

ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS 1890 to 1900

1 January 4 1890

JEALOUSY, DRINK AND SUICIDE On Saturday Mr G P Wyatt held an inquest at St Thomas's Hospital on the body of Margaret Hodges, 17, a laundry girl, who committed suicide by drowning herself in the River Thames under very painful circumstances. James Hodges, a china and glass dealer of 24 High Street, Lambeth, identified the body of the deceased as that of his daughter. About one o'clock on Tuesday morning, witness returned home, when he found deceased standing partially dressed at the street door. He went upstairs to bed, thinking that deceased, who was with her mother at the time, would follow, but found that she was taking part in an altercation at the bottom of the street. He went out and got her home, and never again saw her alive. He next heard that she had been found in the river. Emma Maria Stratford, an ironer living at 13 William Street, stated that at half past one o'clock on Tuesday morning, she saw deceased and a young man named George Willis sitting on a doorstep in High Street. Deceased said she was going to drown herself and ran away in the direction of the Albert Embankment. There were several persons about; they went to look for deceased, but failed to find her. **George William Willis**, a lighterman's apprentice of 9 William Street, stated that he had known the deceased all his life, and had been keeping company with her. They had a quarrel on Saturday night, as deceased found him walking out with another young woman. A sister of the deceased and several others were in the Windmill public house on Monday drinking with witness, and the former struck witness. Witness ran away from the house to avoid the row which was going on and when all, as he thought, was quiet, he returned about one o'clock in the morning to High Street. Deceased, who was the worse for drink, came up to him crying, and asked him to shake hands and make it up, but witness refused. He was sitting next to deceased on the doorstep, but did not hear her say she would drown herself. When she went away, witness and several others set out to look for her, but could not find her. In answer to the coroner, witness admitted that he had been drinking at the time. Inspector Long of the Thames Police deposed to finding the body of the deceased floating on the ebb tide in the Thames below Charing Cross Bridge on Friday morning. The father stated that he was not aware the deceased, who was a remarkably fine girl, had been keeping company with Willis. The coroner remarked that it was an extremely lamentable case, and the jury returned a verdict that the deceased committed suicide whilst in a state of intoxication.

2 January 4 1890

CHARGE OF BREAKING A MAN'S LEG At the West London Police Court, Charles Graft, a labourer living in Peterborough Lane, Fulham, was brought up for final examination on a charge of violently assaulting an old man named **James Read**, who was employed as waterman on the 'buses outside the Duke's Head, Parson's Green. The case had been standing over for some time in consequence of the injury the complainant had received. He now walked into court with crutches, and was allowed to have a chair. He said that on Saturday night, November 2nd, he was with a 'bus, when the prisoner rang the bell two or three times as he passed. He spoke to him, when he said he would do it again, and jumped on to another 'bus. After pulling him off, the prisoner ran at him, caught hold of his legs, and threw him over on to his back, falling upon him. He was conveyed to St George's Hospital, where it was found that his leg was broken. George Midwinter, a conductor, deposed that the prisoner had been drinking. He said, "You have broken poor old Jimmy's leg". The prisoner used an epithet, and said he had not. Police-constable Nash said the prisoner alleged that the complainant broke his leg himself in the fall. Mr Plowden committed the prisoner for trial, and accepted bail.

3 January 11 1890

SINGULAR DETECTION OF A THIEF After a lapse of two years, William Anderson, a well known character who belongs to Sittingbourne, has been at length brought to justice for a robbery committed by him at Chelmsford. At about October 1887, Anderson was "wanted" for a barge robbery at Sittingbourne, and making himself scarce he next turned up at Chelmsford, where he

obtained a livelihood after a fashion. He lodged at a small beer house with another man, and in the month of December of that year made a raid on the belongings of a fellow lodger. Secreting himself in the fireplace, where he was screened by a sack, Anderson waited until the household had retired to rest, and then, emerging from his hiding place, he took a coat and some eatables belonging to an old man, and escaped by climbing up the chimney. The next morning the footprints, covered with soot, disclosed the means of egress, and suspicion fell upon Anderson who, however, was not to be found. Time passed on, and the old man who had been robbed, getting into low water, was compelled to obtain lodgings in the casual ward of the Chelmsford Workhouse. During his stay there, he was surprised one night to see the man Anderson enter in quest of a night's lodging. He at once recognised him, and communicating the facts of the robbery to the officials, Anderson was eventually handed over to a police-constable, charged with the theft, and committed for trial. The case came on at the Chelmsford Quarter Sessions. Anderson pleaded guilty. Previous convictions were proved by Superintendent Mayne of the Kent County Constabulary, Sittingbourne, and prisoner was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

4 January 25 1890

SHOCKING FATAL ACCIDENT The sailing barge *Emma*, which was passing through Stewart's Lock on the Regent's Canal on Saturday, contained amongst her crew a lad named **Albert Edward Brown**, who resided at Whitaker Road, Upton Park. The poor boy accidentally fell over the side of the barge, and was crushed between the barge and the wall of the lock. He was got out as soon as possible, and Constable Harris of the G Division, called to assist Dr Davies of New North Road, saw the body about ten minutes after the occurrence, and pronounced life extinct. The deceased was removed to the Islington mortuary.

5 February 22 1890

WOOLWICH **Walter Craddock**, 34, of 47 Boleyn Road, Plaistow ; **George Law**, 21, of 50 Kinross Street, Bermondsey ; and **James W Watson**, 38, of 44 Dunmare Road, Bermondsey – all lightermen – were charged with being concerned with two others not in custody in stealing a 52 gallon cask of stout, value £7. Sergeant Davis, CID, Thames Division, said that the previous day, in company with Sergeant Scott, he was on the pierhead at the entrance of the Royal Albert Dock, when he saw the prisoners and two other men standing round something, which witness afterwards found to be a cask of stout, on the head sheets of the barge *George*, of which Watson was in charge. Soon afterwards the men separated, Craddock and Law going on board the barges of which they had charge, and before leaving them they locked the cabin doors. When the prisoners subsequently came on to the pierhead, witness questioned them concerning the cask of stout, and they said they had picked it up, but denied taking anything from it. Witness told them that they would be detained till their cabins were searched, but Watson managed to break away, and got on to his barge and into the cabin before he did. When witness entered, he saw a wash deck bucket apparently just emptied, and a quantity of fresh froth on the floor of the cabin from stout which had run into the bilge. Witness drew Watson's attention to this, and he replied that it was only bilge water. On the barge *Success*, of which Craddock was in charge, a five gallon and a three gallon jar were found containing stout. Joseph W Scadney, shipping clerk, identified the cask as part of the cargo of one hundred casks of Guinness's stout on board a barge which sank off Miller's Wharf on Wednesday last. The prisoners, in defence, stated that they picked up the cask under the dock pierhead, but declared they had not taken any of its contents. It had been staved in when they found it, and the liquor must have run out. Watson's employer gave him a good character, stating that he had been in his service for thirteen years, and he had always found him honest. Mr Marsham said that he had no doubt the prisoners had had the stout, but he would only treat the offence as one of unlawful possession, and fined each 20s or fourteen days' imprisonment.

6 February 22 1890

A man named **Kendall** was summoned to the Greenwich Police Court on Saturday under the Canal

Boats Act, for using his canal barge as a dwelling for himself, wife and five children. It was stated that the barge was registered for three persons and one under twelve years of age, and that there was not more than half the room required for the number of people on board. The defendant was fined 10s.

7 March 1 1890

GREAT PETROLEUM FIRE AT EAST GREENWICH An extraordinarily fierce conflagration, which involved a group of buildings nearly a hundred yards square, a field of barrels of petroleum and over a dozen barges, which were all blazing at the same time, raged at East Greenwich from an early hour on Sunday morning, and was still burning on Sunday night. The scene of this great outbreak was the Ordnance Wharf, Blackwall Lane, and the property attacked belonged to Messrs Forbes, Abbott and Lennard, manufacturing chemists. Half an hour after midnight, a man ran into the Greenwich Fire Station and gave the alarm. For some minutes before this, numerous "calls" had been received at various South London stations, and on the arrival of the engines it was found that the mischief had broken out in a vast building, about seventy yards long and fifty wide, which was used by the firm for general manufacturing purposes, and was crammed with thousands of tons of stock of the most inflammable description. In the course of a time to be measured by seconds the entire structure was enveloped in fire, while the flames soon set fire to tons of petroleum &c, contained in thousands of barrels lying about in the open ground all round the burning building. The *Cormorant*, the *Dragon* and the *Dart*, powerful floating engines lying at different parts of the river, were at once dispatched to the scene, and luckily the state of the tide served admirably for their services to be utilised. Fanned by a strong wind, the flames burst their way through a field of petroleum barrels with marvellous quickness and fierceness, and when the different contingents of the brigade arrived and began to set to work, the conflagration was spreading in a most alarming manner in all directions, and gave the directing authorities the utmost anxiety, the heat and smoke being intense. At first, workmen employed by the firm had got a stationary engine into play, and the first body of firemen which came up set a hydrant to work, but the supply of water which was obtained from the land side was not a good one, and it was particularly fortunate, as has been said, that the tide was about at the full. At one time some hundreds of carboys containing sulphuric acid began to blaze and sent out sickening fumes. Then a still more serious disaster occurred, for the fire began to burn the Point Wharf, next to the Ordnance Wharf, and presently ignited some of the barges which were lying off the wharf. The spread of the flames in this direction was marvellously rapid, and the spectacle presented to the view by the waterside fire was a magnificent one. It was obvious, from the very first stages of the fire, that the great manufactory must be entirely destroyed, and it was not long after the first outbreak that the laboratory, offices and dwelling had all become involved, and began to burn with great fierceness. By means, however, of admirable direction, the firemen succeeded in cutting off the spread of flames in one direction, and in so doing saving some thousands of barrels of oil. For a long time, the tons of water which were poured upon the flames appeared to have little or no effect, and all the firemen could do was to continue to direct the deliveries and to try and prevent fresh extensions of the mischief. Some very exciting incidents occurred while this duty was being performed. For instance, there was an entire dock of tar, and it was only by the most strenuous efforts of the brigade that this was saved. Some of the burning barges, too, were continually breaking away, and one, well alight, broke from her moorings and floated down the river. One of the tugs belonging to the brigade instantly went after, and, setting to work, put the fire out just as the barge was getting across the bows of some other petroleum barges. Exciting incidents of this sort continued throughout the morning, and it was not until late in the day that some of the engines were enabled to leave the scene. The two floats kept at work all day, and on Sunday night officers and men were detailed to stay at the fire and keep pumping water on the flames all night. The following is Captain Shaw's official account :- Quarter past twelve am, called to Ordnance Wharf, Blackwall Lane, East Greenwich, to the premises owned and tenanted by Messrs Forbes, Abbott and Lennard, manufacturing chemists ; cause of fire unknown ; contents not insured ; damage – two buildings, one of one and two floors, about 165 by 110 feet (used as

manufactory and stores), the other of three floors, about forty by thirty feet, used as a laboratory, office and dwellings, and the contents burnt out and roofs off ; about 1000 casks of creosote and 300 carboys of sulphuric acid destroyed, and stills damaged by fire in yard (all adjoining and communicating) ; Point Wharf ditto, **A E Edmonds**, barge builder ; front and side front of wharf damaged by fire, about twelve barges nearly destroyed, and one laden with reeds seriously damaged by fire and water.

8 March 15 1890

POLICE INTELLIGENCE

THAMES Alfred George Chapman, a licensed lighterman and waterman, was summoned for carrying eleven passengers in his boat in excess of the number he was licensed to carry, which was eight. Inspector King having given evidence, defendant said the passengers refused to get out of the boat, and told him that if he would not row them, they would take the boat from him. Mr Lushington said the defendant had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £22. He would be fined £5 and 2s costs.

9 March 22 1890

WOLVERHAMPTON Joseph Fletcher, boatman, Bilston, was committed to gaol for one month's hard labour for the gross neglect of his three children, of the respective ages of ten, eight and three years. Defendant is a noted pigeon fancier, and an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children stated that whilst his pigeons were well looked after and in good condition, the three children were pinched and wan for the want of food, and in a wretchedly filthy state.

10 April 19 1890

A WEST END MYSTERY

STRANGE DEATH OF A GIRL An inquiry as to the mysterious death of a girl named Louisa Osborn was on Friday evening last week opened at the Kensington Town Hall before Dr Diplock. The deceased, with her body shockingly injured, had been discovered in the Grand Junction Canal at Notting Hill. She was 16 years of age. Henry Richard Osborn, a laundryman living at 322 Latimer Road, Notting Hill, stated that the last time he saw the deceased, who was his daughter, was on Sunday the 23rd of March, on the evening of which day she left home. She had always been bright and cheerful, and witness had noticed no alteration in her manner or conduct indicating suicide. She left a letter behind her, explaining why she left home.



The coroner was handed the following letter, which he read to the jury :- Dear Father and Mother – Do not worry about me. I am gone to service as a nurse-girl to two children in Kensington, not far from one of your customers. I ought to have gone on Saturday evening, but it was not convenient.

There is another girl there who I used to go to school with. It was her who got me the place. She says, "It is a very nice place – plenty to eat and drink", so I shall be all right. I got tired of being at home, as work is always wrong, and I was often wished out of it. So I thought that service was the best place for me. Sunday is a funny day to go. If it was not for the other girl, I should not have been able to have gone, because it was her who let me in. I shall write to you in a week or twoI dare say it will seem funny at first, but I must put up with that. Please excuse this blotted letter, as I wrote it in a hurry. I thought I would write and then you would not worry. I remain your affectionate daughter,

LOUISA OSBORN

The witness went on to say that on the morning following his daughter's absence, he saw a 'busman named Smith and questioned him about the deceased, but he denied all knowledge of her. From information witness afterwards received, he was told that on the evening the girl left home she went to the 'busman's house, and that afterwards he was out with her for half an hour.

William Reynolds, a bargeman of 3 Wellington Place, Paddington Green, deposed to discovering the body of the deceased in the canal on Tuesday. He at once informed the police.

Police-constable George Waller, who searched the body, stated that the deceased had two handkerchiefs in her pocket, one of which bore the mark "A J Ghates", with the figure 6 on it.

THE INJURIES – INFLICTED DURING LIFE Mr David H Daniell, surgeon, Addison Road North, stated that he had made a *post mortem* examination and found, from the appearance of the body, that the deceased had been in the water from two to three weeks.

The Coroner : Were there any external marks of violence? Yes, very extensive. The right arm was broken in the upper part – a simple fracture – and both bones of the forearm. One bone hung by the skin.

Protruded? Yes, the bone protruded. The left wrist was dislocated. On the right side six ribs were fractured, and on the left five ribs were broken. The pelvis was fractured in two places. The liver was ruptured.

What is the cause of death? Shock from the injuries, I should think. I could not say that all the injuries were inflicted before death, but effused blood and other indications at the pelvic injury showed that it was inflicted before death. There was a wound on the tongue, as if it had been bitten. There were not the symptoms of drowning present.

By the Jury : I could not say that the wrists were broken in a struggle – they were broken right across.

The coroner, who said that the case must be adjourned, was handed an anonymous letter by the father of the girl. The communication stated that the deceased had been in the company of a married man in the district, who had "gone after her on account of her money".

The inquiry was then adjourned.

11 April 19 1890

GREENWICH James Henry, 49, foreman at Brewery Wharf, Bridge Street, Greenwich, was charged with stealing from a barge at Deptford Creek about fifty six pounds of coal, value 8d, the property of John Dixon, coal merchant of 81 Breakspear Road, Brockley. Two witnesses deposed to seeing the prisoner come down from Mr Dixon's wharf by a ladder, go on to Mr Dixon's barge, and fill a bucket with coal and walk off with it, adding that they had seen him do it many times. In consequence of a letter, Mr Dixon went with a police-sergeant to the prisoner's residence, and on his being told he would be charged with stealing, he said he must admit that he took a bucket of coals from the barge. In his cellar were found about two hundredweight of coals, which Mr Dixon said corresponded with his. Mr Dixon said he did not wish to hurt the prisoner, but having lost quite a ton of coals from one barge, he wanted to put a stop to the thefts. Mr Holmes Moss, solicitor, who attended for the prisoner, said he bore a good character, and if convicted of stealing, would lose his situation. Mr Marsham said he would treat the case as one of unlawful possession, and the prisoner would be fined £5 or a month.

12 May 17 1890

EXCITING SCENE ON THE RIVER An exciting scene was witnessed on the river on Saturday afternoon just below Greenwich, and but for the promptitude and gallantry of one man it would undoubtedly have had a fatal termination. Two young men and a young woman were, it appears, "larking" in a small boat, and caused it to capsize, all being thrown into the river. The young woman contrived to seize hold of the boat and keep herself afloat, but her companions drifted some distance away and were in imminent danger of drowning, as one could not swim at all, and the other had evidently only an elementary knowledge of the accomplishment. Seeing the serious state of affairs, a man named **Marshall**, working on a barge nearby, with commendable courage, stopping only to divest himself of his boots, plunged in to the rescue. He seized the non swimmer and swam towards the barge with him, but the other young man clung to him, with the result that all were in danger of losing their lives, as the three men disappeared beneath the water several times. A boat had by this time put off to their assistance, but it seemed doubtful to the onlookers if it would reach them in time. The occupants, however, pulled away with a will, and succeeded in getting the three struggling men out of the water. The whole party were much exhausted, one of them being insensible when rescued, and it was a long time before he recovered consciousness. The young woman, who all this time was clinging to the upturned boat, though greatly frightened, seemed little the worse for the immersion.

