

## GLOUCESTER CITIZEN

### **1** 27 April 1877

ALLEGED MURDER OF A BOATMAN A number of men were on Wednesday engaged in discharging a boat on the canal in Blackburn, when a man named **Barber** dropped a spade, to recover which he got out of the boat into the canal. He was prevented by **Joseph Houghton, James Houghton, John Seddon** and **Michael Lassey** from again entering the boat, pushed back into the canal, and drowned. All four men are in custody.

### **2** 8 May 1877

#### **Worcester**

MURDEROUS ASSAULT On Saturday night, **William Weaver** (20), boatman, had a quarrel with his brother-in-law, named **David Brace**. A fight ensued, in which Weaver was worsted. He thereupon went into his house in Lion Row and, procuring a large adze, he returned and struck Brace a murderous blow on the head. The injury inflicted was of the most serious character, and the wounded man was taken to the infirmary. Brace's skull is fractured, and the result at present is very uncertain. Weaver was taken before the city magistrates yesterday and remanded.

### **3** 14 May 1877

#### **City police, this day**

FAILING TO SUPPORT A FATHER **William Drew**, boatman, of Sherborne Street, appeared to a summons for leaving his father chargeable to the Gloucester Union. Mr Thurston, representing the Board of Guardians, said that he must ask the Bench to order the defendant to contribute to the support of his father, who was at present an inmate of the Workhouse. The defendant said his wife was in the last stage of consumption, and he had had no regular work since Christmas. Adjourned for a fortnight to give defendant an opportunity to arrange the matter with the Board of Guardians.

### **4** 21 May 1877

#### DEATH BY DROWNING AT MAISEMORE – THE INQUEST – IMPORTANT EVIDENCE

Mr M F Carter, the coroner for the western division of the County, held an inquest on Saturday afternoon, at the White Hart Inn, Maisemore, on the body of **John Webb**, boatman of Rudford, who came by his death in the manner described in the evidence. Considerable interest will be taken in the proceedings, owing to the serious charge which is brought against the companions of the deceased.

**Ambrose Webb**, boatman, deposed : The deceased, who was 22 years of age, was my son. He was not employed on No 50 boat of the Severn and Canal Carrying Company, but was engaged in loading her.

**Charles Hale**, of Upper Quay Lane, deposed : I am boatman of No 50 boat of the Severn and Canal Carrying Company. Mr Edwin Norris is the secretary of the company. I was engaged as a hobbler to bring the boat round to Over. Deceased was also a hobbler, but Mayo, who was in charge of the boat, told me that deceased was going to Hereford. We left Gloucester about 3pm on Wednesday last in tow of a steamer. When we started, neither **Captain Mayo** nor **Thomas Cooper** (who was also on board) were sober. Between 4 and 5, deceased was put ashore to look after the line, and he afterwards jumped into the river and swam to the boat. I helped him on board and begged him to stay there. Almost at once, however, he jumped into the river, and struck out for the shore. The boat meanwhile was going on, and deceased was swimming at the stern. He said he would follow the boat, which was approaching Maisemore Bridge. When the boat reached the bridge deceased was still swimming behind, but on getting through he was lost sight of, and they were unable to find what had become of him. At that time, Mayo was forwards, and I was steering. Mayo then jumped in and swam ashore to see where deceased was. Shortly after, he returned to the bank crying, and said, "Poor Jack is drowned. I have seen the last of him". Search was then made for the body, but without effect. I was quite sober.

**Henry Webb**, lock-keeper at Maisemore, said No 50 boat passed through the lock at 4.30 pm on Wednesday last. I saw deceased on shore. He was the worse for beer. Thomas Cooper was also on

shore. He was the worse for beer. I saw the deceased jump into the river and swim to the boat. The next time I saw him, he was floating down a few yards on the upper side of the bridge. I threw a line to him, but he seemed too much exhausted to take hold of it. It is about 30 yards from the lock to the bridge, and probably about 100 from the bridge to the place where deceased jumped in first. Previously to throwing the line, I called out to the men in one of Mr Rowle's boats, which was at hand, to bring a boat, but they did not do so, though they must have seen the deceased floating. The barge was the *Wherry*, and **Captain Aldridge** was in charge of her. I saw the deceased sink under the bridge, and he only rose once.

Charles Hale, recalled : Before deceased jumped off the boat, Mayo had lost a shaft. Immediately after, deceased jumped in, but he pushed the shaft away from the boat, and not towards it. Mayo told me after deceased was drowned that he went in after the shaft.

**William Voyce**, boatman of Gloucester, deposed to the recovery of the body, which was found in a hole just below the bridge on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst.

The Coroner said the case was one of the most disgraceful he had ever heard of, and he should not be doing his duty if he did not order the company to take out summonses against Mayo and Cooper. It was quite evident that if they had been sober the deceased would have been rescued. He should report Aldridge to Mr Rowles for refusing to send a boat to the relief of deceased, while the conduct of Mayo would be reported to Mr Norris, the secretary of the company. Holding, as he did, an important public position, he should not allow the circumstances of the case to escape the most searching investigation.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

## 5 29 May 1877

### Worcester

THE LATE MURDEROUS ASSAULT At the City Police Court yesterday, before the Mayor and other magistrates, **Wm Weaver** (20), boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding **David Brace**, another boatman. Mr Pitt defended. It will be remembered that the parties are brothers-in-law, and on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> May, a quarrel took place between them, and the prosecutor struck the prisoner. After a fight, prisoner went away. Prosecutor followed prisoner into his house, when prisoner seized hold of an axe and struck prisoner on the head. The injuries were such that Brace had to be removed to the Infirmary, where he had remained up to the present time, under treatment. At the hearing yesterday, prosecutor gave his evidence very unwillingly, and stated his wish not to proceed with the case. It appeared that the quarrel arose out of some betting transactions. Mr Wilding, house surgeon at the Infirmary, said that the prosecutor was taken there suffering from a wound extending from above the right eye over the forehead. It was three inches long, and had penetrated the skull. The man would be under treatment for some time to come. The Bench committed prisoner to the Sessions, but admitted him to bail.

## 6 26 June 1877

ASSAULTING A POLICEMAN A canal boatman named **Henry Smith** was charged at the Birmingham Police Court yesterday with a violent assault upon Police-constable London, on the banks of the Warwick Canal on Saturday evening. London had interfered to protect Smith's wife against the prisoner's drunken violence, when the latter attacked him with an axe, which struck him on the right side of the head, fracturing his skull. As London lies at the hospital in rather a precarious state, the prisoner was remanded. A man named Leonard was fined by the magistrates 20s and costs for exciting the mob to rescue Smith from the hands of the police.

## 7 4 July 1877

### Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions

STEALING MONEY **Thomas Hickman**, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing at Ashleworth in April last, six pounds sixteen shillings, the moneys of Edwin Saddler. There being a previous conviction, the prisoner was sentenced to six months imprisonment, with hard labour, and two years police supervision.

**8 17 July 1877**

**William Boswell**, of Barnston (*sic*), Northampton, canal boatman, was charged at the Birmingham Police Court yesterday with shooting a boy named Connor. It appeared that a number of boys stood on Lea Bridge, which crosses the canal on the Dudley Road, when the prisoner discharged a gun at them, and several shots struck the complainant, and seriously injured him. Stones are frequently thrown by children upon the boatmen when passing under the bridge, and the prisoner said he discharged the gun to frighten them, a missile having just before been thrown into his cabin. The Bench committed him for trial at the sessions.

**9 25 July 1877**

THE ALLEGED MURDER OF A BOATMAN NEAR CHESTER At the Chester Assizes last evening, the Grand Jury ignored the bill against **John and Jane Probert**, charged with the murder of a boatman named **Charles Moston**, at Waverton near Chester on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of April. Deceased was found dead on the towing path of the canal, having been seen in the company of the accused. The counsel for the prosecution did not proceed on the coroner's warrant, and the judge said that, having read the depositions over and over, he had come to the conclusion that there was no evidence to convict the prisoners. His remarks were received with applause.

**10 1 August 1877**

**Local Intelligence**

SUDDEN DEATH This morning, a boatman named **Hullett** was found dead on board a trow lying in the canal. The dock constable (who first saw the deceased) immediately fetched Dr Peacock who, upon examining the deceased, reported that he had been dead for some time. He attributed death to a fit brought on by excessive drinking. An inquest will be held.

**11 2 August 1877**

SUDDEN DEATH OF A WATERMAN The Gloucester city coroner held an inquest yesterday at the Albion Hotel, on the body of the boatman whose death we reported yesterday. The evidence showed that the deceased, who was a native of Bewdley, had come in the trow "*Lilly Venn*" from Stourport to Gloucester. On Tuesday evening he left the trow, and instead of returning to it for the night, went on board the trow "*Avon*" and slept in the forecastle. He was seen by one or two other watermen as late as 11.30, but at 6 am on Wednesday, he was found dead on the cabin floor. It was shown that he had been subject to fits, and that he had been drinking heavily. Dr Peacock deposed that upon examining the body of the deceased, he had found his knees drawn up to his chest and his limbs rigid. He appeared to have been drinking rum during the night, and a sudden attack of epilepsy had brought on apoplexy, from which he had died. The jury returned a verdict of "Died from natural causes".

**12 27 August 1877**

**City Police**

CHARGE OF STEALING A SOVEREIGN Eliza Paradise, a married woman, well known at court, was charged with stealing a sovereign from **Jeremiah Pitt**, a boatman. Remanded till Wednesday.

**13 29 August 1877**

**City Police**

ALLEGED THEFT OF A SOVEREIGN Eliza Paradise, a married woman, was charged on remand with stealing a sovereign from **Jeremiah Pitt**, boatman of Severn Street, Worcester. The prosecutor deposed that on Saturday night last, he met the prisoner, and accompanied her to several public houses. Between 10 and 11 they went to the Mermaid Inn and had some whisky. On taking some coppers out of his pocket to pay for it, he found he was short by a halfpenny, and he then pulled on his purse to see if there was a halfpenny there, but as there was only a sovereign and a key in it, he told the landlady he would pay her the halfpenny in the morning, and put the purse with the sovereign back in his pocket. He then went with the prisoner to her house on the Quay, and they sat on the doorstep about five minutes. Prisoner then put her hand in his pocket and took out the purse.

He charged her with doing so, when she ran into the house. The landlady of the Mermaid deposed to seeing the sovereign in the prosecutor's purse. The landlady of the Duke of Gloucester having given evidence showing that the prosecutor had silver in his possession at the time alleged, the magistrates dismissed the case remarking that the circumstances were suspicious but that no jury would convict in such a case.

**14 12 September 1877 City Police**

**ILL USING DONKEYS** **Thomas Lewis**, boatman, was charged with ill using two donkeys. PC Spicer deposed that on Friday last, he saw two donkeys fastened on the top of a long boat ; they were tied in such a manner as to prevent their lying down or moving six inches from the position in which they were placed. They had no shelter, being on the top of the deals. An officer of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals gave confirmatory evidence, and said the donkeys were undoubtedly tortured. Mr Riddiford, who evidently did not attach much importance to the case, said he supposed the animals had been tied to prevent them falling overboard. The defendant said he was compelled to put the animals in that position, but it was shown that the usual practice was to make a hole in the timber. The Chairman urged that the donkeys should have been put on board the next morning, but the master of the boat replied that the defendant was obliged to go through the locks the night previously. The defendant called Charles Lewis, who said no rope was over the backs of the donkeys during the night. It was impossible to make a hole in the deals because they had no short lengths. The Bench thought there was no intention to commit an act of cruelty, and therefore imposed the small fine of 2s 6d and 9s costs.

**15 24 September 1877 City Police**

**Edward Davis** of Chalford was charged with stealing a boat hook. William Baxter, porter in the employ of Mr J G Francillon, proved that on Thursday evening last, he left the boat hook near the office. The next morning, it was missing, and witness afterwards saw the boat hook in a long boat of which the prisoner had charge. He afterwards gave information to the dock constable. Thomas Darke, a boy also in Mr Francillon's employ, deposed that he saw the former witness using the boat hook on Thursday evening at 7.30. D C Hunt deposed that he found the boat hook on board the long boat of which the prisoner was in charge. Mr Francillon accompanied witness, and prisoner handed over the boat hook, alleging when he did so that he had fished it up out of the water. The boat hook was at the bottom of the boat, but it was not concealed. The prisoner said he picked up the boat hook in the canal on Thursday afternoon. The Bench thought the case had not been established, and discharged the prisoner.

**THREATENING LANGUAGE** **James Davis**, boatman of Chalford, was charged with using threats to Mr Francillon. The defendant was the captain of the long boat in which Davis was boatman, and upon Mr Francillon inquiring about the hook, defendant threatened to knock his head off. The Bench ordered defendant to pay costs, and to enter into his own recognisances to keep the peace for three months.

**16 12 October 1877 City Police**

**ILL TREATING ASSES** **George Lewis**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to two asses. James Watkins, an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, deposed that he saw two donkeys on the defendant's boat at 2.30 yesterday afternoon, fastened on top of the timbers. They were fastened in such a manner that they could not move six inches. He saw the donkeys until 10 o'clock last night. PC Spicer gave corroborative evidence, and said he saw the donkeys on top of the boat until six o'clock this morning. The Bench advised Watkins in future to speak to persons who were ill treating animals in this manner, and not allow them to suffer all night without remonstrance. Fined 10s and costs, 5s 6d.

**17 1 December 1877**

**DEATH IN A TUNNEL** An inquest was held yesterday at Husband's Bosworth, Leicestershire, on

the body of **Edward Bramley**, a boatman, who met with his death in a long tunnel on the Grand Union Canal. On Wednesday morning, the deceased had charge of a canal boat, with two men named **Smith** and **Matlock**. Smith and Bramley had some words and fought, but they became friendly before reaching the tunnel. The deceased and Smith lay on their backs to push the boat through with their legs, but on coming out at the other end, Bramley was missing, and Smith stated that he had fallen into the water. Smith afterwards told a woman that he must have fought with Bramley in the tunnel, adding that the deceased caught hold of his hand when in the water, saying, "Good bye, Sam ; God bless you. I am going", and then sank like a stone. Smith was drunk when he made this statement, which he afterwards contradicted. The body, when recovered, presented the appearance of death by drowning, there being no injuries whatever. Smith's face bore several marks, as if caused by fighting. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**18 5 December 1877 City Police**

ALLEGED FALSE PRETENCES **George Stephens**, boatman, was charged with obtaining £1 16s by false pretences from Mr T Harris, landlord of the Shipwright's Arms. Mr C Taynton prosecuted. The prosecutor deposed that on Friday last, the prisoner asked him for a loan of £1 16s, saying that he was the captain of a trow laden with coal for the gas company. This afterwards proved incorrect. The money was advanced. Mr Taynton applied for a remand, which was granted.

**19 28 December 1877 City Police**

DOMESTIC INFELICITY **Edward Beard**, boatman, was charged with an assault on his wife, **Ann Beard**. According to the narrative of the complainant, who was a feeble old woman, the defendant wished her to go on a voyage with him. She refused to go, because she felt unable to do so, and he then left her penniless. She was obliged to pawn some of his goods to procure food, and on his return, she left him, because of the threats he had used. The son of the parties supported his mother's statement, but admitted that his mother sometimes drank. The defendant, who appeared a respectable, well spoken man, said his wife was everything that could be desired when she was sober, but she had taken to drinking, and had led him a very unhappy life. The defendant was ordered to enter into his own recognisances, and to find two sureties for his good behaviour.

**20 4 March 1878 City Police**

**James Hawker**, boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Sergeant Ford found the prisoner drunk and using obscene language on the Quay on Saturday night. Fined 2s 6d and 8s costs, or five days.

**21 22 March 1878 Gloucester City Police**

MASTER AND WORKMAN **W Holland**, boatman, was summoned by **John Critchley** for a balance of wages alleged to be due. The complainant agreed to accompany the defendant in his boat to Worcester for 10s, but on getting to that city, defendant engaged Critchley to go on to Birmingham, and a dispute arose respecting what was due for the latter part of the journey. Critchley said he was entitled to 8s 6d more than had been paid to him, making for the trip from Worcester to Birmingham an aggregate payment of £1. The Bench made an order for the payment of 6s and 4s costs.

**22 15 April 1878 Gloucester Assizes**

BIGAMY **William Williams** (36), boatman, was charged with feloniously marrying Ann Sophia Wells, his former wife, Sarah Williams, being then alive. Mr Ellicott prosecuted, and the prisoner was undefended. On October 11 1869, the prisoner married a woman named Sarah Hardle at St Nicholas Church, Gloucester. He lived with her for about five years, and then deserted her ; and on Nov 5 last, he married in the name of Cornelius Williams a widow named Ann Sophia Wells. Elizabeth Hardle, sister of the prisoner's wife, deposed to the first marriage, and said that Williams deserted her sister at each of the confinements, and he finally left her three years ago. The prisoner

cross-examined the witness at some length, but the material evidence was not in any way shaken. Sergeant Ford, who was the next witness, deposed to apprehending the prisoner, and produced a copy of the marriage register from St Nicholas Church, containing the entry of the marriage of the prisoner to Sarah Hardle. Ann Sophia Wells, a widow, said that the prisoner married her on Nov 5 last year, at St James Church, Gloucester, in the name of Cornelius Williams. She had been acquainted with the prisoner for about a month before she married him. In reply to the prisoner, witness said the marriage was proposed and the necessary steps taken within a week of their first acquaintance. She cohabited with the prisoner from the time that he began to lodge at her house. She met him first at the Barley Mow, and he invited her and some other women to drink. On the same day, after leaving the Barley Mow, he came to her house, and said that he would not go away again. At night he took off his boots, and “like his impudence” he went upstairs to bed, but she only consented to cohabit with him after he had promised to marry her. Sergeant Ford produced a copy of the marriage register of St James. The prisoner in defence said that he had been sunstruck two or three times, and had had his ribs fractured. At the time of his second marriage, he was so ill that he did not know what he was doing. He was taken to the church, but was too ill to know what was done there. Witness proposed to call witnesses, but none of them were in attendance. Ann Sophia Wells was then recalled, and said that the prisoner was sober and sane at the time of his second marriage. The Judge summed up, and after a brief consultation, the jury found the prisoner guilty, but recommended him to mercy “on account of the expedition used by Mrs Wells”. The learned Commissioner said he agreed with the recommendation of the jury, and certainly Mrs Wells was not entitled to sympathy. The sentence under the circumstances would be a months imprisonment with hard labour.

**23 28 May 1878**

**Gloucester City Police**

AS BAD AS EACH OTHER **Sarah Wilkes**, wife of a boatman, was charged with an assault on Emily Harris of the Royal Oak Yard. The complainant alleged that on Saturday last, she met defendant and her father in Westgate Street ; he threatened her and told his daughter to give her a good hiding. Defendant then pushed her and struck her. The defendant denied that she was the aggressor, and called her father to give evidence, but on being questioned, he said the Bench had better send both of the parties to gaol, as “it was six to one and half a dozen to the other”. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay the costs, 5s 6d. Her father, on being appealed to, refused to pay a single farthing, as he thought the Bench ought to have sent both the woman to gaol as he had “axed em to do”. The amount was paid, however, by a person in the body of the court.

**24 3 June 1878**

**Stroud**

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

**25 11 June 1878 Stroud**

A BRUTAL FELLOW This morning, **William Smith**, 40, boatman of Chalford, was brought before Messrs J W Hall and J C Little, charged with assaulting PC Packer. The prisoner had gone to his wife's mother's house, where his wife was lying dangerously ill with consumption, and threatened and cursed his wife, and when the policeman was called in, he attacked him in a furious manner. He was sentenced to six months hard labour, the magistrates regretting that they could not order him to be whipped.

**26 5 August 1878 Gloucester Assizes**

UNLAWFULLY WOUNDING **George Bailey** (25), boatman, was charged with maliciously wounding William Herbert at St George on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Mirehouse prosecuted, and Mr Griffiths defended.

The prosecutor deposed that on July 17<sup>th</sup>, he was drinking with the prisoner at the Lamb Inn, St George, when without any provocation, he got up and stabbed him with a knife in the left shoulder. He then shut up the knife, and went out. The knife went through his coat and shirt and caused a severe wound.

A witness was called in corroboration. Mr George Lennie, surgeon, described the wound, which he said was an inch and a quarter in depth. Considerable force must have been used. Cross-examined : The wound might have been inflicted with a small pocket knife. He did not think the wound could have been caused accidentally.

Mr Griffiths addressed the jury for the defence, suggesting that the wound was caused by an accident.

The learned Judge summed up, and the jury found the prisoner guilty.

In passing sentence, the Judge said the wound was inflicted with a knife, and the practice of using the knife was becoming so common that severe punishment must be inflicted. The prisoner had been already convicted of assaults, and it was clear that he gave way to an ungovernable temper and to drink. He would be sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

**27 11 September 1878 Gloucester City Police**

ALLEGED THEFT OF PLANKS **William Halling**, boatman, was charged with stealing some planks, but as the prosecutor said he did not believe the prisoner was guilty, although the stolen property was found in his boat, the case was not proceeded with, the prisoner being discharged on entering into his own recognisances in £20 to appear if called upon.

**28 6 May 1879**

CRUELTY TO HORSES At the Stafford Assize on Saturday, before Mr Justice Hawkins, **Henry Theobald**, a boatman, was sentenced to ten years penal servitude for brutally ill treating two mares, thereby causing their death.

**29 15 May 1879**

CHARGE OF SHOOTING A canal boatman named **Thomas Hilton**, of Manchester, was apprehended at Lymm, near Warrington, on Saturday morning, on a charge of maliciously shooting a boy named Michael Mannion, aged 13, residing with his parents at Warrington. On Wednesday last, the boy and some others were by the side of the canal when Hilton came past with his boat. One of the lads shouted something to him, upon which he threatened to shoot Mannion with a double-barrelled gun which he held in his hand and, the lad daring him to do it, he fired at him, loading a heavy charge of shot in his breast and arms. The boy was taken to the Warrington Infirmary, where he now lies in a precarious condition. The prosecutor's boat was boarded by the police a mile or two further down the canal, and Hilton gave a minute description of a poacher who, he said, had got on his boat near Manchester, with nets and a gun, adding it was he who had shot the boy and then made his escape. As the description tallied with that of a well-known Warrington poacher, Hilton was allowed to go on, and it was not till Friday night that the police discovered they

were on the wrong track and that the boatman himself had committed the outrage. By a fortunate circumstance, they apprehended Hilton on Saturday morning opposite the place where he shot the boy, and when he was charged with the offence, he betrayed the most abject fear, begging the police to have mercy on him. He was brought before Mr T P Norris during the afternoon, and remanded till the boy is sufficiently recovered to give evidence.

**30 27 May 1879**

**THE RICHMOND MURDER** After the Thames Police had been ineffectually dragging the River Thames for about three weeks in the vicinity of the Barnes Bridge, in hope of recovering the black leather bag which the prisoner Webster is supposed to have thrown over there on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, a reward of £50 was offered for the recovery of this bag. Since then, a good many black bags have been produced, but none has been found to contain the missing portions of Mrs Thomas, which the bag sought after is supposed to have contained. On Saturday, however, it was reported that a black bag containing a human head had been picked up at Deptford by a boatman named **Garston**. This statement is untrue. The boatman, about eight o'clock on Saturday morning, did find a black bag, but it was empty, although it had the appearance of having only recently contained some animal remains, as there were stains of blood about the bag. It was handed to an inspector of the Thames Police, and is now at Wapping Station. As it is over two months since the bag was supposed to have been thrown into the water, it is scarcely possible that anything it contained would now be recognisable. The bag itself, however, may not be so damaged, and if the police can trace it to the possession of Mrs Thomas, it may furnish a link in the evidence.

**31 4 July 1879**

**ACCIDENT TO A CHILD** Yesterday afternoon, **Mary Ann Horke**, aged 4, child of a boatman living in Goulder's Yard, Norfolk Street, Gloucester, was received in the Hospital, Birmingham, suffering from a severe fracture of the skull. It is stated that she sustained the injury through a portion of a stack of coal falling upon her whilst she was in her father's boat. Her condition last night was precarious.

**32 11 July 1879**

**WANTED** A boatman, to take charge and work a long boat ; must have first class references. Apply by letter only to Mr W Beard, Tyfield Villa, Falkner Street, Gloucester.

**33 6 August 1879**

**City Petty Sessions**

**OWNER AND BOATMAN** **George Lee** was summoned under the Masters and Servants Act for having refused to obey the lawful orders of his master, Mr John Chadburn, timber merchant, whereby he had sustained damages to the extent of 5s. Mr C Taynton appeared for the complainant. It appeared that the complainant is the owner of several lighters, and defendant had been in his service for three years as a lighterman. On the 24<sup>th</sup> July, defendant was ordered to Sharpness, to lighten a vessel, and was sent with advance money, but defendant refused, because he said it was not his turn. The men preferred an up country load to one at Sharpness. The defendant belonged to a boat called "*The Bee*", which had to be sent down by another man. Having other men in his employ, it did not seriously inconvenience him, and he simply made the claim to show these men that they could not dictate to him the terms upon which they do their work. The Bench made an order upon the defendant to pay the damages claimed, and the costs, which Mr Chadburn paid, saying he merely wished the men to be taught what was their duty.

**34 15 August 1879**

**Gloucester Petty Sessions**

**H Holland**, a boatman, pleaded guilty to being hopelessly drunk in Southgate Street, and was fined 2s 6d and costs.

**35 24 September 1879 Police Court**

**BAD LANGUAGE Benjamin Ballinger**, a boatman, who did not appear, was summoned for using obscene language. Robert Baker, a man in the employ of the Stoke Prior Salt Works, proved the case. Fined 5s and costs, or seven days.

**36 3 December 1879 Gloucester County Court**

A TIMBER DEALING DISPUTE

**WARE AND CO v CHARLES BUTLER** Plaintiffs in this case are timber merchants of Bullo, near Newnham, and defendant is a boatman of Newent, and plaintiffs sued to recover £33 14s, balance alleged to be due for certain timber and poles under a contract. Mr Gilbert of Newnham appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr Edmonds of Newent for the defendant. It appeared that the plaintiffs entered into a contract on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March last, to deliver poles and small timber to the defendant to the amount of £73, towards which £20 was paid in cash on the 17<sup>th</sup> April, and £19 8s on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, making a total of £39 18s, and leaving the balance claimed due to the plaintiffs. This claim arose, according to the contention of the plaintiffs, out of a verbal contract made in Highnam Woods, on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. The main point at issue between the parties was whether certain oak wood was included in the contract, and this turned upon the construction of the contract. The defendant, in reference to the action, filed a counter claim for damages amounting to £35 for breach of contract, which breach, according to defendant's contention, consisted in the non delivery of the oak. His Honour said he believed the contract did not include the oak, and therefore it was not necessary for defendant's solicitor to go into that part of the case in regard to breach of contract. Judgement for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed.

**37 26 February 1881**

**WANTED** Boatman for coal boat ; must have good character. Apply, by letter only, to C, care of Mr E Pickford, King Street, Gloucester.

**38 23 April 1881**

**SUICIDE IN THE SEVERN AT GLOUCESTER** An elderly woman named Gardner, aged about 56, wife of a thatcher, and residing in Suffolk Street, who left home on Thursday and did not return, has been found drowned in the Severn at Gloucester this morning. It seems that she left about a quarter past eight o'clock, and went to a neighbour's house. She stayed there a short time, and then left, telling the inmates of the house that "she was going to do away with herself". Little importance was attached to what she said, and she was not detained. Nothing except that during the last few days she has been depressed in spirits and that she made the remark referred to , justifies such a conclusion. When she left home, she was without a hat or bonnet, and was wearing, it is believed, a light skirt and two odd boots. This morning, at half past eight o'clock, the body of the unfortunate woman was found drowned in the Severn, a little below the Llanthony weir, by a boatman named **Henry Dark**. It was taken out of the water, and at once conveyed to the Sir Colin Campbell Inn, where it now lies, awaiting a coroner's inquest.

**39 25 May 1881 Gloucester Crown Court**

**A BOATMAN'S CLAIM Charles Critchley v Charles Sivell.** Mr Taynton for the defendant. The plaintiff, who is a boatman, sued the defendant for 10s, the balance of wages alleged to be due to him for conveying a cargo of clover. Plaintiff admitted that he knew defendant was acting for Mr Voyce in the matter, but stated that defendant said he would pay him if Mr Voyce raised any difficulty. His Honour said it was perfectly clear on the plaintiff's own showing that the money was due from Mr Voyce and not from the defendant, and he gave judgement for the defendant accordingly, without costs.

**40 21 June 1881**

**A DRUNKEN QUARREL** Last night, about eleven o'clock, some men were quarrelling in a public

house near the Quay, and having been turned out by the landlord, one of the men named Bunn struck a man named **Joseph Jeffreys**, a boatman of Birmingham, and kicked him severely when on the ground. Jeffreys was subsequently taken to the Infirmary, where it was found his leg was broken. Bunn is in custody, and will be brought up before the city magistrates tomorrow morning and charged with the offence.

**41 1 November 1881**

**The Winter Assizes**

BURGLARY AT UPTON-ON-SEVERN **Benjamin Shepherd** (34), boatman, and William Daniels (25), labourer, pleaded guilty to feloniously breaking and entering the dwelling house of John Coomb, on the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> July last, after the hour of ten o'clock in the night of the first-named day, at the parish of Upton-on-Severn, therein stealing, Shepherd a double-barrelled gun, and Daniels a pair of sheets, the property of the said John George Coomb. Prisoners said they were both drunk at the time, and asked for mercy. His Lordship taking into consideration the fact that the prisoners had been already sometime in gaol, sentenced them each to nine months hard labour.

**42 14 November 1881**

**Gloucester Petty Sessions**

FOWL STEALING William Hogg, a boy 13 years of age, was charged with stealing a fowl, value 2s, on Sunday. **Samuel Priday**, boatman, living with his father in Westgate Street, said he kept fowls at Llanthony, and they were all safe on Saturday night. The following morning, about half past nine o'clock, he missed a hen and six chickens. In a field near the fowls' house, he saw the prisoner, who picked up a stone and threw it at a fowl. It struck the fowl in the eye and stunned it, and then he put it under his coat. He saw witness, dropped the fowl, and ran away. Witness followed him as far as Robin's Wood hill, and then lost sight of him. The prisoner was the same boy, and witness had known him a long time. He afterwards found the chickens with the hen. In reply to the charge, prisoner said he picked up the fowl to see if he had hurted it, and then ran away. Mr Chipp said the boy was kept in custody because the parents backed him up in saying he had only been out of the house a quarter of an hour, whereas he had gone nearly to Robin's Wood hill. He pleaded guilty, and having been cautioned, he was ordered to receive twelve strokes with the birch rod at the Police Station.

**43 7 December 1881**

ACCIDENTS AT STROUD A boatman named **Thomas Wilkins** was admitted to Stroud Hospital this morning with a broken leg, caused by falling off a plank leading from his boat to the wharf at Wallbridge, across which he was carrying coal in a handbarrow.

**44 13 December 1881**

FATAL RESULT OF KICKING On Saturday afternoon, a boatman named **Kent Shaw**, aged 53 years, and his son, Richard, aged 20, were returning to their home in Gannow Lane, Burnley, from a neighbouring beerhouse, when they quarrelled. On arriving at the house, Richard threw his father down on the floor and kicked him in the chest, fracturing several ribs, through which the old man died on Sunday night. Prisoner was remanded by the magistrates.

**45 13 January 1882**

A MAN DROWNED IN THE CANAL AT STROUD – INQUEST Mr Smith (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Canal Tavern, Bowbridge, Stroud, this morning, on the body of Luke Harmer, an old man, who was found drowned in the canal yesterday afternoon.

John William Harmer, cloth cleaner at Mr Chambers's dye works, said the deceased was his father, and lived at Bowbridge. He also worked at the dye works. He was a widower, and 61 years of age. He lived alone. Witness saw the deceased last on Tuesday, when he seemed as usual. He enjoyed fairly good health. He was at work on Wednesday, and yesterday morning he did not come to work, and the foreman sent witness to look after him. He went, and found the door of the house locked and the key in the door. Witness went in, and found his father was not there. The bed had been

slept in, and his garters had been left near the bed. Deceased had often left the key in the door, so witness thought he had gone to Stroud. Later in the day, he heard that a hat had been picked up near the canal. It was given him, and he recognised it as his father's. Mr Butt lent witness a drag, and they found deceased under Bowbridge Canal Bridge, in the water. He had a bruise on the nose. He might have gone by the canal as a near cut to his work. He had money in the house, and food.

Mark Jones of Stroud Hill deposed that he worked with the deceased. There was nothing peculiar in him as a rule, but on Wednesday night, when witness said "Good night" to him, he appeared to be crying. He sometimes came by the canal to work. They commenced work at seven.

Charlotte Butt, a young girl, said deceased came into their shop on Wednesday evening about six pm, and bought a loaf of bread. He seemed unusually quiet.

A juryman remarked that someone had noticed that on Thursday morning, deceased had no light in his house as he usually had.

**Francis Bennett**, a boatman, deposed that at seven o'clock on Thursday morning, he found a soft hat lying on the towing-path in an angle of the bridge. It lay as though placed there, being on its edge with the top against the wall. Deceased's son afterwards came and claimed it. It was dark at seven, and it would require care to walk by the water. There was not enough wind to blow the hat where it was. To get to his work, he would not pass to where the hat was, but his body might have been carried there by the water.

John Aldridge deposed that he worked at the dye house, and on Thursday, about half past one, he saw deceased's son with the hat. He got a drag, and after a few throws, pulled deceased out exactly opposite to where the hat had been found, and about two yards from the path at the Brimscombe end of the bridge. Witness helped to take him home and undress him. He had a slight bruise on the nose. There was a hand rail about four feet from the ground at the place where deceased was found at the edge of the path. The water was about six feet deep.

By a Juryman : Deceased might have fallen in above where the rail ends, a few yards away. There was no sign of a struggle.

The Coroner reviewed the evidence, dwelling upon the fact of deceased being quiet, but said it did not appear that his mind was so affected as to make him commit self destruction ; besides, he had had a night's sleep. It was probable he fell in in taking a short cut to work. His hat might have fallen off with a gust of wind, or he might have knocked it off accidentally, or it might have been put there by a passenger. He recommended a verdict of "Found drowned".

The Jury accordingly returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

#### **46 30 January 1882**

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

#### **47 7 February 1882**

**GLOUCESTER SCHOOL BOARD** A meeting of this Board was held on Monday, Mr J P Wilton in the chair. There were also present :- the Rev J Mayne (Vice Chairman), Rev J Bloomfield, Messrs J Ward, C Parker, H W Bruton, and P Cooke (clerk).

**IRREGULAR ATTENDANTS** It appeared that at a meeting of the Irregular Attendance Committee held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, it was recommended that the parents of 28 children who were irregular attendants should be summoned before the justices.

Attendance officer Jones said some of the children had since attended school ; and the Board thereupon resolved to summon the remainder who had not done so. In reference to the boat children, some were very irregular in attendance, and the Chairman suggested that in all cases where they did not attend school, they should be taken before the magistrates, and be dealt with by them.

The Attendance officer stated that last week a case came before him in which boat children had received presents of books and cards, but which they could not read. It was not an unusual

occurrence for boat children of 12 or 13 years of age to be unable to read.

The Rev J Bloomfield considered that the worst case of irregular attendants among the boat children should be taken before the magistrates ; and Mr Ward hoped the Board would not deal harshly with the parents of such children.

The Chairman said the Board had allowed the cases to go on for such a long time that they seemed now to have lost all control of the boat children.

The Attendance Officer said there were 40 or 50 families in the Island who went with boats. He understood that at Birmingham there existed a place to which the children were taken on the arrival of the boats, and there fed and educated.

The Chairman remarked that many of the boat children did not go to school at all, and so the Board were not in a position to ascertain who they were. At present, they could only find out who were the irregular attendants, but it was the children who were receiving no education at all they wished to get at.

Mr Parker suggested that the attendance officers should give up a portion of their time devoted to ordinary duties, and spend it in looking up the boat children.

The Clerk, however, pointed out that this would not be possible.

It was decided to take proceedings in one case only of a boatman's child who was an irregular attendant.

#### **48 18 February 1882**

**Mary Rafferty** has been charged before the Chester magistrates with wandering about in a nude state on the previous night. The woman said she had been quarrelling with her husband, a boatman, and that he first stripped her naked and then carried her to the canal bank, where he left her. The prisoner could not be put in the dock, and the Bench granted a remand until clothes could be obtained for her from the workhouse.

#### **49 28 February 1882**

**REMARKABLE SUICIDE Benjamin Evans**, a boatman, on Monday told some fishermen that he was going to drown himself in the Towy. They informed a constable, who following the deceased, found him standing in the water. Evans said his wife's misconduct had driven him to suicide, and told the policeman to stand off. The latter dashed at the deceased, who plunged into deep water. Here he faltered, and swam towards the shore, but the heavy flood from the recent rains carried him away, the swirl making him helpless, and the same cause frustrating a rescue attempted in coracles. Deceased, whose wife lives with another man, attempted suicide by cutting his throat some time ago.

#### **50 6 March 1882**

**SCHOOL BOARD PROSECUTION** At the City Police Court this morning, **Caleb Stokes**, boatman, of Lower Westgate Street, was summoned at the instance of the Gloucester School Board, with neglecting to send his four children – Harry aged 9, Bessie aged 7, Caroline aged 4 and John aged 11 – to school in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act.

Mr P Cooke appeared on behalf of the Gloucester School Board, and defendant was represented by his wife.

Mr Cooke said this was a boat case, in which the boat was registered in the city of Gloucester, and it was the duty of the School Board to see that the children of parents who went with such boats were properly educated. There were some 80 children in Gloucester who went with boats that received no education whatsoever, and the School Board authorities were bound to carry out the provisions of the Act.

Mr Wheeler, one of the magistrates, considered the requirements in these cases most unreasonable.

Mr Jones, the attendance officer, was called, and said the four children named had not been to school for many months. Defendant lived in a cottage near Westgate Bridge, and took his wife and children with the boat voyages up the river.

Mrs Stokes said her husband's boat was at present in the Basin. The master of St Nicholas's school, Mr Stanway, had taken two of the children that morning. They had been refused admission at the Free School, because they were sometimes only a week at home in Gloucester, and were taken away when the boat left.

Mr Cooke said he knew the children had been admitted to St Nicholas's school.

Mr Reynolds remarked that these people stood in a very awkward position, and he thought the law somewhat severe with regard to them.

Mr Cooke was of the same opinion, but the Act stated that unless 200 attendances were made in a year no grant would be given. Therefore, one could very well understand why the master of the Free School had declined to take these children. So far as receiving education, however, the School Board were bound to see that they went to school.

Mr Reynolds : But how can they? They cannot afford to pay.

Mr Cooke said it would be impracticable for him to get the Canal and Navigation Companies to put up a school for these boat children, although there was such an institution, where the children were educated free, at Birmingham.

Mr Reynolds asked Mr Cooke : If these children are sent to the Board School, will you accept them?

Mr Cooke : Certainly ; but it would be a long way for them to go.

Mr Reynolds, addressing the woman, told her the Bench endeavoured to get as near the Act as they could. If her husband failed to get his children educated, he must be fined or sent to prison. He asked her if she would be willing to send them to the Board School every day when in Gloucester. The law must be met in some way, as it wanted the children to be educated.

Mrs Stokes said she should like her children educated, but would rather take them to the Free School than the Board School, as it was so much nearer.

Mr Cooke said the Free School had managers, but if arrangements could be made for defendant's children to go there, he would accept that.

Mr Reynolds suggested that a room might be hired in the neighbourhood of the Quay, and a teacher placed there to instruct the boat children.

Mr Cooke said the Birmingham Navigation Company had provided that in their town, and when the boat arrived, the children were taken in. Still, he could hardly ask the companies to have a similar one here, but any suggestion that came from the Bench, he should be pleased to lay before the School Board.

Mr Reynolds said the Canal Boats Act would no doubt receive reconsideration by Parliament.

Mr Cooke stated that Major Price got the Act passed, and all the boat children in this neighbourhood now came under the supervision of the Gloucester School Board.

Mr Reynolds said surely the citizens of Gloucester would not mind providing accommodation for these little children without having to send them more than a mile to the Board School.

Mr Cooke thanked the Bench for the consideration they had given the case, and said he would take care the observations made were brought before the Board.

The case was then adjourned for two months, and the defendant's wife told that in the meantime she must keep the children at school.

## **51 8 March 1882**

### **Police Courts**

**SUSPICIOUS CASE** **Richard Mayo**, boatman, and **Emma Mayo**, his wife, were placed in the dock under the following circumstances. On Tuesday, PC Cantle was on duty when he saw the woman carrying a bundle. He stopped her, and in reply to his questions, she said the bundle contained some scrap iron. Not being satisfied, he examined it, and found that it contained lead. In answer to further questions, she said that the bundle had been brought from Oldham, Staffordshire, and that her husband knew all about it. The constable then went to the husband, and he admitted that the lead was stolen property, and he had brought it to Gloucester to get rid of it. After detailing these circumstances, Mr Chipp applied for a remand for a week, in order that the Staffordshire police might be communicated with. The Bench granted the application, and admitted the man

Mayo to bail in £10 for himself and £10 for his wife.

**52 6 June 1882**

**Joseph Shay**, a canal boatman, who hailed from the Black Country, has been committed for trial at Derby for kidnapping a boy named How, age about 10 years. The lad, who is respectably connected, got on board the prisoner's barge in play, and the latter refused to let him go ashore, but took him by canal to Wolverhampton, compelling him to drive the boat horse, and exposing him to hardships. The little fellow there managed to escape, and tramped home to Derby, but suffered much from exposure and insufficient food, the prisoner, it is stated, keeping him chiefly on bread and turnips.

**53 24 July 1882**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**THEFT OF TOOLS** **Joseph Kerwin**, a youth, was charged with stealing a bag of ship's carpenter's tools, of the value of 5s, the property of Herbert Jones, sail maker, living at the Star public house, on Friday. It appeared that the prosecutor left his bag of tools in a truck outside the Duke Inn, where he went in for a few minutes. The prisoner was seen by **John Smith**, a boatman, to come out of the Duke and take the bag of tools from the truck. On Saturday, the prisoner was working a boat up the river with **William Millard** of Quay Lane, when prisoner pointed out the bag, which was lying under the Quay wall near the Ship Inn. The bag containing the tools Millard afterwards handed to the prosecutor, and the prisoner was apprehended by PC Collette. The prisoner elected to be tried summarily, and said he did not take the tools with the intention of stealing them, but only for a joke. He was sent to prison for 14 days.

**54 26 July 1882**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**OBSCENE LANGUAGE** **Alice Bowers**, of Alms Place, Bristol Road, who did not appear, was summoned for using obscene language in the public streets on Saturday. Mary Ann Leighton stated that she was talking with her friends outside her door in Alma Place when the defendant passed by. Hearing her (witness's) boy laugh, defendant, thinking he was laughing at her, used very filthy and obscene language. Emma Brown gave corroborative evidence. Defendant, who is the wife of a boatman and has been up before, was fined 5s and costs, or seven days.

**55 5 October 1882**

At Manchester Police Court, **Martha Smith**, wife of a boatman, was on Tuesday committed for trial for attempting to drown her child and herself. On Friday night, when under the influence of drink, she leaped into the canal with the child, aged four years, in her arms. She was rescued by a policeman and others, and now protested that she had slipped in.

**56 25 November 1882**

**A WITNESS CENSURED** An inquest was held on Wednesday by Mr Hawkes, coroner for Birmingham, on the body of **William Reason** (72), boatman, who died whilst travelling in a canal boat belonging to **Mr Thomas Hipwood** of Gloucester. The jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes, and censured a witness, named **George**, for not calling in a doctor to see the man before he died.

**57 29 November 1882**

**Gloucester County Court**

**Smallman v Price**. Defendant in this case said the weather was at fault. Her husband was a boatman, and he had not been able to get regular work. Things had been very unsettled for boatmen. His Honour ordered that instalments of 4s a month should be paid in future.

**58 26 February 1883**

**Gloucester Petty Sessions**

**SCHOOL BOARD CASES : BOAT CHILDREN** **Jas Thomas**, Royal Oak Yard, was summoned for not sending his children – Annie, aged 12 years and Charles aged 11 years – to school. Mr P

Cooke prosecuted. The mother of the children appeared, and said her husband was a boatman, The boy was employed at Mr Butler's tar works. The Bench said they were determined to enforce the law against parents who neglected to provide for the education of their children, and fined defendant 3s 6d in each case, or ten days.

**59 19 March 1883 Gloucester Petty Sessions**

SCHOOL BOARD CASES **John Tunks**, a boatman, was summoned for not sending his children to school. Mr P Cooke appeared on behalf of the School Board, and stated that the defendant had gone up the country with his boat, but would attend the Court when he returned. He applied that the case be adjourned *sine die*, and the Bench assented to this course.

**60 22 March 1893**

SINGULAR DEATH IN A CANAL BOAT An inquest was held on Wednesday evening at the Infirmary by J H Jones, deputy city coroner, on the body of **William Phipp** (60), who was a native of Lechlade and "captain" of a coal boat. **Mr Edward Greenway**, a boatman, deposed that he was on the same boat as deceased. He came down from Kempsford and arrived in Gloucester on Saturday. Deceased had been poorly on the journey, and he had medical advice at Chalford. On Monday he was still unwell, and laid down from breakfast time till about half past twelve o'clock. After dinner, he laid down again, and he (witness) had occasion to go into the cabin about ten minutes past two, and saw that deceased had fallen on his knees with his head jammed between the stove and some partition of the boat. The stove was at the time half red hot. The deceased did not speak nor make any motion. He was badly burnt about the head. He was still alive, and with assistance he had him conveyed to the Infirmary, but deceased died just before reaching the institution. Deceased was a steady man, and he never knew him have a fit. **John William Phipp**, son of deceased, stated that he had known deceased complain of giddiness in the head, and a pain in his heart. Mr Walter Brown, house surgeon, deposed that the deceased was brought to the Infirmary on Monday afternoon. He was then quite dead. By order of the Coroner, he had made a *post mortem* examination. The whole of the blood vessels were in a very diseased state, and the heart was under great fatty degeneration. The whole of the organs were much congested. Death was the result of failure in the heart's action. There was a slight burn on the right cheek, but that had nothing to do with his death. He thought deceased must have fallen on the stove as a result of the commencement of the failure of his heart's action. The jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes.

**61 25 April 1883 Stroud News**

A MAN ACCIDENTALLY DROWNED An old boatman, known in Stroud as "**Tatty Pearce**", of Randwick, has met with his death by drowning, He was found floating in deep water at the Lower Wharf, Wallbridge, about five o'clock this morning, near the boat where he slept in. He was quite cold, and had apparently gone to his boat last evening to retire for the night, and missing his footing, fell into the water. The bank bore marks as though a pair of heels had slipped down it. His body was taken to the Ship Inn, where an inquest will be held.

**62 27 April 1883**

THE STROUD DROWNING CASE – INQUEST Mr Ball held an inquest at the Stroudwater Canal Offices, Stroud, on Thursday, touching the death of **Frederick Pearce**, boatman, who was found drowned in the canal on Wednesday morning.

Thomas Brown, landlord of the Ship Inn, Wallbridge, stated that the deceased called at his house on the afternoon of Tuesday, and one of the boatmen there gave him half a pint of ale, and another man gave him some bread and bacon. He had no money. Witness did not know whether he had more beer. He was sober when he left the house. Witness helped to pull deceased out of the canal next morning. Mr Clark and he pulled him out.

**Thomas Wyman**, boatman of the *Wave*, said he knew the deceased well. He arrived on Tuesday

afternoon from Chalford to the boat *Lily*. Witness went into the Ship Inn with him, and gave him a glass of beer in the afternoon. Witness left with him in about five minutes, and left him on the wharf. Witness saw him again near the Bell Inn about seven o'clock. He was sober, and witness went up the street a little way with him. He said he was going to see his brother. He seemed the same as usual. No one else slept on board the *Lily*. Witness went to his boat about nine o'clock, but saw no one about. Next morning, as they were starting about five, his mate **Butt** called witness's attention to the deceased in the water. The body was floating on the farther side of his boat, near his cabin. Mr Clark sent for the police. There was a fresh mark on the bank near the cabin, as though someone's foot had slipped down. If he fell in, he would probably go under the boat and up the other side. The cabin door was locked. By a juryman : He used to get a drop of beer sometimes, and was very helpless when in that state.

**Joseph Butt**, boatman of the *Wave*, deposed that on Tuesday afternoon, he walked as far as the Shambles with the deceased, and did not see him again till five next morning. Witness slept in the town, and on going to his boat saw the deceased floating in the water by the *Lily*. He called Wyman and Clark, and they pulled him out. The body was limp, and had apparently not been in the water long. He might have been in four or five hours. His clothes were all right, except his hat, which was gone. Witness carried him into the Ship Inn.

George Hogg, landlord of the Horse and Groom, Leazes, stated that he called at his house at 9 o'clock on Tuesday night, and left in about half an hour. He and his brother had two pints of beer between them. He was perfectly sober when he left the house.

Jacob Pearce, brother of the deceased, said his brother was 60 years of age and lived at Randwick. His wife died a fortnight ago. There were no children. He called on witness at 9 o'clock on Tuesday at the Horse and Groom, where witness lodged. He left sober, and said he was going to his boat.

William Price, landlord of the Orange Tree Inn, Silver Street, said the deceased came into the house at ten o'clock on Tuesday night, and stayed ten minutes. He had one pint of beer, which he paid for. He left quite sober.

PC White had examined the body, and found no marks of injury. He could not find that the deceased had called at any other public houses besides those they had in evidence.

By a juryman : He had 1s 5d in his pocket.

A juryman remarked that deceased had been paid 2s 6d on Tuesday afternoon by his master.

Verdict, "Found drowned – probably accidentally".

### **63 4 June 1883**

### **Gloucester Petty Sessions**

ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENT BY A CAPTAIN **John Wood**, captain of the longboat *Frolic*, was charged with stealing £5 8s 3d, the money of his employer, Mr John Price. Mr Chipp having stated the facts, the following evidence was given. Mr Alfred Price, shipbuilder of the Docks, Gloucester, said : On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1882, I employed the prisoner as captain of the longboat *Frolic*, my property. I gave him directions to take the boat to the Western Wharf, and load it with deals at Messrs Morris and Smith's yard. I also told him that he was to receive instructions from Edward Clark as to where he was to deliver the deals, and I also told him to go to Mr Charles Portlock to receive £3 17s 6d, and to go to **James Marchant**, lock-keeper, to receive £1 7s 6d, making a total of £5 5s, which money was to pay his expenses up to the discharge of the cargo. It was the prisoner's duty, on delivering the goods, to receive the money for freightage, and on his return to Gloucester, to account to me for the money. I gave him instructions to call at Stoke Prior and receive a cargo of salt, and bring it to Gloucester. The prisoner nor the boat returned to Gloucester, and I never saw the prisoner until he was in custody at Gloucester on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May last. He has not accounted to me for the freightage money he was to have received at Wolverhampton. About seven months after the *Frolic* had left Gloucester, I found her abandoned at Birmingham. Mr E Aldershaw, cashier for the firm of Messrs Millington and Bowen, timber merchants of Wolverhampton, said : The prisoner delivered a load of deals at my employers' yard, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July last year. They were consigned from Morris and Smith of Gloucester. I paid him the sum of

£5 8s 3d and took his receipt (now produced) for the money. I saw the prisoner sign the receipt. Mr H T Humpidge, clerk in the employ of Messrs Morris and Smith, said : ON the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, a boatman, representing himself as J Wood, of the boat *Frolic*, signed the receipt produced, consigning a load of spruce deals to Messrs Millington and Bowen of Wolverhampton. D S Piff said : I apprehended the prisoner on Monday last, under a magistrates' warrant. In reply to the charge, he said, "I know I did wrong by receiving the money up the country and not bringing it back". The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to six months hard labour.

**64 7 June 1883**

**ROBBERY FROM A BOATMAN** At Walsall, on Wednesday, Mary Ann Ross (21) was brought up on a warrant from Leamington, charged with having stolen £28 10s from **George Jones**, boatman, Gloucester, whilst in a house of ill fame. A previous conviction was proved against her, and she was sentenced to four months imprisonment, with hard labour.

**65 18 June 1883 Gloucester Petty Sessions**

**HUSBAND AND WIFE Elizabeth Clutterbuck** was charged with beating and assaulting **George Clutterbuck**. Mr A Henderson prosecuted. The parties are husband and wife, but had been separated for some time. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, the complainant was steering a long boat drawn by a steam tug, and on nearing the Westgate Bridge, the defendant assailed him with stones, several of which struck him. Defendant stoutly denied throwing the stones. She was ordered to keep the peace for three months and find a surety.

**66 11 August 1883**

**A BOATMAN DROWNED AT THE DOCKS** This morning a man named **Robert Braxton**, owner of the boat "*Pioneer*" of Maisemore, was drowned in the old basin at the docks. He was standing on his boat and pulling it along with a boat hook, when the hook slipped from off a buoy, and he fell into the water. Although assistance was given immediately, he was drowned. His body was recovered about an hour later and taken to the Llanthony Bridge Inn.

