrs Mary Ann Brittlebank, from a field at Dorden in the parish of Polesworth. The defendant said he only took five swedes and one white turnip – a white mangel [Laughter]. PC Ford stated that in consequence of numerous complaints made to him, he watched the field from which the turnips were stolen on Sunday morning, and he saw defendant leave the boat, enter the field, and stoop nine times, each time pulling a turnip. He re-entered his boat, and observing witness, he threw some of the turnips into the canal. Defendant pleaded to be dealt with leniently, observing that it was his first offence. The Constable produced the turnips the defendant admitted having stolen, and Mr Wolferstan said it was evident the defendant wanted “ a dressing for his boiled mutton”. Fined five shillings and costs.

72 20 August 1892

Atherstone Petty Sessions

PROVIDING DINNER **Alfred Lakin**, boatman, Bedworth, pleaded guilty to trespassing upon land at Hartshill in the occupation of Mr C Abell on the 5th inst. William Ward, in the employment of Mr Abell, said he saw the defendant shoot a rabbit in a field near the towing-path, which he gave up when witness spoke to him on the matter. There was nothing further against defendant, and the Bench fined him 6s and 13s costs.

73 18 February 1893

SAD DROWNING ACCIDENT An inquest was held on Saturday last at the Bull's Head Inn, Atherstone, by Dr Iliffe, on the body of a boy named **Wm Mott**, 14 years of age, who was drowned under painful circumstances on the previous Thursday. It appears that a boat belonging to Wm Bash, Brierley Hill, in whose employment Mott was, was proceeding up the Birmingham and Coventry Canal, when the boy, who had gone to prepare No 2 lock for the boat to enter, jumped across the lock and missed his footing, with the result that he had fallen into the water and was drowned. The boatman, on coming up to the lock, could not see the boy, but noticed that his cap was floating on the water. He immediately gave the alarm, and on the lock being dragged, the unfortunate boy's body was shortly after recovered. A verdict that death was due to drowning was returned by the jury. From information obtained by the police, it appeared that the boatman found the boy six weeks ago at Tipton in a wretched state from starvation and neglect, and immediately took him under his care. The boy appears to have been entirely friendless.

74 11 November 1893

Atherstone Petty Sessions

HELPLESSLY DRUNK **George Spare**, boatman, Polesworth, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly in Long Street, Atherstone on Oct 4. Sergt Hawkes stated that shortly before midnight, he found the defendant lying crossways in the middle of the street, fast asleep. With help, he assisted him to his feet when he found he was in a hopeless state of intoxication. He locked him up for his own safety, and bailed him out next morning. Defendant did not appear. Previous convictions were put in, and a fine of 6s and 8s 6d costs was imposed.

75 13 January 1894

Tamworth County Sessions

SCHOOL CASES **Joseph Cheneler**, boatman, Fazeley, was summoned by T W Woodcock, school attendance officer of the Tamworth Union, for not sending his son, Henry, to school regularly. Defendant's wife appeared, and stated that the master of the school sent the boy home three times. Mr Woodcock described the case as a very bad one. The Bench made an attendance order.

76 24 March 1894

Atherstone County Court

CLAIMS BY A POLESWORTH BOAT BUILDER **Frederick Sephton**, boat builder of Polesworth v Philip Mellor, coal merchant, Weedon, Claim £19 2s 2d for boat hire and repairs to a boat. Defendant admitted his liability to the extent of £10. Mr J Matthews (Messrs Nevill and

Atkins, Tamworth) appeared for plaintiff, and Mr C J Allinson (Northampton) for defendant. Plaintiff said, in April of 1892, he repaired defendant's boat, "*The Moss Rose*", and for his services he charged £7 4s 10 1/2d. He also executed repairs to another boat to the extent of £10 16s, and the remainder of the claim, £3 10s, was for boat hire. Plaintiff, cross-examined, admitted that the boat sank whilst under his care, and that the defendant told him that if he repaired it, he should not pay for it. Defendant afterwards agreed to have the boat repaired. Plaintiff denied that he consented to repair the boat for £2 10s. For the defence, it was urged that damage was done by the sinking of the boat through plaintiff's neglect, and not properly docking it. Defendant countermanded by letter the order for repairs, and Mr Allinson submitted that he was not liable. Defendant pleaded that plaintiff had exceeded his instructions as regarded the amount of repairing that he required to be done. His Honour asked defendant if he had any means with which to pay in the event that he gave a verdict against him. Defendant replied that he had not. His Honour said that was just what he expected. It was what he invariably found. A fine defence was set up, and the defendant really admitted the claim, but had no means of paying. In giving judgement, he said he was convinced that all the repairs were ordered by defendant, and that there was a proper memorandum kept of the boat hire. The sole reason for the defence was that the defendant could not pay the debt. He gave judgement for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed, to be paid by instalments of £2 a month.

Frederick Sephton v Thomas Lapworth, boatman of Foleshill. Claim £2 16s for repairs to a boat. Mr Matthews appeared for plaintiff. The Registrar had given a verdict for Mr Sephton when the case came on earlier in the morning, defendant not being present. Defendant asked His Honour to consider the claim, but the Judge upheld the decision of the Registrar, and ordered defendant to pay £1 a month.

77 14 April 1894

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN **Richard Own**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned for having assaulted William Wood, gamekeeper, Hartshill, at Hartshill on March 7. Complainant, who appeared with a disfigured face, said about half past nine o'clock in the evening, defendant caught hold of him and tried to strangle him, saying, "he would give him Abell's gamekeeper". He scratched his face with his fingers. The man decamped, but with some difficulty, he obtained information which led to the defendant's arrest. Cross-examined by defendant : He did not get onto his boat, or threaten to throw him in the canal. He did not strike him in the face or jump on him. Charles Ison, Hartshill, said whilst he was in his house, he heard defendant say if he could get hold of Abell's gamekeeper, he would kill him. Witness went to his father's house, and on returning home, met complainant. He was covered with blood and was accusing another man of having assaulted him. Witness told him that he was accusing the wrong man, and he got him to accompany him to defendant's boat. They were unable to find defendant, but on the following morning, defendant admitted the offence. He knew of no reason why defendant should have assaulted complainant. Ellen Ancott said she saw defendant strike Ward in the face several times. In the scuffle, both fell down. She did not see Ward strike Own whilst on the ground, Ward cried out, "You are strangling me". Defendant then got up and ran away. Sarah Ann Woodward, married woman, corroborated. Defendant said the complainant struck him first, and he retaliated. He asked that a summons should be issued against complainant for an assault upon him. The Bench granted the summons, and adjourned the case for a fortnight.

78 28 April 1894

Atherstone Petty Sessions

THE ASSAULT ON A HARTSHILL GAMEKEEPER **Richard Hone**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned on remand to answer a charge of assaulting William Ward, gamekeeper, Hartshill, on April 17. There was a cross summons charging Ward with assaulting Hone. The evidence as given at the last sitting of the Court was repeated. Hone did not put in an appearance. The Bench said they were satisfied that Hone did commit an assault, and they ordered him to be sent to prison for one month with hard labour.

79 12 May 1894

Atherstone County Court

A POLESWORTH BOAT BUILDER'S CLAIM **Frederick Sephton**, boat builder, Polesworth, v **Nathan Buckler**, boatman, Chilvers Coton. Claim £8 9s 1d for work done and materials provided. Defendant filed a counter claim for £5 6s, the chief item in which was £4 16s, for detention of a boat for twelve weeks, damages being laid at 8s per week. Mr Matthews appeared for plaintiff, and Mr J H Bland (Nuneaton) represented defendant. At the request of his Honour, defendant first entered the witness box. He said in October of last year he saw plaintiff repairing a boat which he left at his premises in Polesworth. Plaintiff asked him if he should sell it for him, and he replied that he desired to keep it. Plaintiff promised to repair the boat in about eight days. He did not get the boat for sixteen weeks, by which he sustained a loss of £4 16s. He could have hired the boat at 8s per week. Mr Matthews produced a letter written by defendant to plaintiff stating that he required £40 nett for the boat. Defendant admitted having given a workman of plaintiff's a shilling, asking him to make a good job of the boat. Plaintiff said defendant came to him in October and asked him to sell a boat, adding that if he could make £40 he would give him £5 for his trouble. He kept the boat for some time, receiving several offers, the largest of which was £23. He had a plate printed which he attached to the boat, "This boat for sale". Five or six weeks later, in accordance with instructions he received from defendant, he repaired the boat. The reason he did not do the painting earlier was because of the frost, which lasted for six weeks. By His Honour : It was the custom of the trade for all boats to be brought to the dock and fetched away. In reply to Mr Matthews, plaintiff said he heard nothing from defendant respecting the the counter claim until he sent the fifth letter asking for payment for the work done. His Honour said plaintiff's claim was a clear one. Boatmen generally managed to get a counter claim when asked for payment, and he was quite convinced there had been no wrongful detention. Defendant placed the boat in plaintiff's hands for the purpose of selling it, as was proved by a letter in which he stated that he would accept £40 for it. On the other hand, had the boat been brought simply for repairs, plaintiff had a perfect right to detain it until he received payment for his labour. He gave a verdict for plaintiff and dismissed the counter claim.

80 23 June 1894

Atherstone Petty Sessions

ADJOURNED **James Ison jr** (30), miner, Hartshill, was charged with having assaulted **Mary Ann Hone**, married, boatwoman, residing at Hartshill, on May 26th. Mr Sale appeared for defendant. Complainant stated that shortly before half past nine o'clock in the evening, defendant followed her out of the Malt Shovel public house, and threw her down several times, covering her clothing with mud. She shouted and struggled, and he then placed his hand over her mouth, almost suffocating her. She had not brought any witnesses, because a man and wife who saw the assault had refused to come. Defendant had formerly been a boatman. Witness stated that the reason she did not take the summons out earlier was because she had to go to Banbury. The case was adjourned for a fortnight in order that the complainant's witnesses might be subpoenaed.

81 1 September 1894

Polesworth

A CHILD ACCIDENTALLY SUFFOCATED Dr Iliffe, coroner, held an inquiry on Thursday afternoon at the Chetwynd Arms, on view of the body of **James Gardener**, aged five weeks, the son of a boatman named **Charles Gardener** of Rugby. Mr T Blower was the foreman of the jury. Mrs Gardener said she found her child, which lay between her and the side of the berth, dead, about four o'clock in the morning. The child was healthy, and was fed about an hour previous. She believed in her sleep she must have suffocated it by pressing upon it. Dr Smart attributed death to suffocation. The Jury agreed and returned a verdict accordingly, sympathising with Mrs Gardener, who appeared in court much distressed. In examination by the Coroner, Mrs Gardener stated that the berth in which her husband, her child and herself slept was only 4 1/2 feet wide. The boat was, however, duly registered.

82 29 December 1894

TERRIFIC HURRICANE – LOSS OF MANY LIVES – GREAT DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

The storm which recently swept over the United Kingdom seems likely to rank as one of the most destructive of recent times. On the first meteorological indications of the approach of the storm, orders to hoist the storm signal were issued by the Meteorological Office to all our south western and southern coasts, the cones having already been displayed in the north western districts. Strong south westerly gales sprang up quickly in nearly all parts of the kingdom, with heavy squalls and rain and hail all over England, and with a rough sea on all our coasts.

The storm did extensive damage in Leeds and the district. Not a few persons sustained personal injury through being blown by the wind that raged tremendously strong. In several cases, chimney stacks fell through roofs into bedrooms. An old news vendor named Holder died soon after being picked up when the wind had blown him off his feet, and another lamentable fatality followed the fall of a mill chimney forty yards high on the premises of Crowther and Co, drysalters, Woodhouse. In Bradford, injury to property was most extensive. A substantial house in Selbourne Terrace, Manningham, was practically demolished with fatal results to a lady named Hickson, aged thirty three. By the overturning of a steam tramcar at Dudley Hill, Thomas Foster, a grocer, sustained a broken leg, and another man was badly hurt. In all, nine cars were overturned ; but, though there were passengers in every one of them, there were no serious injuries except in the cases mentioned. A considerable number of people were injured by falling chimneys and other material. A moderate estimate would place the total known damage within the borough of £100,000. At Grimsby, roofs, windows and walls were demolished, and a large rope manufactory in Cromwell Road collapsed with fatal results. At the docks, great damage was caused to the warehouses, and a labourer was thrown down by the wind and his ankle dislocated. Scarborough streets were strewn with debris from the roofs, stout trees were snapped asunder, windows were blown in, and walls, chimney stacks and parapets blown down. Gunner Devine, of the Royal Artillery, was knocked down by a stone wall near the North Riding Hotel, which collapsed as he was going by, causing him a fractured leg and rendering his removal to the military hospital at the Royal Artillery depot at the Burmiston Road barracks necessary. At Burnley, two women were blown down in the street, one being killed and the other severely cut. A huge chimney stack at the ironworks of W Cooke and Son, Sheffield, some hundred and fifty feet high, fell upon a shed in which fifty or sixty puddlers and hammermen were at work. A general stampede was made for the exits, but three men and two boys were buried in the mass of bricks and stonework and instantly killed, several others being injured. In Manchester and the neighbourhood, the gale blew with greater intensity than has been experienced for a long time past. The record of disasters, too, both to persons and property, is more serious than has been the case for many years. Only one person – a woman, who was buried beneath a hoarding, which had blown down just as she was passing – has been actually killed, but the officers at the Royal Infirmary and the other hospitals were busily employed all day dressing the wounds of those who had been struck by falling chimney pots, slates, bricks, hoardings, etc. The destruction of property has been very great. The terrific character of the hurricane, and its consequent damage, throughout the length and breadth of Derbyshire, is without parallel. Fortunately, the damage to property, great though it is in every division of the country, ranks first, and personal injuries take a second place. At Huddersfield, the storm raged with great violence. At the house of Mr Haigh, music seller, Grove Street, a chimney stack fell through the roof and bedroom floor into the dining room. At Almondbury, the chimney of Addy's mill fell across the mill and two cottages, but the occupants of the latter had been warned in time. In the Lancaster district, a tramcar was overturned during the forenoon, and the occupants injured. Damage was done to the Aqueduct Bridge, which carries the Lancaster and Preston Canal over the River Lune. A postman was severely injured through being blown down when delivering letters. At Blackburn, there was an accident at the Infirmary of a remarkable character, and it is considered marvellous that there was not serious loss of life. First the chimney stack collapsed and crashed through the roof into the children's ward and then through the floor, carrying six children and the cook with it, and again through the second floor. While the firemen and some policemen were engaged in the work of

rescue, the bottom floor broke under the weight of the wreckage of the chimney stack and the upper floors, and fell into the cellar burying a policeman, who when dug out was found to be badly injured. All the children escaped with their lives, but some were severely hurt. The cook escaped with slight bruises and a severe shaking. A boatman standing near the Infirmary was blown into the canal, and when rescued, one of his legs was found to be broken. At Kenilworth, the chimney stack of the tannery was blown down, causing damage to the extent of a thousand pounds. The tannery stack was one of the highest and best known stacks in the Midlands. In Birmingham, a large number of chimneys were blown down and houses unroofed, and many miraculous escapes are reported. Only one fatality, however, occurred. The gale was extremely violent in Nottingham and the surrounding district, and was unfortunately attended with fatal results. Two girls, Florence Oram aged ten, daughter of a bicycle maker, and Christiana Stewart, aged twelve, daughter of a labourer, were walking alongside a high garden wall at Beeston, not far from their homes, when the wall was blown down upon them, and they were instantly killed. The driver of the mail cart between Deeping and Spalding had a miraculous escape. A tree fell between the man and the horse, smashing the cart to pieces. The gale was very severe in South London, and much damage has been sustained by private dwellings, warehouse property &c, while the gardens have been found to have suffered considerably. At Guy's Hospital, a man was admitted with injury to the skull, having been blown to the ground when crossing Tower Bridge. At Cambourne, a cyclone, the force of which was confined to an area about forty yards wide, swept across Tuckingmill, a populous village about a mile from Cambourne. Residents in the neighbourhood state that their houses shook and rocked as if from an earthquake, whilst for a few minutes the roar resembled the discharge of artillery. Then followed a complete calm. The windows of the houses were smashed in all directions, and the houses presented the appearance of having been bombarded. Fortunately no one was injured. A very severe storm swept over Dublin, and practically over the entire country. Much damage was done to property in the city and throughout the provinces. The military barracks and Protestant Cathedral in Armagh City suffered a good deal. It is known that several lives have been lost at Belfast during the storm. The damage to the Donegal coast is most disastrous. Heartrending details are forthcoming of destitution amongst poor people whose homes in the hills have been destroyed. A house which collapsed killed three young children.

A Holyhead Correspondent says :- During the gale, a large barque was observed with her sails split in ribbons, and evidently unmanageable. Guns were fired at the coastguard station, and the lifeboats and life saving apparatus were summoned. Three very large tug boats also got under weigh and proceeded to the assistance of the distressed ship. The waves could be seen pouring over the decks as she rolled helpless in the trough of the sea. Before either tugs or lifeboats could reach her, she was driven before the furious gale into the jetty at the end of Holyhead breakwater. One tug got very close to her, but not sufficiently so as to get a hawser on board. The barque was then caught by the waves and dashed upon the rocks just beyond the breakwater. Here she was literally buried in the foam which obscured the end of the breakwater from view. The coastguards proceeded cautiously along the breakwater, and ultimately got sufficiently near to fire the lifeline right over the doomed ship. The crew secured the end of the line, and one man after another got into the basket until eleven were landed in safety amid the cheers of the spectators, who watched with admiration the splendid way in which the coastguards worked. The names of the hands lost are Mr Dickson, first mate; Mr McGubbin, Glasgow, second mate; three apprentices named Martin, Richardson and Lepscombe; an A B named Richard Lea; the sailmaker, Ready, of Liverpool.

83 14 December 1895

A BOATMAN CHARGED WITH MURDER At Leeds Assizes on Tuesday, **Alfred Beaumont** (43), a boatman, was indicted for the murder of John Illingworth, a collier, at Altoft near Normanton, on August 3. The evidence showed that on the evening of the date named, the two men were drinking at an inn near the river Calder. A few minutes before eleven o'clock, Illingworth started for home, accompanied by the prisoner. They were last seen standing on a bridge, and five days later, Illingworth's body, with the neck broken and the face bruised, was found in the river.

The medical testimony was to the effect that Illingworth did not die from drowning, but from the fractured neck. Beaumont was arrested, and in his house was found a watch and chain which, it was stated, had belonged to the deceased. Beaumont's coat was discovered in the warehouse of the inn, with two caps in the pocket, one of which tallied with that worn by Illingworth on the night upon which he met his death. The jury found the prisoner not guilty.

84 20 June 1896

Polesworth

A HORSE CASE FROM POLESWORTH At the Atherstone County Court on Saturday, before Judge Jordan, **Philip Mellor**, boatman of Weedon, Northampton, sued Frederick William Jones, a baker and shop keeper of Polesworth, for £9 10s balance on the sale of a horse. The price of the animal was £8 10s ; £4 was paid on the account, and defendant sold plaintiff a pony for £5, leaving the balance. Defendant filed particulars of defence alleging that the plaintiff had, in order to induce him to purchase the horse, stated that it was eight years old, and that he would warrant it to be sound. He also said that the horse had not been down (meaning that it had not fallen onto its knees), and that it was accustomed to lie down to sleep. The horse was subsequently discovered to be aged and unsound, having a spavin on each hock. The horse was not accustomed to lie down, and it was not worth more than £8. In view of these facts, defendant put in a claim, in extinction of the balance, of the price, and in the alternative claimed £10 damages for fraudulent misrepresentation and breach of warranty. Mr Hallison (Northampton) appeared for plaintiff, and Mr J Matthews (Tamworth) represented defendant, who first gave evidence in support of his case. Plaintiff then went into the box and denied the alleged warranty, urging that the purchase of the horse was not completed until after it had been driven from Polesworth to Atherstone, where the defendant paid £4 on account. In cross-examination, plaintiff admitted that defendant never had charge of the horse, and that the alleged trial took place when it was dark, at half past eight o'clock on New Year's Eve. Plaintiff drove the horse to Atherstone, and his wife accompanied him at his request. The Judge held that the drive constituted a trial by defendant and that being so, the defendant was unable to say that he relied upon a warranty. Verdict would be for plaintiff.