13 July 5 1890

About half past eight on Saturday evening, a respectably dressed woman, aged about 40 years, leaped from Lambeth Bridge into the Thames. A lighterman named **Moore**, who was passing at the time, rowed towards the drowning woman, and succeeded in rescuing her from the water. The Thames Police then came upon the scene and conveyed the woman, who was in an unconscious state, to St Thomas's Hospital, where she was detained.

14 January 2 1892

Mr A W Wyatt, deputy coroner for East Surrey, held an inquest at the Grove Mission Hall, Southwark, on the body of Emily Brown, aged 48 years, the widow of a City police-constable, and lately living at 1 Queen's Court, Minorities, E. Emily Brown, a daughter, living at Brixton, said that she last saw deceased alive on Sunday week. She was then very strange in her manner, and said that she was being watched and followed about by persons whom she did not know, and who completely upset her peace of mind, and added that she should never be happy again. Deceased had been subject to these illusions for some time past. George Brown, a son, said that he lived with deceased. About six o'clock on Wednesday evening, she gave him the keys of the house and stated that she was going to visit her daughter in Brixton. About eleven o'clock the same night, as deceased did not return home, he went and saw his sister, who informed him that deceased had not been there. The following morning he was informed that her body had been picked up in the river. **Charles Carter**, a waterman, stated that at half past six o'clock last Thursday morning, he noticed the body of deceased lying on the foreshore of the river on the Surrey side of Blackfriars Bridge. She was fully dressed, with the exception of her bonnet and shawl, which were found on the steps leading down to the river. Witness handed the body over to Police-constable Thomas Bengel, 405 City Police, who conveyed it to the Ewer Street Mortuary. Dr O S Hill of 33 Great Charlotte Street, Blackfriars, having stated that death was due to suffocation from drowning, the jury returned an open verdict of found drowned in the River Thames.

15 March 12 1892

RECKLESS NAVIGATION ON THE THAMES A pilot named **Edward Lily**, residing at Gravesend, appeared before Mr Slade at the Southwark Police Court, to answer a summons taken out at the instance of the Thames Conservators, charging him with navigating the steamer *Amstelstroom* without caution, and in such a manner as to endanger the safety of other vessels. Mr Banting, from the solicitors' department of the Thames Conservancy, prosecuted. It appeared from

the opening statement of Mr Banting that on the 8th of January, a barge was sunk in the river just off the new Tower Bridge works, and an official was sent there with a wreck boat to mark the spot and to warn passing craft. Between twelve and one on that day, the defendant, who was the pilot of the *Amstelstroom*, was seen coming up the river, and when within a quarter of a mile he was warned. He took no notice of the signal but continued his course, with the result that he ran into the sunken barge, and would have run down the wreck boat had not the man in charge moved. **Robert Burfoot**, the man who was in charge of the wreck boat, was called, and bore out the statement made by the solicitor for the prosecution. For the defence, it was urged that the wreck boat was not properly placed on the day in question. After hearing a great deal of conflicting evidence, Mr Slade held the case was proved, and fined the defendant £5 and costs.

16 April 9 1892

SERIOUS ASSAULT ON A "BLACKLEG" Henry Stokes, 21, giving an address at Rotherhithe, and described as a labourer, was charged at the Southwark Police Court with violently assaulting and intimidating a workman named Clark. Mr Phillips appeared to prosecute, and said he did not propose to go fully into the charge against the accused on that occasion. He would merely call evidence sufficient to justify a remand. Fred Phipps said he was a labourer in the employ of Messrs Corbutt of Dockhead, and on the previous day a dispute occurred with some of the men who were unloading a barge. The men left off work, and the foreman ordered the witness Clark and others to unload the barge. At about twenty minutes past two o'clock, the accused and a number of other men suddenly appeared on another barge, and threw stones and bricks at the witness and the other men who were working in the barge. The witness saw the accused deliberately pick up a fire brick and throw it at the injured man. The brick struck the prosecutor on the right side of the head and inflicted a very severe wound. Clark reeled and fell into the water, and witness and another man succeeded after a lot of trouble in rescuing him. The injured man was taken in an insensible condition to Guy's Hospital. Cross-examined by the prisoner, the witness said he was quite sure it was the accused who threw the brick. Witness was standing next to the man Clark. One of the house surgeons from Guy's Hospital said the injured man had a very severe scalp wound on the right side of the head, and was, at the time the witness left the ward, unconscious. It would be some weeks before the man would be able to attend the court, and even then his recovery depended on the success of an operation. The man was in a very serious condition. Mr Phillips said that was all the evidence he proposed to offer, and Mr Slade remanded the accused for a week. Another workman, lately employed at Messrs Corbutt's, was then charged with intimidating a labourer, and was remanded, bail being allowed.

17 April 23 1892

DOCK THIEVES Alfred Pryor, 18, of Hoy Street, Canning Town ; William Walker, 18 ; John White, 17 ; and Edward Fowler, 17, described as labourers, having no home, were charged at the West Ham Police Court with being found on enclosed premises at the Victoria Docks, at nine pm on the 12th inst, for the supposed purpose of committing a felony. It appeared that between eight and nine o'clock on Monday night, the prisoners were seen to enter the docks by a dock constable, who asked them where they were going. They all replied that they were going on board the steamship *Whitejacket*. The officer watched them, but suddenly lost sight of them. He obtained assistance, and made a thorough search among the craft in the docks, and at last saw the prisoners leaving a barge. They were all arrested, and on Fowler a long clasp knife in a sheath, attached to a strap, was found. Soon afterwards, it was discovered that five fathoms of rope had been cut from the barge *Cedar*, and that she was adrift. The rope was found in the barge which the prisoners had left. A foreman in the employ of **Messrs Williams and Sons**, the owners of the *Cedar*, complained of many recent robberies from their barges, and said that within two months, over £100 worth of property had been stolen. Convictions were recorded against all the prisoners except Fowler, and they now made no defence, but simply denied having attempted to commit a robbery. The magistrate sentenced the prisoners to one months' hard labour each.

18 May 21 1892

Edward Trunley, aged 18, described as a "scurfer", 9 Ship Street, Canning Town, was charged, before Mr Curtis Bennett at the West Ham Police Court, with stealing a metal watch and chain, valued at 18s, from the barge *Fanny* when in Bow Creek, the property of **Henry Blyde**. The prosecutor, who is the captain of the barge, stated that he went ashore, leaving his watch and chain in the cabin, the door of which he locked. Returning at about twelve o'clock, he found the door had been broken open and his watch and chain stolen. He communicated with the police. The next day, prisoner showed the watch to his father, and said he had purchased it the previous day for 4s. He added, "If you like it, you can have it for a gift". His father accepted it, and prisoner then left his home. On the 4th inst, the watch was pawned for 2s by direction of the prisoner's mother. In the meantime the prisoner had been arrested and imprisoned on another charge. On Thursday morning he was arrested by Detective-sergeant Cooper, K Division, on his discharge from Pentonville Prison. When told the charge, he admitted it. Three convictions were recorded against him, and he was now committed to two months' hard labour.

19 May 21 1892

THREE BODIES FOUND IN THE THAMES Three bodies were taken from the Thames on Saturday morning. The first was that of a middle aged man, which was discovered at five am by a bargeman off the Temple, and afterwards taken to the Golden Lane mortuary. A little later, the Thames Police, while rowing at Horselydown, saw a body floating and picked it up. They took it to St John's mortuary, where it was found that the description coincided with that of a young man who fell from a boat near Waterloo Bridge about a fortnight ago, while endeavouring to pick up an oar. The third body was discovered by the river police at six thirty opposite Jamaica Wharf. It was that of a man aged about 40, 5 ft 6 in in height, who had the appearance of a clerk. Nothing was found upon him to lead to identification, but the fact that he had two clock weights in his pockets points to a case of determined suicide. The body was taken to Blackfriars mortuary. The police are aware that there have been a large number of suicides in the Thames of late, but very few bodies have, up to the present, been recovered.

20 June 4 1892

ATTEMPTED MURDER AT HOXTON Albert Briggs, 28, of Monyer Street, Hoxton, and Henry Monro, 18, of Squarry Street, Bethnal Green, were charged at Clerkenwell Police Court on Friday with being concerned with another man not in custody in attempting to murder Harry Ruskin by throwing him into the Regent's Canal.



The prosecutor, a coachman, said he had known Briggs for about a fortnight. During Thursday afternoon, he was in the company of the two prisoners and another man ; they visited several public houses. At eleven o'clock, they left the Angel at Islington, and walked towards Nile Street, Hoxton. They stopped on the way on Danbury Bridge, and stood looking into the canal, talking. Briggs suddenly seized hold of witness, who was leaning on the parapet, and said, "Go over and drown, you ----". Prosecutor clung to the parapet, and Briggs knocked his hands away and, lifting him up by the waist, threw him over into the canal. Briggs was a taller man than he. The witness fell into the water, and found that he could not touch the bottom. He could not swim and sank twice, and cried for help as he got his head above the water. He was becoming unconscious in the water when he was rescued by a bargeman.

Mrs Anne Woods said she was walking over the bridge and saw the men leaning over the parapet. She heard one of them say, "Drown, you ----", and then a splash, followed by agonising cries of, "Help!" She screamed "Murder" and saw a bargeman rescue the drowning man with a boat hook.

James Robinson, lighterman of the *Emery* sailing barge, said he was asleep in the cabin of his barge when he heard cries of "Help!" and "Murder!" He went up on deck and saw a man struggling in the water. He sprang into a skiff, and rowed as quickly as he could towards the man, whom he succeeded in rescuing with a boat hook. Ruskin seemed very much exhausted when he was got on the barge. Police-inspector Daybell and other officers proved arresting the prisoners the same night. Briggs denied having been in Ruskin's company, and Monro said he knew nothing of the matter. Witness, Mrs Woods, said she could not identify the men who were standing on the bridge, because they walked rapidly away after Ruskin fell in the water.

The prosecutor, questioned by the magistrate, said that while he was in Brigg's company on Thursday evening, the latter urged him to snatch a watch and chain from an old gentleman who was standing outside the Agricultural Hall. Briggs said, "I'll knock him down if you run away with the watch". Witness declined to do this, and he believed it was for that reason that Briggs threw him into the canal.

Mr Bros : I have not the slightest doubt that this man would have been drowned had it not been for the promptness with which the lady raised the alarm and the readiness with which the bargeman rescued him. I hope the Court which tries this case will take some notice of the conduct of these witnesses.

The prisoners were committed for trial.

21 July 2 1892

John Curling, 26, an officer of Customs, and **Joseph Birch**, 32, a watchman, were charged on remand at the Thames Police Court with stealing three pints of brandy, valued at 15s, the property of **William Balchin**, barge owner and lighterman of 2 Fenchurch Buildings, City. Mr G H Young and Mr Bryan (Messrs Waters and Bryan) defended. On Friday week, some officers attached to the Hendon Dock police saw the prisoners on a barge acting in a suspicious manner. On the barge being boarded, Curling was seen in a stooping position before a cask of brandy, as if in the act of drawing out some of the spirits. Five bottles containing brandy and an instrument for boring holes in casks were found at the bottom of the barge. The barge was under Curling's charge, while Birch was engaged to navigate it. Curling, when at the dock police office, denied having drawn off any of the brandy. Mr Dickinson committed both of the accused for trial.

22 July 9 1892

CAPTURE OF A BURGLAR Charles Fox, 25, was charged at the Thames Police Court with burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house of Samuel James Cadman, living at 81 Thomas Street, Burdett Road, and stealing therefrom a number of articles valued at 10s. Mrs Cadman said that between two and three o'clock on the morning of the 21st June she was awakened by a lodger. On getting up, she found that a window over the scullery had been opened, and that a pane of glass had been cut out of the kitchen window. A file was lying on the table. The witness missed some curtains and an apron from the kitchen. Mrs Harriett Jewitt, a lodger in the house, said

that on the morning in question, she was aroused by the prisoner trying to open her bedroom window. There was a tall man with him. The witness raised an alarm. Previous to that, she had seen the prisoner and the other man creeping along a low wall. **Francis Everard**, a waterman, said that about half past one o'clock on the morning in question, he rowed the prisoner and another man across the River Thames from Limehouse to Home's Stairs, Rotherhithe. On getting to the other side, he asked the prisoner for his fare, when Fox threatened to throw him overboard. The witness did not get his fare. The prisoner was carrying the basket produced. Constable 127 M said he saw the prisoner and another man running down a street in Rotherhithe. He stopped Fox, who struggled violently to get away, but was overpowered and taken to the station. A previous conviction having been proved against the accused, Mr Dickinson committed the prisoner for trial.

23 July 16 1892

DETERMINED ATTEMPT AT SUICIDE William Shaw, 37, of 91 Earl Street, Plumstead, was charged with attempting to commit suicide in the river Thames off the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. **George Price**, waterman, said that on Wednesday evening he was rowing some people on the river when he saw the prisoner run into the water far out of his depth. Witness rowed near and hooked him, and the prisoner tried to shake himself loose, persistently trying to keep his head under water, and called out, "Let me go". Witness held him with difficulty until assistance arrived. The prisoner's mother said the prisoner, who had been employed in the Royal Arsenal, had sent a letter to his wife, and told her to bury him with the child. Mr Marsham remanded the prisoner.

24 September 17 1892

The waterman's strike on the river Weaver has terminated, chiefly owing to the mediation of the Bishop of Chester. The Salt Union has issued a memorandum agreeing to permit the men to return to work.

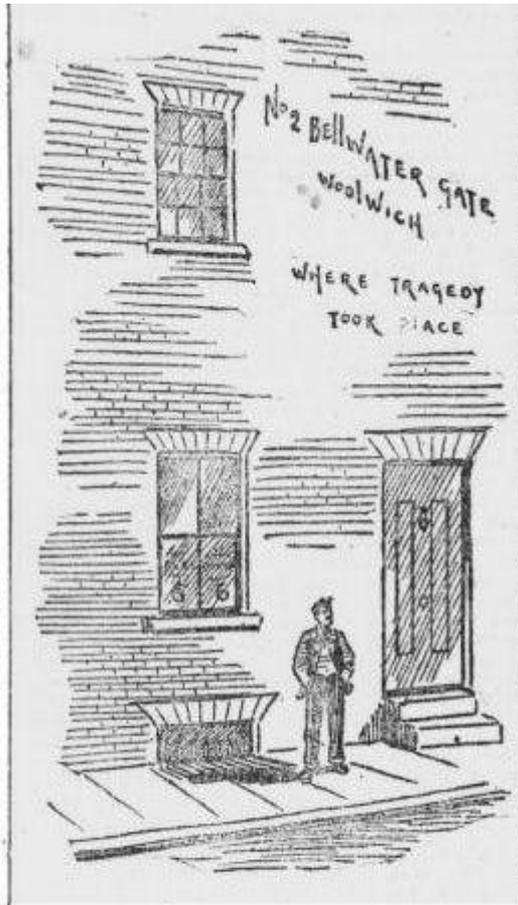
25 October 8 1892

A CURIOUS ALLEGED "CUSTOM" **David Sime**, 43, tug owner of Brunswick Street, Poplar ; **Robert Wilson**, 57, marine engineer of 1 Prestige Street, Poplar ; and **Joseph Cobb**, 45, mate of a steam tug of Brunswick Street, Poplar, were charged on remand at the Woolwich Police Court, with being concerned in stealing about a ton of coals valued 16s from a barge belonging to **Messrs Lambert Brothers**, in Galleons Reach on the river Thames. The evidence was to the effect that Inspector Lander of the Thames Police saw the prisoner Sime's tug, the *Tiger*, coming from alongside the barge *Lakeside*, laden with coal. The tug carried no lights, and the inspector spoke to Sime, who said he was going to make fast, but while the inspector was going to look at the barge the tug moved off. Eventually the prisoners were arrested, and about a ton of coal, similar to that in the barge, was found in the bunker. Mr Moss now appeared for the prisoners, and set up the defence that it was a custom with masters of tugs, in cases of emergency, when (as in this case) they had not sufficient coal to fulfil a contract to tow a vessel, to "borrow" coal from barges on the river. Mr Kennedy said it amounted to stealing. If there was such a custom, the sooner it was abandoned the better. They might as well call it a "custom" when a man put his hand into another's pocket. He fined the prisoner Sime, who received a good character, £5 with the alternative of 21 days, and the other prisoners 20s or seven days' imprisonment, for unlawful possession.

26 October 8 1892

A WOOLWICH TRAGEDY – CASE OF ATTEMPTED MURDER AND SUICIDE

A WATERMAN, named John Armitage, on Saturday afternoon shot a married woman named Frances Perkins, at 2, Bellwater-gate, Woolwich, with a revolver, and then shot himself. The supposed motive is jealousy. Armitage is a widower and a waterman, the tenant of the house in question. Mrs. Perkins, with her husband, lodges at the house. Perkins is very frequently away from home, and for some time past Armitage and Mrs. Perkins have been in the habit of going about together. They had a quarrel in the morning, but at half-past three in the afternoon



they were drinking in the Crown and Anchor, Market Head, Woolwich. Returning to the house, they went upstairs, and immediately after a report of firearms was heard. A married daughter of Armitage ran up and found Mrs. Perkins lying in a pool of blood on the bed, while Armitage was bleeding from a gunshot wound in the temple. The two injured persons were attended to by Dr. Haynes, police surgeon, and Dr. Tees, who found that a bullet had passed through the face of Mrs. Perkins. Armitage shot himself in the temple, but the bullet only grazed the bone.