**67 14 August 1883**

**DROWNED AT THE DOCKS** On Monday afternoon, Mr A M Sydney-Turner, city coroner, held an inquest at the Llanthony Bridge Inn on the body of **Raymond Braxton**, a boatman of Maisemore. From the evidence of **Arthur Wood**, who was in deceased's employ, and **James Rea**, a lighterman, it appeared that on Saturday morning about half past five o'clock, deceased went to his boat at the Docks. The boat was then discharged, and Wood and deceased began to pull the boat across to the locks. Deceased made use of a boat hook to get the boat along, but in placing it against a floating buoy, it slipped, and he pitched into the water. Wood threw a piece of rope towards deceased, who could not swim, and when he once went under, did not come up again. Directly he saw deceased in the water, Rea, a lighterman, jumped into a boat and pulled out to deceased who, however, sank just before the intended help was of avail. Drags were procured, and the body was found close to the buoy. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned."

**68 23 August 1883**

At a meeting of the Brownhills Local Board last night, the Surveyor reported that he had ascertained that a canal boat, with two smallpox cases on board, had passed through the Brownhills district, and been stopped at or beyond Lichfield by the sanitary authorities. He added that he believed the boat came from West Bromwich, and that there had been in the boatman's family four other cases of smallpox, of which two had proved fatal and two had been left in the West Bromwich Hospital.

**69 6 September 1883**

**DROWNED IN THE SEVERN** A boatman named **James Taylor**, of Stourport, was drowned in

the Severn in January last, but no trace of his body has been found until now. A message has been received by the Stourport police from Upton-on-Severn stating that the body has been recovered there. It is only recognisable by the fact that Taylor had lost one of his fingers.

#### **70 12 September 1883**

**ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO DROWN A WIFE** At the Old Bailey today, **Richard Peirce**, boatman, was acquitted on the charge of attempting to drown his wife by thrusting her off his boat into the Grand Junction Canal.

#### **71 13 September 1883**

**ATTEMPTING TO DROWN A WIFE** At the Central Criminal Court on Wednesday, **Richard Pearce**, 22, boatman, was indicted for feloniously throwing his wife, **Mary Pearce**, into the Grand Junction Canal, with intent to murder her. The prisoner was the master of a tug called the *Helena*, which vessel, when the affair occurred, was lying in the canal at Brentford. The prosecutrix went on board and asked the prisoner to give her some money, and while she was in the cabin, the prisoner was alleged to have used an oath and called out to her, "Come up on deck and I'll give you some money". The woman accordingly came up to the deck, and the prisoner was represented to have deliberately twisted his legs round those of his wife, and deliberately pushed her into the water at a place where the canal was five feet deep. It was also alleged that when a man who was on the barge was about to endeavour to take the woman out of the water, but the prisoner prevented him and said, using an oath, "Let her drown!" This was the case on the part of the prosecution, but some of the witnesses very materially modified the evidence they had originally given, and what they stated was to the effect that the occurrence was accidental, and this was the defence that was now made to the charge on the part of the prisoner. The prosecutrix in her evidence, however, positively contradicted this suggestion, and asserted that the prisoner wilfully pushed her into the water, after making use of the expressions above mentioned. The jury retired to deliberate upon their verdict, and after being absent an hour, they found the prisoner not guilty.

#### **72 13 October 1883**

**ST NICHOLAS SCHOOLS AND BOAT CHILDREN** Last evening, a meeting of the managers of the St Nicholas School received a deputation from the School Board at the schoolroom, to consider the question of admitting the children of boatmen into the schools. The managers present were the Rev J J Luce, Messrs W Byett, W Green, J Powell, F Dupre, H J Sherwood, T W Webb, J Thomas and F Stanway, and the deputation were the Rev J Mayne and Mr J P Wilson.

The Rev J Luce said the managers were glad to see the deputation. They expected their visit from the remarks at the School Board meeting that had appeared in the newspapers with respect to the managers.

The Rev J Mayes thanked the managers for the readiness with which they had granted the request of the School Board for an interview. The matter which they were there to consider arose out of a representation which was made at a meeting of the Irregular Attendance Committee. It was stated to the committee that a child of a boatman had been sent to the St Nicholas School, and that a fee of sixpence per week had been demanded – a fee which was altogether out of the power of the parent of the child to pay. The child had consequently not gone to school. The case stood thus :- That as the child was not going to school, it was the duty of the School Board to ascertain the cause. The cause was stated to be, in this particular case, that a prohibition school fee was placed upon the child, and the parent was unable to pay it. The hands of the Board were thus tied, and they were almost helpless to carry out their work. The Board had been led to believe that this particular case was not the only one of its kind, but that there were many parents in the St Nicholas district were in the same position. The Board were therefore desirous of a friendly interview, to see if a better and more satisfactory state of things could not be brought about.

Mr J P Wilton said he was present on the committee when this particular case came before them. The parent, who was of the boating class, asked what she was to do under the circumstances. She

stated that when she was in Birmingham with the boat, the child went to school free, but had to pay 6d a week at the St Nicholas School. Why, she asked, were they of the boating class to be treated differently to other people who only pay 3d? He knew perfectly well what was the reason of this extra charge. The managers' difficulty was that of the question of average and daily attendance. The daily average of the school would be considerably diminished by the irregular attendance of the boat children. There were one or two considerations why these children should be treated as other children. The St Nicholas School was the school of the parish in which they resided, and he did not think one parishioner ought to be treated on one scale, and another on a different scale. It was the duty of the School Board to see that children go to school, and if they were refused at one school on account of prohibitory fees, it was clear another school must be provided, and the city would be put to the expense of erecting a fresh school.

The Rev J Luce said that before replying to the representations the deputation had made, he wished to refer to the remarks made at the School Board meeting. The managers felt that an injustice had been done them which should be repaired. The Chairman of the School Board was reported in the *Citizen* to have said, "St Nicholas Schools were built some time ago partly by public subscription, not for children in other parts of Gloucester, but for those in the parish of St Nicholas, a great number of whom are, in fact, boat children ; so that if the managers close their doors against this class of children, they would not really be fulfilling the work for which the schools were built". To that statement, the managers took exception, as they claimed to be carrying out to the best of their ability the purposes for which the schools were built. To say that the schools were built exclusively for the benefit of the children of that parish was not strictly accurate. With regard to the charges of acting capriciously and unfairly towards the boat children, they denied them. They had adopted a certain course with respect to these children, which was arrived at after twelve months careful consideration, and the exceptional fee of 6d was charged. They had treated the boat children exceptionally because theirs was an exceptional case. They invited the attention of the School Board in the following facts :- (1) Boatmen were not ranked among the poorest parishioners, but were rather looked upon as people earning good wages ; (2) some of their children attending school themselves earn money when they were away ; (3) they were grossly irregular in their attendance ; (4) that gross irregularity tended to demoralise the tone of the whole of the whole school, which was the most serious consideration ; (5) those children incur their share of the general expenses of the school and yet paid a very insignificant contribution, even when compared with other children ; (6) under the new Code, the boat children would have to be presented on precisely the same conditions as other children, and that would mean a serious pecuniary loss. In the particular case to which reference had been made, he should state that the mother of the child promised to keep her child at school and was only charged 3d. She broke her promise, and the fee was raised to 6d, the managers having no other choice. If the case – or any other – could be proved to be one of real hardship, the managers would be always ready to make allowances. Was it unfair, he asked, that the managers should protect themselves as they did, when they were struggling for very existence, and was it their duty to endanger the interests of the whole of the school for the sake of these exceptional cases? That was practically what they were asked to do. If the Board would suggest a plan by which the managers might treat the boat children upon the same terms as other children, and at the same time be fair to the school generally, they would be happy to consider it.

A long discussion ensued in which the deputation and most of the managers took part.

The Rev J Mayne said the statement of Mr Luce had put a different complexion on the matter. He was extremely sorry any remarks he had made should have caused trouble to the managers – such was far from his intention. The managers had made it plain to him that the boatmen were not the poorest class, and could afford to pay this higher fee. He could not now regard the boat children so hardly treated as he did before he came to the meeting. The case in question was somewhat peculiar, and the Board had been deceived by the parent. The irregularity of these children would materially affect the daily average, and deprive the school of its merited grant of excellence. The School Board were, however, not relieved of their difficulty, and if St Nicholas School could not take the children in, the Board must purchase or build some school for them.



**76 15 February 1884**

**Local and district news**

**STRANGE SHOOTING CASE IN GLOUCESTER** A young man named **George Williams**, 19, a boatman, was on Thursday on his boat on the Severn, when a couple of stray shots from a gun entered his forehead. He was taken to the Infirmary, and the shots were extracted, but it was not considered necessary to detain him. It is not known who fired the gun.

**77 19 April 1884**

**THE WHOLESALE WHEAT ROBBERIES BY GLOUCESTER MEN** At the Birmingham Quarter Sessions on Friday, before Mr J S Dugdale QC, Recorder, **James Hawker** (32), boatman, **John Allen** (57), boatman, Henry Jelf (66), porter, and Edward Wainwright (71), labourer, were charged with stealing 1,216 lb of wheat, the property of the New Union Mill Company. Mr Hugo Young appeared on behalf of the prosecutors. Mr Daly defended Jelf, and Mr Dorsett defended the other prisoners. From the evidence given on behalf of the prosecution, it appeared that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, Mr P Smith, the director of the company, purchased 148,000 lbs of Nicolaieff wheat from a ship in port at Sharpness Point. The cargo was conveyed in two boats by canal, under the care of Hawker and Allen, each boat having a load of 299 sacks, the weight of each of which was about 252 lb. On arriving at the bar lock in the Worcester Canal, the boats were lightened so as to run up the shallow arm of the canal leading to the New Union Mill. At this lock there was a wharf, which was under the charge of Jelf. At the time the boats were lightened on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, there was no wheat on the wharf besides that which was taken from the boats in question. Finally, Hawker unloaded his boat at the mills and returned to receive the sacks taken from both of the boats when lightened, and conveyed it to the mill. Allen subsequently discharged his cargo. On the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, Hawker went to a Mr Wheatley, and asked him to go the next morning to Jelf's wharf with a horse and cart. This Mr Wheatley did, and found Wainwright and Jelf on the wharf. From them he received six sacks of wheat, and took them to a Mr Fawdry in Deritend, where they were disposed of. The sacks delivered at the mill were found to be short of their proper weight, and it was contended that the six sacks taken to Fawdry's consisted of the missing quantity. Detective Superintendent Black proved receiving information of the affair from Wheatley on the night of January 14<sup>th</sup>, and in company with other officers, Black watched the persons removing the wheat, and Wainwright was shortly afterwards arrested. He implicated the other prisoners, who were subsequently apprehended, and from their statements it appeared that Allen sold the wheat, which was brought from the mill to Jelf's wharf by Hawker. Witnesses were called who gave evidence in accordance with this statement, and the jury without hesitation found the prisoners guilty. Detective Sergeant (*sic*) Black said the prisoners, he believed, had been in the habit of carrying on this pilfering for some time. During the last three months, to his knowledge, 130 sacks of wheat had been taken to Fawdry's, and there disposed of. The jury expressed the opinion that Fawdry should have been present to give an account of his transactions. The Recorder said he was afraid that he could express no opinion on the subject. He considered the cases of Wainwright and Jelf were the worst, for they were evidently the instigators of the theft. It was a very bad case, and they would be sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. Jelf : I have done three months already. The Recorder : If you were not an old man, I should have sent you to penal servitude. Jelf : I shall not live it out. The other prisoners were sentenced to nine months imprisonment each.

**78 26 April 1884**

**Whitminster Petty Sessions**

**William Owen**, boatman, for being drunk at Stonehouse on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> instant, was fined 5s and costs.

**79 18 June 1884**

**SHOCKING INHUMANITY AT WEST BROMWICH** On Tuesday, Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Britannia Inn, Dial Lane, Hill Top, West Bromwich, respecting the death of Enoch Corbett (10) of Brickhouse Lane, Hill Top, who was drowned on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst whilst bathing in the Birmingham Canal at Gold's Green. James Corbett, labourer, identified the body, and stated that he

took the boy to Messrs Solly's Works with him, where he was employed, and about eleven o'clock he heard that he was drowned in the canal. Thomas Rowland (9) said he met deceased in Solly's Works, and went with him to the "Long Bridge" where he got into the canal. He (deceased) dived into the water and swam across to the other side. He came back, but could not catch hold of the bar alongside of the canal, and he attempted to get back, but sank. There were two men and a young man present. As he came up, the young man tried to reach him, but could not, and then all three walked away. The Coroner : Then they did not try to get him out? Witness : No, sir. The Coroner : What did you do? Witness : I called them back again. Coroner : Did they come back? Witness : Yes, sir. Deceased put his leg up, and then I did not see him again, and the men went away. Witness then took his clothes to the works of his father. **George Thomas**, boatman, said that he heard that the boy was in the canal, and he got in and fetched him out, but he was quite dead. The water was deep. The Coroner (to the officer in charge of the case) : Have you taken any steps to get those men here? The Officer : Yes, sir, we have, but we cannot find them. - I am sorry we cannot get them here, for I should certainly give them a severe reprimand, for their conduct seems anything but humane. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

### **80 2 July 1884**

### **Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

ALLEGED ROBBERY OF WEARING APPAREL **Thomas Moss**, boatman, and Hannah Summers, charwoman, were charged with stealing, on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult, at Stonehouse, a number of articles, wearing apparel, &c, valued at £5, the property of Sarah Hazeland. The prisoners pleaded not guilty. Mr Gough prosecuted, and from his opening statement, it appeared that the prisoners lived next door to the prosecutrix, and the female prisoner was sometimes employed as charwoman by her. Owing to a conversation between the prisoners which was overheard by a woman named Amelia Andrews, their house was searched, with the result that the effects (produced) were found there by a policeman. Moss told Mrs Andrews that Summers had robbed the prosecutrix of two sovereigns, and if there was anything in his house belonging to the "old lady", she could have it. The female prisoner, in a long rambling statement to the jury, said that she had the articles to "cleanse and to clean", and that the prosecutrix gave her sundry articles which were found at her house. The jury found Summers guilty, and she was sentenced to six months hard labour. Moss they found not guilty, and he was accordingly discharged. It transpired that Moss had been convicted twelve times before, and the Chairman warned him not to come there again.

### **81 5 July 1884**

A MAN DROWNED IN THE CANAL An inquest was held yesterday at the Sir Colin Campbell Inn, before the City Coroner (Mr A M Sydney-Turner), on the body of David Bailey, a labourer, who lodged at No 5 Victoria Street, and was drowned on Wednesday evening while bathing in the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal. From the evidence, it appeared that on Wednesday evening the deceased, who was the son of Charles Bailey of Churcham, and his brother Thomas went down to the canal to bathe, having previously had a good meal. His brother then left him and went on down the canal to the brick pits at the two mile bend. The deceased then got into the water, in company with a fellow labourer, Thomas Hyett. The deceased, who could only swim a little, had been bathing about fifteen minutes, and when in the middle of the canal, he shouted, "Tom". Hyett immediately swam to him and caught hold of deceased's head. Deceased struggled and caught hold of Hyett, and both sank. Hyett let go of him, but again made an attempt to save him. The deceased again prevented his own rescue by clutching Hyett who, becoming exhausted, was obliged to loose the deceased and swim to the bank. A boatman named **William Voyce** procured the drags, and in a few minutes the body of deceased was recovered, but life was then extinct. The body was then removed to the Sir Colin Campbell. The Coroner remarked that for a man to indulge in a full meal, and then walk to the water, arriving perhaps in a heated condition, and plunge into the cold water was a most egregious act of folly. Such an act might bring on either cramp, which paralysed the muscles, or apoplexy, owing to the blood being driven to the head. He wished also to make a remark with reference to a statement in the *Citizen* that perhaps he would speak on the subject of

public swimming baths. He had nothing to say on that subject, and he did not consider it his duty to teach the Corporation what they should do. The members of the Corporation were the delegates of the citizens, and if the citizens wished their voices to be heard in the Council Chamber, they had a way of doing so. The jury then returned a verdict of accidental drowning.

**82 4 August 1884**

**Stonehouse Petty Sessions**

**CAUGHT IN THE ACT** **Alfred Lewis**, boatman of Stonehouse, was charged with stealing a quantity of apples and potatoes. PC Simpson was on duty at Ryeford early in the morning, and saw the prisoner helping himself to apples in the garden of Mr J M Webb. He arrested him and found also some potatoes upon him. He made enquiries subsequently, and found that prisoner had stolen the latter from the garden of Mr Enoch Thomas. Prisoner was very violent and attempted to escape on the way to the station. He got free, but was caught and secured again by the constable after a struggle. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and in default of a fine of 5s and 3s 6d costs in either case, was sent to prison for fourteen days.

**83 8 August 1884**

**SUDDEN DEATH IN GLOUCESTER** On Friday evening, **Elizabeth Harris**, the wife of a boatman living in the Royal Oak Yard, the Island, died very suddenly. During the day, her husband had been at work on the Quay, and when she took his dinner to him, she complained of feeling "queer". He advised her to go home, but she said she did not feel able to walk. Her daughter and son were with her at the time. Just before seven o'clock, she had had a nap on a stool outside her door, when her husband came home to tea. She was getting some hot water for him to wash his hands with, when she staggered, made a half turn, and fell to the floor. Dr Johnstone was soon in attendance, and pronounced life extinct. It is thought that deceased had a fainting fit, which she has been accustomed to have, but the ordinary remedies applied on these occasions had always proved efficient hitherto.

**84 11 August 1884**

**SUDDEN DEATH IN GLOUCESTER – INQUEST** On Saturday afternoon, Mr A M Sydney-Turner, city coroner, held an inquest at the police station, on the body of **Elizabeth Harris** (55) of 26 Royal Oak Yard, the Island, Gloucester. Rumours having circulated to the effect that deceased had met with foul play, it was deemed advisable to hold an inquest. The jury, of whom Mr Pearce was the foreman, having viewed the body, the following evidence was taken :- **James Harris**, boatman, husband of the deceased, deposed that on Friday he was at work near the Llanthony Bridge unloading pitch. His wife brought him his breakfast, and also his dinner, when she sat down and had something to eat. His eldest son and one of his daughters were there. She then complained of feeling ill. He went home about seven o'clock in the evening, and found his wife sitting outside the door. She was then very poorly. He went into the house and she followed him, and he asked her if she had any tea. She went to get some hot water, and he went to the Severn and obtained a bucket of water to wash himself. When he had finished, he went back to the house. He saw his wife lying on the floor, supported by his daughter and a Mrs Meadows, and he picked her up and put her on a chair, but he found she was dead. For the last fortnight, his wife had complained of feeling very ill. She was accustomed to have fainting fits, and had one some three months ago.

Elizabeth Wilkes, of 9 Royal Oak Yard, daughter of the deceased, deposed that her mother was very tired, and felt the heat very much on returning home on Friday afternoon. She then got a stool, and sitting down by the door, dozed till her husband came home. A neighbour named Mrs Meadows told witness that her mother was calling her, and on going across to the house, she found deceased lying on the floor. She asked what was the matter, but deceased did not move nor speak. Dr Johnstone was called in, and pronounced her dead. Deceased suffered from fainting fits. She was on good terms with her husband, and witness never heard any "bother" going on. She did not think any violence had ever been used towards deceased.

Mrs Ann Meadows, of 20 Royal Oak Yard, deposed that deceased and her husband were on good

terms with one another.

PC Theyers deposed that on Friday night, he went down to the Royal Oak Yard about eleven o'clock, and with Mrs Meadows, examined the body of the deceased, with the result that he found two small bruises on the eyebrows, such as might have been caused by falling. He made enquiries around the neighbourhood, and found that deceased and her husband were considered a very quiet couple, and always lived on good terms.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased died from natural causes, and attached no blame to anyone.

#### **85 20 August 1884**

**SUPPOSED BATHING FATALITY** As a Monmouth boatman, named **George Davis**, was making his way up the river for home in a boat on Monday night, about nine o'clock, he observed a heap of clothes on the bank of the Wye at Lower Redbrook. As he merely thought the apparel belonged to some person who was bathing, he passed on without further notice. It has since transpired that the clothes belonged to a young man named Arthur Charles, aged about 19 years, a native of Lichfield, engaged by Mr Palmer, JP, of Newland, as footman. As no trace of the young man has since been found, it is feared he has been drowned whilst bathing. That part of the Wye is known as Lower Redbrook Wash, and is in the county of Gloucester, on the borders of the borough of Monmouth. The worst fears being entertained, the river was dragged, but nothing further has been discovered.

#### **86 5 September 1884**

**SINGULAR CASE OF SUPERSTITION** On Thursday, Mr T H Stanley held an inquest at the Horse and Jockey Inn, Bloxwich Road, Walsall, on the body of Leah Brown (12), who was found drowned in the canal near Pratt's bridge on Wednesday morning. The evidence of the mother, Miriam Brown, wife of a puddler, was to the effect that the deceased left home on Sunday afternoon to attend a school at Rycroft, her brother, aged 10, accompanying her. The little boy returned at about four o'clock, having left school earlier than his sister. The deceased had been anxious to go blackberrying all week, and on Sunday, but was not allowed to go to school, or leave the house, because witness had had "a dread" upon her, in consequence of having three nights in succession dreamed of baking bread. She had lost other children, and on each occasion had had similar dreams before the child died. She dreamed each night that she was kneading dough and baking bread, and that her oven was twelve or fourteen yards long. She had no suspicion of foul play, and had no reason to suppose that the child had intentionally drowned herself. **William Simcox**, boatman, having deposed to the finding of the body, the jury returned an open verdict.

#### **87 13 October 1884**

**A BOY DROWNED** On Saturday, the body of **Frederick King** (5), son of **Charles King**, boatman of Gloucester, was found in the canal near the Chemical Bridge, Oldbury. Deceased, whilst playing on the canal side on Friday night, accidentally fell into the water.

#### **88 15 October 1884**

#### **Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

**LICENSING APPEAL : THE ANCHOR, RYEFORD**

**Thomas Long** v Justices of Whitminster

Mr D S Sim and Mr Morton Brown appeared on behalf of the appellant, and Mr Gough represented the respondents. Mr Sim, in opening the case, said that the appellant was formerly the holder of the license of a beerhouse called the Anchor Inn, Ryeford, and that he appealed against the refusal of the respondents to grant the renewal of the license of the house. The ground on which the refusal was based was that the appellant was not a real resident holder and occupier. He called :

Thomas Long, the appellant, who stated that he became possessed of the license of the Anchor Inn in April 1883. Previous, he had lived in a cottage about 120 yards from the inn. The trade of the house was not very large, and he found it necessary to do other work to get a living. He was a waterman, and went on trips in his barge to Lydney and Stroud, with cargoes of coal. He could get



**91 27 November 1884 Lydney**

**Edwin Knight**, a boatman of Berkeley, was charged with carrying a gun, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, without having obtained the necessary licence. The defendant admitted the offence, and was fined £2 and 9s 6d costs.

**92 15 December 1884**

CONTRAVENING THE CANAL BOATS ACT On Saturday at the Wolverhampton Police Court, **John Stokes**, a boatman, of the boat *Dublin*, belonging to the Severn and Canal Carrying Company, was fined 10s and costs for disregarding the regulations of the Canal Boats Act. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Inspector Blanton examined the boat, and found that the defendant, his wife and three children were living in it. **Edward Bannister** of the boat *Margaret*, belonging to Messrs Fanshaw and Pinson, was also fined 10s and costs for a like offence.

**93 7 June 1885**

A MAN DROWNED IN THE SEVERN – INQUEST On Tuesday evening, an inquest was held at the Sir Colin Campbell Inn, before Mr Sydney Turner, the city coroner, on the body of James Frederick Lewis, who was drowned whilst bathing in the river Severn on Saturday last.

Susan Lewis, wife of the deceased, said she lived at 4 Robin Hood Court, in the Island. She had seen the body, and recognised it as that of her husband. About half past four on Saturday afternoon, she last saw her husband, who told her he was going “to have a swim”. He went with a man named Harry Miles, and a man whom she knew as “Smiler”. She could see that her husband had had some beer, but “Smiler” was sober. Her husband came from Lydney. He was not subject to any sudden illness, though he suffered from rheumatism. Half an hour after he went out, she heard he was drowned.

Henry Miles deposed that he lived at Lower Westgate Street. On Saturday afternoon last, he was in company with the deceased. They started to go for a swim in the river, and had a quart of beer at the Nag's Head. Thos Pardoe, known to witness as “Smiler”, was with them. When they arrived on the bank of the Severn facing Mr Jeynes brick yard, Pardoe and the deceased undressed and plunged into the water. The river was running down very fast at the time. The deceased swam across to the opposite bank, and got out of the water and sat down on the bank with his arms folded. Witness shouted to him to come back, but he remained where he was for about 10 minutes. He then plunged into the water again. After striking off from the bank, he swam towards the Black Bridge, and as he went round a curve in the river, he was lost sight of. Pardoe was in the water showing witness some swimming feats. The deceased was certainly not sober when he entered the water ; he had been “muddly” all day.

Jane Price of Vine Cottages, Westgate Bridge, said that on Saturday last she was sitting outside her daughter's house at Walham. There were three little boys fishing on the bank close by, and she heard them call out, “There is a boy drowning”, and they also called out for Mrs Thomas who lived close by, but who was not at home. Witness went to their assistance, and saw two hands above the water, but no head or body. She ran and shouted with all her might, and sent the boys for the police. She did not know until Mr Miles, the last witness, brought down the clothes that it was a man. Mr Stokes and Mr Rea came with a boat, as soon as possible, and searched for the body that evening.

**James Phillips**, a corn porter and boatman, living in Alney Terrace, said that on Monday afternoon last about two o'clock, he saw a body floating in the Severn opposite the Gas Works. Another man and he got a boat and stopped the body just below the docks, and sent for the police. PC Theyers came, and they conveyed the body to the Sir Colin Campbell Inn.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death”, and attached no blame to anyone.

**94 1 September 1885 Cirencester**

PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY **Robert Ridler** of Chalford, canal boatman, was charged, on the information of Inspector Willment, of the Cirencester Independent Association for the Prevention of Cruelty, with cruelty to two asses on August 19<sup>th</sup>, by leaving them an unreasonable time without

food. **Mr W Pratt**, canal superintendent of Siddington, said the donkeys were left tied up from early Wednesday morning till five o'clock Thursday night at a point on the towing-path where there was no grass. They got entangled with the ropes and could not move until he released them. Defendant said the donkeys were tied with a 32 feet rope. He also said Mr Pratt gave information out of malice, and in return for an action brought by him in the County Court against Mr Pratt. Defendant was fined 15s, to include costs, or ten days hard labour, the Bench observing that it would have been bad enough to tie the donkeys up even if they had food.

**95 7 October 1885 Gloucester County Court**

John Wilson v **James Holland**. Plaintiff obtained judgement in February last for £3 odd. Defendant, a bargeman, was committed for 21 days, in default of paying in a week.

**96 28 October 1885 Gloucester County Court**

Joseph Daft v **Edward Parrot**. Defendant did not appear. Judgement was obtained on July 21<sup>st</sup> for 15s 11d, and nothing had been paid. Defendant, a boatman, was committed for 21 days.

**97 26 November 1885**

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF A PILOT A few days ago, **Mr Richard Cumper**, boatman of Lower Church Street, Chepstow, was sailing past the shallows near the mouth of the Wye, known as the "Mathom Ooze", when he met with an empty smack. This was recognised as the *Enchantress*, belonging to Robert Rolls, a Lydney pilot, who resided near Berkeley. The sails were set and the rudder shipped, and in the smack were a pilot coat, an oil skin waterproof, telescope, and some papers, including Rolls' licence and some bills. It has been ascertained that Rolls left home about a week ago, and all inquiries as to what has become of him have proved unavailing. The general opinion is that the poor fellow has been accidentally drowned.

**98 16 December 1885 Gloucester County Court**

Edwin Yeuell v **James Holland**. Judgement was obtained in October 1884 for £2 odd. Only 1s 6d had been paid. Defendant, a waterman, was ordered to pay 3s.

Hastie and Co v **George Apperley**. Plaintiff obtained judgement in March last for £1 9s 10d, and £1 was due. Defendant is a boatman, and plaintiff said he was in regular employ. Committed for 21 days, or pay in two months.

J and H Hill v George Moorfield. Defendant's wife appeared, and said she lived at Sandhurst. They had been flooded out and had done no work. The case was adjourned for two months, the money to be paid in the meantime.

**99 9 January 1886**

A BOY DROWNED AT BORDESLEY Yesterday afternoon, Police-constable G Barnes of the E Division was called to the canal near Sandy Lane, and found that a boy named **Charles Pittaway** (11), son of a boatman living at 4, back of 6, Edward Street, Parade, had been drowned. It appears that the lad was sent by his mother from a barge to fetch a can of fresh water, and as he did not return, she went to look for him, and then discovered his hat floating on the water. The canal was dragged, and the boy's body was brought to the surface. As life was extinct, the body was removed to the Moseley Street Police Station, to await an inquest.

**100 5 February 1886**

ANOTHER BODY RECOVERED FROM THE CANAL – THE INQUEST An inquest was held on Thursday evening, before Mr F Morton-York, city coroner, at the Sir Colin Campbell Inn, on the body of **Alfred Hyett**, who was found in the canal on the same morning. Mr Abel was chosen foreman of the jury. Miss Hyett, 1 Oxford Street, identified the body as that of her brother, whose age was about 45. He was, she believed, residing in the neighbourhood of Stroud. He was a boatman. She had not seen him for about twelve years. She believed him to be a single man. **J G**

**Sims**, captain of the steam vessel *Lincoln*, now lying in the Gloucester Docks, said at eleven o'clock that morning, he and three of his crew were dragging the canal near the Wagon Works, when they discovered the body of the deceased. The body was not floating, and they took it out of the water. PC Golding said that on Thursday morning about eleven o'clock, he saw the last witness dragging the canal, and further saw them discover the body of the deceased. He examined the deceased, and found a clay pipe, a box of matches, a knife, and tobacco (produced). There were no external marks of violence, and the body was conveyed to the Sir Colin Campbell Inn. James Wood, 100 Westgate Street, proprietor of the Golden Heart Inn, said he had viewed the body of deceased, and recognised him as having been at his house one or two days before Christmas last, He and another man came in, and they had a pint of beer, and witness himself supplied them. They both appeared on friendly terms together. They had two more pints of beer after this. The other man left about a quarter of an hour before the deceased. It was about nine o'clock. After deceased had had the three pints, he asked him to trust him with a pint, and he declined doing so. The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Found in the Canal", there being no evidence to show how he got there.

### **101 13 March 1886**

The Dudley police apprehended at midnight **Samuel Mountford**, a boatman of Kingswinford, it being alleged that he had staid in a common lodging house in the town that he was engaged in the murder of Police-constable Hine at Fenny Compton. The woman to whom he is stated to have said this at once gave information to the police.

### **102 4 May 1886**

THE SAILOR DROWNED IN THE CANAL – INQUEST On Monday evening an inquest was held at the Sir Colin Campbell, Gloucester, before Mr Morton York, city coroner, on the body of **Henry Rowles**, who was found in the canal on Saturday last. Mr Faville was elected foreman of the jury.

Robert Rowles deposed : I live at Burley in this county, and am a woodturner. The deceased is my brother, aged 34 years. He was a married man with a family of three children, and lived at Chalford Hill. He was a boatman. About a fortnight ago I last saw him alive. I know nothing of this sad occurrence except what I have been told. My brother's health was generally good, but I could not say whether he could swim. I have never seen him the worse for liquor. He lived happily with his family.

**Henry Timbrell** said : I live at the Llanthony coffee house, and am a boatman. On Friday I was with the deceased at about eleven o'clock, when James Davies and myself and deceased were in the Squirrel public house in Littleworth. Deceased was there when I came in. I was drinking cider. The captain and deceased had about four or five pints together. On leaving the house, he was perfectly sober. We walked together as far as the Llanthony Bridge Inn, when deceased took a bag off Davies. Deceased and I went off on the left side going from Gloucester, and Davies walked along on the right bank. When we reached my boat, the *Emily*, we parted, and deceased went on in the direction of the *Serapis*, upon which the deceased was working. The boats were about 400 yards or more apart. The deceased seemed in good spirits. I heard no noise after.

**James Davies** deposed : I live at Chalford Hill and am the captain of the boat *Serapis*, belonging to Mr Thomas Clarke, Chalford, miller. Last Tuesday, deceased and I left Chalford for Gloucester, arriving here at eleven o'clock on Wednesday. We left the boat to come into the city and we met at the Squirrel at about four o'clock in the afternoon. We left the Squirrel soon after this, and we had then had about two pints of cider, and went into the town to buy some provisions. About six o'clock, we returned to the Squirrel and had something to eat and a pint of cider each. We sat on then till about half past nine, and between six o'clock and that time, we had some more cider. When Timbrell came in we had some more cider. We were all on good terms. On reaching Llanthony Bridge, deceased and Timbrell took the left road, and I went on the right bank of the canal from Gloucester. When I got opposite the *Serapis*, she was adrift in the middle of the water, and I shouted out but could not make anyone hear. I went to the company's dredger and obtained their

boat, and went down opposite the boat, which was still in mid stream. I saw nothing more of deceased, and I believe he could not swim. The bundle and the bag which the deceased was carrying were in the cabin of the boat. We left the Squirrel a few minutes before eleven.

John Holford said : I live in Cullenden Road, Gloucester, and am a brickmaker. On Saturday afternoon about four o'clock, I found the body of deceased in the middle of the canal, opposite Mr Barkworth's office. The body was close to where the boat was situated. I have known deceased for ten years. He could not swim. He was always a very steady man.

The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

### **103 13 July 1886**

**THE DROWNING CASE NEAR LLANTHONY – INQUEST** The inquest on the body of Thomas White, a labourer of Levi's Court, Gloucester, who, as reported yesterday, was drowned in the river some distance from Llanthony Bridge whilst fishing on Sunday, was held before Mr Morton-York in the Sir Colin Campbell Inn last evening. Mr J Margretts was foreman of the jury. Ellen White, the deceased's mother, gave evidence of identification. Deceased was 32 years of age, and sometimes got work as a hay trusser. He had bad health, and was subject to epileptic fits for the past eleven years. He would suddenly fall down without any warning. He was unmarried and lived with witness. He left home early on Sunday morning. James Knight, labourer, Levi's Court, said that about five o'clock on Sunday morning, he went with deceased to Llanthony to fish. Witness walked along the bank for half a mile, leaving deceased near "The Parting", fishing. About two hours later, witness came back. He could not see deceased anywhere, but his rod was on the bank. Witness went to deceased's home to see if he had returned, but he had not. Then he gave information to the police. Deceased was subsequently found in the water. They were good friends whilst fishing, and deceased seemed in his usual health. **William Voyce**, a boatman living in the Island, said that on hearing of the occurrence, he procured a drag and got the body out, near where he saw by the marks on the bank that deceased had fallen in. Witness knew he had fits, and once before he picked him up near Llanthony and took him to the Infirmary. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **104 3 September 1886**

**A MAN DROWNED IN THE SEVERN** Shortly after six o'clock on Thursday evening, a sad drowning accident occurred in the Severn near the Quay. A boatman named **Charles Tandy** was in charge of a long boat which with other long boats was being tugged up the river to Worcester. Tandy, who was accompanied by his wife, was standing outside the cabin, and when opposite the lower part of the Quay, a woman on the shore shouted to him. He answered her, and was apparently turning round to enter the cabin when he was seen to slip, and fall sideways into the water. His wife immediately threw a rope to her unfortunate husband, which he managed to seize, but the ropes connecting the boats dragged him beneath the water. These ropes were quickly detached, but Tandy was not seen again. Several men at once procured boats and drags, and after half an hour's search, the body was recovered and conveyed to the deceased's house, 3 Roberts Yard, Westgate Street. Tandy is said to have been a quiet respectable man.

### **105 15 November 1886**

#### **The Assizes**

**AN EXEMPLARY SENTENCE** **William Goddard** (19), boatman, was charged with criminally assaulting Sarah Price, a girl 11 years of age, at St Peter's, Droitwich, on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1886. Mr Amphlett prosecuted and Mr Wells defended. The defence admitted an attempted criminal assault, but the jury found him guilty of the full offence. Sentence of ten years penal servitude was passed.

### **106 16 November 1886**

#### **The Assizes**

Henry Williams alias Mayo (33), bricklayer, was charged with unlawfully wounding Albert Gribble, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm, at Slimbridge on June 10 1886. **Albert Gribble**, a boatman of Slimbridge, said that on the day in question he was at Shepherd's Patch, loading a boat.

Prisoner and another man were assisting. When they finished work, prisoner and himself went to a public house. Witness returned to the boat, and later prisoner came back and asked to be allowed to sleep on the boat. He replied in the negative. Prisoner then began to swear, and witness went up and caught him by the arm. The prisoner produced a knife, and threatened him, and as he went up to him, made a stab at him, cutting him in the back. He walked away. The wound was attended to by a medical man, and he was sent to Gloucester Infirmary. Prisoner was not sober. By Prisoner : He did not strike prisoner. He was alone ; he had not two companions who assisted in hitting and kicking prisoner. Albert Henry Morgan corroborated prosecutor's version of the story. Oliver Tudor said that prisoner had no right to sleep on the boat. The jury found the prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding. He was sentenced to a day's imprisonment, having been in gaol since June, and was at once discharged.

**107 27 November 1886**

**ACTION FOR PERSONAL INJURIES AGAINST THE CANAL COMPANY** In the Worcester County Court on Wednesday, before Sir Rupert Kettle, **John Weaver**, a boatman, sought to recover from the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company the sum of £50, for negligence in not taking reasonable care to provide machinery that would not endanger the lives and property of people using their locks. Plaintiff, a boatman of 51 years experience, was on the 26<sup>th</sup> August bringing a boat into the lock at Diglis. He wound up the right hand paddle on the lock, and put the catch in to allow the water to come into the lock, and was about to go and wind the left, when the right paddle, without warning, fell, and the windlass attached revolved with great rapidity, and broke his right arm. He had not been able to do any work since, and had lost 30s per week as wages. He had often spoken to the lock-keeper about the dangerous condition of the lock. Medical evidence was given to show that the plaintiff would be another month before he could use his arm. For the defence, it was urged that the immediate and proximate cause of the injury that was done to the plaintiff was the carelessness and negligence of the plaintiff in not placing the catch fully home into the cog. His Honour reserved judgement until he had seen the rack, and gave his decision on Thursday. He gave judgement for plaintiff for the amount claimed, his Honour being of opinion that through long use, the iron had become worn, and that the attention of the managing engineer should have been called to it by the lock-keeper.

**108 2 December 1886**

**ACCIDENTS** **Henry Baron**, a boatman, has been admitted to the Infirmary suffering from an injury to his foot. Baron, who is employed at Hardwick, was unloading a boat on Wednesday morning, slipped in his employer's yard, and fell.

**109 6 December 1886**

**ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER AND SUICIDE** At Wolverhampton on Saturday, Margaret Howard (34) was charged with attempting to commit suicide. On Friday evening, the prisoner was in Mill Street in the neighbourhood of the Wolverhampton and Birmingham Canal, when she was heard to say to a girl about three years of age, who accompanied her, "Maggie, this is the place where you and I are to end our days. I am in deep trouble, and cannot bear it any longer". Taking up the child, who began to scream, the prisoner advanced towards the canal, but she was stopped by **Emma Baker**, wife of **Jacob Baker**, a boatman. The prisoner threatened to knock the woman's brains out if she would not let her go, as she was determined to jump into the canal and put an end to her trouble. To another woman, who took the child from her, the prisoner said, "She is my Maggie, and I will do what I like with her"; and added, "It is a fine thing for you to rob me of my baby". The prisoner was very excited, and admitted she had drunk two quarterns of gin. She was remanded for a week.

**110 27 April 1887**

**ACCIDENTS** **Henry Thomas** of White Swan Lane, boatman, met with an accident at the Oil

Mills of Messrs Foster Bros on Tuesday evening, which necessitated his speedy removal to the Infirmary, where it was found that one of his ribs was broken. He was engaged hooking on sacks to a chain, and when one of the sacks had been hoisted some distance, the chain broke, and the sack fell from a considerable height upon the unfortunate man.

**111 27 April 1887**

**Gloucestershire Assizes**

**A FORTUNATE ESCAPE** **William Palmer** (56), boatman, was charged with stealing 49 lbs of coal, value 4d, the property of Lord Fitzhardinge at Berkeley, on April 18<sup>th</sup> 1887. PC Newman said that on the night of April 18<sup>th</sup>, he saw the prisoner in the direction of the Kennels. He saw him later on coming from the direction of a coal heap, the property of Lord Fitzhardinge, situated near Reynold's yard. He was carrying a bundle of sticks and the bag of coal mentioned in the indictment. When prisoner saw him, he put the coal down, and after a short conversation, prisoner admitted he had taken the coal. Witness went to the coal heap referred to, and saw that coal had been taken from it. Prisoner's intellect was somewhat weak ; he had been in a Lunatic Asylum. By the prisoner : When he first saw him, he was carrying a bag of something. He did not examine it, but judging from prisoner's actions, it was something light, such as straw. Henry Baker, a carter in the employ of Lord Fitzhardinge said he missed coal from the heap, which contained coal similar to that produced. The Judge asked witness a number of questions as to how he knew that the coal, or the place where it kept, belonged to Lord Fitzhardinge, and he could not give any satisfactory answer, only inferring that they did from the fact that he hauled the coal by direction of his steward. Prisoner asserted that neither the coal nor the yard belonged to his lordship. The jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty", and prisoner was discharged.

**112 6 May 1887**

**Cirencester**

**Joseph Hunt**, boatman, was fined 10s including costs for being drunk and disorderly at Cirencester.

**113 7 May 1887**

**ACCIDENTS** **William Surman**, 86 Southgate Street, a boatman aged 26, met with an accident at the Docks on Friday, which necessitated his removal to the Infirmary. He was in a boat, when a piece of iron, which was being lifted by means of a crane, struck him on the head, inflicting a severe lacerated wound of the scalp.

**114 17 June 1887**

At an inquest at Tipton on Thursday, respecting the death of a boatman named **Stephen Poole**, it was shown that the deceased had for years been in the habit of sleeping in brickyards and near to furnaces. On Wednesday morning, his charred remains were found on a cinder heap near to some ironworks. It is supposed deceased was overcome by the fumes from cinders, and that his clothes becoming ignited, he was burned to death.

**115 29 June 1887**

At the Oldbury Police Court on Tuesday, **Henry Comley**, boatman, was fined 10s and costs, or in default fourteen days imprisonment, for creating an obstruction on the Birmingham Canal on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant blocked the locks at Oldbury for six hours, and prevented about 40 boats from passing through.

**116 21 July 1887**

**DROWNING CASES** On Wednesday afternoon, as Ernest and Bertie Deeley, the children of parents living in Hawkins Street, Hill Top, West Bromwich, were engaged with a third child in endeavouring to fish corks out of the canal near to their home, the little fellow Bertie, who was only five years of age, fell into the water, and his brother, who was his senior by less than a couple of years, in trying to save him fell in too. The third child raised an alarm, and in a short time the bodies, life being then extinct, were got out by a boatman named **Robinson**.

### 117 12 August 1887

INQUEST At the conclusion of the previous inquiry, a second inquest was held before the City Coroner and the same Jury on the body of George Marshall Goddard, a corn porter, the circumstances of whose death have already been reported in the *Citizen*

**Charles Goddard**, of 33 Clement Street, boatman, identified the deceased as his brother, aged 32, who lived with him. He was a corn porter. Witness saw deceased last alive on Wednesday at twelve o'clock. He was conscious, but said nothing about the cause of the accident.

Charles Soles of 42 Front Barton Terrace, a labourer, said that on Wednesday last, shortly after eight o'clock in the morning, he was having his breakfast, when he saw deceased fall under a railway truck, which was attached to a goods train, and which was being shunted on the Dock Company's quay at Sharpness. Witness was on one side of the truck, and he on the other. Deceased fell on his face between the wheels of one truck. The trucks were going very slowly. From what witness saw, he should say the deceased did not throw himself between the wheels. Deceased was subject to fits, and he had been with him when he had them. They came on suddenly.

Charles Goddard (recalled) said his brother was subject to fits.

John Willey, second officer on board the *Streonshlah*, said that at about eight o'clock on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, he was on the ship on the after gangway, and saw the last wheel of the truck go over deceased. He took deceased up from off the metals, he then appearing to be in a fit. He was taken into a warehouse.

Mr F H Knaggs said deceased was admitted to the Infirmary at 11.50 am on Wednesday. He was suffering from severe compound fracture of the pelvis, with symptoms of internal haemorrhage. There had been some slight bleeding from the nose, and from the right ear. He was then conscious. He was treated in the usual way with such cases, but he died at 2.30 on the same afternoon, having had a convulsive fit before he died. Death was caused in his opinion from internal haemorrhage, consequent upon the accident. The injuries would be consistent with the deceased's having been run over by a railway truck. Deceased stated to witness that he was subject to fits, and had been so since he was 17 years old.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

### 118 6 September 1887

A distressing drowning fatality took place in Gloucester Docks on Monday. A boatman named **Albert Holder**, of Bagpath, Stroud, aged about 28, engaged on the barge *Wave* belonging to Mr Lambert of Stroud, was pushing the boat from the dock wall in order to get into the lock, when the pole slipped and he fell into the water. Efforts were made to save him, but they failed. The body was recovered half an hour afterwards. Deceased, who was a very steady man, leaves a widow and one child. An inquest will be held.

### 119 7 September 1887

THE DEATH FROM DROWNING IN THE BASIN – INQUEST An inquest was held at the Mariner's Arms on Tuesday evening before Mr Morton-York, city coroner, on the body of **Andrew Holder** (31), a boatman, who met with his death under the circumstances detailed below. Mr W Ford was chosen foreman of the jury.

William Holder of Stroud, a labourer working on the water, identified the body as that of his brother, who lived at Burleigh, near Stroud. Deceased was a married man with one child, and witness last saw him alive on Sunday afternoon. He was a healthy man.

**Henry Boon**, of St Mary's Square, a lighterman, said that on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst, at a little after two o'clock, he was standing on the lock gates by Messrs Spiller's Warehouse, and saw deceased with a boat hook in his hand on a longboat, which he was pushing off. The boat hook slipped and he fell on his back into the water. The captain, **Joseph Hawkins**, was about 40 feet from him. There was no one near him at the time. The occurrence was entirely accidental, and the captain ran to get another boat hook and tried to save him. Other men also helped to get deceased out. Witness ran for the drags, and in about half an hour he recovered the body.

Joseph Hawkins, captain of the long boat *Wave*, and residing at Stroud, said the boat belonged to a coal merchant of Stroud. He had known deceased from his birth. About ten minutes past two in the afternoon of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst, deceased and himself were going through the lock. Deceased had a boat hook in his hand. Somebody shouted that there was a man in the water, and he ran and got another boat hook, and with others tried to reach deceased. Witness touched him, but he went down. He was on the bank at the time of the occurrence. Everything was done to save him, but the efforts were in vain. Deceased had been a total abstainer.

The watch belonging to deceased was produced with other articles found on him, and it had stopped at 27 minutes past two.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

### **120 21 September 1887 Cirencester**

INQUEST On Tuesday morning, Mr Deputy Coroner Smith held an inquest on the body of a little child named **Harriet Dolman**, six years old, daughter of **William Dolman**, boatman of Siddington, at the Greyhound Inn, Siddington. Mr W M Plummer was foreman of the jury. From the evidence of the father, a man named James Cooke and a woman named Bettie Packer, all residing at Siddington, it appeared that deceased was left at home on Saturday evening, the 17<sup>th</sup>, with two younger children, by their parents, who had gone to Cirencester shopping. They stayed out rather later than was their custom, and on their return found the deceased was missing, she having put the younger child to bed, as she usually did, and had then gone to try and find her parents. Every possible search was made, and the body was found about ten o'clock the next morning, drowned in the canal about 100 yards from her home. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned", and gave their fees to the parents.

### **121 22 September 1887**

A coroner's jury at Manchester on Wednesday returned a verdict of manslaughter against a boatman named **Johnson**, who is alleged to have caused the death of **Jane Jones**, with whom he cohabited, by beating her on the head with a poker, on Sunday last. Nothing has been heard of Johnson since the affair.

### **122 6 October 1887**

ACCIDENT **John Worgan**, aged 23, of 30 Hare Lane, boatman, met with an accident at the Docks on Wednesday. He accidentally twisted his foot and fell, breaking his ankle. He was taken to the Infirmary.

### **123 4 November 1887**

For taking four swedes from a field at Kemble, a boatman named **Davis** was ordered to pay 9s 2d by the Malmesbury magistrates. Defendant said he was very poor. He only had six small potatoes for his wife's dinner and his own, and being very hungry, he took the swedes to cook with them.

### **124 16 November 1887**

CHARGE AGAINST A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN At the Bromsgrove Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **John Hopkins**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged with infringing the bye laws of the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Canal Company, on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, by passing a boat through a tunnel in the canal which was not in tow of the steam tug. Mr F Holyoake appeared for the prosecution, and spoke of the danger of collision, and the risk to life and property incurred by the conduct of defendant. Mr Hobrough, the agent of the company, said they did not ask for a heavy penalty, but only to caution boatmen. Defendant was let off on paying costs, 9s.

### **125 21 January 1888 Littledean Petty Sessions**

SCHOOL BOARD CASE **Thomas Weyman**, a boatman of Newnham, was summoned for not sending his son to school. Adjourned for a month.

**126 13 February 1888**

**PAINFUL CASE OF DROWNING** When near to Consall Forge, on the North Staffordshire Canal, a woman named **Bagman**, wife of a boatman, fell into the water, which is deep and swift at that point. Her cries for help brought both her son and her husband to the spot, and they promptly leaped in to her assistance. Attacked by cramp, the son cried out that he was sinking, and his father, who had taken hold of his wife, let go and rescued his son. He then found that his wife had sunk beneath the boat, and his efforts to find her were unsuccessful. It was late on Saturday when the body was recovered.

**127 3 March 1888**

**SAD BURNING FATALITY IN GLOUCESTER** An inquest was held at the Infirmary yesterday evening before Mr H Morton-York on the body of a child named James Knight, 20 months old, who met with his death under the following circumstances. Ann Knight, wife of James Knight, and mother of deceased, said that when the child was about four months old, he lost the use of the legs and part of the use of the arms as the result of a chill. At eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning, she went to the West End Dairy. Before leaving, she fastened deceased in a child's chair, which she tied to the leg of the table. The chair was about 20 inches from the fire. No one was left in the house with the child. On returning, she saw deceased being taken to the Infirmary by two neighbours. The fire in the grate was small. The child's life was insured for £3. **Harriet Thomas**, wife of **James Thomas**, boatman, of Royal Oak Yard, said she was hanging clothes out on the 29<sup>th</sup> inst, when she heard screams. Mrs Knight's door was wide open, she saw some smoke, and going in, found deceased in flames sitting in the chair. She saw John Bolton, a neighbour, take deceased out of the chair and put out the flames. Mr Knaggs, house surgeon at the Infirmary, said deceased was admitted on the 29<sup>th</sup>, suffering from burns on both legs, abdomen, face and arms, and died the next day. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**128 6 April 1888**

**TO LIGHTERMEN AND BOATMEN** Mousell and Co require Captains for their lighters ; Steady men with good characters ; will be given particulars of wages &c at Albert Wharf, Docks, Gloucester.

**129 17 July 1888**

**THE BATH BOATING FATALITY** The Bath City coroner held an adjourned inquiry on Monday evening on the bodies of three young persons who were drowned through a boating accident on the River Avon at Bath on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. After a lengthy investigation, a verdict of accidental death was returned. The jury thought that the conduct of a boatman named **Wiltshire**, who instead of going at once to assist the deceased, went for another man, was highly reprehensible.

**130 17 July 1888**

**Stroud News**

**POLICE, MONDAY** **William Smith**, boatman of Eastcombe, was brought up in custody charged with stealing two lots of cabbage, value 6d and 3d, the property of Joseph Butt and Jesse Davis respectively, on Saturday ; also with assaulting PC Simpson while in the execution of his duty, and damaging his helmet, value 6s, at the same time and place. PC Simpson stated that about 12 at night, he was in the Eastcombe allotments, when he saw the prisoner cut some cabbages. Witness went towards him, and prisoner, exclaiming, "Hulloa", and throwing the cabbages away, knocked witness down, and in the struggle took possession of his stick, and struck him four violent blows across the head. Prisoner was remanded till Friday.

**131 21 July 1888**

**Stroud Petty Sessions**

**William Smith**, boatman, was charged with assaulting PC Simpson at Eastcombe on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, and damaging his uniform and helmet to the extent of 6s ; with stealing a quantity of cabbage, value 6d, the property of Joseph Butt ; and with stealing cabbage, value 3d, the property of

Jesse Davis. He pleaded guilty to all three charges. PC Simpson stated that he found prisoner at twelve o'clock at night cutting cabbages. Prisoner at once rushed at him, snatched his stick, and gave him blows over the head, knocking him down, smashing his helmet, and making a large bruise on his head. Witness secured the stick, when prisoner threatened him with the knife with which he had been cutting the cabbages. Witness knocked the knife out of prisoner's hand, and struck him with his staff, but that broke. The prisoner still struggled and used threats, and witness had to strike him with a pair of handcuffs, which with the assistance of PC Wynne, who came on the scene, were put on prisoner. Prisoner was sentenced to six months hard labour for the assault, and to 14 days for the other offences, the sentences to run concurrently.