85 15 August 1896

Atherstone Petty Sessions

OBSCENE LANGUAGE **William Wilkinson**, boatman, Polesworth, was summoned for having used obscene language at Polesworth on July 25. PC Spraggitt was the informant, and defendant was fined 10s and 10s 6d costs.

86 31 October 1896

Tamworth County Sessions

SCHOOL CASES **Thomas Spilsbury**, boatman, Glascote, was summoned by Edward Thompson, school attendance officer, with respect to the irregular attendance of two of his children. Attendance orders made.

87 12 December 1896

Warwickshire Assizes

William Wainwright (18), caster, **Nehemiah Moore** (17), boatman, and John Arnold (17), labourer, were indicted for burglaries at Over Whitacre and Wolvey on the 22nd and 23rd of October. Wainwright was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment, Arnold four months, and Moore was released on his father's recognisance.

88 16 April 1898

Tamworth County Sessions

WASTE OF WATER **Joseph Parker**, a travelling boatman, was charged with wantonly wasting the water of the Birmingham Canal Co at Kingsbury on March 1. Defendant denied the offence. **Samuel Stokes**, lock-keeper, in the employ of the Canal Co, gave evidence in support of the prosecution from which it appeared that on March 1, he saw the defendant in company with two others working a boat up the locks at Kingsbury. On approaching the tenth lock, which was full against him, the defendant opened the paddles at the bottom gates before closing those in the top gates, with the result that there was a great waste of the company's water. Witness had previously

93 24 December 1898

Tamworth County Sessions

THE BENEFIT OF A GOOD CHARACTER **William Berry**, boatman, Trevor Street, Birmingham, was summoned for having worked a horse in an unfit state at Wilnecote on December 6, while suffering from a sore shoulder. PC Lock gave evidence, but as defendant bore an excellent character from his employer, the magistrates dismissed the case on payment of costs.

94 8 July 1899

Tamworth County Sessions

JEALOUS BOATMEN **John Parker**, canal boatman, pleaded not guilty to a charge of assaulting **George Dennis**, canal boatman, Burton on Trent, on June 23. It appeared that the boats were moored at Hopwas, and about midnight, Dennis was preparing to leave when the defendant said, "Can't we leave as well as you?" Complainant replied, "There is plenty of room for both". Defendant, who was in his stockings, then challenged him to fight, and struck him in the abdomen, rendering him unconscious. He believed defendant struck him with an iron crowbar, but could not be sure. His mate, who was with him, did not interfere on his behalf. He had since been an out patient at Burton Infirmary. He gave no provocation. Defendant was drunk, and also jealous because a man had said that one boatload of his manure was worth two of defendant's. **William Rudgard**, complainant's mate, said defendant struck complainant with his fist and also kicked him when on the ground. He did not interfere because they were "one and one" [Laughter]. Charles Taylor, goods porter, Hopwas, in the employ of the London and North Western Railway Co, said he was in bed at the time, but was aroused by the disturbance. He corroborated as to the assault. It was a moonlight night. He went for the police. Defendant said he was asleep in the cabin, when he heard a noise in the stable and went out, thinking that something might be wrong with his horse. When on the bridge, complainant started on him and struck the first blow, knocking out one of his teeth. **George Berry** (17), defendant's mate, also gave evidence, but admitted that he did not go out of the cabin until he heard the disturbance. The Bench fined defendant £2 4s 6d including costs ; in default, seven days hard labour.

95 15 July 1899

Atherstone Petty Sessions

A BATCH OF SWEARERS **Wm Wilkinson**, boatman, no fixed abode, was summoned for using obscene language on a boat adjoining Grendon Road, Polesworth, on June 26, as deposed to by PC Spencer. The defendant, who had been previously convicted for similar offences, was fined 10s and 9s 6d costs.

GROSS CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Edward Howell**, boatman, no fixed abode, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working the same while in an unfit state, at Polesworth, on June 28. PC Spencer stated that he examined the horse on the day in question, which was attached to a boat load of coal. The animal, which was in poor condition, was very lame, and was suffering from two raw wounds on its withers. It was also suffering from skin disease. Sergeant Harrison said he never saw a horse in worse condition. Defendant's employer admitted that the horse ought to be destroyed. The magistrates thought this a case of infamous cruelty, and fined defendant £1 and 11s 6d costs, in default a months imprisonment. The money was paid.

96 12 August 1899

Atherstone Petty Sessions

OBSCENE LANGUAGE **Alfred Grantham**, boatman, late of Polesworth, was summoned for using obscene language at Polesworth on July 19th, and was fined 5s and 11s 6d costs.

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **William Corkett**, canal boatman, Harefield, Middlesex, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a horse by working it while in an unfit state at Polesworth on August 1. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Johnson spoke to stopping the horse in question, which was attached to two boat loads of coal, and finding two large raw wounds on its shoulders. Ernest Ison, veterinary surgeon, Atherstone, corroborated, and stated that the animal must have been caused considerable pain. Fined £2 including costs.

97 21 October 1899

ACCIDENTS On Monday, a canal boatman named **James Rainey**, aged 42, was admitted to the Cottage Hospital suffering from a broken leg, which resulted from falling from a boat at Glascote. He was also much cut and bruised.

98 13 January 1900 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **James Darley**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned for cruelty to a horse at Atherstone on December 28. Mr Alfred Sale, solicitor, stated that he saw defendant in charge of a horse which was drawing a boat in the canal. Owing to the ice, the horse could make little progress, and only moved the boat about 40 yards in an hour and ten minutes. Defendant kept striking the horse on its head and neck, and it swerved to get out of his way. The horse did its best to pull the boat. Mr Ison, veterinary surgeon, who examined the horse, said it had a sore on the shoulder under the collar. There were also two wounds on the fetlocks caused by the horse falling. Defendant pleaded guilty. His employer stated that the horse was all right when it left Banbury, and it was not his wish that the horse should be worked when in an unfit state. Defendant was fined £2 with £1 2s costs, and the Bench thanked Mr Sale for bringing the case forward.

99 24 February 1900 Atherstone Petty Sessions

FIGHTING **Henry Bromage**, boatman, Coventry, was summoned for fighting on the highway on January 16th. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Barrows said defendant struck another man on the nose, knocking him down. Defendant said he committed the act in self defence. Fined 6s and costs, 15s 6d in all.

100 23 June 1900 Bolehall and Glascote

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN On Thursday June 14, PC Field of Glascote was informed that a boatman named **John Garner** (60) of Braunstone, had died in the cabin of his boat on the Coventry Canal at the Anker bridge, Kettlebrook. On making enquiries, the officer found that deceased had been under medical treatment for pneumonia, and he communicated the facts to the coroner, Dr C W Iliffe, who dispensed with an inquest.

101 25 August 1900 Atherstone

DROWNING CASE On Thursday, Dr C W Iliffe, coroner for North Warwickshire, held an inquest at the Red Lion Hotel, respecting the death of **Joseph Thompson** (11), son of **Nathan Geo Thompson**, boatman of Hillmorton, near Rugby. On Monday, the boy was assisting his parents with a boat on the Coventry Canal, and when entering a lock at Atherstone, he attempted to jump to the bank, but fell into the water and was drowned. A verdict of accidental death was returned.

102 22 September 1900 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A PONY **Charles Bromage**, canal boatman, Coventry, was summoned for working a pony in an unfit state at Grendon on August 23. Sergeant Harrison stated that under the collar on the off shoulder, the animal had a large open wound, and was evidently in great pain. Defendant told witness that the shoulder was tender and the skin soon rubbed off. Defendant at once stopped working the animal. Defendant said the wound was very small. A fine of £1 and 11s 6d costs was imposed.

103 6 October 1900 Atherstone County Court

COLLISION ON THE CANAL The Hartshill Quarry Company sued **William Bromwich**, boatman, Coventry, for £10 15s 3d, for damage to a boat. Mr F Fielders appeared for the company, and Mr Maddocks, Coventry, for the defendant. Mr Fielders stated that on August 27, a man named **Moore** had charge of a boat belonging to the company on the canal at Grendon. After unloading, Moore began to turn his boat in an arm of the King's Head Wharf, when he saw defendant coming

with a boat from the direction of Baddesley. Moore shouted to defendant to stop, but defendant took no notice, and his boat collided with Moore's boat, which was seriously damaged. Wm Moore of Hartshill stated that he was taking the boat from Hartshill to Atherstone loaded with stone. He unloaded the boat at the King's Head Wharf, and in order to return, he had to turn the boat in an arm in the canal. Whilst he was doing so, he saw defendant's boat coming towards him. He shouted to him to slacken speed, but he did not, and defendant's boat ran into witness's, and knocked a large hole in it. When witness first shouted, defendant was a hundred yards away and could have stopped his boat in that distance. By Mr Maddocks : According to the canal company's rules, a boat should not be turned at the arm if he saw another boat coming. Witness could have pulled his boat further into the arm and have left the canal clear, but he did not do so, as he wanted to get back as soon as possible, and had he gone into the arm, he would have had to have waited until the defendant passed. **Thomas Hambridge**, boatman, stated that there was no other boat in sight when Moore's boat began to turn. Emma Hambridge, Alfred Green and John Chetwynd, landlord of the King's Head, Grendon, gave evidence to the effect that defendant could have stopped had he tried to do so. Defendant, in his evidence, stated that when he saw Moore's boat, he was too near to stop, but if Moore had drawn his boat a little further when he (defendant) shouted to him, the collision would not have occurred. Mr Maddocks : What speed did you strike Moore's boat at? His Honour : He struck it at a speed of £9 9s 3d. By Mr Fielders : He first saw Moore's boat when he was 100 yards away. He saw Moore begin turning his boat, and he thought he should be able to clear Moore's boat. When he found he could not, he stopped the pony and donkey which were drawing the boat, and ran the boat into the side. The boat was going about two miles an hour. Re-examined : Moore did not actually start turning the boat until witness had got within 30 yards, and he could not stop in that distance. **William Heath**, a boy, who was steering defendant's boat, stated that they were only 30 yards away when Moore began turning his boat, and witness at once steered his boat to the side to stop it. His Honour gave judgement for the plaintiffs for £9 6s 3d and costs.

104 3 November 1900

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BAD LANGUAGE The following persons were fined for this offence : **George Garratt**, boatman, Polesworth, 12s including costs.

105 16 March 1901

Tamworth County Sessions

ADJOURNED **James Bricknell**, boatman, Hawkesbury, was charged by J W Parker, canal boat inspector, Tamworth, with using a canal boat as a dwelling house, without being registered, at Amington on December 19. Mr H J Cheatle, clerk to the Rural District Council, prosecuted. Defendant did not appear, and the case was adjourned.

106 27 April 1901

Tamworth County Sessions

AN UNREGISTERED CANAL BOAT **James Bricknell**, boatman, Grange Farm, Longford, was summoned by J W Parker, sanitary inspector, Tamworth, for using a boat as a dwelling which was not registered, at Amington, on December 19 1900. Mr Parker said he visited defendant's boat, which was named *Beatrice*, and defendant informed him that **Fred Hodgetts** of Worcester was the owner. He wrote to Hodgetts, who stated that he had sold the boat to a man named **Neale**, of Upton, who also stated that he had sold it to defendant. The owner of the boat was liable if it were used, as the boat in the present case was, as a dwelling. The name of **Fanny Hodgetts** was upon the boat as that of the owner. Defendant produced a certificate, which he said he had not in the boat at the time, but at home. He bought the boat from Neale about two years ago. In answer to the Chairman, Mr Parker said that the real offence was that the boat had not been freshly registered since it changed hands. The Chairman said defendant must have the boat registered in accordance with law, and the Bench would only require him to pay the costs, 17s, of the present proceedings.

107 10 August 1901

BOATMAN'S MYSTERIOUS DEATH The dead body of an Ilkeston boatman was found on

Thursday in a ditch in Black Lane, Borrowash, Derbyshire. The cause of death was evidently wounds in the throat, which the medical evidence shows were not self inflicted. The deceased's watch had also gone. He was drinking the previous night with another boatman, and the pair left the Nag's Head together at ten o'clock, having had some words. This man is missing.

108 17 August 1901

At the inquest at the Nag's Head Borrowash, on the body of **Thomas Compton**, boatman, a verdict of "Wilful murder" against **Joseph Harrison** was returned.

[Note that name is shown as CAMPION not Compton in some of the other articles on the case]

109 21 September 1901

Atherstone Petty Sessions

James Biddle, boatman, was fined 5s and 10s costs for having been drunk and disorderly at Polesworth on September 16.

110 28 September 1901

Amington

CHILD DROWNED On Saturday, Dr C W Iliffe held an inquest at the Pretty Pigs Inn, Amington, touching the death of **Lizzy Grantham** (5), daughter of **Alfred Grantham**, boatman of Lower Heyford, Banbury, who was drowned in Amington Basin on the previous Wednesday. From the evidence, it appeared that the father left the boat to attend to the horse, leaving the child in the cabin with her mother, who is deaf. It was thought that the child tried to follow her father, and in getting out of the boat, fell into the water and was drowned, her mother not hearing her. The father searched for the child on his return, and found it in the basin, dead. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and with the coroner expressed their sympathy with the parents, to whom they attached no blame.

111 23 November 1901

STRUGGLE ON A CANAL BOAT A boatman, **James Winstanley**, entered the cabin of a canal boat at Blackburn on Saturday night, in which **John Boardman** was sleeping. On being ordered out, he took up a poker and struck at Boardman. A desperate struggle ensued. The intruder was eventually overpowered, and handed to the police. He has been twice confined in a lunatic asylum, and on Saturday, the Blackburn magistrates ordered his committal to the workhouse.

112 14 December 1901

Staffordshire Assizes

SAD STREET SCENE AT WEST BROMWICH **Richard Handley** (45), boatman, was indicted for the manslaughter of Thomas Gorman, at West Bromwich on August 3rd. Mr Vachell was for the prosecutor and Mr Hazell defended. According to the opening statement, it appeared that about eleven o'clock on the night of August 3rd, the deceased left the Globe Inn, Hill Top, West Bromwich, under the influence of drink. As he walked along the street, he was muttering to himself and using bad language. Prisoner and his wife passed along the street at the time. Prisoner's wife, hearing the bad language, called deceased a foul mouthed beast, whereupon the deceased called the prisoner's wife a very offensive name. Prisoner, taking umbrage at the remark, went up to the deceased, and the two men in a scuffle fell on to the road, and the allegation against the accused was that he took deceased by the coat collar and bumped his head three times on the stone setts which formed the roadway. Eye witnesses of the occurrence heard a cracking sound during the time prisoner bumped deceased's head on the ground. Deceased was rendered insensible, and was carried home, prisoner assisting in removing the man. Death ensued on August 6th, and it was ascertained at the *post mortem* examination that deceased's skull had been fractured at the base. The doctor, Mr Sansome, also gave it as his opinion that the fracture might have been caused by the fall. The doctor, in cross-examination, said he thought it was improbable that the cracking noise heard by the witnesses was clear to the fracture of the skull, and might have come from the clashing of deceased's teeth. When arrested and charged with the offence, prisoner said he only pushed the deceased. Mr Hazell, for the defence, pointed out there was no ill feeling previously existing between the parties, and he

submitted to the jury that the only intention in prisoner's mind was to give deceased a good shaking for having insulted his wife, and that the deceased, being drunk, slipped down and met with an accident which brought about his death. The Judge instructed the jury that however foul a man's language was, it afforded no justification for violence, pointing out that the law had provided a proper remedy for the use of obscene language. The jury found prisoner guilty. PC Owen, in answer to the Judge, said prisoner was a man who worked regularly, and that he was a steady man. The jury, through the foreman, said they thought that the fracture of the skull was caused by the bumping spoken of by the witnesses. Sentence was deferred.

113 4 January 1902 Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

DISASTROUS LARKING **William Turner** (17), boatman, was indicted for unlawfully wounding Samuel Longmore at Bentley on November 11. Mr H Staveley Hill prosecuted, and Mr Haxel defended. Prisoner and prosecutor were on a canal boat playing with other youths. Prosecutor left the cabin and walked along a plank to the middle of the boat. He picked some small pebbles up and threw them at the cabin, and while getting on to the deck of the boat, he was struck in the eye with a piece of coal thrown by the prisoner, with the result that the eye was damaged and had to be removed. The defence was that the youths were larking on the boat, and that the wound was the result of an accident. The jury found the prisoner guilty of common assault, and he was bound over to come up for judgement when called upon.

114 15 February 1902 Tamworth

CRUELTY CASE Henry Tricklebank, provision dealer's assistant, Tamworth, was summoned for working a horse in an unfit state on January 21, and **Arthur Crawshaw**, boatman, Glascote, was summoned for causing the animal to be worked on the same date. Tricklebank pleaded not guilty, and Crawshaw did not appear. PC Lewis said that at 10.40 am, he saw the horse in question in Victoria Road, attached to a spring cart laden with groceries. The horse was very lame on the off fore leg. The hoof was very hot, and appeared tender on being touched. There was a crack in the hoof, and a sore on the near ear. Tricklebank told him it was not his horse, but one he had hired from Crawshaw. Tricklebank said he was driving the horse as a favour for a friend, Mr Brearley, who was in the hospital with a broken leg, as a result of an accident. Inspector Canning, RSPCA, Burton-on-Trent, said on January 23 he examined the horse. It was in good condition, but very lame on the off fore foot. The crack was a wide one, the centre of the foot being exposed. Crawshaw was fined 10s and costs and Tricklebank 5s and costs.

115 22 February 1902 Polesworth

SUDDEN DEATH OF AN INFANT An inquest was held at the Chetwynd Arms on Thursday by Dr Iliiffe, coroner, on the body of **Mary Ann Ward**, aged 8 months, the daughter of **Charles Ward**, boatman, of no fixed abode. The Rev Canon Trotter was foreman of the jury. **Sarah Ann Ward**, mother, said the child had not thrived well. At about seven am on Monday, she found the child dead in the bed. Sergt Harrison said the bed on which the father, mother and child slept was only three feet four inches wide. Dr Langley stated that the child was weakly looking and somewhat emaciated. Death was, in his opinion, due to natural causes. Verdict accordingly. The jury thought the bed insufficient for three persons.

116 8 March 1902 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **Wm George Shilcock** (17), boatman, Coventry, in the employ of his father, pleaded guilty to working a mule and horse in an unfit state at Polesworth on March 3. Sergt Harrison said he saw a pony and a mule attached to a boat. They were in poor condition. The mule had a raw sore on its crest, and had an old sore on the near shoulder. The other animal, which was an aged pony, appeared very tender all over. There were various sores on different parts, and hair was coming off. A veterinary surgeon's certificate stated that the animals were totally unfit to be worked. They were also verminous. Defendant's father said he was willing to have the pony

destroyed, but wanted the mule preserving. Ald Bourne inspected the animals, and gave his opinion that in their present condition they were unfit for anything. The mule, if properly fed, might come round. The pony was a mass of skin and bone. A fine of £2 and 19s costs was imposed for the ill-treatment of the pony, which the Bench ordered to be destroyed. Defendant was requested to get the mule in proper condition for work before he used it again.