THE DYING WOMAN'S DEPOSITIONS.

Mr. Kennedy, the police magistrate, accompanied by his clerk, went down with the prisoner to the bedside of the woman, and took her dying deposi-



THE ATTEMPTED MURDER & SUICIDE.

tions. She said:—"I am the wife of Robert Perkins, a **lighterman**. We occupy two rooms at Armitage's house, where I have been in the habit, since his wife's death, of looking after the prisoner's five children. We had been drinking at the Crown and Anchor, and on getting home I said to prisoner's married daughter, 'Sue, I believe he means mischief. Come up with us.' She would not do so. On getting up into the garret, prisoner pulled out a revolver, and I said, 'What are you going to do? Don't be silly.' He fired, and I fell on the floor. He then shot himself, and I was brought home." The police at once telegraphed to the husband, who was with a barge at Cliff, near Gravesend.



27 October 15 1892

MYSTERY AT ACTON On Saturday morning at a few minutes after nine, as a bargeman named **Frederick Morris**, residing at Westbourne Park, and in the employ of Messrs Viger, was towing along Regent's Canal, he came across the body of a man floating in the water near Cook's Bridge at Twyford Abbey, Alverton, Middlesex. He hooked the body out of the water, and in getting it on to the bank, found the throat cut nearly from ear to ear. He gave information to Police-constable Underwood, 538, who reported the matter to his inspector. Dr Watts of Overcourt Crescent, Willesden, was sent for, and on arriving pronounced life extinct, and gave it as his opinion that the body had only been in the water about four hours. There was also a wound near to the groin, which perhaps was done with a boat hook. The doctor stated that the deceased's throat was cut while alive, and before the body entered the water. A search was made by the police along the canal bank for some distance, but there were no signs of any struggle as far as could be observed. Up till late on Saturday night, there was no clue as to who the deceased was, neither had the police anything to guide them in arriving at an opinion as to how he got into the water, or whether it is a case of suicide or murder. They incline to the opinion that it is the body of a respectable man. He was apparently about 60 years of age, 6 ft in length, complexion and hair fair, but the latter turning grey. He was clean shaved on the chin and upper lip, bald on the top of his head. His eyes were grey, and he had a scar on the bridge of his nose. He was dressed in a black overcoat and vest, and was wearing two pairs of trousers, one pair being light check tweed and the other light brown check. He had a black silk wrapper tied around his waist, and wore a white undershirt, also a white calico

shirt. He also wore a truss. He had lace up boots, and nothing was found in his pocket but one halfpenny in bronze. The coroner was communicated with, and the body was conveyed to the Acton mortuary.

28 October 22 1892

THE ACTON MYSTERY Dr George Danford Thomas, the coroner for Central London, held an inquest at the Acton Local Board offices concerning the death of John West, aged 65 years, a painter lately living at 26 Blundell Street, Caledonian Road, whose body was found floating in the waters of the Grand Junction Canal, the throat being cut, whilst there were injuries to the body which were believed not to have been self inflicted. Alfred Busson, a carpet planner residing at Blundell Street, Caledonian Road, stated that the deceased had lodged in witness's parents' house for the last ten years, he being a widower. On Saturday night, the 17th ult, he saw the deceased, when he spoke about changing his lodgings, saying that he was out of work owing to his being old, and that he was tired of his life and should not go to the workhouse, but cut his throat. Witness did not think seriously of the matter because the deceased turned round and laughed at him. Alice Alward, wife of a labourer living at 26 Blundell Street, Caledonian Road, stated that she noticed deceased had been wandering in his mind for some time. **Frederick Morris**, a bargeman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company, proved finding the body of the deceased in the canal near to Willing's Bridge, which he got out by the aid of a hitcher, and then saw that there was a large wound in the throat and another one at the lower part of the body. Dr Watts of Harlesden stated that he saw the body of the deceased on the towing path of the canal, and found that there was a severe wound in the throat from ear to ear and another one in the lower part of the body. He had since made a *post mortem* examination, and found that death was due to haemorrhage, due to the severe wound in the throat. There was no appearance whatever that death had resulted from drowning, for there was no water in the stomach or other signs of drowning. From the severe character of the wound in the throat and the injuries to the lower part of the body, he was not certain that the wounds were self inflicted. The coroner said he found that persons when in a certain state of mind, particularly *delirium tremens*, had made attempts to mutilate themselves. Dr Watts said that there was very little blood on the deceased's clothing, though from the severe character of the wound in the throat, there must have been much haemorrhage, and deceased could not have gone far before death ensued. Detective-inspector Morgan said that the towing-path had been examined, and no marks of a struggle had been found, nor traces of blood. All that was found on the deceased was a halfpenny. Deceased used to shave himself, but he was unable to find any razor in his room. He was informed that the deceased was an excellent swimmer. The coroner said that he thought the reason that there was little or no blood was that the deceased, after having inflicted the injuries at the lower part of the body, then got into the water and cut his throat. There was no evidence, he thought, to lead them to suppose that anyone had injured the deceased, and there was an entire absence of any motive why anyone should attack a poor old man like him ; but, on the other hand, there was evidence to show that the deceased most likely committed suicide. Detective-inspector Morgan said he had other evidence to show deceased had threatened many times to commit suicide. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased committed suicide whilst of unsound mind.

29 November 5 1892

FATALLY IMMERSSED IN BOILING PITCH At the Montague Cottage Hospital, Mexbro', on Friday afternoon, Mr Wightman held an inquest on the body of **Ethel Wilburn**, aged four years, daughter of **George Wilburn**, captain of a barge, and living at Doncaster. It will be remembered that the father had gone with a barge to the chemical works of Messrs Ellison and Mitchell, Kilnhurst, on Wednesday, and that the deceased got into what is known as a pit of almost boiling pitch. When extricated, the pitch clung to her in a solidified form, and at the Mexboro' Hospital, when it was cut off, the flesh came away with it wherever the child had been unprotected by its clothing – and the immersion took place up to the neck. A verdict of accidental death was returned.

30 November 5 1892

SAVED BY A RETRIEVER On Sunday morning, a number of children were playing on the towing-path of the Thames, near Barnes railway bridge, when a girl named Jane Stowe, residing with her parents at Worpole Way, Mortlake, fell into the water. Mr S Dixon of Priory Terrace, Brompton, happened to be passing at the time with a large retriever dog, and being himself unable to swim, at once persuaded the animal to jump into the river to the girl's rescue. The dog seized the child by the dress and, notwithstanding the strong current caused by the receding tide, succeeded in holding the girl above water for some minutes, until a waterman named **Hammerton** had put off in his boat, when the animal released his hold. The child was brought ashore by the waterman in an unconscious condition, but she quickly recovered.

31 January 14 1893

MURDEROUS OUTRAGE BY A SOLDIER Matthew Haley, a private in the 1st battalion of the Essex Regiment, was charged on remand at the Thames Police Court with breaking and entering Thames Wharf, Limehouse, and stealing therefrom £5 in gold, 60s in silver, a gold chain and twelve keys, value £10, the property of **Edward Tucker**, a barge builder. He was further charged with violently assaulting Mr Tucker, with a view to prevent his apprehension. The prosecutor was so seriously hurt that he was unable to attend the court on the first hearing. At twenty minutes past eleven on the night of the 23rd ult, the prosecutor's premises were securely fastened up. Mr Tucker had retired to rest, when he was awakened and, while raising his head from the pillow, he received a blow with a poker. He stretched out his hand and seized someone who grasped him by the throat. They struggled, and both fell on to the floor. They tussled together for half an hour, until they reached the corner of the room by the door, when Mr Tucker saw who his assailant was. The prisoner became exhausted, and the prosecutor managed to pin him down. He obtained possession of his pistol and threatened the prisoner, who was then very quiet, and pleaded hard for his life. Mr Tucker discharged the revolver out of the window several times, and **Robert Kemp** and **William Hart**, watermen and lightermen, hearing the report of firearms proceeding from the Thames Wharf, hastened thither and found the gate fastened. Kemp assisted Hart over the gate, and on both of them getting through the window into the bedroom, they saw Mr Tucker bleeding very much from the head. They assisted in detaining the prisoner, who went on his knees and begged for mercy. While the pistol was pointed at him, the prisoner dropped the money on the floor. The desk had been broken open and the master's desk had also been tampered with. A poker was lying alongside the bed, and that had evidently been the weapon Mr Tucker had been struck with. Fortunately for him, when he received the blow he raised the left hand, which was severely bruised. At four o'clock on the morning of the 24th, Caleb Carter, an inspector of K Division, examined Thames Wharf and found that an entrance had been effected by breaking a pane of glass in the office window, and then inserting a hand and raising the bottom sash. The prisoner must have passed through the office to the bedroom, which was in great confusion, and there was blood on the clothes and floor. There were also signs of a most severe struggle having taken place. Inspector Carter saw the prisoner at the station. The prisoner was then evidently recovering from the effects of drink. The prosecutor was recalled, and stated that during the struggle he said to the prisoner, "For God's sake, spare my life and take anything you like". Frederick Westerman proved that on the 8th of October 1888, he was present when the prisoner was sentenced to three months for felony after previous convictions. Mr Dickinson committed the prisoner to the Central Criminal Court for trial.

32 February 11 1893

THE CONFIDENCE TRICK At Westminster Police Court, William Jessop, 68, was charged with being concerned with another man, not in custody, in stealing a watch and a purse containing £2 from **George Manning**, a bargeman. The prosecutor, who lives in Southend, created amusement by the way he gave evidence. He said that on the 12th of January the prisoner, who was got up something after a nautical fashion, accosted him in the Buckingham Palace Road, and asked him to have a drink with an old salt from Yarmouth. They went to a public house, and while there another

man came in and joined in the conversation. The newcomer, who said his name was Charles Lucas, talked of his fortune that had been left him, and the presents he intended to make various people. He was going, he said, to give overcoats and rings to his lawyer's clerks, and he asked the prisoner and witness what they would like. The prisoner said he should like a pair of top boots, and witness said they would suit him nicely (Laughter). They all adjourned to another public house, where Lucas left his purse and what appeared to be a roll of bank notes with the prisoner just to show "his confidence". Lucas came back, gave prisoner what was described as a fiver, and suggested to witness that a similar present would be the reward of his display of confidence. The prosecutor parted with his watch, chain and purse, and waited in vain for the return of both men, who had left in company. Meeting the prisoner on London Bridge, he gave him into custody. The prisoner, who pleaded guilty, was remanded for inquiry.

33 March 18 1893

The barge *Whitewall*, which left the Medway on Friday morning from Rochester to London with a cargo of cement, sprung a leak and foundered. The captain was drowned and the mate, in escaping in the boat, fractured his leg very badly. Another Rochester barge, the *Cleopatra*, belonging to **Messrs Booth**, was run down by a steamer whilst at anchor in the Lower Hope in the Thames. The captain and mate, named **Arnold** and **Styles**, belonging to Rochester, were drowned.

34 March 25 1893

A LOVERS' QUARREL At the Kingston-on-Thames Borough Police Court on Saturday, Jennie Goulder, 17, was charged with attempting to commit suicide by jumping into the river on the previous evening. James Robert Wallington of Pheasant Lane, Kingston, said he was acquainted with the prisoner, and about eight o'clock on Friday night, as they were sitting at tea, she came in and sat down on a chair without saying a word. Witness's wife asked her what was the matter, whereupon she burst into tears, and throwing her shawl on the chair rushed out of the house. Witness followed her, and when he got to the riverside, he heard screams for help, and saw someone struggling in the water. He jumped into a punt with another man named Cobb, and they reached the spot just as the woman was sinking for the third time. Cobb sprang into the water, and after some difficulty they got her to the bank, but in an unconscious condition. **John Cobb**, a lighterman, said the prisoner was his sweetheart, and she had been living with him for about seven months. On Wednesday night he discovered her drinking, and told her that if he caught her doing so again, he would leave her. When he came back from Woolwich on Thursday night, he found she had been again drinking, and that night he slept in his barge. On Friday night, he was sitting in the cabin when he heard screams, and recognising his sweetheart's voice, he rushed out and met the last witness. The girl was unconscious when taken out of the water, but they managed to restore respiration by artificial means. Prisoner, who wept bitterly during the hearing of the case, said she had no explanation to give, and was remanded.

35 March 25 1893

ATTEMPTING TO DROWN A MAN At Worship Street Police Court, **John Usher**, lighterman, Carr Street, Limehouse, was charged on a summons with assaulting **Joshua Pitman** and throwing him into the Regent's Canal at Bow. The prosecutor is master of the barge *Frank*, owned by Green, Holland and Co of Lime Street, City. He said that between nine and ten o'clock on the morning of the 4th inst, he was on his barge in the Regent's Canal at Old Ford Lock. The defendant was in charge of a lighter at the same place. Both had to get through the lock, but he (prosecutor) was first in turn, and had been ordered by the lock-keeper to pass in. The defendant's lighter was towed by a horse, and he worked it and other lighters in such a position, by trying to get first in the lock, as to jam the barge in the entrance to the lock. He was told by the lock-keeper to draw back, but directly the lock-keeper went away – because he had to attend to five locks – the defendant jumped on to his (prosecutor's) barge, made his rope fast to her, and began to draw the barge back into the canal. His (prosecutor's) son, who was on board as mate of the barge, tried to cast off the rope, but was

prevented. Witness ran to help his son, but directly he reached the spot, the defendant said, "You old ---, I'll knock you into the canal and drown you", and the next instant struck him a blow in the face with his fist, and sent him clean overboard into the water. When witness rose to the surface, the defendant was working his lighter so as to bring it right over him. The prosecutor becoming very agitated at this point in his evidence, exclaimed, "I didn't mind being knocked into the water if he'd struck me a fair blow as he ought to have done, but he tried to draw his lighter on top of me, and I should never have got out alive then". He added that he saved himself by swimming to the bank, being prevented by the lighter from regaining his own vessel. Corroborative evidence was given, and the further hearing was adjourned.

36 April 1 1893

THE CHARGE OF ATTEMPTING TO DROWN A MAN At the Worship Street Police Court, **John Usher**, a lighterman of Carr Street, Limehouse, was charged on remand with assaulting **Joshua Pitman** by throwing him into the Regent's Canal. Mr Low, barrister, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Moore, solicitor, for the defence. The evidence of the prosecutor, master of the sailing barge *Frank*, last week, showed that when he was at one of the locks on the canal at Bow, about to enter the lock, the defendant, who was in charge of a lighter, got his barge in the way and blocked him. Then he boarded the prosecutor's barge and tied a rope to one of the thwarts, with the object of drawing the vessel out of his way to take his place. The prosecutor ran to stop him, and the defendant then, with a foul exclamation, struck the prosecutor a blow in the face and knocked him overboard. It was said that he declared the moment before striking the blow that he would "knock him into the canal and drown him". The prosecutor added that the defendant, after knocking him overboard, made no attempt to help him, but drew up his barge, breaking the rope which tied the *Frank* to the shore, and pulled that vessel back into the river Lea. The prosecutor, on rising to the surface, found he was in danger of being "run down" by the defendant's barge, and he said that that was a wilful act on the defendant's part, and maliciously done. A Mrs Newman, living on the bank of the canal, fully bore out the prosecutor's evidence as to the assault and its consequences, and in cross-examination denied that the prosecutor fell before he reached the defendant, or that he fell overboard without being struck. Six witnesses for the defence, three of them being bargemen working on the canal, were then called, their evidence being that they saw no blow struck, and that the immersion of the prosecutor was due to his slipping as he ran to the defendant. The witnesses, however, differed in points. One said the prosecutor was struggling with the defendant, two others said that the man slipped and rolled overboard before reaching the defendant, one putting it as happening five or six yards away, and another at three yards. The last witness put the distance at two or three feet. Only one of the witnesses said there was no blow struck, the others contenting themselves with saying they didn't see it. Mr Bushby, however, said it was impossible to say the evidence for the defence did not raise a doubt, and the defendant was entitled to the benefit of it. He therefore dismissed the charge, but refused costs.

37 April 1 1893

THE BOAT RACE MISHAPS AND FATALITIES An accident of an exciting and somewhat comical nature took place on the Thames, nearly opposite Thorneycroft's Works at Chiswick, early in the afternoon on the Boat Race day in the presence of a numerous body of spectators, who had already commenced to take up positions to view the boat race. Among the many barges moored on the river at this point was one belonging to a local coal and timber merchant, who had caused it to be elaborately fitted up, and had issued a number of invitations to customers and friends to partake of his hospitality. Shortly before one o'clock, a punt, in charge of a waterman's apprentice, put off from the Middlesex shore, carrying a French chef named Gustave Beral of Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square, and two City waiters, John Walters and Arthur Bevan, who were being conveyed across the river to the barge in question with a load of edibles, including joints, poultry and a quantity of crockery and glass intended for the furnishing of the tables.