**132 23 July 1888**

**Gloucester City Petty Sessions**

ANOTHER THEFT FROM MR SULLY'S Decimus Simmonds (19) was charged with stealing during the last four months from his employer, Mr Sully of Eastgate Street, a lady's jacket, a cotton umbrella, two silk handkerchiefs and six cotton handkerchiefs. Albert Sully, a draper of Eastgate Street, said prisoner entered his employ as a porter in the month of March last. In May, a lady's jacket was missed from the stock, and subsequently a cotton umbrella, two silk handkerchiefs and several cotton handkerchiefs. They were his property, and were together of the value of 20s. They had not been sold to the prisoner, who left his employ on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. Fanny Simmonds, the wife of Charles Simmonds of Columbia Street, said that the prisoner was her husband's brother. On Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup>, prisoner was at her house with a girl named Ball, and he told her to give witness a pawn ticket for a handkerchief. Witness took it to Mr Onley's, paid 1s 0 1/2d, and received the handkerchief (produced). **Alice Granger**, wife of a boatman living in Victoria Street, said prisoner was her brother and lodged with her in March last. Whilst with her, he obtained work at Sully's, and about a month after he had been there, he brought the silk handkerchief, and gave it her, saying he gave him 1s 6d for it. She accepted it, and subsequently he brought a cotton umbrella. He said she could have it, and she gave 9d for it. Last Thursday, she searched the prisoner's box, and found the cotton handkerchiefs. Florence Ball (17), living with her parents at 60 Westgate Street, Gloucester, said she had known prisoner and had been keeping company with him for 18 months. She knew the prisoner worked for Sully's. One evening, he gave her a silk handkerchief, saying he gave 3s 6d for it. It was pawned. She had the ticket, and she eventually gave it to Mrs Simmonds. Some time after, he gave her the black jacket. It was quite new. He said he had had it for 8s 11d from Mr Sully, and was paying 2s a week for it. PC Theyers apprehended prisoner, who pleaded guilty, and elected to be dealt with summarily. Mr Sully (recalled) said prisoner was discharged from his employ for previous bad conduct. Prisoner was sent to gaol for six weeks. The Mayor, addressing Mrs Granger, hoped what had happened would be a caution to her in future.

**133 14 August 1888**

DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE CANAL – INQUEST An inquest was held at the Plough Inn, Quedgeley, on Monday afternoon, before Mr A J M Ball, coroner for the Mid division of Gloucestershire, on the body of a woman unknown, which was recovered from the Canal on Friday, under the following distressing circumstances. Mr William Hooper was chosen foreman of the jury. **Edward Dyer** of Tewkesbury, boatman, said he was captain of the boat *Harry*. On Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, he was proceeding from Sharpness to Tewkesbury up the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal. When near Stonebench, he saw the body of deceased floating in the water, near the towing-path side. He reached the body with a boat hook, and tied it to a spike in the towing-path. When he reached Gloucester, he informed the police. It was about two o'clock when he first saw the body. He saw some articles on the towing-path about 12 feet from the body. The satchel, jacket and umbrella produced were the ones he saw on the path. There were no houses near, and he saw no one about. There appeared no marks of violence about deceased. The articles on the bank were put carefully under a bush. He thought she was between 40 and 50 years of age. Maurice Clutterbuck said he was a bridgeman at Sims' bridge. He saw a woman go down the towing-path alone between twelve and one on Friday. She was a stranger to him, and was going in

the direction of Frampton. He recognised the jacket produced which she had on. She was carrying the black bag produced, and had an umbrella open over her head, which hid her head from view. He could not recognise the woman.

PC Jenkins said that at four o'clock on Friday, he received information of the occurrence at Gloucester Police Station. He proceeded to the spot, took the body from the water, and conveyed it to the house. He searched the place, and saw no marks on the bank. He picked up one glove about a yard from the body. The other glove was in the bag. Inquiries had been made as to her identification, with no result.

PC Brooks said he examined the body on Saturday morning. It was well nourished. There was nothing in her pocket, and she was very poorly clothed. The black bag contained four white handkerchiefs, one black kid glove, a pair of curling tongs, a comb and a blank envelope.

The Coroner remarked that everything pointed to the fact of her having been in service, and having had the articles given her. The bag was a good one, and the jacket was a costly one, and not such as a woman of that description would have been likely to possess. He thought it probable she had been a lady's maid, or something of that kind. They had only two courses open to them, viz, to return an open verdict of "Found drowned, without evidence to show how she got into the water", or to adjourn the inquiry. He thought the former the preferable course, and if any information was obtained, the police would follow it up. The jury found a verdict accordingly.

### **134 16 February 1889**

### **Stroud Petty Sessions**

**George Arnold**, boatman, was ordered to pay 19s 6d arrears on an affiliation order obtained by Fanny Eldridge of Chalford.

### **135 26 February 1889**

**SHOCKING CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At Walsall on Monday, **Thomas Smith**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse. The animal, whilst drawing a canal barge, fell and was unable to rise. Prisoner sent for another horse, leaving the first one still alive, unfed and uncared for, and evidently in agonising pain, writhing on the bank. Other persons gave it food at times, some of them being boatmen who were passing; and some of them endeavoured to get it on its legs, but without success; but the defendant rendered no help whatever, and swore at those who endeavoured to move him to pity. The police were communicated with, and by the orders of the Chief Constable, Mr Paley, veterinary surgeon, was fetched. He found that the horse had in its struggles torn out one of its eyes, which was hanging on the cheek, and being crushed into the earth as the animal beat its head on the ground; that the nostrils were choked with dirt; and that the legs were cut and wounded by the beating of the hoofs against them. By his instructions, the poor animal was put out of its misery. He said it was in poor condition, but if help had been got at the first, it might no doubt have been raised up and have recovered. In the writhings, it had travelled 20 or 30 yards along the path, or been dragged. The weather was very cold, the ground having ice and snow upon it whilst the horse lay there. The Mayor said the Bench considered the defendant's treatment of the poor animal most brutal, and to mark their sense of his conduct, they would sentence him to six weeks imprisonment with hard labour.

### **136 16 April 1889**

### **Stroud**

**A TROUBLESOME PRISONER** **John Hayward**, boatman of Dudbridge, was charged at Stonehouse Police Station on Monday with having been drunk and disorderly at Dudbridge on Saturday night, and with having assaulted PCs Cummings (Stonehouse) and Davis (Stroud) while in the execution of their duty. PC Cummings stated that at 10.30 on Saturday night, he found prisoner at Cainscross, stripped to the waist, and fighting with a man unknown. He arrested prisoner, who became violent to the extent of scratching, biting and kicking at the constable. PC Davis came from Stroud to the assistance of Cummings, and prisoner was laid and fastened on a truck and wheeled to Stonehouse. He was remanded to Whitminster.

**137 23 May 1889**

**SHOCKING OUTRAGE BY ROUGHS** A brutal piece of ruffianism on the part of a large number of men and boys is the subject of investigation by the Birmingham police. Elizabeth Littlewood, a friendless woman of about 37 years of age, was passing along the towing-path of the canal on Monday evening, slightly the worse for drink. A number of loungers seized her, threw her down, and tore off nearly all her clothes, which they threw in the canal. In the presence of a crowd of about 100 persons, her assailants treated her in a most insulting and disgraceful manner. A boatman named **Samuel Smith**, who was endeavouring to make his way through the crowd, was also set upon, and received several blows on the head from stones and belt buckles. He managed, however, to get to the nearest lock, and the lock-keeper went to the rescue of the woman, but was driven off by the roughs. Another lock-keeper went for the police, but when he returned with an officer, the roughs had fled. The woman was taken to a neighbouring house and provided with clothing, and she is now being taken care of by the police. No arrests have been made.

**138 28 May 1889**

**Stroud Police, Monday**

**Frederick Meecham**, boatman of Chalford, was charged with assaulting Maud Denson, a child of eight years, with whose mother the prisoner lives. The evidence of the child was of a revolting character. Prisoner was remanded till Friday.

**139 2 July 1889**

**Gloucester**

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING IN GLOUCESTER** A boatman named **John Groves** of 12 Westgate Street, aged 29, had a very narrow escape from drowning on Monday. He was stepping from one boat to another, and fell into the water between the boats, which were in the new basin of the canal. Some moments elapsed before a boat hook could be procured, during which he had twice sunk to the bottom. On his rising the third time, he was supported with the boat hook, and the drags having been procured, he was taken from the water, after an immersion of some two minutes duration. He was found to be still alive, and was at once conveyed to the Infirmary, where restoratives were used, and the man, who was in drink at the time, was brought round. He is this morning reported as progressing favourably, and fast approaching recovery.

**140 3 July 1889**

**ALARMING FIRE – A GALLANT BOATMAN** Early on Tuesday morning, a fire broke out in a house occupied by a man named William Harbutt, on the canal side near Lodge Street, Oldbury, and was only prevented from being attended with fatal consequences by the brave conduct of a boatman named **Benjamin Taylor**, in the employ of Mr Hickman of Brierley Hill. It appears that Taylor and his wife were in a boat on the opposite side of the canal, and shortly after midnight, they were alarmed by hearing cries for help. Hurrying out of their boat, they saw that a fire had broken out in the front bedroom of a house on the opposite side. Taylor and his wife ran over a bridge close to, and in a few seconds reached the house, which by this time was filled with smoke. Mrs Harbutt, who had two children sleeping with her, the husband being at work, was either overcome by the smoke, or so terrified that she was powerless to render any help to her children. Taylor, after some difficulty, obtained access to the house, and rushing upstairs through the smoke he, at considerable personal risk, succeeded in rescuing Mrs Harbutt and her two children, one of them a baby. Having rescued the inmates, Taylor afterwards extinguished the flames. The bedclothing and a quantity of Mrs Harbutt's clothes were destroyed. The fire, it is thought, originated through a spark from a candle falling on a table cover. On Tuesday night, at the Parochial Officers, New Street, the vicar (Rev W T Taylor) presented Taylor with a sum of money as a reward for his brave and prompt conduct in saving the lives of the three persons referred to above.

**141 24 July 1889**

**Stroud News**

**POLICE, TUESDAY** **James Gardner**, boatman, was charged with sleeping out (on a barge) without visible means of subsistence. He was sentenced to seven days hard labour.

**142 17 August 1889 Stroud News**

PETTY SESSIONS, YESTERDAY **Thomas Watkins**, boatman of Saul, was charged with unlawfully wounding **William Hudd**, also a boatman, on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Prosecutor, who had been felled to the ground with a shovel, stated that he did not wish to proceed with the case, and Mr Heelas, who represented the prisoner, said the case was not so serious as first represented. The Bench said they were willing to believe that the prisoner had some provocation, and allowed the charge to be withdrawn.

**143 17 October 1889**

ACCIDENTS **Joseph Williams** (36), boatman of Tivey's Court, Lower Westgate Street, was admitted to the Infirmary yesterday. He had been at work in Tewkesbury, and falling from a plank, had sustained a severe bruising of the right thigh.

**144 30 November 1889**

THE DROWNING OF A BOATMAN – INQUEST An inquest was held at Tewkesbury on Friday, on the body of a man who was drowned in the Avon on Wednesday. The deceased had been employed on the trow *Venus*, belonging to Mr Rice of Gloucester, about seven weeks, and was known as "Devonshire Tom". After hearing the evidence, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned", and strongly recommended that adequate fencing or chains should be put at the place, and that the town authorities should sufficiently light the spot where the deceased got into the water.

**145 24 January 1890**

THE DROWNING FATALITY – INQUEST The City Coroner, Mr H Morton-York, held an inquest at the Robin Hood Inn, Bristol Road, on Thursday afternoon, on the body of **Thomas Grainger** (69) of 23 Theresa Street, boatman, who was found drowned under circumstances already reported in these columns. Mr Frederick Godwin was chosen foreman of the jury. Ellen Harding, married daughter of deceased, said deceased had lived with her and her husband for the last three years. Some three months ago, he ruptured himself, and since that time he had been in a low desponding state occasionally, and suffered from fits of giddiness. Witness had seen him stagger across the kitchen several times. On the 19<sup>th</sup> inst, deceased left home at ten o'clock to get shaved and take a walk. His usual walk was by the canal. In consequence of his absence, witness communicated with her brother, Edward, who lives at 35 Theresa Street. He had given up his boat since Christmas owing to the giddiness. James Hawkins of 8 Baker Street, inn-keeper, said that on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> inst, he saw deceased at the corner of Baker Street going towards the Oil Mills, in the direction of the canal. Witness did not observe anything unusual in his manner. Deceased often went down that way. This was about 10.20 am. **Edward Grainger** of 35 Theresa Street, waterman, son of the deceased, said that on Sunday last, his sister came to his house in the afternoon and asked if he had seen deceased since the morning. Deceased called at his house just about ten o'clock. He said he was a bit better, and said he thought the fresh air would do him good. On Sunday night, witness and his brother-in-law began a search for deceased, and on Monday began to drag the canal, and recovered the body about five o'clock on Tuesday from the lower lie-by by Price, Walker and Co's wharf. There were no marks of violence on the body. Deceased had never threatened to commit suicide. Deceased had fallen off his boat into the river at Worcester about two months ago, during a fit of giddiness. Witness was of the opinion that deceased was taken with a fit of giddiness and fell into the canal. Witness was present when PC Luker searched the body. An open verdict of "Found drowned" was returned, the jury being of opinion that the evidence was not sufficient to show how deceased got into the water.

**146 4 February 1890**

ACCIDENTS **James Best**, a boatman, living at 40 Longsmith Street, was admitted, having sprained his foot badly by falling in his boat.

**147 18 February 1890**

ACCIDENT **John Butt**, aged 38, a boatman, residing at Frampton-on-Severn, was admitted to the Infirmary yesterday. He was at work at Chepstow, when he fell down a quarry and fractured his right thigh.

**148 13 March 1890**

FATAL RESULT OF A CAROUSE **John McFay**, a boatman, who lived at 30 Harding Street, Smethwick, died in the Birmingham General Hospital on Wednesday morning, suffering from severe burns. Deceased, whilst in a drunken condition, went to sleep in front of a large fire on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. His clothes caught fire, and he was badly burned before assistance arrived.

**149 3 April 1890**

THE DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE CANAL – AN OPEN VERDICT Mr H Morton-York attended at the Llanthony Bridge Inn on Wednesday evening, and held an inquest upon the body of a man unknown, which was recovered from the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal under circumstances already briefly reported. Mr George Tingle was chosen foreman of the jury, and the Coroner having opened the inquiry,

**Samuel Preedy** of 5 Linden Road, boatman, said that at about 6.30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, he was passing along the bank of the canal near the Oil Mills, when he saw a body in the water, about 17 feet from the wall. He got a boat hook, and tried to reach the body, which he could not at first do. He shifted a lighter which enabled him to reach the body, which was that of a male person and was dressed in seaman's clothes. He thought the probable age of the deceased would be around 29 years. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition. He secured the body with a rope, and towed it with a boat to Llanthony Bridge, where he took it from the water and carried it into those premises. He gave information to the police as soon as he had first reached the body, and PC Gale attended, and was there when the body was removed to that house. He was present when the body was searched, and two short clay pipes, a small tin box, and a brass strap buckle (all of which were produced) were found in the deceased's pockets. By the foreman : There was no current in the canal at that point.

PC Gale said he had made every inquiry, but had failed to obtain any clue as to the identity of the deceased.

The Coroner said it was one of those most unsatisfactory cases in which it was quite impossible to ascertain who the deceased man was, or how he got into the water. All they knew about it was that it was the body of a male person, that it was probably about 29 years of age, and that it was found in the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal. All the evidence that could be produced bearing on the case had been brought before them, and they could not manufacture evidence. He saw no advantage to be obtained by adjourning the inquiry, for there was no appearance of a possibility of identifying the man, who seemed likely to have been in the water several months. No one had intimated the disappearance of a man at any time, and the police had no shadow of a clue upon which to set to work to investigate the case. The body was so much decomposed that it would be a very difficult matter to identify the features even to a friend. He saw no other course open to the jury than to find an open verdict to the effect that the deceased was found dead in the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, but as to how he got there there was no evidence to show. He thought that was the only verdict they could possibly return upon the evidence.

The Foreman agreed that this was the only thing they could do, because they could not tell but what the deceased might have been travelling the country in search of work, and have fallen into the water whilst walking on the bank of the canal. It did not follow that the body entered the water at the spot where it was found, or even within a limited number of miles of it.

A Juryman referred to the inadequate lighting of the canal near the place where the body was found, but the Coroner remarked that that was rather beside the question, and was outside the scope of that inquiry.

After a little further discussion, the jury returned an open verdict.

**150 10 April 1890**

**Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

A BAREFACED AND DELIBERATE ACT **Saul Cook** (19), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing an overcoat and a pair of gloves, the property of Walter Charles Tooby, at Wheathenurst, on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Grey prosecuted. The prisoner had a very bad character, and a long list of “antecedents”, and the Chairman said the offence was a very barefaced and deliberate act of dishonesty. He was sentenced to twelve months hard labour and three years police supervision.

**151 7 May 1890**

**Stroud News**

**Joseph Gardner**, a boatman, being charged with sleeping in an outhouse at Bowbridge on the 6<sup>th</sup>, said he would plead guilty, but he was feeling very bad through drinking water, or he should not have been there. It was mentioned that there were several previous convictions against prisoner, to which prisoner replied, “Yes, but I am here under compulsion this time”, this being a further reference to the water and its bad effects. The fine and costs amounted to 2s 6d, which prisoner was allowed a few days to pay.

**152 8 May 1890**

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST TWO GLOUCESTER MEN At the Birmingham Police Court on Wednesday, before the Stipendiary (Mr T M Colmore), **William Timbrell** (28), boatman, Llanthony Road, Gloucester, and **Thomas Pready** (22), boatman, Westgate Street, Gloucester, were charged with violently assaulting another boatman named **David Kerwin**, of Allison Street, Birmingham.

The prosecutor, whose appearance gave ample evidence of his ill treatment, told the police that, along with another boatman, he was proceeding towards his boat in Gas Street on Tuesday night, when he encountered the prisoners. There was no former ill feeling between them, and no bother on meeting. On coming up, however, the prisoners attacked them. Pready took the most active part, and did nearly all the mischief. Having knocked Kerwin down, he kicked him savagely, and Timbrell finished by throwing him and his companion into the canal. Fortunately, they managed to scramble out, and prosecutor went to the hospital. He had several wounds on the head. His face was much discoloured and bruised, and his left arm was fractured. Prisoners were arrested on Wednesday morning by Inspector Moore. They admitted having assaulted Kerwin and thrown him into the canal. Their contention was that they were first of all attacked, and retaliated.

The Stipendiary pointed out that neither of the prisoners had so much as a scratch, while prosecutor was dreadfully injured. They were remanded for a week.

**153 27 June 1890**

**Whitminster**

PETTY SESSIONS **Walter Pearce**, boatman, was summoned for stealing cabbage, the property of John Niblett, Cainscross. Frederick Collier and Charles Frith deposed that they saw defendant take the cabbages. Defendant was fined 10s, 3d the value of the cabbages, and costs 16s.

**154 16 July 1890**

DROWNED AT TEWKESBURY – INQUEST On Tuesday afternoon, Mr F Moore, deputy coroner, held an inquest at the Town Hall, Tewkesbury, touching the death of **James Walker**, aged 21. Mr R W Fouracre was foreman of the jury. Elizabeth Pitts said deceased was her brother. She last saw him alive on Saturday night, but he was at her house on Sunday night, and she heard him and spoke to him several times, though she was in bed at the time. He changed his best clothes for his working clothes at her house, and said he would go aboard the *Higre* to sleep, as he had to be at work early the next morning, and should be ready dressed. **Charles Titcombe**, a boatman from Saul employed on the *Higre*, said they were moored alongside the quay on Sunday night, about a foot from the wall. He went into his cabin about half past ten. Between twelve and one, he heard someone call out, “Charlie”, but as they often had people come and call out, he did not take any notice, and heard nothing more. Deceased used to come on board, but not to sleep. Anyone wanting to get on board would have to jump. Philip Jesse Gregory proved finding deceased's hat about five yards from the boat on Monday morning. Samuel Halling, who dragged for the body,

proved finding it near the boat in about 10 or 12 feet of water, between the boat and the Quay wall. PC Millard proved the condition of the body, upon the face of which were marks and bruises, and the finger nails discoloured as if the deceased had grasped at something. There were marks on the tarpaulin as if that had been snatched at.

A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

### **155 22 July 1890**

#### **SINGULAR DROWNING CASE AT TEWKESBURY**

**CALLOUS BOYS** An inquest was opened at the Union Workhouse, Tewkesbury, before Mr C Moore (coroner) on Monday, touching the death of Richard Henry Gould (10), son of Mr Harry Gould, farmer of Claydon, in the parish of Ashchurch.

From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased, in company with two other small boys named Henry Potter and Lionel Nind, went down together to the Lower Lode on Saturday morning, and upon reaching the lower part of Mill Avon, they decided to strip and go into the water after some fish which were floating on the top. Upon entering the water, however, the deceased remarked that he would go across, and as a consequence got out of his depth, and sank immediately. His companions immediately repaired to the bank, dressed, and started for home, leaving the deceased's clothes on the bank, and resorting to no means to recover the body, or even raise an alarm. Upon reaching home, they said nothing as to the fate of their companion, and it was not known what had become of the deceased until the boys were questioned by deceased's father the following day. The body in the meantime had been found, a young man named Charles Jephson noticing the clothes on the bank on Saturday evening. He acquainted **John Hill**, boatman, of the fact, who recovered the body with a drag, and it was removed to the Union.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and the Coroner having called the boys forward, remarked that they had done very wrong in not notifying the occurrence, and warned them against courting danger in future.

### **156 25 July 1890**

**KICKED TO DEATH BY A HORSE** On Thursday morning, a boatman named **Thomas Carrington** died in the Blackburn Infirmary of shocking injuries caused by the kicks of a horse. While the horse was drawing a boat on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal near Chorley, the deceased struck it on the hindquarters with his hand. The animal immediately lashed out, and battered Carrington in the face with its hoofs, inflicting the terrible injuries from which he died.

### **157 9 August 1890**

#### **Stroud**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **George Mills**, boatman, was summoned for assaulting **Alfred Bowns**, another boatman on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The case was dismissed.

### **158 14 August 1890**

**THE CANAL DROWNING CASE – THE FOURTH OF A SERIES** Mr H Morton-York, city coroner, held an inquest at the Old Dial Inn, Westgate Street, on Wednesday night, on the body of Richard Griffiths, a corn porter, aged 21, whose death was occasioned by drowning in the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, under the following circumstances. Mr Alfred Spring was chosen foreman of the jury.

At the outset, the Coroner remarked that of the last five inquests he had held, four had been in cases in which death had been caused by drowning.

Samuel Griffiths, brother of the deceased, said he lived at White Swan Lane. Deceased was a married man and was healthy. He had never had a fit, and could swim. Witness saw him last on Tuesday, when he appeared in his usual health.

**William Strain** of Lower Bath Road, Worcester, boatman, deposed to working with the deceased for the first time on Tuesday, when they were being towed in a boat behind the *Windsor Castle*, their duty being to open the bridges between Gloucester and Sharpness along the canal. They reached

Sharpness all right, and began the return journey about 3 pm. When about 70 yards from Priday's lower bridge, deceased and witness were tightening a rope on the fore end of the small boat and the aft end of the steamer, the object being to keep the boat steady. The wash from the steamer came over the side of the boat, which sank. Witness and deceased could swim, and witness swam to the bank. Deceased, however, threw up his arms and said, "I can't swim", and immediately sank. He did not rise again, and witness went on in about ten minutes in the steamer, leaving Thomas Goddard to look after deceased.

By a juryman : Deceased took hold of the boat and held on to it for a short time, but let go and sank. There were two lifebuoys on the steamer.

A juryman : Then they ought to have been thrown overboard.

Witness : The steamer had got on some distance before that could have been done. Further examined, he said deceased and himself both got into the bow of the boat to pull it up, and it got a little to one side.

A juryman : One ought to have stayed at the stern and then it would have been all right.

James (*sic*) Goddard of Lower Westgate Street, labourer, deposed to recovering the body, after half or three quarters of an hour, with the drags, and conveyed it to Gloucester in a wagon. He had known deceased all his life, but did not know whether he could swim.

The Coroner said that it would certainly have been wise to have thrown out the lifebuoys, though it probably would not have been of much avail. However, he thought the facts showed clearly that it was a case of accidental drowning.

A verdict to that effect was returned.

### **159 17 September 1890**

**A GLOUCESTER MAN IN TROUBLE** On Tuesday, at Oldbury Police Court, **William Wakeman**, boatman of Lower Quay Street, Gloucester, was charged with stealing some straw, the property of Joseph Jeffries, hay and straw dealer, of Worcester Wharf, Birmingham, on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. Police-sergeant Clarke stated that on Friday evening last, he visited a brickyard in Portway Road, Oldbury, and saw the prisoner's boat there, and the straw lying close to it on the canal side. Prosecutor identified the straw as his property, and said that it had been stolen from Worcester Wharf. Prisoner said he was not aware that the straw was in his boat until he reached Smethwick locks, and that he intended to take it back again. The Bench imposed a fine of £1 9s, including costs, or in default seven days imprisonment.

### **160 27 December 1890**

#### **Stonehouse**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **William Hogg**, boatman, was summoned by Richard Fryer for damages for leaving his employment without notice, and ordered to pay 30s, with 10s costs.

### **161 7 January 1891**

#### **THE SAD BURNING CASE NEAR GLOUCESTER**

**INQUIRY AT THE INFIRMARY** An inquest was held at the Infirmary on Tuesday evening on the body of Harriet Pullen (22), Mr H Morton-York, city coroner, conducting the inquiry. Mr G H Lewis was chosen foreman of the jury. The following was given in evidence.

John Pullen of the Croft, Ashleworth, a labourer, identified the deceased as his daughter, who was a single woman, residing with himself and her mother. She was sometimes strange in her manner, having been so from birth. He had often left deceased at home. Deceased had never been out to service, being incapable of undertaking such duties. He left home on Saturday morning, and deceased then appeared all right. He was called from his work close by at about 11.30 by Mrs Payton's little girl. On reaching home, he found deceased on fire. He asked her how it happened and she said, "A coal fell down and my clothes caught on fire". He extinguished the flames and took her into Gloucester Infirmary.

Eliza Pullen, wife of the last witness, said the deceased was nervous, but had been more cheerful of late. She would not do anything wrong, and was well able to take care of herself. She was quiet

and inoffensive. Witness left for Gloucester at 9.30 on the day in question, and the deceased was at the well winding up the bucket when she left. Deceased was careful of fire, and told her before she went out that she could not have much fire till her father came in. Witness did not see her again till in the Infirmary.

**Mrs Payton**, wife of **John Payton**, a boatman, said that just after eleven o'clock on Saturday last, deceased, in flames and screaming, ran towards her house. Witness fetched a wet apron and threw it over her. She sent to deceased's father, and accompanied her to her home, and called other assistance. Deceased told her that a coal fell on her. She had known deceased seven years, and she had told her that she was giddy in the head at times.

Mr J Forester-Wood, MRCS, house surgeon at the Infirmary, said that deceased was brought into the institution suffering from severe burns all over the body, at 1.30 on Saturday. She was treated as usual, but succumbed soon after four o'clock on the same afternoon.

The Coroner remarked that they had it in evidence that deceased told the same story to three or more individuals, and it appeared that it was a pure accident, and one in which blame was to be attached to no one.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

### **162 20 January 1891**

AWKWARD ACCIDENTS **William Preedy**, a boatman living at Church Buildings, Westgate Street, met with a serious accident on Monday evening. It appears that Preedy, who is very deaf, was on his way to a meeting, when he was knocked down by a conveyance, the wheels of the latter going over his arms, chest and leg, causing severe injuries. He was taken to the Infirmary and detained.

### **163 28 February 1891**

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A GLOUCESTER MAN An elderly man named **Henry Jones**, master of the trow *Nora*, of Gloucester, on Thursday night fell down the hold of the vessel whilst she lay in the river at Newport, and sustained concussion of the brain. He was removed to the Infirmary, where he remained unconscious for a long time, and died during Friday afternoon.

### **165 28 February 1891**

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **William Wakeman**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged at Worcester on Friday with cruelly ill treating a horse on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The horse was drawing a boat along the Severn. William Bach, horse slaughterer, Diglis, was also charged with allowing the horse to be worked, the animal having been sent to him to be slaughtered. Mr H Weaver said the horse was worn out and only fit to be slaughtered. He sold the horse to Bach for 30s to be slaughtered for the dogs. The Bench dismissed the case against Bach, but fined Wakeman £3, including costs, and intimated that he had aggravated the offence by calling witnesses to commit perjury in his own defence.

### **166 19 June 1891**

DISCOVERY OF THE MISSING MAN

FOUND IN GLOUCESTER DOCKS The body of **Henry White** of Arlingham, who was employed as boatman on the trow *Exeter*, and who has been missing since Wednesday week, was recovered from the Docks, near the Old Arm, this morning. Dragging operations having proved futile, it was thought probable that the body was fixed under one of the lighters near where the man was supposed to have fallen in the water. A rope was accordingly procured, and the bottom of the lighter *Llanthony* swept, with the result that a hat quickly rose to the surface, followed shortly afterwards by the body of the missing man. It having been brought to the side of the water, information was sent to the police station. A stretcher was procured, and the corpse, which presented a shocking appearance, the hands and arms being skinned, was recovered and taken to the Mortuary.

## 167 20 June 1891

### INQUESTS IN GLOUCESTER

**THE MISSING BOY** Three inquests were held in Gloucester last evening by the City Coroner (Mr H Morton-York). The first was held at the Ship Inn, the Quay, on the body of the boy **Joseph Henry Best**, who had been missing from his home some days. Mr George Tomes was appointed foreman of the jury. The evidence taken was as follows :-

**Elizabeth Best**, wife of **Richard Best**, a boatman, living at No 40 Longsmith Street, said the deceased, who was her son, was eight years of age, and was a healthy boy. On Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>, he left home about 11 o'clock in the morning, which was the last time she saw him alive.

John Green, nine years of age, and son of Charles Green, a labourer residing at 32 Mill Street, who gave his evidence remarkably well for one so young, said that on Saturday afternoon last between half past two and three o'clock, he saw the deceased – a schoolfellow of his – in the Great Western Yard at the Docks. He was running away from his brother, William, and called out to him to “hit William”. Just afterwards, the deceased slipped his foot, and “in he went”. Witness was some little distance away when his schoolfellow slipped into the water, but his brother Frank was close by. He was quite certain that Frank did not touch the deceased ; William was farther away at the time than either of them. Witness was standing on the bridge, and could see that no one was close enough to have pushed the deceased into the water. He was running at full speed, and as he ran turned round three times to see if the others were coming, when he slipped into the water.

Henry Salisbury, of No 2 Sebert Street, Kingsholm, cooper, said that on the 17th inst, about half past nine o'clock in the morning, he was in the Great Western yard when he saw the steamer *Wave* come by ; and shortly afterwards the body of the deceased rose to the surface of the water, about twelve or fourteen feet from the wall. Witness went on board the barge *Ada*, and with a boatshaft caught the body by the jacket, and bringing it to the wall, made it fast to the railings.

The Coroner, in the course of his summing up, said he did not think he had ever heard a little boy give evidence more straightforwardly and clearly than the boy Green had. He thought he was a witness of truth, and it was very natural, when they came to think of it, that the deceased considering he was being pursued – whether in fun or otherwise was not material – ran at full speed and, as the witness said, looked round occasionally, when he slipped into the water. So far as he could see, there did not appear to have been anybody near the deceased at the time.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally drowned”.

## 168 20 July 1891

**THE BIRMINGHAM CANAL COMPANY** **Richard Hobbs**, boatman in the employ of the Corporation, was on Saturday fined 50s and costs for having thrown a ton of rubbish into the canal as he was passing through a tunnel. It was stated that the Canal Company were put to an expense of thousands of pounds in dredging the canal owing to this practice of boatmen.

## 169 21 July 1891

### Stroud News

**INQUEST ON A CHALFORD WOMAN** Mr R H Smith, deputy coroner, held an inquest at the Clothiers' Arms Inn, Chalford, on Monday afternoon, on the body of Elizabeth Dennison of Cowcombe Hill, who died on Saturday afternoon. Deceased was the widow of a soldier, but for seven years past had cohabited with a man named **Frederick Meecham**, a canal boatman. Mr Cromack was foreman of the jury. The deputy coroner, in opening the inquiry, said he feared that Meecham was a man who did not bear the best of characters. Dr Gordon, who had visited deceased previously, saw her on Sunday in a comatose and dying state, and declined to certify as to the cause of death. Under these circumstances and from what he had heard, he thought it desirable that a *post mortem* examination should be made. The jury having journeyed up to the cottage to view the body, the evidence of Dr Gordon was taken. He had made a *post mortem* examination that afternoon. He found a small clot of blood on the left side of the brain, due to the bursting of a blood vessel. Both lungs were congested. The liver was in a state of chronic congestion, the result of drinking. Otherwise deceased was healthy, though not well nourished. She was pregnant, and had apparently

been so for four or five months. Apoplexy was the cause of death. He found no bruises, and so far as he could see, the clot of blood was not the result of violence. Excitement might have caused it. She visited him on Wednesday and said she was spitting blood, and he thought that was due to the lung congestion. Alice Gardner and Sarah Ann Gardner, neighbours of deceased, spoke to their attendance on deceased on Saturday, during which day she was unconscious, and when she died on Sunday. Frederick Meecham was also called. He said he had lived with deceased for seven years, and during most of that time, he had been with her on canal boats. She had suffered from colds, had bronchitis eighteen months ago, and was a delicate woman. In reply to the jury, Meecham denied that he had used any violence towards deceased. He admitted that he had smacked her in the face. There had been no rows lately. Asked by a jurymen why he did not keep a more comfortable home, Meecham said there was a comfortable home aboard the boat, where they generally were. The jury returned a verdict that death was due to apoplexy.

### **170 10 August 1891**

**ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN** On Saturday, **John Rice** (70), boatman belonging to Gloucester, was admitted to the Worcester Infirmary suffering from a fractured leg. He was stepping from a boat at Bilford locks, when he overbalanced himself and, in falling, sustained the injury.

### **171 4 September 1891**

**A GLOUCESTER MAN CONVICTED OF CRUELTY** At the Worcester Police Court this morning, **John Groves**, boatman, Westgate Street, Gloucester, was charged with having been guilty of cruelty to a horse on Thursday. The evidence was to the effect that the horse had a large running sore on the shoulder, and another on the crest. The horse was in a shockingly poor condition. The collar pressed the sores, causing the animal extreme pain. The horse had drawn a load of stone from Rowley Regis. Prisoner said that he was careful with the pony. Groves was fined £1 and costs ; and **Maria Smith**, for causing the animal to be worked, was fined £2 and costs.

### **172 3 October 1891**

**Ellen Pye** (24) was with her husband, a boatman, in his boat on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Shipton on Friday, when she fell over the gunwale and was drowned in spite of her husband's efforts to save her.

### **173 3 December 1891**

**THE GLOUCESTER DOCKS DROWNING CASE – THE INQUEST** On Wednesday evening at the Police Station, Gloucester, Mr Morton-York and a jury of which Mr David Beard was foreman, held an inquest upon the death of Agnes Seyman, aged 17, factory hand, whose dead body was discovered on the previous day floating in the water at the Docks. The following evidence was called :-

George Seyman, father of the deceased, said he was an ostler at the Fleece Hotel, and lived at 13 Mitre Street. Deceased was 17 last January, and was employed at Moreland's Match Factory. About two months before he missed her, he had reason to complain to her of her staying from home too late at night. She sometimes stayed out until 11 or 12 o'clock. He told her she must leave, and she did so. He did not know where she went to lodge. On Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>, his younger daughter Sophia brought him a message from the deceased, in which she asked to be allowed to come back. He consented on the understanding that she promised to be obedient. She came home again, and between then and the 10<sup>th</sup>, she kept better hours. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, he called her at about 5.30 am, and asked her if she was going to work. She answered, "Yes". He went back to bed, but he heard her go out. He did not see her again until he saw her dead body at the Mortuary. He heard a rumour that she went to see a man named **Albert Broadey**, and that she went to Birmingham with him on a boat. Feeling uneasy about it, he communicated with Sergeant Theyers. Deceased had kept company with Broadey for eight or nine months past. He knew of no reason for her attempting to commit suicide, and she had never referred to such a thing. Deceased was subject

to fainting fits. He had never seen her the worse for liquor. When she was out so late, he believed she was walking about the streets or in the company of "this man". Her life was insured in the Prudential Office for £9. He benefited by the insurance, and paid the premium. He had seven children living and four were insured, and he was himself insured. By DCC Chipp : Deceased was rather quick tempered. By the Coroner : Deceased was subject to fits. He had known her have a fit when walking out of doors. By DCC Chipp : He did not know the man Broadey. He had no reason to suppose deceased was in trouble of any kind.

**Arthur Rea**, 17 Poole Meadow, said he was a boatman. On Tuesday evening, he saw the body of deceased floating in the docks about 20 yards from Llanthony Bridge. He got assistance and took the body out. The Dock Constable came and took charge of it. He knew Broadey, who was a boatman.

PC Cripps, Coroner's officer, said he saw the body of the deceased at the Mortuary on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> last. He searched it, and found a purse containing a pawn ticket and two bills. The pawn ticket showed that a petticoat had been pledged with Mr Carless, Barton Terrace, and bore the address, Esther Coles, Ducie Street. One was a bill for 15s in respect of an ulster purchased at Somerset House, St James's Square, Cheltenham, on October 10 1891 by Miss Seymour, on which two instalments of a 1s had been paid. The other referred to two hats purchased at Mr Turk's, Southgate Street, Gloucester. There were no external marks of violence. The body appeared to be well nourished, and deceased was fairly well dressed for a person in her class of life, wearing the ulster described in the bill, and a straw hat.

PS Theyers stated that the body might have been in the water about ten days. Certainly not more than that.

In reply to a juryman, the Coroner said they had no reason to suppose that Broadey was at Gloucester on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Calling attention to the rumour about deceased going off with Broadey in a boat, he said if the jury thought it necessary to adjourn the inquest, he would do so.

After a short consultation, the jury decided upon an adjournment, which was fixed for that day week, the Foreman stating that they considered Broadey should have an opportunity to clear himself from any charge which might be made against him.

The Coroner remarked that Broadey was not the captain of the boat, so that the deceased could not have gone with him to Birmingham, as the captain would have prevented it.

## **174 10 December 1891**

THE DROWNING CASE AT GLOUCESTER DOCKS – ADJOURNED INQUEST Mr Morton-York on Wednesday evening resumed the inquiry as to the death of the girl Agnes Seaman, whose dead body was found floating in the Gloucester Docks on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. The inquiry had been adjourned to allow of an explanation being given by a boatman named Broadey, whose name had been mentioned in connection with the affair. Mr D Beale was again foreman of the jury.

The Coroner mentioned that in addition to the evidence of Broadey, other evidence of a more important nature had been obtained.

**Albert Broadey** was then called, and said he lived at Levi's Court, the Island, and was a boatman. He had known deceased for about two years, during which time he had been keeping company with her. He was in Gloucester on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, his boat having arrived four days before. He met the deceased on the 11<sup>th</sup> at about 8.30 in the evening in Commercial Road, by arrangement, he having seen her the previous night at the Ship Inn, the Quay. He noticed nothing unusual in her manner. She complained about her father being "always against her", but did not say in what way. She said "she did not like him" and she would "have to do something to herself". Witness told her she must not do that. They were together about half an hour on that evening, and did not go for a walk, because witness had to get some things for the journey next day. That was the last time he saw her alive. He did not see her at the Docks that night. He had never had a quarrel with deceased. He knew she was subject to fits. He started with the boat next day at 3 pm for Birmingham. He knew no reason for deceased's committing suicide. By a juryman : Deceased never came to the docks to see him. By the Foreman : She had never been in his boat ; the captain

would not have allowed it.

Kate Lewis, a girl employed at Messrs Moreland's Match Factory and living in Ducie Street, said she had known deceased for about three years, having worked with her at the factory. Deceased was subject to fits. About six months ago, witness was out with deceased at about eight o'clock at night, and Ellen Hiram was with them. When in Commercial Road, deceased started running in the direction of the Severn. They both ran after her and caught her. Deceased then said, "If you hadn't caught me now, I should have jumped into the water". Witness asked her why, but deceased did not reply. They took her home. Deceased had always said that she would do away with herself. On Monday the 9th of November, at about 9.10 am, deceased was seized with a fit in the factory, and it lasted till about 12 o'clock, when witness and Ellen Hiram took her home to Mitre Street, and remained with her until half past four, and then left her, as she was better. Deceased came to work on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup>, and witness saw her at 6 pm, when she gave in her work.

Ellen Hiram of Sweetbriar Street, also a girl employed at the Match Factory, corroborated the previous witness, and said that when deceased gave in her work on the evening of Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, witness was with her. Witness asked her if she was going out that night, and deceased replied, "Yes, this is the last time you will see me. The water will be my doom". These were the last words witness heard her say. Deceased said this as if she meant it, but gave no reason at all for what she had said.

The Coroner, in summing up, pointed out that the deceased suffered from epileptic fits, and that persons who suffered from these fits were subject to distorted judgement. There was no doubt that the statement of the deceased that she would put an end to herself, and the fact of her naming the very instrument of her doom, would fully justify them in returning a verdict of suicide. He submitted that deceased's conduct all through was not that of a person in a sound and rational state of mind, and if such was the case, it would be impossible to return a verdict of *felo de se*.

After deliberation, the jury, through their foreman, said their verdict was that deceased committed suicide whilst of an unsound mind, and they wished to exonerate the father and also Broady from any blame.

The Coroner entirely concurred in the addition to the verdict.

### **175 11 December 1891**

THE USE OF THE POKER – PENAL SERVITUDE FOR LIFE At Leeds Assizes on Thursday, a Doncaster boatman named **Routledge** was indicted before Justice Wright for an assault upon his paramour, Elizabeth Holmes. The accused went home drunk and, pulling the woman out of bed, inflicted a series of terrible wounds with a red hot poker. Routledge, who wept bitterly, pleaded drunkenness as an excuse for the crime. The Judge said the case was fortunately almost unheard of in the annals of crime. He sentenced the prisoner to penal servitude for life.

### **176 24 December 1891**

At Leeds on Tuesday night, a boatman named **William Lamb** (25) and a labourer named Patrick Cowan (60) lost their way in the fog, and walked into the river and were drowned.

### **177 23 February 1892**

ACCIDENT **Samuel Meadows**, aged 22 years, a boatman of Elmore, was admitted to the Gloucester Infirmary on Monday. He was engaged in loading a boat at West Bromwich with iron, when a large piece fell on his foot, several bad bruises being the result. The accident happened two or three days ago, the injuries being temporarily attended to, and the patient sent on to Gloucester.

### **178 9 March 1892**

#### **Stroud County Court**

JAMES WEBB v **THOMAS GILES** Plaintiff claimed £1 for breach of contract. Plaintiff, a coal merchant, had sent defendant, a boatman, to Bullo for coal, and he alleged that he left work without bringing back the coal. Defendant's answer to the claim was that when he got to Bullo there was no coal to be had, and that he waited a reasonable time. The Judge said defendant had fulfilled his

contract, and gave him the verdict.

**179 6 April 1892**

At the Staffordshire Assizes on Tuesday, Mr Justice Hawkins passed sentence of six months hard labour upon **Jeremiah Edwards**, labourer, and **Richard Williams**, boatman, who, after being acquitted of the murder of a little boy named Barrett at Sedgeley, had pleaded guilty to stealing some of the deceased boy's clothes.

**180 13 April 1892 Stroud News**

At the Police Station yesterday, **Richard Townsend**, boatman of Bagpath, was remanded to Nailsworth on the charge of beating his wife.

**181 16 April 1892 Nailsworth Petty Sessions**

**Richard Townsend**, boatman, charged on remand with beating his wife, was discharged.

**182 26 April 1892**

**ALLEGED ELOPEMENT FROM GLOUCESTER – HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS**

**HUNG AND BURNED IN EFFIGY** Between five and nine o'clock on Monday night, the South end of the city was the scene of disorderly and exciting demonstrations. It is alleged that the wife of a boatman had left her husband and seven children, and eloped with another boatman. The parties went up the river together on a longboat, and returned to Gloucester on Monday evening.

The boat arrived at the Quay about five o'clock, and here a crowd of people gathered and gave the couple an extraordinary reception. Their effigies were strung up to the crane on the Quay and, after a quantity of paraffin had been poured on them, were set fire to. The boat was then brought to the locks, the crowd following. Whilst waiting in the locks the man, who was on board, was made the recipient of a quantity of stones, mud, water, old frying pans, and anything in the shape of missiles that the crowd could procure. The woman had so far wisely concealed herself from the angry mob.

Another move was then made, and the man was able to get alongside the Old Arm in the Basin without much molestation. On his arrival there, however, the man must have been surprised to find the crowd still further increased, the unusual excitement having caused hundreds of persons to congregate at the Docks. Calls were made to the man to turn the woman out, but he stoutly denied that she was on board. A section of the crowd, however, thought otherwise, boarded the boat, and commenced a search. Their efforts in this respect were rewarded, the woman being found coiled up in the cabin. On making her appearance on deck, she was "dowsed" with water, her clothes becoming saturated. By some means, the man got his boat on the opposite side of the Basin, and a cab from Mr Colwell's mews having been procured for them, and which waited near the Llanthony Bridge, the couple immediately jumped into the vehicle, and were driven towards Southgate Street.

When the vehicle with its occupants had reached Southgate Street, it was met by a number of men and women, who refused to allow it to proceed further. The mob rapidly increased in size, and the cab was soon surrounded by 200 or 300 people of both sexes and all sizes, who gave vent to their virtuous indignation in hoots and groans. An attempt, in which the windows of the cab were broken, was made to hustle the occupants out, and the cabman, seeing it was useless to hope to get any "forrhander", took his horse out of the shafts, and left the fly in the centre of the surging mob, who made the night hideous with their yells and execrations. A couple of policemen had in the meantime appeared on the scene, and they bravely held their ground against the excited demonstrators, while they sought to protect the objects of the popular rage from ill usage.

Two or three men, however, seized the shafts and, with many willing hands pushing, the cab was taken at a run down Llanthony Road towards the canal, amid cries of "Duck 'em". Those in charge of affairs ran the vehicle round towards Messrs Foster Bros Mill, and through a yard to the canal side, and for a moment it appeared as though the threat, with all its serious possibilities, was really going to be put into execution. But when the canal side was reached, the policemen, who had stuck well to their charge, took advantage of the situation – the narrow way having precluded people from

getting at the sides of the vehicle – and the door having been opened, they bolted with the man and woman. As soon as the crowd realised this manoeuvre, which had been favoured by the darkness, they gave chase and overtook their quarry in the “Black Road”. For some moments, it was impossible to fight a way through the crush, but at length the constables were able to move slowly on, with the man and woman between them. There was no attempt at rescue, though free expressions was given to the opinions of all around ; and at last the policemen were able to lodge the luckless pair in a place of safety. It was a long time, however, ere the excitement died down ; but more policemen, who had been sent for, arrived on the scene, and the crowd – which like a snowball, had increased in size as it went along – gradually dispersed. Considerable damage was done to the cab, and in the excitement at the top of Llanthony Road, two women fainted ; while it is alleged that the woman struck one of her tormentors on the head with a poker when in Castle Street, causing a wound which had to be sewn up.

### **183 29 April 1892**

#### SEQUEL TO THE ALLEGED GLOUCESTER ELOPEMENT

POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS A case arising out of the fracas which took place in the south end of the city on Monday night, in consequence of the alleged elopement of a boatman's wife with another boatman, was heard at the Gloucester Police Court this morning, before Mr C Brown (in the chair) and Mr C Clark.

The case was a charge of assault preferred against **Elizabeth Beard** of Castle Street by Walter Hatgood. The defendant did not appear. The complainant, who is a respectable looking young man, went into the witness box with his head bandaged up, and stated that between eight and nine o'clock last Monday night, he was proceeding home from work, when he saw a crowd, consisting of something like a thousand persons, near the Spa Gates, He ascertained that the crowd were after the defendant, who had “been off” with another man, and he accordingly followed them into the “Black Road”. Whilst there, defendant suddenly came up, and notwithstanding the fact that he had never said a word to her, struck him a violent blow across the forehead with a poker which she held in her hand.

A woman named Maria Lee spoke to seeing the defendant strike the complainant with the poker.

PC Eames stated that about half past eight o'clock on Monday night, he was on duty at the Spa crossing, when he saw the defendant and a man come up the road in a cab, and followed by an enormous crowd of excited people. The crowd tried to turn the cab over, and they eventually succeeded in smashing both the windows and the doors. The crowd tried to get the cab to the canal side, but the defendant was able to get out of the vehicle, whereupon she was knocked down and became insensible, and witness had great difficulty in conveying her home. The defendant had great provocation to strike anybody.

In answer to the Bench, Mr D C C Chipp said there were nine policemen on the scene, but the woman had nevertheless to protect herself also. There could not be the slightest doubt that if the woman had not had the assistance of the police, the mob would have put both her and the cab into the canal.

The Chairman, in giving the decision of the Bench, said the complainant seemed to have followed the crowd, and must therefore put up with the consequences. After taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, the magistrates had come to the conclusion that they could not do otherwise than dismiss the charge.

### **184 9 June 1892**

THE SAD BATHING FATALITY IN GLOUCESTER – INQUEST Mr H Morton-York held an inquiry on Wednesday night, at the New Pilot Inn, Southgate Street, into the circumstances attending the death of Frederick Osmond Wilkins, 12 years of age, son of George Frederick Wilkins, tailor, of 6 Pilot Terrace, Southgate Street, who was accidentally drowned in the canal on Monday morning. Mr James Romans was the foreman of the jury.

The father of the deceased having given evidence of identification,

Chrispus Alfred Johns, a boy eleven years of age, said he lived with his parents at 34 St Michael's Square, The deceased was a friend of his. On the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst, witness and the deceased went together to float a toy ship on the canal. They first put the ship in the canal by the boat house on the right side of the water towards Sharpness. Just past the boat house, they were joined by other boys, and they all got on a raft. After being on the raft for about a quarter of an hour, the deceased undressed himself and got into some shallow water near the bank. He walked about for a time, but eventually got into deep water, and disappeared. Witness raised an alarm, which brought assistance to the spot, but for a time all efforts failed to find the body.

**Henry Lewis**, a boatman, spoke to seeing the deceased with others on the raft, and to the deceased getting into the water and disappearing. Witness made every effort to recover the body, but failed. In witness's opinion, the deceased lost his foothold, as no one touched him, and the affair was a pure accident.

**William Goddard**, a lighterman, deposed searching for the body, and eventually finding it near the place where the deceased fell in.

This was all the evidence called, and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

### **185 30 June 1892**

### **Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

A WARNING A boatman named **Saul Cook** (21) was indicted for having on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, at Lydney, stolen two pairs of boots, one oilskin jacket and other articles, the property of Oliver Lane, from the vessel the *Emperor*, then lying in the canal there. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and the Chairman, in passing sentence, said the prisoner had already been convicted before, and if he appeared in the dock again, he would assuredly be sent to penal servitude. The sentence of the Court would be that he be imprisoned for twelve months with hard labour, after which time to undergo three years police supervision.

### **186 26 July 1892**

### **Ross**

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE On Monday evening, a female tramp named Holland attempted suicide by walking into the Wye at the Dock. She was got out by a boatman named **Andrews** and taken to the Police Station.

### **187 31 August 1892**

THE BOATMAN AND HIS GUN On Tuesday, at Atherstone, **William Johnson**, a boatman, was committed for trial, bail being allowed, charged with shooting Joseph Harding. On the 17<sup>th</sup> inst, as defendant's boat was proceeding along the canal at Polesworth, a number of young men, who were standing on a bridge, annoyed him by calling to his horse to stop. Defendant fetched a gun from his cabin and fired, several shots striking Harding in the hand. His defence was that he merely wished to frighten the young men.

### **188 29 October 1892**

### **Stroud News**

POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **Frank Gardner** and **George Gleed**, boatmen, were fined, the former 7s 6d and the latter 12s 6d, including costs, for being disorderly at and refusing the quit the Old Red Lion Inn, Chalford on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **189 7 January 1893**

### **THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF**

(To the Editor of the *Citizen*)

Dear Sir, - I want to use your paper to complain of the way they manage the relief of the poor this winter. I mean the special relief through the frost.

I am a boatman frozen up. This is a hard time for the likes of us – wife and family not much to eat, and no coal in the house. We made a request to be allowed to wheel a boat through the streets, but were not allowed. What I want to know, sir, is who has got the giving away of coal tickets and such like in this St Nicholas' Parish. I have asked several, but nobody knows. I advise the Relief

Committee to advertise the names and addresses of those who are appointed to take charge of districts. Then we should know where to go to.

Thanking you if you will take this matter in hand.