117 15 March 1902

Tamworth County Sessions

SERIOUS STABBING CASE AT GLASCOTE **Charles Print** (37), boatman, was charged with unlawfully and maliciously wounding **William Woodward**, boatman, by stabbing him in the face, head and left arm, with a knife, at Glascote on March 6. Woodward, who is 50, and had his right arm and hand bandaged, and was in a very feeble state, said he lived in his boat, which was named *Lilian Mary*, registered at Brownhills. On March 6, he and defendant were working the boat from Brownhills to Nuneaton. They tied up at Glascote about six in the evening. Coming through the locks at Lichfield, they had had a few words about the work. After stabling the horse, they went to the Anker Inn, and had beer. Defendant was quarrelsome, and he told him he had better get off. Defendant wanted two more shillings. He paid him 2s, and defendant went away. Complainant went to the boat about 10, and saw defendant there, saying to him that he thought he had gone. They again had more words, when defendant gave him a severe blow with his fist, knocking him down on the bed and rendering him "silly". Defendant began knocking him about. Complainant raised his right arm to protect himself and begged him to desist. He did not at first realise that defendant had a knife. Defendant threatened his life, and complainant shouted, "For God's sake, Charlie, don't stab me any more". Assistance then came; defendant remained in the boat till the police came, and complainant was taken to the Cottage Hospital. Defendant stabbed him seven or eight times. They had beer at Lichfield, Fazeley and at Glascote. Defendant said he had no questions to put to complainant. He was very sorry it had occurred. **John Wright**, boatman, Brownhills, said he was at Glascote with his boat, and saw Woodward. He was in the inn, when defendant came in and asked complainant for money. Complainant gave him 2s, and defendant said he was going up town to get lodgings, and would not work with complainant. As witness was going on his own boat, which was lying next to Woodward's, he heard a disturbance, and heard Woodward say, "Don't stab me with the knife, you have nearly killed me now". Defendant said, "I will kill you dead now, you old ---". Witness gave an alarm for a policeman, and defendant said to him that he would knock him out of the boat if he did not get off. Witness saw that Woodward was bleeding severely, and leaning on the cabin bed with his head on his arm. Defendant was there, and had his jacket and waistcoat off, and his sleeves rolled up to the elbows. Woodward said to witness, "Jack, I am glad you have come; he meant killing me". Defendant said nothing. Witness tied up Woodward's arm to stop the bleeding, and then left another man on the boat and went for the police. Dr H P Barlow, Tamworth, said he was called at 11 pm to the Cottage Hospital to see Woodward. He found that he had lost a considerable quantity of blood, and had received seven distinct wounds and that both eyes were swollen and discoloured. The wounds were of the nature of stabs, and could have been made with the knife produced. Four wounds were on the face; two of these were above and one below the left eye, and one in front of the left ear. Three were on the right wrist, two being on the front and one on the inner side. They varied from three quarters of an inch to an inch in length. The two wounds on the front of the wrist appeared to be the deepest. He considered that on account of the number of wounds, although no important artery was cut, there was danger to the life of Woodward at the time from hemorrhage. The man had since made excellent progress. The knife (produced) is a pocket clasp knife. The knife was sharp. In reply to Mr Inge, Dr Barlow said the wounds were in the form of stabs. In answer to the Clerk, witness said considerable force must have been used by defendant in striking with the knife. Two of the wounds were very near the brain. The wounds had been bandaged before the man was brought to the hospital. PC Pickthorne said about 10 pm he was called to the boat wharf by the witness Wright. He saw complainant, who was bleeding from the wounds over the eye and on the wrist. Witness said, "Hullo, what's up". Complainant said, pointing to prisoner, "This man had stabbed me two or three times over the eye".

He searched defendant, and in his right hand pocket found the knife produced. He took him off the boat on to the wharf, and charged him with unlawfully wounding complainant. The knife had blood upon it. Defendant said, "It served the old ---- right, he should have paid me". At the police station, witness showed defendant the knife, whereupon defendant used very filthy language, and said, "I wish I had done it, killed him. It served him right, and I could do you the same". After being put in the cell, defendant was very violent, and on going in to him, defendant, who had pulled the lid of the pan, struck him a violent blow, and witness with his fist knocked him down on to the bed. Witness went back to the boat, and got a conveyance and took complainant to the hospital. Someone had tied a handkerchief above complainant's elbow to form a tourniquet. Witness held the artery above the elbow until he got to the hospital to try to stop the bleeding. Defendant could walk steadily, although he appeared to have had drink. Defendant in reply to the charge said he reserved his defence. The Bench committed defendant for trial at the next Assizes for Warwickshire.

118 22 March 1902

THE ATTACK ON A BOATMAN AT GLASCOTE At Birmingham Winter Assizes on Friday, before Mr Justice Bigham, **Charles Print** (39), boatman, pleaded guilty to stabbing **William Woodward** with a knife, on the 6th inst, in the parish of Bolehall and Glascote. It was stated that the prisoner, whilst under the influence of drink, stabbed the prisoner seven times in the head and wrist, and inflicted serious wounds. Prosecutor's life was in some danger owing to loss of blood, but he had now recovered. The Judge considered this a very bad case indeed. A murderous assault had been committed, he said, and so far as he could find, there was no excuse. Prisoner would have to undergo three years penal servitude.

119 24 May 1902

Tamworth County Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Henry Mountney**, boatman, 3 Great Tyndall Street, Birmingham, was fined 5s and costs for being drunk and disorderly at Hopwas on May 18, as stated by PC Beresford.

120 27 September 1902

ALREWAS CANAL TRAGEDY- CHARGE OF MURDER DISMISSED At Lichfield County Police Court on Monday, before Mr Negus and the Mayor of Lichfield, **John Turner** and **Frederick Hathaway** were charged on remand with having wilfully murdered **James Green**, boatman, of the Radleys, Rushall, on the Trent and Mersey Canal at Alrewas on August 29. Mr A W Barnes appeared to prosecute on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and Mr W R A Willcock of Wolverhampton represented the accused.

In his opening statement, Mr Barnes said the three men were in the employ of **Mr Woodward**, owner of canal boats, at Rushall, and travelled for him on the Trent and Mersey Canal, delivering goods at various places. Turner was foreman, and lodged with Green, and Hathaway, who was a kind of odd man, who accompanied the men on their voyages. They left Rushall early on the morning of Wednesday August 27th with a boat load of lime for Burton-on-Trent, and expected to be away three days, returning on the Saturday following. The load of lime was delivered at Burton, and on the return voyage, the men called at the Navigation Inn, Alrewas, where there was evidence to show that some dispute occurred on Friday August 29. Turner and Hathaway returned to Rushall on Saturday August 30th without Green, and the dead man's body was found in the canal at Alrewas on Monday September 1st, with a wound over his right eye. Turner went to his lodgings at Green's house, and enquired from his wife whether her husband had returned. She told him he had not, and he said he had left him at a public house. As a matter of fact, Turner had not left him at the Navigation Inn, but had been seen with him and Hathaway on the towing-path of the canal, some distance away, after the dispute which had taken place in the public house.

Mrs Green, widow of deceased, said her husband was forty three years of age. Turner had lodged with them for upwards of four years. In August last year, deceased had one of his drunken freaks, and left her and went to live at Walsall Wood. He stayed away for nine months, and then came back

and asked if he could come home again. She consented, and they had lived happily since. Deceased had frequently gone off drinking, and they had had constant quarrels at those times about money matters, inasmuch as he made no provision for the home. While he was away, he never sent her anything, and she never troubled him. In answer to Mr Willcock, Mrs Green said one of her sons slept with Turner, and another son in the same bedroom, when her husband was away. Turner was a quiet inoffensive man, and her husband was never jealous of him, and never had cause to be. While in drink, she saw her husband fall in the canal some years ago, and he had told her he had fallen in five times.

Sidney Williams, painter, Alrewas, said on the evening of Friday August 29, he was in the Navigation Inn, and heard the three boatmen haggling about some tobacco, and the spilling of some beer. Hathaway pulled his belt off, and threatened to give Green a tap on the head with it. Green turned to Hathaway, and swore with an oath, "I will give you pulling your belt off to me. I will shove you in the "cut" directly. Dead men tell no tales". They then calmed down, and seemed as if they had been joking.

Robert Smith, Nettleton, canal agent, said that on Friday night, August 29, he walked from Fradley Junction to Alrewas, and passed three canal boats. The third was the Daw End lime boat, and Hathaway was on the towing-path, driving, another man was in the boat steering, and about 150 yards away he met Green putting on his belt. He could not say whether Green could have caught the boat before it cleared the Common Lock. Frank Goring, of Plaster Mill Cottages, said, while digging in his garden on the night in question, he heard cursing and swearing and sounds of a big row at the Common Lock. Charles Perry Stockman, Fradley Sale, said he heard a great noise at the Common Lock. He heard someone say, "---- your ----eyes", and then a cry, "Oh dear", after which all suddenly became quiet. Samuel Smith, fireman at Daw End Lime Works, Rushall, said he was in the Royal Oak Inn at midday, August 31, and heard Turner talking to a man named Birch. The name of Green popped up, and Turner said, "When Green's found, it will be either in the canal or lock up". When arrested by Police constable Morrey, Turner exclaimed, "Causing his death? Why, we left him in the Navigation at Alrewas", and Hathaway added, "Yes, I'm sure we did".

Dr Norton of Alrewas said he had made a *post mortem* examination, and found an incised wound 1 1/4 in long on the right temple. It had the appearance of an ante mortem wound, and might have been caused by striking the head against, or with, a moderately sharp substance. The wound would not be sufficient to cause insensibility or death. The condition of the body showed the man to be addicted to drink. The immediate cause of death was drowning. This closed the case for the prosecution.

The Bench considered the evidence insufficient, and dismissed the case.

121 29 November 1902 Atherstone Petty Sessions

THE CANAL BOATS' ACT **Frank Potts**, canal boatman, Coventry, was summoned for using a canal boat at Atherstone on Sept 1 without having the registered number and address thereon. Charles Joint, local inspector under the Canal Boats' Act, stated the facts. Defendant was ordered to pay 5s. He stated that he left statutory form, which the prosecutor gave him to be filled in and returned, to an inspector at Moira. The Bench agreed that if this statement was found correct, the money should be refunded.

122 14 February 1903 Atherstone Petty Sessions

WITHDRAWN **George Shilcock**, boatman, Coventry, was summoned for a common assault on **James Ison**, boatman, Hartshill, at Grendon on January 23. Mr Maddocks, who appeared for the defence, applied for the case to be withdrawn, and said the parties had come together. The Bench agreed.

123 21 February 1903 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO AN ASS **Peter J Shillcock**, boat boy, Coventry, was summoned for cruelty to a donkey by working it whilst in an unfit state, at Atherstone on January 30 ; **George Shillcock**,

boatman, Coventry, was summoned for allowing and causing the animal to be worked. PS Harrison deposed to seeing two donkeys attached to a loaded boat. One of the donkeys had a number of old sores on the shoulders. The case against the boy was dismissed, the other defendant being ordered to pay 16s 6d inclusive.

124 28 March 1903

Fazeley

SINGULAR ACCIDENT On Saturday, **Armplas Bradshaw**, wife of a boatman named **John Bradshaw**, residing at Birmingham, was in charge of a boat travelling from the latter place to Hockley Hall colliery, her husband having charge of another barge close behind. On reaching Curdworth locks, she was crossing over for the purpose of winding up the lever to let water into the lock to enable the boat to pass through, when she suddenly fell into the water. Her husband stated that it appeared as though a gust of wind got around the woman and blew her straight over. The woman was rescued as quickly as possible by her husband and daughters, and conveyed to Fazeley, she being attended to on the way. On arriving at Fazeley, Dr McColl was called in, between 6 and 7 pm, and prescribed for the woman, but at eight o'clock on the same night, she expired. Mr T E Auden held an inquest on the body at the Navigation Inn on Tuesday afternoon, when the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

125 11 April 1903

Kettlebrook

SMART RESCUE FROM DROWNING Shortly after half past two on Sunday afternoon, a boy named William Newbery, aged 6, fell into the Coventry Canal from the towing-path opposite the Park Inn, Kettlebrook. The cries of the child's companions attracted the attention of a man named **John McLoughlin**, who was in the yard of the Park Inn at the time. He immediately ran to the spot, and without divesting himself of any clothing, jumped into the water, which was between five and six feet deep, and rescued the child, who was in a serious condition. The child was carried to the house of his parents in Kettlebrook, and he is now none the worse of his adventure. McLoughlin, who is a young fellow, has just left the Royal Horse Artillery. He has been in the army for over nine years, and saw service in South Africa. His promptitude in rescuing the child has brought him warm congratulations from the residents of the hamlet. McLoughlin resides at 84 New John Street, Birmingham, and is a boatman in the employ of Tibbits' granite stone quarry, Atherstone.

126 25 April 1903

SINGULAR SHOOTING AFFRAY AT WALSALL The Birmingham boatman, **Herbert William Downes**, charged with shooting Horace William Lawley, a six year old boy, of Darlaston Road, Walsall, on April 11, when he appeared in the dock at the police court on Tuesday, was accompanied by his companion, **Thomas Bill**, who was charged with attempting to shoot Lawley and two other boys on the same date. After considerable evidence had been taken, the magistrates decided there was no case against Bill, and discharged him, but Downes, who pleaded that the shooting was accidental, was committed to the Assizes for trial, bail being allowed. According to the prosecution, Horace and Harold Lawley and a boy named Gnosall were fishing on the canal side near the Pleck, Walsall, when a boat laden with coal came along, in charge of Downes and Bill. Gnosall asked if he could cross the canal on it, to which Bill replied, "Put your foot on it, and I'll drown you", and, getting a frying pan, he threw a lot of water over them. When the boat was about twenty yards away, Bill went down into the cabin, and came out again with a revolver, which he pointed at them and pulled the trigger, saying, "Shift a yard and I'll shoot". The hammer clicked, but there was no report. Downes then remarked, "Give it here, there's no cap on it", and receiving it, put a cap on and, pointing at the boys, he fired. The boy Horace fell to the ground crying, with a wound in his leg from which blood was issuing. Downes and Bill only laughed and went on with the boat, while a man carried the injured lad home. Downes was subsequently identified as the man who fired the shot. The lad Gnosall said it was Downes who threw the water over them, and first pointed the revolver at them, and that Bill fired the shot which injured the boy, whilst two men who

witnessed the occurrence from a bridge said that it was Downes who caused the lad's injury. When arrested, Downes said, "All right, I'll give you no trouble. I am sorry to say it was me who shot him. They were throwing "bibbles" at us. I hope the little lad will get better. I shot the revolver up in the air, but it "jumped"". Subsequently he pulled off his cap, and showed some old wounds in his head, saying that they had been caused by stones. Bill also stated that the boys were stoning them, and Downes fired the revolver in the air to frighten them, but it "jumped", and the bullet hit the boy Lawley.

127 7 November 1903

Atherstone Petty Sessions

A BRUTAL BOATMAN Charles Sedgeley, boatman, 21 Henry Street, Coventry, was summoned for cruelly ill-treating an ass by kicking it, at Polesworth on October 7. Defendant pleaded guilty. In answer to Inspector Rogers, RSPCA, who prosecuted, Mrs Harvey deposed to seeing the defendant kick the donkey in a very brutal manner for about half an hour. PS Harrison said he saw the man kick the donkey six or eight times in the belly and about the fore legs as hard as he could. He never saw an animal kicked more brutally. Defendant alleged that the donkey had kicked him in the "cut". Sentenced to fourteen days hard labour.

128 5 December 1903

Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions

EXTENSIVE THEFTS BY BOATMEN Henry Banks (21), boatman, and **Benjamin Church** (23), boatman, were indicted for stealing and converting to their own use whilst bailee thereof, one bale, containing 60 pairs of cotton sheets, two rolls of black merino, and one 2 cwt bag of sugar, the property of Fellows, Morton and Clayton (Limited) at Stone, between November 3 and 9. The following were indicted for receiving the sheets knowing them to have been stolen :- Thomas Owen (31), licensed victualler, 30 pairs, at Stone : Rebecca Evans (58), ten pairs, at Hixon : Susannah Cooper (51), 10 pairs, at Acton Trussell : **George Betts** (29), boatman, 10 pairs, at Sandon : John Simcox (51), farmer, one bag of sugar, at Penkridge. Mr B C Brough prosecuted, and Mr R C E Plumpry and Mr F H Vachell defended Owen, Evans, Cooper and Simcox. Banks, Church and Betts pleaded guilty.

Mr Brough said Banks and Church were men in charge of a canal boat plying between Preston Brook in Cheshire and Birmingham. The goods were alleged to have been stolen from a boat named *Ludlow*, and the two men were in charge of the boat, Banks acting as captain. On Tuesday November 3, the goods alleged to have been stolen were included in a large cargo which was being taken to Wolverhampton. During the journey, the boat passed through a number of towns in Staffordshire. On the arrival of the boat at Wolverhampton on November 9, a representative of Messrs Fellows, Morton and Clayton, carriers, examined the contents of the boat, and found that a certain portion of the cargo was missing. Banks and Church left the boat, and a warrant was issued. On being arrested, they made certain statements incriminating the other four prisoners. The police visited the houses of prisoners, and recovered almost all the stolen property.

The prisoners admitted that they bought the articles from Banks and Church, but said they did not know they had been stolen or they would not have purchased them. Owen, Evans, Cooper and Simcox were found not guilty and discharged. Sentence in the case of the boatmen, who pleaded guilty, was deferred.

129 12 December 1903

John Higgins (34), boatman, was indicted for having criminally assaulted Emma Poxon at West Bromwich on October 17. Mr Lawrence prosecuted, and Mr Vachell defended. Prisoner was found guilty and he was sent to penal servitude for five years.

130 9 January 1904

Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

THEFT OF BRICKS James Copestake (40), boatman, was indicted for having, on October 27th, stolen eighteen tons of old bricks at Leek, the property of the North Staffordshire Railway Company. Mr G C Lewis prosecuted. It appeared that a large number of bricks had been taken

from an old tunnel, and that, as it was intended to use them in some other building, they were stacked on a piece of ground. It was alleged that the prisoner employed a man to put the bricks into his boat, and that he took them to Cheddleton, where he sold them to a contractor. Prisoner was found guilty and was committed for three months with hard labour.

131 23 January 1904 Atherstone Petty Sessions

A BOATMAN'S OMISSIONS **Henry Woodhouse**, boatman, Northampton, was summoned by Charles Joint, canal boat inspector to the Atherstone Rural District Council, for being the owner of a boat without having a certificate of registration, and no water vessel on the boat, on October 30. Mr Joint said the boat was named *Industry*. Defendant, who did not appear, was ordered to pay 10s inclusive.