When in midstream, the punt became unmanageable and collided with the steam launch *Lily* of Ditton, with the result that the frail craft had a hole knocked in its side, through which the water commenced to flow rapidly. The lad in charge and the two waiters, the latter in evening dress, jumped from the punt and swam ashore without much difficulty. The poor chef, however, being unable to swim, stuck to the punt until it showed signs of sinking, and appeared to be in great danger of drowning until a waterman rowed to his assistance, and after getting him into his boat, attached a rope to the punt, which was hauled ashore just in time to prevent it from going to the bottom of the river. A portion of the crockery and glass and one or two of the joints were washed overboard, while the remaining delicacies were soaked with Thames water to such an extent as to be quite unfit for the table.

A boating fatality, by which two women were drowned, occurred on Wednesday night off Bankside at Southwark, after the finish of the University Boat Race. It appears that a party of Deptford people had been on the river in a skiff since early in the day, and when returning homewards at about eight pm, their skiff was capsized. Of the party, consisting of five men and three women, six were saved, one of them being picked up by two bargemen, who put off in a boat from Queenhithe. Three of the men had already been rescued, and one had managed to swim to shore. Two of the women, however, were unfortunately drowned. The third, Louisa Howse, drifted from Southwark Bridge to London Bridge, where she was rescued by the Thames Police in a most precarious condition. Her father, George King, was in a scarcely better plight. After being attended by a doctor he was removed to Guy's Hospital, whither his daughter had already been taken. Of the two women who were drowned, one was single and the other married.

38 April 8 1893

FROM THE RIVER TO THE ALTAR At the Kingston-on-Thames Borough Police Court on Wednesday, a respectable looking young woman named Jessie Golder, 17 years of age, living in Hope Avenue, Kingston, was charged on remand with attempting to commit suicide by jumping into the river on the 18th ult. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner had been keeping company with a young man named **Cobb**, a lighterman, and that they had had a quarrel, in consequence of which Cobb threatened to throw her up. This preyed on her mind, and late on the night in question she rushed from a neighbour's house to the riverside, and threw herself into the stream. Cobb was sitting in the cabin of his tug at the time, and hearing screams for help, rushed to the spot, and arrived just in time to rescue his sweetheart as she was going down for the third time. Mr A W Stuart, police court missionary, who had interested himself on the prisoner's behalf, told the magistrates that the lovers had made up their quarrel, and that Cobb was willing to marry the girl at

once, as soon as wedding arrangements could be completed. Cobb came forward and acquiesced in this arrangement, and the prisoner giving a ready consent to the nuptials taking place at once, she was discharged with a caution.

39 April 8 1893

A THAMES MYSTERY Mr Baxter held an inquest at Poplar Town Hall respecting the death of John Channon, aged 55, a carpenter late of 127 Tachbrook Street, Pimlico. James Metcalfe, a police-constable, said that the deceased was his lodger. On the 9th ult, he left home to go to work at Woolwich. He never returned. Witness saw a description in the information book which tallied with that of the deceased and, on going to Poplar mortuary, identified his body. **Samuel Poet**, a lighterman, stated that on Sunday morning he was shifting barges off Torrington Arms, Millwall, when he noticed the body of the deceased in the water. On examining it, he found that it was made fast to the moorings by a piece of rope, which was fastened round the left arm. The body was fully dressed, with the exception of coat and hat. No money was found on the body, and the only article of value was a small gold locket. Arthur Channon, a son, stated that his father had an overcoat and a jacket on when he left home. Neither of the articles had been found. No inquiry had been made as to where the deceased had been to work. A juror strongly commented on the conduct of the family in not making inquiries as to the deceased's whereabouts, and said that it seemed as though they did not care very much about the deceased. The coroner said that if the coats could have been found, that might give them some clue, but under the circumstances the only course left was to return an open verdict. A verdict of found drowned was returned.

40 April 15 1893

HOLIDAY FATALITIES

DISASTER IN ESSEX A shocking boating accident, involving the loss of the lives of five holiday makers, occurred in Monday afternoon at Burnham on Crouch, Essex. A party of friends from London and Southminster hired a sailing boat for a run up the river. The boat was in charge of a competent local boatman, and everything went well for about a mile and a half when, as the vessel was in the act of tacking, a treacherous gust of wind caught the heavy sail and caused the crowded craft to capsize. All the occupants were thrown into the river, and as the boat quickly foundered, it seemed almost impossible that any of the unfortunate people could escape with their lives. Fortunately, however, the shrieks of the struggling men and women, and the sight of the sinking vessel, soon attracted attention and assistance. Fourteen persons were rescued, some of them in an exhausted condition, but five, including the boatman, were drowned.

The deceased are **Albert Victor Whiting**, the boatman in charge ; John Burkes of Northumberland Street, Poplar ; Alfred Aston of Copenhagen Street, Limehouse ; William Edward Clark of Louise Cottage, Vicarage Road, Tottenham ; and a woman, name unknown. Whiting is said to have been warned before he started from Burnham that his boat was greatly overloaded, but he took no notice of what was said. There were no fewer than twenty persons in the small boat, and it was feared at one time that the list of dead would be far greater than it actually was, some of the rescued being brought round only with the greatest difficulty. At the spot where the accident took place, the River Crouch is about three quarters of a mile wide. It is bordered here and for many miles by marshes, which the tide is only prevented from overflowing by huge sea walls or dykes.

41 April 29 1893

A JOKE THAT DID NOT PAY George Metcalfe and Thomas Copeland were charged with extinguishing twenty four gas jets in the Thames subway. **Arthur Trott**, lighterman's clerk, Spa Road, Bermondsey, stated that he was passing through the subway, when he saw the lights go out one after the other in a most unaccountable manner, until he saw the prisoners put their caps over them. They then left the jets without even turning them off, which caused the gas to escape at an alarming rate, much to the danger of the other foot passengers who happened to be passing through at the time. The collector at the turnstile also stated that the putting out of the lights was a frequent

occurrence. Each fined 40s or a month.

42 June 3 1893

A TOTTENHAM MYSTERY The body of a man was picked up on Wednesday in the River Lea, Bailey's Lane, Tottenham, by a boatman named **Thomas Springer**. The police were communicated with, and the body was removed to the mortuary, where Dr Hall, the divisional surgeon, found that there were several cuts on the head, apparently afflicted by a hatchet. Dr Hall believes that death resulted from foul play. Subsequently, the body was identified as that of Henry J Allen, aged 53, of Millard Road, Kingsland. Allen left his house at ten o'clock on the 19th ult to look for work. The police are making inquiries into the matter.

43 June 24 1893

The body of a youth named **Heath**, aged 16, lately residing at Boar's Head Yard, Brentford, was found in the Thames on Saturday. The lad was on board a sailing barge, which collided with one of the buttresses of Westminster Bridge, and was thrown overboard and drowned before assistance could be rendered.

44 June 24 1893

ROYAL ENGINEERS DROWNED A shocking boating fatality occurred on the Medway off Chatham Dockyard on Wednesday, resulting in drowning three Royal Engineers, while eight others had very narrow escapes. Several hundred men belonging to the corps were at work on the Upnor side of the river, and a party of eleven left the shore in a wherry to get possession of cutters, moored some distance in the river, which were to take the men back to Chatham. Whilst rowing to the spot and in passing a buoy, a barge, which was tacking, passed on the wrong side of the buoy and collided with the wherry amidships, cutting her nearly in half and throwing all the occupants into the water. Six of them – some unable to swim – managed to scramble up the barge's side, but three sappers at once disappeared, and it is believed they were injured by the barge. Their names are William Fife of G Company, J Greville and J Maddicott, both belonging to C Company. Fife and Greville were excellent swimmers. Sergeant Thatcher had a very narrow escape, sinking twice, and then saving himself by grasping an oar till picked up by a boat. Sergeant Hocking swam ashore.

45 July 22 1893

REMARKABLE SCENE ON THE THAMES Two Frenchmen and a performing bear gave a highly diverting but unrehearsed entertainment in the Thames, near Hammersmith Bridge, on Saturday morning. They had taken the animal on to the towing-path on the Surrey side of the river, for the purpose of giving it a drink of water. The bear having quenched its thirst, suddenly jumped into the river, dragging with it one of the men who was holding its chain. The animal appeared to enjoy its bath immensely and cut all manner of capers in the water, to the great discomfort and danger of the Frenchman, who held on desperately to the chain, screaming loudly. The grizzly monster could not be prevailed upon to return to *terra firma*, and continued to indulge in a great variety of curious pranks, occasionally standing on its hind legs and bobbing its nose and eyes out of the water, as if it were accustomed to the performance and enjoyed the fun. As its keeper seemed to be in imminent danger of drowning, his companion, carrying a curious instrument of the bagpipe order, rushed into the water and swam to the assistance of his partner, buoyed up by the huge bladder attached to the instrument strapped over his shoulder. Then followed a "tug-of-war" between Bruin and his masters, but the united efforts of the Frenchmen failed to bring the animal ashore. To make matters worse, the bladder collapsed, the water ran into the pipes of the instrument, and both men were now in peril and cried loudly for help as they clutched convulsively at the chain for fear of losing the brute which had been the cause of so much mischief. Fortunately a waterman rowed to their aid, and having got the men safely aboard, he took the bear in tow and brought it to land amid the applause of the onlookers. The animal now showed itself perfectly amenable to discipline, and marched off quietly with its masters.

46 December 2 1893

ANOTHER INJUSTICE **John Donovan** aged 29, who was charged before the Lord Mayor with stealing raisins, is evidently of opinion that the iniquity of the theft is considerably lessened providing the thief risks his life when engaged in his larcenous pursuits. On Friday, Donovan was seen to drop a box of raisins, the property of John (?Hail?) and Co, off Fresh Wharf on to a barge, and to follow himself. He was chased by Police-constable Minords from the barge to another one, on which he stood and dared the constable to follow him, threatening to “chuck him in” if he did. The constable did follow and John, in his effort to escape, slipped overboard and took the plunge he had threatened to give the policeman, being afterwards picked up by a steam tug in an exhausted condition. His defence before the Lord Mayor was ; “I nearly lost my life for them there plums”. But his lordship refused to accept that as any extenuation of his offence, and sentenced him to a months' hard labour – not a very heavy sentence, considering that Donovan had been nineteen times previously convicted.

47 January 27 1894

DEATH IN A POLICE CELL **Robert Ward**, waterman, who was arrested on Saturday night at Sheerness, was found dead in his cell at the police station on Monday morning. The police surgeon was called, and certified that death was due to excessive drinking. The deceased called the lock-up keeper about ten minutes before his death and asked for beer, but was given tea.

48 February 10 1894

A FATAL CASE OF PLAYING AT HANGING At Fulham, Mr C Luxmore Drew held an inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of **Joseph Abraham Undey**, aged 14 years, son of a



lighterman, residing at 43 Lurgan Avenue, Fulham, who was found hanging in his bedroom on Sunday. **Abraham Undey** identified the body as that of his son. On Sunday morning, shortly before dinner, the boy came home, and witness asked him to go upstairs and light a fire. Shortly afterwards he heard the deceased “jollying” with his mother. About a quarter of an hour afterwards, the witness said, “How long will the dinner be?” and receiving a reply to the effect that it would be ten minutes, he went upstairs and found the deceased suspended by the neck. The deceased when at home frequently played at hanging with his sisters' dolls. The witness did not know that he was in any trouble. Detective-sergeant Day said he had made inquiries, and could find no blame attaching to the parents for their treatment. A verdict of accidental death whilst trying to frighten his parents was returned.

49 February 17 1894

SERIOUS DECLINE IN THE THAMES CARRYING TRADE In the twenty second annual report

of the Barge-builders' Trade Union, recently issued, **Mr W C Steadman**, the general secretary, refers to the decline in the carrying trade of the river Thames, and states that the severe depression of trade which has been felt all over the country has been very marked in its effect upon the barge building and other riverside industries. So acute has the depression been that the largest item of expenditure in connection with the union during the year has been for unemployed grants. In Mr Steadman's opinion, trade on the river has not been so bad since 1870.

50 February 24 1894

The watermen's dispute with the Manchester Ship Canal Company is approaching a crisis. Unless a prompt settlement is effected, the flatmen and Federated Trades Unionists will cease work. The men decline to ship cargo, and demand payment for overtime, including Sunday labour.

51 May 5 1894

COUNTY OF LONDON SESSIONS

RIVER THIEVES Albert Smith, 26, sailor, and William Noon, 22, labourer, were indicted for having stolen a quantity of rope from off the *Eclipse* in Lion Wharf, Millwall ; and also from the barge *Ellen* a quantity of rope. There were in all six counts against them, to all of which they pleaded guilty. Mr Hutton, who prosecuted, stated that early on the morning of the 14th of April, a police-constable saw the prisoners on board the *Eclipse*, and on asking them what they were doing, one replied, "I am watchman, and my pal is watching with me". The constable went away, but on returning in about half an hour, saw the two prisoners making towards the shore in a small boat. He followed them. On getting ashore, they ran away, but were arrested shortly afterwards, and the rope in question was found in the abandoned boat. Several previous convictions were proved against Noon, and it was stated that Smith, who had been a sailor, had recently become associated with very bad companions. Sir P H Edlin sentenced Noon to eighteen and Smith to twelve months' hard labour. Noon was also sentenced to five years' police supervision.

52 July 21 1894

HIGH SPEED ON THE THAMES At Dartford on Saturday, **George Fishenden**, master of the Victoria Steamboat Company's *Royal Sovereign*, was summoned at the instance of the Thames Conservancy for that he on June 5th navigated his vessel on the Thames in Long Reach without care or caution, and at a speed and in such a manner as to endanger the safety of other vessels, and as to cause damage to another vessel, the steam tug *Scorpion*, contrary to the provisions of sec 15th of the Thames Act 1883. It was shown that on June 5th the *Scorpion* was in Long Reach, having in tow the barge *Quebec*, three parts filled with wheat, and a smaller barge, the *Jessie May*. The *Royal Sovereign* was coming down at a high speed, and causing a great wash. The tug eased, but the steamer did not, and the wash caused the tow line between the *Scorpion* and the *Quebec* to break, and the latter to pitch on to the former, doing damage to the extent of £40. For the defence, evidence was called to prove that the *Royal Sovereign* was only going "easy ahead" through the reach, and only "half speed" when passing the *Scorpion*. There was not an abnormal wash, and the steamer was properly steered. The collision between the barge and the tug was caused by the barge being fastened improperly over the quarter of the tug. Defendant was fined £10 and costs.

53 July 28 1894

SHOOTING AT BOYS At the Marylebone Police Court on Thursday, **William Bravington**, 49, a barge owner of Stoke Prior, Worcester, was charged before Mr Cooke with shooting at Frederick Dowsett, an engineer's apprentice of 181 Great College Street, Camden Town, and James Barnes, a reading boy of 117 York Road, Camden Town, thereby causing them bodily harm.

Mr Freke Palmer, solicitor, defended the accused.

The lad Dowsett said he was passing the bridge spanning the canal in the Camden Road at about a quarter to two o'clock on Wednesday, and looked over the wall and watched some barges which were being towed along. The prisoner halloed at him, and said something to a man in the barge,

and the man handed the prisoner a gun. The latter put the weapon to his shoulder and fired, and the witness was shot in four places in the face and hand, and blood flowed from them. Somebody in the crowd advised the witness to go to the hospital, and he went in that direction, and as he went along he called upon his master and asked him what he had better do. The witness went home, and he and his father went after the prisoner and found him at the lock near Chalk Farm Road.

By the Magistrate : The prisoner was steering the barge, and after firing the gun went on his journey.

Cross-examined by Mr Freke Palmer : The prosecutor had his brother and two other boys with him, one of whom was shot in the head. The witness had watched barges from the bridge many times, and had seen boys throw stones at men on the barges, but he had not thrown any himself. The prisoner complained of stone throwing to the inspector at the police station. The witness did not hear the prisoner say that he had picked the gun up at a raffle, and did not know that it was loaded.

James Barnes, who was with the previous witness, gave similar evidence. He was shot in the eye.

Cross-examined : He had seen boys throw stones at bargemen.

Police-constable Wingram, 307S, said he received information of the occurrence, and he went with the prosecutor towards the locks in Camden Town. He met the prisoner outside the Oxford, and told him he would have to go to the police station. On the way there, the prisoner said, "They were throwing stones at me, and I presented the rifle at them, but did not know there was anything in it".

Cross-examined : There had been many complaints about boys throwing stones, and some of the bargemen had been seriously hurt. The witness produced the firearm, which was an old fashioned muzzle loading gun.

Inspector Head, S Division, deposed that when the prisoner was charged, he said, "It is very hard that they should be allowed to throw stones at us. I only did it to frighten them. I bought the rifle at a raffle for 4d". The divisional surgeon who attended to the boys extracted a shot from one of the wounds, Three windows in one of the adjoining houses were broken.

Cross-examined : The prisoner said that he did not know that the gun was loaded.

For the defence, Mr Palmer urged that the boys having been hit was an accident. The gun had been recently bought at a raffle, and his client, unfortunately, had no knowledge of its being loaded. All that he intended doing was to frighten the boys. He hoped that after that explanation that his worship would see his way to discharge the prisoner.

Mr Cooke said it was a case for a jury. He therefore committed him for trial, and agreed to allow him out on bail – two sureties in £40 each.