I remain, yours respectfully,

BOATMAN

**190 7 January 1893**

#### **Stroud News**

POLICE COURT, YESTERDAY **Joseph Gardiner**, boatman, was charged with stealing 32 lbs of coal, value 4d, the property of Messrs Wood and Rowe, coal merchants. Prosecutors had missed coal from Walbridge Canal wharf, and on Thursday set a man to watch. Shortly after eleven, he stated in evidence, he saw prisoner take some coal from the wharf and take it aboard a boat lying in the canal. The watcher fetched PC Clutterbuck, and the two went aboard the boat and found that prisoner had just put some of the coal on the fire. Prisoner denied that he put the coal in the cabin, and said he did not know who did. He was sentenced to seven days imprisonment.

**191 9 January 1893**

#### THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF

(To the Editor of the *Citizen*)

Dear Sir, - In your issue of 7<sup>th</sup> inst, a correspondent signing himself "Boatman" complains of the way in which the Winter Relief Tickets are distributed, and suggests that the distributors' names should be advertised. I, as one of the latter, sincerely trust the Committee will do no such thing. During the past week there has been a continual stream of applicants at my house, and the time and trouble taken in dealing with them has been considerable. If my name and address are made public, the volume of applicants will be materially increased, and no good purpose will be served, as the present arrangements are in my opinion as perfect as they can well be, and likely to effectually relieve the needy, and at the same time baulk the imposter.

At the present time, the city has been divided into fifteen small districts, to each of which is attached a secretary and a small band of distributors. These go through the various streets of their particular district in search of the fireless and starving, and I believe that as the area assigned to each is small, all such cases are relieved. To frustrate the attempts of the "sponger" each distributor has assigned to his particular care certain streets. Should an applicant residing in either of those streets apply to any other distributor, he is referred to the one in charge of the street in question, and the latter does not give any tickets before personally satisfying himself that the case is a necessitous one.

Some of the most heartrending scenes we meet with, and but for our timely help, terrible indeed would have been the privations. We have seen little ones huddled round the empty grate, whilst articles in the same room have been in a frozen condition, and in many cases not a scrap of food has been in the place. These are the people we are at the present time helping, but if our names and addresses are advertised, the number of those who go "cadging" with a false name and address, and a pitiable story upon their lips, will be perhaps largely increased.

It is unfortunate that at the present time our efforts are so crippled for want of funds, and that we are unable to relieve really deserving cases on this account.

Yours faithfully

TREDWORTH

We thoroughly agree with our correspondent as to the inadvisability of publishing the names of ladies and gentlemen who have the distribution of relief. But "the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley", and with all the arrangements it is possible that really deserving cases may be overlooked. If any such cases should come to the ears of individuals, they should send the name and address of those requiring relief to the hon secs at the Guildhall, or mention the matter to one of the district visitors. The arrangements, we have good reason to know, are excellent ; but we have also reason to know that it is not quite correct to describe them, as our correspondent does, as "perfect as they can well be". But if persons hearing of deserving cases that have been overlooked

will call attention to them, the system will then be most thorough and efficient, and it ought not to be crippled for want of funds. - Ed, *Citizen*.

## 192 10 January 1893

### DISTRESS IN GLOUCESTER

THE VIEW OF THE WORKING MAN A representative of the *Citizen* called on Mr Abel Evans at the office of the Gloucester branch of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union, last evening, and having ascertained that the Secretary wished to let our readers know what he had discovered as to the relief of distress in the city, and his ideas as to the constitution and working of the Committee, our reporter took out his notebook. Mr Evans then referred to the letters which had appeared on the subject from "Boatman" and "Tredworth", and said he had made enquiries into twenty distinct cases, in which he found that individuals earning about 30s to 35s a week, permanent employment, had been having tickets for coal and bread, and their children tickets for the children's tea. There was a place in ----- Street, said Mr Evans, giving the name of the street, where tickets were given to an individual, who had no family, and was in permanent employment at ----- timber yard at 24s a week, with the advantage of piece work in summer ; whilst next door was a family of five children, the father having done no work for some weeks, passed by. Another case was that of a tailor who could earn, when he kept away from the "booze" on an average £2 a week. He had coal and bread tickets ; whilst another family in the same yard, in real want, had nothing because the house was kept decent. There were cases where a bit of fire is kept in the grate, but where the people are really starving though they will not let anyone know. On the other hand, in some cases where bread tickets had been given, they had taken them to the shop and asked for cakes and buns instead of bread, of which they said they had plenty. In Tredworth there are men whose earnings have averaged for the last eight weeks only four or five shillings who have been passed by, and men engaged permanently on the railway have received relief tickets.

"These are not isolated cases that you have come across?" "Certainly not."

"But I suppose you have found cases in which the relief committee have done real good?" "Oh, yes".

"Could you say what is the percentage of misplaced relief and of cases of oversight?" "No, I don't think I could".

Our representative directed Mr Evans' attention to the editorial footnote to "Tredworth's" letter, which suggested that the relief system would be made all the more complete if those possessing such information as that he had imparted would send it to the Hon Sec of the Mayor's Relief Committee. Mr Evans admitted the wisdom of this course, but added that he thought much good would be done by the publication of these facts, because it would show the impostors that an eye was upon them. He asked whether it would not be possible to prosecute any of these as an example to others. The interviewer ventured the opinion that if it could be proved that anyone obtained tickets by stating that which was not true, he might be prosecuted for obtaining goods by false pretences.

Discussing the question as to the improvement of the present means of administering relief, Mr Evans said there was too much of the Church and Chapel system adopted, and politics also entered into the matter. It was pointed out to him that Churchmen and Nonconformists, Liberals and Conservatives, were placed on the Committees as a safeguard against this sort of thing, but Mr Evans maintained his opinion. There ought, he said, to be three or four working men on each of the fifteen district committees, for these were most likely to know how their fellow workers were faring. The committee, in going their rounds, should not simply look into a house and judge on what they saw, but should make enquiry into the outward circumstances of each case. The district committee should meet at the conclusion of their work each evening, and members should report cases in which there was any doubt. Someone on the committee would almost always be able to give information on the case.

So far as we (the Dockers) are concerned, said Mr Evans, only a very few men have been employed owing to the frost. The boatmen were without work, and the canal having been frozen and blocked,

other work at the docks had also been stopped. The poverty would, however, have been felt much more than it has, had it not been for one or two large employers of watermen, who had generously advanced money to their men. A plan had been suggested, and was adopted last week, by which those men at work should contribute to a Dockers' Relief fund. Those earning £1 a week paid in 3d, and those earning more paid 6d. This week they had distributed to 65 men a loaf of bread, a quarter of tea, and a lb of sugar. They were also going to give soup to fifty children during the week. Mr Evans said, he must say that the system adopted by Mr Ravenhill, the Corporation foreman, was a most excellent one. After the first batch of men was put on the relief work, he gave the preference to those who had the largest families, and with a view to testing the accuracy of the statements made to him, he submitted the names and addresses of the men to individuals well acquainted with working men. Only one case of misstatement had been discovered, and that spoke well for the honesty of the men.

One thing that wants looking into by the Corporation and ratepayers during the coming summer, remarked Mr Evans, is the means to prevent such distress, and one suggestion he would make is that the gas company should be approached to employ Gloucester citizens to make the gas, instead of men from the country, who pay no rates. He alleged that only a small proportion of the men employed at the works were city men, and he contended that as it was a city concern, the directors should be called upon to assist them in this matter of preventing distress by providing regular work for city men. Our representative suggested that the employees may have been drawn from the city, but prefer to live out in the country near their work. Mr Evans said this was not so. The men lived as far away as Hardwicke, and recruits were drawn from the same neighbourhood. Another thing which Mr Evans thought caused distress had relation to employment at the Docks. Some of the employers in the timber trade had, for certain reasons, had a number of men with whom they contracted to find employment both winter and summer. Before this system was adopted, it often happened that the work now done by about 75 hands was equally divided among twice the number, and these 150 men earned a few shillings every week and were kept from the necessity of taking charity. Mr Evans has hopes that this will not last much longer, as he is convinced that the system is detrimental to the employer as well as to the employed, as some of the former have not had enough work for these men, whom they are contracted to employ summer and winter.

Our representative pointed out that these changes at the Gasworks and Docks, if carried out, would only affect a small number of the men now out of work, and indicated that the practice of thrift was required. Mr Evans agreed that this was so, and said the Dockers' Union did all they could to inculcate habits of thrift.

**A TOWN COUNCILLOR'S VIEW** Mr Councillor Peters has also spoken to one of the *Citizen* representatives on the distress question. He says he has been besieged at his office by numbers of people from the Bristol Road district, and that there are scores of people in Alma Place and neighbouring streets in real want, who declare that they have seen nothing of the district committee. He has had 250 loaves of bread distributed in the district.

### **193 11 January 1893**

#### **DISTRESS IN GLOUCESTER**

**"ORGANISED RELIEF"** Mr Robert Blick of 13 Hyde Lane, Gloucester, writes to say he can thoroughly understand the complaint contained in "Boatman's" letter, which recently appeared in the *Citizen*, and firmly believes every word of it is true. He is of opinion that the statement therein contained would apply to nearly all Gloucester. Our correspondent says that the whole of the organised charities are a farce, and advises the benevolent to give their own money away and not trust to others. He encloses a copy of the 20<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Brighton Charity Organisation Society, which he considers will be an "eye opener" to many. This statement shows that the office expenses amounted to £95 13s 9d ; in addition to which the sum of £100 was paid to the secretary ; £155 5s 0d to agent and assistant ; and £24 5s to a collector, making a total paid in salaries of £279 10s ; and a total of salaries and office expenses together of £376 3s 9d. The statement further shows that the amount spent in charity was £21 13s 10d, being made up as follows :- Bread £6 1s 1d ;

additional relief £15 12s 9d. Our correspondent adds that, in reply to a letter which appeared in the Press, the Secretary of the Brighton Charity Organisation Society stated that, as far as regarded that one account, the statement that out of a general expenditure of nearly £400, only £21 13s 10d was expended in charity, was correct.

#### **194 16 January 1893**

##### FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS IN GLOUCESTER

**FOUND LYING ON A LIGHTER** A labouring man named Charles Whadley, who is a native of Quedgeley, and supposed to be about 60, was found by Dock Constable Merchant on Sunday afternoon prostrate in a lighter, which was lying near the Oil Mills. It was evident that he was in a fit, and assistance having been procured, the unfortunate fellow was removed in a truck to the Infirmary, where he succumbed a few hours after his admission. As there seems but little doubt that Whadley's death is due entirely to natural causes, it is not thought likely that an inquest will be held.

**THE IMMERSION AT THE DOCKS** The man named James Cook, who was found struggling in the water at Gloucester Docks on Friday night and then taken to the Infirmary, has been removed to the Asylum. At the Gloucester Police Court this morning, Mr D C C Philpott spoke of the heroic way in which the men **Reuben Russell**, a boatman of 21 Pitt Street, and **Charles Cornock**, lighterman of 38 Nag's Head Yard, saved the man's life, and asked the magistrates to grant them something out of the Poor Box in recognition of their behaviour. The Bench decided to grant them 3s each.

#### **195 20 January 1893**

##### INQUESTS IN GLOUCESTER

**FOUND DEAD ON ITS MOTHER'S ARM** Later in the evening, Mr Scott held an enquiry at the Squirrel Inn, Southgate Street, into the circumstances attending the death of a child named **Thomas Halling**, nearly four months old, who was found dead in bed by its parents early on Wednesday morning. Mr Curtis was again chosen foreman of the jury.

**Annie Halling**, wife of John Halling, boatman, residing at the Squirrel Inn, Southgate Street, said the deceased, who was their child, was born on September 25<sup>th</sup> 1892, but had not enjoyed very good health. About three weeks before Christmas, witness took the deceased to Dr Belcher, and he gave her some medicine, which the deceased took regularly according to the doctor's orders. Deceased appeared to get better and throughout Tuesday seemed about the same. Witness retired to bed about 11.30 that evening, the child lying on her left arm on the outside of the bed. About seven o'clock the next morning, witness's husband woke her, and they found that the child was dead. The deceased never had any fit.

**John Halling**, husband of the last witness, corroborated his wife's statement as to the delicate state the child had been in since its birth. Witness did not notice anything particular about the deceased on Tuesday. At three o'clock on Wednesday morning, witness awoke, and found the child all right then. Witness bore out the evidence of finding the child dead on awaking about four hours later. In answer to the Coroner, witness said he was quite sure the child, on Tuesday evening, was lying on his wife's right arm.

Mrs Halling, recalled, was asked on which arm the child was lying on Tuesday night, and she reiterated that it was on her left.

Priscilla Drew, single woman, who lived next door, and who was called up after the child was found dead, was next examined, but her evidence carried the case no further.

Dr J S Balcher stated that the child was brought to him about the time stated by the first witness. He found it was suffering from dyspepsia, caused by taking too solid food for its age. On inspecting the dead body, and having heard the evidence, he was of opinion that the child had died in a fit, there being marked evidence of such in the thumbs, &c. From the appearance of the child, he did not think it had been overlain. Witness saw no reason when the child was brought to him, why it should not live.

A verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned.

**196 9 February 1893**

**SUDDEN DEATH OF A GLOUCESTER WOMAN** At the inquest, held at Hanbury, on **Selina Davies**, aged 60 years, **William Davies**, boatman, No 4 Clare Street, Gloucester, husband of the deceased, said that on Saturday last about 9am, they were passing Hanbury Wharf on the canal, with a boat load of coals from Old Hill to Worcester. Witness was walking along the towing-path in charge of the horse which was drawing the boat, when a lad named Clutterbuck, who was steering, called out to him, "Oh, Uncle! Aunt's fallen down dead". Witness got aboard, and found deceased on the floor of the cabin. She was black in the face. Deceased had been suffering from fluttering flatulency of the heart for eighteen months. She had had fainting fits before, but only slight ones. **George Clutterbuck**, nephew, corroborated, adding that it was three or four minutes from the time the deceased fell ill to the time that her husband could get on board, and deceased was then dead. Mr J M Cuthbertson, surgeon of Droitwich, said that death was due to heart disease. A verdict was returned accordingly. A letter was received stating that the deceased had been a patient in the Gloucester Dispensary, suffering from weak action of the heart.

**197 12 April 1893**

**LIFE ON A CANAL BOAT** Startling evidence was given at an inquest held at Blackburn on the infant child of a Wigan canal boatman named **Moore**. The mother stated that she, her husband and child all slept in the cabin bed, which the coroner's officer said was exactly 38 inches wide. The coroner observed that the conditions were eminently favourable to suffocation, and the jury assented, but in the absence of medical evidence declined to return a verdict of suffocation.

**198 24 April 1893**

**ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN** **William Greenwood**, aged 32, of Westbury-on-Severn, was admitted to the Infirmary on Saturday, suffering from injuries received by falling down in a canal boat. Upon examination, it was found that the poor fellow had broken his leg.

**199 6 May 1893**

**Stroud News**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **Jesse Cook**, boatman, for being drunk and disorderly at Chalford on April 26<sup>th</sup>, was fined 10s and costs.

**200 9 June 1893**

**ASSAULT** Frank Page, farmer of Tirley, was summoned for assaulting James Edward Shipton, dealer, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Mr H A Armitage appeared for the complainant, and Mr Langley-Smith for the defendant. Mr Armitage said defendant owed the complainant a sovereign, and about 4.15 pm on Saturday, his client was in the meat market at Gloucester and, seeing defendant, he went up to him and asked him for his money. Defendant, without receiving any provocation, knocked him down with the butt end of a whip, cutting him badly behind the right ear. On getting up, defendant again struck him under the left eye, injuring him so severely that he had to go to the Infirmary and have the cut sewn up. Walter Warner, butcher, said he had a stand in the meat market. On the day in question, he heard a commotion near his stall, and looking round, he saw Shipton on his knees, covered with blood, and Page standing above him in a fighting attitude. For the defence, Mr Langley-Smith said his client did not owe complainant the money. On Saturday last, the complainant came to the defendant in the meat market and told him that if he did not pay up the sovereign, he would "knock it out of him". Shipton attempted to take the whip from the defendant, and in striking the complainant, he only acted in self defence. Frederick White, butcher, **Thomas Niblett**, boatman, Haw Bridge and William Hopkins gave corroborative evidence. Defendant was fined 5s and costs 13s 4d.

**201 4 July 1893**

**Cirencester**

**PETTY SESSIONS** Cornelius Gardner, Frederick Davis and Ernest Peacey, of France Lynch, and George Wood and Austin Holmes of Chalford Hill, youths, were fined 10s each, including costs, for

illegally bathing in the Thames and Severn Canal. **James Davis**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d for illegal fishing in the canal ; and **George Gleed**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d for throwing stones to drive the fish into Davis's net. Mr P N Stone, solicitor from the office of the Canal Company, prosecuted in all the canal cases.

**202 18 July 1893**

**Stroud News**

A FOOLISH FREAK – STOPPING AN EXPRESS A Chalford man named **Walter Gardiner**, boatman, was charged at Stroud Police Court this morning with being drunk and disorderly at Chalford on Monday evening, and with doing damage to the cell to which he was consigned by the police. It was stated that prisoner had had a quarrel with his relatives, and to annoy or frighten them, he laid himself down between the up rails on the Great Western Railway, when a train was due over the spot. A down goods driver saw prisoner on the line, and gave warning to the officials at Brimscombe, who had the express stopped before the spot was reached. He was removed, and Police-constable Lane being called to the spot, found the prisoner drunk and struggling with his friends. The policeman said he was violent on the way to the station, and that he afterwards broke his cell windows and damaged the door. Prisoner was remanded on the charges above named till Friday. Superintendent Harrison said prisoner was liable to prosecution by the railway company. A summons was granted against prisoner's brother charging him with obstructing the police while prisoner was being conveyed to the station.

**203 22 July 1893**

**Stroud News**

POLICE COURT – FRIDAY **Walter Gardner**, boatman of Chalford, was charged on remand with being drunk and disorderly at Chalford on July 17<sup>th</sup>, and with damaging a cell at Chalford Police Station. He was now also charged by the GWR Company with trespassing on the railway at Chalford and exposing himself to danger by lying between the metals. Prisoner was ordered to pay fines and damage to the amount of £1 12s, in default 14 days imprisonment. **Frank Gardner**, brother of the last prisoner, for obstructing PC Lane of Chalford, was fined 10s.

**204 5 August 1893**

**Stroud News**

POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **George Gleed**, boatman, drunk and disorderly at Chalford on July 18<sup>th</sup>, was fined 2s 6d.

**205 14 August 1893**

A MAN DROWNED IN GLOUCESTER DOCKS This morning, the body of **Daniel Jones** (71), a boatman who was a native of the city, was found in Gloucester Docks. Jones, who lived on board the longboat *Melbourne*, which belongs to Messrs Barnes and Chadborn, went on shore on Saturday night for the purpose, it is supposed, of purchasing some provisions, the *Melbourne* then lying in the New Basin near an old dredger, which is in process of being broken up. The captain of the longboat (**Mr John Payne**) saw him at half past ten on Saturday night near the dock gates in Southgate Street, by a baker's shop where he is believed to have bought a loaf of bread, and nothing more appears to have been seen of him. This morning, a loaf of bread was seen floating on the water near the old dredger – a portion of which Jones would have to cross to get to the longboat – and this gave colour to the suggestion that the man must be in the water. Boat hooks were accordingly procured, and after dragging some time, John Phillips, a dock labourer, found deceased's hat, and his dead body was shortly afterwards brought to the surface. The Coroner's officer (P C Cripps) was communicated with, and the body was taken to the city mortuary, where it awaits the inquest. There were no marks of violence on the body, and the supposition is that Jones, in endeavouring to get on board the boat, accidentally slipped into the water.

**206 16 August 1893**

THE DROWNING CASE IN GLOUCESTER DOCKS – INQUEST The inquest on the body of **Daniel Jones**, who was found drowned in Gloucester Docks on Monday, was held before Mr C

Scott, the City Coroner, and a jury, at the Ship Inn on the Quay, on Tuesday evening. Mr H Sheppard was chosen foreman of the jury.

Alice Head, wife of Henry Head of 7 Alma Place, said the deceased was her father. He was 65 years of age, and a boatman in the employ of Messrs Barnes and Chadborn. Witness last saw deceased alive on Saturday afternoon. He was then perfectly sober, and in health as well as he had been for years. He suffered from asthma, but was not subject to fits.

**John Payne**, of 61 Stroud Road, captain of a longboat, the property of Messrs Barnes and Chadborn, said deceased was employed with him on the longboat. Deceased always slept on board. Witness left him about 2.30 on Saturday on board the boat, which was anchored close to the shore, in the New Basin, Gloucester Docks. Witness saw him again at 10.30 the same night, in Southgate Street, near the Dock Gates. He was then making some purchases at a grocer's shop. From what witness could see of him, he was sober. About 9.30 on Monday morning, witness went on board the boat, expecting to find Jones, but he was missing. Everything was right on board, but the boat had been shifted alongside the old dredger. He did not know who had shifted her. Not finding deceased, he had a suspicion that he had fallen in the water and, assisted by a man named Phillips, witness immediately commenced a search for the body, which was subsequently found in the dock in the middle of the old dredger. In answer to a jurymen, witness said his fears that deceased had fallen in the water were aroused through seeing a loaf of bread floating on the water in the middle of the dredger.

**John Phillips**, of 51 Westgate Street, a boatman, corroborated the evidence as to the finding of the body, and added that in his opinion deceased must have fallen into the dock while crossing the dredger to get into his own boat. Deceased was quite dead, but there were no marks of injury on the body. In answer to the Coroner, witness said the buckets had been removed from the dredger, leaving an open space about four feet wide, leading straight down to the water, in the centre of the dock.

A verdict of accidentally drowned was returned.

**207 6 September 1893 Gloucester Police Court**

ALLEGED THEFT FROM A LONGBOAT **Leonard Johnson** (16), boatman of no fixed abode, but who said he was a native of Wigan, was charged with having stolen on September 4<sup>th</sup> from the longboat *Rouen*, when lying in Gloucester Docks, three shirts, one pocket knife, a pair of boots, two towels, a pair of stockings, one pound of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea, together of the value of 10s, the property of **Henry Holland**. Mr D C C Philpott applied for a remand, and stated that the whole of the articles named in the charge had been traced to the possession of the prisoner, who was found in Bristol. Prisoner was remanded until Wednesday.

**208 8 September 1893**

WANTED An experienced boatman ; reference required. Apply Gardiner, Daneway, Sapperton, Cirencester.

**209 13 September 1893 Gloucester Police**

DRUNKENNESS **Edward Parrott**, boatman of Swan Lane, was charged with being drunk on the Quay on Tuesday night. This being defendant's first appearance, he was let off on payment of 2s 6d, costs being remitted.

**210 15 September 1893 Gloucester Police Court**

THEFT FROM A LONGBOAT **Leonard Johnson** (16) was brought up on remand charged with stealing a number of articles, valued 10s, from a longboat, the property of **Henry Holland**, on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. The prosecutor, who lives at 1 Prince's Street, High Orchard, Gloucester, said the prisoner had been in his employ as boatman about five weeks. He sometimes slept on board. On 1<sup>st</sup> September, prosecutor loaded a longboat, named the *Rouen*, with grain for Birmingham. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, he gave his wife three shirts, a pocket knife, a pair of boots, two towels and some groceries.

She gave them to the prisoner to take on board, and prisoner remarked that he would join the boat on Monday morning. Upon going on board at that time, he found the cabin open and the articles missing. He immediately informed the police of the loss. **James Barker** of Walsall said he was a boatman on board the *Hamburg*, which at the time of the robbery was lying alongside the *Rouen* in the Gloucester Docks. Witness saw prisoner, who was carrying a parcel, come on board the *Rouen* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Prisoner slept with the witness that night on the *Hamburg*. At two o'clock in the morning, prisoner got up and went on board the *Rouen*. He returned again at 4.30, and asked witness if he was going to get up, to which he replied, "Not yet". He saw nothing more of him. PS Theyers said he received information of the robbery on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. He proceeded to Sharpness, and from thence to Bristol. Next day he went again to Bristol, where prisoner had been apprehended by PS Harding with the stolen articles in his possession. Prisoner, who pleaded guilty, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour. Prisoner appeared quite unconcerned at the sentence. Inspector Elliott said there was another charge against Johnson of stealing 4 1/2d, but with their Worships' permission, that would be withdrawn. This was allowed.

### **211 17 October 1893**

THE RECENT DROWNING CASE IN THE SEVERN – INQUEST An inquest was held before Mr Charles Scott and a jury at the Ship Inn, the Quay, on Monday night, touching the death of John Smith, who was drowned in the Severn on Sunday night.

**James Dunn**, of No 10 Carter's Yard, Lower Westgate Street, boatman, said that about seven o'clock on Sunday evening, he was standing at the corner of the Mermaid Inn, with a man named **James Barnes**, when he saw a man standing on the Quay. He went along the riverside, and in a few minutes after, witness heard a splash in the water. Witness looked in the direction, but did not see or hear anything else. He and Barnes went aboard a longboat, and found the deceased between a tug and a boat. His head was just above water, and he showed no signs of life whatever. Quite half an hour passed before the poor fellow could be extricated. The depth of water was about 7ft. Having recovered the body and used artificial means of respiration in vain, deceased was removed to the Mortuary. In witness's opinion, Smith must have slipped over a mooring rope or the fender chain, and was thus precipitated into the river.

James Barnes, 13 Clare Street, a boatman, who assisted the last witness in recovering the body, corroborated.

PC Cripps said that about 7.40 on Sunday night, he received information that the body of a man had been found in the river. He went to the Quay and found deceased on a longboat, dead. He had the body conveyed to the Mortuary, and upon searching it, he found in the pockets 5d in bronze, a pair of spectacles, a knife, and a pipe and tobacco. From enquiries, witness had ascertained that deceased was named John Smith, and was an army pensioner of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Foot Regiment. He was 60 years of age, and was in receipt of 1s 1 1/2d per day. Witness did not think he had drawn his last quarter's pension. At all events, he had not been to the Police Station to have his papers signed. He was a native of Painswick, but had not resided there for some years. He lodged chiefly at Gloucester and Cheltenham, and after his money was spent, he was in the habit of begging, and had been twice convicted at the Gloucester Police Court. About a fortnight ago, he was staying at Mrs Young's lodging house on the Island. He was turned away from there, however, because of his filthy condition. Witness added that on walking along the Quay himself, on Sunday night, he had a narrow escape of falling over the chain referred to. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **212 10 November 1893**

#### **Nailsworth**

PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **Frank Gardiner**, boatman of Chalford, for refusing to quit licensed premises (the Clothiers' Arms Inn, Chalford) was fined 5s and costs.

### **213 19 January 1894**

A BOATMAN DROWNED IN THE SEVERN **Samuel Carter** (48), a married man with a large family, residing at Bark Hill, Bewdley, was engaged on the 18<sup>th</sup> ult with three other men, lugging

timber from Hampton's Load to Bewdley. The four men were drinking at the Unicorn Public House at Hampton's Load that day, and three of them subsequently left – Carter remaining – and returned to their cabin in the canal boat. About half past nine the same night, deceased left the public house, and shortly afterwards, it is stated, the other men heard someone walk across the plank leading from the bank to the boat, and then a sound of splashing in the water. The next morning, Carter was missing, and the police were communicated with, and the river dragged, but without success. On Thursday morning, the Bridgnorth police received a telegram from Upton-on-Severn stating that the body of the deceased had been recovered in the river there. The night was very dark and the river high at the time of the occurrence.

#### **214 22 February 1894**

At Old Hill Police Court on Wednesday, **William Neate** (43), a boatman, was committed to Stafford Assizes on a charge of attempting to murder his wife on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. The evidence showed that prisoner struck his wife on the head with a hammer, fracturing her skull.

#### **215 24 March 1894**

“MEETING THE BORE” – AN EXCURSIONIST DROWNED A sad drowning fatality occurred on the Severn on Good Friday morning, by which a visitor named Mr W Glass lost his life. It appears that the deceased came to Gloucester the same morning with Mr F Haine and another resident of Bristol, Mr T Watson, on a visit to Mr Haine's father at Sandycroft, Churchdown. On arrival at Gloucester, they decided to charter a small boat and row down the river to meet the bore. Accordingly, they hired a boat from Mr Priday at Westgate Bridge, and engaged a man named **Charles Schollard** to accompany them. The party proceeded some distance without mishap, but when near the Hempsted fish house, and on meeting the full force of the high tide, the little craft became unmanageable. The occupants, however, safely got through the first heavy head, but had not gone many more yards when several big waves completely swamped the boat, and all the occupants were thrown into the water. The boatman Schollard swam ashore, and Messrs Watson and Haine were rescued by a man in another boat, but Mr Glass, though Mr Haine handed him his scull, was unable to save himself, and he suddenly disappeared and was seen no more. Though there was a large number of spectators on the banks to witness the bore, very few were present at the exact spot where the unfortunate accident happened, but on the fact becoming known, a numerous crowd quickly congregated, and great excitement prevailed. Messrs Haine and Watson proceeded to a cottage near, where their clothes were dried. Dragging operations were made in the course of the afternoon for the recovery of the body, but up to the present all efforts have proved abortive, and it is considered useless to continue the operations at the scene of the disaster, as the body has probably been taken some distance down the river. Deceased, who was in the employ of Messrs Charley and Smith, fruit merchants of Baldwin Street, Bristol, was well known and highly respected in the latter city. He leaves a widow and two children, who had arrived at Sandycroft the previous evening, but they were not made acquainted with the sad fatality until late in the evening.

#### **216 28 March 1894**

THE SEVERN DROWNING CASE – INQUEST AND VERDICT The City Coroner (Mr Charles Scott) held an inquest at the Ship Inn, the Quay, Gloucester, on Tuesday, on the body of William Glass of Clifton, who was drowned in the Severn at Hempsted on Good Friday, by the swamping of a boat which he and others had hired at Gloucester and rowed down the river to meet the “bore”. Mr Granville Clutterbuck, solicitor (for Mr Frank Treasure) watched the proceedings on behalf of **Charles Schollar**, the boatman who was engaged to accompany the party from Westgate Bridge. Mr Thomas Hanman was chosen foreman.

The jury having viewed the body, which was lying in the City Mortuary, the following evidence was adduced :-

Francis Martin Haine of Windsor Villa, Clifton Wood Road, Bristol, fruiterer, said he had known the deceased about 18 months. Deceased, who was 27 years of age, was ledger clerk in the employ of

Messrs Charley and Smith, fruiterers, Bristol, and lived at the same address as witness. Deceased and witness came to Gloucester on Good Friday, arriving about 8.15 in the morning, and intended going to Sandycroft, Churchdown, where witness's father lived. On arriving at Gloucester station, they proceeded to Westgate bridge, and hired a boat from **Mrs Priday**, in which they went down the Severn to meet the tide. Deceased and witness were accompanied by Frank Watson of Bristol, and Charles Schollar went with them as boatman. Witness took one oar going down with Schollar, as he was familiar with boating, and had done a good deal at it both in Bristol and on the sea. Glass and Watson could also row, and he had been out with them before. As soon as the "bore" came in sight, Schollar took both sculls ; witness was in the prow of the boat and Glass or Watson steered until Schollar took the sculls. They met the first two or three waves all right, and about the fourth wave the boat shipped her first water. A good deal of water entered the boat, and at the next wave, more water came in, and the boat sank with her sides level with the river. The boat went over on the stroke side, and all the occupants got in the water. Witness went under, and when he came up he clung to the boat until she turned over again, and as he thought the tow-lock was likely to catch in his clothes, he left it and took an oar. It was at that point that he saw Glass in the water and holding to an oar. Witness, who could swim, went towards him to see if he could assist him towards the boat, and gave him the oar. Knowing that Glass had two oars, he had confidence in leaving him and going towards the boat himself. After the next wave they both went under, and when witness rose, he looked for Glass but there was no trace of him. The two oars which he had were floating close together. Witness stayed as long as he thought it safe, in case Glass should come up, and he was afterwards picked up by a boat. Glass told him as they were coming up in the morning that he could swim. They were talking about the trip when Glass said that, but neither of them imagined that there was any special danger in it. The boat rose on the top of the first two or three waves. When the boat was swamped, he could see Watson and Schollar clinging to the boat, and the former was picked up by the same boat that witness was in, whilst the latter swam ashore. By the Foreman : They were in the middle of the river when they met the "bore", but the boat afterwards drifted towards the Over side,

The Foreman : Did Schollar caution you in any way when he knew the "bore" was approaching, so that you should not move in any way?

Witness : Yes. As we were riding the first wave, he said we were to sit still. I don't think he thought there was any danger, but he said that just to keep us quiet, as we were perfect strangers to it.

Charles Schollar, of No 7 Church Street, boat builder in the employ of Mr Chas Priday, said he had been accustomed to row on the river nearly all his life. He had been accustomed to go down to meet the tide, and it was a common thing for people to do, not only in boats but in canoes. One of the three gentlemen forming the party asked him to go down with them, and he went. They hired an ordinary pleasure boat, which was from 20 to 21 feet long and four feet wide. Witness had frequently taken his wife and children in a similar boat to meet the "bore". On Friday, they went all right until the "bore" approached, when witness took the sculls and the management of the boat. They met three or four waves all right, and then the water commenced to fill the boat, coming in at the "waist". The boat gradually sank and all four occupants found themselves in the water. When witness came up, Glass appeared to be swimming ashore "as hard as he know'd how". Sometime after they were out of the boat, he missed Glass, but he could see the other two. The swamping of the boat was not caused by anyone getting up ; they all sat still till the water came in. Witness managed to keep the prow of the boat straight with the waves. The accident happened almost abreast of Hempsted Church, below the Fish House.

A juror remarked that the young men could not have had a better man than Schollar to manage the boat. He did not believe there was anyone on the river who understood the management of a boat better.

**William Phillips** of No 51 Westgate Street, waterman, said William Griffiths, with whom he was dragging the river, recovered the body at 1.30 on Sunday afternoon, and it was placed in a boat and conveyed to the Mortuary. The body was found near where the accident occurred. Witness had several times met the tide in a boat similar to the one used by Schollar and party. Schollar was a

skilful, trustworthy boatman. The witness added that when he wanted to use drags, he had to borrow of the Canal Company, to whom he had to be answerable if he lost them. He considered that drags should be provided on the Quay, where they would always be ready in case of an emergency.

It was suggested that would be a matter for the Humane Society to consider, but the Coroner remarked that he was told there was not a single subscriber to that Society in Gloucester, and that in consequence, a man here who had saved many lives did not receive a medal.

The jury found that the deceased was accidentally drowned, and added that Schollar was perfectly free from blame.

### **217 25 April 1894**

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

### **218 29 May 1894**

**AN ARLINGHAM MAN KILLED BY LIGHTNING** An inquest was held on Monday on the body of **James Bennett** of Arlingham, near Gloucester, mate of the ketch *Sarah* of Gloucester, who was killed by lightning whilst standing under a tree during a severe thunderstorm which passed over Bridgwater on Saturday, **Louis Aldridge**, captain, being injured at the same time. Dr F J C Parsons of Bridgwater, deposed to examining the body at the infectious hospital, and expressed the opinion that death was as sudden as it was painless. **George Bale**, boatman, proved hearing cries for help from the captain, and on going to the spot found him lying over the gate in great pain, whilst deceased was close by, quite dead. Portions of their boots and clothing were scattered all around for a distance of 30 or 40 yards. Mr Frederick Symons was fetched by the last witness, and stated that on going to the spot, he spoke to Captain Aldridge, who exclaimed several times, "Poor Jack, I'm afraid he's dead". Deceased's body was very much burnt and scorched, and portions of the bark of a tree under which he had been standing were stripped off. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned, and Dr Parsons and the jury gave their fees to the widow.

### **219 16 July 1894**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

**Albert Smith**, boatman, was summoned for being drunk in the public street on July 14<sup>th</sup>, and was let off on payment of 4s, the costs of the case.

### **220 25 July 1894**

**DETERMINED SUICIDE OF A MAN AT EBLEY** Early on Tuesday morning, a man's hat, slippers and jacket were found on the side of the Thames and Severn Canal near Ebley Mill. Information was given to the police at Stonehouse and Stroud, and officers from both stations proceeded to the spot and commenced dragging operations. Some time afterwards, the police recovered the body of a man, whom they at once identified as **George Drinkwater**, boatman, formerly of Stonehouse, and lately an inmate of the Stroud Workhouse. The legs were tied together and the left arm secured to the left thigh. Sergeant Packer and P C Potter conveyed the body to the Lamb Inn, Ebley, there to await an inquest. Deceased was seen by Sergeant Smith (Stonehouse) on Monday night, to whom he stated that he was looking for work. He also visited his sister at Stonehouse the same afternoon, and made the same remark. So far as can be yet ascertained, he uttered nothing that showed he then meditated taking his own life. He had not been well recently.

### **221 29 September 1894**

#### **Stroud News**

**POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** **Walter Pearce**, boatman, a young man of Bowbridge, was charged in custody with having assaulted W T Taylor, tailor, an elderly man of Stroud, on September 21<sup>st</sup>. He pleaded guilty. Complainant stated that he was going down Spring Lane when he picked up a boy's cap. He called to some boys who were near, and asked them to whom the cap belonged, and as

neither of them owned it, he placed it on a wall. Just then, prisoner came round a corner holding a small boy by the hand, and after abusing him, struck him three times, injuring him so that he had been unable to follow his business for a week. Prisoner (who alleged that complainant frightened his boy) was ordered to pay 12s, and time was allowed for payment of the sum.

**222 31 October 1894 Gloucester Police Court**

OBSCENE LANGUAGE John Connell, Hare Lane, labourer, pleaded guilty to using obscene language in the public street on the 27<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant was discharged on payment of 2s 6d costs. For a similar offence in Commercial Road on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst, **Thomas Long**, boatman of Stonehouse, who did not appear, was fined 2s 6d and costs 10s 6d.

**223 10 November 1894 Stroud Petty Sessions**

Alfred Roberts was summoned for assaulting **Richard Townsend**, boatman, at Brimscombe on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The case was dismissed.

**224 15 November 1894**

STABBING AFFRAY AT SHARPNESS – GLOUCESTER MEN INJURED Charles Ford, corn porter of St Mary's Square, Gloucester, lies in Berkeley Hospital with injuries which are not, however, believed to be dangerous, received in an affray with sailors at Sharpness on Wednesday night. Benjamin Marshall, corn porter of St Mary's Square, received a cut on the hand, and a boatman named **Griffiths** was knocked down with a "sling-shot". The police have the matter in hand, and we understand that three sailors are in custody.

**225 16 November 1894**

STABBING AFFRAY AT SHARPNESS – GLOUCESTER MEN INJURED As reported in the Citizen yesterday, Charles Ford, corn porter of St Mary's Square, Gloucester, lies in Berkeley Hospital with injuries received in an affray with sailors at Sharpness on Wednesday night. Benjamin Marshall, corn porter of St Mary's Square received a cut on the hand, and a boatman named **Griffiths** was knocked down with a "sling-shot". Ford is in a dangerous condition, having lost a lot of blood, and his depositions have been taken. The police arrested Charles Herman, a Russian Finn, and Emil Andersen and Bernt Christofferson, Norwegians, who were charged at the Berkeley Police Court, on Thursday, with unlawfully wounding Ford. There appears to have been some quarrelling between the seamen and others at the docks, and the three prisoners were identified as being in the row. They said they were innocent, and Andersen said he could point out the man who committed the deed. They were remanded till Monday next.

**226 19 November 1894 Gloucestershire Assizes**

THEFT OF BOOTS IN GLOUCESTER **George Patrick** (38), boatman, pleaded guilty to having, on 10<sup>th</sup> November, at the parish of St Mary de Grace, Gloucester, stolen a pair of boots, the property of Alfred Charles Lane. Prisoner, who had been in trouble before, was sentenced to four months hard labour.

**227 6 December 1894 Stroud News**

POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **Charles Butt**, boatman, summoned for having been drunk at Bisley, was fined 5s. **Joseph Gardner**, boatman, summoned by George Bates for having damaged a door and a window, to the amount of 5s, at the Ship Inn, Wallbridge, was ordered to pay a fine of 5s, and damage 5s.

**228 24 December 1894**

AN EXCITING RESCUE FROM THE SEVERN On Sunday (writes a correspondent), as the last cadence of the Cathedral bells floated away in the distance, and the metal tongues of the city's steeples had hushed for the morning service, there came from the bank of the Severn, in the vicinity

of the prison, the shrill agonised cry of a woman, "He'll drown, he'll drown". There is no mistaking the cry that goes out from the heart, and every hearer within sound of that voice at once rushed to the river bank where, battling for dear life in the swiftly running tide, sometimes sinking beneath the surface, then rising again, was seen a struggling form, whose piteous eyes and expressions of despair moved every mind to sympathy. At once the scene was alive. Boatmen who had been lazily smoking their matutinal pipe seized hooks and ropes and shouted their commands in a language only known to their order. Women, regardless of their unwashed, dishevelled looks rushed from the adjacent houses, whilst above all the din could still be heard the frenzied sobs of her to whom that hapless being was dearer than to all the rest. The only clue obtainable as to the identity of that form fighting for existence in the surging stream was the heartbroken cry of a woman, "It's poor Bob". "Get a boat!" was shouted, and a hatless coatless man darted over the lock bridge to the mooring on the hither side, but, alas, no boat was there. Meanwhile it seemed, as the struggles of the form in the water became weaker and the tide was fast carrying it beyond the hope of succour, that another household was to be plunged into mourning, when, by a mighty effort, the involuntary swimmer escaped from the rushing tide and made for the quieter water of the lock mouth. At once down the dangling lock chain a sturdy boatman swarmed, and with encouraging cries urged the exhausted swimmer to renewed exertions, whilst, hanging with one hand, he endeavoured to grasp the half drowned wretch. Alas, the ear he seized was wet and slimy from long immersion. Another effort and he had a surer hold, and pausing while he held the head for a moment above the surface, by an effort of muscular exertion, he lifted the now half inanimate body on to the lower step of the lock. From this position, it was raised by willing hands to a place of safety, and one female form bent over it and shed tears of joy, although it was only Bob the boatman's bull terrier that had been thus rescued from a watery grave.

## **229 30 January 1895**

**THE DROWNING OF A GLOUCESTER MAN AT ROSS – THE INQUEST** Mr Thomas Hutchinson, deputy coroner, held an inquest at the Castle Inn, Dock Street, Ross, on Tuesday evening, concerning the death of John Saunders (25) of Kingsholm Road, Gloucester, who met with his death by falling from the Railway Bridge at Backney into the river Wye on Friday last, and whose body was recovered on Monday afternoon. Mr Raymond Holder was foreman of the jury. The first witness called was William Saunders, father of the deceased, who deposed that he lived at 40 Kingsholm Road, Gloucester., and was a bridgeman in the employ of the Great Western Railway Company. The body was that of his son, John Saunders, who lived at home with witness, and was also a bridgeman in the employ of the GWR Company. Deceased was 25 years of age the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1894, and was unmarried. On Friday last, witness was at work with his son repairing Backney Railway Bridge. They were engaged fixing a jack on the top of the pier of the bridge, for lifting timber. Witness did not know exactly where his son was standing at the time, but he heard him drop into the water. He did not hear his son speak. He heard Henry Rose, one of the other men who was at work with them, say, "Jack is in the water", and witness threw a rope to the men on the bank to throw to his son. A ladder and a piece of timber were also thrown into the water to him, and everything that could be done to save him was done, but he drifted out into the river and ultimately went down. The water in the river was very high at the time, and there was about eight feet of fresh water in the Wye at the time. Witness had been employed by the GWR Company for 29 years. His son had worked for the same Company for eight years, and had been on the bridge gang for 3 1/2 years. The deceased was very careful in his work and did not run any risk. In reply to questions, witness said the GWR Company sometimes kept a boat in case of accident when they were working over water, but in this case they would have been working over the land had it not been for the high water. He did not know if the boat was ordered to be there. Witness was quite satisfied to work without it. His son could not swim at all. Henry Rose, bridgeman of 38 Victoria Street, Gloucester, said the deceased was standing on the pier of the bridge at the Ross end. He did not see him fall, but he called out, "Jack is in the river". Witness ran along the scaffold, and by the time he got down by the side of the river, the deceased

had sunk. There was no frost, and the pier was not slippery or wet. Everything that possibly could be done was done to save the deceased. In reply to questions from the foreman of the jury, witness said they sometimes had a boat and sometimes not. The river was very high, and a wind was blowing at the time, but it did not make it awkward in their work, and witness did not experience any inconvenience from it. Witness did not consider the work risky.

Thomas James, foreman in the employ of the GWR Company, and residing at 44 Sinope Street, Gloucester, deposed that he was in charge of the bridge, and was present at the time the deceased fell into the river, but did not see him fall, as witness was on the bank. He heard someone say, "Jack is in the water", and went to the lower side of the bridge and caught hold of a rope but Tomkins, another workman, said, "I can get him with this", which was a smaller one. Witness then got a plank and threw out towards deceased, and at the same time Henry Saul threw a plank. They did everything they could to rescue the deceased. Witness, in reply to the foreman, said it was the custom, when they were working over a river, to have a boat, but as they were working near the land, he did not think it was necessary to have a boat until they got over the water. He did not know if any railway companies used nets. He had never heard of them. He did not think if a boat had been there it would have been any good in such a strong current of water. If they had been at work in the next bay of the bridge, they would have had a boat there. They had a boat of their own.

**John Drew**, a boatman, living in Dock Street, Ross, deposed to finding deceased's body on Monday, about a mile below the bridge at Backney.

Thomas James, the foreman of the GWR was recalled, and said that he had been in the employ of the Company for 24 years. For 19 years of that time, he had been foreman of bridge work, and he had never known a man fall in the river before. Something had been said as to the wind when the men were at work on the bridge, but witness had had two truck sheets fixed up to protect the men from the wind. They were there at the time of the accident. Henry Rose and William Saunders were recalled and said they never knew of anyone falling into a river before.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned" and said that no blame attached to anyone.

The body was conveyed from Ross to Gloucester by the 7.1 pm train on Tuesday evening. The funeral will take place at Gloucester Cemetery on Thursday afternoon. The deceased was a very respectable, steady young man, and was about to be married.

### **230 4 February 1895**

DEATH OF A WELL KNOWN GLOUCESTRIAN **Joseph Rea**, a well known figure in Gloucester, died on Saturday after three days illness. Deceased was injured when a child in a singular way. His father, who was a boatman, threw him on to the river bank from his sinking barge. His life was thus saved, but he was permanently crippled. Rea used to sell apples and ginger beer outside the Dock gates and, by energy, perseverance and strict attention to business, was able in the course of time to set up a chip potato cart. He was a regular attendant at St Nicholas's Church.

### **231 25 May 1895**

As the result of a quarrel with her husband, who is a boatman, **Elizabeth Poole**, on Friday evening, attempted to drown herself and her infant son in the Birmingham Canal at Wolverhampton. Fortunately, the act was witnessed by a lock-keeper who, with assistance, effected a rescue.

### **232 31 May 1895**

ACCIDENTS **George Nicholls**, aged 6, child of a boatman, has been admitted to the Infirmary with a broken leg. The accident was occasioned by a fall.

### **233 4 July 1895**

FOUND DROWNED IN THE SEVERN AT GLOUCESTER About eight o'clock on Wednesday evening, the body of a man named Henry Evans was discovered floating in the Severn near the weir, Llanthony, Gloucester. The body was secured and brought to shore by a boatman named

**Bodman**, and was subsequently conveyed to the mortuary. Deceased, who lodged in Westgate Street, was a collector of rags and bones, and sometimes worked as a drover in the Cattle Market. He had been missing from his lodgings for some days. An inquest will be held this evening.

### 234 6 September 1895

#### SUDDEN DEATH OF A WOMAN IN GLOUCESTER

**CALLOUS RELATIVES** On Thursday evening, the City Coroner (Mr C Scott) and a jury (of whom Mr Dudman was chosen foreman) held an inquest on the body of **Eliza Ann Sircombe** (26), the wife of **Thomas Sircombe**, boatman, of 28 Theresa Street, Gloucester, who died on Tuesday morning.

Thomas Sircombe, husband of the deceased, said she had been very well for the past twelve months, complaining of nothing but occasional fits of pain in the head, accompanied by giddiness. She had been attended by Drs Belcher, Oscar Clark and Johnstone, the latter having treated her at the Union for anaemia. Witness left home on Thursday week on a long boat, and came back on Saturday last, reaching home about 7.30 pm. When he arrived, he found deceased on the bed with her clothes on. Witness spoke to her, but her replies were inaudible. He then purchased some cake and made tea ; she ate a cake and drank a cup of tea, after which she seemed livelier, but still could not manage to speak intelligibly. Witness's mother undressed deceased, who kept on muttering all night. During the night, witness gave her some tea, his mother staying with them. On Sunday, deceased's appetite seemed fair, though she was unable to articulate clearly, and she remained quiet in bed during the night. At half past six on Monday morning, witness gave her some tea and went off to his work, and his mother (who had gone home overnight) arrived a few minutes afterwards. Witness heard nothing more until he was telegraphed for, and on Wednesday he arrived home to find his wife dead. Witness did not send for a doctor on Saturday or Sunday because he thought it was merely a recurrence of one of his wife's "turns".

The jury were of opinion that witness had been guilty of a certain amount of neglect in not sending for a doctor.

Isabella Hill, wife of James Hill, engine driver of 30 Theresa Street, said she had known the deceased to speak to for about six months. About a week before her death, deceased had complained to her of pain in her right side. Witness recommended a mustard plaster, which deceased applied, and said it afforded relief. Witness saw her again last Saturday, when she said she felt better, and was going to her sister's. Witness also met her the same evening, when she spoke to her ; she thought deceased from her manner was under the influence of drink, but afterwards concluded that she must have been ill. Witness told the husband that his wife was ill, and he said he would send for a doctor on Monday. When witness saw her on Monday, she appeared to be dying, and Mr A Price, surgeon, was sent for and attended, but she expired, as before stated, on Tuesday at 2 am. Deceased always looked unhealthy.

Harriet Sircombe, widow of Robin Hood Street, deceased's husband's mother, said deceased was subject to fits. Witness stayed with deceased all Saturday night and Sunday till 9.30 pm. On Monday morning, she returned at about seven o'clock, and as deceased changed for the worse, witness fetched Mr Price. Asked by the Coroner why she had not sent before, she said it was because they thought it was only one of deceased's fits (which usually lasted about half an hour), and also because they had no money.

The Coroner advised the witness to abstain from beer during the day when next she attended a coroner's inquest.

Mr A Price, surgeon, said he saw deceased first on Monday at twenty minutes past twelve. She was then lying on her bed, her head flexed back and her eyes wide open, the pupils being dilated and fixed. The left arm was extended, and there was a twitching of the left hand and left foot. The right arm was lying by the side. There was a peculiar noise in the throat, and puffing of the cheeks. He saw the woman was *in extremis*, and ordered a hot poultice for the neck and a hot bottle for the feet. The heart's pulsation was very feeble. Witness then left, requesting that he should be informed how the deceased was. This was not done, and he heard nothing more till the mother-in-law and

someone else came and asked for a death certificate. This he felt justified in refusing them, and referred them to the Coroner's officer. Had he seen the woman alive, he would have had no hesitation in granting the certificate, but she was practically dead when he first set eyes on her. He subsequently made a *post mortem* examination. The body appeared fairly well nourished, and there was no external injury. Blood, however, had evidently been flowing from the mouth and nostrils since death. The lungs were all right, with the exception of a slight congestion of the base of the left lung. The heart was flaccid and quite empty except for the right ventricle, which was full of dark fluid. The abdomen was next examined, and found to be in a congested state, and she had plainly suffered from anaemia. There was evidence of incipient kidney disease. The stomach was quite empty. Death was immediately due to rupture of an artery of the brain which probably took place naturally on the Saturday, and as the clot in the brain increased, the coma did. Witness would not say that had he been called in on Saturday he could have saved the woman's life.

The Coroner, in summing up, remarked that there was every appearance of the poor woman having been neglected, although her death was natural. In common humanity, experienced aid of some sort should have been called in, and he characterised the neglect as utterly brutal and callous. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony, at the same time endorsing the remarks made by the Coroner as to the neglect.

### **235 24 September 1895**

**SHOCKING LAMP ACCIDENT IN GLOUCESTER – A WOMAN BURNED TO DEATH** Late on Monday evening, a shocking lamp accident, which subsequently had a fatal termination, occurred in Gloucester. It seems that **Mrs Ann Elizabeth Ewers** of No 3 Vinegar Yard, Clare Street, was going upstairs to bed with three of her daughters when the sad accident happened. Mrs Ewers was carrying her eight months old baby on her right arm, and in her left hand she had a lighted paraffin lamp ; and as she was ascending the narrow staircase, the lamp came in contact with the wall, breaking the globe. The lamp immediately turned over and became aflame, and the woman dropped it, but not before her dress had become ignited. In great alarm, Mrs Ewers jumped downstairs with the baby still in her arms, and her eldest daughter snatched the child from her and went for assistance. In less time than it takes to write, the poor woman was a mass of flames, and in her terror she ran out into the yard screaming for help. Several neighbours, attracted by her cries, were soon on the spot, and did all they could to extinguish the flames by wrapping clothes round the woman. The flames were eventually extinguished, and two policemen conveyed Mrs Ewers to the Infirmary, where she died at three o'clock this morning. The surface of the body was completely covered with burns. The deceased, who was 38 years of age, was the wife of a boatman, and she had ten children, the eldest of whom is 18 years old.