132 9 April 1904 Atherstone Petty Sessions

NO DOG LICENSES **Joseph Garrett**, boatman, Hartshill was summoned for keeping a dog without a license. Fined 5s,

133 28 May 1904

LIFE IN A CANAL BOAT The story of Mr Smith's campaign, which resulted in the passing of the Canal Boat Acts of 1877 and 1884, is one of a long struggle against difficulties which to a less earnest and persistent spirit would have proved insurmountable. But victory came at last, and enactments were made which would, it was hoped, secure the education of the children and a cleanly, sanitary home for all dwellers on canal boats. There is no doubt that the Acts have beneficially affected the lives of the canal population, though perhaps they have been less far reaching than might have been hoped. Every canal boat must now be registered, and is subject to inspection – an inspection which varies in effectiveness according to the zeal and industry of the local authorities through whose districts the boats pass. It is the duty of the inspectors to see that the boats are properly registered, that the cabins are clean and not overcrowded, that offensive cargoes are separated by double bulkheads from the living rooms, and that various minor regulations for the health and comfort of the inhabitants are observed. According to the report of His Majesty's Inspector of Canal Boats for 1901-2, it is estimated that there are now between 7,000 and 8,000 canal boats in actual use as dwellings. During the year, about one fourth of the boats were found to be infringing the regulations in one way or another. But many of these infringements were mere technical offences against the regulations regarding registration, and no doubt the same fault was often discovered by more than one inspector, and so would appear in the turns twice over. Altogether, 1,101 cases had reference to the sanitary state of the cabins, but of these 231 related only to the temporary dirty condition of the interiors, very often due to the nature of the cargo or the weather at the time ; and the inspector reports that as a rule the boat people took a pleasure in remedying the fault as soon as possible. It would seem, therefore, that as regards the sanitary conditions of the canal boatman's life, a great improvement has been made ; and my own restricted observations would lead me to suppose that a canal boat is a far healthier dwelling place than a city slum. In order to get a fair impression of the life of our canal population, and to gain information on many matters which cannot be recorded in official reports, I recently spent some time among the canal folk at Brentford. It is at Brentford that the Grand Junction Canal joins the Thames, and large numbers of barges bound to and from all parts of the Midland waterways make this place a port of call. To very many of these wandering canal folk, Brentford is a sacred place. In the parish church they were married and their children christened, and in the churchyard some of their friends and relations, their last voyage made, are sleeping their long sleep ; here is the school where many of their children receive, during the occasional days spent in the town, all the schooling they will ever get, and here is the only place where very many of them ever hear the Good Tidings of Great Joy, or receive any impulse towards the higher life. The centre of the good work among the canal folk at Brentford is the Canal Boatmen's Mission, which is under the care of a City Missionary, Mr R Bamber, who may well be called "the bargee's parson". For twenty three years, Mr Bamber has

worked amongst canal dwellers, and no man in England understands them better, or is more generally loved and respected by them. It was under his kindly guidance that I had the opportunity of visiting some of the boat folk in their curious little homes. It is evident that the women for the most part take a commendable pride in keeping their tiny homes as clean and cheerful as possible. Some are models of neatness and cleanliness ; the stove is blackleaded and polished ; the household utensils are of brass and copper, and they shine like mirrors ; the walls are adorned with pictures, and a little of the precious shelf room is spared for a few china ornaments. Even if we find a cabin which is untidy, and where the children are dirty, the mother will apologise and explain that we have caught her at an unfortunate time. Nevertheless, Mr Barber, and anyone introduced by him, are sure to be welcome. You cannot stand upright in these cabins, and the captain, if he is a very tall man, may touch one wall with his head and the other with his feet as he lies in bed. Many of the fixtures “contrive a double debt to pay”; the seat is a locker for household goods, and also for the children's bed ; one cupboard door is a dining table and another is the bed for the captain and his wife ; there is thus more accommodation than one might at first suppose. The bargee has a terrible reputation ; but it would be a mistake to suppose that he spends his whole time in drinking, swearing and kicking his wife. There are rough characters on canal boats, but the typical bargee, though he has a rough tongue, has a kind heart ; he is an honest, manly fellow, and if he can keep away from drink – the besetting weakness of his class – is a good husband and father. The canal boat women are a hard working, industrious race ; not only have they to see to the cleaning and cooking, and to look after the children, but they have to take their turn at the rudder and on the towing-path, and not infrequently they are charged with such duties as seeing the owners and buying forage for horses, for it frequently happens that the wife is the best business man on the boat. To see the woman in their picturesque print bonnets bustling about the boats on a bright summer day, or taking tea on the cabin top, is a pleasant sight enough ; but to see them in winter time tudging along the towing-path, ankle deep in mud, is to realise something of the hardships of the bargewoman's life; and in time of sickness, it is easy to believe that her condition is pitiable in the extreme.

H B Philpott in “The Quiver”.

134 3 September 1904

Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A BOAT HORSE **Wm Jackson**, boatman, Hartshill, was summoned by Inspector Snelling of the RSPCA for cruelty to a gelding by working it while in an unfit state at Chilvers Coton on August 13. Defendant pleaded not guilty. PC Baxter said he saw the horse, with a donkey, attached to two boat loads of stone. On the horse's left shoulder, there was a raw wound about the size of half a crown, which was caused by the bursting of a boil the previous day. The horse's hind leg was double its normal size. PC Haynes gave similar evidence, adding that he cautioned the defendant about the horse six weeks ago. Defendant said a veterinary surgeon told him to continue his journey with the horse. A fine of 30s inclusive was imposed.

135 12 November 1904

Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **George Simmonds**, boatman, of no fixed address, was summoned by Inspector Snelling, RSPCA, for cruelty to an ass by overloading it at Grendon on October 24 ; and **John Grantham**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned for causing the animal to be so worked. Defendants did not appear. Mrs Pratt, wife of Spencer Pratt, Atherstone, deposed to seeing the donkey attached to a canal boat, with a lad in charge. The boat was laden with a heavy load of coal, which the donkey was drawing, but had great difficulty in getting along. PS Flockton stated that he saw a boat aground close to the canal bridge on the Watling Street Road. The donkey was attached to the boat, and seemed thoroughly exhausted. Thirty two tons of coal were on the boat, and the boat would weigh another eight or nine tons. On examining the donkey, he found that it was very old and had been severely knocked about some time. Simmonds told him it took him 7 1/2 hours to come from Polesworth. Inspector Hammond said there were several old wounds on the donkey. In the evening, Grantham called at the police station and said he sent the boy to go gently on while he

took a horse to fetch an empty boat from Polesworth, and he hoped to catch him up. He hoped to catch Simmonds up, and said he was sorry he had been stopped. The Chairman said it appeared to be a very shameful case, and the Bench fined Grantham £2 and costs 8s, the case against Simmonds being dismissed. The Chairman said the Bench were much obliged to Mrs Pratt for giving evidence.

136 26 November 1904 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE John Marston, boatman, Chilvers Coton, was summoned by Inspector Snelling of the RSPCA for cruelty to a horse by working it in an unfit state on November 10. PC Baxter deposed to seeing the accused, who pleaded guilty, working the animal, which was very lame on the off fore leg. The horse was in shocking condition and practically "a frame of bones". Inspector Snelling said it was a very bad case. When he saw the horse on the following day, it was in a field, and could scarcely put its foot on the ground. Defendant said the cause of the lameness was defective shoeing. Fined £2 and costs, 6s 6d.

137 10 December 1904 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS Wm Tooley, boatman, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire, was summoned for ill-treating a horse by working it in an unfit state at Polesworth on December 1. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Pinfold said the horse was drawing about 30 tons of coal. The horse had a raw wound and an old wound on its shoulders. PC Fletcher corroborated. Fined £1 and costs, 6s 6d.

138 1 April 1905 Atherstone Petty Sessions

A HEAVY LOAD Wm Shilcock, boatman, Canal Side, Coventry, was summoned for having ill-treated 3 donkeys by overloading them on March 10. Defendant pleaded not guilty. PC Morgan said he met defendant at Hartshill in charge of two boats which were heavily laden with coal. The donkeys were attached to the boats, and were "completely done up". Defendant admitted that the boats were overloaded, and said his father was going to meet him with some more strength. A ticket which defendant produced showed that there were 71 tons of coal on the two boats. Defendant told him he had come from Polesworth and was going to Coventry. A previous conviction for cruelty to a mule and a donkey was recorded against defendant, who was now fined £1 and costs 6s 6d.

139 10 June 1905 Atherstone Petty Sessions

ILL TREATMENT OF HORSES James Darby, boatman, Banbury, pleaded guilty to working a horse in an unfit state. PC Linder said the horse, which was in a poor condition, has a very bad wound on the off fore leg penetrating about an inch and a half. There was a sore wound on the shoulder. He never saw a horse as bad in South Africa during the war. The horse was in a field then, and was unable to get up. Inspector Snelling, RSPCA, said defendant had promised to have the horse destroyed. Defendant was fined £2.

140 8 July 1905 Atherstone Petty Sessions

Arthur Nicholls, labourer, Polesworth and **William Chadwick**, boatman, were summoned for being drunk and disorderly in Tamworth Road, Polesworth on June 27. Nicholls pleaded guilty and Chadwick did not appear.

141 30 September 1905 Atherstone Petty Sessions

John Gorton, boatman, Lichfield Road, Aston, was summoned for wilfully damaging a hedge at Oldbury, the property of William Turner of Purley Chase, on September 14. Defendant pleaded guilty. William Stokes deposed to seeing defendant get over a hedge when he committed the damage complained of. He went to gather blackberries. To pay 2s 6d.

142 11 November 1905

Polesworth

A DISORDERLY BOATMAN At Atherstone on Wednesday, a boatman named **George Robinson** was charged before Alderman Vero with having been drunk in High Street, Polesworth on Monday. Fined 10s

143 9 December 1905

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DAMAGE **Frederick Rawlins**, boatman, Atherstone, was summoned for wilful damage to growing trees at Oldbury on December 1 1903. Joseph Foote, gamekeeper, said defendant gave a wrong name, and subsequently absconded. Fined 2s 6d.

144 16 December 1905

Tamworth Borough Police

DRUNK **Peter Kelly**, boatman, recently of Glascote, but of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to being drunk in George Street on December 9, and was fined 2s 6d and costs 6s, or seven days.

145 12 May 1906

Atherstone Petty Sessions

PITCH AND TOSS Samuel Cheshire, Jesse Parsons, miners and **Frederick James**, boatman, all of Hartshill, were summoned for playing pitch and toss on a footpath leading from Harshill Hayes on April 22. PC Garner proved the case, and said defendants paid men to watch for them so that they should not be caught by the police. Parsons and James were fined 10s and costs, 3s each, and Cheshire, who did not attend, was fined 15s and costs, 3s.

146 4 August 1906

Atherstone Petty Sessions

FIGHTING John Williams, miner and **Frederick Boyard**, boatman, both of Hartshill, were summoned for fighting on July 20. Boyard did not appear, and Williams pleaded not guilty. PC Garner said that at 11 pm, Williams came to his station and told him Boyard was going to knock him about. Witness went into the road with Williams, and Boyard was there with two or three other boatmen. Williams then started to fight. Witness parted them. An old bother cropped up again which caused the disturbance. Williams was bound over to keep the peace for six months, a warrant being issued against Boyard.

147 11 August 1906

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

THE EDUCATION ACTS **George Cook**, boatman, Argyle Street, Glascote, was summoned for not sending his son, George, aged 9, regularly to school, and he was also summoned for having on July 24 unlawfully taken his son into his employment, he being under the age of 12 years. Defendant did not appear. H F Walker, school attendance officer for the Tamworth district of the county of Warwick, stated the case as to the non attendance of the boy, and the Bench made the usual order. With regard to the employment of the boy, witness had warned defendant about his having the boy on a boat working. After the warning, he had still employed the boy on the boat, the excuse being that defendant had a man short. The Bench fined defendant 10s inclusive for illegally employing the boy.

148 25 August 1906

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

CHARGE AGAINST CANAL PEOPLE **Jesse Moore**, boatman, Bedworth, and **Annie Moore**, boatwoman, pleaded guilty to using indecent language at Bolehill and Glascote on August 8. The male defendant said he was very upset, because owing to the water being low, the boat was stopped. PC Tucker said at 10.15 pm the woman was sitting on the bank drunk, and using extremely bad language. The man was in the boat, and his language was disgraceful. Supt Evans said defendants had come from Bedworth that morning to meet the case. The male defendant said his wages averaged from 18s to 25s per week, and his wife helped him without any extra pay. Fined 5s each.

149 3 November 1906

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

MAINTENANCE ORDER **Thomas Compton**, boatman, Tipton, was summoned, but did not

appear, to show cause why he should not contribute to the maintenance of his father, Wm Compton, Glascote, who is chargeable to the common funds of the Tamworth Union. Mr R R Wimperis, collector to the Guardians, said Compton's father was in receipt of 6s cash and 3 3/4d in bread per week. The Guardians in June last asked Compton to pay 1s 6d per week, but he had sent only 1s per week, paying that amount regularly. His wages were 27s per week, and he had only a wife and no children to keep, and no rent to pay. The Bench made an order for 1s per week, the Chairman remarking that the Guardians would have to bring further evidence of defendant's earnings before they made an increased order. Mr Wimperis's costs were allowed.

Later on, the defendant Compton appeared, and denied that he received 27s per week. He did not have regular work, sometimes he received 19s per week, and sometimes less. He had received £1 15s for a fortnight's voyage between Tipton and Ellesmere Port recently. Defendant produced a letter from his employer, Mr Boffey, stating that work had been very bad. The Bench decided to make the order 1s per week, as before mentioned, but if the Guardians submitted further evidence of defendant's earnings, they would consider it with a view to increasing the order. The costs were remitted.

150 3 August 1907

Atherstone Petty Sessions

THEFT OF A WATCH AND CHAIN Bert Taylor (18), boatman, Coventry, was charged with the theft of a metal watch and chain, value 7s, the property of Samuel Owen, labourer, Warton, on May 2. Prosecutor said he was at the Polesworth canal wharf at 9.30 am, and left his watch and chain in an outhouse. The watch had not yet been recovered, but he identified the chain produced as his property. **George Smith**, boatman, Bitteswell, said that the defendant went to him in Coventry and gave him the chain in exchange for a silk handkerchief. PS Blackburn said he spoke to defendant about the matter on July 8, when he denied ever having the watch, but admitted that he went to the outhouse. That morning (Tuesday), however, defendant told witness that he threw the watch into the canal near Nuneaton. The chain was handed to witness by George Smith. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was dealt with under the First Offenders' Act, being bound over to come up for judgement if called upon within three months.

151 31 August 1907

Polesworth

At Atherstone on Saturday, before Mr J E Compton-Bracebridge, **George Lewis**, boatman and Kate Grindley, of no fixed abode, were charged with having been drunk in the Tamworth Road, Polesworth, on the previous night. PS Blackburn proved the case, and the couple went to gaol for seven days hard labour in default of paying a fine of 10s.

152 28 September 1907

SUDDEN DEATH IN A TAMWORTH HOTEL Dr J Holmes Joy, coroner, held an inquest at the Tweeddale Arms hotel on Monday afternoon, relative to the death of Richard Waddington (72), formerly a waggoner, of Green Hammerton, Cattle, York, who suddenly expired on Saturday.

Mt George Griffin was foreman of the jury.

Harriet Adie, niece of deceased, 21 Market Street, Tamworth, was called to give evidence of identification.

The Coroner asked witness if she had seen the body, and she replied that she had not, but her husband, A E Adie, had. The Coroner had Mr Adie, who was also in attendance, called to give the necessary evidence. Witness said deceased was in his usual health, and he had no reason to suppose he would die so suddenly.

John Thomas Villiers, boatman, Glascote Heath, said he saw deceased at the Tweeddale hotel about 12.30. He sat near to him. He did not see him drink anything. Suddenly he fell on one side, but he did not speak, only groaned a little. Deceased was picked up, and the landlady brought some brandy to him, but he could not take it. He died immediately.

The Coroner said it was clearly a case for medical evidence.

Dr H J Fausset said he had seen the man about the town recently, and understood that he had been

here since February. He made a post mortem examination, and found deceased had a fatty heart, which was enlarged. The kidneys showed signs of chronic disease. Death was due to syncope, associated with fatty degeneration of the heart. There were no signs of cerebral haemorrhage. The Coroner said deceased had Bright's disease of the kidneys. It was a perfectly natural, although alarmingly sudden, death.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

153 9 November 1907 Atherstone Petty Sessions

REFUSING TO QUIT **William Jackson**, boatman, and **Mary Jackson**, his wife, were summoned for refusing to quit the licensed premises of the Stag and Pheasant Inn on October 21. Mr F S Clay prosecuted. Defendants were each ordered to pay 5s.

154 21 December 1907 Atherstone

BOATMAN DROWNED IN THE CANAL A sad drowning fatality occurred at Atherstone about four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. A boatman named **Matthew Lunn** (56), formerly of Atherstone, was in charge of a boat from Baddesley Wharf to Coventry, and had reached the third lock, which is near the Coleshill Street bridge. His wife, who was in the boat with him, went on to the next lock to get everything ready. Deceased meanwhile was engaged in opening the lock gates and, by some misadventure, fell into the water, a distance of about seven feet below. No one was about at the time, and the first thing that was known of the mishap was when another boatwoman came along for the purpose of getting through the lock with her boat. She saw a child on board, and asked it where its father was. The youngster replied that he did not know, and at that moment the woman caught sight of a head in the water. She at once procured a boathook, with which she pulled the body to the side, and held it there until further assistance arrived on the scene. Dr Power was summoned, and artificial means of respiration were tried without avail. Deceased leaves a widow and six children. An inquest is to be held on Friday afternoon.

155 25 April 1908 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Millard**, boatman, Stockton, Rugby, was summoned for having caused a horse to be ill-treated at Hartshill on April 1. PS Lake said defendant was in charge of a cob attached to 27 tons of coal. The horse appeared to be in pain, and was flinching at the shoulder. On the near side, he found a bare place about the size of a man's hand, with a raw inflamed sore which was chafing on the harness. He told defendant the animal was unfit for work, and ordered it to be stabled. Inspector Stanbridge, RSPCA, said the horse was quite unfit for work, and had been for some time. The Bench imposed a fine of 40s and costs 6s 6d, considering that it was a very bad case.

156 16 January 1909 Atherstone Petty Sessions

THEFT OF CABBAGES **Mark Collins**, boatman, Mancetter, was charged with the theft of a quantity of cabbages, value 6d, from a garden at Mancetter in the occupation of Walter Freeman, on January 2. Defendant pleaded guilty, and as this was his first offence, he was let off on payment of 2s 6d.

157 7 August 1909

CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION AGAINST GLASCOTE COAL MERCHANTS At Lichfield County Court on Thursday, before his Honour Judge Howard Smith, **Geo Lakin**, boatman, of Main Road, Glascote, made application under the Workman's Compensation Act against Messrs Thos and Jno Barlow, trading as Samuel Barlow, coal merchants and canal carriers of John Street, Glascote, for the continuance of his compensation allowance on the ground of his disablement from following his employment, as the result of an accident. Mr R A Willes (instructed by Messrs Argyle and Sons) appeared for the claimant, and Mr H H Joy (instructed by Mr J H Dewes) represented the respondents. The case had been transferred from the Tamworth Court. From the evidence, it

appeared that the claimant was 58 years of age, and had been for sixteen years in the employ of the respondents as a boatman. On December 16 last, he fell over a tow rope on the canal path at Bromford, while in charge of one of respondents' barges, and was badly shaken and bruised, and had since been unable to follow his employment. His wages were £1 4s 6d per week, and the respondents paid him compensation for twelve weeks at the rate of 12s 3d per week, being half his wages. He was then visited by a doctor on behalf of the respondents, and from March 15, his compensation allowance had been stopped. Evidence for the applicant was given by Dr A H Richardson and Dr H Jessop (Birmingham). For the respondents, evidence was submitted by Mr M C Sykes (London), Dr Mitchell (Clacton-on-Sea) and Dr C H Jay. After a long hearing, his Honour gave judgement, saying that he found that the present incapacity of the claimant was not caused by the accident, either directly or indirectly, it was allowed by his doctors that the man was not in a good state of health, and he himself admitted that organic disease was present, but alleged that by the fall over the rope in the towing-path, he was knocked off balance, and that as a result the diseases began to develop at a much greater pace. If that were so, he (the Judge) should have been bound to find for him. But what was the other evidence? Three doctors at least agreed, and said nothing of the kind. They said that the man had Bright's disease, cirrhosis of the liver, and four organic diseases, none of which could have been produced by the accident. He therefore found that the claimant's present incapacity was not caused by the accident, and made his award for the respondents, with costs on Scale B. Judgement accordingly.