54 August 11 1894

DOGGETT'S COAT AND BADGE The half dozen competitors who had won their preliminary heats a fortnight ago rowed for Doggett's Coat and Badge on Wednesday. The course, as usual, was from London Bridge to Chelsea, and those who took part were :- **T F Thompson** (Richmond), **F Sully** (Kingston), **H Briant** (Shadwell), **W H J Crout** (Woolwich), **F Pearce** (Hammersmith) and **H Snow** (Rotherhithe). At the start, Sully got badly away, and Briant led from Pearce to Cannon Street Railway Bridge, where he was a length and a half in front. Before reaching Southwark Bridge, however, Pearce had gone ahead of Briant, and Thompson was next, Sully being last of all. Soon afterwards, Briant ran into a barge and thus destroyed his chances. At Blackfriars, Pearce was two lengths in front of Thompson, and he reached Waterloo Bridge in 8 min 3 sec. Sully, who had drawn up, now took third place, and before arriving at Hungerford Bridge he had passed Thompson. His effort, however, took a lot out of him, and he soon gave way again to Thompson. Pearce continued to keep in front, and he eventually won easily by 1 min 12 sec, his time being 32 min 44 sec. Thompson finished second in 33 min 56 sec, and Sully finished third in 34 min 42 sec. Crout was fourth and Briant last.

55 September 1 1894

BOY NAVIGATION ON THE THAMES On Thursday afternoon at the Fulham mortuary, Mr C Luxmore Drew held an inquiry with reference to the death of **Joseph Sammons**, aged 16 years, a

lighterman's apprentice lately residing at 17 Oak Lane, Limehouse, whose body was found in the Thames off Fulham on Sunday.

Jane Sammons, the mother, deposed that her son left home at eight o'clock at night on the 13th inst to go to work, and the next day she heard he had been drowned. She identified the body by his boots.

William Richard Stringer, a lighterman of 23 King's Street, Bermondsey, deposed that on the night of the 13th inst he was in his punt in the "Roads" off Limehouse, and at eleven o'clock saw the deceased coming out of the cut with a barge. Directly afterwards he heard a shout, "I am in the water", and at once pulled to the spot, but could not rescue the deceased. Witness was of opinion that his staff slipped and he fell backwards. There was a heavy swell at the time. The deceased was breaking the bye laws of the Thames Conservancy by navigating the barge alone. The foreman of the lightermen would give him his orders.

Samuel Barnes, a lighterman of 11 Matlock Street, Stepney, said the deceased was his nephew. He had been apprenticed 18 months, and witness produced the bye laws of the Thames Conservancy, which prohibited under a penalty boys being sent to navigate a barge until they had served two years and obtained a certificate of qualification. Witness was a practical lighterman, and knew it was the rule of master and foreman lightermen to order these boys to navigate these small craft at night to "run the blockade". The pay for the boy was 1s 6d a night, and a man 6s and, added the witness, "They save 4s 6d and risk the boys' lives". It was time steps were taken to prevent this sweating, which was monstrous.

A representative of the lightermen was present, and stated the lad was sent out by **Foreman Brown**. The coroner adjourned the inquiry for his attendance, remarking that it was an illegal act, and the man who ordered the boy was responsible.

56 November 3 1894

THE EXTENSIVE ROBBERY OF SILVER Walter Tagg, 20 ; Henry Brown, 18 ; and **George William White**, 23, lighterman, convicted last sessions of receiving four bars of silver of the value of £1200, the property of Messrs Lock, Lancaster and Co, Canning Town, were brought up for sentence. Mr C F Gill, who prosecuted, stated that the prisoners had afforded no information whatever since the last sessions as to the £600 worth of silver still missing. Tagg had been in a reformatory. Mr Mair, for Brown and Tagg, reminded the court that the jury strongly recommended them to mercy. Mr Sherwood represented White. Mr Gill said that no witnesses had been called as to White's character. Had there been, he should have been compelled to have cross-examined them as to the loss of tin from barges of which he had had charge. The Common Serjeant said the robbery was well planned and skilfully carried out, and he was satisfied that it could not have been perpetrated without the cognisance of persons in the employ of the firm. He sentenced White to five years penal servitude, Tagg to ten months' and Brown to nine months' hard labour.

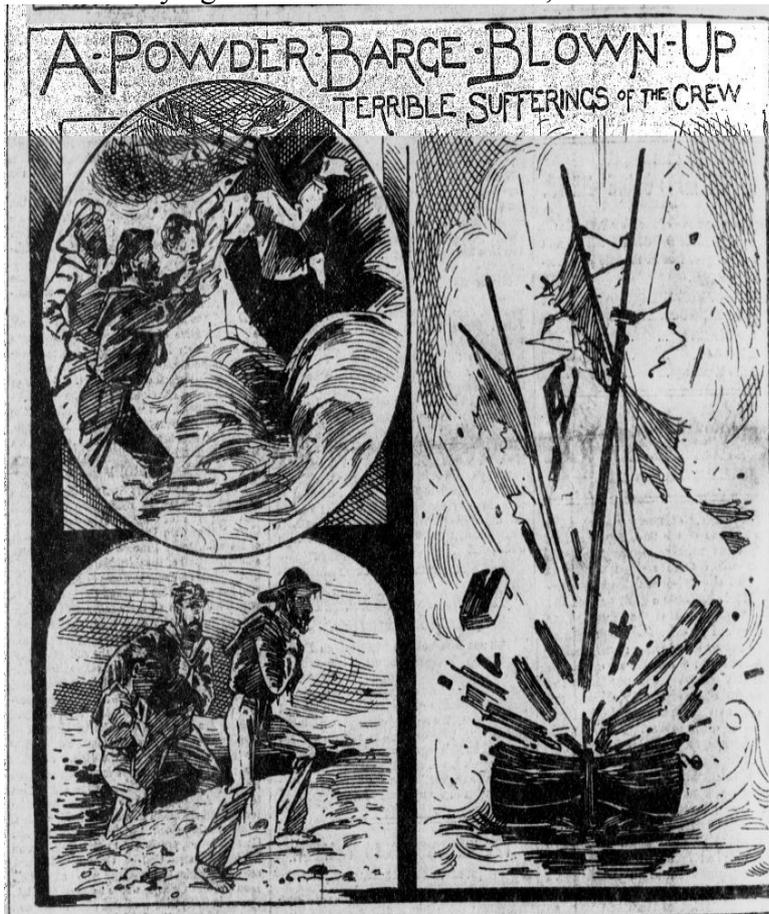
57 February 2 1895

A POWDER BARGE BLOWN UP

TERRIBLE SUFFERINGS OF THE CREW Thursday morning, a telegram was received at the Central Office, Woolwich Arsenal, that the War Department sailing barge *Petrel*, laden with a gun, live shell and ammunition, had blown up at Lower Hope Reach near the mouth of the Thames, and that the crew were missing. The commissary-general and Mr Oliver, acting superintendent of shipping, at once left by steam launch for the scene of the disaster. The first intelligence stated that the crew, consisting of three men and a lad, were missing, but in the afternoon three of the survivors arrived at the Arsenal to report the fate of the *Petrel*. One of them was unable to walk, and was at once admitted to the Royal Arsenal Infirmary and attended to by Dr Green. The names of the survivors were **Thomas Greensmith**, able seaman ; **George Edward Hoar**, able seaman ; and a man named **Frederick Guttrill**. The survivors were examined for the purpose of drawing up a report of the catastrophe, and stated that they left the Royal Arsenal at ten o'clock on Tuesday night with a new 12 inch quick firing gun for trial at Shoeburyness, with orders to call at Purfleet for shell

and powder. The night was a stormy one, but they reached Purfleet in safety. They took on board 2 1/2 tons of powder and three boatloads of live shell. They left Purfleet at eleven am on Wednesday, the wind blowing hard at the time.

On reaching Lower Hope Reach, a strong gale threatened to drive them ashore. With the view of averting this, they let go the anchor. This proved futile, and the vessel was driven with tremendous force towards the shore, where they ran aground. By manipulating the sails they managed to get off, but were driven back again and again, and it was a quarter to eleven at night when they relinquished the attempt. The crew did not go to bed, but went below, and after a smoke, dropped to sleep, Greensmith keeping watch on deck. At a quarter to twelve, he noticed smoke issuing from the forecabin, and called to the crew, "For God's sake, come up and dive overboard!" The men, Greensmith and Hoar, immediately jumped overboard, and after reaching the shore, found that the lad was not with them. They returned, and persuaded him to jump from the vessel, Hoar catching him in his arms and conveying him to land. The master, named **Herbert Lott**, remained behind to



try to battle with the flames, and he was last seen jumping overboard, his clothes being on fire, and he has not been seen or heard of since. Knowing that a terrific explosion was inevitable, the three survivors got away to a safe distance to await the result. The fire, being fanned by the wind, became fiercer and fiercer, the flames coming out of the hold and the cabin. Within a few minutes after the crew left the barge, explosion after explosion occurred. The two and a half tons of powder having been well battened down, it was some time before the fire reached it, but when it did, there was a loud and terrible explosion. The final explosion blew the barge to pieces, and the gun went to the bottom.

Finding everything lost, the men and boy made their way in search of the nearest house. Hoar was without shoes or cap, and their wet clothing was all frozen. They walked along the rough and stony beach a distance of eight miles, and it was a quarter to four o'clock Thursday morning, when they reached a house in the occupation of Mrs Welland, Cooling Marshes, near Rochester. They knocked at the door and were admitted and supplied with dry clothing and food. At eleven o'clock Thursday morning, Mrs Welland's son drove them to Cliffe railway station, and thence they were

conveyed by train to Woolwich. An official inquiry will be made into the disaster. The survivors are unable to assign any cause for the fire.

58 April 27 1895

STRATFORD

WINE "TASTERS" IN THE DOCKS **Daniel Ward**, 34, of 15 Kirk's Place, Rhodeswell Road, Limehouse, a lighterman's watchman ; **Joseph Rufus Stoney**, 32, a labourer ; and **George Vorley**, 17, a lighterman's apprentice, both of 2 George Street, Silvertown, were charged with being concerned in broaching a barrel of wine on board the barge *Topsy*, in the Royal Albert Docks. On Tuesday, the barge *Topsy*, in charge of the prisoner Ward, was by the side of the P and O steamer *Valetta*, and it had wine on board. At 5.30, Mr Kenrick, the second officer of the *Valetta*, saw the prisoner Stoney in the water floating by the side of the barge, and he was in imminent danger, but with the assistance of Vorley, who was on the barge, he was got on board. Afterwards, a coloured seaman said he had seen the men taking liquor from one of the barrels on board the *Topsy*, and when Condon, a dock policeman, went into the cabin, he found Ward and Stoney there. There was a can containing wine, and by the side of Ward, who was drunk, there was a gimlet and a spile. Ward now said he had had too much beer and went to sleep, not knowing what was done. The other two prisoners declared they had nothing to do with the robbery. They were each fined 10s and 14s costs, or fourteen days, Stoney being told he might think himself lucky he was not drowned.

59 May 18 1895

DROWNED ON HIS BIRTHDAY On Saturday Mr Langham held an inquest at St Bartholomew's Hospital touching the death of Albert William Hall, aged 15, a warehouse boy lately residing at 50 Acorn Street, Camberwell. The evidence showed that on Tuesday he was having his dinner while sitting on the wall of the quay at Brooke's Wharf, Queenhithe. It was his birthday, and the boy appeared in high spirits. After he had finished dinner, he tried to climb on a post used for mooring barges. While doing so he slipped and fell into the water. **Richard Terror** of 30 Pensonby Buildings, Blackfriars Road, a lighterman, stated that he went to the boy's assistance and succeeded in getting him out of the water into the barge. It was a very dangerous place, but the boys would go there to play, though they were constantly warned off. He got four boys out of the water the year before last, and two last year. **Thomas Maguire**, a bargeman, said the boy Hall was lifted into his barge, and artificial respiration was resorted to. In three quarters of an hour he began to breathe. They continued their efforts, and he apparently came quite round, and was taken to St Bartholomew's Hospital. The following morning he died of congestion of the lungs and brain, the result of immersion. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death"

60 August 10 1895

STRATFORD

BARKING GIRL'S NIGHT OUT **Thomas Jarrett**, 18, of the barge *Swift*, lying at the Town Quay, Barking, was charged with a criminal assault on Mary Ann Bones, a girl of 14. Mr Fred George prosecuted. The girl said that on Monday night she and three or four other girls were playing together on the Town Quay. They were there at half past ten, and the prisoner came up and entered into conversation. They all remained until half past twelve, when Jarrett invited the prosecutrix down on to the barge. She consented to go, and went into the cabin and lay in a sleeping bunk with the prisoner until about six o'clock the next morning, during which time the prisoner was intimate with her. When she got up, he gave her a shilling, and she proceeded home. On the way she met her mother, who was looking for her, and took her to the police station. Here she made a statement, upon which Constable Steele, 649K, went to the barge and saw the prisoner, who at once admitted that the girl had slept with him. He was arrested, and when charged said, "I'll own it. I gave her a shilling and thought she was a prostitute". Dr Schimeld, who had examined the girl, said there was no appearance of any intimacy. The prisoner suggested that all the girls asked him to "stand" some beer, and said they would go to his cabin. He also alleged that the prosecutrix told him she was 17

years old and had stayed out before. He was committed for trial.

61 August 31 1895

SHOCKING STORY FROM CANNING TOWN

ALLEGED STARVATION OF A BABY At the Liverpool Arms, Canning Town, Mr C C Lewis, coroner for West Ham, held an inquiry touching the death of a child, the son of **George Reuben Price**, described as the captain of a barge, residing at Chargeable Street, Plaistow, whose death was alleged to be due to neglect and starvation.

Emma Price, a poorly clad woman, who also appeared to be of rather weak intellect, having been cautioned by the coroner, stated that the deceased was her son, and was three months old.

The Coroner : Have you had a doctor to the child?

The Witness : It was too sudden.

The Coroner : How many rooms do you occupy? - One, a front room downstairs.

How many of you lived in that room? - Five ; my husband, myself, two elder girls and the baby.

What age are the other children?

Edith is twelve and Ellen eleven.

A Juror : What is the doctor's opinion?

The Doctor : It appears to me to be a very bad case. I can see no traces of natural disease.

The Coroner : I have seen some hundreds of children, but never in my experience have I seen such a skeleton as this.

A Juror : There was scarcely anything to see at all.

The Coroner : Have you seen anything worse, doctor?

The Doctor : No, sir, I have not.

The Coroner : It is simply bones and very little skin. I never saw anything like it. The mother, recalled, said the child had never been either registered to christened. The inquiry was adjourned.

62 February 22 1896

LIGHTERMEN AND BARGE OWNERS The Association of Master Lightermen and Barge Owners on Wednesday adopted the following resolution :- "That this Association protests against the action of the London and India Docks Joint Committee in inviting the shipowners to enter into an agreement with them to land all their cargoes on the dock quay, charging the consignees with the cost of delivering the goods from the quay to barge at rates varying from 2s to 3s 6d per ton, whereby a monopoly will be created in favour of the Docks Committee, and the interests of merchants, wharfingers, lightermen and others engaged in the trade of the Port of London will seriously suffer."

63 February 29 1896

DIVORCE COURT

ROBB v ROBB, DICKINSON AND JOHNSON

Husband's petition : Grounds, misconduct of wife with two co-respondents.

The marriage took place in September 1874 at Tranmere, where petitioner and respondent afterwards resided for some time. In 1886, there was a deed of separation executed between the parties, which it was alleged was brought about by the intemperate habits of respondent. In 1889, they resumed cohabitation, and lived together until 1891, when there was a second deed of separation, petitioner allowing respondent £2 a week. Subsequently respondent went to live at Sutton on Trent at the house of Mr Dickinson, one of the co-respondents, and afterwards, certain matters coming to the knowledge of petitioner, the present suit was instituted.

Witnesses having been called in support of petitioner's case, Mrs Robb, respondent, in her evidence gave a direct denial to the allegations made against her, and in the most positive terms denied that she had ever been guilty of the slightest impropriety with either of the co-respondents. She once went to Dickinson's room, but it was only to see how he was, as he had a bad cold. She was never in his room in her nightdress. On one occasion when near the Railway Inn, she was overtaken by

Johnson on the road. She left him about ten, but she did not arrive at her own home until two in the morning, as she lost her way in the dark. She left Johnson asleep on a garden seat, and never saw him again.

A witness named Wood said he saw Johnson in Farmer's Lane, but Mrs Robb was not with him.

Johnson, who said he was a boatman, denied that he had ever misconducted himself with respondent.

Decree nisi, with costs against both co-respondents.