### **236 26 September 1895**

**THE GLOUCESTER BURNING FATALITY – INQUEST AND VERDICT** On Wednesday evening, the City Coroner (Mr C Scott) and a jury, of whom Mr F Dedman was chosen foreman, held an inquest at the Infirmary on the body of **Ann Elizabeth Ewers** (39), wife of **James Ewers**, boatman, of 5 Vinegar Yard, Clare Street, Gloucester, who died in the Infirmary on Thursday morning. From the evidence of **Elizabeth Ewers**, deceased's eldest daughter, it appeared that about 11 o'clock pm on Monday, deceased went upstairs, carrying the baby on her right arm and a round glass paraffin lamp with a chimney in her left hand. Suddenly, she stumbled and fell, dropping the baby on the stairs. The lamp also dropped and broke. The paraffin went over deceased, and her clothes caught fire. Witness's sister, who was following deceased upstairs, caught the baby, and witness, who was engaged in locking the door, hearing her mother's screams and seeing what was happening, opened the door, through which her mother rushed. Her cries attracted several neighbours, who extinguished the flames as soon as possible with sacks, &c. PC Mustoe said he was on duty that evening in Swan Lane with PC Green, when they heard loud screaming, and saw the glare caused by the flames over the tops of the houses. They found deceased on her back and on fire from head to foot, and they helped to put the flames out. A truck was then fetched, and the

woman conveyed on it in a blanket to the Infirmary. On the way, she exclaimed several times, "Oh, where is my poor baby?" The staircase, which was a sort of box, was very narrow and steep, with an awkward turn, and no hand rail. The first witness's sister, who was following her mother upstairs when the accident happened, corroborated. It was mentioned by a juryman that a neighbour who had been very active in helping to extinguish the flames got one of his arms badly burned, and the limb had to be bandaged at the Infirmary the same night. Dr Wayland Ancrum, house surgeon, said deceased was admitted at 11.45 on Monday night, suffering from burns all over the body. Deceased, who was in a state of collapse, was just conscious, but comatose. There was no hope from the first. Witness had never seen anyone so badly burned. Deceased did not say anything, and died at 3.15 am on Tuesday. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death". The Coroner commented strongly on the disgraceful stairway accommodation provided in many houses.

### **237 4 October 1895**

News has been received at Clayton le Moors by a man named **Turner** that he is heir to a fortune of £150,000. Turner follows the occupation of boatman on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Many years ago, his uncle went to Australia gold mining, and it was rumoured in England that he had become enormously rich.

### **238 16 November 1895**

#### **Worcester Assizes**

THE ATTEMPTED MURDER AT OLDBURY At the Worcester Assizes on Friday, before Mr Justice Cave, **David White**, a boatman, was indicted for attempting to murder his wife at Oldbury by cutting her throat. He was found guilty of doing her grievous bodily harm, and was sentenced to twelve years penal servitude.

### **239 21 December 1895**

#### **Stroud News**

POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

THEFT OF HAY AT BOWBRIDGE Mark Jones, carter, and **William Chandler**, boatman, were jointly charged with stealing a quantity of hay, value 2s, the property of W C Chambers and Co, Bowbridge. Mr P Witchell appeared for prosecutors, and Mr J P Wilkes of Gloucester for prisoners. The evidence was that between five and six on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, Jones was seen by Daniel Holborow, watchman, to carry a truss of hay from a rick and deposited it in a shed on prosecutor's property near the canal. Jones went away, and in a few minutes, returned with Chandler, the two afterwards going away together. On the following morning, about the same time, Sergeant Hale, having watched the shed during the night, saw Chandler, who had a barge moored on the canal, carrying the truss from the shed to the barge. Prisoners pleaded guilty, and Mr Wilkes addressed the Bench on their behalf, urging their previous good character. Jones had been in the employ of the prosecutors for 12 years. Mr Wilkes asked the Bench not to send the men to prison. Mr Witchell said prosecutors would be content if the men were leniently dealt with, but they had felt compelled to bring the case before the Bench. Prisoners were fined £1 each, in default a month. Jones, having no money, and being out of work, was removed in custody.

### **240 26 February 1897**

#### **Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, THIS DAY

REFUSING TO QUIT **Francis Minchin**, boatman of Chalford, pleaded guilty to being disorderly and refusing to quit licensed premises (New Red Lion Inn, Chalford) on February 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr Heelas appeared to prosecute on behalf of the local branch of the Licensed Victuallers' Association. Defendant was fined 5s, costs remitted.

### **241 1 April 1897**

GLOUCESTER MUNICIPAL CHARITIES On Wednesday, **William Preedee**, 73, boatman, 2 Spencer's Court, Lower Westgate Street, was elected to a vacancy at St Bartholomew's Hospital.

**242 9 April 1897**

SAVAGE ASSAULT ON A STONEHOUSE POLICE SERGEANT – SIX MONTHS FOR A BOATMAN At Whitminster on Thursday, **James Gardiner**, boatman, described as of no fixed abode, was charged with assaulting PS Smith in the execution of his duty, on April the 8<sup>th</sup>. Prisoner had also been charged with sleeping out, but that charge was not proceeded with. Sergeant Smith stated that he found prisoner that morning asleep in a shed at Haywards End. He woke him, and prisoner put on his boots and hat, and then began a struggle. Witness had to fight with prisoner for something like half an hour. Prisoner scratched his face and made his nose bleed, and tried to bite his hand. He got one handcuff on prisoner, but the other was bent, and would not go on. He hit prisoner with his staff, after which prisoner went quietly for a while, but began another struggle in the road, and witness had to use the staff again. At Haywards End Inn, witness called up the landlord, and had to hold prisoner down in the road while the landlord dressed. They could not get prisoner to the station either on foot or in the landlord's cart, but prisoner was subsequently mastered. At the station, it was seen that the prisoner's head was cut, and Dr Watters was called to attend to it. Prisoner, who appeared with his head well bandaged, denied the charge, and accused the Sergeant with beginning hostilities. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**243 8 May 1897**

SUDDEN DEATH IN A GLOUCESTER PUBLIC HOUSE **Albert Davis** (56), a boatman of Epney, went into the Squirrel Inn, Southgate Street, this afternoon. While conversing with another man named William Bricknell, he said, "I feel rather queer", and thereupon fell dead in Bricknell's arms. Dr Jones was summoned, but could only pronounce life extinct, and PC Davis, the Coroner's officer, removed the body to the Mortuary to await an inquest.

**244 11 May 1887**

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN IN GLOUCESTER – INQUEST AND VERDICT An inquest was held by Mr C Scott (city coroner) at the Ship Inn, the Quay, Gloucester, on the body of **Albert Davis** (56), a boatman of Epney, who dropped down dead in the Squirrel Inn, Gloucester, on Saturday afternoon. Mr F Smith was chosen foreman of the jury. **Frederick Hood**, master of the trow *Thor*, of Gloucester, said he had known deceased from a boy. He joined the trow on Easter Tuesday, and had worked on board up till Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, when he left the vessel, and witness did not again see him alive. **William Bignell**, a mariner from Somersetshire, stated that he had known deceased for about 15 years, and he always appeared in good health. Witness went into the Squirrel Inn about 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, where he saw deceased reclining on the settle. He complained of feeling queer, and shortly after, he fell dead in Bicknell's (*sic*) arms. Dr Jones was summoned, but when he arrived he could only pronounce life to be extinct. This witness gave his evidence in a very confused manner, and the Coroner, after severely reprimanding him, disallowed his fee, on the grounds that he was drunk. Harriett Drew, landlady of the Squirrel Inn, said she had known deceased for about 20 years. He was a customer at the house, and was there on the Friday night previous to his death, when he left about 10 o'clock, quite sober. He called again next morning, and had three two pennyworths of rum and coffee. About 11 o'clock, deceased called again, but had nothing to drink, and at 12.30 he seemed all right. Shortly before one o'clock, Bignell came in, and a few minutes after, deceased was taken very ill. Witness bathed his face and hands, and tried unsuccessfully to administer a little brandy. Before a doctor could arrive, deceased was dead. Witness had been told that deceased's father died in his chair twelve years ago. Dr William David Jones, who saw deceased after his death, said he had since made a *post mortem* examination of the body, and found the main artery of the heart diseased. Witness attributed death to failure of the heart's action, owing to relative incompetence of the aortic valves. A verdict of death from natural causes was returned.

[Bignell, Bicknell or Bricknell?]

## SEVERN BOATING FATALITY – CHARGE AGAINST CAPTAIN PRIDAY

MAGISTERIAL INVESTIGATION – ACCUSED COMMITTED FOR TRIAL At Worcester Police Court on Wednesday, **Charles Priday** of Gloucester and **William Strain**, owner and captain respectively of the *Holt Castle* – which steamer, it is alleged, caused the upsetting of a rowing boat in the Severn near Worcester on Easter Monday, as the result of which Mr Sidney Bourne of Harborne, Birmingham, lost his life – were charged with the manslaughter of deceased. Mr A J Beauchamp prosecuted on behalf of the Chief Constable ; Mr Tree appeared on behalf of both defendants.

Mr Beauchamp, in opening the case for the prosecution, said that there was culpable neglect of duty in this case, which caused the death of Mr Bourne. As the Coroner had said, the river was a highway open to all, and small boats had a right equally with steamers. Persons who owned steamers or those who ran them should take great precautions in passing small boats, as the steamers were a cause of a certain amount of insecurity to them. On Easter Monday, they should have taken extra precautions. The *Holt Castle*, on this particular journey, met four rowing boats, and of these two were swamped and one was in great danger of being so. No extra precautions seemed to have been taken on that dangerous day ; no boat was carried by the steamer ; no one was placed specially to look out and warn persons in small boats or tell those on the steamer to slow down. With reference to the carrying of a boat, there was a bye-law passed by the City Council – he believed in 1891 or 1892 – which stipulated that within the city boundary, the proprietors of pleasure steamers should carry a dinghy or other boat in order that it might be lowered for the purpose of saving life. On this occasion, no boat was carried, and there was therefore neglect so far as the city was concerned. The steamer was going at about seven miles an hour, and the other two steamers which were passed were going much slower. Mr Beauchamp, continuing, said that he would show that it would have been quite possible to have thrown a lifebuoy with some degree of success, and with the probability of saving life. There was neglect on the part of Captain Priday in not giving orders for proper precautions to be taken, in leaving Strain in charge, in order that he himself might serve out drinks, and taking no trouble himself to see that the boat was properly navigated. Further, there was neglect, because when the boat was swamped, Strain took no steps whatever to help those in the water. The defence would probably be : First, that the young men should not have gone out on a day such as it was on Easter Monday ; but they had a perfect right to do so if they were capable of managing the boat, and there was no contributory negligence on their part. Secondly, the defence might be that , if after the boat had been swamped, any attempt had been made to reverse the engines, or lessen that way on the steamer, the person in charge of the vessel would have been unable to steer it properly, and it would turn round, and a panic or loss of life would ensue. Mr Beauchamp, however, thought that he could satisfy the Bench that it would have been possible for the engines to have been slowed down to such an extent that, although they kept a slight way on the boat, she would have drifted slightly down the stream and been placed in a very much closer position to the drowning men. Mr Beauchamp, in conclusion, said that he merely wanted to make out a case sufficient to commit defendants for trial.

THE EVIDENCE Mr Robert Dugald Deacon, deceased's companion in the boat, living at Battenhall Road, then repeated the evidence which he gave before the Coroner. In cross-examination, witness said that he had never been boating on the Severn when the river was so high as on Easter Monday. The current was running at about six miles an hour but the water was not rough until they got near Newey's meadow on their way home, when they met created waves about a foot high. Mr Tree : Was there not a very strong wind? - I can't say for certain. I presume that by the time it took you to get to Camp, it was very difficult to row? - Yes, but we stopped at several places. In answer to another question by Mr Tree, witness said that he selected the boat they had, because it had just come in with a passenger, but Brown advised witness to have a heavier boat. Why did you not have a heavier boat? We wanted to get to Holt, and it would be more difficult to pull a heavy boat against the stream. There was, he added, over three inches depth from the top of the stern of the boat to the water. In reply to the Chairman, witness said that the waves from the

*Holt Castle* were bigger than those from the other steamers they passed, and there were breakers on them. By Mr Tree : There was nothing unusual in the way in which the vessel was being navigated except in speed. Putting aside the state of the river, there was nothing unusual in the speed? - No. - The only thing unusual was the state of the river? - Yes. - The progress the steamer was making did not exceed more than four miles an hour. No warning was given of the steamer's approach. - But there would have been no apparent danger, as you were on one side of the river and they were on the other? - I did not expect any warning. - No warning would have been of the slightest advantage, would it? - No. - When passing the steamer, there was no apparent danger? - No. Witness also said that the *Bella* was not making any wash, and the *Lady Alwyne* only caused a little swell.

Edith Annie Maycock, servant to Mr Gascoyne, Park Avenue, described the swamping of the small boat. She saw a gentleman on the steamer stand up and cry, "Stop!" but the vessel went on, and no attempt was made to throw a lifebuoy. Another man on the steamer shouted that there was someone in the water. In cross-examination, she said that there was another boat on the river into which a man got, and rowed across the river. After the *Holt Castle* had passed and Bourne's boat had been swamped, this man rowed up to the spot, but was too late to render assistance.

Theresa Davis, widow, Back Walk, Upper Tything, also described the swamping of the dinghy. The steamer was going very fast. In cross-examination, she said that she judged the speed of the steamer by the wash. She did not think she could walk at the rate the steamer was going.

Edmund George Underhill, sculptor, Lowesmoor, who was near the steersman Strain, repeated his evidence. He said that Strain was told of the occurrence, and leant over towards the speaking tube, but did not give any orders down it. The vessel did not slacken speed either before or after the accident. In answer to Mr Tree, witness said that no one particularly called the attention of the captain to the accident, but he might have been told. Witness expected to see him stop the steamer. - You had gone too far to throw a lifebuoy? - I don't think that we were. They might have thrown it to the people walking along the river bank.

Oswald Tombs Allen, clerk, 3 Severn Terrace, another passenger, also said that the steamer did not slacken speed. He heard someone cry out, and Strain could have heard it.

Charles Cartwright, bookbinder, Comer Road, who was on board, said that he shouted out, "Stop!" twice, but the steamer did not slacken speed. By Mr Tree : He would not like to say that Strain heard him call, "Stop!" but he must have heard the people say there was someone overboard. Charles John Jarman, gardener, Hazeldine, Kepax Ferry, said that he saw the *Holt Castle* go by on Easter Monday. It was going too fast for the state of the river at that time, and for the safety of small boats. No boat was being towed by the steamer.

Mr Henry Thomas Sission, mechanical draughtsman, 3 Birchwood Terrace, Gloucester, whose firm supplied the engines for the *Holt Castle*, described the machinery. The steamer was a twin screw, and could be slowed down and steered by one screw. By Mr Tree : In the state the river was in on Easter Monday, it would have been quite possible to have lost control of the vessel if that were done. In an ordinary stream, it could be done safely. Re-examined : There was no risk in lowering the vessel's speed from four miles to one mile an hour.

**Benjamin Oakley**, captain of the dredger, and living at Ombersley, also said that the vessel could have been slowed down from four miles an hour to considerably less. It was only necessary to keep a little way on the boat to keep her in the track. By Mr Tree : It would have been risky to go astern with the engines.

Mr E Rigg, of the Town Clerk's office, produced bye laws of the city of Worcester, made in 1891 and 1892, relating to pleasure boats and steamers. One provided that every boatman or person in charge of a steamer should, when meeting or overtaking a boat, slacken speed as might be necessary to prevent death or inconvenience from the disturbance of the water caused by the steamer. The other bye law required that every boatman or person in charge of the steamer should either tow or carry a boat or dinghy, with all necessary appliances for the purpose of saving life in case of accident. Mr Tree : These bye laws are in force, but not enforced. Mr Rigg : We have had no prosecution under these bye laws.

Police Sergeant Haynes proved serving the summonses on Friday and Strain. The former said : "I'm as innocent of this charge as a child unborn. If we had run the small boat down and cut her through the middle, and the young gentleman had been drowned through it, we could not have been served worse than we have been. The accident did not happen till after we had passed more than 100 yards.

This concluded the case for the prosecution, and the Court adjourned. On resuming, Mr Tree called for the defence Mr J Bradley, superintendent of the river Severn from Stourport to Gloucester, who said that, without any reference to steamers, it would be very risky to take out such a boat as Deacon and Bourne used in such a current as there was on Easter Monday. In answer to Mr Beauchamp, he said that he had not heard of any other accident on the river due to the state of the stream, but he had heard of a boat going over the weir on the same morning. The danger would be increased by the steamer. The *Bella* and *Lady Alwyne*, not being such large boats, would make less wash than the *Holt Castle*.

Edward Bradley, engineer's assistant, Cherry Orchard, said that he had charge of steamers on the Severn. It would have been safe to stop the *Holt Castle*, but not to go back. If she attempted to drift down, she would have swung round, and there would be danger to those on board. If, on the other hand, she were turned round, that occupation would require considerable time, and he would not like to try it with passengers on board. By Mr Beauchamp : The steamer could have been slowed down to one mile an hour, and she would not then have gone so far from the men in the water.

**Joseph Hale**, captain of the tug *Glen*, said that it would not have been safe to stop and go back. With 300 people on board, there would have been a panic. The current was so strong that the steamer would have to run two and a half or three miles in order to remain stationary. The wash in the river was caused by the wind rather than the steamer. Mr Beauchamp : If you had been in charge, would you have made any effort to save these men? - No, I can't say I should. - Couldn't you have thrown a lifebuoy? - Who could throw a lifebuoy in that wind? - Could you not have thrown the lifebuoy to the men on the bank? - Not if the steamer were in the middle of the river. - How far could you have thrown a lifebuoy? - Only about 15 ft.

John Darke, Hylton Road, in the employ of Mr Bradley, Superintendent of the Severn Navigation, gave evidence as to having warned the boat proprietors, including Brown, not to let out boats for hire on Easter Monday, owing to the current.

Mr H P Jackson, a member of the Worcester Rowing Club, said that he went out with three companions in a four oared boat on Good Friday, but it was swamped by the roughness of the water. On Easter Monday, the water was much higher. In cross-examination, witness said they were paddling at about four miles an hour, and more likely to ship water than in the case of a man who was merely keeping his boat steady.

#### SPEECH FOR THE DEFENCE

Mr Tree addressed the Bench for the defence, acknowledging the courtesy of the police in issuing summonses instead of warrants, and also the great fairness with which Mr Beauchamp had conducted the case. It was a case, he continued, in which the police were bound to take proceedings, but when they came to examine the question, he did not think that there was sufficient evidence to justify the sending of the defendants for trial at the Assizes. Mr Beauchamp had to prove some case of culpable neglect. This was a case in which it was perfectly obvious that the defendants were engaged in the performance of a perfectly legitimate occupation ; they were doing their ordinary work in navigating a steamer, on which there was a large number of persons. The case was, contended Mr Tree, similar to that of a man who was using a hatchet, when the head of that hatchet flew off and killed another man. The wash of the steamer caused the accident, and there was neither culpable neglect nor criminal neglect to justify the Bench sending defendants for trial on a charge of manslaughter. He urged that the only possible grounds on which the prosecution could be based were that the steamer was going too fast or that defendants failed to render the assistance they might have done. Was there any evidence to show that the steamer was going too fast? The steamer was going steadily at the usual pace, and all that was unusual was that additional

wash was made by the rush of the river ; it was the state of the river combined with the wash from the steamer, and not because the vessel was going at an unreasonable pace, that caused the accident. It so happened that at the particular place where the accident occurred, the river was rougher than anywhere else. That was proved by Mr Deacon himself, who said that before reaching the *Holt Castle* they found the water was rougher. Then again, the boat was not more than three inches above the water, and was quite unsafe. Was it surprising, then, that it was swamped? Deacon and his companion had been warned not to go in the boat. It took very little wash indeed from the steamer, added to the roughness of the river, to swamp the boat. The speed at which the steamer was going had nothing to do with the unfortunate occurrence. Then it was brought against defendants that those on the steamer rendered no assistance. But could any effective assistance have been rendered? As far as Captain Priday was concerned, there was no case whatever, because it was not proved that he knew anything about it, he being down below. Then for the other defendant, what could he have done? The Bench had heard ample evidence which rendered it obvious that it would be most dangerous to back or stop the steamer. Before the boat upset, the steamer had gone some 40 or 50 yards, and before she could be turned and have gone back, those in the water would have been either rescued or drowned. Then any attempt to stop the steamer would have been attended with very great danger to human life. On board, there was considerable noise and confusion, and immense harm would be done to those on the steamer if a panic ensued, as it would have done if the boat had swung round against the bank ; indeed, many lives might have been lost. It had been suggested that a lifebuoy could have been thrown, but that, the evidence showed, was absolutely impossible in such a wind. If it had been thrown towards the bank, it would not have reached it, and if thrown towards those in the water, would have drifted away. Strain had been blamed because he did not throw a lifebuoy, but to have done so, he would have to leave the helm, and the boat might have swung round. It was not proved that the defendant heard what was said about the young men being overboard, for at that time there was considerable noise and confusion on board. If he had thrown a lifebuoy, it would merely have been an expression of sympathy, and it could hardly be said that there was any want of sympathy with the victims of the accident. Referring to the bye law as to the carrying of boats, Mr Tree said that that had not been enforced, and even if it had, it would not effect this case which occurred in the county. It had been said that the steamboat ought not to have gone out, but there was no danger to the steamboat or the people on it. Would the Bench say that a steamer which could be navigated with perfect safety and afford pleasure to a large number of people ought to be kept in simply because a small boat which could not be navigated with safety must be capsized? The most that could be said, continued Mr Tree, was that there was an error of judgement, but even that could not be said of Captain Priday, whose name had hardly been heard throughout the case. There was no regulation as to the speed at which steamers should go on the Severn, as was the case on some other rivers. In conclusion, Mr Tree pointed out that Captain Priday owned four steamers besides the *Holt Castle*, and for 33 years had run steamboats. During all that time, this was the first charge against him – a fact which spoke of the steadiness and care with which the steamers had been navigated by him. Mr Priday bore a very high character, especially at Gloucester, where he was better known.

#### THE DECISION

The Bench retired, and after a short absence, on returning, the Chairman said it was their duty to consider whether prima facie evidence had been brought before them to compel them to send that case to the Assizes. They were aware that the current on the Severn on Easter Monday was very strong ; that the river was very high, and that there was a considerable amount of risk incurred in going out in small boats ; but this very fact ought to have induced Capt Priday to take extra precautions and extra care. But instead of that, he had appointed no look out man, and he himself was downstairs in the cabin at other duties. If there had been notice given, and the steamer slowed, in all probability there would have been no accident. Capt Priday knew very well that the pace the steamer was going caused a very great swell, in which it was clearly proved a boat could not live. The Bench, therefore, considered it their duty to send the case to the Assizes.

On being asked what they had to say in answer to the charge, each of the defendants said, “I am not

guilty”.

The Bench allowed the same bail as was previously granted.

**246 21 August 1897**

**John Agar**, a boatman residing at Pembroke Dock, has been informed that an aunt of his died recently at Auckland, New Zealand, leaving him £20,000 in cash and about £2,000 worth of other property.

**247 3 September 1897**

“A DEN OF WILD BEASTS” - GROSS NEGLECT OF CHILDREN At Leeds, a boatman named **McGrath** and his wife were committed to gaol on Thursday, the former for two months and the latter for four months, for neglecting their children. The house was described as being more like a den of wild beasts than the home of a civilised family. It transpired that two of their boys had been convicted of felony, and that the father and mother had sold the proceeds of the robberies.

**248 15 July 1898**

**Whitminster Petty Sessions**

OTHER CASES For assaulting a boatman named **Bush** at Framilode, two boys, Thomas Nicholls and Percy Clements, were each fined 2s 6d.

**249 22 July 1898**

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN **John Groves**, a boatman in the employ of Mr T Hipwood, coal merchant, and who lived at Royal Oak Yard, Westgate Street, Gloucester, died suddenly on some steps by Worcester Bridge on Thursday morning. He had come to Worcester from Stourport with a canal boat loaded with coal, and was stopping by Captain Priday's steam boats. He walked off his boat on to a landing by the bridge to speak to the captain of a tug boat close by, and while doing so, the deceased complained of pains in his chest to a man who was standing by, and almost immediately dropped down dead. Mr Williams, boat builder, quickly fetched Dr Gostling, but his assistance was of no avail. The deceased's wife, who was also on the boat, said that he had been complaining of his heart all the morning during the voyage from Stourport.

**250 23 July 1898**

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN At the Worcester Guildhall on Friday, the City Coroner held an enquiry touching the death of **John Groves** (39), boatman of 8 Royal Oak Yard, Gloucester, who died suddenly on Worcester Quay on Thursday. **Florence Groves**, deceased's widow, and **Joseph Hale**, captain of the steamer *Holt Castle*, described the circumstances of the death, as already reported, which Mr T P Gostling, surgeon, said was due to valvular disease of the heart. Verdict accordingly.

**251 3 August 1898**

**Tewkesbury**

DROWNING FATALITY On Tuesday evening, an aged boatman named **Charles Longford** fell from a canal boat which was being towed up the River Severn. The accident occurred near the Avon's mouth, and deceased being unable to swim, sank in deep water. Dragging operations were immediately commenced, and about three quarters of an hour afterwards, the body was recovered.

**252 26 August 1898**

THREE GLOUCESTER BOYS SHOT – A SCENE ON THE SEVERN On Thursday afternoon, a number of boys were bathing in the Severn at a place frequented by them near the second brick pits. The boys had got out of the water and dressed, and were proceeding along the bank, engaged, it is said, in throwing into the river. A tug with three long boats on the way to Tewkesbury were coming by at the time. Whether the boys flung at the man in charge of the last boat or not is so far not known, but the boys state that he pointed a double-barrelled gun at them and fired twice, making a remark to the effect that it served them right. Three lads, whose names are Thomas Ball of 51

Westgate Street, 14 years of age ; Edward Evans, 5 Quay Street, aged 13 ; and John Price of the Co-operative Buildings, Lower Westgate Street, aged 12, were all more or less injured about the head and face, and were taken to the Infirmary by PC Clarke to have the shots extracted. Here Dr Mudd, the house surgeon, extracted the shots. Ball and Evans were shot chiefly in the legs, the former having also shots in the head, two in the scalp and one just above the eye, and the number taken from Evans's leg being about a dozen. Price's injuries were about the face and body.

AN ARREST PS Collett on Thursday night received information of the affair and a description of the man who is alleged to have fired the gun. This morning, he proceeded to Ashleworth, and there arrested **Giles Smith**, boatman, at the public house on the Quay. The Sergeant, on searching Smith's boat which was lying off the Quay, found a breech loading gun. The officer took the man into custody, and conveyed him to Gloucester. He will be brought up at tomorrow's county sessions at the Shire Hall.

### **253 27 August 1898**

ALLEGED UNLAWFULLY WOUNDING – A SCENE ON THE SEVERN NEAR GLOUCESTER – PRISONER BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES At the Gloucester County Petty Sessions this morning, before the Rev C F Dighton (in the chair) and Mr W C Lucy, **Giles Smith** (36), boatman of Ashleworth, was brought up in custody charged with feloniously shooting three boys with intent to do them grievous bodily harm, at Maisemore on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Frank Treasure defended the accused.

John William Ball (14), 81 Westgate Street, deposed that on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst, he was on the banks of the Severn at Maisemore, with a number of other boys, just above the brickyard at Walham, but on the opposite side. There was a steam tug with several boats and barges going up the river. One of these belonged to Mr Bodman, into which they were trying to throw pieces of clay. There was a man in the last barge standing up steering, who said that if the lads threw clay at him, he would shoot them. They stopped throwing, but the man picked up a gun and put it to his shoulder. Witness and his companions thought he was only doing this in fun, and commenced laughing, but the man fired towards them, and one shot struck a boy named John Price on the upper lip. Price fell down. Witness then heard the man in the boat ask the cabin boy to give him another cartridge, which he did, and the boatman put it in his gun. Witness and the others all laid down, but the man put the gun to his shoulder and fired a second time. Five shots struck witness – one over the right eye, two on the left side of the head, and two in the left arm. Afterwards, witness was taken to the Gloucester Infirmary, where he was examined by Dr Mudd, the house surgeon, who extricated some of the shots. Blood ran down witness's shirt front, and there was blood in his cap, the result of the shot wounds. Prisoner was about 25 yards away when he first fired, and about 35 yards when he fired the second shot.

Cross-examined, witness could not say whether the man whom he saw steering was eating his dinner as he passed, neither could he say whether a piece of the dirt thrown knocked any food off the plate. Witness was quite sure prisoner put the gun up to his shoulder.

In reply to Mr D C C Philpott, witness said he and the other boys had been bathing.

Edward Evans (13), 5 Quay Street, said he was with the last witness and other boys on the banks of the Severn about 4.30. When the barges passed, witness and his companions threw some clay at Mr Bodman, who was in a little boat tied to the barges. Witness heard the man who was steering say, "If you throw at me, I will shoot you". Subsequently, witness saw the man fire the gun twice. Witness was not hit the first time, but the second time, the man pointed the gun at a lad named Hawkins, who was standing near the water. Hawkins said he was not going to fling, and the man fired at witness and Ball. Witness was hit on both legs, right arm, through the right ear, and on the left side of his chin. Witness identified the man who shot the gun on both occasions ; his name was Giles Smith.

Cross-examined : Witness only saw one boy on the boat. He had never seen prisoner before the day of the occurrence, but had since been told who he was. None of them threw bricks at the boat. They all treated the first shot as a joke, and did not think the man meant anything until they were

hit. He could not say in what position the man had the gun when he fired, nor its condition afterwards.

John Price (12) of the Co-operative Buildings, Westgate Street, the other injured boy, bore out the statements of his companions. Witness identified prisoner as the man who was in the boat and shot at them ; he was hit through the top lip.

Edwin Joseph Neiningner of 1 Queen Street, watch maker and jeweller, spoke to being on the banks of the Severn at Walham, near the second brick pits, engaged in taking photographs. There were about a dozen lads about 20 or 25 yards from witness, who appeared to be playing amongst themselves. A tug with longboats and barges came up the river, and witness took a photograph of them. He heard a shot fired, but he took no notice of it, and afterwards saw what he took to be two clods of earth flung near to the last boat. He saw a man in this boat, but he could not identify him ; the man put his arms as if using a gun. Immediately afterwards, he heard a report and saw a puff of smoke near where the man was standing. Witness heard some strong language used, and someone say, "Now you've got something". After the shots, the boys cried out and made towards him. Seeing that something was wrong, he went to meet them, and found one of the boys wiping his face, from which blood was flowing, while another was holding his leg and limping with pain.

Cross-examined : The boys and the boat were about opposite each other, but he could not identify the man, as he was near sighted. He should think that there was a space of about a minute between the shots.

Frank Burnand Mudd, house surgeon of the Infirmary, said that the boys were brought there on Thursday afternoon. They were all three suffering from shot wounds. Some of the shots did not penetrate the skin ; others fell out of their clothes. The injuries in the face were most serious. The shot over the right eye of Ball was the only serious one, that shot entering the orbit, and had not been recovered. Some shot passed through the skin, but the injuries were superficial.

George Bodman, fisherman of 3 Norman's Row, Quay Street, spoke to having tied his boat to the barges as they came up the river. Prisoner and his son was in charge of the last boat. Witness spoke to the boys flinging at him, and hearing Giles Smith tell the boys to stop throwing. Shortly afterwards, witness heard the report of a gun ; he believed it came from the boat where prisoner was. The shots struck the bank and the water. When the boat got about 70 or 80 yards from the boys, he heard the second shot.

Cross-examined : Giles Smith was having his dinner just before the shot was fired, sitting near the cabin. He saw no bricks thrown ; it was hard clay. He did not think the prisoner shot to do the boys any injury.

**William Smith** of Ashleworth, son of the prisoner, said he was with his father on the boat at the time of the occurrence. The boys "dubbed" witness and his father with everything that they could catch hold of, and his father told them to stop flinging, saying, "If you don't stop, I shall stop you". The boys said they shouldn't, and kept on "dubbing". His father sent him in the cabin out of the way, and to give him the gun to frighten them. Witness did this, and his father asked him for a cartridge, and he gave him one. The first time, his father shot against the bank, and told the boys they "would get something warned if they did not stop". The boys flung all the more and prisoner asked for a second cartridge, which witness got, but his father did not have. His father went to open the gun when it discharged. The gun produced was the one his father used, which he had not touched for twelve months. Defendant knew the gun was broken. When the gun went off a second time, the stock flew back against the cabin door, and in consequence, the first finger of his father's hand was blackened with the powder.

PS Collett deposed to arresting prisoner at Ashleworth Quay on Friday morning. In reply to the charge of unlawfully wounding the boys referred to by shooting them, prisoner said she knew nothing about it, and added that he had not shot off any gun. . Witness asked him where the gun was, and accused replied that it was at home and he would fetch it. Witness said he would have to search the boat, whereupon prisoner said the gun was in the cabin. Witness subsequently found the gun produced in pieces in the cabin with two empty cartridge cases in it. Accused afterwards said, "Put it to yourself : if the ----- were to throw at you when you were at dinner, what would you do?"

Witness examined the outside of the cabin, and found a mark upon it as though it had been struck with a piece of dirt.

This was the case for the prosecution.

Mr Treasure handed in the following, a written statement by the accused : I was having my dinner on the top of the cabin on the longboat *Success*, when several boys on the river bank threw, and one of their "marks" struck my plate and knocked part of dinner out of it. I shouted out, and asked them two or three times to stop throwing, and threatened that I would come ashore if they did not. They continued throwing, and I told my boy, aged 15 years, to fetch my gun and I would frighten them. He brought it, and before I could get hold of it properly, the right hand barrel went off. I did not know the gun was loaded. I thought the gun was broken. I went to open the gun, and whilst doing so, the other barrel went off, and the gun flew backwards. I did not intend to shoot at or injure the boys.

The prisoner was committed for trial to the Assizes, bail being allowed, himself in £20, and one surety in a like amount. At the time of the occurrence, prisoner was working for Messrs Pimble and Stephens, hay and coal merchants, Gloucester, and Mr Sam Pimble offered to stand bail.

The Chairman passed a word of censure on the lads concerned, for getting into mischief by throwing at the boats.

#### **254 26 September 1898**

**DROWNED AT GLOUCESTER DOCKS – A BOATMAN'S TRAGIC DEATH** A boatman named **Walter Tonks**, a single man 40 years of age, a native of Gloucester, was drowned at the Gloucester docks on Saturday night. It appears that about nine o'clock on Saturday evening, deceased, who was in the employ of Mr Henry Cooper, boat owner, The Flatt, near Gloucester, was going on board his boat, which was anchored alongside of some others in the New Basin, when by some means he stumbled and fell into the water. Deceased was accompanied to the boat's side by a man named John Taylor who, immediately he heard deceased fall, ran to the lock-keeper for assistance. The drags were procured and the body was shortly afterwards recovered and brought to land. Mr W Washbourne, surgeon, was sent for, but on his arrival he could only pronounce life to be extinct. The body was subsequently removed to the mortuary to await an inquest.

#### **255 27 September 1898**

**TRAGIC DEATH OF A BOATMAN AT GLOUCESTER – THE INQUEST** An enquiry was held by Mr C Scott (City Coroner) at the Police Station, Gloucester, on Monday night, on the body of a boatman named **Walter Tonks**, who was drowned in the Gloucester Docks on Saturday night. Mr Alfred Brown was chosen foreman of the jury. Mr Spink (from the office of Mr Frank Treasure) watched the case on behalf of George Moulder, landlord of the Ship Inn.

**Henry Cooper**, waterman, of the Flat, near Gloucester, said he had known the deceased since he was a lad. He had been working for witness for four years, and slept in the boat. Witness last saw Tonks at eight o'clock on Saturday evening in the Ship Inn. He had had "a drop of drink", but witness had seen him "much worse". Deceased had a bottle of pop in the inn, which witness paid for. About 8.45 deceased, witness and others left the inn, and witness asked a man named **John Parker** to see deceased on board his boat, which lay anchored in the Basin. Witness did not see any more of deceased that night. Pressed by the Coroner, witness said deceased was not quite sober, but he had seen him "more drunk". In reply to Mr Spink, witness said he was with deceased at the Ship Inn for three quarters of an hour, during which time Tonks had no intoxicating liquor. By the Foreman : Deceased was rather a weak minded man, and a pint of beer would affect and upset him.

**John Parker**, who assisted deceased with the boat from Minsterworth to Gloucester, deposed to leaving Tonks outside the Mermaid Inn on Saturday afternoon between four and five o'clock. They had a pint of beer in the inn, and witness left deceased to go home. Shortly before nine o'clock, witness saw deceased on the Quay, about half drunk. He went down to the Basin with deceased, and he stepped safely off the wall onto the first deal boat to get to his own, which lay three boats off. Witness then left him, as the deceased said he could manage, but witness had only gone a few

yards off when he heard a splash in the water. He returned, and called the deceased by name, but received no answer. He looked about for him, but could see no one, and he ran to the lock-keeper and asked for the drags. The drags were got out, and the body recovered, but not before life was extinct. Deceased was not in the water more than ten minutes. When the body was got out, artificial means of respiration were resorted to, but without effect, and Mr W Washbourn, surgeon, was sent for, but on his arrival he could only pronounce the man to be dead. In reply to the Foreman, witness said, coming up the Canal, deceased had a quart of beer at Minsterworth, and another quart at Stonebench, where the boat unloaded. The Foreman complimented the witness upon the straightforward way in which he had given his evidence, and upon the promptitude he had shown.

Walter Priday having deposed to finding the body, and PS Jones to receiving it into his custody on the way to the mortuary, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

**256 28 September 1898**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**AFFILIATION ARREARS** **Thomas Sercombe**, boatman, was placed in the dock charged by Susan Lusty with being £6 6s 4d in arrears on an affiliation order. Applicant said the child died on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. The Bench made an order on defendant to pay the money, or in default to go to prison for a month.

**257 18 November 1898**

**Gloucestershire Assizes**

**THE CHARGE OF SHOOTING AT BOYS NEAR GLOUCESTER** **Giles Smith** (36), boatman, surrendered to his bail, and was charged with having, on August 25<sup>th</sup> at Maisemore, shot at John William Ball, John Price and Edward Evans, boys, with intent to do them grievous bodily harm. Mr Rea prosecuted, and Mr Cranstoun (instructed by Mr Frank Treasure) defended.

Accused denied shooting with intent, but pleaded guilty to a common assault.

Mr Rea said that, subject to his Lordship's approval, he was ready to accept the latter plea.

The Judge said he should not accept the plea. If the jury subsequently liked to do so, it was a matter for them.

Mr Rea stated the case for the prosecution, which was to the effect that on the afternoon of August 25<sup>th</sup>, a number of boys were in a field near the Severn opposite the brickyard at Walham, who were amusing themselves by throwing mud and stones at a boat which, with others, was attached to a tug. Accused, who was steering the last barge, called out to them to desist, and said he would shoot them if they did not. Accused asked the cabin boy for his gun, which was brought, and he fired, hitting a boy named Price. He afterwards asked for a cartridge, fired again, and wounded Ball and Evans. Mr F B Mudd, house surgeon at the Infirmary, said the shot wounds were serious but not dangerous. Mr Cranstoun asked that the prisoner should be allowed to make a statement from the dock, which he did. Accused said there were about 25 boys on the bank throwing at him, some of the missiles being brickends with mud around them. He told the boys if they did not stop, he should have to "shape them". He only intended to frighten them, and pointed the gun up the river, when it went off and blew the side of his finger off. If he had known the gun was loaded, he should never have pointed it.

Mr Cranstoun was heard to ask the prisoner a question, and the Judge said he had no right to question the prisoner unless he went in the witness box.

At the Judge's suggestion, Mr Cranstoun put accused in the witness box, and he was sworn. He said he had been on the river for 25 years. He had no intention whatever of injuring the boys. The missiles thrown upset his dinner plate.

The Judge commented on the fact that prisoner's evidence did not agree with his statement to the police.

Mr Cranstoun, in his speech for the defence, said the firing of the gun was an accident, prisoner, who had borne a good character, not knowing it was loaded.

The Judge, in summing up, said it seemed to him that the jury could not find the prisoner guilty of anything less than unlawful wounding. If a man took a loaded firearm and used it in such way that

it went off and hit any person, although it was not aimed at him, he was guilty of unlawful wounding. Prisoner ought to have known that the gun was loaded, so there was no defence to the case. The jury could not possibly do their duty by returning a verdict of not guilty. He did not, however, think there was evidence of deliberate intention to do grievous bodily harm. With regard to the medical evidence, it appeared that one of the boys had a narrow escape of losing his eyesight. The jury, after a short deliberation, found the prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding.

Mr Cranstoun called prisoner's employer, who gave him a good character. Mr Cranstoun said accused had a family of seven.

The Judge, in passing sentence, said he supposed prisoner was aware what had happened to him before. He would not fix his sentence upon that, but when people gave prisoner a good character, he (the Judge) was entitled to see what it really was. His character was not quite blameless. He should take the view of the case that the jury had, and he did not say it was the wrong one. It was a most serious offence that prisoner had committed, and he recommended him to navigate the river in future without having a gun on board.

Prisoner : I will, my Lord, in future.

The Judge, continuing, said that in the meantime he must undergo four months imprisonment with hard labour.

### **258 21 December 1898**

**WIFE MURDER BY A JEALOUS BOATMAN – EXECUTION AT DERBY**

**BOASTED HE HAD KILLED TWO PREVIOUS WIVES** **John Cotton**, aged 66, a boatman, who was sentenced to death at the recent Derbyshire Assizes for murdering his wife at Bugsworth, near Stockport, on October 26<sup>th</sup>, was executed in Derby Gaol this morning.

The deceased woman was only 36 years of age, and the evidence tendered at the trial showed that jealousy was the cause of the crime. Cotton beat his wife about the head with a poker, fracturing the base of her skull. The defence was that the prisoner had received provocation.

Prisoner since his conviction had exhibited the utmost contrition, and had paid deep attention to the ministrations of the prison chaplain, to whom he more than once admitted the justice of his sentence. He received the Holy Communion on Tuesday, and throughout the day the chaplain was in frequent attendance in the condemned cell.

Cotton retired to rest early on Tuesday night, but his sleep was disturbed, and early this morning he again welcomed the presence of the chaplain. He partook sparingly of breakfast, and just before eight o'clock, the Sheriff's Representatives presented themselves to summon him to his doom. The usual procession was quickly formed, and halfway to the scaffold the party was met by Billington, the executioner, who was assisted in the preliminary process of pinioning the prisoner's arms by his son.

Cotton, who remained perfectly silent, walked firmly to the scaffold, where the younger Billington strapped the culprit's legs, whilst the executioner placed the noose around the prisoner's neck. All this was accomplished in the most expeditious manner, and while the Chaplain was repeating the words, "Remember not the offences of thy servants", the bolt was drawn, and the body disappeared from view. Subsequent examination showed that death had been instantaneous.

Although it was not completely light, a large crowd gathered outside the prison to watch the hoisting of the black flag, but no sympathy was exhibited for prisoner, whose boast had been that he had killed two previous wives.

### **259 5 July 1899**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

**SHOCKING NEGLECT OF CHILDREN** **Thomas Hook** and **Louisa Hook** of Stephens Court, Westgate Street, were charged with having neglected their children – Annie aged 13, Louisa aged 6 and Albert aged 5 – in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering and injury to their health, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January and divers other dates. Mr Champney appeared for the prosecution, and called Inspector Shalders of the NSPCC, who said that he had visited the house of the defendants and saw the children, who were in a shocking state of neglect, ragged and covered with vermin.

The house was in an exceedingly dirty condition. The mother said that she had been in the Infirmary and had just come out. The father was a boatman. Witness cautioned the defendants and visited the house on subsequent occasions, but found no improvement in the condition of the children. Mr W Washbourn, surgeon, said he had visited the house of the defendants and saw the children ; they were in a dirty and neglected condition. On April 7<sup>th</sup> he again saw them, and there was an improvement in their condition. George Millard, School Board attendance officer, said that he had frequently been to the defendants' house during the last six months. The children were not in a fit state to attend school, and he had spoken to the mother about them. The male defendant said that he was very seldom at home, and the woman said that she had been ill, and for some time an inmate of the Infirmary. Electing to be dealt with summarily, they were each fined 10s and costs, or 14 days.

**260 19 July 1899**

**Gloucester Police Court**

A SOUTHGATE STREET ROW **George Benjamin Patrick** a boatman, Deacon Street, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in Southgate Street on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. PC Welchman stated the facts. Patrick, who is a cripple, said he did not move on because his leg ached, and added that he was arrested because the policeman had been "on" to him. "I was no more drunk than I be now", he loudly asseverated, "I'd got no money for victuals, let alone drink". Fined 2s 6d and costs (5s) or five days.

**261 10 August 1899**

**Stroud**

JESSE COOK AGAIN **Jesse Cook**, a well known boatman of Chalford, was brought up on a warrant at the Stroud Police Station this morning, before Mr E W Winterbotham, charged with having committed wilful damage to property at France Lynch, and also with assaulting his wife. Formal evidence only was given, and Jesse was remanded to the ordinary Petty Sessions tomorrow.

**262 11 August 1899**

**Stroud Police Court**

JESSE COOK ONCE MORE **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, who has been a prominent figure in the Police Court, was charged with having assaulted his wife on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Upon previous occasions, Jesse has appeared in gala costume, but this time his former jovial gait had undergone a change. An air of nonchalance had given place to a somewhat worried look, and the Chalford boatman faced the magistrates minus his coat with his shirt sleeves rolled up, altogether presenting a very shabby genteel appearance. He pleaded guilty to the charge, and the woman stated that her husband knocked her down and gave her ten or eleven smacks on the head. Cook was further charged with having on August 7<sup>th</sup>, cut down four damson trees, one plum tree and one apple tree, value 16s, the property of Louisa Restall of France Lynch. It will be remembered that Cook has previously committed damage on the same property which at one time belonged to him, but which he mortgaged, and not paying up the interest his estate passed away. Jesse, however, still maintains that the property belongs to him, and today he informed the magistrates that he had never "signed it away". Mr Stuart prosecuted, and observed that Cook's conduct was not that of a man responsible for his actions. He had become a terror to the neighbourhood of Chalford, and he now asked the Bench to inflict the maximum punishment. Formal evidence only was taken, and Jesse was further charged with having on August the 8<sup>th</sup> committed wilful damage to the door, window, floor and ceiling of a cottage at France Lynch, the property of William Young. The damage was estimated at £2 10s. Cook, in reply to the charge, said, "The place is rotten. I could put the lot right for half a crown. I never done 50s worth of damage." It appears that Jesse occupied the cottage in question, and that on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, he went home and threw several chairs through the windows, tore up the floor, and also damaged the ceiling. The evidence offered, however, was not considered sufficient to substantiate the charge, which was dismissed. For the assault on his wife, he was sent to prison for 14 days hard labour, and for the damage to the fruit trees, he was sent down for three months hard labour, the sentences to run concurrently. The Chairman observed that for this class of offence, Cook had paid £7 in fines and a like sum in costs. This was the reason why the Bench

imposed the maximum penalty. Cook : I shan't want no more. The woman will get no more money from me ; I have done with her now.

**263 5 September 1899**

**ALLEGED MURDEROUS ATTACK ON A BOATMAN** At West Ham today, four young men were remanded, charged with being concerned in inflicting grievous bodily harm on **Benjamin Billson**, boatman, at the Custom House, London, on Monday, by knocking him down and fracturing his skull. Billson is in a critical condition.

**264 10 October 1899**

**ALLEGED FATAL KICK AT CARDIFF** At Cardiff today, a coal trimmer named **Jones**, angered to learn that his wife had slept in an empty house, pursued her into the street and, it is alleged, kicked her so terribly in the stomach that she died in a few minutes. He afterwards fled, and this afternoon was still at large.

A later Cardiff message says that Jones, on hearing of his wife's death this afternoon, gave himself up to the police. Jones, it appears, is not a coal trimmer, but a boatman at the Docks.

**265 10 February 1900**

**Correspondence**

**SHAKESPEARE RELICS** Sir – I observe by your London Letter of February 8<sup>th</sup> that the Shakespearian relics are again on the market. When they were in the possession of the late Mrs Fletcher, I carefully collated and examined all the evidence in proof of their genuineness. These relics were hastily and stupidly sacrificed after the death of the late Mrs Fletcher, for at one period she could have obtained nearly a thousand pounds for them. The Shakespeare Society in America would have purchased them, but its funds were exhausted, and they could not spare the adequate sum required for their purchase. They should be secured for Stratford-on-Avon, or for the nation.

I have never heard that Joan Hart's husband settled in Tewkesbury. Joan Hart's descendants resided there, and the family can be traced in the registers, and mural and other memorials still exist in the burial grounds of the historical town. The Harts possessed Shakespeare's theatrical wardrobe. Years and years ago, a man from Tewkesbury told me that the Harts, the chairmakers, had a heap of Shakespeare's old theatrical wardrobe, which had been handed down to them from Joan, and that they used it for polishing the chairs which they made. A very intelligent man named Whitehead from Tewkesbury, who's mother's maiden name was Hart, told me that she (his mother) used to prop up her washing tub occasionally with an old dulcimer (or some old fashioned musical instrument resembling one). It had been in the Hart family from time immemorial, and the tradition was that it belonged to Will Shakespeare, and had originally been in the possession of Will's sister, Joan Hart. I once asked **Bill Shakespeare**, a Tewkesbury boatman, "Are you any relation to William Shakespeare?" He said, "I doan't know as I bee, but I ha yurd my old huncle, Jock Shakespeare, say as we had a play acting sort of fellow belong'd to we, in times agone. But I didn't know 'un".

**266 19 March 1900**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**DRUNKENNESS** **Benjamin Kirby**, boatman, on tramp, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly in Northgate Street on March 18<sup>th</sup>. PC Swallow proved the case, and defendant was dismissed on promising to leave the town.

**267 9 April 1900**

**TRAGIC DROWNING CASE NEAR GLOUCESTER – THE DANGERS OF THE BORE** An inquest was held by Mr Charles Scott (City Coroner) at the Ship Inn, the Quay, on Saturday night, on the body of **James William Moseley**, aged 16 years, of Sandhurst, who was drowned in the Severn on March 29<sup>th</sup>. **William Moseley**, labourer and boatman of Sandhurst Lane, deposed that deceased was his son. About 8 pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult, witness, deceased and a young man named Dennis were on board a long boat with a load of sand, coming to Gloucester. They moored the boat to the river's bank, when near the head of the Hams, about a mile and a half from the lower parting,

but unmoored it on hearing the tide approaching. Whilst they were getting out the oars, however, the boat was swept with the “racers” that followed the bore, and began quickly to fill with water. Witness and Dennis held a side cloth up to stop the inflowing tide, and witness called to deceased, who was in the steerage, to move the tiller. The lad shouted, “Father” and witness, in reply, told him to come to him at the fore part of the boat, but at that moment a big wave swept over the stern and knocked deceased into the cabin, the door of which was open. The boat was swamped, and immediately sank, and witness found himself struggling in the water, but managed to seize a plank, which kept him afloat. Dennis saved himself by jumping into the small boat and detaching the rope. After a futile search for deceased, Dennis came to witness's rescue, and drew him out of the water. The tide on the night of the accident was 28 ft 6 in at Sharpness. The boat rose on the head of the bore all right, but was swamped by the “racers” which followed closer upon one another than witness had ever known them before. In further reply to the Coroner, witness said it was not customary to shut the cabin door when steering. There was about a foot of “free-board” on the long boat.

**William Voyce**, a waterman of Quay Court, deposed to being employed by Mr Tandy to recover the smaller boat. Chains were placed under her, and on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> inst, she was lifted to the surface of the water. Upon getting to the cabin, they found deceased in it dead, and subsequently the body was brought to the mortuary. Witness went on to state that the spot at which the accident happened was a particularly dangerous one, the banks of the river forming a kind of funnel, with shallow water until the tide entered, which it did with great force and volume. Witness added that the boat, when lifted, was in such a condition that it broke up and sank in about 15 feet of water. The boat was a good one for the purpose for which it was used.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally drowned”.

**268 30 April 1900**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**DRUNK AND DISORDERLY William Pinkney**, 9 High Orchard, boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly and refusing to quit the Talbot Hotel on Saturday night. PC Allen deposed that he and PC Welchman were called to the Talbot on the night in question, when they found the accused outside in the street, with a large crowd of people round him. He was drunk, and acting in a disorderly manner, and as he refused to go away he had to be taken into custody, but was subsequently let out on bail. Mr E H Kilminster, landlord of the Talbot, deposed to prisoner coming to his hotel on Saturday night the worse for liquor. Witness declined to serve him with any more drink, and as he refused to leave the house, witness had to eject him. Accused had since come and apologised for his conduct. Defendant, who bore a good character, was fined 1s and 6s 6d costs.