158 20 November 1909

Warwickshire Assizes

MINWORTH MURDER CHARGE – DEATH SENTENCE At Warwickshire Assizes on Wednesday, James Jones (55), labourer, was indicted for the wilful murder of his five year old daughter, Rhoda May Jones, at Minworth on September 15. Mr Ryland Atkins MP and Mr S Foster prosecuted, and prisoner was defended by Mr R F Sawyer. The case for the prosecution was that Jones, a man of jealous and excitable temperament, had threatened to take his own life, and had been strange in his manner. Witnesses agreed that he was intensely fond of the child, but he had been heard to say that he hoped if anything happened to him, the child would go too. On the morning of the tragedy, he had a slight quarrel with his wife and his nephew, and the prosecution asked the jury to find that he then deliberately set out to murder the child and himself.

John Neale, a boatman on the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, said that on September 15, he was near Minworth, when he saw Jones jump into the canal within six yards of him. He could not say whether he had a child in his arms, but he (witness) heard a cry of "dadda". With the aid of a mate, witness got a line round Jones, and pulled him from the middle of the water. When they got him near the side, they saw that he had both his arms round a child. He exclaimed, "Oh, my child". By Mr Sawyer : It was very nearly dark at the time. When they threw the rope, Jones seemed to be struggling to get back to the bank. PC Tonks said he asked Jones how he came to get into the canal, and he replied, "I jumped in to save my baby". He added that he came from Blakeland Street, Smallheath, for a walk, and that when he was about to return, he missed the child, adding that he thought it must have "slipped into the water". After this, Jones was charged with murder, and he then exclaimed, "I did not do it, God forbid". He was cold, shivering, and looked dazed. In fact, said Inspector Puckwell, he thought he did not understand the charge. Mr Sawyer : Why? He looked sulky, and put me in mind of a man whose head was not quite right.

Mrs Ingram, a sister-in-law to the prisoner, said Jones, whom she saw about a month before the occurrence, looked very wild. He then told her that it would not be long before he made an end to it, adding, "It won't take me much to make a hole in the water, and when I do, I hope the Lord will call my baby". "I said", continued the witness, "don't talk like that", and he went on, "I'm not boss of my own house ; he is", (meaning his nephew). Witness added that Jones had suffered for a long time from sciatica. Medical evidence showed that the prisoner was agitated, but answered questions rationally.

This closed the case for the prosecution, and prisoner gave evidence on his own behalf. He said that on September 13, after a few words with his wife, he met his child coming out of school, and took

her for a walk along the canal to Minworth. Suddenly she loosed his hand, as he was turning from the towing-path to return home, and the next moment he saw her in the canal. He walked into the water some distance to rescue the child, and when the boatmen came on the scene, he cried for help. With tears in his eyes, the prisoner denied that he jumped into the canal with the child. He loved the child, and did not mean to harm it. In cross-examination, he denied having said he would "make a hole in the water" though he admitted having expressed the hope that if anything happened to him, the Lord would call the child too. He denied he was standing in the water when he was rescued. He was on his back, and was almost "done in". He went along the canal side because the child wanted him to, but he could not explain why he took a girl of five years a walk of over five miles.

In his address, Mr Ryland Adkins commented on the improbability of the drowning being accidental. There was only one splash, there was no cry for help, and there was the extraordinary fact that Jones walked so far away on the canal side with the child. Mr Sawyer, in defence, asked the jury to say that the threats of suicide were the idle threats of a jealous man. He commented strongly on the fact that no one saw the prisoner jump into the water with the child ; even the boatman, who was only six yards away, could not say that he had the child with him. Did not that bear out his story – the only story he had told – that the child fell into the canal, and that he jumped in to rescue her?

The prisoner was found guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy. The prisoner was too deaf to hear the verdict, and a warder shouted out the decision. In a low voice, he replied, "I am innocent, I am innocent". The judge passed formal sentence of death.

159 4 December 1909

Fazeley

His life's story as a converted boatman was related by **Mr F Palmer** (Grendon) on Monday evening, at the United Methodist Church. Mr Dabner occupied the chair. There was a large audience.

160 11 December 1909

Tamworth County Police

DEAR CABBAGE **Charles Andrews**, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing two cabbages, value 2d, the property of Daniel Nutt, market gardener, Fazeley, on November 11. Prosecutor's son said his father had a market garden near the canal side at Drayton Bassett. He was at work in the garden, and saw a man cut the cabbage. Witness called out to him, and he made off, throwing the cabbage down. He could not recognise accused. PC Berisford said at 8 am he received a complaint from prosecutor, and went to Glascote, where he saw accused. He questioned him as to stealing cabbages, and he said, "Yes, I only cut two, someone shouted to me, and I put them down". Next day there was a summons taken out, and witness served it at Bedworth. Accused did not attend the court, and the magistrates ordered a warrant. Accused said he was sorry he interfered with them. Inspector Heath said prosecutor had suffered a great deal from that kind of theft by boatmen. Prosecutor's son said he and PC Martin had watch till 11 pm, and as much as 8s worth of cabbage had been taken in one night. To pay £1 inclusive, or fourteen days.

161 15 January 1910

Atherstone Petty Sessions

OVER CROWDED CANAL BOAT **John Plimmer**, boatman, Aston, was summoned by the Atherstone Rural District Council for keeping a canal boat, which was occupied by four persons, and was only registered as a dwelling for three. Defendant did not appear. **Samuel Beck**, inspector of canal boats, proved the case. Fined 5s and costs 7s.

162 28 May 1910

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S THEFT **Thomas Chatten**, boatman, 95 Rocky Lane, Aston, was summoned for stealing five broccoli, value 10d, from a garden at Glascote, the property of Arthur Croshaw, on May 12. Defendant pleaded guilty. Prosecutor's wife said she saw the defendant cut the broccoli. The garden adjoined the canal side. They did not wish to press the case, but brought it forward as a

warning to others. Defendant said he was extremely sorry. Fined 10s and 10s costs.

163 10 September 1910

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DONKEYS ILL TREATED **George Lewis**, boatman, Stonehouse, Gloucester, and **Edwin Capper**, labourer, of no fixed abode, were summoned for cruelty to two donkeys, by working the same in an unfit state, at Polesworth on September 5. Inspector Spencer said about 3 o'clock he was cycling along the Grendon Road, Polesworth, when he saw Capper driving two donkeys attached to a boat, along the canal side. The boat was laden with timber. The elder defendant (Lewis) was on the boat, steering. Capper was belabouring the donkeys about the ribs with the stick (produced). One of the animals kept kicking. Witness overtook the boat, and asked Capper why he was striking the animal in that manner, and he said, "You've got to do what you're told. The old man gave me the stick". One of the animals had two raw wounds on the near shoulder, which were being chafed by the collar. Witness spoke to the older defendant, and pointed out the sores, saying they were there in addition to the beating. He said the donkey had fallen down on some hot ashes. He admitted Capper was just giving it a hit. Capper was locked up as he had no fixed abode. One of the animals was a poor little miserable one, and it was really a pity to see it attached to a boat. PC Stone spoke to seeing the animal with the wounds on later in the day. The donkey looked more fit to be slaughtered than anything else. The other one was not in a good condition either. Lewis said it was the first time he had appeared in court. Supt Evans said it was a cruel case, as the collar was very hard where it pressed on the wound. Lewis was fined £2 including costs, and Capper £1 inclusive.

164 25 March 1911

Atherstone Petty Sessions

John Wilson, boatman, Braunston, Northamptonshire, did not appear in answer to a summons for being drunk and disorderly in Coleshill Street on March 11. A fine of 2s 6d was imposed.

165 22 July 1911

Tamworth County Sessions

DISCHARGED **William Heritage**, boatman, 41 Pendle Street, Birmingham, was charged with stealing one fire stove and chimney, and one ash can, value 5s, the property of the Midland Pipe Co at Polesworth on July 7. PS Evans said he offered no evidence against defendant, and asked that he might be discharged. He was locked up on suspicion of having stolen the goods mentioned, and was bailed out till the Sessions. Defendant was discharged.

166 12 August 1911

BODYMOOR HEATH DROWNING CASE – NEED OF A MORTUARY Dr C W Iliffe, coroner, held an inquest at the Dog and Jacket Inn, Bodymoor Heath, on Friday last week, with reference to the death of Thomas Allen (53), labourer, Bodymoor Heath, who was found drowned in the canal early the previous Tuesday morning.

Mr Reuben Stevenson was foreman of the jury.

Annie Allen, widow of the deceased, said before the occurrence, her husband was quite well. He had no regular employment, and some weeks he did not do any work. She thought this worried him. He used to go to look for work every morning.

The bricks which the deceased fastened round his neck were in the room, and the woman catching sight of them, burst out crying and called out, "Take those bricks away". The bricks were put on the floor, and the woman was removed, crying.

Thomas Allen, son of the deceased, then gave evidence. On Monday night, his father said to his mother, "Don't you think you could do better without me". His mother said she did not want to try, and asked him not to talk so silly. For about a month, his father had seemed funny. He had often stayed out all night. One night he lay in the dog kennel. Deceased took his food all right. He would take drink if he had the money.

The Coroner : Would you say he was addicted to drink? Witness : Yes. After these fits, there would be a lowness and despondency? Yes. Were you all happy at home? No. Was there a

difference between him and your mother? Generally, when he could not get any work, she said he had not tried. You didn't want for anything in the house? No. As a rule, would there be going into the house 30s or 25s? Yes. To live moderately, that would do, wouldn't it? Yes. It was not being short of food? No. Was it temper between your mother and father, and that irritated him? I don't know. The cause you think would lead him into this condition of frenzy first of all was drink, and then depression, and then perhaps a few words your mother might say to him? Yes.

Thomas Simpson, boatman, plying between Birmingham and Fazeley, said on Tuesday morning at 4.30, he found a jacket and cap on the towing-path. That attracted his attention, and he felt for a body with a boat hook. He found the body in the lock, and brought it to the "Dog" lock. He did not know deceased at first. Round the man's neck was tied a basket containing three bricks. The man must have deliberately put his hat and coat there, the hat being beneath.

PC Pink, Kingsbury, said he came to the inn and saw deceased. He searched the body. In the pockets he found a knife, a little "twist" and a box of matches. That was all he found, there being no money. Deceased had been at work on Monday. As far as he had been able to ascertain, deceased had not been to either of the public houses in the district. He reached home about 8.30 pm and went out about 10.30 pm. No words passed between him and his wife. When he was leaving, he said he was going for a little stroll. His wife told witness he was very quiet that night, and she thought he was going to turn over a new leaf. They had been living a very unhappy life, chiefly through drink. The boy was a good lad.

Dr W F Moore, Kingsbury, said death was due to asphyxia, and he thought there was great probability that the man suffered from temporary insanity.

The Coroner said the case was a very sad one. Unquestionably, for a month past, the man's condition of mind had been getting from bad to worse. He had not the slightest doubt that drink had been the cause of his not being employed. It was difficult to get farm hands now, they were going to the towns. If there was a decent man, he could get a job. There must have been something faulty, and he had no doubt that fault was that he neglected his work, and no farmer would employ him. That no doubt irritated his wife, who did not say any more than any ordinary person would under such circumstances. He did not think anything she had said to him at home would have unhinged his mind, without he had so saddened it with drink.

The Foreman said deceased was one of those men who were not very fond of work, and that was why he did not get employment. Deceased was not altogether drunken.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst temporarily insane.

The Foreman said it was the opinion of the jury that there should be a mortuary provided for the parish of Kingsbury, which was a large parish, and contained a big colliery. The body they had been to view that day was in a small cottage, and was not fit to be viewed.

The Coroner said he endorsed what the Foreman said. There was no doubt they lived a little bit in an ancient condition in some of these remote parts, and the sooner it was altered the better. There was no doubt every district should have a mortuary, and it should be situated at the most convenient and biggest place ; he should think Kingsbury would be the best in this case. He suggested that representation should be made from the jury to the Kingsbury Parish Council on the matter.

A juror remarked that the body had not been placed in a coffin.

The Coroner said that might have been done.

PC Pink said the man's wife sent to Tamworth on Tuesday, and applied to the Relieving Officer to bury the body. They had no money in the house. The Relieving Officer said he would see about it, and the woman received a post card that morning that the coffin would be brought at 4.30 pm that (Friday) afternoon, and the funeral could be at 5 pm. He thought the body should have been put in a coffin before ; they had had plenty of time since Tuesday morning. If there had been a public mortuary at Kingsbury, he should have had the body removed there.

The Foreman intimated that he would make a representation to Kingsbury Parish Council with reference to the provision of a mortuary.

167 30 December 1911

Atherstone Police Court

LYING IN A YARD **Joseph Ward**, boatman, was charged with being drunk in the Kings' Arms yard. PS Pooton said he found defendant lying in a helpless condition, and he took him to the police station. To pay 2s 6d.

168 8 March 1913

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DOGS AND LICENSES The following were summoned for not having dog licenses :-**John Sanders**, boatman, Penkridge. Fined 5s.

169 28 June 1913

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DRINK CASES **Joseph Ward**, canal boatman, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly in the Tamworth Road, Polesworth, on Monday night. PC Taylor said the man was too drunk to walk, and was locked up for the night. He was let off on payment of 2s 6d.

170 2 August 1913

Tamworth County Police

WANTED TO FIGHT **Samuel Smith**, boatman, was charged with having been drunk in the Main road at Glascote on July 26. PC Stone said at 10.45 pm, he saw Smith drunk, and when spoken to, he became abusive. When witness was taking him to the station, defendant wanted to fight, and started to kick. He had to put the handcuffs on him. PS Evans said he had to assist the last witness to take defendant to the police station. Smith was drunk, and used filthy language. He kept it up in the cell. Cross-examined : Witness did not punch defendant's head when he searched him. To pay 4s 6d towards the costs.

171 7 February 1914

Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S OFFENCE **John Stevens**, boatman, Longford, was summoned for failing to have his canal boat registered as a dwelling in accordance with the Canal Boats Act. Defendant pleaded not guilty, and said the boat was not used as a dwelling. Mr Richard Fielders prosecuted on behalf of the Rural District Council. **Samuel Beck**, inspector of canal boats, said he inspected the boat on January 19 at Baddesley Wharf. There was no sleeping accommodation, the boat being unfit for the purpose. He called defendant's attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the boat, and he told him it was struck off the register on that account, and was not used as a dwelling. Asked how he managed at nights, defendant informed witness that he got lodgings in the town. At 11.30 pm on January 20, he found defendant's two sons-in-law sleeping in the boat. An hour later, he found defendant sleeping there in addition to the other men. The registration of the boat was cancelled in December. There was no proper bedding in the bunks. Defendant said they did not get the boat loaded in time. They averaged about 24 boats a week, and usually got home at night to sleep. He could have got lodgings on that occasion, but his sons-in-law said they would prefer to stay on the boat. To pay 5s.

172 7 March 1914

Polesworth

BOATMAN'S THEFT **Wm Holloway** (17), boatman, was charged at Nuneaton on Thursday with the theft of an overall coat, a brace and bit, a wallet containing motor tools, an oil can and a spanner, of the value of £1, the property of George Egbert Deeming, baker, Polesworth, on or about March 1. Charles Lawrence, miner, Amington, stated that at 6.30 am on Sunday, he was in a field by the canal side, and was called to the hedge by the accused, who asked witness to buy from him a brace and bit, which he said he had found on the canal towing-path, and which he offered for a shilling. Witness became suspicious and, under the pretence of going to borrow a shilling, walked with him to the house of PC Linder, who took him into custody. PC Linder spoke to finding the other articles on the accused. Sentenced to fourteen days hard labour.

173 22 August 1914

GOING TO SHOOT THE GERMANS At Atherstone, **Herbert Billingham**, boatman, West

Bromwich, was charged with having been drunk while in charge of firearms. The police were informed that the prisoner was intoxicated with a loaded gun in his possession, and that he had been threatening one of the workmen at Hartshill quarries, where he had been at work loading a boat on the canal. When arrested, he had a loaded gun and a quantity of ammunition in his possession, and he said he was going to "shoot the Germans". Prisoner was sentenced to fourteen days hard labour.

174 24 October 1914

Petty Sessions Reports

DRUNKENNESS **Samuel Cooper**, boatman, Cross Street, Kettlebrook, was summoned for being drunk at Kettlebrook on October 4. Defendant's wife appeared. PS Canning said defendant was lying helplessly drunk across the footpath at 10.30 pm. To pay 2s 6d.

175 21 November 1914

County Petty Sessions

BAD LANGUAGE **Abraham Baxter**, boatman, Glascote, was summoned for using threatening and abusive language in New Street, Glascote on October 31. Defendant's wife appeared. PC Stone said at midnight, he heard shouts of "Police" and "Murder". He found that defendant had turned his wife and children out. He spoke to defendant, who afterwards took them into the house. Defendant's wife said her husband had had some drink. To pay 10s.

176 29 April 1916

Atherstone Petty Sessions

CLAIM AGAINST A BOATMAN Brydon Miles, coal merchant, Atherstone, claimed 3s 9d from **Frank Gregory**, a boatman in his employ, for having neglected his work on one day. Mr Richard Fielders, Atherstone, appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr W H Pownall, Nuneaton, was for defendant. Plaintiff said on April 15, defendant was engaged to carry coal by boat from Polesworth to Atherstone. He took an empty boat to Polesworth, and was told to bring a full one back. Defendant returned between two and three o'clock without a boat, having walked back. Plaintiff asked him why he had come back without a boat, and he said the clerk at the wharf told him they could not load one till Monday. It caused inconvenience to himself and householders. The amount he claimed was nominal. On several previous occasions on a Saturday, defendant had failed to bring back a load. James Hartshorn Lawrence, wharf manager for Messrs Morris and Shaw Ltd, Polesworth, said defendant arrived with an empty boat at about 11 am, and he told him the loaded boat would be ready about 11.30 am. Defendant said he should not take it up that day. Defendant said he was told by Mr Lawrence that the boat would not be loaded till Monday. He would have taken it on Saturday if it had been loaded. William Jesson, a youth of Erdington Road, Atherstone, gave similar evidence. He added that Mr Miles's boat was not completed loading, having only six or seven tons in it. Cross-examined : The boat could have been filled by 11.30. Defendant was ordered to pay the amount claimed and 5s costs.