64 March 28 1896

MYSTERIOUS MURDER AT BRENTFORD On Saturday the funeral of a woman named Elizabeth Quickfall took place at Ealing Cemetery in the presence of a large crowd, attracted apparently by the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death. It appears that on Thursday week a lighterman named **Gardner**, walking along the towing-path of the Grand Junction Canal at Brentford during the early hours of the morning, discovered what he at first thought to be a bundle lying in a dark corner of the path at the end of Boar's Head Yard. On examining it, however, he found it to be the dead body of a woman. She was poorly clad, and to all appearances was between thirty and thirty five years of age. The police were summoned, and the corpse was removed to the mortuary. The following day, the deceased woman was identified by her sister as Elizabeth Quickfall, married, of 82 Windmill Road, Brentford. She had been separated from her husband for some time past, and had given way to drink. Of late, she had gained a precarious living among the barges on the canal. The body having been deposited in the mortuary, nothing further occurred until the Saturday following the discovery, when the inquest was held. Dr Dixon, who was called to the deceased, stated emphatically that he had found several wounds about the body, the spleen was ruptured, and the rupture was unquestionably caused by great violence. The injury could not have been caused by a fall. Dr Bott, divisional surgeon, corroborated the testimony, and after three hours deliberation the jury returned a verdict that the deceased had been wilfully murdered by some person or persons unknown. Two men had been arrested on suspicion, but were subsequently liberated. The matter is now in the hands of the Scotland Yard authorities.

65 April 25 1896

SOUTHWARK

A BARGEE'S BATTLE Patrick Roach, 23, waterside labourer, was charged before Mr Fenwick with assaulting **Wallace Humphrey**, mate of the barge *Richard* of Whitstable. The prosecutor, whose nose was damaged, stated that on the previous night he went to get aboard his barge, which was lying off Clerkenwell Vestry. Mr Fenwick : What do you mean by lying off Clerkenwell Vestry? The Witness : She was moored there, sir. Mr Fenwick : But Clerkenwell is not in this district. Police-constable 147L : He means, your worship, the Clerkenwell Vestry Wharf, which is in this district. Mr Fenwick : Oh, I see ; it's a little bit of Clerkenwell in this district, so to speak. Very well, what did the prisoner do? The Prosecutor : He was standing outside the wharf, and he dared me to go through, and struck me a hard blow on the nose, which made it bleed very much. Mr Fenwick : And what did you do? The Witness : Oh, I shouted out for police (Laughter). The prisoner, who admitted the offence, was fined 10s or seven days' imprisonment.

66 June 6 1896

HER BODY CHAINED TO THE SIDE OF A BARGE .Mr Wynne E Baxter held an inquiry at the Poplar Town Hall respecting the death of Elizabeth Randall, the wife of a bricklayers' labourer, lately residing at Railway Cottage, Grays, Essex.

Stephen Johnson, a bargeman, stated that the deceased had lived with him for fifteen years. On Tuesday his barge was lying in Limekiln Dock, Limehouse, and the deceased came over to see him. They spent the evening in a public house, and on returning to the barge the deceased fell into the dock. Witness seized hold of her clothing and held her up, but could not get her on board. When the breath was out of her body, he fastened her to the barge and went back to the public house to get

assistance.

The Coroner : How did you know the breath was out of her body? I could not hear her breathe.

The Coroner : Your conduct is most extraordinary. I can only think you must have been drunk.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

67 June 6 1896

STRIKE OF THAMES STEAMBOAT EMPLOYEES As the result of the failure of the negotiations which have been in progress during the past few days between the managers and receivers of the Victoria Steamboat Association and the officials of the Amalgamated Society of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames, nearly the whole of the deck and engine room hands employed on the company's boats plying on the River Thames struck work on Wednesday morning. The dispute has arisen in consequence of the demand for an increased rate of wages not having been granted, and as a result 200 steamboat employees that day refused to man the boats. Of the twenty five vessels which, during the last few weeks, have been running on the river, it was on Wednesday possible to obtain only sufficient men to work five of the boats, and these were plying between Greenwich and Westminster. At the company's dockyards at Blackwall and Battersea, where the boats are moored, everything possible was done to persuade the men to resume work pending a settlement of this dispute, but this they refused to do. Great inconvenience was, in consequence, caused to passengers, the boats on the Battersea, Putney, Kew and Hampton Court service being entirely suspended. In the afternoon, a meeting of the steamboat employees was held at the Earl Spencer Rooms, Battersea, and it was decided "to remain out on strike until the Victoria Steamboat Association concedes our demands". The steamboat strike came to an end on Thursday, the company having agreed to give the men the small increase in wages asked for.

68 July 11 1896

A CHILD DROWNED IN THE LEA

A BARGEMAN MIGHT HAVE SAVED IT An inquiry was held at Poplar into the death of a three year old child named William Newley, the son of a cage maker living at Wyke Street, Bow. The boy went out with other children to play in the street, and went down to a place known as the Lea Cut, where he was afterwards drawn out of the water.

William Jones, a waterman who recovered the body, said that he found a bargeman with a hitcher stuck into the clothes. Witness told the man to bring the body on shore, but he refused, saying, "If we do so then we are forced to bury the body if it is not owned. I can't afford it". That was a superstition among bargemen.

The bargeman, amid cries of "Shame" from the jury, confirmed this. A labourer named Sherne deposed that he jumped on the barge, and insisted on the last witness taking the body on shore. After keeping it in the water for about five minutes, witness, by force, took away the hitcher and got the child on shore. It was then alive. (Sensation).

The Coroner : How do you know that?

Witness : It opened and shut its eyes, and almost at once died.

A juror said that the bargeman had killed the child. (Cries of "Shame")

In returning a verdict of accidental death, the jury severely censured the bargeman, the coroner informing him that he had had a lucky escape from a charge of manslaughter.

69 July 18 1896

WOOLWICH

"CHEATING THE BOGIE MAN" **William Carrick**, 23, lighterman, was charged on remand with stealing thirty three gallons of whisky worth £24, and five cases of herrings worth £9, the property of the London and Tilbury Lighterage Company. The evidence at the previous hearing was that the prisoner was seen by Police-constable Clifton removing the property from barges. When challenged, he said that he was going to take them to the *SS India*, lying in another part of the dock, in order to "cheat the bogie man" - criminal slang for defrauding the Excise. **William Watson**,

foreman to **Messrs McDougall and Co**, master lightermen, now identified the two octaves of whisky found in the possession of the prisoner, as the property of his firm. The inspector of the dock police said that the prisoner stole a barge for the purpose of removing the whisky and herrings from the barge *Willie*, lying in the Galleons Basin, Royal Albert Docks. He had no business in the docks, and was not employed there. The police had kept observation on him some time. He had been engaged in removing two cases of brandy from the docks, which two men were in custody for stealing. The prisoner pleaded guilty to stealing the whisky and herrings, and Mr Kennedy committed him for four months' hard labour.

70 July 25 1896

A BARMAID'S EXTRAORDINARY DEATH At the Limehouse Town Hall, Dr Edmund King Houchin, the deputy coroner for East London, held an inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of Alice Bennett, aged 16 years, a barmaid at the Northey Arms, Northey Street, Limehouse, who was found drowned in the river Lea on Tuesday morning, under mysterious circumstances.

Mrs Alice Wilkins stated that the deceased had been in her service about eighteen months, and had never given the slightest idea of being dissatisfied or premeditating suicide. On Monday night the witness went upstairs to bed, and the deceased was following, but said she had left something downstairs. As she did not return the witness called her and, getting no answer, went downstairs, and then found the back door open and the deceased missing. Her son was not lost.

George Bevan, a lighterman of 9 Oak Lane, Limehouse, stated that on Tuesday about 1.30, he was lying on the barge and saw the deceased, whom he recognised, walking along the towing-path. The witness said, "What are you doing, Alice, here so late at night?" The deceased said, "I'm looking for Mrs Wilkins's boy – he's lost ; have you seen him?" The witness replied, "No", and the deceased walked on.

Dr Arthur Millar of 747 Commercial Road, deposed that he was called to the towing-path and saw the body when it was recovered. He found mud clenched in the hands, as though the deceased had tried to catch at something. Death was due to drowning.

Ultimately the jury returned an open verdict of found drowned, and requested that the police make further inquiry into the matter, as the evidence was insufficient for a definite verdict to be returned.

71 July 25 1896

ALLEGED EXTRAORDINARY ASSAULT

LIVELY SCENE IN A BEDROOM On Thursday at West London Police Court, **William Ashby**, **Edward Chester** and **George Lee**, all watermen in the employ of the Grand Junction Water Company, surrendered to answer a charge of violently assaulting James Goldsmith, a painter residing in Acklam Road, North Kensington.

Mr St Bernard Wilson appeared for the prosecution, and Mr H Pierron for the prisoners.

The complainant, who attended for the first time, had his head bandaged and strapping on his nose. He was in an extremely weak condition. He was led into court and provided with a chair in the witness box. He said he occupied the first floor and Chester the parlours. On Saturday the 4th inst, he went to bed with his wife between ten and eleven o'clock, and fell asleep. About twenty minutes past one, he was awakened by his wife, who said there was someone at the door. He got up and opened the door. He saw three strange men, not the prisoners, on the landing. He called over the banisters to Chester to take the men away from the door. He did not speak to the men, seeing they were intoxicated. He heard singing downstairs, and inferred the men belonged to the party. Seeing Chester coming upstairs, he (the complainant) went into his room, closed the door and locked it. He heard Chester call out, "Come on, Ashby". The door was then burst open and Chester rushed in. The prisoner punched him in the chest, caught him by the throat and threw him down. Ashby and Lee followed in, and kicked him. The witness went on to state that his wife and child were dragged out of bed. He was struck in the mouth and dragged out on to the landing. Chester said, "Out of the window with him". Lee opened the window and the prisoners got one of his (the complainant's) legs out, all trying to force him out of the window. His wife screamed, "Murder!" and "Police!"

and a lodger named Blomfield came downstairs. He (Blomfield) said, "For God's sake don't throw him out of the window". The prisoners then dropped him down on the landing and ran upstairs, about eight other men joining them. Chester afterwards procured a broom and struck him on the side of the head and shoulder with it.

Some pieces of a broom handle were produced in court by the police, and the complainant identified one with which he said he was struck, adding that he found it under his table. He went on to state that the men returned and threw him downstairs, all coming down one after the other on the top of him, and jumping upon him. Mrs Chester handed a pair of tongs to her husband, who struck him over the head with them. He used a bad expression to his wife to bring the lamp to look at his (the complainant's) head. One man said, "Kick his chest in". Chester "smashed" the tongs across his (the complainant's) nose, threw him down, and kicked him about the ribs and chest. He shouted, and all the men seemed to stop. He managed to get into his room, but he was followed and thumped about the head with their fists. He heard his wife complaining that Ashby had taken her watch, and she struggled and got it from him. One man ran out of the room with a box containing money which witness had not recovered. The box was thrown broken into the room. His wife let in a constable, who took him downstairs to the parlour door, as he was scarcely able to stand. Some other men came into the passage and assisted the police. Witness pointed out the prisoners, who were taken into custody. He was carried to the police station, where he was seen by a doctor. The police attendants placed him on the ambulance and took him to the hospital, where his nose and neck were strapped. He refused to remain in the hospital, and returned home in a cab. He had since found his rib was fractured.

The Chief Clerk : Do you know of any motive for it?

The Complainant : No, they always spoke friendly to me when I passed.

Mr Pierron reserved his cross-examination, and asked the magistrate to accept the same bail for their appearance. He pointed out that the prisoners had surrendered.

Mr Lane QC declined to accept the same bail, because there was a *prima facie* case of a murderous assault, and in all probability there would be a committal. He refused bail for Chester, and said he would allow sureties for the other prisoners with notice to the police.

The prisoners were then remanded.

[Note names are shown as Charter and Ashley not Chester and Ashby in the article following Also witness Blomfield/Bloomfield]

72 August 15 1896

WEST LONDON

ALLEGED EXTRAORDINARY TREATMENT **William Ashley**, 32, a waterman of 18 Wernington Road ; **Edward Charter**, 29, of 69 Acklam Road ; **George Lee**, 23, of 75 Acklam Road ; and Charles William Jackson, 23, a gas service layer of 23, Southerton Road, Hammersmith, were charged on remand with violently assaulting James Goldsmith, living at 69 Acklam Road, North Kensington, and stealing a cigar box containing £1 13s 6d from his room. Mr St Bernard Wilson prosecuted, while Mr Pierron defended. The nature of the assault was of an extraordinary character. On the 4th ult Charles Bloomfield, a lodger at 69 Acklam Road, was awakened from his sleep, and heard what he described as a terrible noise on the first floor. He got out of bed, and saw several men, including, it was alleged, the prisoners, dragging the prosecutor upstairs by his legs. They then attempted to throw him out of the window, and Bloomfield exclaimed, "For God's sake don't do that". The men dropped the complainant and made for him, but he retreated into his room and shut the door. The men afterwards threw the complainant down a flight of stairs, and then jumped upon him. His head was taken hold of and knocked violently against the stairs, while other men maltreated him with a pair of tongs. Police-constable 433X was attracted to the house by cries of "Police!" and "Help!" and on entering the passage was thrown out with great force, and fell flat on the pavement. The complainant was subsequently rescued and removed to St Mary's Hospital, where his injuries were attended to. He attended the court looking very ill, and denied having provoked the attack. All the prisoners were committed for trial.

73 August 29 1886

FOUR BRUTAL BULLIES GET SEVERELY PUNISHED FOR A CRUEL ASSAULT At the London County Sessions before Mr McConnell, sitting at Clerkenwell, **William Ashby**, 33, waterman ; **Edward Chuter**, 29, watchman ; Charles William Jackson, 23, bricklayer ; and **George Lee**, 23, labourer, were indicted for having maliciously wounded one James Goldsmith ; for having occasioned his wife, Jane Goldsmith, actual bodily harm ; and for assaulting Police-constable Arthur Pollard in the execution of his duty.

Mr Raymond prosecuted, whilst Mr Keith Frith defended all the men except Jackson, who was represented by Dr Cooney.

James Goldsmith, painter, who resides with his wife at 69 Acklam Road, North Kensington, stated that on Saturday night, July 4, he with his wife and baby retired to rest. During the night, witness had occasion to go to his door, where he saw three men. He called to Chuter, who lived in the house, and then closed and locked his (prosecutor's) door, which was immediately afterwards burst open. Chuter entered, Lee and Ashby following. They seized the prosecutor by the throat, threw him to the ground, where he was kicked by the three "gentlemen" named, who then dragged him upstairs to the top landing. Lee having opened the window, the witness was lifted up. "Out of the window with him", cried Chuter, and his companions attempted to carry out his command, he himself assisting in forcing one leg and shoulder outside. A witness named Bloomfield exclaimed, "For God's sake, don't throw him out of the window". The assailants then released their hold, dropping the prosecutor to the floor. They ran downstairs, Chuter returning with a broom and striking witness on the head with it. He was again seized and thrown down a whole flight of stairs, the prisoners and others falling on him. Ashby told Chuter to "kick his chest in". The latter kicked him in the right side, and other persons not in custody assaulted him. Jackson only kicked him once. Some tongs were then produced, Chuter striking him several times about the face and head. Prosecutor retreated into his room, followed by the accused and others, who punched him with their fists. His wife was in bed with the baby when Ashby, Lee and Chuter pulled her to the floor. The bedclothes were seized and dragged off the bed violently, so that "the baby went from one side of the room to the other, but it never bruised the poor little fellow". Whilst witness was lying on the floor unable to stand, Ashby snatched his watch and chain from the table. His wife struggled to regain possession, and was successful. Jackson ran into the apartment and picked up a cigar box containing 33s 6d and made his exit. Jackson did not return, but the empty box was thrown in, it striking Mrs Goldsmith on the back of the neck. Chuter, "to finish", smashed the ornaments in the room with the tongs. During this time, the wife had screamed "Police" and "Murder", and Police-constable Pollard 433X arriving, she unbolted the door to let him in. The officer was pushed out by Chuter and several others. He fell back on his head on the pavement, and was rendered insensible. Other officers arrived, and Pollard regained consciousness. The prosecutor was assisted downstairs by the police, and gave the prisoners – with the exception of Jackson, who was arrested later – into custody. Witness was conveyed to the station, and afterwards to St Mary's Hospital. He informed the Court that he had given no provocation to the accused men, and had always been friendly.

The defence was that Goldsmith commenced the disturbance, and on behalf of Jackson his brother gave evidence that they were singing songs in Chuter's room, and the prosecutor knocked on the floor several times, requesting them to desist. Chuter and Ashby went upstairs, whilst witness with his brother followed later to protect the prosecutor, who was on the ground being hit by the two men.

The jury convicted all prisoners. Chuter has been several times in prison and suffered five years penal servitude.

The learned Chairman said it was an exceedingly unprovoked, ferocious, brutal and vicious attack on an unoffending man who was peaceably sleeping. Chuter would be sentenced to nine, Ashby to six and Lee and Jackson each to four months' hard labour.

74 October 31 1896

THAMES

A CHURCH ARMY TRANSACTION **Samuel George Green**, a lighterman, was charged with stealing £13, the moneys of the Rev W Carlisle, secretary of the Church Army. Mr G H Young, who prosecuted, stated that on October 13 prisoner was engaged by the manager of the Church Army's Forge wharf at Limehouse to convey a load of firewood to Oxford. He was to start on the following Friday. On that day he was given £13 to pay canal dues and tolls, and a man named **Roach** was engaged to assist him. About 5 pm that day, he left the barge, telling Roach that he would be back at nine o'clock, but he never returned. Nothing was seen of him till Tuesday, when he was arrested near Westminster Bridge, and £6 only was then found upon him. Prisoner said that owing to the rain he had been unable to take the barge out. Stress of weather prevented him starting, and of course he had used some of the money advanced him. Mr Dickinson said there was nothing to substantiate a charge of larceny, and discharged the accused.