**269 20 June 1900**

**Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

**CRIMEAN VETERAN IN THE DOCK – AN “INCORRIGIBLE ROGUE” William Palmer** (70), described as a boatman, was indicted for that he, on June 13<sup>th</sup> at Berkeley Petty Sessions, “was convicted of being an incorrigible rogue within the meaning of the Vagrant Act 1824, he having been unlawfully wandering abroad and lodging in the open air at Ham and Stone on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and not then having any visible means of subsistence, and not giving a good account of himself”. Mr L Morton Brown prosecuted. Mr William Hatten, clerk to Mr Charles Scott, magistrates' clerk at Berkeley, produced the register of convictions against the prisoner. There were 13 convictions against the prisoner, commencing in 1895, and he had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment for various offences ranging from ten days to two months. Prisoner had no means, and he would not work. He was many years ago engaged in connection with the pilot boats, but for years he had led a vagabond life. The Chairman, referring to the convictions against the prisoner, said that in 1886 he was convicted of malicious injury, in 1888 of maliciously cutting under wood ; and other convictions were for malicious injury to a fence, malicious injury to other property, and sleeping in an outhouse. Eleven times he had been punished for wandering about and sleeping in the open air. Prisoner : I should have been convicted 27 times if they could have done it. They could not do it ; I've “bested” them. [Laughter] They have got their knife into me because I “bested” the steward

over 2d worth of coal and \$d worth of coal, and cost them £20.”

Mr Hatten informed the Court that the prisoner sometimes frightened small children. The Chairman said prisoner was an old man, and for a great many years appeared to have been living on the public. It would be a mercy if he were prevented from living that life for some time, at any rate. He would be imprisoned and kept to such hard labour as he was able to perform for three months. Before being removed, the prisoner told the Court that he had been in the army, which he joined in 1855. From enquiries, it appears that prisoner fought in the Crimean War, for which he received a medal, and also saw active service in China. It is said that by reason of bad conduct, he lost a pension, which some gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Berkeley, who interested themselves on his behalf, obtained for him from the Chelsea authorities.

**270 22 June 1900**

BOATMAN - Wanted, a steady man, to work Canal Boat. Apply J B Williams and Co, Quay, Gloucester.

**271 25 June 1900 Stroud**

POLICE CASES **George Clements**, a boatman, formerly of Arlingham, was sent to gaol for fourteen days for begging in High Street on Saturday. The man begged 1/2d from PS Hale, who was in plain clothes. When searched at the police station, he had 1s 7d and 1/2lb of tobacco in his possession. There were several previous convictions including five terms of imprisonment for begging.

**272 21 September 1900 Gloucester Police Court**

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Crump**, boatman, 44 St Mary's Square, was fined 2s 6d and 3s 6d costs for being drunk and disorderly in the street on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

**273 15 October 1900**

CURIOUS FATALITY An inquest was held at Three Locks, Linslade, near Aylesbury, on Saturday, regarding the death of **Emma Simpson** aged six, the daughter of a boatman. It appears that three boats were passing through a lock, when one bumped against another, dislodging a gun which was standing in the cabin, with the result that it exploded, blowing away a portion of the child's face and head. A verdict of “Accidental death” was returned.

**274 26 October 1900 Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, TODAY **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, who did not appear, was summoned for having stolen two cabbages, value 2d, from an allotment at France Lynch, the property of Thomas Watkins. From the evidence, it appeared that the parties have adjoining allotments, and that on October 20<sup>th</sup>, prosecutor missed two cabbages, which he traced to the defendant's allotment. Witness found the cabbages in a basket in the defendant's possession. He could identify the cabbages because the defendant had not any of that kind in the ground. Benjamin Deel, another allotment holder, gave corroborative evidence, and the defendant, who has a black list against him, was sent to prison for a month with hard labour.

**275 1 November 1900**

Elizabeth Jane Milling appeared in the dock at Manchester Police Court on Wednesday to answer a charge of bigamy, she having married a boatman named **William Thomas Arnold** in May 1895, whilst her lawful husband, Thomas Milling, was alive. The first marriage was at Radcliffe in 1887, and both parties apparently lived happily together for some years. There were two children of the marriage. About ten years ago, Milling, who is a collier, left his wife and children, and was not seen or heard of until Tuesday. He then turned up, and found that during his ten years' absence, his wife had married again. He accordingly gave her into custody. The certificate of the bigamous marriage was produced, but as the lawful husband did not put in an appearance to give evidence, the

prisoner was discharged. She, however, admitted the offence.

**276 22 November 1900 Stroud**

ALLEGED THEFT OF COAL At the Police station on Wednesday afternoon, William Gould of Tower Hill, Stroud, was brought up before Mr E W Winterbotham, charged on suspicion with having stolen a quarter cwt of coal, value 4d, the property of Mr James Smith, of the Woodhouse, Stroud. It appears that PC Williams saw the man going towards his home on Wednesday wearing a large slop coat, the pockets of which appeared rather bulky. Upon being searched, his pockets were found to contain coal. **Jesse Hawkins**, boatman, said he gave the coal to Gould from one of Mr Smith's boats on the canal. Mr Smith said he did not wish to press the charge, and the man was discharged with a caution.

**277 7 December 1900 Stroud Petty Sessions**

A FAMILIAR FACE **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was summoned for having, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, used insulting language in the public roadway at Chalford to the annoyance of the public, which he denied. Maria Mills, who lives next door to the defendant, gave evidence, and PC Townsend said he heard the defendant cursing and swearing a long distance off. The defendant produced a clay pipe in court and was promptly told to put it away, which he did somewhat reluctantly. There being a long list of convictions for various offences, Jesse was now ordered to pay 8s.

**278 13 December 1900 Whitminster**

POLICE COURT, THIS DAY For having been drunk and disorderly at Frampton on November 10<sup>th</sup>, **Henry Hogg**, boatman of Frampton, was fined 5s including costs.

**279 14 January 1901**

RESCUED FROM DROWNING A correspondent writes that at 11.50 on Friday night, during the thick fog, a boatman named **Edwin Steel**, in the employ of Mr Wakeman, accidentally fell into the canal in attempting to reach his boat, *The Travellers' Rest*, which was lying in the New Dock. James Herbert, in the employ of the Great Western Railway, who happened to be on duty at the time, and hearing the man fall into the water, went to his assistance. He procured a rope, and making it fast to a GWR truck buffer, passed it to the unfortunate man, who held on till Herbert fetched assistance from the *SS Plato*. A man came from that ship, and together they hauled Steel, who cannot swim, out of the canal.

**280 1 February 1901 Stroud Petty Sessions**

REFUSING TO QUIT **Edwin Davies**, a boatman of Chalford, and his wife **Emma Davies**, were summoned for having been drunk and at the same time refusing to quit the Anchor Inn, Chalford, on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The case had been adjourned for the purpose of obtaining further evidence. Neither of the defendants appeared, but sent a letter to the Bench stating that they were detained at Stourport. Elizabeth Franklin stated that she was in the public house on the night in question. The male defendant was "on about politics", and the landlord told him to be quiet or leave the house, at the same time refusing to draw him any more beer. The woman used bad language, and the landlord then ordered them both to leave. They refused, and he ejected them. For the defence, Philip Mills, labourer of Chalford, stated that a woman named Crook started "having words" in the public house, and her husband struck her. This family incident was terminated upon witness's advice, and the landlord, thinking that Davies and his wife had commenced the disturbance, turned them out. They went away quietly. He did not hear all that was said, because a melodeon was going all the time. Charles Dyer of Chalford, also gave evidence. The defendants were each fined 5s (costs remitted).

**281 5 February 1901 Stroud**

POLICE INTELLIGENCE **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was charged with having, on or

about the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, stolen from College Wood, Chalford, a quantity of beech umber, value 5s, the property of Messrs Philpots, timber merchants, Brimscombe. Formal evidence only was given, and the prisoner was remanded in custody until Friday.

### **282 12 March 1901**

**A GLOUCESTER MAN DROWNED** A telegram was received about mid day on Tuesday by Mr John Walker, hay and corn merchant of Tewkesbury, that one of his men named **Ricketts**, who lived at Gloucester, has been drowned at Selly Oak near Birmingham. Deceased was a boatman, and was on his first journey in Mr Walker's employ.

### **283 13 March 1901**

**A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S SHOCKING DEATH** A boatman, employed on the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, met with a shocking death early on Tuesday morning near Selly Oak. The deceased, **Ernest Ricketts** (26), of 56 Seymour Road, Gloucester, was in charge of a boat laden with coal proceeding in the direction of Selly Oak, and when near Somerset Road Station, the horse pulling the vessel was frightened by a tram and bolted. The towing rope snapped, and twisting round the neck of Ricketts, dragged him into the canal. The unfortunate man, being unable to disentangle himself, was pulled through the water for upwards of half a mile, and when at length the horse was stopped by a man named King, the poor fellow was quite dead. Deceased was making his first journey in the employ of Mr John Walker, hay and corn merchant, Tewkesbury, to whom the boat belonged.

### **284 14 March 1901**

**GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S SHOCKING DEATH – INQUEST AND VERDICT** The circumstances pertaining to the death of **Ernest Charles Ricketts** (23), 56 Seymour Road, Gloucester, were investigated on Wednesday by the Birmingham Coroner. The deceased and a man named **King** were in charge of an empty boat on the canal, which runs by the Midland Railway near Somerset Road Station, on Tuesday last. King was steering, and the deceased was on the towing-path looking after the horse. In front of them was a boat loaded with slack going in the same direction, and which they attempted to pass. There was no one in charge of the horse dragging the loaded boat, but the men in the boat called out to the animal to stop, and it did so. The deceased then endeavoured to lead his horse over the slack rope of the other boat, but the horse became restive, and reared. The rope by which the animal was attached to the boat broke, and the end of it caught the deceased round the waist, and also around the neck. The horse bolted, dragging the deceased after it along the towing-path for thirty or forty yards. The deceased then fell down and rolled into the water, the horse still pulling him along. King got out of the boat, ran after the animal, and eventually stopped it. He rescued the deceased from the canal, and then fetched a policeman, who found that Ricketts was dead. The body was removed to the Ladywood mortuary. King, in his evidence, said the horse belonged to the deceased. It was not a young one, but it was very wild. It had bolted three times in one day. He did not think the men in the other boat were to blame. It was usual to leave the horse unattended while the boatmen had their meals, and that horse was very quiet, and stood still when told.

Dr Turner, who made a post mortem examination, said death was due to suffocation, caused by the rope round the deceased's neck.

The Coroner pointed out that apparently no one was to blame, and a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **285 4 April 1901**

**TOWN COUNCILLOR AS THIEF CATCHER** At Blackburn on Wednesday, a Chorley canal boatman named **Minnion** was sent for trial for stealing a bottle of whisky. The prisoner was chased a mile and a half by Councillor Slater who, after the prisoner had challenged him to fight, and threatened to split his head with a piece of timber, ran him to earth by cutting through a house from

the front to the rear, and tripping him up. Councillor Slater was thanked by the Bench for his plucky conduct.

**286 12 April 1901 Stroud**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, against whom there were 29 convictions for various offences, was charged with having, on February 2<sup>nd</sup> last, assaulted **Elizabeth Cook**, his wife. Jesse pleaded “not guilty to beating her”. The complainant stated that on the date in question, she was downstairs for the first time after accouchement. Her husband kept the door open, and refused to close it. He put some swedes against the door to keep it open. He next took up a swede and threw it at her, knocking her down. He then ran out of the house, and she did not see him again until he was arrested on another charge. He was only released from prison a week ago. Edward Mills, stickworker of Chalford, also gave evidence, and the defendant said he did not mean to strike his wife with the swede. He was sent to gaol for 14 days hard labour.

**287 7 May 1901 Tewkesbury**

**A BOATMAN FINED** At the Wolverhampton Petty Sessions on Monday, **Henry Pitts**, boatman of Myrtle Court, Tewkesbury, was fined £1 and the costs for working a mare when in an unfit state. The animal was seen pulling a 25 ton boat load of coal at Swindon (Staffordshire), and at the time was totally unfit for the work.

**288 15 May 1901**

**DROWNED IN A PAN OF WATER** The death has been reported to the Coroner (Mr Charles Scott) of a child named **Gertrude Young**, aged one year and eight months, the daughter of **James Young**, a boatman living at 6 Westend Parade, which occurred on Tuesday afternoon under peculiar circumstances. Mrs Young keeps a small general shop, and whilst serving a customer on the afternoon in question, the deceased toddled out from the kitchen into the back yard, and fell face downwards into a pan of soapsuds that was standing near the sink. There was not more than a pailful of water in the pan at the time. Scarcely two minutes had elapsed before Mrs Young discovered the accident, and the child was at once lifted out of the water, but it appeared evident that life was extinct, or certainly too far gone for recovery. No efforts were spared, however, in the endeavour to restore animation, and a doctor, who happened to be passing near a few minutes later, was called in, but his services were of no avail. An inquest will be held this evening.

**289 26 June 1901 Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

**THEFT FROM A TROW** **George Clements** (79), boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of trousers, a handkerchief, a towel, a piece of bacon &c from a vessel, the property of **James Hathaway**, on June 15<sup>th</sup> at Lydney. From the evidence it appeared that on June 9<sup>th</sup>, he moored a trow named the *Happy-go-Lucky*, of which he was in charge, in the canal at Lydney, and left the vessel with the cabin safely locked up. On returning on June 19<sup>th</sup>, witness found the cabin in great disorder. **Thomas Nurse**, owner of the trow, said he never gave prisoner leave to go on the vessel. PC Ganning deposed that on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> June, he went on board the *Happy-go-Lucky* and found the lock of the cabin broken. Witness found prisoner in the cabin. The goods mentioned in the charge were found in his possession, and witness took him into custody. Prisoner, who denied breaking the lock of the cabin, and had been convicted of felony at Stonehouse in 1896, in addition to many other convictions for stealing, was sentenced to three months imprisonment, with such hard labour as he should be found able to perform.

**290 11 July 1901 Ross**

**BOARD OF GUARDIANS** Letters from the Rector and Mr H F Getting as to the relief of the widow of the boatman, **Thomas**, who was drowned in the Wye were received, and it was resolved to grant 5s per week to Mrs Thomas subject to the sanction of the Local Government.

### **291 1 August 1901**

**A DERBYSHIRE MYSTERY – BOATMAN'S THROAT FATALLY CUT** On Thursday morning, the body of **Thomas Champion**, a boatman of Ilkeston, was found in a ditch at Borrowash near Derby, with his throat cut, and the doctor who examined the body came to the conclusion that the wound was not self inflicted. The police are investigating the matter. Champion's watch is missing.

### **292 5 August 1901**

**Joseph Harensen**, aged twenty, a boatman, who was wanted for the murder of Thomas Champion at Borrowash, Derby, was arrested on Sunday morning at Bingham, Notts.

[Note name shown as Harrison in other articles]

### **293 25 September 1901**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

“MORE LIKE A MAD DOG” **Charles Tunks**, boatman, Worrall Street, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Prisoner was further charged with damaging police uniform on the same date. PS Braybrookes deposed that about 4.30 on Tuesday afternoon, he saw the prisoner going down Northgate Street, drunk. Shortly afterwards, he was called to Hare Lane, where he saw prisoner being held down by several men. He was biting and kicking, and was in a very drunken state. Witness took hold of him, whereupon accused threatened to bite him when he got up. Upon being released from the ground, prisoner ran at witness and put his head between his (witness's) knees, and threw him down. He then took witness's trousers between his teeth and ripped a piece out of the leg. The public were very good, and rendered witness assistance, otherwise things might have been worse. With difficulty, accused was handcuffed and witness sent for PC Birt, and on his arrival prisoner was taken to the Police station on a truck. The man behaved more like a mad dog than anything else. Prisoner, who pleaded guilty and had nothing to say, was fined 5s and costs in each case, and the expense of the uniform (in all 27s) or in default 14 days with hard labour.

### **294 1 November 1901**

#### **Stroud Petty Sessions**

**Thomas Davies**, a boatman of Chalford, was summoned for having committed a breach of the Canal Company's bye laws on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, by allowing his barge to pass through a lock which had only one of the gates open. Mr R E Stuart prosecuted, and the defendant admitted the offence. It was pointed out that when only one gate was opened the barge rubbed against it and injured the woodwork. The defendant was fined 10s inclusive.

### **295 5 November 1901**

#### **Gloucester County Court**

George Webb of 1 Oriell Villa, Priory Road, Gloucester, sued **John Stokes** of 14 Swan Lane, Gloucester, boatman, for the sum of 6s 9d, being the costs of repairing two windows at his residence, alleged to have been broken by the defendant's two sons. Mr W Langley-Smith appeared for the defendant. Plaintiff went into the box and swore to the cost of repairing windows, and after being cross-examined by Mr Langley-Smith, the Registrar informed the plaintiff that he could make no order and non suited him with costs for defendant.

### **296 16 November 1901**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

**James King**, Chalford, was summoned for cruelty to a mare by working it in an unfit state on November 8<sup>th</sup>, and **William Bourn**, boatman, the owner of the mare, was summoned for causing the same. From the evidence of PC Treasure, it appeared that the animal was being worked in a lame state to tow a longboat on the canal. The owner was fined 10s and 9s costs, and the case against James King was dismissed on payment of 2s costs.

### **297 25 November 1901**

**A GLOUCESTER BOY DROWNED – INQUEST AND VERDICT** Mr Edwin Docker (Coroner for North Worcestershire) on Saturday afternoon conducted an inquest at Stoke Pound, Stoke Prior,

on a boatman's son named **Charles Williams**, who was drowned in the Gloucester and Birmingham Canal at Stoke Prior on the previous day.

It appeared the lad, who was the son of Mr and Mrs Williams of Gloucester, was accompanying his brothers, **William and Frank**, on a canal barge from Worcester to Birmingham, and between Stoke Prior and Tardebigge, he fell from one of the lock gates and was drowned.

The two brothers gave evidence, and Frank, the younger of the two stated, in reply to questions from the Coroner, that he could swim. He did not know whether his brother was alive or dead when he first saw him in the canal, and he did not jump in to try to save him, but went to his brother William for a shaft.

The Coroner's comment upon this was that witness would only have been doing his duty by jumping into the water.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was accidentally drowned.

**298 2 December 1901 Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY **George Patrick**, boatman of Gloucester, was summoned for having used obscene language on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November. PC Painter proved the offence, which took place in George Street, and defendant was fined 5s and 7s costs, or 14 days.

**299 3 December 1901**

SEVEN DEATH SENTENCES There are at present no less than seven men lying under sentence of death in England, including **Joseph Henry Harrison** (19), labourer, who cut the throat of **Thomas Campion**, master boatman at Borrowash, Derbyshire, the alleged motive being robbery.

**300 6 December 1901 Framilode**

A BOATMAN'S SUDDEN DEATH Dr E M Grace held an inquest at the Berkeley Arms Inn at Purton on Wednesday afternoon, on the body of **John Sims** of Framilode, boatman, who died suddenly under the following circumstances. On Monday, he was coming down the canal with some boats and, according to custom, assisted the bridgeman to open the bridges. He had scarcely completed the work when he fell down insensible and died. Dr Awdry, who had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, said deceased had most extensive disease of the aorta, which was twice its natural size, and had become calcareous. This, coupled with double valvular disease, rendered him liable to sudden death. Death was due to syncope, set up by heart disease. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

**301 14 December 1901**

RE ARRESTED On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, **George Patrick**, boatman of Gloucester, was arrested by PC E J Smith, in Westgate Street, on suspicion of being wanted at Upton-on-Severn for stealing a watch. There was a charge pending against him of using obscene language in the city, which was heard on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst, and for which he received a sentence of seven days imprisonment. On his discharge on Saturday morning, he was re arrested and handed over to the Upton-on-Severn police. Prisoner was arrested by the constable from a description circulated of his appearance.

**302 16 December 1901**

**Joseph Henry Harrison**, labourer, who was sentenced to death at the Derbyshire Assizes a fortnight ago for the murder of **Thomas Campion**, a boatman, at Borrowash, has been reprieved.

**303 31 March 1902 Sharpness**

INQUESTS Dr E Grace held an inquest at the Hospital at Sharpness on Friday on the body of **Walter Wright**, aged 66 years, a boatman, who died whilst tarring his boat. Dr Awdry, who had made a post mortem examination, said deceased had died from aneurysm of the aorta, and jury returned a verdict accordingly.

### 304 16 April 1902

ROBBERY ON THE SEVERN At Stourport Police Court on Tuesday, **Thomas Bayley**, boatman, Stourport, was charged with receiving twelve iron sheets, the property of the Severn Carrying Company, while in transit from Stourport to Bristol. Two boatmen previously proceeded against gave evidence as to selling the sheets to defendant, who was fined £5.

### 305 3 May 1902

#### Stroud

EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR AT STONEHOUSE – TWO MEN FOUND TIED TOGETHER IN THE CANAL An extraordinary discovery was made at Stonehouse on Friday afternoon, when William Owen, alias “Bacca Jack”, aged about 55, plasterer of Stonehouse and **Joseph William Shelton**, boatman, of Puck's Hole, Randwick, near Stroud, were found in the canal near Stonehouse Church. They were tied securely together face to face, a rope having been drawn tightly round their feet and necks. They were at once got out of the water by a man named Lovemore. Shelton was dead and Owen, who was in a very precarious condition, succumbed at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. The affair has caused a great sensation in Stonehouse and district.

THE INQUEST OPENED AND ADJOURNED Mr A J Morton Hall opened the inquest at the Court Farm, Stonehouse, on Saturday morning, the enquiry at first being confined to the case of Shelton, whose body was lying in the church vestry near by. Mr T W Mastin was foreman of the jury, and at the outset, the Coroner said it would be necessary to adjourn the inquest, as the other man had died that morning. **Emma Shelton** deposed that she lived at Puck's Hole, Randwick, and was the wife of the deceased, William Shelton, who was 54 years of age and was not insured. He had been employed as a waterman, but his work had been very irregular. He did not appear upset because he could not get regular work. She had one boy at work, one at school and a daughter. Her husband had never appeared depressed, and had never threatened to take his life. He had never had a day's illness for 30 years. On Thursday morning, he had breakfast about 7 o'clock and went out. She thought he had some 4s in his pocket. He said he intended to look for work and, as he was often away at night, she was not surprised because he did not return home. The man Owen had been a companion of her husband for many years, but she had not seen him personally for 12 months. As far as she knew, Owen had no influence over her husband, who had a strong will of his own, and gave her considerable trouble through drink. From Thursday morning, she did not see her husband again until she viewed the body that morning.

Caroline Uphill, daughter of the landlord of the Globe Inn, Stonehouse, said that on Thursday, Shelton was at the inn nearly all day. He kept coming in and out, but had no food. He had some ale, but she did not think he had a great deal. She served him two or three times, and he left at 11 o'clock at night. The Coroner : He stayed as long as he could? Witness : Yes. In further evidence the witness said that Owen was at the inn at the same time. At nine o'clock on Friday morning, both men came again and stayed until 12.30. They only had two pints of ale, for which Shelton paid, but neither was the worse for drink when they left. She heard no conversation between them, and when they left, she noticed that Owen was crying. He said, “Good morning, my dear”, to her, and both went across the green. Owen seemed very melancholy, but neither of the men had drunk more than usual. The Coroner : Not too much for their capacity. In reply to the foreman, the witness said that she was quite sure the men were not in the inn after 12.30 on Friday. The Coroner : They might have gone to some other house. PS Smith produced a cloth band which witness said she could identify as belonging to Owen. In reply to further questions, the witness said that the men drank together. There were others in the inn at the time, but she did not overhear a word of their conversation.

William Lovemore of the Nutshell, Stonehouse, in the employ of the MR Company as signalman, said he knew both men by sight. As he was coming off duty at 2.20 on Friday afternoon, he saw them standing near the church gates, and spoke to them as he passed. Shelton replied, “How do”, but Owen said nothing. Shelton appeared to be under the influence of drink, judging from his face and general attitude, but witness was unable to see Owen's condition. Shelton was standing with his hands in his trousers pockets, but witness saw nothing of the cloth band produced. Witness

proceeded over the canal bridge towards his house, and about five minutes later, he looked down the canal and saw both men in the churchyard just in the act of jumping into the canal. They were gripping each other face to face, and their caps were lying in the churchyard, together with their coats. Shelton was the nearest the water, and Owen appeared to give the push off. There was no cry of any kind, and witness at once sent his wife for assistance, and went to the canal with some drags. He saw the bodies rise, but lost sight of them again. Witness threw the drags into the water, and a young man named Taylor came along. With the assistance of Taylor and his wife, witness got the bodies out. They were tied together round the neck with a silk handkerchief, and the cloth coat band produced was round their legs. Witness cut the handkerchief and unbuttoned the band. He next tried artificial respiration, and sent for a doctor and the police. Altogether, the men were in the water five minutes. Both men were treated alike, but Shelton was evidently dead when he was got out of the water. Owen showed signs of life, and was removed to his house in High Street, Stonehouse. The blue silk handkerchief produced was the one tied round the men's necks. The Coroner : I think you did everything you possibly could under the circumstances. I have to compliment you on your good sense and judgement, and I shall award you five shillings. James Perry, MR Stationmaster at Stonehouse, said he arrived on the scene at 2.30, and found the two bodies on the bank. Witness at once saw that Shelton was dead, and turned his attention to Owen, who soon showed signs of life. Witness was an ambulance student, and followed the directions given for dealing with drowning cases. The Coroner : I must congratulate you on having acquired such useful knowledge. The enquiry was then adjourned until 2.45 on Monday afternoon.

### **306 12 May 1902**

**Joseph Skelper**, a boatman on the Bolton and Bury Canal, has been selected as Lord Mayor of Ringley, a little village in the Irwell valley. Among the perquisites of his office is a free allowance of a pint of ale at the three inns in the village every Saturday night.

### **307 12 June 1902**

A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN SEVERELY INJURED – TAKEN TO WORCESTER INFIRMARY  
**William Hayward** (29), a boatman of Gloucester, has been admitted to Worcester Infirmary under unfortunate circumstances. While in charge of a barge at Dudley, he plunged into the canal to save a drowning person. His head came in contact with the barge, and severe injuries were inflicted. He went to Birmingham Hospital, was treated there and given some ointment to use, and rejoined his barge and proceeded on his journey to Gloucester. At Worcester he got worse and was taken to the Infirmary, where he became unconscious, and remains in a very precarious condition.

### **308 26 July 1902**

#### **Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **Frederick Meecham**, boatman of Chalford, on the evidence of PC Wintle, was fined 5s and 8s costs for drunkenness and disorderly conduct at Lower Street, Stroud on July 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **309 13 August 1902**

#### **Symonds Yat**

A STAUNTON MAN DROWNED An inquest was held at the Saracen's Head Inn, Symonds Yat, on Tuesday afternoon, by Mr Thomas Hutchinson, deputy coroner for South Herefordshire, touching the death of Arthur Edward Hicks (20), who was drowned at the Bibbings on Sunday last. Solomon John Hicks of the White Horse Inn, Staunton, said deceased was his son, and had lately resided at 21 Benhill Road, Brunswick Square, London, and was a carpenter. Witness last saw deceased alive at 2.20 pm on Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, when he was in his usual state of health. Albert George Hicks of 37 Brighton Terrace, Brixton, carpenter, and cousin of the deceased, who was down from London on a holiday, said that on Sunday last, he and deceased and two of deceased's brothers started for a walk to the Iron Tower on Little Doward. On reaching the river, they could make no one hear at the Ferry, and deceased started to swim the river to fetch the boat. Witness

asked him not to go, but he made no answer. Deceased had nearly reached the Herefordshire bank, and appeared to stand up, when he suddenly sank, and witness did not see him again. There was no one else present who could swim. Witness went to Staunton and informed deceased's father of what had occurred, and when he returned, the body had been recovered. **William Gardiner**, a boatman, gave evidence as to the recovery of the body, and stated that artificial respiration was used without effect, and the jury found that the deceased was drowned through being seized with cramp.

**310 14 August 1902**

**Whitminster**

PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **Joseph Gardiner**, a boatman, late of Chalford, was convicted for having, on August 14<sup>th</sup>, slept out at Cainscross without visible means of sustenance. The Bench taking into consideration the fact he was an old man, sent him to the Workhouse, and bound him over to come up for judgement in the sum of £5.

**311 25 August 1902**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**William Thomas Price**, boatman, Trinity Street, Tewkesbury, was summoned for cruelty to a mare on August 18<sup>th</sup> by working it in an unfit state. Defendant, who pleaded not guilty, was represented by Mr Harry Lewis, instructed by Mr Langley-Smith. PC Gardner said on the day in question, he was on duty in Westgate Street where he saw defendant in charge of two horses attached to a mission van. Noticing one of the animals went lame, he stopped defendant, and in reply to witness, he said the animal was suffering from corns. He said he had come from Tewkesbury that morning. Witness told him the mare was in great pain, and it was an act of cruelty to walk it, even without drawing anything. Subsequently, witness saw the mare at the Cooper's Arms, where he examined it, and found that the fetlock was swollen and inflamed, and the tendons of the leg seemed strained very much. Witness asked him if it had been lame very long, and he said ever since he had had her. Defendant added that he had had the mare about three years, and he had given £15 for her. She was lame then, and had been ever since. In witness's opinion, it was an act of cruelty to work the mare. Cross-examined : The general condition of the mare was good. Inspector Dennis gave corroborative evidence, and added that he stopped the mare being walked up and down for inspection because it was so lame. Defendant said it had been like it for three or four years, and witness remarked that if it had been in that condition for that length of time, he must have been had up before, to which defendant admitted that he had been fined for working her in the same condition. Witness told defendant that he could not allow him to walk the mare back to Tewkesbury in that state. The animal was turned out on the Ham, and witness saw it on Sunday night, when it seemed a little better, but was still very lame. It was undoubtedly cruel to work it in the state in which it was on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant, called, said the mare belonged to him, and he was engaged to bring the Church of England Mission van from Tewkesbury to Gloucester. Sometimes the mare would go lame, and sometimes it would go "upright". It was not lame on the date named, but simply limped a bit because of corns. It suffered no pain whatever, and it was not cruelty to work it. Alexander Milner, MRCVS of Tewkesbury, said he had known the mare in question for the last five years. It was in the habit of going a bit "groggy" - a bit short - in consequence of having met with an accident in the hunting field some time ago, for which it was "fired", and this contracted the tendons. In witness's opinion, the mare did not suffer a bit of pain, and it was not cruelty to work it. At Tewkesbury, the police took no notice of it. The Mayor said the Bench did not consider the case a serious one, but one which the police were quite justified in bringing before the Court. The mare might be capable of doing short journeys about Tewkesbury, but not such a distance as Gloucester, and with a heavy load behind her. Defendant would be fined 5s and costs 15s 2d.

**312 30 September 1902**

DROWNED IN THE SEVERN Late on Monday afternoon, the body of Thomas While, who had been missing from his home in Clifton Road since Sunday morning, was found by a boatman named **George Bodman** in the Severn, behind the warehouses at the Docks. The body was found close to the spot where Mr Preen saw a man disappear in the water on Sunday afternoon. An

inquest will be held this evening.

**313 7 November 1902**

**Gloucester Police Court**

Vaccination exemption certificate was granted to **Harriet Rice**, wife of **Edwin Rice**, boatman, 55 Robin Hood Street.

**314 27 February 1903**

**Tewkesbury**

THE BICYCLE STEALING CASE – COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER SENT TO PRISON At the Town Hall on Friday, before the Mayor (Councillor C C Moore) in the chair, Alderman A Baker and C Harris, Councillor T W Moore and Mr J Holder, John Sansom Iles (26), alias Frank Harvey, a young man of gentlemanly appearance, stated to be a commercial traveller, was brought up in custody, on remand, charged with stealing a bicycle valued at £10, the property of Mr F C Healing from Quay Lane, Tewkesbury on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr T Weldon Thompson prosecuted and prisoner was defended by Mr E Moore. Great interest was manifested in the case, the court being crowded to its fullest extent.

Mr Healing now repeated his evidence to the effect that his bicycle was left outside his office about 4 o'clock, and when he came out, within an hour, it was gone.

Ada Edwards, barmaid at the Anchor Hotel, deposed that the prisoner came to the hotel on Thursday about 2 o'clock. While his order was being got ready, he went out, saying he would walk round the town. He returned in about half an hour and changed his clothes, putting on a cycling suit. He left about 3.30, sending a boy with his bag to the station.

**Harry Walker**, boatman of Tewkesbury, said he noticed prisoner walking towards the back of the George Inn. On going to his boat again, he saw the prisoner standing at the corner of Mr Healing's office, and then mount the bicycle and ride away, about 4.30.

Constable Jones stated that in accordance with information received and enquiry made, he went to the Law Courts at Birmingham and received prisoner into custody, also the bicycle (produced). He charged him with the theft, and he said, "I was a "blithering" fool, but I was on the rocks".

Prisoner was now asked to plead, and Mr Moore addressed the Bench on his behalf. He said his instructions were to admit most fully his guilt, to express his contrition, and to ask the magistrates to exercise the power given by Act of Parliament to deal with the case summarily, and to deal with it mercifully. He was a young man, brought up as a commercial traveller, married when quite young, and had two children and his wife living – the children being aged four and six respectively. He started in business for himself in Bristol some few years ago as what was called a sundryman. Things did not prosper with him, and he went, leaving his wife and one child, to New Zealand. He stayed there some time, hoping to be able to send some money, but after being away some three years, he found he was not in possession of the money he had hoped, and with a desire to see his family, he once more returned to this country. He put up at Birmingham with his wife and children, and tried Tewkesbury, saw the bicycle, was tempted, and fell. Riding the bicycle to Birmingham, he put it in the room at the Victoria Hotel ; "and so ashamed was I", he said, "that I have never looked at the machine since". Commenting on the fact that the prisoner changed his clothes for a cycling suit, that in itself, said Mr Moore, was strongly against his client ; but he put a label on his bag and handed it to the boots at the Anchor Hotel – which was not what an accomplished thief would do. It was entirely through that parcel that he was discovered. He could not possibly have laid a better trail for the police to follow.

The Bench retired for a few minutes, and decided after hearing the defence, and on consideration, to deal with the case summarily.

Prisoner then pleaded guilty.

The Chairman said it was a very serious offence, but the magistrates had decided to take a lenient view, and to send prisoner to Gloucester gaol for one months hard labour. There was applause in court at this decision, as at the conclusion of Mr Moore's address, but it was immediately suppressed.

**315 13 March 1903 Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **Frederick Mechan**, boatman of Chalford, was summoned for having on March 8<sup>th</sup> been drunk on licensed premises, the British Oak Inn, Bowbridge, which he denied. Mr A G Heelas appeared to watch the interests on Mr Spillard, the tenant of the inn. PC Wintle gave evidence to the effect that he visited the house and found the defendant in the bar in a drunken condition. PC Dance corroborated, and the Bench imposed a fine of 10s and 4s costs, or 14 days.

**Joseph Gardner**, boatman of Chalford, was summoned for a similar offence at the same time and place, and the evidence having been repeated, the defendant said he only had three pints, and 23 pints would not make him drunk. He was fined 5s, costs remitted, or seven days.

**316 13 March 1903 Stroud**

FOUND DROWNED AT BRIMSCOMBE On Friday, the body of **Joseph Gardner** was discovered on the Bourne Lock of the Thames and Severn Canal, at Brimscombe, by the lock-keeper **Mr Stevens**. The deceased, who was about 30 years of age, resided at Bussage, and was employed as a roadman. He had been missing from his home since Sunday night.

**317 24 March 1903**

A DISCOVERY IN QUAY STREET About six o'clock on Tuesday morning, Acting Sergeant Smith and PC Welchman discovered a man lying in Quay Street in an insensible condition. His clothes were very wet, as though he had been in the water or been exposed to the rain all night, and had fallen down in the road exhausted. Endeavours to restore consciousness were unavailing, and a stretcher was subsequently procured from the police station, and the man taken to the Infirmary. The man's name is believed to be **John Parrot**, said to be a Gloucester boatman.

**318 25 March 1903**

GLOUCESTER MYSTERY – FOUND UNCONSCIOUS IN QUAY STREET – DEATH OF THE MAN The man whose name was given as **John Parrot**, believed to be a boatman, who was discovered by the police lying in Quay Street, Gloucester in an insensible condition early on Tuesday morning, and who was taken by them to the Infirmary, died at the institution about 8 o'clock in the evening without recovering consciousness.

**319 6 April 1903**

A STOLEN PORTMANTEAU – MAGISTERIAL PROCEEDINGS AT GLOUCESTER At the Gloucester Police Court on Monday, before Messrs J A Matthews (in the chair), W Long and A Buchanan, John Mc Quinn, a ship's fireman of Houghton-le-Spring, County Durham, was charged on remand with having stolen a brown leather bag containing certain articles of wearing apparel, toilet requisites and other things, together of the value of £2 5s, the property of the Midland Railway Company on 30<sup>th</sup> March. Mr R J Turner (from the office of Messrs Beale and Co, Birmingham) prosecuted on behalf of the Railway Company, and in opening the case said that the prompt and clever capture of the prisoner reflected great credit on PC John Newman.

John Chellow, residing at Penarth, a ship owner at Cardiff, said at 3 o'clock on the date named, he was on the platform of the Midland Railway Station waiting for the express train to Hull. He went into the refreshment room for a few minutes, leaving the portmanteau, produced, on a seat on the platform. When he came out, he found the bag missing, and he gave information of his loss to the railway officials, who communicated with the city police.

**Samuel Priday**, boatman, deposed to being on the Midland platform with a friend on the afternoon of the date named, when prisoner asked him when the next train was to Shields. Witness saw the portmanteau produced on the seat outside the refreshment rooms. Witness went into the refreshment room, where they saw Mr Chellow. On coming outside, the bag was missing, and prisoner was not to be seen.

PC John Newman said he was on duty in Barton Street about 4.20 on the afternoon of March 30<sup>th</sup>,

when he saw prisoner carrying a portmanteau under his arm. He crossed over the road and went into the East End Vaults, where witness followed him, and asked him where he got the bag from, and he replied that he bought it. Questioned by witness as to who he purchased it from, prisoner said that made no difference to him, he (accused) wanted a drink. Witness then arrested him on suspicion of having stolen the bag, and proceeded to take him to the station, when after going some little distance up the street he said he would go no further. He became very violent, and witness had to handcuff him and requisition a milk cart to convey him to the police station. In reply to the chairman, witness said he had been informed of the theft of the portmanteau by the policeman on the Cross.

Prisoner pleaded guilty, and said he was very drunk at the time and knew nothing about it.

In reply to the chairman, PC Newman said the prisoner was the worse for drink, but not very drunk. The Chairman said the property of the travelling public must be protected, and prisoner was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

### **320 13 April 1903**

**GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S CHILD DROWNED** On Sunday afternoon, the body of **James Higgs** (3), son of a boatman of Gloucester, was found in the canal near Gower Street, Birmingham. The boat of which his father had charge was lying in the canal near Gower Street, and preparations were being made for starting on a journey. The child was seen playing on the towing-path about a quarter of an hour before his body was recovered.

### **321 6 May 1903**

**EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN – CANAL BOATS AND SHOW VANS** The consideration of the Employment of Children Bill was resumed by the Grand Committee on Trade at the House of Commons on Tuesday. An amendment was proposed by Sir J Gorst, forbidding employment of children in any occupation which involves their conveyance from place to place in such manner as to prevent their regular attendance at school. Mr Jesse Collings said the amendment would interfere with the legitimate business of the showman and the canal boatman. On a division, the amendment was rejected. A proposed alteration of the age from 11 to 12 years under which children should not be sent out for street trading was defeated. An amendment that no half timer shall be employed in any other occupation was agreed to, and the Committee adjourned.

### **322 14 May 1903**

#### **Lydney**

**POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY** For using abusive language, **James Evans**, a Tidenham boatman, was ordered to pay 23s.

### **323 14 May 1903**

**DROWNED AT UPTON-ON-SEVERN – JURY'S IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATION** Mr C W M Price (Deputy Coroner) held an inquest at the Police Court on Tuesday as to the death of **Matthew George Boucher**, aged 15, of Saul, who whilst stepping onto a long boat off the tug *Athlete*, slipped and fell into the water and was drowned just above the bridge at Upton-on-Severn.

**Herbert William Boucher**, brother of the deceased, said that on Sunday, soon after they left Worcester, he and his brother got from their boat on to the tug. Just before getting to Upton Bridge, witness got back to his boat. He thought his brother would have stayed on the tug, but on looking round he saw him hanging from the rope, and before witness could get to him he fell into the river.

**Charles Thomas**, captain of the tug, did not see the accident, but heard cries of "Stop the tug", just above Upton Bridge. After stopping, he saw deceased in the river about 60 yards astern. It was a very common occurrence for boatmen to get on the tug when they were coming down empty. **James Crump**, boatman of Upton, was about 100 yards away when the accident occurred, and got to within the length of the punt when the deceased sank and never rose again. William Griffin, labourer of Upton, on learning that a lad was drowned, commenced dragging, and after half an hour, recovered the body about 100 yards lower down the river.

**William Page Mayo**, tug superintendent at Gloucester, said there were no printed regulations as to the boatmen leaving their boats and getting on to the tug, but they certainly discouraged them doing so. There was no rule as to the tugs or boats carrying lifebuoys. The jury thought it would be wise for all the tugs to do so. Witness said he would convey their wish to his company. A verdict of accidentally drowned was returned.

**324 26 May 1903**

**Harewood**

POLICE COURT, MONDAY Ernest Porter, labourer, Whitchurch, was summoned by **Harry Gardner**, boatman of the same place, for a breach of the peace on the 19<sup>th</sup> May. Defendant was bound over to keep the peace for six months, himself in £10 and one surety in £5.

**325 5 June 1903**

**Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **John Rice and Edwin Rice**, son and father, of 55 Robin Hood Street, Gloucester, were summoned at the instance of the SPCA (Gloucester), the former for cruelty to a horse on May 27<sup>th</sup>, and the latter with causing the cruelty. Mr W Langley-Smith defended, and defendants pleaded not guilty. Inspector Garrod repeated the evidence against the younger defendant tendered at a previous hearing, which had been adjourned. On that occasion, another defendant had been summoned, and the charge against him dismissed, as he was proved to have had nothing to do with the horse. PC Bartlett corroborated, and agreed with the inspector that the animal was quite unfit for work. Edwin Rice, boatman, engaged on the Severn and the canal, said he was constantly away from home. His brother Henry had given him the horse for hauling coal on a trolley. He left home on Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> for Smethwick. He afterwards went to Worcester, and returned on May 31<sup>st</sup>. Before he left, he saw the pony, and did not observe any lameness. He had not instructed his son to work the horse on the date named. Witness took the pony to the police station last night. He did not know what ringbone was. John Rice supported the statement of his father that he was away on May 27<sup>th</sup>, did not give instructions for the working of the pony, and had no knowledge that the pony was lame. Witness added that it was not lame now, neither was it when he left home on May 27<sup>th</sup>. He (John Rice) had no idea of the nature of ringbone. The Bench viewed the pony, and the Chairman said they thought the Inspector quite right in bringing the case forward, but there was a doubt associated with it. They would give defendants the benefit of the doubt, and dismiss both summonses. An application by Mr Langley-Smith for costs for unnecessarily bringing Henry Rice into court on the last occasion was refused.

**326 16 June 1903**

**Stroud County Court**

TUESDAY James Butt of the firm of Butt and Son, coal merchants of Dudbridge, sued **Albert Chandler**, boatman of Stroud, for £8 10s for goods supplied and money advanced. Mr W F B Warman appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr A H G Heelas defended. The matter was ultimately referred to the Registrar.

**327 4 July 1903**

**Gloucester Police Court**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY For not sending their children regularly to school, **Thomas Stiff**, Upper Parting, Twigworth, a boatman, was fined 5s ; and Emily Payne, also of Twigworth, was fined 2s 6d.

**328 10 July 1903**

**Stroud Petty Sessions**

**Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was summoned for having on July 1<sup>st</sup> been drunk and disorderly in Russell Street, Stroud. The defendant said, "I don't know nothing about the job, sir", and PC Simpson gave evidence, and said that when he spoke to defendant, he said, "I have killed four like you". Ultimately the defendant went away on the Chalford bus. PS Hale corroborated, and the defendant, whose record was a bad one, was fined 14s.

### 329 5 August 1903

**A BRUTAL CANAL BOATMAN** A canal boatman named **George Wilshaw** was charged at Burslem on Tuesday with an assault on Mary Ellen Sedgeley, with whom he lived on his boat. Not satisfied with the speed at which the woman drove his horse, Wilshaw kicked her down the cabin, and afterwards threw her overboard into the canal and held her in the water by her hair for some time. The stipendiary magistrate said that Wilshaw was a brute, and sentenced him to six months hard labour.

### 330 6 August 1903

**TRIED TO JUMP INTO THE WATER** At midnight on Tuesday, a tramp went up to a boatman named **Wigley** on the Wye Bridge at Hereford, and after stating that he was hard up and out of work, added that he would jump into the river. He put his leg over the parapet and tried to get over, but Wigley caught him by the collar and pulled him back, and gave him into custody. The man said his named was Charles Bond, engine fitter of Crewe, and he was on his way to South Wales. He asked the magistrates to let him go, but they remanded him for medical examination.

### 331 17 August 1903

**WYE DROWNING FATALITY – CORONER'S INQUEST AT BROCKWEIR** Mr M F Carter, Dean Forest Coroner, and a jury, of whom the Rev W G Stooke was foreman, held an inquest at the Parish Hall, Brockweir, on Sunday afternoon, relative to the death of Annie Louisa Scrivens (31), wife of John Scrivens, wood cutter, of Oak Cottage, St Briavels Common, whose body was recovered from the River Wye at Brockweir on Wednesday morning last, by **Charles Williams**, a boatman. According to the husband, they went to bed together on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, but upon waking at 4.30 am, he found his wife was missing. Thinking deceased was with the child, he went to sleep again. He got up an hour later, and went into the child's bedroom, but found she was not there. Enquiries were afterwards made, and deceased's body was recovered on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst from the river Wye. Eleven years ago, deceased was confined in Fishponds Lunatic Asylum, she having been badly frightened by a servant. She got better, and was in her usual health until three weeks ago, when she fell on getting out of bed. Since then, she had been in very low spirits. Witness did not consider, however, that she was bad enough to be taken away.

The Coroner said unfortunately that appeared to be the case too often, but he thought it was best, when symptoms of unsound mind were shown, that people should be put where they could be properly looked after.

A verdict of "Drowned whilst in an unsound state of mind" was returned.

### 332 18 August 1903

#### Petty Sessions

**FRIDAY Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, who did not appear, was, on the evidence of PC Grinnell, fined £1 and 4s costs for having been drunk and disorderly at Chalford Hill on August 21<sup>st</sup>. There were 24 previous convictions.

### 333 4 September 1903

**JESSE COOK AGAIN Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, who did not appear, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Chalford on August 29<sup>th</sup>. PC Grinnell stated the facts, and Cook, who was fined £1 for a similar offence last week, was now sent to gaol for 14 days with hard labour.

### 334 14 September 1903

#### Stroud

**POLICE** At the Police Station on Monday, before Mr E W Winterbotham, a well known local character named **Joseph Gardner**, a boatman, was charged with having slept out at Mr S Jefferies' brick works on the night of September 13<sup>th</sup>. PC Garner gave evidence, and several previous convictions having been cited, the man was sent to gaol for 14 days hard labour.

**335 16 October 1903 Stroud Petty Sessions**

**Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was charged with having on September 4<sup>th</sup> wilfully damaged his cell at Stroud Police Station to the extent of 5s. PS Hale stated that soon after prisoner was taken to his cell, he commenced to kick the legs of his bed, which he smashed to pieces. He was fined 11s 6d including costs.

**336 9 November 1903 Stroud**

POLICE **Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was charged with having been drunk at Chalford Hill on Saturday night. PC Gwinnell gave evidence, and prisoner, who said he only had four bottles of ginger beer during the evening, was remanded in custody until Friday.

**337 13 November 1903 Stroud Petty Sessions**

**Jesse Cook**, boatman of Chalford, was brought up in custody charged with having on November 7<sup>th</sup> been drunk and disorderly at Chalford Hill, which he denied. PS Grinnell said that on the evening in question, he saw the prisoner in a very drunken state and swearing loudly. He behaved so badly that witness had to lock him up. He was very violent, and made attempts to kick and bite. Prisoner : *You interfered with me, or else it would have been all right.* PC Townsend corroborated, and, asked if he wanted to make any statement, the prisoner said : *I don't want to make no statement; my ribs have made statement enough for me this week. I was booted up.* There being a bad record, the man was convicted, and was further charged under the Inebriates' Act 1878, with having been three times convicted during twelve months of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. Mr Hyett : Do you admit the previous convictions? Prisoner : *I don't know, sir.* PC Townsend said he had known the man for 15 years, and had often seen him in a state of intoxication. Once he had jumped into the canal and was nearly drowned. Prisoner (excitedly) : *Nearly "drowned", eh? Why I could swim a hundred miles. I didn't go down. Why, I was flung into the Severn and I never went down.* The constable added that once the prisoner went about armed with an axe threatening to injure people. He was a terror to the entire neighbourhood of Chalford. Prisoner : *It's a wonder you don't bring a few of 'em down here ; none of 'em don't say a word to I about it.* William Staddon, driver of the canal dredger, proved seeing the man jump into the canal and also into the mud boat. It was with great difficulty that he was rescued. Prisoner : *That was only a bit of sport.* The witness said that ropes had to be procured to get the man out of the mud boat, and then directly afterwards he jumped into the canal. Prisoner : *That was to wash it off, wasn't it?* Witness : We all thought he was going to be drowned, as he had two cwts of mud on him. PC Grinnell gave evidence of previous convictions, and the prisoner said : *Well, I was in gaol for two months. I got to be a tee totaller when I am in the "house".* The Bench decided to send the man to prison for 14 days on the first charge, and on the second, to order his detention for 18 months in an Inebriates' Home.

**338 13 November 1903 Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS Vaccination exemption certificate was granted to **H W Boacher**, 3 Mercy Place, boatman.

**339 18 November 1903 Gloucester Police**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS Vaccination exemption certificate granted to **Samuel Lee**, boatman, Robin Hood Street.

**340 20 November 1903 Stroud**

ALLEGED NEGLECT OF CHILDREN – POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS At the Stroud Police Court on Friday – before Messrs F A Hyett (in the chair), C H Stanton and J C C Kimmins – **Edward Fletcher**, boatman of Calowell, Stroud, and **Clara Fletcher**, his wife, were charged with having, on divers dates during the past six months, wilfully neglected their five young children in such a manner as to cause unnecessary suffering. Both pleaded not guilty.

PC Brotheridge stated that on November 18<sup>th</sup>, he visited the house occupied by prisoners, and the female came to the door. He told her that he had received complaints as to the way she treated the children, and she replied, "Come in, there is nothing the matter". He walked into a small kitchen, where he found three little children huddled together. They were all in a filthy condition and scantily clad. They looked emaciated and weak. Witness looked round the house, and found one small loaf of bread, about a quarter of a pound of odds and ends of mutton, and some oatmeal. The kitchen was very dirty, and in an adjoining room, which Mrs Fletcher said was occupied by her father, he found an iron bedstead, with no bed or bedclothes, but some old clothing. Feathers and flocks were strewn about the floor, and these were matted together with filth. In the room was a clothes box, upon which was half a calf's head in a state of decomposition. In the window ledge in a baking tin was another half calf's head cooked. There was a pigeon in a mouldy state hanging on a nail, and the stench was overpowering. Proceeding upstairs, he found two rooms, one occupied as a bedroom, in which there were two old beds, but no bed clothing. Both beds were in a most filthy condition, and there was a very bad smell in the room. In the other room, there was nothing but onions. All the children were removed to the Workhouse.

PS Hale corroborated, and said that the woman told him that herself, husband and two children slept in one bed, and three children in the other. She showed him some dirty sheets and old jackets which were on the line in the garden, and which she said were used to cover the beds at night.

Mr Martin Cooke, surgeon of Stroud, stated that he examined the children and found them poorly clad. They were very dirty, and in each case, they were under the proper weight for their ages. He attributed this to the lack of proper nourishment. Their dirty condition was conducive to disease. He thought, by their condition, that the children had not been washed for weeks. Six months ago, at the instigation of the NSPCC, he went to a house in the Leazes, Stroud, then occupied by the prisoners. This house was in a much worse condition than the one in Calowell, and the children were in a bad state.

Leonard Parsons, Master of the Stroud Workhouse, spoke as to the bad state of the children when admitted to the house. Their clothing was in such a filthy state that it was necessary to burn it at once. On the youngest child, there were flea bites in such profusion that a shilling could not have been placed between them.

PC Spicer said that, acting upon instructions from Superintendent Biggs, he called at the prisoners' house in the Leazes and cautioned the woman as to her neglect of the children. At the time he noticed that the house was in a filthy condition.

The male prisoner, in defence, said he had a young family and was unable to give them more food. They had as much as they wanted, but during the past year or so, he had only been able to earn about 10s a week. During the past ten years, his wife had given birth to seven children, and last time there were twins.