The same defendant was summoned for failing to secure two barges by both ends to the side of the Coventry Canal at Polesworth on April 17. Mr Fielders prosecuted, and Mr Pownall defended. The offence was a contravention of the byelaws of the Canal Co. **Owen Charles Smith**, lock-keeper, Atherstone, said he was travelling from Atherstone to Glascote by train, and saw on the canal near Polesworth one of Mr Miles's boats floating about the canal, being unmoored. It was right across the water. In the evening, there was another boat there. Both boats were in a dangerous part of the canal, and had another barge come along, one of them might have been sunk. Witness said he saw Gregory and asked him if he knew about the two boats being loose, and he said he did, having come past them with a loaded boat that afternoon. Defendant said he could not secure them. Witness considered defendant could have secured the boats. The boats were three quarters of a mile from Polesworth wharf. Cross-examined : Defendant admitted that he had passed one boat. Defendant said he had tied one up, and that there were some canal men working close by. Brydon Miles, coal merchant, Atherstone, said defendant took all his boats to Polesworth between April 15 and 17. Mr Pownall pointed out that there had been no proof that the Canal Co's byelaws had been approved by the Board of Trade. He also submitted that the evidence did not bring the charge home to the defendant. Mr Fielders said he was not in a position to prove that the bye laws had been confirmed

by the Board of Trade. He had no doubt they had been approved. The Chairman said they were unable to convict.

177 8 July 1916

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S OFFENCE Richard Parks, canal boatman, Birmingham, was summoned for throwing ballast, to wit, coal, into the Coventry Canal at Polesworth on May 10. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Mr R Fielders prosecuted, and said the proceedings were taken under the Coventry Canal Act of Parliament, which was passed so long ago as the eighth year of the reign of George III. By paragraph 78, it was enacted that every person or persons wilfully throwing any ballast, gravel or rubbish into any part of the canal, or trenches, or watercourse, every such person shall for every such offence forfeit a sum not exceeding £5. PS Johnson said he was in company with a canal official named Wall, between Polesworth and Alvecote. He was there in consequence of complaints made about men throwing coal into the canal. He saw two boats, defendant being in charge of the second one, which was loaded with small coal from Hall End wharf. He saw defendant on the towing-path first, and when he passed under the bridge next to Pooley Hall Colliery, defendant got on to the boat and began to shovel the coal off into the canal. This he continued to do for a distance of 150 yards. Witness stopped defendant and asked him what his "game" was. Witness believed he replied that he was shovelling water out, and witness then pointed out that there was no water on the top of the coal. Charles Wall, canal dredgerman, gave corroborative evidence. Witness said defendant told the sergeant he was levelling the boat. Along that particular length, there had been many complaints of similar conduct. Last year, during August, they dredged seven boat loads of coal out of the canal between the two bridges where the alleged offence was committed. Defendant said he got on the boat and shovelled the coal from one side of the barge to the other, because it was travelling on one side. He did not throw any coal into the canal. The Chairman said the filling up of the canal was a very serious matter indeed. Only a few weeks ago, it caused a blockage for a week, which prevented supplies of coal reaching certain munitions works. A foreman in the employ of T and M Dixon, defendant's employers, said no previous complaint had been made about defendant, who had worked for the firm since boyhood. The Chairman said they were satisfied that coal was thrown into the canal on the occasion. It was a very serious thing to have done from the national point of view at this time, apart from the fact of the value of every bit of coal. In view of the fact that Messrs Dixon had sent a representative to express their appreciation of defendant's services, and that there had not been previous complaints about him, defendant would have to pay £1 inclusive.

178 19 August 1916

Atherstone Petty Sessions

THREATS Thomas Coles, boatman, Polesworth, was summoned by John Smith, farmer, Park Farm, Polesworth, for making use of threats to him on August 5. Mr R Fielders prosecuted and Mr A H Sale defended. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Complainant said he saw a dog in one of his wheat fields, running about, and he thought it was searching for rabbits. He followed the dog to defendant's boat. He called to the boat, and defendant's wife came out and admitted that it was their dog. Later he saw defendant and told him the dog had been running about his wheat. Defendant denied it. He suggested he should pay him 2s 6d for the damage. Defendant threatened him, and came towards him as if he was going to strike him. Witness pushed him away. Defendant went across to the other side of the road and stripped, and said he would "murder him". About half an hour later, he saw defendant again, when he took off his jacket and threatened him. Mr Sale said after hearing the evidence, his client would plead guilty. The Chairman : Mr Sale, I think you are a wise advocate. Defendant was bound over to keep the peace, and ordered to pay 7s 6d costs.

179 3 November 1917

Tamworth County Petty Sessions

WITHDRAWN Albert Pready (17), boatman, Glascote was summoned for assaulting **Joseph Bates**, boatman, Glascote on October 13. Defendant was also summoned for assaulting **Edward Bates**, boatman, Glascote on October 14. Mr G R Jennings (from the office of Messrs Neville

and Matthews) was for defendant. Mr Palmer (Nuneaton) for the complainants, said the parties had become reconciled, and with the concurrence of the Bench, he proposed to withdraw the summons. The magistrates agreed.

180 8 November 1919 Atherstone Petty Sessions

DAMAGE TO WINDOWS **William Thomas Russell**, boatman, Collycroft, was summoned for doing wilful damage to the factory windows of Messrs Wilson and Stafford Ltd, Atherstone, on September 27. Defendant pleaded guilty. Inspector Spencer said when he saw defendant on October 11, after saying he knew nothing about it, defendant admitted breaking two panes of glass. He said he shot at the wall from a catapult, and the stone bounced. He would pay for what he did. W D Stafford, a member of the firm, said the breaking of glass was becoming a great nuisance. As fast as glass was replaced, it was broken. He asked the magistrates to be lenient, the case being brought forward as a warning. The magistrates ordered defendant to pay 10s damage and 2s 6d fine, and 5s costs.

181 15 November 1919

THE HOSPITAL On Wednesday, **Herbert Gregory**, boatman, Tipton, was brought to the institution, he having received injuries to his chest through being kicked by a horse at Polesworth.

182 6 December 1919 Atherstone Petty Sessions

ABOUT A DOG **Joseph Garratt**, boatman, Glascote, was summoned for keeping a dog without a license on November 17. Defendant was also summoned for not having his name and address on the dog's collar. Defendant did not appear. Inspector Spencer proved the case, and said defendant in a letter stated that the canal towing-path was not a highway within the meaning of the law. Witness submitted it was a place of public resort, and came within the regulations. Fined 15s inclusive.

183 3 January 1920 Atherstone Petty Sessions

MOTORIST FINED William John Sims, motor driver, Coleshill, was summoned for being drunk while in charge of a motor car in Coleshill Street, Atherstone, on December 24. Defendant did not appear. Supt Evans said defendant's solicitor, Mr Blewitt, had telephoned asking for an adjournment, as he was engaged at Coventry. They had their witnesses there, and one had come a distance. Inspector Spencer said the summons was served personally on Saturday. The solicitor said he was not instructed till late on the previous evening. One of the witnesses would probably be in London a fortnight hence. The Bench decided to proceed with the case. **Thomas Sutton** boatman, Bedworth, said at 8.30 pm, he brought his horse from the canal side into Coleshill Street, Atherstone. There was corn on the horse's back, which fell off in the yard. He stopped the horse, which had got onto the road, and he went to pick up the corn. When he returned, there was a motor standing where the horse should have been. The horse was up the canal bridge, a man holding it. The horse was injured. Witness went and spoke to the driver of the motor car, and was of opinion that he was drunk. **Arthur Woodward**, lock-keeper, Atherstone, said defendant appeared to be drunk. Inspector Spencer said at about 8.50 pm, he was called by Sutton to Coleshill Street. Sims was standing by the car with his brother. Witness took the number of the car, and asked defendant to produce his driver's license, which he did. Defendant smelt very strongly of drink, and was unsteady. Witness told defendant that in his opinion he had had more drink than he should have done, and that he was not safe to be in charge of the car. Witness said the car was damaged. The horse, a valuable one, died during the night. PS Hannah said he saw defendant at about 9 pm, when he was of opinion that he was drunk and not fit to be in charge of a car. While they were in the office, defendant's brother said they had only had 2 1/2 pints of beer each since five o'clock, and that they had been "Christmasing". Defendant was fined £2 and £1 1s costs.

184 6 March 1920

Atherstone County Court

SEQUEL TO MOTOR ACCIDENT The executors of the late **John Griffiths**, canal boat carriers, Bedworth, sued F Moseley, wine and spirit merchant, Coleshill, for £80 16s damages alleged to have been caused by the defendant's servant negligently driving a motor van in Coleshill Street, Atherstone, on December 24. £73 was claimed as the value of a horse killed in the collision, £1 6s veterinary surgeon's charges, and £6 for loss caused by the detention of two canal boats at Atherstone for two days owing to the death of the horse. Defendant put in a counter claim of £21 11s for damages to his motor van. Mr J F Eales (instructed by Mr W H Pownall) appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr R H Norris (instructed by Mr T B Fitch) for the defendant. **Thomas Sutton**, boatman, in the employ of the plaintiffs, said on Christmas Eve, he brought two boat loads of coal along the canal from Pooley Hall Colliery Wharf, Polesworth, to the canal company's wharf at Atherstone, where he proposed stabling the horse for the night. Arriving at Atherstone about 8.30 pm, he untacked the horse and brought it through the wharf yard to take it to the canal stables over the Coleshill Street bridge. There was a bag of corn on the animal's back, and as he passed the window of the cottage near the outlet of the yard into the street, he noticed the sack fall off the horse's back. He stopped the horse while he picked up the sack of corn. As he stepped back, he heard a crash, and saw a motor van standing in the place where he had left the horse. He ran after his horse, and found that somebody had got hold of it about half way up the bridge hill. He then went back to the driver of the motor van. The rear off wheel was about 2 ft from the kerb on the right hand side of the road, while the front part of the motor was pointing to the centre of the road. Witness said to the driver, "You have broken my horse's leg". The driver replied, "---- the horse, what about my motor". Witness subsequently gave information to the police. The motor van was on the wrong side of the road. Walter Ernest Ison, veterinary surgeon, said when he saw the mare soon after the accident, he found dislocation of the near hind fetlock, while there appeared to be some indication of severe internal injuries. The animal died the same night, and a post mortem examination revealed a rupture of the diaphragm. Thomas Finch, miner, Atherstone, gave evidence as to the motor van being on the wrong side of the road, and **Arthur Woodward**, canal lock-keeper, said his opinion was that Sims, the driver, was drunk, as he could not walk steadily. Inspector Spencer said he was called to the scene of the accident by Sutton. He found Sims standing by the car, which was turned in the direction of Atherstone, and was on the wrong side of the road. He noticed that the motor driver smelt very strongly of drink, and told him he had had too much to drink to be in charge of a motor car. Cross-examined : When a charge of drunkenness was preferred against Sims before the magistrates, an application was made by defendant's solicitor (who was unable to attend the court) for an adjournment of the case. The police objected because they had their witnesses present, and the magistrates decided to hear the case in defendant's absence. For the defence, Sims, the driver of the car, denied that he was the worse for drink. He did not see the horse until he collided with it. After the accident, the van was in the centre of the road, where the horse was struck. He and his brother had been delivering beer in the town, and all they had to drink was two pints. Harry Sims, brother, corroborated, and said his brother was perfectly sober. Ralph Thomason, foreman hatter, said he was an eyewitness of the accident. The horse backed into the motor van somewhere about the centre of the road. Sims was perfectly sober, and was not driving in a careless manner. Arthur Archer, steward of the Atherstone Conservative Club, also spoke as to the sobriety of Sims when he left the club shortly before the accident took place. His Honour said he did not propose to make any finding with regard to the question of the alleged drunkenness of Sims at the time of the accident, but the fact remained that the magistrates decided to deal with the case in his absence and convicted him, although an application was made for an adjournment. He was satisfied on the evidence that the plaintiffs were entitled to succeed, and gave them judgement for £63 with costs. The counter claim was dismissed.

185 10 April 1920

Atherstone Petty Sessions

NO DOG LICENCE **Albert Flowers**, boatman, of no fixed abode, was summoned for keeping a dog without a licence, and had to pay 5s.

186 16 April 1921

Petty Sessions

DAMAGE TO A PADLOCK **John Jones**, boatman, 134 Whitehall Road, Greet Green, West Bromwich, was summoned for wilfully damaging a padlock to the amount of 6s 6d, the property of the Birmingham Canal Co, at Kingsbury on March 10. Defendant pleaded guilty. **Joseph Bird**, lock-keeper, Bodymoor Heath, said the locks were closed at 8 pm and were opened at 5 am. A boat was tied up by the side of the towing-path. He locked up No 11 lock with a padlock at 8pm, and on the following morning, he found that a boat had gone through the lock and the padlock was broken off. The boat of which defendant was in charge was missing. On the following day, Jones admitted breaking off the lock, and said he would pay for it. Defendant said he was anxious to get home for the weekend, as he had two children ill, and one of them died. Fined £1 inclusive.

187 4 February 1922

County Petty Sessions

INDECENT ACTS **Harry Beasley**, boatman, Glascote and John Witts, miner, Glascote, were summoned for committing an indecent act on January 7 and January 20 respectively. Beasley was fined 10s and Witts 12s 6d.

188 22 July 1922

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

CYCLING ON THE FOOTPATH **William Baxter**, boatman, 25 John Street, was summoned for riding a bicycle on the footpath by the side of the Tamworth Road, Shuttington, on June 30. Evidence was given by PC Stockford, and defendant was fined 7s 6d.

189 2 September 1922

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

THEFT OF AN OVERCOAT **Thomas Edwards**, boatman, 102 Springfield Lane, Rowley, was charged with stealing a boy's overcoat, value 7s 6d, at Glascote on August 24. Wesley Williscroft, 10 Thomas Street, Glascote, said the coat was his property and he left it on a stump by the canal side. When he went for it, the coat was missing. PC Wale said he searched the boats in the vicinity. After receiving a communication from a person, he went to the cabin occupied by defendant, who was sitting on the side of the boat. Defendant said he did not know anything about the coat. He asked defendant what he had put under the tiller at the stern of the boat, and he replied, nothing. Witness procured a boat hook and pulled out the coat from under the stern of the boat. Defendant said he did not know anything about it. Witness arrested defendant, who in reply to the charge said he did not steal the coat. Horace Wakelin (15), 66 Bamford Street, Glascote, said he saw defendant fetch the coat out of the cabin, wrap it up and drop it in the canal, and afterwards push it under his boat with a tiller. Defendant pleaded guilty, and said he had the coat from the bank side. When the fellow came for it, he was asleep, and when he arrived a second time, he tried to throw it back to the bank and it fell into the water. Fined £2.

190 4 November 1922

Wilnecote Division Police

DRUNKENNESS **Thomas Woodhouse**, boatman, Long Buckby, pleaded guilty to a charge of being drunk and disorderly in John Street, Glascote on October 27, and on the evidence of Inspector Fielding, was ordered to pay 7s 6d.

191 21 April 1923

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BOATMEN FINED **George Inglis**, boatman, 192 Dawlish Road, Bournbrook, Birmingham, was summoned for throwing ballast into the canal at Polesworth on April 6. **John Woodfield**, boatman, 171 Dawlish Road, was summoned for aiding and abetting. Defendants pleaded guilty. Mr Richard Fielders prosecuted, and said the Canal Co regarded it as a serious case. Inspector Eggleton, of the Coventry Canal Navigation, said he saw Inglis shovelling slack into the canal from a boat loaded with slack. Woodfield was steering the boat, and called to Inglis, "Look up, George". When questioned, Inglis said he was throwing water out, which was impossible from the position he was in. In reply to Mr Dugdale, witness said Inglis was removing the slack to lighten the load. Inglis

said he was just squaring the boat off just after leaving Pooley Hall Colliery, and if there was anything went into the canal, he was very sorry. Inglis was fined £2 and costs £1, Woodfield being fined £1 and costs £1.

192 16 June 1923

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DAMAGE TO A FENCE Alfred Matthews, a young boatman, Halesowen Street, Oldbury, was summoned for damaging a fence along the canal side at Polesworth on May 18. The amount of the damage was 1s. Mr R Fielders prosecuted on behalf of the Coventry Canal Navigations. Defendant pleaded guilty. Evidence was given that defendant took a large hammer and made three unsuccessful attempts with a hammer to knock the barbed wire off a stake. On the fourth attempt, defendant succeeded in knocking off the wire and drawing the stake. Asked why he did it, defendant said he wanted to make a spreader. Fined £1 1s and costs.

193 28 July 1923

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S OFFENCE William Smith, boatman, 33 Weaman Street, Birmingham, was summoned for shovelling coal out of a canal boat into the water at Polesworth on July 5, Mr R Fielders prosecuted on behalf of the Coventry Canal Co, and Mr Fraser defended. **Horace George Eggleton**, a constable in the employ of the company, said he saw defendant with another man in charge of a canal boat loaded with coal. Witness was concealed, and saw Smith deliberately shovel coal into the canal. Cross-examined : Witness was not more than six yards from the side of the canal in a place of concealment, which was under a thick brush. Smith had a shovel in his hand, while the other man was steering. It was not true that defendant was coal trimming and moving the coal from one position to another, but he was deliberately shovelling coal into the canal. Mr Fraser said the defence was that defendant was simply "trimming" the boat. Defendant said the boat was not loaded evenly and was badly balanced. He was compelled to readjust the coal by shovelling it onto the top of the boat, so as to balance the cargo. He denied shovelling the coal into the canal. Defendant was fined £1 and costs.

194 11 August 1923

Atherstone Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S ALLEGED OFFENCE Thomas Dibble, boatman, 19 Beach Street, Birmingham, appeared to answer a summons for aiding and abetting Wm Smith to shovel coal from a boat into the Coventry Canal at Polesworth on July 5. Mr R Fielders prosecuted, and said the facts were stated before the Bench a fortnight ago, when Smith was convicted of the offence of shovelling coal into the canal. Dibble was steering the boat and keeping a look out while the other man was putting the coal into the canal. The Bench did not consider there was sufficient evidence to prove aiding and abetting, and dismissed the case.

195 15 December 1923

Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE Thomas Prince, canal boatman, 41 John Street, Glascote, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state on November 21. Inspector George Harrison, RSPCA, said he went to the canal wharf at Pooley Hall and examined the defendant's horse, which was in very poor condition and lame in the off hind foot. The animal was totally unfit for work, and witness advised the defendant to have the animal destroyed, which had been done. Every time the horse put its foot to the ground, it must have been caused intense pain. The Magistrates' Clerk said there was a letter which stated that the horse in question was under veterinary treatment at the time. Defendant, who pleaded guilty, was ordered to pay 6s 6d costs.

196 12 April 1924

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

BOUND OVER Charles Walter Heath (20), boatman, of no fixed abode, was charged with stealing a gent's bicycle, value 30s, the property of **Arthur Smith**, boatman, 3 Queen Mary Street, Leicester, at Amington on March 17. PC Stockford repeated the evidence he gave at a former hearing, that on March 27 he received accused into custody from the Metropolitan Police at

Brentford, and brought him to Glascote police station. Witness charged him with stealing the bicycle from Amington Colliery wharf, and he replied, "I have nothing to say only that I stole it and sold it in Birmingham for 4s 6d". Arthur Smith, boatman, said on March 14, he engaged accused to assist with the boat to Amington. The bicycle was in the boat. He missed it on March 17, when accused had left. He gave accused no permission to take the bicycle. He identified the bicycle produced as his property. Frank Hargreaves, cycle dealer, 51 Great Barr Street, Birmingham, stated that on March 17, a youth, who he now identified as accused, called at his shop and offered a gent's cycle for sale. He asked him the price, and he replied 5s as he was hungry and wanted to buy some food. He gave him the amount. The Chairman asked witness if he was in the habit of buying bicycles for 5s without any question. Witness replied that he was not. Five shillings was all the bicycle was worth, and it was really out of sympathy that he bought the machine, because he told him he had nothing to eat from the previous day, and he looked like it. In reply to the Chairman, Inspector Fielding said he had a warrant for the arrest of the accused for stealing a bicycle belonging to his cousin at Cannock, if he was discharged or fined on the present charge. Accused sold the other bicycle in Birmingham. Accused was bound over in £5 to come up for judgement if called upon in six months. The magistrates disallowed the expenses of the witness from Birmingham.