75 November 14 1896

A RASH ELOPEMENT

SUFFERING OF THE YOUNG PAIR Frank Cook, 21, a barman with no fixed abode, who was arrested at Oxford, was placed in the dock before Mr Rose at the West London Police Court, charged with unlawfully taking a young girl named **Emma Pearce** from the custody of her parents, who resided in Chancellor's Road, Hammersmith.

The mother said that her husband was a waterman, and her daughter was 17 in October last. She did not know the prisoner. On the morning of October 10, she scolded her daughter for keeping late hours. Her daughter went out and never returned. Her husband searched for the girl, but could not find her. On October 29, she received a letter from Cook and took it to the police. That morning she met her daughter on her arrival at Addison Road Station.

The Prisoner : Did you tell your daughter you would not let her go home any more? - No.

The Prisoner : She told me you said you would not let her go home any more.

Mr Rose : She went away against your will?

The Mother : Yes, sir.

The girl gave evidence, and said she had known the prisoner for about three months. She made his acquaintance by going for beer at the Rifleman, Fulham Palace Road, where he was employed as barman. He left seven weeks ago, and she met him twice afterwards accidentally. He went to the Star and Garter, Sloane Square, and she went once there to see him. She saw him several times afterwards, and walked with him about Fulham all one night. The next morning her mother scolded and told her to go out of the house. She left home in consequence of what her mother said to her.

Mr Rose : Where was your father? - At work.

The girl went on to state that she met the prisoner by appointment in the Broadway, and told him that her mother would not have her at home any longer. He said he did not like to see her walking about by herself, and asked her why she did not go home. She said she did not dare to go home, and went with him to a coffee house in Praed Street. The next night they walked about.

The Chief Clerk : What was the reason?

The Girl (crying) : Because we had not got any money. All the next week they walked about the streets, the prisoner begging for food. On Monday the 19th, they started to walk to Oxford, and reached that place on the following Sunday. At night a lady took her to a home of refuge.

Mr Rose read a letter written by the girl to her parents, asking to be forgiven, and stating that Cook kept her out late, and made her do it.

The Prisoner (to the girl) : Did you say you were very fond of me, and would not leave me? - Yes.

Is it my fault? Did I lead you away? - No. I said I would go where you went. I did not say we would live together ; he said so. I told him I was sixteen when I first met him.

One of the sisters of the Home for Young Girls at Oxford gave evidence as to seeing the girl and the prisoner walking about in a forlorn condition. She spoke to them, and induced the girl to accompany her to the home.

Detective-sergeant West of the T Division, deposed that on Thursday morning he found the prisoner detained at the city of Oxford police station. He read the warrant to the prisoner, who said, "I know I have done wrong, and am sorry for it. I wrote to her parents to tell them where she was". At the request of the police, Mr Rose granted a formal remand.

76 December 19 1896

SOUTHWARK

FRACAS IN A FRIED FISH SHOP **Alfred Thomas Roden**, 22, lighterman's apprentice, of Dockhead, was charged on remand with stealing 18s, the moneys of Joseph Luper. Mr H L Sydney defended. The prosecutor, a foreigner, keeps a fried fish shop in Parker's Row, Bermondsey, and on a previous occasion stated that on the evening of November 21 the prisoner came to his shop and begged for a piece of fish. As he was in the act of getting the fish, the prisoner snatched and secured 18s, which was on a shelf behind the counter. He (Luper) endeavoured to stop the theft, when the prisoner struck him in the face. As the man was escaping, the prosecutor's wife hurled a salt pot at him, and hit him in the eye with it, thereby disfiguring him. He recognised the prisoner because his eye was disfigured. Three witnesses were called by the prosecutor, all of whom were foreigners, and who recognised the prisoner by the marked eye. For the defence, witnesses were called to prove an alibi. Mr George Chabot, landlord of the White Hart, swore that the prisoner was in his house up to closing time on Saturday November 21. Three other persons corroborated, and one witness deposed that he caused the injury to the prisoner's eye the night previous. Police-constable Furniss, 230M, who arrested the prisoner, produced excellent characters. Detective Haigh, M Division, also gave evidence that the prosecutor gave an entirely different description of the man who had committed the theft, and also that it was not until after the prisoner had been arrested that the prosecutor mentioned about the injured eye. Mr Fenwick remarked that it was certainly a case for a jury, and accordingly committed the prisoner for trial, allowing bail.

77 January 9 1897

NEW YEAR'S EVE CUSTOMS ON THE RIVER Among the oldest of the surviving customs in connection with the City companies is that known as the "Watermen's Greeting", a custom peculiar to the "fellowship" on the birth of the New Year. From time immemorial, it has been the established custom for every licensed waterman navigating a barge or boat on the river Thames on New Year's Eve, from Gravesend to Teddington Weir, at the concluding stroke of midnight of the Old Year, to cry out, "A Happy New Year to all free of the river ; a tight craft and a strong tide", a wish which was returned by all within hearing.

With the introduction of the steam tugs, a new departure has been made. Whilst still adhering to the ancient greeting, the crews in charge, who must be freemen or apprentices on the river, in addition use their sirens and steam whistles indiscriminately. At midnight the steam is turned on, and for some ten minutes from Woolwich, the Pool, and further up above bridge, the whole length of the river reverberates with discordant sounds.

Up to within a comparatively recent period in Limehouse reach, it was the custom to serve out hot ale free to the crew of the first barge passing Limehouse Point after midnight. This no longer obtains, but the "greeting" still survives.

78 February 6 1897

AMUSING BARGE CASE A good deal of amusement was got out of a claim for £1 19s made at Bow County Court by a young bargeman named **Edward Smith** against **C F Webster**, barge owner, for navigating the barge *James*. The defence was that the voyage was delayed.

Plaintiff said he navigated the barge as quickly as wind and tide permitted.

Defendant : Why, he lost four tides.

Judge French : How was that, plaintiff?

Plaintiff : When I started, I was driven into Deptford by the wind. There I had a collision.

Defendant : That accounts for one tide. What about three others?

Plaintiff : The wind was dead agin me all the way.

Defendant : Wind. What a lie! (Laughter) There wasn't a capful. Where were you Thursday night?

Plaintiff : Off Deptford.

Defendant : Were you not in the town?

Plaintiff : Could I carry the barge in the town?

Defendant : No ; you left it to the mercy of the thieves on the river.

Mr Haynes : He is adding pirates to the other dangers of the deep.

Defendant : Oh, don't you be so sharp. There are plenty of pirates on the Thames.

Mr Haynes : This was a two handed barge, and you were all alone?

Plaintiff : Yes, I was all by myself.

Mr Haynes : And there were goods to the value of £120 on board?

Plaintiff : There was.

Mr Haynes : Then you could not have done much against the pirates. (Laughter)

Defendant : When he came and asked for the money, I told him he should have taken a tug.

A verdict was given for the plaintiff.

79 February 13 1897

BURSTING OF A BOILER

TWO MEN KILLED

EXTRAORDINARY ESCAPES The steam lighter *Hero*, belonging to Messrs J and J Hay, shipping agents, Glasgow and Grangemouth, was passing through No 4 lock on the Forth and Clyde Canal on Thursday afternoon when the boiler burst. The lighter was being raised from the lower to the higher level when the accident happened. The master, **Robert Shaw**, was blown a considerable distance in the air and, although alive when he reached ground, expired soon afterwards. A lighterman named **John Baxter** was also killed. His body is believed to be beneath the lighter. The stern of the vessel, which sank almost immediately, was blown away.

The canal is completely blocked. The mate, **Henry McCann**, had a marvellous escape. He was raising the sluices of the lock when the explosion occurred, and was blown by the force of the explosion a distance of thirty yards along the canal. Fortunately he landed in the water, and was able to swim to the bank, escaping with little injury. The lock-keeper, a man named **Muir**, was severely injured by debris and had to be conveyed to his house ; while a woman named Fleming was injured by debris blown through a window into her house. In neither case are the injuries likely to have serious results. Three large pieces of the boiler were blown a considerable distance in different directions. The largest piece struck the corner of a brick building 200 yards away, and carried away a portion of it. The other was blown over a two storey tenement, and the third found its way into Abbott's Foundry, about 200 yards away. The sound of the explosion was heard several miles off, and windows of dwelling houses in the vicinity were broken by its force.

80 March 13 1897

WHOLESALE DEATHS IN ONE FAMILY Jane Webb of 35 Ainsty Street, Rotherhithe, was summoned before Mr Paul Taylor by Inspector Chown, of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, for neglecting her son William, aged three years. Mr M Phillips prosecuted in the case of neglect, and said that the defendant had had twelve children, of whom ten had died, all of them having been insured and he believed all healthy children at their birth. Catherine Webb and Lucy Webb of Adam Street, Rotherhithe, deposed to the filthy condition of the child when brought to their house. The first witness said she had been told by the defendant that she had left the child shut up in the house alone. Inspector Chown said the child was in a filthy state. The defendant told him that all the ten children had died under the age of fifteen months, and that she (the defendant) had the insurance money. Medical evidence having been given, the defendant's husband, a barge builder earning £2 a week, said he could not give his wife a regular allowance of money, because she spent it in dissipation. He believed the insurance on the child's life had run out.

His eldest child (aged 17) and the youngest were alive ; the ten others had died. The defendant said her husband abused her, and would not allow her money ; she could not get clothes for the children without money. Mr Paul Taylor said the statement with reference to the children had made an unfavourable impression upon his mind. He committed her for two months' imprisonment.

81 June 26 1897

MYSTERIOUS SUICIDE NEAR GRAVESEND An inquest was held at Gravesend on the body of a man unknown, apparently about 50 years of age, who was found floating in the river Thames with his hands tied behind his back and weighted with a stone, at Denton about two miles below Gravesend on Tuesday.

The body was picked out of the river about 2 pm by **Henry Allen**, master of the *Black Duck* sailing barge, who also recovered a rowing boat which was drifting.

Charles James Warner said the deceased hired the boat at 12 o'clock. He could row well, although he walked with a crutch.

A constable said the man was well dressed, and although only 5s 11 1/2d was found on the body, it was known that he had been possessed of a considerable sum. On the Monday night, he had slept at one of the Gravesend Hotels.

The Coroner, in summing up, commented upon the exceptionally mysterious nature of the case, and suggested an adjournment.

The jury were of opinion, however, that the case was one of suicide, and returned a verdict accordingly.

82 August 14 1897

WOOLWICH

A LIGHTERMAN'S LUXURIOUS TASTE **William Carrick**, 24, lighterman, no home, was charged before Mr Kennedy with stealing a case of champagne, value £6, from the barge *Ada*, in Galleons Basin, Royal Albert Docks, Woolwich, the property of the dock company. Thomas Creagh of the plain clothes dock police said the previous day he saw the prisoner leave the *Ada* on his way out. The witness took the prisoner back, and found that a case had been broken open and the champagne removed. He found the stolen wine in the barge *Emma*, when the prisoner acknowledged the theft. The case contained 24 bottles. Mr Kennedy : What brand is it? The Witness : I don't know, but a publican valued it at 5s a bottle. I found an iron bar which had been used to force the case in the barge *Ada*. Gaoler Gilham said the prisoner had been previously convicted for stealing a cask of whisky from the docks. The prisoner said that when he came out of prison his friends were going to send him to America. Mr Kennedy : You must do four months' hard labour first.

83 September 11 1897

EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF A BARGE BOY'S HEARTLESSNESS Mr George E Hilleary, the West Ham Coroner, held an inquiry at the Canning Town Coroner's Court with reference to the death of **Arthur Charles King**, aged 19 years, a lighterman's mate, late of 84 Lower Heath Street, Greenwich, who was found drowned in the Thames.

According to the evidence of Joseph Wallace, a boy of Albany Road, Brentford, he went with the deceased on Friday evening for a trip on the barge *Fritz*. On Saturday morning, they reached Silvertown, and the deceased got on to another barge for the purpose of shifting theirs, witness at the same time being at the head making it fast. On turning round, the deceased had disappeared.

The Coroner : What did you do?

Witness : I went to sleep. (Laughter)

The Coroner : What did you think had become of him?

Don't know, sir.

The Coroner : What happened when you woke up? - A man named James Gray pointed out the deceased to me, and said, "There is your mate, under the barge".

The Coroner ; Did you help to get him out? - No, sir.

The Coroner : What did you do? - I went and had some breakfast. (Laughter)

The Coroner : You seem a funny kind of boy. - Yes, sir. (Laughter)

The Coroner : Who is James Gray? - Don't know, sir.

Further evidence showed that the body of the deceased was found by the man James Gray, referred to by the boy Wallace, under the barge.

The Coroner pointed out that it appeared that the deceased fell into the water whilst endeavouring to shift his barge. There was, however, only the evidence of the boy Wallace, who certainly knew very little as to what happened.

The jury returned a verdict of found drowned.

84 September 25 1897

A COOL HEADED BRAVE BOY Mr E N Wood, Deputy Coroner, held an inquest at Bermondsey Town Hall on the body of **Sophia Jane Wilkins**, aged 55 years, who committed suicide on September 4 by hanging herself.

According to the evidence of William Windsor, a tanner residing at 76 Vienna Road, Bermondsey, the deceased was his mother-in-law, and used to live with him. She was the wife of a lighterman who had not been heard of for fourteen or fifteen years. Deceased used to think she was in the way. William Charles Windsor, aged 13, a grandson, stated that he returned home on Saturday morning after seeking his first situation, and found his grandmother hanging on her bedroom door suspended by a rope round her neck.

The Coroner : What did you do?

Witness : I cut her down.

The Coroner : You acted much more bravely than a great many men do when they find anybody hanging. Many run away and tell somebody else. What did you do next?

Witness : I ran and got some brandy and vinegar and water, but she was dead. I then went for my father.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst mentally deranged.

85 October 2 1897

A LUNATIC'S LAST SMOKE At Westminster, Mr J Troutbeck held an inquiry into the death of Joseph Mott, 29, a coachman lately living at 10 Coverdale Mews, Coverdale Road, Willesden Lane. Walter George Sheldon said the deceased, who was his brother-in-law, fell from a carriage some two years ago, and since then he had been strange in his head. A week ago he called on the witness, and said he was thinking about getting married, and last Tuesday he went to Suffolk on a visit to his sweetheart. His intended, however, was away from home, and the deceased went into her bedroom and turned the bedclothes and other things over, thinking she had hidden away from him. From there he proceeded to Brighton, where the police found him wandering. He was then fetched home. George Mansell stated that on Monday night he was walking along a path near the east end of the Serpentine when he saw the deceased, who was standing beside some railings, lighting a cigarette. He then walked calmly into the water to his neck, and remained smoking for about two minutes. The witness went to call the assistance of another man, and on his return the deceased had disappeared.

James Symes, a boatman, deposed to finding the body in seven feet of water.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide while insane.

86 January 1 1898

DROWNED IN THE FOG

A BARGEMAN'S PROMPTITUDE Mr Wynne E Baxter, coroner, held an inquiry at the Poplar Town Hall respecting the death of **Richard Petley Bostock**, aged 48 years, a lighterman late of 517 Southwark Park Road, Bermondsey.

The widow deposed that the deceased left home on Christmas Eve at a quarter past eight to go to his

barge, which he had to take to Millwall Docks.

Sidney Clegg, a bargeman of the Malta Inn, Boxley, near Maidstone, stated that he retired to rest at about half past eleven pm on Friday on the barge *Tovell*, which was anchored just below the entrance to Millwall Docks. About midnight he felt something collide with the barge and, running on deck in his shirt, he found that the barge the deceased was in charge of had run into the *Tovell*. Witness could see no one aboard the deceased's barge, but hearing a call for help, at once jumped into his boat and rescued the man from the water. Witness at once rowed to the pierhead and handed him over to the authorities there. It was foggy at the time.

The jury complimented the witness on his prompt action, and said that he was deserving of great praise.

Witness (to the coroner) : What about my expenses, sir? I had to pay a man to go up in my place today.

The Coroner : I cannot help it ; I can only pay you the ordinary witness's fee (1s).

Other evidence showed that every effort was made to bring the deceased round on the pierhead, and that ultimately he was restored to consciousness. He was then removed, by a doctor's orders, to the Poplar Workhouse, but on arrival there was found to be dead.

Doctor Brebner stated that death was due to shock from immersion.

A verdict of accidental death was returned.

87 January 1 1898

A DOCKER'S FATE Another inquiry was held by Mr Baxter concerning the death of **Charles Rand**, aged 69, a dock labourer late of 47 Hemsworth Road, Canning Town.

Charles Rand, a docker of 57 Dale Road, stated that he and his father were working on board the steamship *Echo* in the Millwall Dock all Thursday night last, and at six o'clock on Friday morning went ashore for breakfast with the rest of the gang. At seven o'clock, when about twenty men were returning to work, the fog was very dense. They had just reached the ship, and some of the men were on the gangway, when a splash in the water was heard. The drags were at once procured and the body, which proved to be that of witness's father, was recovered in about a quarter of an hour.

By the Jury : There were wires round the quay, but the men had to get underneath these in order to reach the ship.