The Bench decided to adjourn the case for two months, during which time the prisoners would be watched closely. Unless there was a great improvement in the way in which the children were treated, both man and wife would have to go to prison.

### **341 20 November 1903**

### **Gloucestershire Assizes**

**CHARGE OF THEFT NEAR BERKELEY** **William Palmer** (72), boatman, was charged with having stolen a flask basket, a hammer, screw spanner etc, belonging to William Smith, brickmaker, at Hamfallow near Berkeley, on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. When called upon to plead, prisoner said : I am guilty of having charge of it, but not with the intention of stealing, else why should I carry it up to Berkeley and down again? Mr Harry Lewis (instructed by Mr Frank Treasure) appeared on behalf of the prosecution. Certain tools and a basket, of the value of 6s, were missed from the engine shed (the door of which was lifted off its hinges) at prosecutor's back yard, and subsequently PC Marsh, who arrested prisoner for being drunk and incapable, found the tools in his possession. Prisoner said the tools were given him, but he refused to say by whom. In his statement to the magistrates, prisoner said he desired to be tried by a jury, and his Lordship remarked that he had got what he wanted. [Laughter] Prisoner elected to be sworn. He said that he was an old soldier, and after

having been discharged from the service, endeavours had been made to keep him in asylums, gaols and workhouses. He alleged that this charge was brought to try and get him back to Gloucester again. Prisoner told the judge that he had been more than once on the field of battle, and had served under Lord Elgin and Lord Raglan, and was present at the Indian Mutiny. He had been all over the world, and considered he had been ill used. Prisoner added : I would rather be in Gloucester gaol on half food than in Thornbury Union. The jury, without hesitation, found the prisoner guilty, and his Lordship, in passing sentence of two months hard labour, said Palmer did not appear to bear a very good character.

**342 26 November 1903**

**Stonehouse Petty Sessions**

**Fred Meecham**, boatman, Chalford, was fined 9s 6d including costs, for having been drunk on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the GWR Station, Stonehouse.

**343 4 December 1903**

**Tewkesbury**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT **Thomas Burston**, a boatman, living at Double Alley, Tewkesbury, was charged with unlawfully assaulting Nellie Raggett on the 21<sup>st</sup> November. Mr F W Moore defended, and pleaded not guilty. Prosecutrix said on the date named she went with defendant to his house. He began "cursing and carrying on" with his mother. She interfered, and defendant struck her several times on the face with his fist. She had since been laid up until the previous Thursday. Cross-examined : She had been keeping company with defendant, but had quarrelled with him. She did not threaten to stick a pair of scissors (produced) into him, nor did she tell Mrs Burston that she had threatened to do so. She told Mrs Burston that she did not want to go home until her mother was gone to bed, because she did not want her to see it. Defendant struck her for nothing – for taking his mother's part. They had not had words at all that night. For the defence, defendant stated that prosecutrix followed him home and accused him of going with another girl, which he admitted, and she picked up some scissors and ran at him. He knocked them out of her hands, but she picked them up again and ran at him with them. In getting away, she fell against the table and knocked her face about. Mrs Burston, defendant's mother, said she heard her son tell the girl to go home. Witness went out, and on returning, she saw the girl standing by the fireplace with her nose bleeding. She said to witness that she had run at the defendant with the scissors. The Bench found the defendant guilty. He had been fined before for a similar offence, and would now be fined £1 and costs, or in default 21 days. The result was received with applause, and on leaving the court, defendant was loudly hooted.

**344 16 December 1903**

CLAIM FOR A HORSE – ACTION AGAINST THE GLOUCESTER TOWING PATH CO His Honour Judge Ellicott held a special sitting at Gloucester County Court on Wednesday, when the case was heard, before a jury, in which **John Mayall**, boatman, 53 Theresa Street, Gloucester, claimed £14 from the Gloucester and Worcester Towing-path Co for the loss of a horse, owing to the alleged negligence of defendants in allowing the towing-path along the banks of the river Severn, near Wainloads Pool, to be unsafe and unfit for the use of horses. Mr W Langley-Smith appeared for plaintiff, and Mr Frank Treasure defended.

Plaintiff stated that on August 18<sup>th</sup>, he was engaged by Messrs Chadborn, Son and Taylor to convey a cargo of deals from Gloucester to Birmingham, and before starting, paid 6s towing fee at the Gloucester office of the defendant Company. Everything went all right until they got to Wainloads Pool on August 19<sup>th</sup>. He was steering the boat at the time, and a youth named **William Silvey** was driving the horse. The latter went to open the towpath gates, and had just done so when a portion of the bank gave way, and the horse slipped into the river and was drowned. He gave £11 for the horse about four or five months ago, but having become acquainted with the work, it was more valuable to him at the time of the accident. Cross-examined : The horse was a bit down in the fetlock, but he denied that would make it more inclined to slip. There was a rick peg near the path, but the horse had avoided that before the accident.

Evidence was also given by **Thomas Hawker**, tug captain, 4 Castel Villas, Gloucester, and **William Wakeman**, boatman, 19 Swan Lane Gloucester,. The latter stated that he complained to Mr John Bradley, the Company's representative, about three weeks before the accident, of the dangerous nature of the bank at this particular spot.

Mr Langley-Smith stated he had subpoenaed two other witnesses, who were up country in connection with their work, and had not returned. Mr Treasure raising no objection, his Honour said he would allow them to be called if they appeared in court before the case was finished.

Mr Treasure, for defendants, submitted that no negligence had been proved on the part of defendants, and raised the question of contributory negligence on the part of plaintiff's servant, Silvey, in leaving the horse unattended while he went to open the gate.

William Bradley, in the employ of defendants, denied that the path was dangerous at this spot, and stated that the plaintiff told him that the rick peg might have been a likely cause of the accident. Wakeman had never complained of the bank there.

Edward John Bradley, superintendent assistant in the employ of the Severn Commissioners, agreed with his brother that there was plenty of room on the bank for a horse to pass safely. For the six months ended September, 228 horses had passed there without mishap.

John Bradley, manager of the Company, Worcester, stated that no report was received by him regarding the condition of the path near Wainloads Pool.

Albert Hamling, another employee of the company, and Edward Dutfield, who was employed by Mr Surman, farmer, in haymaking near the place of the accident, were also called.

His Honour, in summing up, pointed out that there was nothing in the Act of Parliament under which the company was formed, to make them responsible for the almost impossible task of keeping up the river banks when worn away by the action of the river, but simply to provide a proper path.

The jury, after a retirement, found for plaintiff, awarding £10 damages.

### **345 24 December 1903**

A boatman named **John Robert Thornton** was committed for trial at Bingley on Wednesday, on a charge of wounding a horse on November 6<sup>th</sup>, by shooting at it with a gun, the animal being seriously injured.

### **346 14 January 1904**

#### **Upton-on-Severn**

PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY A Severn Stoke labourer named George Clay was charged with being drunk and disorderly on Boxing Day. He denied the allegation, but previous convictions were proved, and he was fined 5s and costs. PC Jeffs stated the facts.

There was a similar charge against **Henry Kent**, a boatman, who did not appear, which was proved by PC Ashford, the offence having been committed in New Street, Upton, on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, and a fine of 10s and costs was inflicted.

### **347 22 January 1904**

#### **Stroud**

WASHING INMATES AT THE STROUD WORKHOUSE – INTERESTING CASE AT THE POLICE COURT At the Stroud Police Court on Friday, before Mr F A Hyett and other magistrates, Matthew John Stokes, male imbecile attendant at the Stroud Workhouse, was summoned for having assaulted **John Gardiner**, a boatman, whilst an inmate of the Workhouse, on January 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a cross summons.

Gardiner stated that he was in the convalescent ward on January 9<sup>th</sup>, about to have a bath. He got into the water, and Stokes threw the water over him. Prosecutor alleged that he pushed his head deliberately under the water, and kept it under until he nearly "lost his mind". A great quantity of water went down his throat. He asked the Master to send for the police to give him in charge, but Mr Parsons refused. In reply to the Chairman, Gardiner said he did not object to being bathed. William Evans, another inmate, said he saw Gardiner in the bath, and Stokes got a quantity of water and poured it over his head to begin washing him as usual. Gardiner then commenced to throw

water over Stokes with his hands. Stokes used a dinner plate to put the water over Gardiner, and then pressed him down, and his head went under water. Henry Evans, another inmate, gave corroborative evidence, and the defendant gave his story, which was to the effect that he was about to bath the old man, but could not find him. He was of opinion that the man was hiding with the object of escaping from bathing. Subsequently, he found the man and took him to the bath room, and he undressed without making any objection. Witness wetted the man's head in the bath, and Gardiner then began to object and splashed the water about. Gardiner also spat in his face, and witness took hold of his hands, whereupon the man slipped under the water. Gardiner : There had been two men washed before me. Leonard Parsons, master of the Workhouse, also gave evidence, and said that when Gardiner came into the house, he was so dirty that they had to scrub him. It was usual to bath only two inmates in the same water. Mr Davis (magistrates' clerk) : What, two of the same sort as Gardiner? The Master said that an inmate had the right to demand fresh water. Mr Hyett : Well, we think it is most desirable that fresh water should be provided whether an inmate demands it or not. Mr Parsons said that the Local Government Board regulations laid down that the water should be changed "as often as possible". The Bench decided to dismiss both cases, and held that there was provocation on both sides. Mr Hyett said it was extremely disagreeable to the man Gardiner to have dirty water thrown over him, but he had acted improperly, and as the attendant took the law into his own hands, the Bench thought the punishment sufficient. They did not think that Gardiner should be sent to prison, and therefore both cases would be dismissed.

**348 25 January 1904**

**Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **James Tonks**, boatman, Lower Westgate Street, charged with being drunk and disorderly, was let off on payment of costs (3s).

**349 6 February 1904**

TRAGIC AFFAIR AT STROUD – THE INQUEST – AN OPEN VERDICT On Friday evening Mr R H Smith, deputy coroner, held an inquest at Beverstone House, Bath Road, Stroud, on the body of Mabel Emily Lewis, aged 27, daughter of Mr Isaac Lewis, builder, who was missed from her home last Tuesday, and whose body was recovered from the canal at Whitminster on Thursday evening.

Mr J E J Pratt was foreman of the jury.

Ellie Kate Lewis, sister of the deceased, said that the unfortunate young lady had suffered from depression for some time, and had been worse since her mother's death some time ago. On Tuesday, she went for a walk for about three quarters of an hour, and upon returning went in the direction of the kitchen. Witness subsequently missed her, and was quite unable to trace where she went.

Isaac Lewis, father of the deceased, said that his daughter lived at home, and had been in low spirits for some time. This had been the case for some two years, and at the commencement of her illness, she was attended by Dr Waller. For a month or two, she would appear quite well, and then relapse into a state of depression. She had occasionally obtained a nerve tonic from the doctor, but had not done so for the past few months. Her mother's death had affected her very much, and two or three months ago, she fell backwards out of a trap, and this also did her nerves considerable injury. At the time she was getting out of the trap, she said she felt a "swimming" sensation in her head. Five weeks ago, she went to stay with some friends at Beverstone near Tetbury, and remained away a month. The bracing air there appeared to agree with her, and she felt much better for a time. Whilst there, however, she was found wandering in Lord Estcourt's Park in a state of depression, having apparently lost her memory. He went to Beverstone with the intention of bringing her back home, but she preferred to stay, and her relatives there also desired her to remain. However, she came home last Monday, and appeared very much better in every way. She was quite cheerful on Monday evening and Tuesday morning – when he left home, there was nothing unusual in her demeanour. He had never before known her lose her memory, not had he ever heard of her threatening to injure herself. Two years ago, her movements were slightly suspicious, but the medical advisor did all that was considered necessary, and no importance was attached to the

matter. When he returned home at six o'clock in the evening and found that she had left the house, he at once set up enquiries, but could hear no tidings of her whereabouts. On Thursday, he heard that the body had been found, and she was brought home about 7 o'clock in the evening. He was quite satisfied that no one was to blame for the sad occurrence, and he was quite certain that with the exception of the fits of depression, she had no cause whatever to worry. He felt certain that these moods of depression were quite sufficient to interfere with the balance of her mind. She was subject to sudden seizures, and had said that she appeared occasionally to lose control of both mind and body. She did not complain of violent headaches, but after one of these seizures, she was prostrate for a week. She would recover very quickly, and be quite bright for a time. In reply to the Foreman, Mr Lewis said he certainly thought that the deceased was much worse after the accident. She was stout, and fell very heavily on her head out of the trap.

**Henry Wathen**, boatman of Saul, said that on Tuesday afternoon, he saw the deceased on the canal bank near the Shallow Lock at Whitminster. She was walking along the towing-path, and he spoke to her. He asked her if she had seen the hounds, and she replied, "No, I haven't". She then walked back towards Stroud, and he noticed nothing whatever strange in her conduct or appearance. She spoke to him quite naturally, and he did not see her again. The spot where she was found was about seven miles from her home. By the Foreman : When he first saw her, she was coming from the direction of Stroud, and she at once turned back and was out of sight in a few minutes.

**George Bailey**, mariner of Oldends, Stonehouse, said that at 8.15 on Wednesday morning, he passed the Shallow Lock with a boat. When within 50 yards of the lock on the Stroud side, he noticed that the boat stirred something up from the bottom of the canal. He could not see what it was, as it sank again immediately. He had no suspicion that it was a body, but next day he met the police searching, and at once showed them the spot, with the result that they recovered the body.

PC Williams also gave evidence to the effect that he raised the body to the surface with an oar, and then got it to the bank with a boat hook. He knew the deceased lady, and at once identified her. She was fully dressed, and he thought she had been in the water at least 24 hours. He at once had the body conveyed home to Stroud. When found, he thought the body was in an upright position. She was still wearing her hat and gloves. There was nothing whatever in her pockets. The water was about six feet deep at the spot where the body was found. He thought that anyone falling into the canal at that point could easily get out, because the bank sloped. He certainly thought she must have walked into the water herself.

Mr Lewis, recalled, was informed that nothing was found in the deceased's pocket, and said he was quite satisfied that she left home without any money. Mr Lewis now said that a letter had been found which his daughter had written whilst staying at Beverstone, in which she made a resolve to endeavour to be useful, although everything appeared dark and cloudy around her.

The Coroner said they must arrive at the conclusion that the deceased got into the canal herself. They had to consider whether she lost her memory and got into the water without really knowing where she was going. The letter written by the deceased showed that she had suffered a great deal, but yet was determined to make every effort to do what was right. The jury had to consider whether she got into the canal knowing what she was doing, or whether she was seized with one of those fits of mental aberration from which she had suffered.

The Foreman pointed out that there was no direct evidence to show how the deceased got into the water.

The jury decided to return an open verdict to the effect that the deceased was found drowned, there being no evidence to show how she got into the water.

### **350 23 February 1904**

### **Stroud**

**A PAUPER'S HAIRCUT** At the Police Station on Tuesday morning, before Mr E W Winterbotham, **Joseph Gardiner**, boatman, a well known local character, was charged with refractory conduct at the Workhouse that morning, and with having used threats towards the Master. It will be remembered that some time ago Gardiner summoned one of the Workhouse officials for an alleged assault, the case being dismissed. Upon that occasion, Gardiner objected to taking a

bath, and it was then stated that he always came to the House in a dirty condition. In connection with the present charge, Mr Parsons, the Master, stated that on Tuesday morning, Gardiner was told that he must have his hair cut by Mr Stokes, the attendant on the imbeciles. He refused, and was then taken into one of the wards and held in a chair, whilst his hair was being cut. He behaved in a most disorderly manner, used violent threats, and ultimately threw himself on the floor on his face. Corroborative evidence was given by Matthew John Stokes and William Rowie, labour master, and Gardiner, who said that since the bathing incident he had been "afraid of his life" was sent to gaol for 14 days hard labour.

**351 8 March 1904**

**SUDDEN DEATH IN GLOUCESTER** The neighbourhood of Deacon Street, Gloucester, was startled on Monday night by the news of the sudden death of **Mrs Anne Coldrick**, which occurred between 7 and 8.30 o'clock. Mrs Coldrick was the wife of **Thomas Coldrick**, a boatman, and used to accompany him on his journeys. She was 56 years of age, and had enjoyed good health. Mr Coldrick went out at six o'clock on Monday evening to see to his boat, and left his wife asleep on the sofa. When he returned, he found her quite dead in the same position as when he went out. He summoned neighbours, and Dr J A Boodle was afterwards called in. The doctor expressed his opinion that death was due to apoplexy.

**352 7 April 1904**

**Stroud**

**NAILSWORTH PETTY SESSIONS** **Richard Bentley**, boatman, Chalford, was summoned for refusing to quit the Clothiers' Arms Inn, Minchinhampton, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst, and further with using obscene language. Fined 10s in all.

**353 7 April 1904**

**A TIMELY RESCUE** Between eleven and twelve o'clock on Tuesday night, as Mr F Pickthorne, a Corporation night employee, was doing his round on the Quay, he heard a splash in the water, and on going to the spot, he saw a boatman named **Charles Perks** in the water. The man had sunk twice, but on rising again, Mr Pickthorne shouted to him to cling to his brush. Pickthorne called for help, and two young fellows came to his assistance and succeeded in getting the man out of the river. Mr Pickthorne, being an ambulance man, by artificial respiration got Perks round again, and he was eventually able to return to his boat.

**354 20 April 1904**

**Gloucester Police Court**

**CITY PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY** **Joseph Carver**, a boatman at the Docks, was charged with stealing a piece of coal, valued 1s, the property of Messrs Knight and Co, coal merchants at the Docks, on April 15<sup>th</sup>. PC Richardson, dock constable, said on the night of the date named, he saw prisoner take a large piece of coal from the top of some trucks in Messrs Knight and Co's yards. Witness went to him and enquired what he was doing, when he replied that he had no fire in his cabin, and wanted a bit of coal. Witness took possession of the coal, and reported the case to the Dock Company. Prisoner went into the witness box and admitted that he was about to take the coal when the dock constable came upon the scene, but pleaded that he did not actually remove it from the yard. Mr Barber submitted that there was no case against the prisoner, inasmuch as he did not actually remove the coal. The Bench, however, held differently, and fined accused £1 8s including costs. Mr Hemmings, prisoner's employer, gave the young man a good character for honesty.

**355 29 April 1904**

**Stroud**

**PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY** **Joseph Gardiner**, a boatman, who has been before the Bench upon many previous occasions, was again charged with having on April 25<sup>th</sup> begged in the London Road, Stroud. He was further charged with being a rogue and a vagabond, and his previous record having been produced, which showed 29 previous convictions, he was formally convicted and sent to gaol for three months hard labour.

**356 27 May 1904**

**Tewkesbury**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **Thomas Burston**, boatman of Tewkesbury, was summoned for unlawfully assaulting Henry King in Sun Street, Tewkesbury, on the 14<sup>th</sup> May. The prosecutor alleged that on Saturday night, the date named, the defendant struck him, knocking his pipe out of his mouth, and used threats, there being no provocation of any kind. This evidence was corroborated by Annie Fletcher, who saw the dispute from start to finish, but the defendant, who would not give evidence on oath, denied having struck King until the latter struck him. The magistrates carefully considered the case, and as the evidence was conflicting, Burston was only fined 5s, including costs. He was afterwards ordered to pay 8s 6d in addition to the costs incidental to his non appearance when summoned.

**357 30 May 1904**

PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY **William Dolman**, boatman of Siddington, who did not appear, for drunkenness and disorderly conduct at Watermoor on Whit Monday evening, was fined 20s or 14 days.

**358 24 June 1904**

INQUESTS IN GLOUCESTER – CHILD KILLED ON THE RAILWAY On Thursday evening, at the Lower George Hotel, Westgate Street, the circumstances attending the death of Ivy Isabel Rose Williamson, four years of age, who was knocked down and killed by a GWR train near St Catherine's Bridge on Tuesday evening, were made the subject of an enquiry by the City Coroner (Mr C Scott). Messrs W Roberts (district traffic inspector), H Waters (permanent way inspector) and S Fox (locomotive inspector) attended on behalf of the Great Western Railway Company. Mr Ralph Houldey, senr, was appointed foreman of the jury.

Alfred Hydan Williamson, bricklayer of 20 Park Street, said the deceased child was his daughter. She was four years and two months old, and attended St Catherine's School. He last saw her alive on Monday night. All Tuesday, from six o'clock until half past five, he was away. When he got home about a quarter to six, he was informed of the accident. On Wednesday, he visited the spot where he was informed the accident had taken place, and saw the fence through which deceased was supposed to have got through on to the Recreation Ground, from whence she must have strayed on to the railway. The child was not, as far as witness knew, in the habit of playing on the Recreation Ground. It was situated a considerable distance from witness's house, which would probably account for that.

Alfred Francis Ball of 13 Stella Villas, Conduit Street, stated he was an engine driver in the employ of the Great Western Railway Company. He was in charge of an engine attached to a train from Ledbury to Gloucester at 5.9 pm. He passed the public Recreation Ground about 5.8 pm. Witness did not notice anything on the line as he was coming along, except some workmen. There were some boys and girls playing on the embankment on the left hand side. They were in the grass at the top of the bank. He noticed the children through the engine going over some small stones on the lines. Witness had previously experienced this, and knew children sometimes placed things on the metals. He had seen children running away, generally into the meadow on the left hand side. He reported the presence of the stones when he arrived in Gloucester, and in consequence of what he afterwards heard – some twenty minutes later – he examined his engine and found some hair on the brake shaft bracket bolt. The bolt was situated, witness explained, between the two front wheels on the tender, and projected downwards nearly in the middle of the rails. He found besides the hair, which was fair and rather long, a few spots, the nature of which it was impossible to determine.

Charles Henry May, 68 Brook Street, fireman in the employ of the Great Western Railway, deposed to being on the engine with the previous witness. He was opening the water valve on the tender when he noticed they were going over the stones. During the interval he was thus occupied, a child might possibly have had time to put a stone on the line without his seeing it. He assisted in looking over the engine afterwards, and corroborated the driver's evidence. Witness stated that he had also seen children playing about in the neighbourhood of the line in the vicinity of the accident. There

was a fence there, but not such as would deter anyone from getting on the line if they chose. Thomas Cooling, living at Over, a railway ganger, gave evidence to seeing the deceased child's body on the line on Tuesday afternoon just after the train driven by Ball went into Gloucester. Witness was working on the Over side of the bridge. A down train passed him, the driver of which gave him information which caused him to go up the line. Witness saw a man come on to the line from the Recreation Ground and pick up a child from out of the four foot way on the up line, and lay it down upon the bank. The man then went back to the Recreation Ground, and witness saw no more of him and knew nothing as to his identity. PC Frape came on the scene later and took possession of the body. Witness did not examine the body, but noticed a cut on the left side of the forehead.

**Sarah Hemming**, wife of **George Hemming**, boatman, living on the Quay, laid out the body at the Mortuary at the request of PS Davis on Wednesday. She said the head was badly cut at the back of the left ear, the scalp was fractured severely, and the left arm and leg were both broken, whilst there were bruises all over the back of the body.

The Coroner remarked that they had no one who had actually witnessed the accident. The man who picked the body up had not, apparently, the decency to tell anyone. He had failed to do his duty, perhaps in view of having to attend that enquiry. However, that did not very much matter, as the ganger had observed his action. Children would do these dangerous things, as they knew.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and attached no blame to anyone.

**359 30 June 1904**

**Stonehouse**

PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY A warrant was issued for the arrest of **Walter Jones**, a boatman late of Chalford, who failed to surrender to his bail on a charge of having stolen a loaf of bread from a cart at Stonehouse.

**360 2 July 1904**

**Stroud**

POLICE **Walter Jones**, boatman of Chalford, was brought before Mr W J Staunton at Stroud Police Court on Saturday, charged with wandering abroad and sleeping in the open air, having no visible means of subsistence, on Friday night at Chalford. He pleaded guilty. Evidence was given by PC Grinnel, who found prisoner sleeping under a hayrick. His tobacco pipe was lying by his side. Prisoner was committed to gaol for twelve days, the magistrates describing him as a dangerous man. Superintendent Biggs stated that prisoner should have surrendered to bail at Stonehouse Court on Thursday last on a charge of theft, but failed to appear, and a warrant had been issued for his arrest.

**361 11 July 1904**

Early on Monday morning, **Charles Hopkins** aged seven years, the child of a boatman living at Awre Road, Blakeney, was admitted to the Infirmary at Gloucester suffering from concussion of the brain. He fell from a window – a height of some thirty feet – to the ground.

**362 14 July 1904**

**Whitminster**

PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **Walter Jones**, boatman, of no fixed abode, was charged with having stolen a loaf of bread, value 2 1/2d, the property of Charles Smith, baker of Stonehouse, on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Jones, who took the loaf while the cart was standing at the entrance to the Stonehouse Police Station, pleaded guilty, and was sent to prison for one months hard labour.

**363 29 July 1904**

**Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **Richard Bentley**, boatman of Chalford, was summoned for having been drunk on July 23<sup>rd</sup> near the Great Western Station at Chalford. PC Townsend proved the case and, there being previous convictions, the defendant was now fined 10s, or seven days.

**364 19 August 1904****Tewkesbury**

**ALLEGED CRUELTY TO A MARE – CASE DISMISSED** At the Borough Police Court on Friday – before Mr T W Moore (in the chair), Dr A F Turner, and Messrs J Holder and George Hone – a lad named **Albert Price**, son of **Thomas William Price**, boatman and hay dealer, residing at Trinity Street, Tew, was charged with walking a mare on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, in High Street, whilst in an unfit state. Mr T Weldon-Thorson, Tewkesbury, defended, and pleaded not guilty.

PC Fluck stated that he saw the defendant leading the mare in the High Street. It was very lame indeed on the near forefoot. Witness stopped him, and asked who the mare belonged to, and the defendant answered that it was his father's. Witness told him he ought not to walk the horse, and Price replied, "I brought her from Apperley. She is very lame, and I have let her rest whenever necessary". Whilst talking to the lad, the mare rested her foot, and flinched when touched. It was distressed and sweating very much. He gave instructions for the mare to be put in the stables.

Inspector Selwood, William Henry Wood, NSPCA inspector (of Cheltenham), and Ernest Siddall, MRCVS (Cheltenham) gave evidence of the animal's injury for the prosecution. The latter said the injury was incurable.

The defendant stated that he was 4 1/2 hours bringing the mare a distance of 4 miles, and in pursuance of instructions, he allowed it to rest very frequently, and walked slowly. The defendant's father deposed that it was in consequence of a post card from Mr Harnby that the keep was slack that he sent for the mare, and in order to feed the animal well and have proper veterinary treatment. The Inspector asked if he had not previously been in trouble regarding the mare, but Mr Thomson strongly objected, saying the Inspector had no right whatever to ask such a question ; and the Chairman said, on the advice of their Clerk, the Bench decided to agree with Mr Thomson. Mr A C Elder, MRCVS, of Church Street, Tewkesbury, stated that he had several times seen the animal, and he knew of the injury having existed for some three years. It would certainly be better to walk it on the road, as the field was cracked and dry. He should certainly have allowed the animal to be walked to Tewkesbury, as the lameness was caused by stiffness, and would never get better.

In addressing the Bench, Mr Weldon-Thorson submitted that there was no direct and intentional cruelty.

The Bench dismissed the case after a brief consultation, and a summons against the father for allowing the horse to be worked was withdrawn.

**365 23 August 1904**

**MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT DUDLEY** The Dudley police on Monday evening received information of the death, in hospital, of **Jonathan Sefton**, a boatman of Garrett's Lane, off Hill. Deceased was brought to the hospital unconscious on Saturday, and died without recovering consciousness. His relations informed the authorities that he was assaulted by some unknown person on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, and had lain in a state of coma ever since.

**366 24 August 1904**

**KILLED BY LIGHTNING AT TEWKESBURY – AN EXCURSIONIST'S SHOCKING FATE**

About three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, a shocking occurrence took place at Tewkesbury, a girl being fatally struck by lightning. It appears that a party of 190 employees of the Textile Manufacturing Company, Stourport, had been brought to Tewkesbury on an outing to celebrate the wedding of one of the chief members of the firm, a Mr Anderson. The boat carrying the party, which was a Severn steamboat belonging to Mr Thomas Bainley of Stourport, named *Beatrice*, arrived at Tewkesbury at about 12 o'clock, being moored near the Quay. It was the intention of the skipper to start back at 3.45, and about 3.10, several of the excursionists were making their way to the boat, proceeding via Quay Lane. Among them was a girl named Jennie Wigley, an employee of the Textile Manufacturing Company, and residing with her widowed mother at Worcester Road, Stourport.

The girl, with several other of her workmates, had reached a spot near Messrs Holder and Co's warehouse, the deceased walking on the railway line which runs as a siding to Messrs Healing's

mill. No rain was falling at the time, but the sky was very overcast, when suddenly a vivid flash of lightning felled the girl to the ground. Several of her companions, including two girls named Bourne and Drew, and also a youth, who was employed at the factory, named Bird, were all struck somewhat slightly by the lightning, but their injuries were comparatively slight with the exception of shock. Wigley was struck lifeless to the ground and, it was stated, never moved again.

A boatman named **Arthur Pitts** of Tewkesbury was engaged loading hay, and witnessed the occurrence. He instantly rushed to the spot, as by this time did several others who were near. A barrow was procured, and deceased was removed upon it to the Tewkesbury Hospital. Her straw hat was badly burnt, the crown being almost entirely destroyed. Her hair was completely scorched off her head. The deceased's blouse was burnt about the neck, and her skirt was also burnt and charred in several places. In fact, the whole of the front of her wearing apparel was more or less burnt all away, even to her stockings.

Mrs Brookes, who accompanied the visitors from Stourport, was also on the spot, and rendered every possible assistance. The party was in charge of Mr Leonard Horton, and the occurrence cast quite a gloom over them. Dr W C Devereux, the surgeon at the Hospital, saw the deceased immediately on her admittance, and he informed our representative that in all probability death was instantaneous. He also stated that the body was charred, and in some places badly burnt. Death was caused by shock, the result of being struck by lightning.

### **367 25 August 1904**

**KILLED BY LIGHTNING AT TEWKESBURY – THE INQUEST** Mr Neville G Moore, Borough Coroner, held an inquest at the Rural Hospital on Thursday afternoon, touching the death of a girl named Janet Wigley, aged 18, of Worcester Road, Stourport, who was killed by lightning at Tewkesbury on Wednesday. Mr James Horton (Tewkesbury) was foreman of the jury, and Mr J Robinson, District Traffic Inspector (Gloucester) represented the Midland Railway Company.

Frederick Jackson Wigley, a tin tack worker of Stourport, deposed that the deceased was his half sister, employed at the works of Messrs Anderson and Company, textile manufacturers, Stourport. Deceased was a spinster, and aged 18.

Eliza Morris, wife of William Morris, a weaver of Stourport, said that she came to Tewkesbury in the company of deceased and others, their employers having given them an outing. At 2.45, she was standing on the Quay with the deceased, who went towards the captain of the boat which brought them to Tewkesbury, with the intention of asking if they could get on board, as the weather looked very threatening. They were standing near a railway truck, and the deceased proceeded in the direction of the boat. It was found impossible to get on board at that moment, and as the rain commenced to fall, they sheltered near the railway truck. At that moment, a flash of lightning came, and lifted witness's hat nearly off her head, it only being held on with a hat pin. Witness was standing against the truck, and the deceased, at that instant, would be some few yards away. Witness was dazed, and on realising what had happened, noticed that it was the deceased who had been struck. Assistance was at once forthcoming, and the deceased removed to the hospital.

**Henry Gannaway Pitts**, a boatman of Myrtle Court, Tewkesbury, saw the deceased struck. She was walking towards Healing's Mill from the direction of the stop block. He saw the girl fall to the ground. She carried a boa on her arm, and she was not near the stop block. She was midway between the block and the mill, near the rails, and almost came in contact with the edging stones.

Dr William Charles Devereux, surgeon of Tewkesbury, said he was called to the hospital, and found deceased had expired. He judged that she was killed instantaneously, or practically so. She had a mark like a bruise extending from below the left ear across the left breast, and down to the right thigh, across which it ran ; part of the upper body was blistered like a burn, and the underclothing was extensively charred. In his opinion, deceased died from shock, in consequence of being struck by lightning.

The Coroner, in reviewing the evidence, said this was one of the saddest cases it had ever been his lot to deal with since he had been coroner. He desired to express his deep sympathy with the family and employers of deceased.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony, and gave their fees to the mother of the deceased.

**368 5 September 1904**

**FOUND IN THE CANAL AT GLOUCESTER – INQUEST ON A TEWKESBURY LABOURER**  
Mr Herbert H Scott (Deputy County Coroner) held an inquest at the Lower George Hotel on Saturday evening on the body which was found in the canal near Llanthony Bridge, Gloucester, early on Saturday morning, and which was afterwards identified as that of **James Biggs**, aged 47, a waterside labourer of Tewkesbury.

**John Halling**, waterman, 101 Southgate Street, said he had known deceased for 20 years. His native place was Tewkesbury, and he lived on jobs he could pick up on the waterside. He was about 47 years of age, single, and a steady man. Witness saw him last on Monday evening, when he was out of a job. Deceased came to his house, and left his jacket there, as it was very hot. He said he was going as far as Llanthony Bridge. Witness did not see him alive again.

Hubert Frank Price (13), living with his parents at 1 Exhibition Street, said that at 5.10 on Saturday morning, he was going along the canal bank near Llanthony when he saw a body in the water. He was frightened and ran home to tell his mother, who made him go back to tell someone. He told a man at the Coffee House at the corner of Llanthony Road. Two policemen came along, and they got the body up in a boat.

**Frank Harris**, boatman, lodging at the Squirrel Inn, Southgate Street, deposed to the last witness calling out to him that there was “a man in the 'cut'” (canal). Presently he saw the man in the water, and the policeman in a boat rowing to the place. They towed the body to the lock, and he helped to get the body out of the water and carry it to the Mortuary.

PC Henry Charles Hendry said he was on duty at the Spa Crossing at 5.45 am on Saturday, when a man reported that there was a man in the canal. He proceeded to the spot and found a boat, which he rowed to the body, which was close to the wall. He removed the body to the Mortuary and searched the clothes, finding a knife and a short clay pipe. There was no appearance of violence, and he thought the body had been in the water about a week. Whilst getting the body out of the water, a slight abrasion was made on the side of the face.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was found dead in the Canal, there being no evidence to show how he got there.

**369 22 September 1904**

**Upton-on-Severn Petty Sessions**

**William Williams**, boatman of Upton-on-Severn, was charged with being drunk on the High Street on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. PC Rea proved the case, and defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs.

**370 1 October 1904**

**Stroud**

**THE DROWNING FATALITY AT STROUD – INQUEST – AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE** Mr A J Morton-Ball held an inquest at his office, George Street, Stroud, on Saturday morning, touching the death of Henry George Colin Smith, aged 8 years, of 11 Anderton Street, Summer Hill, Birmingham, who was on a visit to Stroud, and was drowned at Hooper's Lock on the canal at Thrupp, near Stroud, on Friday morning.

Paulina Smith of 11 Anderton Street, Summer Hill, Birmingham, said she was a widow and mother of the deceased boy, who was her youngest child. On Thursday, the lad accompanied Mrs Osbourne, of Tower Hill, Stroud, who was witness's sister, to Stroud for a holiday. He attended St Mark's School, King Edward Road, Birmingham, and was usually a strong healthy boy. He had been ailing of late, and she thought a holiday would do him good.

Harold Osbourne, son of George Osbourne of Tower Hill, Stroud, marine store dealer, deposed that the deceased was his cousin, and came on a visit on Thursday night. Next morning they started out together for a walk along the canal side. They intended walking to Chalford, and when they got to Hooper's Lock, they saw a boat going up the canal. The deceased was looking into the canal at some fish, and fell into the water. They were not fishing, but they had a rod with them. Witness ran

to the spot, and then spoke to a woman who was in the boat, and asked her for assistance. The boy was struggling in the water, but the woman gave no assistance. She said, "My heart is in my mouth". Coroner : But didn't she come to help? Witness : No, sir. There was a man at the upper gate of the lock. Coroner : Didn't you call to him? Witness : No, sir. Coroner : What did you do? Witness : I ran back to Stroud. Coroner : And left the poor boy in the water. Why ever didn't you run out into the road instead of going down the tow path? You would have met at least ten people on the road. I suppose you met no one on the tow path? Witness : No, sir. Coroner : It was a foolish thing to do. Witness added that he went up Tower Hill and when he got back to the canal, he found a lot of people there. The man belonging to the boat was at an upper lock, and witness didn't think he could have heard the shouting. The woman called out, but witness did not think the man heard it.

Robert Cratchley, of 13 Middle Street, Stroud, a sugar boiler, said that when he arrived on the scene, attempts were being made to get the body out. Witness got into the water and found the boy. He tried all he could, but found that life was extinct.

**Alice Davies**, wife of **Thomas Davies**, boatman of Chalford, said she was on a boat named *The Alert* on the canal on Friday morning. She had two little children with her, and they were going in the direction of Chalford. At Bowbridge Lock she saw the boys sitting on the lock gates. She did not speak to them, and the boat proceeded. The boys were at the next lock when the boat got there, and she thought they were simply following the boat. They sat on the bank. Her husband went up to the next lock to draw the water off. Witness was inside the cabin when the witness Osbourne came and shouted, "Master". She asked, "What is the matter?" and he replied, "There's a boy in the water". She saw the boy in the water, and said, "Oh, dear, I don't know what to do. You go down to the other lock and shout, "Murder!" " Coroner : Hadn't you a hoe on the boat? Witness : Yes. Coroner : Why didn't you give him that? Witness : I was too much put about. Coroner : Well, you might have saved the boy's life. Witness : Well, I shouted out to my husband and he came back. I could see no help for it but to get into the water myself. Coroner : Didn't your husband jump in? Witness : No. Coroner : Well, don't you think if you had been a man you would have done so? Witness : Well, I was very much put about. I was afraid of my own children falling in.

**Thomas Davies**, husband of the last witness, said that the boys had a fishing rod, and asked him if the fish were likely to bite better after the boat passed. He replied that this might be so, and passed on. At Hooper's Lock, he saw them still fishing, and told them to move the line, or they might be pulled into the water. As soon as witness got a hundred yards up, he saw his wife beckoning, and he ran back. His wife said, "He's gone", and witness looked into the water, but could see nothing. Coroner : Didn't it occur to you to get into the water? Witness : I can only swim a little. Coroner : But you could have walked in. The boy Cratchley got in. Witness : But the water was let out by the lock-keeper, and the boy was swilled into the shallow water. I told the lock-keeper there was a boy in the water. Coroner : That alters the position of things. He told the lock-keeper as soon as he could. By a juror : If he had seen the boy in the water, he should have done all in his power to save him. He had no boat hook.

The Coroner : Now I must recall the boy Osbourne. I am sorry to say it, but his evidence is absolutely untrue. No doubt he was frightened, but why he should tell lies, I don't know. I am going to recall him to give him an opportunity of correcting his evidence.

Osbourne was then recalled, and the Coroner told him he had kept some facts back, and he would now be given an opportunity of telling the truth. Was it a fact that he and deceased were fishing at both locks?

Witness now said he went to the Canal at Bowbridge. They went fishing near the "Banty Brook". Witness then corroborated what Davies had said, and the Coroner remarked ; Why ever didn't you tell me this before? In reply to a juror, the boy altered his first statement, and said he went to the canal via Castle Pitch and not at Bowbridge. The Coroner : If you tell the truth there is nothing to be afraid of ; if you don't, there is. Witness : We went to the canal near Bishop's Mill. The Coroner : That is the third tale you have told us. I don't think we can get any further. The Foreman : The evidence of Davies, the boatman, is very straightforward. I think we can quite

exonerate him. Davies, in reply to further questions, said he had never been cautioned not to leave his wife in charge of the boat. Mr Whiley, a juror : Well, it is against the regulations to allow a woman to be left by herself in charge of a boat. Mr J Curtis, another juror, said he thought that lads ought to be prevented from frequenting the canal. The Coroner : The Canal Company have their regulations against fishing without a licence, and that is perhaps the reason why we have had a difficulty in getting the truth today.

The jury at once returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and the Coroner warned the boy Osbourne against making statements which were not true. He should not pay the boy for having given evidence, and he hoped his father would take notice of the matter. The Coroner complimented the boy Cratchley, and awarded him 3s for his conduct.

### **371 18 October 1904**

#### **Tewkesbury**

**EXTENSIVE THEFT OF HAY – THREE MONTHS FOR A BOAT CAPTAIN** At the Town Hall on Tuesday morning – before Mr T W Moore (in the chair) and Ald. C Harris – **Thomas Drinkwater**, a boatman residing at Tewkesbury, was brought up on a warrant charged with having, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1904, stolen four tons 10 cwt of hay, valued at £14 12s, the property of Thomas Walker, hay and coal merchant of Tewkesbury.

Thomas Walker, the prosecutor, stated that he had employed prisoner as a captain of a boat, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, he left Tewkesbury with a boat laden with hay amounting to seven tons 17 1/2 cwt. He was to take it to Birmingham for the Corporation. He saw the prisoner at Birmingham, and, as the order had been countermanded, he then, on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, instructed him to take the hay on to the Conduit Colliery Company, Norton Canes, Staffordshire. On the 7<sup>th</sup> October, he received a postcard (produced), and in consequence he went the following Monday to the colliery. He found the boat, but prisoner had absconded. He saw the hay on the boat unloaded, and it weighed 3 tons 8 1/2 cwt. The hay had been sold to the Conduit Colliery Company at £3 4s per ton. Whilst at the colliery, the prisoner came on board drunk, and said he had £6 belonging to witness, and would hand it over in the morning. Next morning, he absconded, and witness next saw him at Tewkesbury, where the prisoner offered to "work out" the deficiency at the rate of £1 per voyage. Witness declined. He gave him £3 1s on leaving Tewkesbury to pay the tonnage and expenses, and another £1 at Birmingham. He had received no money for the hay sold from the boat, which he valued at £14 12s. By prisoner : He was to take the hay on to the colliery, as the Birmingham Corporation had countermanded the order. He was not to sell any hay.

**Sidney Crockett**, boatman in the employ of the prosecutor, stated that he accompanied prisoner, who was captain of the boat, to Birmingham. He saw the prosecutor at Worcester Wharf, Birmingham on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, and next day they started for the colliery. They put five cwt of hay off at Mucksley. At Walsall Lock, the prisoner had one ton put into another boat and took it away. Next day, the prisoner said he had sold two tons of hay to a Mr Hawker, a hay and corn dealer. Witness assisted in putting the hay on to the carts, and by the prisoner's instructions, witness went and fetched the money for the same and paid it to the prisoner. Then a man came to the boat and had 10 cwt, and paid £1 10s, which he handed to the prisoner at the Boat Inn. Five cwt was also sold to a man named Crocker for 15s, and he also paid the prisoner this at the Boat Inn. On the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, by prisoner's instructions, witness took the remaining portion of the hay to the colliery, and there saw Mr Walker.

Inspector Selwood deposed to the prisoner making a statement, in which he admitted selling some hay and receiving £1 10s. He did not remember receiving the money for the hay sold at Walsall, and if he did, he must have lost it. He did receive the money for the one ton sold at Walsall.

The prisoner pleaded guilty, and the Chairman, in sentencing him to three months imprisonment, said the case was a serious one, the prisoner having had confidence placed in him and then treated his master very badly. Coupled with this, his record of convictions was a bad one.

### **372 14 November 1904**

**SEQUEL TO A DRINKING BOUT** **Charles Henry Wilkes**, boatman of Winson Green, was

charged at Wednesbury on Saturday with attempting to drown a woman named Rosa Hickin, at Wednesbury on Wednesday last. It appeared from the evidence that complainant and another woman entered a canal boat, in which were prisoner and a companion. The four were drinking on the boat when Wilkes, it is alleged, after a dispute, pushed the woman into the canal, from which she was rescued by men on another boat. Prisoner was remanded.

**373 23 December 1904 Stroud**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY **Albert Chandler**, boatman of Bisley Old Road, Stroud, who did not appear, was, on the evidence of PC Jackson, fined 8s for having used obscene language at Bisley Old Road on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Biggs said that this class of offence was very much on the increase.

**374 4 January 1905 Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS Vaccination exemption certificate was granted to **Sydney James Williams**, 7 Devonport Yard, boatman.

**375 11 February 1905**

CHILDREN GIVEN AWAY On Friday afternoon, at Northwich (Cheshire) Rural Council, a case was cited where a boatman had signed a printed form of will, and given away to another boatman his two children. The Council discussed the terrible consequences resulting from child life on canal boats, and passed a resolution urging that children of school age should be prohibited from living or travelling on the boats, such life being detrimental to health, morality and education. Representations on the subject are to be made to Parliament.

**376 2 March 1905**

DISCHARGED At Wolverhampton on Thursday, **Peter Kelly**, a boatman, who had been charged with the murder of Jane Doley, aged three years, was discharged, the police being unable to corroborate the evidence of another boatman named **Green**, who swore he saw Kelly and Doley together on the morning of the crime. Green was remanded on a charge of assaulting a witness in the charge of alleged murder.

**377 8 March 1905 Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **William Gibbins**, boatman, 39 Cecil Road, was granted a vaccination exemption certificate.

**378 9 March 1905 Lydney Police Court**

**Alexander Dibden** of Brockweir, boatman, and **Edwin Bullock** of St Briavels, boatman, for game trespass were fined 15s and costs and 10s and costs respectively.

**379 27 March 1905**

WATER ON CANAL BOATS – A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN FINED A curious case under the Canal Boats Act came before the Wolverhampton magistrates on Saturday. **James Young** of 18 Alney Terrace, Gloucester, was summoned for not supplying a suitable water supply for two canal boats, the *Harriet* and the *Emily*. The proceedings were taken by the Health Committee of the Wolverhampton Corporation, and it was explained that the Act provided that a receptacle for holding three gallons of fresh water should be kept on every canal boat. On December 21 last, the two boats in question were inspected at Wolverhampton, when it was found that one had no water jar or bottle, while the other had a bottle which held only two gallons of water. If the jars were not kept on the boats, boat people, it was stated, would drink canal water, with serious consequences to themselves. The defendant pleaded that there was a jar on board the *Harriet*, but that the *Emily's* jar had been broken. He was fined 5s and costs in one case, and ordered to pay costs in the other.

**380 28 March 1905**

**Arthur Sims**, aged about 35, a boatman of Eastington, was admitted to the Infirmary on Tuesday morning in an unconscious condition. He was cycling into Gloucester from his home, and it is thought he must have either been attacked with faintness or had a side slip en route.

**381 31 March 1905**

FATAL ACCIDENT The death occurred in the Infirmary on Thursday of **Arthur Sims**, aged 35, boatman of Framilode, as a result of injuries to his head, for treatment to which he was admitted to the institution on Tuesday. It appears that he had cycled in from his home to work at the Docks, and while wheeling his bicycle between two piles of timber, he was apparently attacked by faintness and fell, striking his head against a baulk of timber.

**382 1 April 1905**

In the case of **Arthur Sims** (35), boatman of Framilode, who died in the Infirmary on Thursday, death has been certified to be due to cerebral haemorrhage, which was the cause and not the effect of the man's falling down at the Docks on Tuesday. No inquest will be held, therefore.

**383 17 April 1905**

POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS – PRISONERS COMMITTED FOR TRIAL At the Gloucester Petty Sessions on Monday – before Messrs James Bruton (in the chair), S J Moreland, W Long, H K Butt and A V Hatton – Frederick Goode, farm labourer of 87 Worcester Street, formerly of Longford, was brought up in custody on remand, charged with keeping a disorderly house, and suffering a girl over the age of 15 and under the age of 16 to be there. Annie Edith Goode, wife of the defendant, was charged with assisting in the commission of these offences. There was a further charge against Goode of living wholly or in part on the earnings of immorality.

Annie Elizabeth Hale (15), said she was the daughter of Benjamin and Annie Elizabeth Hale, and lived with her parents in St Aldate Square. About five weeks ago, she went to live with the prisoners at 87 Worcester Street. There was another young girl there called Annie Webb, and men frequently visited the house. When they did so, the male prisoner hid himself in a cupboard or elsewhere. The female prisoner, said witness, endeavoured on a number of occasions to persuade her to go in the company of the men visitors. For some time she refused ; but eventually allowed herself to be persuaded. The first time was about a fortnight ago, and the same thing had frequently occurred since. Money which visitors to the house gave to witness she gave to the female prisoner, though she did not think the latter ever told her to do so or asked her for it. Witness had told Mrs Goode that she was 15 years old, and she replied that she would pass well for 17. Mrs Goode also told her that “they were only two by themselves”, and if anyone asked her anything about her age, she was to say she was 17.

Cross-examined by the female prisoner : Her mother consented to her staying with the prisoners because she had no food for her.

Annie Webb, daughter of Abel James Webb, 9 Llanthony Road, who said she was 20 years of age, said about four or five months ago, she went to live with prisoners at Longford, and about a month after, they moved to 87 Worcester Street, where the two prisoners, witness and a young man slept in the same bed. Men called at the house and went upstairs with the female prisoner,

Annie Elizabeth Hale, wife of Benjamin Hale, 4 St Aldate's Square, mother of the first witness, produced her daughter's birth certificate, showing the girl to be fifteen years of age on December 16<sup>th</sup> last. Five weeks ago last Tuesday, the female prisoner called at witness's house and asked her if she would let her daughter come to do the housework, and that she (prisoner) would find her plenty of good food and take care she came to no harm. Witness said she would let the girl go, provided she (prisoner) did her no harm, and the female prisoner took the girl there and then. Two or three days after, from something she heard, she went to prisoner's house and saw both prisoners, Webb and her daughter. She told Mrs Goods that she wanted Annie to come home, and she took her home, but she went back the next day. Three or four days later, witness called at Goode's house

again, with a Mrs Smith, who told the female prisoner the age of the girl Hale. Some days later, the prisoners brought the girl home, and witness again told Mrs Goode that the girl was only 15. Prisoners replied that the girl was in no harm and was having plenty of good food.

Benjamin Hale deposed to being present about a fortnight ago in his house, when his wife told the female prisoner that the girl was only 15 years of age.

**Caroline Susan Smith**, wife of a boatman, Cox's Court, Hare Lane, also deposed to telling the female prisoner that Annie Hale was only 15, and that she was "under a great penalty" for encouraging her.

Inspector John Dennis said that on April 12<sup>th</sup>, between 8 and 9 pm, with PC John Newman, he entered 87 Worcester Street, and arrested the male prisoner on another charge. He conveyed him to the Police Station with the girl Hale. He read the warrant, to which prisoner made no answer. The girl Hale made a long statement (which witness read) similar to her evidence. Goode heard her make the statement, and said it was true. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, he arrested the female prisoner on the present charge, and conveyed her to the Police Station, where he read the warrant in her husband's presence. She replied that Mrs Hale had told her that Annie was 18 years of age. The male prisoner said he did not wish for the girl to be there, and that he had told her her proper place was home. She told him she was 16 years of age last December.

Prisoners were committed for trial at the next Assizes, bail being allowed, the prisoners in £20 each and one surety of £20 each. Bail was not forthcoming, and prisoners were removed in custody.

A charge against the male prisoner of living on the proceeds of immorality was withdrawn.

### **384 25 April 1905**

**William Dobson** (32), a boatman belonging to Lydiate, was found dead on the Liverpool and Southport Railway on Monday, having been run over by a train.

### **385 19 May 1905**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **William Mayall**, boatman, Robin Hood Street, was charged at the instance of PC John Newman with a similar offence (using obscene language). He expressed regret, and was let off on payment of the costs (2s 6d).

### **386 14 June 1905**

#### **Stonehouse**

At Stonehouse Police Station on Wednesday morning, before Mr E Jenner Davies, **James Fowler**, boatman of Burleigh, was charged with having been drunk at the Stroud and Bristol Road on Tuesday. After hearing the evidence of PC Watts and James Dobbings, who was on a visit to Stonehouse, and found prisoner lying across the road in such a manner as to be a danger to himself and other people, he was fined 5s, costs remitted. The magistrate complimented Mr Dobbings on having rescued prisoner from a perilous position.

### **387 19 June 1905**

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING About seven o'clock on Sunday night, a very narrow escape from drowning of a little boy occurred in the Avon. The lad – whose age is seven years – named George Griffiths, son of Edmund Griffiths, a machinist employed at Messrs Collins and Godfrey's, and residing in High Street, was playing with other children on the bank of the Avon, and near to the locks, when he fell into the water. PC Beale was on duty in the High Street, and being told of the occurrence, he proceeded to the spot, and found that the lock-keeper (**Mr Philip Gregory**) and a man named **Frederick Hook**, a boatman, and George Fletcher, a fisherman, all of Tewkesbury, had succeeded in rescuing the boy with the aid of a hook shaft. PC Beale at once commenced artificial respiration, and with the very valuable assistance of the two men named, the child, who was rescued in a quite unconscious state, was brought round. A nurse (Mrs Lewis), who is staying in the town, happened to be passing, and her timely assistance did much towards the recovery of the child. A blanket was obtained, and the child taken home, and then medical assistance was sought.

This makes the third time this lad has fallen into the river, and the father desires to most heartily thank the constable for his prompt action in the matter.