197 22 November 1924

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

BOATMAN'S OFFENCE Samuel Heath, boatman, 73 Park Lane, Oldbury, was summoned for unlawfully drawing certain top and bottom paddles of a lock in the canal at Bodymoor Heath, before the top and bottom gates of the said lock were closed, contrary to No 17 of the bye laws of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, on October 13. Defendant admitted drawing the top paddles. **Joseph Bird**, lock-keeper, Bodymoor Heath, said before defendant's boat was half way in the lock – it should have been all in – defendant drew a full bottom end paddle right to the top. When the lock was empty, defendant drew a full top end paddle. When he spoke to defendant, he said he was sorry. James Harris, detective in the service of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, said, on October 24, he saw the defendant, when he said he knew he had done wrong, but it should not happen again. They were compelled to take the proceedings to prevent waste of water. Fined 10s ; the Chairman said defendant should tell his pals that the penalty could be £5, and they would not be as lenient as they had been with him in future cases.

198 31 January 1925

THEFTS OF COAL – BOATMEN FINED AT ATHERSTONE At the Police Court, Atherstone, on Tuesday, **Walter Jelf** (46), boatman, 10 Canal Side, Wimsey Bridge, Oldbury, was charged with stealing coal from the Meredale Wharf, Grendon, on January 26. The magistrates were Mr J E Compton-Bracebridge and Mr W J W Bourne.

PC Robinson stated that at 6.40 pm on Monday, he was on plain clothes duty at the wharf, in company with PS Taylor. He saw the defendant go to a truck of coal which was in the siding and take three pieces off the top. Defendant was proceeding in the direction of his boat with the coal when witness approached him and asked what he was going to do with it. He replied that he wanted it to make up a fire in the cabin. Witness arrested him and took him to the Police Station where, in reply to the charge, defendant said he was only taking enough coal to get him back to Smethwick.

Albert Moss, colliery cashier, said the weight of the coal was 1 1/4 cwt, and the value 2s 2d.

Defendant pleaded guilty, but said he did not think he was doing any harm. He thought the boatmen were always allowed a bit of coal to take them back. It was the first time he had done it.

Inspector Horseman proved a previous conviction for larceny against the defendant, who was now fined £1 and 6s costs.

John Orton (19), boatman, Lock Side No 2, Tatbank, Oldbury, was also charged with stealing 2 cwt of coal, value 3s 8d from the same wharf.

PS Taylor stated that in consequence of complaints having been received from the colliery of coal being missed from Meredale Wharf, he was watching the premises on Monday, in company with PC

Robinson. At 7.15 pm, after the defendant in the previous case had been taken away, Orton came from the cabin in his boat, went to the top of a truck, and threw down a quantity of coal. He was in the act of taking it away when witness caught him and took him into custody. While they were proceeding along the side of the trucks, defendant broke away from witness and ran along the canal side. He was rearrested in the cabin of his boat on Tuesday morning, and when charged with the theft, he said he was not going to have all the coal himself, some of it was for others.

There were two previous convictions for larceny against the defendant, who was fined 30s and 6s costs.

199 8 August 1925

Wilnecote Division Police

DRUNKENNESS Abel Stokes, boatman, Aqueduct House, Fazeley, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly in Kettlebrook Road on August 3. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Duffin (Glascote) proved the case. Defendant was fined 10s.

200 19 September 1925

Atherstone Petty Sessions

SHOVELLING SLACK INTO THE CANAL Charles Rabone, boatman, 147 Park Road, Hockley, Birmingham, was summoned for throwing slack from a boat into the canal at Polesworth on August 27. **Samuel Watson**, boatman, of the same address, was summoned for aiding and abetting him. Mr A H Sale, who prosecuted on behalf of the Coventry Canal Company, said this was regarded as being a very serious offence under the Company's bye laws. The company were repeatedly being called upon at considerable expense to clean out the bed of the canal in the vicinity of collieries, and they wished to put a stop to the practice of shovelling coal overboard. **Horace George Eggleton**, a police constable in the employ of the Coventry Canal Company, stated that he kept the defendants' boat under observation for some distance, and saw Rabone take a shovel and commence throwing slack into the canal. He continued doing this for a distance of about 30 yards. Watson shouted to Rabone, "That will do, that will do". The boat was loaded at the Pooley Hall Colliery wharf, and was riding quite correctly. Charles Wm Wall, canal dredger, 50 Canal Side, Polesworth, said when the defendants' boat passed him about half a mile from the colliery, it was riding quite smoothly. Mr Bickley (Birmingham), who defended the men, submitted that the constable was mistaken in suggesting that the defendants were deliberately shovelling slack into the canal. The boat was not levelled properly before leaving the dock, as it should have been, and the defendants were merely shovelling the slack from one side to the other.

Rabone said the weight of the slack when the boat left Pooley Hall Colliery was 27 tons 1 cwt, as declared by the colliery officials. On arrival at Glascote, the load was gauged by the Canal Company's toll clerk at 27 tons 10 cwt. He was merely levelling the slack in the boat as they went along, as it had not been properly loaded. Watson said it would be no advantage to them to lighten the load. Defendants were fined £1 each, including costs.

201 27 March 1926

GLASCOTE BOATMAN FINED Two boatmen, **Alfred Whitehouse** of Minworth and **George Spiers** of Glascote, were, at Coleshill on Wednesday, fined 10s each for drawing a lock on the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal in such a manner as to cause wastage of water. The defendants candidly said they would not have committed the offence had they known they were being watched.

202 27 November 1926

Atherstone Petty Sessions

DOG TO BE DESTROYED Abel Skinner, boatman, of no fixed abode, was summoned for not keeping under control a dangerous dog at Grendon on November 16 ; also for not having taken out a licence in respect of such dog. Frederick Wm Haywood, Holly Lane, Whittington, in the employ of Mr Coley, farmer, said he was driving a horse and float in the direction of Atherstone, when he saw in a field a black dog worrying a sheep, which was on the ground in an exhausted state. Witness stopped the horse and ran across the field, but the dog got away. He reported the matter to the police. Inspector Horseman stated that he afterwards saw the defendant, who said he did not

know that the dog had been away from the boat. Asked if he had a licence for the dog, defendant said he had not been in a position to get one. The sheep was bitten about the legs, and was killed shortly afterwards. The Bench made an order for the dog to be destroyed by the police, defendant to pay the costs, £1.

203 18 December 1926

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

COAL IN THE CANAL Horace Storer, colliery worker, I Bright Crescent, Kettlebrook, was summoned by **Horace George Eggleton**, 14 Highfield Street, Great Heath, Coventry, for throwing or depositing coal in the Coventry Canal at Kettlebrook on November 9. Mr G R Jennings prosecuted. Eggleton stated that he was concealed at Kettlebrook, when he saw a man standing on the towing-path. Witness saw a barge laden with coal approach Barn bridge. Defendant took some coal off and threw it into the canal. Witness spoke to defendant about it, and he replied, "You know why I have done it". Defendant gave witness a wrong name and address. **Robert Wood**, boatman, 2 School Street, Glascote, said he noticed defendant pull some coal off the boat into the canal. Fined £1 inclusive.

204 15 January 1927

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

CASES DISMISSED **George Cresswell**, boatman, 50 Union Street, Spon Lane, and **William Dell**, boatman, 110 Greet's Green Road, both of West Bromwich, were charged with stealing a quantity of bean coal, value 1s 4d, the property of Charles A Sadler, Portway, Oldbury, at Bodymoor Heath on January 7. Arthur Mason, stockman, Bodymoor Heath, was charged with feloniously receiving the coal. Mr Bickley, Birmingham, defended Cresswell and Dell.

PC Wale stated that at 9.55 pm on January 7, he was on duty on the towing-path of the Birmingham Canal at Bodymoor Heath. He saw Cresswell and Dell handle a bag of coal, which they placed on the towing-path. Witness afterwards saw the coal by the side of a hayrick near the Dog and Jacket Inn. He kept observation till 10.15 pm, when he saw Mason place the coal on a barrow and take it away. At 3 am next day, he arrested accused, and when charged at Glascote police station, Dell and Cresswell said they had nothing to say. Cross-examined : He was not in a position to say that Mr Sadler refused to prosecute. Superintendent Spencer said a representative was present and stated that that was untrue. In further cross-examination, witness said when he first saw the coal, it was at the lock gate, and the next time he saw it was when it was near the rick. He could not say who moved it. Mason said Mrs Greatbach gave the coal to him, and he took it from the Dog and Jacket Inn. Samples of the coal from Greatbach's cellar and from the boat were produced.

On the charge of receiving against Mason, PC Wale said at 10.15 pm, when he was watching a bag of coal near the Dog and Jacket Inn, accused came up Dog Lane and placed the coal in a barrow and commenced to wheel it away. Witness stopped him, and asked him what he was doing with the coal. Mason said Mrs Greatbach had given it to him. Witness told Mason he had reason to believe it had been stolen. Mrs Greatbach denied that she had given Mason any coal. Mason said he did not steal any coal, and that he had it out of Greatbach's cellar. When charged, Mason said, "I will say nothing". Cross-examined, witness said he did not see Mason fetch any coal from the boat.

PS White also gave evidence.

Emily Greatbach, married, Dog and Jacket Inn, Bodymore Heath, said she had never given Mason permission to take coal from the cellar.

Ernest Garfield Jackson, 42 Talbot Street, Oldbury, manager to Mr Sadler, stated that on the instructions of his employer, he went to London Iron Works, Oldbury and saw a canal boat laden with double-screened nuts which had been brought there by Cresswell and Dell. He produced a sample, and said it was similar to the sample produced by the police. Cross-examined : He was not prepared to swear that the coal came off the boat, nor to say that it was his master's property. He was giving evidence for the police.

Mr Bickley said there was no case on which to send Cresswell and Dell for trial. There was no evidence of stealing, and he suggested it was an absurd charge. Their master did not prosecute. The cases were dismissed.

205 5 March 1927

POLESWORTH DROWNING TRAGEDY- SUICIDE OF MINER AND HIS WIFE Mr C W Iliffe, coroner for North Warwickshire, held an inquest at the Church Sunday Schools, Dordon, on Monday, respecting the deaths of Mark Holtom (55), miner, Watling Street, Dordon, and Lily Edith Holtom (45), his wife, who were found drowned in the Coventry Canal at Polesworth on Thursday afternoon last week.

Kate South, Arley, Coventry, sister of Mark Holtom, said he was a miner and was formerly head ostler at a colliery. She last saw him alive twelve months last August. She identified the bodies of Holtom and his wife. Witness believed the age of Mrs Holtom was 45 years. They lived together. Witness, in reply to the Coroner, said she had not known anything of how they had been living. Whatever has made him do this wicked thing I cannot think, witness added. The Coroner : We shall hear in evidence, I dare say.

Dr E T Power, Atherstone, said he had attended Mark Holtom several times during the last twelve months. He suffered from melancholia. Witness last attended him about three or four days before his death. He suspected that he might injure himself or injure someone else. In fact, his wife went out to sleep for two nights, he believed, saying she was afraid of him. He could not say which nights they were, but he thought a few nights before he saw him last.

The Coroner : Had you suggested he should be removed? Witness : I suggested to the wife that he should be removed to a place of safety, but she said she would rather wait and see how he went on.

The Coroner : Did you have any need or cause to treat the wife at all ; was she quite normal?

Witness : She was normal, but not what I should call distinctly intelligent ; she was rather soft. She came to me about twelve months ago, because he was in a terrible state of mind, as she had been doing things which he thought she ought not to have done. She said he was so distressed in his mind, and so queer in his manner about it, that she would like me to go and see him.

The Coroner : If he had been able to get work, would he have been a fit person to work?

Witness : Bodily fit, but not mentally.

In reply to further questions, witness said the certification of the man would be a case for the parish medical officer. The case had not been reported to him, it did not warrant it, just the last week or two, but if he had gone on, it would have been necessary, undoubtedly.

The Coroner : There was no particular urgency for that action as far as you were concerned when you last saw him? Witness : No; he talked to me quite rationally, he had no delusions, but he seemed in a brooding, despondent state, he was in that condition of mind in which he thought the whole world was his enemy.

The Coroner : I suppose the wife was a sort of person who would be easily persuaded? Witness : Easily.

The Coroner : Have you any doubt that it was his persuasion that caused the woman to do what she did, she did drown herself? Witness : I think she was weak minded. If she had the idea he was going to do it, she would do it with him. She was just the sort of weak minded, easily led, person.

Witness, continuing, said he had examined the bodies. There were no marks of violence on the man, and from his appearance it was evident that he died from asphyxia due to drowning. There were marks on the woman's face due to the drag in getting her out. Both bodies were well nourished. The cause of the death in the case of the woman was asphyxia due to drowning.

Asked if she wished to put any questions, Mrs South said she did not, she had heard what had been said, and was satisfied with what the doctor had stated.

Ada Chetwynd, a widow, said she had lived next door to the couple for seven years. During that period, they had led an unhappy life. Holtom was jealous of his wife, who did not seem to be able to do anything right for him. At about 9 pm on February 23, she was in her house, and she heard the upstairs blinds in Holtom's house drawn down. She thought they had retired to bed. Shortly afterwards, witness went to bed herself, and during the night she heard nothing of them. If they had spoken fairly loudly, she would have heard them talking. At 5 am on February 24, when she got up, witness heard no movements of Mrs Holtom and began to think there was something wrong,

because she was generally about by six o'clock. She knew Holtom had been ill, and did not really suspect anything serious until 9 am. As the blinds were still down, she suspected something had happened and decided to inform the police. She sent a note to PC Penney. The last time she spoke to them was on Tuesday, when Mrs Holtom seemed ordinary. She knew Holtom was peculiar. The Coroner : Did he ill-treat his wife? Witness : They had their ups and downs like everybody else.

Thomas William King, boatman, 59 Main Road, Glascote, said at 1.40 pm on February 24, he was coming from the direction of Atherstone with his boat. When he was near Meadow Lane Bridge, he noticed a trilby hat and a woman's hat on the other side of the canal. About 25 yards further, on the other side of the bridge nearer to Polesworth, he saw a man's body in the canal. He did not disturb it. About 100 yards further on, he noticed a woman's body in the canal. He reported the matter to the police. In answer to the Coroner, witness said there were no signs of life, or he would have got the bodies out of the water.

Mrs Chetwynd, recalled, identified Mrs Holtom's writing in a note produced by the Coroner.

PC Penney, Dordon, said he received information from Mrs Chetwynd at about 10 am on February 24 that the blinds of Holtom's house were still down, and she suspected something had gone wrong. Witness went to the house and found both doors were locked. The blinds upstairs and downstairs were down. He knocked several times, and getting no response, forced himself through the window, entering the house in that way. Witness searched upstairs and downstairs, but found no trace of Holtom nor his wife. The bed had been made, but had not been slept in. Witness searched the fields around and found no trace of them. Later, from something that came to his knowledge, he visited the canal about half a mile from Polesworth, and about two miles from Holtom's house. He saw PC Haynes and the two bodies on the canal towing-path. They appeared to have been in the water some time. He recognised them as Holtom and his wife. Witness examined the canal side and found no trace of a struggle. There was a foot bridge about 200 yards from the Grendon Road at the spot where the two hats were. It was a private road. In witness's opinion, the bodies had been washed along the canal by passing boats. He moved the bodies to the couple's house, where on the kitchen table he found the note (produced).

The Coroner read the note as follows : "Wednesday night, February 23. We are going out of this misery, I have made up my mind to go with him. Lily Holtom. He wanted me to stay behind".

PC Haynes, Polesworth, spoke to receiving information from the boatman of the presence of the two bodies in the canal. With the assistance of King, he recovered the bodies.

The Coroner said there could be no doubt that both Mark Holtom and Lily Edith Holtom took their own lives, and he thought from the evidence of the doctor, who had been able to throw the fullest light on the condition of their minds, he could say that they committed suicide while of unsound mind. The doctor's evidence was that the man had been mentally unbalanced for some little time, in fact the doctor was thinking, and indeed if it had not been for his wife's objection, would have sent him to an asylum. The unfortunate thing was that he was not sent before that happened. He did not think the man in any way threatened, compelled or caused the woman's death other than by persuasion. He thought the note showed she was a willing party. He therefore returned a verdict that they both committed suicide whilst of unsound mind.

206 4 June 1927

Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

HORSE ASTRAY Ernest Worsey, boatman, the Bungalows, Bodymoor Heath, was summoned for allowing a horse to stray in Watery Lane, Bodymoor Heath, on May 15. Defendant pleaded guilty. PC Wale stated the facts. Defendant said the horse was not out three minutes. PC Wale stated that he was trying to get the horse in the stable for ten minutes. To pay 5s.

207 25 June 1927

Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE Thomas James Mitchell, canal boatman, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working the same while in an unfit state at Grendon on June 20. PC Morgan said the horse was at work on a winding machine at Grendon Wharf. He noticed that the animal flinched as though in pain, and he examined it. He found six sores underneath the collar, and when he called

defendant's attention to them, he said he did not know they were there. Inspector Cosway, RSPCA, said the horse was in good bodily condition. It was obvious that the sores had not been caused through pulling the boat. Probably the animal had been at work drawing lorries, and then turned over to the defendant for canal boat work. Defendant was fined £2 and 5s costs.

208 9 July 1927 Atherstone Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A CANAL HORSE **Joseph Hewer**, canal boatman, Hawkesbury Stop, Longford, was summoned by Inspector Cosway of the RSPCA for cruelty to a horse by beating it at Grendon on June 17. PC Purser said the defendant gave the horse five lashes across the body with a whip, with as much force as he could use. There were three weals on the animal's back. Defendant denied using undue force, but admitted that he struck the pony across the legs on two occasions. Fined £1 inclusive.

209 10 December 1927 Atherstone Petty Sessions

DOGS WITHOUT LICENSES The following were summoned for keeping dogs without licenses :- **William Ball**, boatman, no fixed abode. Fined 7s 6d.

210 28 January 1928 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

Frank Ward, boatman, Gresley Cottages, Amington Road, Bolehall, was summoned for riding a bicycle without a light in Summerfield Road, Glascote, at 2.45 am on January 5. PC Barnacle proved the case. To pay 5s.

211 3 March 1928 Tamworth County Court

Edgar Carruthers Ltd, merchants, 13 Upton Road, Bishop's Stortford, sued **Bertram Baxter** senr, boatman, and Gertrude Baxter, 25 John Street, Glascote, the amount of the claim being £1 19s 6d. Mr R H Briggs was for the plaintiffs and Mr W Rutherford for the defendants. Mr Briggs said the claim was for a coat-frock supplied in May 1924, when Gertrude Baxter was a minor. It was sought to make the father liable, as the garment was a necessary. His Honour gave judgement for the defendants.

212 24 April 1928 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

DOG OWNERS SUMMONED **Frederick Baxter**, boatman, 25 John Street, Glascote, was summoned for not keeping a dog under control at Glascote on March 10. Defendant's wife appeared. PC Barnacle said at 10.30 pm, he received a complaint that the dog was making a noise outside a house in John Street. Complaints were made about it. To pay 5s.