**388 14 July 1905 Tewkesbury**

**BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS Thomas Burston**, a boatman of Tewkesbury, was charged with assaulting a labourer named Frederick Chapman. He denied it, and as the complainant had no witness present, the case was dismissed.

The same defendant summoned a boatman named **Alfred Shakespeare** for an assault on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, but this case was dismissed also.

**389 17 July 1905**

**SAD BATHING FATALITY NEAR GLOUCESTER – BOY DROWNED IN THE SEVERN** On Sunday evening about seven o'clock, a distressing bathing accident occurred in the river Severn at Walham near Gloucester, whereby the twelve year old son of a lighterman named **Stephen Taylor**, of Longsmith Street, Gloucester, and who is employed by Mr G T Beard, lost his life.

It appears that a large number of men and boys – computed by some eye witnesses at hundreds – were bathing in the river at the brick pits – a favourite spot in the summer evenings – and that the deceased, Ernest Edward Taylor and another boy named Robert Henry Johnson (11), son of a porter of Ladybellegate Street, were playing in the shallow water near the bank. While splashing about, Johnson appears to have slipped and got out of his depth. Taylor went to his assistance and clutched his wrist, but the poor lad, in attempting to assist his chum, also got out of his depth and was drowned. Johnson was dragged out in a semi conscious state, and was quickly brought round, being little the worse for his very narrow escape.

Some minutes after the occurrence, which was witnessed by a large crowd of people on the bank, a man named Matthew Thorpe, 3 Cross Keys Lane, succeeded in recovering the body of the boy Taylor. Two ambulance men, William Slatter, West End Terrace, and Charles Coleman, 13 Knowle Road, made every attempt to restore animation by means of artificial respiration, and Inspector Dennis, who came up soon after, continued the attempt, but after nearly an hour's work it was found to be in vain.

The body was taken down the river to the Mortuary in a boat by **William Scholar**, boatman of Gloucester. The news of the sad accident quickly spread, and a crowd of hundreds of people witnessed the arrival of the boat at the Quay.

The boy Johnson was quite recovered on Monday morning.

**390 10 August 1905**

**MISSING BIRMINGHAM MAN'S BODY FOUND** It will be remembered that a bundle of clothes was found on the banks of the Severn at Wintle's Brickyard, Walham, near Gloucester, on Sunday, and that the garments were afterwards identified as belonging to Carl Prahall, 14 Grange Road, Small Heath, Birmingham. Search for the missing man was carried out without success until early on Thursday morning, when his body, dressed in a bathing suit, was found between a barge and a long boat close to the lock at the bottom of Commercial Road. PC Merrett and a boatman named **George Patrick** got the body out, and it was conveyed to the Mortuary to await the inquest.

**391 11 August 1905**

**GLOUCESTER DROWNING FATALITY – INQUEST ON A BIRMINGHAM MAN** Mr Charles Scott, City Coroner, held an inquest at the Lower George Hotel, Westgate Street, on Friday morning, into the circumstances of the death of Carl Theodore Prahall (21), clerk, of 14 Grange Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, whose dead body was recovered from the river Severn on Thursday morning, and who had been missing since Sunday, when his clothes were found on the river bank near the Jolly Waterman Inn, Walham, Gloucester.

The Coroner, in opening the inquest, briefly stated the facts, and said that the deceased bore a deep cut on the forehead, and there was no evidence to show how it was occasioned. The jury would,

however, probably come to the conclusion that deceased dived into the water – as was his habit – and struck his head against some obstacle, which might have stunned him. If there was any doubt or suspicion in the jury's mind, he would adjourn the inquest and order a *post mortem* examination of the body.

Edith Harriet Humphris, shorthand writer and typist, whose home is at 216 Charles Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, but who has been staying with friends at 27 Edwy Parade, Kingsholm, said she had known the deceased for two years. He rode on his bicycle down from Birmingham on the Saturday night before August Bank Holiday, and she met him about four miles out on her cycle and rode into Gloucester with him, arriving about nine o'clock. He stayed with her till about 11 o'clock, when he went next door to sleep. He said when he went that he should have a bathe in the morning. He was used to bathing, but was not a very expert swimmer.

Catherine Williams, wife of George Williams, ship's rigger, 29 Elwy Parade, said the deceased lodged with her on Saturday night last, and asked her to call him so that he might go and bathe. He said he would go to the Severn, but she warned him that it was a treacherous river to a stranger who did not know it, and advised him to go to the Baths. He laughed and said he should manage all right, and her husband called deceased about 7.20 on the Sunday morning, and he went straight out. Florence Manley, living with her aunt at the Jolly Waterman Inn, Walham, said that at about 7.45 she saw a young man coming up the bank wearing such clothes as those produced ( a blazer with brass buttons, and a cap with the Camp Hill Old Edwardians crest) and a towel round his neck. She did not see him get into the water.

Miss Humphris, who was labouring under deep emotion, identified the clothes as deceased's.

**George Benjamin Patrick**, boatman living at 5 Vinegar Yard, Clare Street, said that at a little before six o'clock on Thursday, he was going towards Gloucester Lock (at the bottom of Commercial Road) when he saw the body in the Lock's mouth, between a long boat and a barge. He called for PC Merrett, and with his assistance took the body to the Mortuary.

PC Gilbert Charles Merrett examined the body at the Mortuary. Deceased had on a bathing costume. There were two wounds over the left temple and one over the left eye, and had the appearance, in his opinion, as if sustained by deceased taking a running dive into the river and striking his head against some obstacle in the water.

PC Alfred Holmes said that at about 10 o'clock on Sunday, he was informed of the clothes being on the bank. He took possession of them. They were in some long grass opposite the "trap" into Wintle's brickyard. There were keys, a chain and money in the pockets. He examined the bank for 50 yards each way from where the clothes were, but found no marks. The only way deceased could have got into the water at this point was by diving, as there was no convenient place for walking down to the water. There was a quantity of bricks on the bottom just at that point.

The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict that deceased was drowned whilst bathing.

### **392 10 October 1905**

The police have been informed of the death of **Leonora Emily Mayall**, the nine months old daughter of **Annie and John Mayall**, boatman, residing at 53 Theresa Street, Gloucester. The child, which had been ill for the past three or four months, was taken worse on Sunday, and death ensued before the arrival of a doctor. The facts have been reported to the Coroner, and an inquest will be held this evening.

### **393 1 November 1905**

There was no business at the Gloucester Police Court on Wednesday except the granting of vaccination certificates to **Samuel Lee**, 11 Robin Hood Street, boatman, by his wife Alice.

### **394 2 December 1905**

TEWKESBURY MAN'S ADVENTURE – ALLEGED ASSAULT AND ROBBERY At Birmingham Police Court on Friday, Susan Cannon was charged with committing a violent assault

upon **Charles Mew** (70), described as a boatman of Oldbury Road, Tewkesbury, and robbing him of a bag containing £29, on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

The prosecutor said that the prisoner and another woman accosted him in Smallbrook Street, and asked him to “treat” them. Witness took them to a public house and paid for some stout for them. Prosecutor then left them and made his way to Worcester Wharf to join his boat. The women followed him, and on reaching the gate, they overtook him. They wanted to go with him on board the boat, and on receiving a refusal, the prisoner struck him in the eye, knocking him down. Both women made off, and prosecutor then found that he had been robbed of his money.

An engineer from Gorton, near Manchester, who was in Birmingham at the time, deposed to seeing the woman being pursued by the prosecutor, who was demanding his money. Witness also saw the prisoner strike the old man violently in the face. He gave the prisoner Cannon in charge. She said, “I have not done it”. Shortly after, she pulled out five sovereigns and said, “That is all I've got”.

On being charged at Ladywood Police Station, prisoner said, “It's a lie”. She was searched, and a purse containing eight shillings was found upon her, along with two large door keys with which, it is alleged, the old man was struck. In her defence, Cannon said the other woman stole the bag and handed it to her. It only contained five sovereigns.

She was sent to take her trial at the next Assizes for the county.

### **395 10 January 1906**

**A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S OFFENCE** At the Worcester County Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **James Barnes**, boatman of 10 Clare Street, Gloucester, was charged with employing a boy named **Albert Broady**, aged nine, contrary to the Employment of Children Act, on December 17<sup>th</sup>. On that date, the boy was sent from a village near the city with two horses and two donkeys to Worcester, where the defendant's boat was moored. On the way, one of the donkeys fell down, and was dragged to death by the horses to which it was attached, the boy being unable to stop them. Mr Abel Evans of Gloucester spoke on behalf of the defendant. He said the boy's father was dead, and defendant was to be commended for adopting him. When the Bench suggested that the boy ought to have been at school, Mr Evans said he was in delicate health, and the doctor said the boat journeys would be beneficial. The Chairman (Mr F J A Wood) said whilst the magistrates had considered what Mr Evans said, they thought the boy ought not to have been left in charge of such a team. He would be fined 10s and 10s costs.

### **396 12 January 1906**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

**CITY PETTY SESSIONS** **William Ramsay**, a youth now living at 44 Melbourne Street, was charged with unlawfully pawning a vest, jacket and pair of boots, the property of **W Mayo**, his brother-in-law, between December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr T G Barber appeared for the defendant, and pleaded guilty. The prosecutor, a boatman of Longsmith Street, stated that the defendant at the time of the offence lived with and worked for him. In the latter part of December, witness was away from home, and when he returned he missed the articles named in the charge, and he found that they had been pawned by the defendant with the Gloucester Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company Ltd. Mr Barber, on behalf of the defendant, pleaded extenuating circumstances, and the Bench came to the conclusion that the case was a trifling one, and dismissed it.

### **397 3 March 1906**

#### **Tewkesbury**

**F Cole**, boatman of Twynning, has been adjudicated bankrupt.

### **398 7 March 1906**

#### **Tewkesbury**

**BOROUGH POLICE COURT – A BOATMAN'S BANKRUPTCY** The statement of affairs re **Frederick Cole**, boatman of Twynning near Tewkesbury, shows gross liabilities amounting to £235 1s 3d (£227 1s 3d due to two unsecured creditors and £8 for rent). The only asset is the sum of £15 deposited with solicitor for costs of petition, and a deficiency of £220 1s 3d is revealed. “Bad trade and illness” are the alleged causes of failure.

**399 15 March 1906**

**FATAL STRUGGLE IN A CANAL BOAT** A coroner's jury at Cardiff on Wednesday returned a verdict of wilful murder against **William Thomas**, boatman, whose mate, **William Edwards**, was found dead in the blood stained cabin of a canal boat on Monday morning. There had evidently been a fearful quarrel, Edwards having 26 distinct cuts on his face and head, while Thomas's nose was cut across. He said that Edwards did this with a hatchet, and for it the accused gave him "a couple".

**400 22 March 1906**

**Cheltenham Bankruptcy Court**

**A TWYNING BOATMAN** **Frederick Cole**, boatman of Twyning near Tewkesbury, appeared to undergo his public examination. His unsecured liabilities were £227 1s 3d. The assets consisted of £15 cash deposited with debtor's solicitor, and that was all. Bankrupt said he was 35 years of age, and had been living at Twyning for the last seven years. He used to help his father, and on his death, started on his own account with no capital, buying a boat for £40 - £30 of which was his wife's money, left her by her father. With that boat, he worked the rivers Avon and Severn and canals for a little over three years. Then he got another boat for £135 from a Mr Craddock of Cheltenham. This boat, debtor kept for about four years, selling it some few months ago by private treaty to Mr George Farran for £40. Since then, debtor had hired the boat at the rate of 10s per week. Debtor sold the boat to file the petition, and had kept his wife and family upon what was left of the £40 after the £15 had been paid his solicitor. Further examined, debtor said he owed a Mrs Hatton £166 1s 3d, and was pressed for the money. It was with this money that debtor bought the boat. The rest of the debt was for hay which he had bought and sold at a loss. Mr Scott told debtor that in selling the boat and spending all the money except just enough to file his petition, he had been guilty of what seemed to him (the Official Receiver) "a dishonest transaction", and an attempt to do Mrs Hatton out of her money. Debtor : Oh no, sir. The furniture was his wife's, debtor said, left her by her father. He had two horses and a trap. One had died, and the other he sold to a dealer. He used them for hauling the boat. The trap he had, an old one, he had sold a considerable time ago. Debtor said the boat was worth 15s a week to him, whilst he lost on the hay dealing. He had seven children, and his expenditure had been 35s a week. "Got to live, sir," he said, but the Official Receiver replied, "Oh no. No necessity for it - not at the expense of your creditors". The examination was closed.

**401 23 April 1906**

On Saturday, **Mr and Mrs Woollass** at Laneham near Gainsborough, celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their wedding day. They have lived in the same cottage for sixty five years. Mr Woollass is a canal boatman.

**402 27 April 1906**

**DROWNED AT THE DOCKS - A REMARKABLE CASE** The body of **Benjamin George Patrick**, locally well known as "Benny" Patrick, the lame boatman, was recovered from the Basin at the Docks on Thursday night at about 10.30. He left his boat, the *Doris* (master, **William King**), with whom he had been working for about two months, at 6.30. **Thomas Bourne**, of the trow *Times*, saw Patrick struggling in the water and succeeded in getting him out on to the bank. He left the man, who was then alive, lying on his back, and ran for assistance, but on his return, Patrick was again in the water, and on being fetched out the second time with a boathook, he was dead. Dr Jones was sent for, and the body removed to the Mortuary.

**403 1 May 1906**

**GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S DEATH - A SINGULAR CASE - VERDICT OF ACCIDENTALLY DROWNED** The Deputy City Coroner (Mr Herbert H Scott) held an inquest at the Lower George Hotel, Gloucester, on Monday evening, on the body of **Benjamin George Patrick**, locally known as "Benny" Patrick, the lame boatman, who was drowned in the Basin at the

Docks on the 26<sup>th</sup> April. Mr J Owner, H M Inspector of Factories, Bristol District, was present at the inquiry.

Elizabeth Boucher of Clare Street identified the body as that of her brother, who she said she thought was about 42 or 43 years of age.

**Thomas Bourne** of Stourport, captain of the trow *Taff*, said his boat on Thursday night last was in Gloucester Docks. About 10.30, he was going into the docks to get on board, when he heard somebody crying out. As far as he could understand them, the words shouted out were, "Come and pull me out, or I shall be drowned!" He went in the direction from which the cry came, and found Patrick, whom he knew, struggling in the water between a long boat and the shore. The longboat was three or four feet from the shore, and was secured there by a rope. He caught hold of the deceased, and pulled him out. He laid him against a post about eight feet from the water side, and Patrick said, "You're only just in time". Asked if he was perfectly conscious, witness said he spoke "thick" and like a man who had had some beer. Witness told him to stay there while he went and fetched somebody to help him get him aboard. He went for assistance, and found a constable and another person. He asked them to come and help him to get a man on his boat whom he had got out of the water, and they returned with witness, but deceased had then disappeared. They searched around for some time before they found him, and eventually, with the assistance of a boathook, found him in the water. They brought him out with the boathook, and he appeared to be dead. They worked his arms about to induce respiration, and sent for Dr Jones, but when the latter came, he said the man was dead. It would be about ten minutes between the time witness left deceased after bringing him out of the water the first time, and the time he returned with the constable to the spot where he had left him. There was a gas lamp near the place. There was no gangway between the shore and the long boats, on one of which deceased worked, and to get on to the longboat or from the longboat to the shore, he would have to jump the distance. The longboat stood higher in the water than the quay wall. The deceased was a cripple, and would, of course, experience greater difficulty in getting aboard than another man. The reason the long boat was not moored close up to the quay wall was that the stern of the steam tug *Bee* intervened. Witness himself jumped the distance between the wall and the longboat. Further questioned, the witness said besides speaking thick the deceased smelled of beer.

PC Ledbrook gave corroborative evidence as to the last witness's statement to him, as to their search for the deceased, and as to their eventually finding him in the water. They tried artificial respiration for about 15 minutes – all the time until the doctor came. There were no marks on the body, with the exception of a scratch on the forehead, evidently caused by the boathook.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

**404 16 May 1906**

**Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **Patrick Mc Cormack**, boatman, described as of no fixed abode, but late of Cork, was charged with an assault on Raymond Halford, dock constable, on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Halford said he was called to the prisoner by a woman, and he found him stripped to the waist and fighting with a man called **Wood**. Witness separated them, and advised them to return to their boats, which were lying in the Docks. Wood did as requested, but prisoner became very violent and punched witness in the face, making his nose bleed, and kicked him several times about the legs. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and said it would not have occurred had he not been in drink. The Chairman said that was no excuse for him knocking another man about, and he was ordered to pay 14s 6d, with the alternative of 14 days hard labour.

**405 12 June 1906**

**Gloucester County Court**

ABSENT DEBTOR FINED **Charles Goddard**, boatman, 26 St Catherine Street, was fined £2 for not attending on a judgement summons, 10s being allocated to the defendant on the application of Mr C Granville Clutterbuck.

**406 10 August 1906**

**FOUR MONTHS MARRIED – GLOUCESTER HUSBAND FINED FOR ASSAULT** At the Gloucester Police Court on Friday, **William Mayall**, master boatman of 64 Robin Hood Street, who did not appear, was summoned by his wife, **Louisa Mayall**, for assault on July 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr T G Barber appeared for the complainant.

The complainant stated that she was married at St Luke's Church, Gloucester, in April of the present year. On the date named, she and her husband and another woman, a friend of theirs, were walking down Bristol Road when her husband called her a dirty cow, punched her on the arm, ran her across the road, knocked her down and kicked her on the leg, severely bruising it. When they got home, he told her to get into bed, and he then opened his pocket knife, placed it against her breast, and said he would do for her that night and swing for her in the morning.

The Bench imposed a fine of 20s and costs, with the alternative of a months imprisonment.

**407 28 August 1906**

**PLUCKY RESCUE IN GLOUCESTER – CHILD'S NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING** A child named **Henry Burlow**, aged two years and four months, the son of a boatman named **John Burlow**, living at 1 Knapp Court, St Catherine Street, had a narrow escape from drowning in the river Severn on Monday. The child was in charge of his grandmother, Mrs Bullock, near the Black Bridge, when he suddenly slipped away from her and fell down the embankment into the water. Mrs Bullock's screams brought to the rescue a man named William Hartland of 24 Oxebode Lane, who entered the water and with some difficulty brought the child out from mid stream, after he had sunk the third time. Means of artificial respiration were employed, and were successful, and the child was soon apparently little the worse for his severe ducking and extremely narrow escape.

**408 30 August 1906**

**Stonehouse Petty Sessions**

On the evidence of PC Jones, **Adolphus Young**, boatman of Eastington, was fined 10s 6d, in default 14 days, for being drunk and disorderly at Eastington on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**409 12 September 1906**

**GLOUCESTER BOATMAN CHARGED WITH DESERTION – SEPARATION ORDER GRANTED** At the Gloucester City Police Court on Wednesday, before Mr Alfred Woodward and other magistrates, **William Mayall**, boatman of 64 Robin Hood Street, was charged with deserting his wife, **Louisa Mayall**, on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr T G Barber appeared for the complainant, and Mr A Lionel Lane for the defendant, who did not appear in person.

Mrs Mayall stated that they were married at St Luke's, Gloucester, on the 16<sup>th</sup> April last. For 13 years, she had worked at Moreland's match factory, but two months after her marriage, she had to leave her employment in consequence of her condition. When she married the defendant, he was a boatman in the employ of the Severn and Canal Carrying Co. They lived together at his mother's till July 30<sup>th</sup> last, and she contributed 6s per week towards keeping the home, as long as she could work. Since their marriage, he had only given her 35s, and on July 30<sup>th</sup>, he assaulted her and was convicted at that court. After the assault and before the conviction, they went home together, and the following morning he left, saying he was going to catch the 8 o'clock tow. He came back, said he had missed the 8 o'clock tow, and should have to catch the 3 o'clock. He went out again about 9.30, and about 3 o'clock, complainant saw him in Llanthony Road. He said, "It's no use you going to the mother's ; there's no home for you there, and I've torn up all your clothes", at the same time making use of bad language. She had seen nothing of him since, excepting on one occasion when she saw the back of him on the Quay, but she did not speak to him. She ascertained that he discharged himself from the Severn and Canal Carrying Company and went away on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and excepting the one occasion stated she had neither seen nor heard from him since. She understood that he was now working for the Rochdale Carrying Company, Manchester. She sent to his mother's for her clothes on the day the summons for assault was heard, and she got them, and they were not torn. She had since been living with friends in Alvin Street.

Cross-examined, complainant said when the summons for assault was heard, defendant was away on a voyage, and it was heard in his absence. It was not true that she had a row with the defendant because he would not take her to Birmingham on the longboat, and that in consequence of his refusal to take her, she left him. She did not want to go to Birmingham on the longboat. She did not go back to his mother's house to ascertain if there was a home for her or not after he told her there was none. On one occasion only, she went with him on the longboat.

Mr Long : If your husband is willing to provide you with a home now – a fresh home – are you willing to go back to him? Witness : No, sir.

Mr Lane : You will not? No, sir.

Mr Lane : It isn't the home you want.

Ada Mayo of Alvin Street said the complainant came to her house on August 6<sup>th</sup>, saying she had nowhere to go to, and she had lived with her since. So far as witness could see, she had no means of subsistence.

This closed the case for the complainant.

Mr Lane submitted that he had no case to answer. Her home since they were married had been at his mother's house, 64 Robin Hood Street. They had a bit of a tiff, and he told her in anger or in jest that there was no home for her, and she did not go back as she should have done to enquire whether it was mere idle talk on his part. The home had been there for her all along. As a matter of fact, when the husband came back from his voyage, he went to 64 Robin Hood Street. She was not there. He tried to find her, and could not. He went to the Severn and Canal Carrying Co, found that she had been there creating a disturbance, and he left that Company and got employment elsewhere. The Bench decided to hear the evidence for the defence.

Emily Dean, sister-in-law of the complainant, and living at 64 Robin Hood Street, said the complainant and defendant lived at that address after they were married. The whole of the unpleasantness between them arose through his refusing to take her with him to Birmingham on the longboat, because he told her he had a young fellow with him and it would not be decent. She left Robin Hood Street and did not return, excepting that on one occasion she went for her clothes. The day before she left, which was also the day before he left on a voyage, he gave her 25s. Witness knew of no reason why the complainant should not have been living at 64 Robin Hood Street all along. Defendant was now in Manchester looking for work. She saw complainant working at Moreland's last week. Cross-examined, witness said she did not know the defendant's address in Manchester.

Complainant was recalled, and in reply to Mr Barber, she said it was quite true that she started work at the match factory again on Monday of last week, but she had to leave off on Thursday because she was ill. She went on the Monday because she was compelled to get something with which to pay her lodgings.

Asked again by Mr Lane why she did not go to her home, which was 64 Robin Hood Street, complainant said defendant's mother told her when she fetched her box that there was no home for her there. She said the house did not belong to her son, and there was no home for her there.

The Bench granted a separation order with 7s per week maintenance. An order for payment of costs was also made.

#### **410 12 October 1906**

#### **Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **John Price**, boatman of Beale's Court, Westgate Street, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly on September 16<sup>th</sup>. PC Ponter stated the circumstances, and defendant admitted the offence. He was let off on payment of the costs, 2s 6d.

#### **411 26 October 1906**

DARING ESCAPES FROM GLOUCESTER GAOL

WARDERS OVERPOWERED – FLIGHT ACROSS THE RIVER SEVERN

DESPERADOES AT LARGE – ONE CONVICT RECAPURED – PRISON GARB RECOVERED

A profound sensation was caused in Gloucester late on Thursday night by the news which, despite

official reticence, quickly spread – and was on Friday morning the absorbing topic of conversation in the city and surrounding districts – that a serious mutiny had broken out in the County Gaol amongst certain of the convicts confined there, and that five had succeeded in making good their escape.

The Governor of the Gaol (Mr J Finn) – with whom great sympathy is felt locally on account of the unfortunate and serious occurrence – when seen by one of our representatives, courteously but firmly declined to give any information whatever, pointing out that he was by reason of his official position absolutely precluded from making any statement to the public in reference to matters occurring within the Prison walls. Our reporter pointed out that news of the outbreak had become common property, and that as it was a matter affecting the public, the Press would have to take cognisance of it ; and that it was our desire to publish only authentic details, as far as they could be ascertained, and to render whatever assistance was in our power to assist in the recapture of the fugitives from justice by giving such descriptions as would enable the public to identify them. Mr Finn, however, remained obdurate, and politely repeated that he was unable to say anything whatsoever.

Under these circumstances, we had no alternative but to make inquiries in non official directions, and although it has been an exceedingly difficult task to get at the whole truth of the matter, we have succeeded in ascertaining from other sources full, and it is believed accurate, particulars of what is in every respect a most sensational affair.

Gloucester Gaol has, it will be remembered, within recent years been utilised by the Prisoner Commissioners as a subsidiary convict establishment, where men under sentence of penal servitude are sent to work out part of their time. This alteration led to the removal of all female prisoners, but besides the convicts there are still received those who are described as “locals” - males sentenced by the county magistrates to terms not exceeding two years imprisonment. The last report of the Visiting Committee, presented to Quarter Sessions, stated that there were on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant 37 convicts in the gaol, besides 107 “locals”. That report also stated that one case of attempted escape on the part of a convict had been reported during the last quarter, that the case had been investigated by the Chairman of Quarter Sessions (Mr F A Hyett) and the culprit punished.

It would appear from the attitude adopted by certain of the convicts that there has of late been amongst them a growing feeling of discontent. Some of them are stated to be men of very bad characters indeed, who would stop at nothing to achieve their ends ; and the attempted escape referred to in the report seems to suggest that it was the prelude to something more serious. Whether the officials thought so or not we are unable to ascertain, but subsequent events would seem to suggest that there is some ground for the suspicion.

To come to the events of Thursday evening, despite all official reticence, the fact remains that at a time when everything within the Gaol is usually quiet – work being suspended for the day preparatory to the prisoners retiring for the night – a plot, which evidently had been in course of hatching for some time, was put into execution.

Just before eight o'clock, several of the convicts – we believe we are correct in stating that the number was eleven – made a desperate attempt to regain their liberty. As what we are about to relate has reference to doings within the Prison walls, and in view of the complete official silence which prevails, we write with all reserve, but we have reason to believe that the details are substantially correct.

These eleven men are said to have risen en masse, to have overpowered the officials in charge of them, and to have made for the door. Before reaching their intended destination, they are said to have assaulted at least one warder and to have shut him in a cell. The Governor – who, whilst the kindest of men, is withal a strict disciplinarian and a most efficient officer – is alleged to have been seized by the convicts when he came on the scene, and to have been also locked in a cell. It is further rumoured that Mr Finn was gagged in some way, and the startling information has got abroad that he was robbed of his watch and chain, which are said to have been subsequently found on one of the convicts who was recaptured inside the Gaol boundaries.

This sensational turn of affairs naturally caused great commotion in the prison and the “imprisoned”

officials loudly called for assistance. The usual alarm under such circumstances was given, and a strong attempt was made to prevent the escape of the desperadoes. The eleven convicts, thinking they had done all that was necessary to ensure their escape, rushed in the direction of the main entrance to and exit from the Gaol, where they are stated to have succeeded in overpowering the warder in charge of the keys which stood between the mutineers and liberty.

The ruffians are alleged to have secured the keys, and five of them got through the front door and made good their escape. The cries of the officials in the cells brought a party of warders to the rescue, and they followed the eleven convicts hot foot. The officials were able to prevent the escape of six of the prisoner breakers, who were reduced to submission and escorted to their cells.

The five men who got through the lodge door, clad as they were in prison garb, rushed towards the Severn, and on the Quay, at a spot close to the Gaol walls, they espied a boat in which was a man named Harry Bubb. The convicts jumped into the boat, knocked Bubb backwards, and made efforts to get across the river. They could not, however, do so without Bubb's assistance, and he was terrorised into paddling them across.

When the other side of the river was reached, the convicts made off as fast as their legs could carry them, and Bubb at once returned and gave information to the police and at the Gaol. At this time, the front door of the prison is said to have been open.

The Deputy Chief Constable of Gloucestershire (Mr D C C Harrison), immediately he was apprised of the escape, took steps to organise a complete search, and messages were dispatched for the aid of additional police officers from Cheltenham and elsewhere. A large body of police was soon collected, many being brought to the city by motor cars, and the Deputy Chief Constable adopted all means in his power to try and trace the fugitives.

Experienced police officers, some in plain clothes and others in uniform, were dispatched in various directions, special attention being paid to the district on the other side of the Severn in which the convicts were seen to run. Detectives went post haste all through the district up to and beyond Over Bridge.

The five escaped convicts, who are said to include a desperate character known as "London Mick" - who is believed to be the ringleader - range in ages from 22 to 32, and their heights from 5ft 5 ins to 5ft 9ins. They are described as dangerous criminals, and most of them come from London and neighbourhood. Some of them are said to have scrubby beards.

The police scoured the neighbourhood throughout the night, and early on Friday morning, secured the arrest of one of the convicts at Over. This man, whose name is James Flynn, was in a somewhat exhausted condition, and he appears to have been glad to get away from his desperate companions, who are believed to have made their company "too hot" for him. Flynn is said to have attempted to get a ride on a passing train, and to have been unsuccessful. Other information is to the effect that this man was found walking on the railway line at Over and entrapped by a signalman who got him to go into his cabin and partake of tea and bread and butter ; and whilst he was there, the police were sent for.

The convict Flynn was in prison clothes when recaptured at 2.30 on Friday morning. He was at once conveyed to Gloucester Police Station where he was placed in a cell.

Later on Friday morning, some of the police found a portion of the escaped convicts' clothing in a fisherman's hut in the Elmore district. The find consisted of two pairs of convicts' trousers, two jackets and two shirts. So far, two complete convicts' suits are missing.

When the fugitives had got some distance from Gloucester, they managed to secure other clothing of a somewhat tattered and worn description, which they substituted for their official "toilettes". These clothes they seem to have picked up in huts and outhouses in the district abutting the Severn. Some of the clothes found on Friday morning were damp.

Householders, especially those in remote country districts, would do well to be on their guard against men apparently of the tramping class.

#### INTERVIEW WITH THE BOATMAN – HOW THE CONVICTS CROSSED THE RIVER

**Harry Bubb** of Vinegar Yard, employed by Messrs Turner, Nott and Co, warehousemen, at the Docks, who with his boat was commandeered by the convicts immediately after their escape, told a

Citizen representative on Friday morning that he was pulling up to his mooring place after attending to an eel net on Thursday night, when five men came rushing through the Barrack Yard gates. His boat was exactly opposite here at the time, about one foot from the bank, which is very steep, and some twenty yards from the steps where he was going to moor.

They made across the road, down the bank, and three of them made a jump, "As I suppose," said Bubb, "to swim the river. But they leaped clean into the boat. This sent the boat farther out, and the other two made a jump into the water, but they were quickly pulled aboard by the three. It was all done in a second or two".

"What's up? I'm all right", I said. "That be ----- ; it aint all right with we. We're convicts got out, and don't you make no noise or we'll put your lights out", one of them replied.

"They were all in convict's dress", Bubb continued, "and when they were all on board, the tallest banged me backwards and took the paddle from me. He tried to get the boat across, but couldn't. "Here", he said, "get hold of this", giving me the paddle again, "and be handy and put we over there, and don't make no noise. If you do, we'll ----- well kill you"."

"So", said Bubb philosophically, "that being so, I put them across. And I was glad to put them ashore on the other side, I can tell you" - this with an adjective or two expressive of his feelings.

"I suppose", he said in reply to another question, "they went across the Meadows ; but I didn't wait. I crossed over again, and moored my boat, and then went to the police office and told them. They had heard nothing there up to that time, and I went to the prison, and they didn't know then at the lodge house there".

"I don't think", Bubb said further, "that they had their hats and jackets on. But it was all done so sharp, and I was knocked backwards. I saw enough to show me where they came from, and I didn't wait for nothing more when I got them across the river. One had a bunch of keys, because I could hear them jangling in the boat. I don't know what he did with them". Asked again as to what first occurred - what first drew his attention to the men - Bubb replied expressively, "I was twenty yards from my moorings, and they came flowing in". It would be about ten minutes to eight o'clock.

#### THE CAPTURED CONVICT - ANOTHER ACCOUNT

The signalman in charge of the signal box at the Over Siding on Thursday night was H E Dunsby, who resides at Tuffley. The police had just left the signal box, where they had gone to acquaint the occupant of the escape, when Dunsby saw a man in convict's dress on the line, moving towards the box. The signalman was eating his supper at the time, and the convict asked him to give him part of it to eat, and also asked him to send for the police to arrest him. Dunsby telephoned to the Over Signal Box, where the police were, and the convict, whose name is James Flynn, was removed by the police, philosophically munching bread and butter.

#### THE INJURED WARDER - A TERRIFIC STRUGGLE

The warder who was injured was named Hall, and resides in Pembroke Street. We have been able to ascertain that as he was going his round, he had passed one of the prisoner's cells, and was proceeding to the next one on the evening duty of locking up, when the lamp in the first cell went out, and the bell was rung. Mr Hall returned and unlocked the door, and on opening it received a terrific blow in the face. However, elderly man as he is, he pluckily stuck to his duty, and he and his colleague who was with him struggled bravely for fully ten minutes with two convicts. Mr Hall's companion was early overpowered, and the two assailants proved to be too much for Hall, who was gagged and thrown into the cell. His keys were taken from him, he was locked in with his mate, and the convicts then proceeded to release their fellow prisoners.

Hall received bad cuts and bruises on the face, particularly on the nose, and injuries to the arm.

We understand that two or three warders were shut in the cells, and that some of them at least were not released until the police arrived on the scene, which happened in a very few minutes. It is also stated that at least two convicts who failed to gain the door were secured in the yard by police officers.

#### THE ESCAPED CONVICTS - OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MEN

The following is the official list of the escaped prisoners, who are described as breaking loose at 7.30 pm on October 25<sup>th</sup>,

James Flynn, London, 22 years of age, fresh complexion, hazel eyes, dark brown hair, height 5ft 5ins, proportionate build, painter, scars on forehead and both eyebrows, one under the chin on the right and left of the head, on the left jaw, on the front of the left side of the head, in the front of right wrist, and the point of the left forefinger. This is the man who was rearrested at Over Signal Box.

Frederick Lane, London, 30, fresh complexion, light brown hair, grey eyes, 5ft 8 1/4 in, proportionate build, shoemaker, scars on right eye, brow and eye, back of the right ring finger and the right thumb, a tattoo dot on the web of the left thumb.

Edwin Thomas Baker, Brighton, 25, fresh complexion, dark brown hair, brown eyes, 5ft 7ins, proportionate build, bricklayer, nose broken and inclined to the left, scars on the forehead and the back of his head, tattoo "H Strong" on the outside of the right shoulder and "J Wright" on the outside of the left hand.

Michael Harnett, London, 29, fresh complexion, dark brown hair, brown eyes, 5ft 8 1/2 ins, proportionate build, scaffolder, scars between the eyes, on the right leg, the right jaw, the left of the nose, the left leg, on the left of the upper lip, tattoo "E Cain" on the back of the right arm, and "True Love" &c, on the front of the right arm.

William Irwin, London, fresh complexion, dark brown hair, blue eyes, 5ft 7 1/2 ins, proportionate build, carpenter, scars on the right jaw, neck, the left of the forehead, the left jaw, under the left shin, back of the right hand, between the ring and little fingers, on the little finger of the right hand, and the back of the middle finger of the right hand.

#### REPORTED NEAR WESTBURY

Late on Friday afternoon, a persistent rumour gained currency in Gloucester that the men, or some of them, had been seen near Westbury-on-Severn.

#### **412 29 October 1906 Gloucester Police Court**

CITY PETTY SESSIONS **Joseph Higgs**, a boatman of Norfolk Street, was summoned for neglecting his four children, whose ages ranged from six years to 14 years. Mr A C Champney prosecuted on behalf of the NSPCC, and the defendant pleaded guilty. Mr Champney said this was not really a serious case, but it might easily have developed into one, and the Society thought it a proper one to bring before the justices. As the defendant had pleaded guilty, he did not wish to press it at all, and should be satisfied if the Bench thought right that the man should be bound over to be of good behaviour. He was a boatman, and he had been a widower for ten months. During his wife's lifetime, the children were properly cared for. Since her death, however, they had been left to take care of themselves, and the defendant did not leave them sufficient money to sustain themselves upon. From September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 10<sup>th</sup>, he left them with 5s only. They were otherwise in a neglected state. The prisoner had a sister-in-law, and she did what she could for the children, and the neighbours also helped them, otherwise they must have seriously suffered. It was to prevent a recurrence of this and to bring home to the man the fact that he must make proper arrangements for the children that they had brought him there that day. Inspector Marshall bore out Mr Champney's statement, and the defendant was bound over for six months on undertaking to look after the children.

#### **413 9 November 1906 Whitminster**

PETTY SESSIONS **Walter Powell**, boatman of Stonehouse, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Stonehouse on October 27<sup>th</sup>, but after hearing the evidence, the Bench dismissed the case, this being the first offence, and the defendant having a good character.

#### **414 27 December 1906 Stonehouse Petty Sessions**

**William Chandler**, a boatman of Stroud, was fined 10s inclusive for using obscene language at Dudbridge on December 13<sup>th</sup>, on the evidence of PC Garner.

#### **415 21 January 1907**

WELL KNOWN GLOUCESTER CITIZEN ASSAULTED – BOATMAN BEFORE THE

MAGISTRATES At Gloucester Police Court on Monday, before the Mayor (Mr S Aitken) and other justices, **Thomas Henry Price**, 29 Victory Road, a boatman, was summoned by Alfred William Webb, Worcester Street, for assault on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Defendant pleaded not guilty.

Complainant said defendant called to pay a week's rent and give notice to quit. He was abusive, and on complainant telling him to leave the house, defendant struck him in the face. He (complainant) hit him back in self defence. Complainant said he was an old man and much excitement caused him great worry. He had a palpitation of the heart, and had generally suffered since. The Bench knew him as a quiet, sober, respectable and loyal citizen, and he hoped to remain so. He had given the defendant no provocation.

Dora Haines, complainant's servant, corroborated.

Defendant said all he did was to protect himself.

Ada King, housekeeper, gave evidence to the effect that Price struck the first blow. This she afterwards corrected, and said Webb hit "her husband" first, but she got the blow. Then she pushed "her chap" out in the passage.

The Bench said under no circumstances should the defendant, a powerful man, have struck an old man like Webb. He was fined 10s and 9s costs. The money was paid.

#### **416 26 March 1907 Tewkesbury**

BOATMAN SENTENCED FOR THEFT On Monday at Brierley Hill, **Sidney Crockett**, boatman of Tewkesbury, was sent to prison for six weeks for stealing £6, the property of his employer, Christopher Charles Ball, a farmer of Tewkesbury, on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Prisoner arrived at Pensnett from Tewkesbury with a canal boat of hay. He was dispatched with a boat to Cannock to fetch coal, and was given £6 with which to pay tonnage on the canal. After reaching Woodside, Dudley, prisoner left his horse and boat, went drinking, and later absconded with the balance of the money.

#### **417 28 March 1907**

RIOTOUS BOATMEN **Joseph Brick**, boatman, was sentenced at Redditch on Wednesday to a months imprisonment on each of two charges of assault, and fined 18s 4d and ordered to pay £2 damage done by the breaking of a plate glass window at the Crown Inn, Alvechurch. **William Brick** and **William Hook** were sentenced to a month on each of two charges of assault. The prosecutors were Frederick Whitby, landlord of the Crown Inn, Alvechurch, and George Thomas Robinson, his assistant, both of whom were roughly handled after a refusal to supply drink.

#### **418 10 May 1907 Stroud Police Court**

Thomas Witts of Chalford was summoned for having on May 4<sup>th</sup> used abusive language at Thrupp to **Esther Bown**, wife of **Charles Bown**, boatman of Chalford, which he denied. After hearing the evidence, the Bench imposed an exclusive fine of 10s.

#### **419 4 June 1907**

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A GLOUCESTER MAN - "REVOLTING AND DISGRACEFUL CASE" - ACCUSED COMMITTED FOR TRIAL At Bromsgrove on Tuesday morning, **Alfred Meadows**, boatman of Gloucester, was charged with an attempted criminal assault upon a four year old child at Stoke Works. From the evidence, it was alleged that prisoner, who expressed his sorrow, took the child to see a pony and committed the offence in a field. The magistrates characterised the case as revolting and disgraceful, and committed prisoner for trial at the next Assizes.

#### **420 13 June 1907**

GLOUCESTER BOATMAN'S CRIME – TEN YEARS PENAL SERVITUDE At Worcestershire Assizes on Thursday, before Mr Amphlett KC, **Alfred Meadows** (25), boatman, Gloucester, was indicted for criminal assault on Ida Halford, aged four.

It appeared prisoner took the little girl with him to fetch a pony, promising to give her a ride back.

The evidence showed that shocking injuries had been inflicted on the child. Prisoner said he was sorry, and would not do it again.

Sentence of ten years penal servitude was passed.

#### **421 22 July 1907**

**A CHARGE OF NEGLECT** At the Town Hall on Monday, before Messrs G Hone CC (in the chair) and C Harris, **Thomas Mew** of Tewkesbury was brought up on a warrant charged with being a person able to work and able to maintain himself, wife and family, and have unlawfully within six calendar months from that date neglected to maintain his wife and children, and allowed them to become chargeable to the Union. Mr T W Manning, relieving officer of the Tewkesbury Union, said the man's wife and four children had become chargeable to the Workhouse, having been in receipt of out relief since the 8<sup>th</sup> July. The man was the husband, and the father of the children, so far as he knew. He was a boatman working for his father and was earning 50s a voyage, which averaged about a fortnight. Defendant said he had been sending money home to his wife, but admitted that although he had been paid for his last voyage, which he had just completed, he had no money. The Bench considered that defendant had treated his wife and children very badly, and decided to give him 14 days hard labour.

#### **422 25 July 1907**

##### **SIXPENNYWORTH OF TIMBER – GLOUCESTER BOATMAN COMMITTED FOR TRIAL**

At Berkeley Sessions on Monday – before Mr T G Matthews and Col Monckton – **John Mayser**, long boatman of Vinegar Yard, Gloucester, was summoned for feloniously stealing a piece of timber, value 6d, from Sharpness Docks, the property of the Dock Company, on the 4<sup>th</sup> July.

Henry Smith, dock constable, deposed to seeing defendant with the wood, which he knew came from one of the Dock Company's stacks, and John Cole corroborated.

Defendant said he only left his boat to get a piece of wood with which to light a fire for the purpose of boiling his kettle, and he had no intention of going into the Dock Company's shed.

Mr Harold Langley-Smith, who defended, submitted that defendant had no felonious intent, and that it was a trivial offence.

The Bench, however, said they were powerless to deal with the case, and had no alternative but to commit defendant for trial at the next Quarter Sessions. Bail was allowed in defendant's own surety of £5.

#### **423 13 September 1907**

##### **Gloucester City Petty Sessions**

Joseph Liggins, of no fixed abode, was charged with stealing a metal watch and chain, a pair of boots and a suit of clothes, value £1 4s 6d, from a longboat, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the property of **Edwin Capper**. Capper stated that he was a boatman living in Gas House Lane, Stroud, and was engaged on the longboat *The Sisters*. On the date in question, he was on board the boat, which was moored in the Docks at Gloucester, and the defendant, who was not employed there, came on. The articles mentioned in the charge were in the cabin, locked up. Witness had occasion to go to another part of the Docks, and as he was returning, he saw accused walking over the Lock Bridge, carrying a bundle which he identified as his own property. He followed him as far as a pawnshop, which he entered. Witness followed, and asked him what he was going to do with the bundle. Prisoner made no reply, but ran away as hard as he could, leaving the clothes behind, and taking the watch and boots with him. Witness made a complaint at the police station. William Deakin, detective constable in the Worcester police, deposed that about 9.30 am on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst, he met the prisoner by the Severn side at Worcester. He answered the description of a man who was wanted, and he stopped him and asked him his name. He said, "Joe". Witness said, "Do they call you Brummy Joe?" and he replied, "No". He also said he came from Tewkesbury, but admitted that he was in Gloucester the previous day. He was carrying a bundle under his arm, and on examining this, witness found the boots produced. He took him to the police station, and on searching him found the watch and chain produced. He pleaded guilty, and elected to be dealt with summarily. In

June of last year, he was sentenced to three months hard labour for stealing clothing, and he was now sent for a similar term.

**424 11 October 1907**

**ILL TREATING DONKEYS – A GLOUCESTER BOATMAN FINED** At Worcester on Friday, **John Grainger**, boatman, 9 Albany Terrace, Westgate Street, Gloucester, was fined £3 13s for ill treating five donkeys and using obscene language.

The evidence showed that defendant was driving the donkeys attached to a boat along the canal side when he brutally kicked the animals and twice knocked one into the water. Remonstrated with by a woman, defendant used filthy language.

Defendant denied the offence. He said he merely lifted the tackle off the donkeys' backs, and one donkey slipped.

**425 16 October 1907**

**Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions**

**NO BILL** The Grand Jury found no true bill in the case in which **John Maysey** (55), boatman, on bail, was charged with stealing three board ends, the property of the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company at Hinton on July 4<sup>th</sup> last.

**426 25 October 1907**

**Gloucester City Petty Sessions**

William Finch, of 2 Wood's Mill, Westgate Street, was charged with the theft of an overcoat, value 2s 6d, the property of Alfred Masters, between October 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The prosecutor, who said that he did not wish to press the case, missed the coat from a stable at Messrs Priday, Metford and Co's mill, where he is employed. **Thomas Shepherd** of Foresters' Court, Westgate Street, boatman, deposed to finding the coat produced on his boat at Llanthony on the morning of October 24<sup>th</sup>, and to handing it to a policeman when he arrived at Sharpness. PC Townsend said he received a complaint concerning the loss of the coat, and after making inquiries, arrested the prisoner. When charged, he said he had a drop too much to drink, and went into the stable and took the coat. He went down to a longboat and went to sleep, and when the boatman came, he went away and left the coat on board. He now told the Court that he had no intention of stealing the coat. He had a drop too much to drink and took it. He was very sorry next morning that he had done it, and wanted to get it back to return it, but could not do so. He asked some men on the quay to tell the owner where it was. There was nothing previously against prisoner, and he was let off with a fine of 5s, 7 days in default. Time to pay was allowed.

**427 26 October 1907**

**Stroud**

**DRUNKENNESS** At the Stroud Police Station on Saturday, **Walter Henry Chandler**, boatman of Pagan Hill, Stroud, was charged before Messrs Alfred Apperly and C A Apperly with having been drunk and disorderly in Cairncross Road on Friday night. The man admitted the offence, but said he was more tired than drunk, as he had been working from 3 o'clock that morning. PS Brotherton said the man was very drunk and behaved in a most disorderly and violent manner. He struck witness and tried to kick him. The Bench imposed a fine of 5s.

**428 30 October 1907**

The death is announced of **Mr Gerald Massey**, poet and historian, in his 80<sup>th</sup> year. His father was a canal boatman.

**429 19 November 1907**

**MISSING GLOUCESTER BOATMAN – BODY RECOVERED FROM THE SEVERN** The body of **William Henry Bennett** (40), a boatman who resided at 29 Sherborne Street, Gloucester, was recovered from the Severn on Monday afternoon. The deceased was employed on boats between Gloucester and Coventry. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, he took his children to the Mop on the Oxleaze, and when returning, left them on his way to Mr Critchley's yard to pull a boat in, owing to the tide.

When taking leave of his children, he asked his adopted daughter to tell his wife that he would be home about 10.30 the same evening. He, however, had never been seen since until his body was found in the river near Westgate Bridge about four o'clock on Monday afternoon by Alfred Giddins, labourer of Mr Critchley's yard, and Frank Harper, Stroud's Lodging house, Westgate Street. PC Hayden received the corpse on the Quay and conveyed it to the Mortuary, where it was identified by Mrs Bennett as that of her husband.

#### **430 21 November 1907**

**FOUND IN THE SEVERN – INQUEST AND VERDICT** Mr Charles Scott, city coroner, conducted an inquiry at the Lower George Hotel on Wednesday night into the circumstances attending the death of **William Henry Bennett**, aged 40, a boatman of 28 Sherborne Street, whose body was recovered from the Severn on Monday afternoon. He had been missing since October 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr A Lionel Lane appeared on behalf of the widow.

**Susan Bennett**, the widow, said she last saw deceased alive at 3 o'clock on October 7<sup>th</sup>, when he took his child and a neighbour's down to the Fair on the Oxleaze. He sent them home with a message that he had gone to see his barge at Mr Cratchley's wharf, because the tides were high, and would be back at 10.30.

Evidence was also given by John Cratchley and Elizabeth Giddins, while Alfred Giddins deposed to seeing the body floating in the Severn and securing it, with the assistance of Frank Harper.

The jury returned their verdict to the effect that deceased was found dead in the water, there not being sufficient evidence to show how he met his end, and expressed their sympathy with the widow and relatives.

#### **431 30 March 1910**

**DROWNED IN THE CANAL AT GLOUCESTER – INQUEST ON A LITTLE BOY** The City Coroner (Mr Charles Scott) conducted an inquiry at the Robin Hood Hotel, Bristol Road, on Tuesday evening, into the circumstances of the death of Frederick George Butt, the four year old son of Fred and Edith Butt of 1 Cambridge Villas, Bristol Road, Gloucester, who was drowned in the Canal on Easter Monday.

The father, in his evidence of identification, said he was a publican at present out of business, and last saw deceased alive when he left him at home between 11 and 11.30 in the morning, in his mother's care. He was in the habit of going out with his elder brother, aged 7 years. He arrived home about 12.40 and found that both the boys were away from home. A few minutes past one, he was informed that the deceased had fallen into the canal, and shortly afterwards the elder brother returned, but was too frightened to give any account of the accident. He went to the canal by the Oil Mills, where he found the boy and Dr Jones with him. Shortly afterwards, the doctor pronounced life extinct, and the body was conveyed to his house. In reply to a question by the Foreman (Mr Howard Shepherd) as to whether the boys were in the habit of frequenting the canal, the witness replied in the negative.

The seven year old son, who was with the deceased, said his brother was looking at the ships, and was between two, when on turning round to show witness something, he fell in the water. There was no one about except one man, who was a long way off.

**Samuel Preedy** of 9 Exhibition Street, a boatman said that just after one o'clock he was walking up by the Oil Mills on the canal bank, when a man at the side said there was a boy in the water, and on his asking where, he said just out of sight under the bank. He fetched drags from the Malt House and called the assistance of a man named Wiggs to help him drag, and at the second throw they pulled the boy out. They tried artificial respiration till the doctor came, when he took charge of the case. The man who called witness rendered some assistance with a shaft, but seemed too frightened to do much.

Dr W Jones said that about 1.15 on Monday, he was called to the spot and found the deceased lying on his back on the canal bank with artificial respiration being performed. There were no external marks of violence on the body. He was apparently lifeless, and artificial respiration was tried for

about 15 or 20 minutes, and he administered the usual restorative hypodermically without any signs of life being shown. In his opinion, the deceased died of heart failure on account of the immersion. Recalled, Preedy said that there was a mooring line just where the body was found, over which he might have tripped.

The jury returned a verdict that the boy accidentally fell into the water and died from heart failure. They expressed their sympathy with the parents, and commended the promptitude of the witness Preedy.

#### **432 19 June 1910**

**THE CANAL FATALITY** The funeral of **Yens Peder Henry Pedersen**, the boatman whose death occurred on Saturday last after immersion in the canal, took place in Gloucester Cemetery on Thursday, the officiating clergyman being the Rev A H Cheesman. There was a large number of friends present, and the principal mourners were the widow, his brothers Thomas and Fred, his sisters Alice, Lizzie and May, his cousins Will and Hubert, Uncle Will, Aunt Lucy and Eliza, and Mr and Mrs New. Wreaths were sent by the widow and children, George, Winnie and Enid, his father, his brothers Thomas, Ernest and Fred, his sisters Lizzie, Alice and May, Will and Kate (Sharpness), Bert and Margaret, nephew Harold, Thomas Pedersen and wife, Mr and Mrs Price, Mrs Bennett and family, Howard and Gordon Bennett, Mr and Mrs Wood and family, cousin Florence, Mr and Mrs New, a few Eastgate Market Vaults friends, his fellow workmen, the bridgemen of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, from his old shipmates of the *ss Sappho*, and old friends of the Goat Inn. The bearers were C Hall, N Moody, C Hook, J Hall, C Goddard and T King. The coffin was of polished oak with brass fittings, and bore the inscription, "Yens Peder Henry Pedersen, died June 11<sup>th</sup> 1910". The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr Edward Goodwin, 222 Barton Street.

#### **433 26 August 1910**

##### **Stroud Police Court**

**Walter Chandler**, boatman of Pagan Hill, Stroud, who did not appear, was fined 5s for using obscene language in Chapel Street, Stroud, on August 17<sup>th</sup>. PC Jackson and Florence Wilkins (defendant's sister) proved the case.

#### **434 8 November 1910**

**THREATENING A SWEETHEART** At Glamorganshire Assizes on Monday, **Ernest Trigg** (24), a boatman, was sentenced to 15 months hard labour for sending letters to a former sweetheart, Alice Webb, at Pontypridd, threatening to kill her. It was stated prisoner thought that by that means he would regain the girl's affection, and never had any intention of carrying the threat out.