213 18 April 1928

GLASCOTE MOTOR FATALITY CHILD CRUSHED DRIVER CENSURED Mr C W Iliffe, Coroner for North Warwickshire, sitting with a jury, held an inquest at the United Methodist Schoolroom, Glascote, on Tuesday afternoon, respecting the death of Sidney Smith, aged two years and ten months, who died as a result of being crushed by a motor car at Glascote on Sunday. Mr F H Argyle appeared for Mr S E Barlow, the owner of the car, Mr J H Dewes for the Tamworth Board of Guardians and the foster parents of the child. Mr G Shaw represented the Transport and General Workers' Union, and Inspector Horseman (Atherstone) appeared for the police. Mr G H Musson was foreman of the jury.

Edward James Higgins, miner, 11 Argyle Street, Glascote, said he was the foster father of the deceased. On Sunday, he left home with the child at about 10.20 am. The child was in a pushchair (produced). At about 1 pm, he came to the Anchor Inn. He went inside to get a drink, which he brought outside, so that he could keep his eye on the child. Shortly afterwards, he saw a motor car backing out of Barlow's yard, which was right opposite the Anchor yard. He thought the car was backing to turn, or to wait for someone who was in the inn. When he saw it coming too far and too fast, as he thought, he shouted and put out his arms. As the car did not seem to stop and was

coming faster, he tried to grab the pushchair. He got hold of the handle, but the carrier on the back of the car had got fast in the pushchair, the hood being raised. It squeezed the pushchair against the wall. (The damaged pushchair, which was exhibited, had bent wheels and a crushed body). People inside the house heard him shout, and came outside. The car was pushed back, and witness got out the boy. The child was then alive, and was taken into the sitting room of the Anchor Inn. It would be over half an hour before the child died. The car was standing still in Barlow's yard when he first saw it. He then saw it start to back out. He did not know but thought there was a proper driver in charge. He saw it come out of the gateway, across the road and into the Anchor yard. The car seemed to be under proper control at first, until it got onto a bit of a gradient half way down the Anchor Yard. At first, the pace of the car would not be more than a walking rate, but it gathered speed as it proceeded, and would be going at double the original pace when it crashed into the wall. He did not notice the engine going at all, so he unable to say whether the man on it might have put his foot on the accelerator. The hood of the car was up. He did not see the driver at all. By Mr Dewes : After he came out with the beer, the push chair would not be three yards away from him. The car caught his shoulder. He was very fond of the child. Every Sunday morning, if it was fine, he took it for a walk. By Inspector Horseman : The car kept a straight course. It did not stop or nearly stop, and start on again.

John Thomas Malkin, after having been cautioned by the Coroner, elected to give evidence, and said he lived at Anchor Row, Glasgote. He was a boatman in the employ of Mr Barlow. On Sunday last, he went to Mr Barlow's yard to get the car out of the garage ready for Mrs Barlow. It was an 11.9 hp Standard car. He started the engine, got in the car, regulated the petrol, and put the car in reverse to get it out of the garage. The car was coming backwards, and he saw that it was going further than he wanted it to go. The car came through the doorway on to the road. He was fumbling for the brake, got rather flurried, and could not find it. The next thing that happened was that the car ran into the wall against the Anchor Inn. From the garage to the gates was 45 yards. It was slightly uphill. He intended to bring the car to rest near the stables, a few yards inside the gateway. He tried to pull up before the car got to the gates, but he was fumbling for the hand brake, and was unable to feel it. There was a foot brake, but he did not know why he did not use it.

The Coroner, stating that it was 22 yards from the gates to the Anchor Inn wall, asked witness what he was doing all that time, and witness said he did not know. He did not look out at the back, as he was fumbling for the hand brake at the time. He had driven the car out of the garage before, and another car every other fortnight for about two years, without coming on to the main road. There was no difference in the cars referred to. Previously, he had not had difficulty in finding the brakes. No one had taught him how to drive a car, he had learnt what he knew himself. The Coroner remarked that witness had not learned very much if he had not learned to find the brakes. Witness said it was known that he got out the car. He held no licence to drive. He was quite sober and was not thinking about anything else, having his mind on what he was doing. The Coroner : How do you account for it? Witness : I don't know, sir. Witness added that he did not touch the foot operating lever. By the jury : He could not estimate the speed. By Inspector Horseman : He was 24 years of age. He pushed the car out of the garage before starting the engine. He had to take off the brake to push the car out. He had never held a licence to drive. He afterwards put on the brake and started the engine. He used the clutch pedal to put the car into reverse. The speed was about the ordinary backing speed. He made two or three attempts to stop, but could not find the brake. He could not say whether he put the clutch out. He had never driven out into the road previously. By Mr Argyle : He pushed the car out of the garage before he got into it, that being all he was required to do as far as Mrs Barlow was concerned. He wanted to move it because of the horses coming out for a drink. He did something with that particular car which he had never done before, getting in, starting the engine, and reversing. He agreed that he must have lost control.

Dr Chalmers, Tamworth, said he was called to the Anchor Inn at about 1.20 pm on Sunday, and saw the child, who was still alive but quite unconscious. He could only find a little bruise on the left forehead, and an abrasion on the left forearm. The child was dying. Witness held a *post mortem* examination on Monday. The cause of death was shock from haemorrhage following internal

injuries. In reply to the Coroner, witness said it looked as if the child was crushed in the push chair. The Coroner summed up, and said the carrier of the car was crumpled up and the back panel of the car was pushed in. He thought under the circumstances, the jury would agree that Malkin seemed to give evidence in a straightforward manner ; he did not say anything to try to shield himself, quite frankly admitting that he lost control. The wonder was more damage was not done, that Higgins was not injured. It was carelessness for a man to get into a car and not to know how to stop it. He ought to have been able to stop ot, or not have got into it. It was a most astounding thing that a child in a push chair could not be on a pavement and be safe. Touching the legal aspect of the matter, on the question of manslaughter, the Coroner said that they had no evidence that the man was intoxicated, or that he was driving the car quite regardless of the results. If they were satisfied that the evidence was not sufficient to justify a verdict of manslaughter, they could request that he should be censured if they thought he was negligent, or they could find that it was an accident. After a brief retirement, the Foreman announced that the verdict of the jury was one of accidental death, at the same time they thought Malkin was very negligent, and they wished the Coroner to censure him.

The Coroner said he most certainly agreed with the jury.

The jury expressed their sympathy with the foster parents.

Mr Argyle said he would like to be associated with that expression on behalf of Mr Barlow, who was extremely sorry that his car should have been the instrument to cause the child's death.

Mr Shaw, on behalf of Malkin, said he was sincerely sorry for what had happened, and tendered his sympathy to the Guardians and the foster parents of the child.

Malkin was then called before the Coroner, who said it was very fortunate for him that there was not a more serious charge. A man who took possession of a dangerous thing like a motor car must have sufficient knowledge to look after it. He did a very careless thing. He got into the car, not knowing how to drive, which resulted that he had deprived the foster parents of the joy of that little child's life. He hoped he would take a lesson, and next time he put himself in charge of a thing capable of doing damage, he would take care to know how to manage it. You will remember that, won't you? concluded the Coroner. Malkin : Yes.

The jury handed their fees to the foster parents.

214 22 September 1928 Atherstone Petty Sessions

William Stevens, 44 Leamington Road, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham, was summoned by **Horace George Eggleton**, a constable for the Coventry Canal Navigations, for shovelling coal into the Coventry Canal from a loaded boat, at Polesworth on August 2. Mr Bickley, Birmingham defended, and pleaded not guilty. Mr T B Fitch, prosecuting, said defendant was seen shovelling coal from the canal boat into the water, his apparent object being to make the boat go easier by having more weight on the front than on the back. Eggleton gave evidence and said he watched defendant for 300 yards, and he was shovelling coal into the water all the time. In answer to Mr Bickley, witness said defendant was not trimming the boat. **John Stokes**, 103 Great Barr Street, Birmingham, said he was the mate of Stevens, who was supposed to go on the boat with the intention of trimming it. He deliberately got some coal on the shovel and threw it into the canal. Defendant said the first thing they had to do after loading was to trim the boat. He denied throwing the coal into the canal deliberately. Fined £2 including costs.

215 2 February 1929 Atherstone Petty Sessions

ILL TREATMENT OF A HORSE **Joseph Hewer**, canal boatman, Hawkesbury Stop, nr Coventry, was summoned for ill-treating a horse by beating it with a whip, on the Coventry canal towing-path, at Polesworth on December 15. PS Bennett said defendant gave the horse seven or eight vicious blows with a whip for no apparent reason. Fined £1.

216 16 November 1929 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

INSULTING BEHAVIOUR **James Richards**, boatman, Brownhills, was summoned for insulting

conduct with intent to put certain persons in fear, in Wilnecote Lane, Kettlebrook, on October 10. Evidence was given by a girl. PC Barnacle spoke to receiving complaints about defendant's conduct. Defendant sent a long letter, in which he said he would see such a thing did not occur again. Fined £1.

217 1 February 1930 Atherstone Petty Sessions

THEFT OF COAL Richard Humphries, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing four cwts of coal, value 7s 6d, the property of the Baddesley Colliery Company. Harold Wainwright, Station Street, Atherstone, clerk at the wharf, said he missed the coal that morning, and saw four cwts of coal on the fore hatch of Humphries's barge. Defendant, who expressed regret and said he had returned the coal, was fined £3.

218 28 June 1930 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

SLACK IN THE CANAL William Dainty, boatman, 51 Prestbury Road, Aston, Birmingham, was summoned for throwing a quantity of coal slack in the Coventry Canal at Amington on April 19. Defendant pleaded not guilty. PC Stockford said he saw defendant shovel slack into the canal while the boat travelled about 40 yards. Defendant threw into the water about twenty shovelful of slack. When questioned, defendant said he was trying to find a lump of coal. Joseph Watts, overseer, said the Company were put to great expense in dredging. Asked what was the point of throwing off the slack, witness said he thought it was the idea of getting the boat along faster. Defendant said there was no short weight when the load was gauged at the locks. To pay 5s.

219 7 January 1933 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

DOG AND FOWL William Stafford, boatman, 3/56 Browning Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, was summoned as the owner of a dog which was alleged to be dangerous, and for failing to keep it under proper and effectual control, at Bodymoor Heath on December 1. Gladys Ward Plant, Bolton Lock, Bodymoor Heath, said when she was in a field she saw a whippet dog chasing fowl. The dog singled one out, and mauled it badly, making it unable to stand. A man called the dog away. PC Butler said a fowl was brought to his station, and had to be killed on account of its having been mauled. Later witness saw defendant, who said he intended to have the dog destroyed. Defendant sent a letter stating that he thought the complaint was a frivolous one. Immediately he knew the dog had damaged a fowl, he offered the owner compensation, but he said the value was 5s. When witness said he thought it was too much, the door was slammed in his face. He had since had the dog destroyed. Owing to the canal bank being infested with rats, it was necessary to keep a dog on the boat. Defendant was ordered to pay 11s 6d costs.

220 13 May 1933

A CANAL OFFENCE Albert Fullwood, canal boatman, 32 Legge Street, Wolverhampton, was fined 10s at Sutton Coldfield on Tuesday for drawing the paddle of a lock at Minworth before the bottom gate of the lock was closed. It was stated Fullwood did this to help to flush his boat out of the lock more quickly. Fullwood admitted he received 17s 6d from the employment exchange each week for the three days he did not work and 12s for his work on the canal. The Clerk : You are better off not working than working. That is how we live in England, happy England.

221 2 September 1933 Petty Sessions Wilnecote Division

Frederick Kinson, boatman of Wharf House, Kettlebrook, was fined 7s 6d for riding a pedal cycle without a red rear light or reflector, on the Watling Street, Two Gates at 12.15 am on August 5.

222 28 October 1933 Fazeley

ACCIDENT TO BOATMAN Whilst going over the junction canal bridge and casting a rope on Friday last week, **William Key**, boatman, 9 Sherborne Street, Sherborne Grove, Ladywood, Birmingham, slipped and broke his right ankle. He was taken to Tamworth Hospital, and was later

removed to the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham.

223 9 December 1933

ROAD QUESTION FROM BOLEHALL Mr J L Auden, Deputy Coroner for East Staffordshire, held an inquest at the Municipal Hotel, Tamworth, on Thursday, respecting the death of **Ethel Moore**, aged 6 years, whose parents reside at 52 Leedham Avenue, Bolehall, Tamworth, and who was drowned in the canal on Wednesday.

Jesse Moore, boatman, father of the child, gave evidence of identity. He said children would not go round by the road to school because it was so far, they preferred to go along the canal side, which was so much nearer. He had chastised the children time after time for going by the canal side.

It was stated that the child went to Glascote school. A private road was formerly used, but it was stopped. The children now had the option of going round by the road under the railway bridge, or the canal side. The latter cut off half a mile, and there was not the danger of main road traffic.

The Deputy Coroner pointed out that there might not be danger from main road traffic, but there were apparently other dangers. He inquired if any suggestion could be made to obviate the children walking by the canal path, and he was told that it was suggested that the road which was closed should be reopened.

The Deputy Coroner said it seemed to be definitely dangerous for children to have to use the towing-path.

Gladys Chapman (8), 6 Goostry Road, Bolehall, Tamworth, said she was with Ethel Moore when they were walking back from school by the side of the canal. Ethel tried to reach a piece of ice, and fell in the water. Witness went and told Billy Moore.

George Thomas Baker, blacksmith, Doreen Cottages, Lud Lane, Tamworth, said when he was at work in Musson's workshop, he heard a man named Pearsall shout that there was a child in the canal. He immediately ran out and took a long piece of iron. When he found they could not reach the child with it, he went into the canal until he was able to reach it with a boat hook. He pulled the child to the side, and with the help of Pearsall, took her to a nearby house.

The Deputy Coroner said he thought the child would be dead when it was recovered, and her father, in agreeing, mentioned that he had had some experience, his father, mother and grandfather all having been drowned.

The Deputy Coroner, in returning a verdict of accidental death, said he thought Baker and Pearsall did everything they could. He said there was definitely something wrong when children of that age had to walk to get to school along the canal towing-path if there was means of obviating it.

It was mentioned that a small boy also fell in the canal on Wednesday.

224 20 January 1934

KETTLEBROOK MAN DROWNED An inquest was held at the Municipal Hotel, Tamworth, on Thursday, by the Deputy Coroner for East Staffordshire (Mr J L Auden) with reference to the death of **Bernard Alexander Kinson**, aged 56 years, of Wharf House, Kettlebrook, whose body was recovered from the canal, near the aqueduct between Fazeley and Kettlebrook, on Wednesday.

William Bernard Kinson, miner, 12 Marmion Street, Tamworth, son, stated that his father was formerly a boatman, but had been unemployed. Witness last saw him alive on December 26 last, at his own house. He seemed very cheerful. In answer to the Deputy Coroner, witness said his father's health was good, except his eyesight. Asked if he could suggest why he should go along the canal side, witness suggested that he went to find where witness's brother lived, who was married on Boxing Day. He would go along the towing-path instead of all the way round the road ; he heard he was missing on the day after Boxing Day.

Police sergeant Perry said on December 28, a hat, identified as the property of the deceased, was found floating on the canal by the Warwickshire police. He had ascertained that the man was seen near midnight on December 27 at Fazeley. He had been making enquiries as to where his newly married son had gone to live. A man directed him to a house, apparently the son had gone to bed, and he went to a house next door. Finding he was at the wrong house, he proceeded to return home.

George Davies, miner, 306 Tamworth Road, Kettlebrook, stated that on Wednesday afternoon, January 17, when walking along the canal side, he saw a body in the water. In answer to the Deputy Coroner, deceased's son said no note had been found in the house. The Deputy Coroner, remarking that there was no evidence of suicide, returned a verdict of accidental death.

225 30 March 1935 Petty Sessions

DANGEROUS DOG Frank Bushell, boatman, Pitt Street, Birmingham, was summoned for being the owner of a dangerous dog at Bodymoor Heath, Kingsbury, and failing to keep it under proper control. He was also summoned that the dog thereby did damage amounting to 15s to three sheep and one lamb.

A boy of 14 said that at 10.15 am on February 26, he was harrowing in a field by the side of the canal, when he saw a dog chasing ten sheep and a lamb. It also ran a lamb across a field into a deep ditch. He called the dog, and it ran to the canal. He followed it, and told a man on a boat that the dog had been worrying sheep.

Charles Rogers, farmer, Bodymoor Heath Farm, said that three of the sheep had their wool pulled about, and the lamb was missing.

PC Butler said defendant told him he had never had any complaints about the dog, and would keep it under control in future. He did not intend to destroy the dog. The sheep, added witness, had teeth marks on the shoulder and rump, and the lamb was drowned.

Defendant apologised to Rogers, and said that after seeing Rogers he had had the dog destroyed.

Rogers said that as defendant was a married man with five children, he did not wish to press his claim.

Defendant was fined 10s.

226 1 August 1936 Tamworth Borough Petty Sessions

RECEIVED STOLEN BICYCLE Francis Edward Woodhouse, boatman, 5 Anchor Row, Glascote, was summoned for receiving a pedal cycle, value 25s, knowing it to be stolen, on July 13. Accused elected to be summarily dealt with, and pleaded not guilty. A boy, who said he had been before the Juvenile Court the same morning on a charge of stealing the bicycle, said on July 13 he saw accused outside the Anchor Inn, and asked him if he wanted to buy a bicycle. In reply to Mr Newstead, witness said he went to defendant because he thought he would buy it. Witness, continuing, said he asked defendant inside the inn if he wanted to buy a bicycle, and he came out and looked at it, and inquired how much he wanted for it. He asked defendant to give him 2s for it and defendant replied, "All right then". Defendant gave him 2s, and witness gave him the cycle. Defendant returned to the inn afterwards, leaving the bicycle outside. PS Shelton said on July 25, he saw defendant while he was making inquiries about a bicycle stolen from outside the Grand Theatre. Defendant fetched the bicycle from upstairs. Witness told him it was a stolen bicycle, and he should take possession of it. Defendant said, "I am sorry, I don't want to get into any trouble. I gave the boy two bob for it". In a statement, defendant referred to his seeing the boy who asked him if he wanted to buy a bicycle. After he tried it, he found it was not much good, and he gave him 2s for it. He asked the boy if his father knew about it, and he said, "Yes". He had done several jobs on it since. Witness said there were two new tyres on the cycle, which were worth 7s 6d. Defendant produced a receipt, showing that he had spent 2s 10d on the cycle. He denied that he knew it was stolen. Cross-examined : The boy told him he had bought the bicycle for 1s a fortnight before. Recalled, the boy denied that he said he bought the bicycle for 1s. Two years ago, he sold defendant a bicycle which was given to him. Defendant was fined £2 and 15s special costs.

227 19 September 1936

GLASCOTE CHILD'S DEATH An inquest was held by the Birmingham Coroner on Monday respecting the death of **Ronald Peter Woodhouse**, aged 5 years, son of a boatman living at Anchor Row, Glascote, Tamworth. The evidence showed that the boy was pulled off the "joy wheel" in

Tamworth Castle pleasure grounds on August 31, and received an injury to the ankle. He was treated at Tamworth Hospital, and was afterwards transferred to Birmingham Children's Hospital, where he died on Friday September 11. The cause of death was tetanus. The Coroner returned a verdict of accidental death. He said playgrounds were a Godsend to children, so that instead of complaining against the playground equipment, he ought to be the first to compliment local authorities who provided those things. This case was a pure accident, and as far as he could see, the Council did everything that could be reasonably expected of them. Messrs Blewitt and Co represented the Corporation, and the Town Clerk (Mr H Wood) and the Borough Surveyor (Mr A O Marshall) were also present at the inquest.