The Coroner remarked that the conditions under which men worked in the docks were greatly improved compared with a few years ago, when in one week he held no fewer than twenty inquests upon the bodies of men who had fallen into the dock waters during the fog, but still there was considerable risk.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

88 January 22 1898

A double tragedy of an extraordinary nature was discovered at Hanwell on Sunday. Early in the morning the dead bodies of a man and a woman were found in the cabin of the barge *Azalea*, which had been moored all night in the canal near Hanwell. The body of the man was subsequently identified as that of John Sumpter, aged 33, and the woman as Jane Merritt, aged 36, both of no fixed abode. The barge was laden with gas lime, and was deserted at night by all the bargemen working it. It is supposed that Sumpter, who was known as a loose character in the locality, got into the barge with the woman Merritt the previous evening unperceived. Dr Hope, who examined the bodies, gave it as his opinion that death was due to suffocation by the fumes of the gas lime.

89 January 29 1898

MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERY IN THE EAST END

A MUTILATED BODY OF A WOMAN FOUND IN A CANAL Considerable excitement was caused in the East End on Thursday by the reported discovery of a woman's mutilated body in a sack at the rear of Shoreditch Church. The report proves to be incorrect, although a discovery of a somewhat similar character was made at Dalston. On Monday last, a human leg, supposed to be

that of a woman, was found in the Regent's Canal near the Cat and Mutton Bridge, Hackney. At the time it was thought not improbable that the leg had been used for dissecting purposes, and had been thrown away. Dragging operations, however, were instituted for the purpose of ascertaining whether any other portions of the body were in the canal, but these did not meet with success. On Thursday morning, a bargeman in the employment of the Canal Company, when in the neighbourhood of Queen's Road Bridge, saw a body floating near one of the barges. He got it to the bank and found it to be that of a woman fully dressed. Both legs were missing. The clothing was fairly good, and the body was very much decomposed. A few minutes later he found a leg, also floating in the water. The body and the leg were both placed in a sack and taken on a coster's barrow to the Shoreditch mortuary. Dr Jackmann, the divisional surgeon, was summoned, and after having examined the remains, stated that they were those of a woman, and had evidently been in the water about three weeks.

On Thursday night the police stated that the leg found in the canal on Monday undoubtedly belonged to the body discovered. The false report as to the supposed murder of a woman in Shoreditch and the finding of her mutilated corpse in a sack in a by street was, in all probability, caused by the moving of the body found in the canal in a sack to the mortuary. As to how the wounds about the body were caused, there is no evidence to show at present. The most likely theory is that they were inflicted by barges passing along the canal. Up to a late hour last evening, the body had not been identified. A representative of a news agency was informed at the Dalston Lane Police Station that there had been no notifications of missing women made there recently. It is impossible to say how the woman got into the water, or whether the case is one of suicide, accident or murder.

Dr Wynn Westcott, the coroner for North East London, will hold an inquest in the case at Shoreditch. Meanwhile, the police are making all possible inquiries into the case.

90 February 12 1898

THE MARRIED WOMAN'S ACT

A SINGULAR CASE A singular case under the Married Woman's Act of 1895 came before the Longton (Staffordshire) Bench.

William Slinn, a waterman, was summoned by his wife, who had not lived with him for nearly twenty years, for maintenance.

It was stated that in November 1879 he was convicted and sentenced to two months for an aggravated assault upon her, and that since then the woman had maintained herself.

In her evidence, Mrs Slinn stated that the reason she had not lived with her husband was because she was afraid to do so, but as she could no longer work she was unable to keep herself.

For the defence it was submitted that the summons should have been taken out within six months of the offence, although it was admitted that could not have been done, inasmuch as the Act was not then in existence. The objection was overruled and an order made.

Notice of appeal was given.

91 February 26 1898

DISGRACEFUL OUTRAGE BY A BREWER'S DRAYMAN A story of a remarkable outrage was investigated by the Clerkenwell magistrates, when George Fisher, drayman in the employ of Messrs Barclay, Perkins and Co, brewers, was summoned for assaulting **Thomas Charter**. The complainant is a waterman in the service of the Road Car Company, on duty outside the Hare and Hounds public house, Upper Street, Islington. On January 25, the defendant was annoyed at not being able to draw up in front of the house, owing to a bus standing in the way. He called upon the complainant to move the bus on, but Charter was unable to comply with the request for some three minutes. Fisher, after abusing the complainant, threw some stale "bottoms" from a cask over him, and putting a rope round his neck, threatened to lower him down the cellar of the public house. Later, while Charter was chaining the wheel of another bus, the defendant came up behind him, and gripping him firmly between his knees, proceeded to rub a quantity of cartgrease well into his hair,

eyes, ears and face. Complainant was blinded for the time, and it took several hours and three pails of hot water to remove the filthy mixture.

Mr Horace Smith imposed a fine and costs amounting to £5, in default one month's imprisonment.

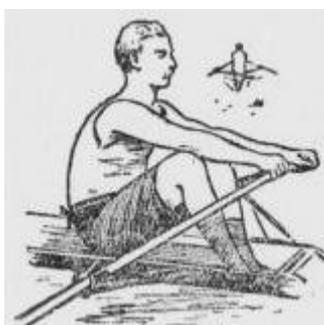
92 August 13 1898

DOGGETT'S COAT AND BADGE On Wednesday last, six sturdy young watermen were to be found in their wager boats, moored just above London Bridge, ready to compete for the time honoured Doggett's Coat and Badge.

As most of my readers know, the course is from London Bridge to Chelsea, a distance of five miles, and as no course is kept for them, the conditions are often such as would try the most experienced of watermen.

The youngsters who had elected to try their skill came from all parts of the river, from Greenwich to Chiswick, their names being **Armstrong, Driscoll, Kenerson, Carter, Pizzle** and **Mills**.

The weather was beautifully fine, but a strong wind made the water very rough, and in some places it was a regular sea to row through. All the lads, however, stuck gamely to their task and finished the trying course.



When the pistol was fired, just before three o'clock, Carter of Greenwich was off like a flash, and immediately showed in front. He settled down to a fine swinging stroke, and thus early in the race he looked all over a winner.

He speedily got clear, and when Blackfriars was reached he was half a dozen lengths to the good. Driscoll, Armstrong and Pizzle were all of a heap behind him, while Kenerson and Mills were right out of it, and acted as whippers in for the whole distance.

From Waterloo it was any odds on Carter, and although Armstrong made a grand spurt opposite the Hotel Cecil, the leader kept his position and was fully eighty yards to the good.

From Westminster to Lambeth very rough water was met, and Armstrong got a lot of wash from a tug near Battersea that upset him a lot. Still it is very doubtful if it affected the results at all, as Carter had any amount of go in him at the finish, and after a very hard row in very rough water he came in a winner by just over half a minute, and thus won the Coat and Badge and £10.

Armstrong was second, while the rest tailed off for about a mile.

93 September 3 1898

A RIVER MYSTERY

BATTERSEA MAN FOUND DROWNED ON THE EVE OF HIS WEDDING On Saturday evening Mr Walter Schroder, the deputy coroner, opened an inquiry at the Church Room, Richmond, with reference to the death of Peter John Chaplin, a plumber lately residing at 16 Rollo Street, Battersea Park Road, who was found dead in the Thames opposite Syon House, Isleworth, in very mysterious circumstances.

William Chaplin, a tailor's cutter of 43 Fontarabia Road, Lavender Hill, stated that the deceased, who was his brother, was to have been married that day. He was on excellent terms with his fiancée, and was out with her on Sunday, when he was in the best of spirits. He had no troubles, and so far as the witness knew, was friendly with everybody. He had provided the greater part of his home, and the rest of the furniture he was going to get on Tuesday, the day of his disappearance. His honeymoon was to have been spent in Hastings. He was supposed to have over £40 in a loan

society or club after paying for his furniture, but no trace of the papers or book could be found. His sister and a young lady had seen his bank book, showing a balance of more than £40. Witness did not know the name of the bank. His brother had had no quarrel with his young lady. He was at work all Tuesday, and was not seen again after leaving his place of business that evening. He was in the habit of planning his arrangements for the day and writing them down.

The Coroner (reading) : Withdraw money from bank ; measure bedroom and parlour for oilcloth and carpet ; obtain certificate of banns ; make arrangements for wedding, 19 Stockwell Green (verger's address) ; buy carpet, oilcloth and tea service ; order broughams”.

The witness identified the writing as his brother's.

The Coroner said there was another entry which no doubt referred to his forthcoming honeymoon. It ran : “Trains – Vic five o'clock, 6.50 : Clapham Junc, 6.58 : Hastings, 7.43, 9.40”.

Witness went on to say that the deceased's disappearance was reported to the police. He had not been to Rollo Street since he left on Tuesday morning. He had no illness, and was of a lively disposition. He was looking forward with pleasure to his approaching marriage, he and his intended wife being thoroughly wrapped up in each other.

By the Coroner : He was last with his young lady on Monday evening. He always wore a watch and chain, but neither was found upon him.

John Hayes, a porter of 10 Gladstone Terrace, Battersea Park Road, who said he was the deceased's only “chum” and was going to be his best man at the wedding, deposed that he saw him for the last time at midday on Sunday, when he was as usual, and was talking about his marriage. He made no remark from which witness could gather that he did not wish to get married.

Mr Chaplin (deceased's brother) : His young lady tells me that my brother said, “I must see Jack Hayes at his house on Sunday night”. What was that for?

Witness : I don't know. I saw him at 1 30. He would not stay to dinner. He said he was going to his young lady's at Clapham.

In reply to further questions, the witness emphatically denied that he called upon the deceased's fiancée and asked her for a recent specimen of Chaplin's writing, but he admitted having been to Fulham since his friend's disappearance and made inquiries about the money in the loan society. He did this unknown to the family, and because he wished to learn whether anyone saw him take the money.

By the Jury : The object of his visit to Fulham was to ascertain whether the deceased had drawn his money.

Mr Chaplin : Where did you go when you were trying to find John? (To the Coroner) : I ask this because none of us could find this young man (indicating the witness).

Witness : I beg your pardon ; if you ask your sister, you will find I called. I have thrown up my job to look for my “chum”. I think the way you are questioning me is a shame. I don't think I am on my trial.

Mr Chaplin : I appeal to the coroner.

The witness went on to say that he believed the deceased had met with foul play.

The Coroner : Why do you say that? Many things might have happened to him.

Witness : Because he was not a fellow to drown himself, and I knew he was too straightforward to leave the girl.

Richard Simms, a lighterman of 32 Church Street, Isleworth, spoke to finding the body of the deceased in the river on Thursday afternoon. All his pockets were filled with pebbles from the shore, and he was without a watch and chain.

Dr Matthew Henry Gardner, the divisional surgeon, who made a *post mortem* examination, stated that the deceased was perfectly healthy. On his head he found a lacerated and contused wound a quarter of an inch in diameter, and extending in depth to the bone. It contained a little sand and grit, and was unquestionably inflicted during life. The wound was compatible with a fall from a moderate height into shallow water or a severe blow, but it did not cause death, and he was doubtful whether it produced insensibility. Death was due to suffocation by drowning.

At this juncture, the Coroner said the case had assumed a serious aspect. It would not be right in the

public interest to close the inquiry, which would be taken up by the detective department. The case was adjourned for a fortnight.

94 **October 29 1898**

BARGEMEN'S ATROCIOUS CRUELTY TO A GIRL

OTHER MEN LOOK ON, BUT DON'T INTERFERE A remarkable case of brutal assault upon a young girl came on for hearing at the Essex Quarter Sessions, when **Benjamin Williamson**, 46, a bargeman, and **Thomas Hook**, 24, a lighterman, were charged with maltreating and maliciously wounding a servant girl named Catherine Thrower at Shoeburyness on September 23. Williamson pleaded guilty to the charge, but the other man denied everything.

Mr Jones, who prosecuted, said that the girl had been employed as a general servant in London up to the end of August, when she left her situation. One day, as she was watching the river craft go by on the Embankment, she saw the prisoners in their barge, and got into conversation with them. She told them that she wanted very much to go to Yarmouth, and they agreed to take her there. On September 23 the barge reached Shoeburyness, and the prisoners went on shore. Later on in the evening they came back drunk, and assaulted the prosecutrix for two hours "with everything they could lay their hands on". There were six men at work on the barge, but not one raised a finger in the assistance of the poor girl, who was so seriously injured that her life was for some time despaired of. She had received injuries which would last her all her life. Her brain was very seriously affected, and counsel was afraid that it would never be any better.

In bearing out her counsel's opening statement, prosecutrix said that Williamson had cut her head open with a chopper, in addition to kicking her many times. When the men were assaulting her, she screamed out for help, but the men who were engaged in unloading the barge took not the slightest notice of her. She wanted to go to Yarmouth for the purpose of obtaining a situation.

Driver Cox of the Royal Artillery said that he saw Hook knock down the girl twice, and threaten to murder her if she came on deck again. Williamson struck her on the head with the sharp edge of a bowl. As the girl went below, one of the men threw several buckets of water over her. Subsequently witness went on board with the police, and found prosecutrix lying in the cabin, insensible.

William Newman, a labourer who was engaged on the barge and saw the assault, said that he didn't interfere, whereupon the chairman of the Bench remarked that he ought to be ashamed of himself.

Police-constable Born said that when he went to arrest the men, Williamson tried to throw him overboard. The medical evidence showed that the girl had received terrible injuries, and it was a wonder that she had not died from them.

Lord Rookwood, in summing up, said that the case was one of the worst he had ever heard of. Happily, such enormities were very rarely committed.

The prisoners were sentenced to five years' imprisonment each.

95 **November 26 1898**

THE RECENT DEATH OF A BOXER

PROCEEDINGS AT BOW STREET

COMMITTAL OF THE OFFICIALS FOR TRIAL On Thursday at Bow Street, Nathaniel Smith, carpenter, Bravington Road, Harrow Road ; Arthur Gutteridge, butcher, North Road, Caledonian Road ; Bernard John Angle, stockbroker, 14, Buckingham Road ; Arthur Bettinson, manager of the National Sporting Club ; Eugene Corri, stockbroker, The Hollies, Epsom ; and **Barney Shepherd**, waterman, South Island Place, Clapham Road, were charged on remand, before Sir John Bridge, with being concerned together in the manslaughter of Thomas Turner at the National Sporting Club at Covent Garden.

Mr C Mathews defended.

Sub Divisional Inspector Purdo explained that all the prisoners, with the exception of Barney Shepherd, were charged last week. On Thursday morning, Shepherd surrendered himself at Bow Street, he having been one of the seconds in the glove fight. When he was formally charged he

made no reply.

Arthur Smith, house surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital, repeated the evidence he gave at the inquest on the deceased man.

Mr Mathews argued that there was no evidence against the prisoners, with the exception of Smith.

Sir John Bridge said he was satisfied that practically all the prisoners had taken part in the contest.

Counsel went on to submit that there was no case for him to answer, a glove contest of this nature not being illegal. He cited decided cases in support of his contention, that in the case of death resulting from manly sports and exercises, the persons concerned were to be held free of liability. In a case in which death resulted from a boxing contest in a private room, Baron Bramwell said it was difficult to say what offence there was to answer, sparring with gloves being a lawful sport and not in itself dangerous to life, and there was certainly no breach of the peace. The jury in that case brought in a verdict of non guilty in accordance with the learned judge's remarks.

Sir J Bridge pointed out that it had not been proved that the gloves used in the contest at the National Sporting Club would not be dangerous.

Mr Mathews said that he could prove, if necessary, that as they were 5 oz gloves, the fists of the contestants were more protected than was usual. It was a contest of skill, not of endurance, points being given for skill in sparring, not the weight of the blows.

Sir J Bridge said the question before him was whether this was or was not more than a sparring match, it being a match with gloves for money, and therefore coming under the same description as a prize fight, in which a person fought another for money or reward.

Mr Mathews said there was a great difference, a prize fight being a contest of endurance in which the parties fought with bare fists. There was a further decision arising from a case heard at this Court last year. There, too, there was a contest with gloves for a money prize, and Sir James Vaughan remanded the case for the attendance of the Treasury solicitor, in order that he might learn from the authorities whether such a contest was against the law. On the remand, Mr Sims (representing the Director of Public Prosecutions) said he was unable to find anything to show that this contest was of the nature of a prize fight, and he could not think that any jury would find the prisoners guilty of manslaughter. Sir J Vaughan therefore released the defendants.

Sir J Bridge said that whether legal or illegal, he must regard such contests as dangerous and likely to kill.

Mr Mathews said this club had been in existence over seven years, and some 2,000 contests had been fought there, in which there had been only two casualties. That was sufficient to show that such contests were not dangerous. In this particular case, there was evidence to show that the man who died was in a condition which rendered him liable to heart failure from the slightest exertion. How many deaths had there been in the cricket and football fields, through racing and steeple-chasing during the last year?

Sir J Bridge said that it was certain that boxing contests with gloves were not merely a lawful proceeding, but it would be of very great importance if it should be decided anywhere that they were illegal. It was necessary and right that young men should become experts in boxing as in all other manly exercises, but the question now to be decided was whether there was anything in this particular case which was different from other cases of sparring with gloves. In this case, the contest had been one of a money prize, and he could not help thinking that in such case it was a fight – a prize fight – and therefore illegal. It was not illegal in the sense that it was criminal ; but, if any one of those engaged in it were to receive injuries resulting in death, those who took part in it should be answerable to the law for having caused the manslaughter of the person by engaging in an unlawful sport. He did not say that the circumstances were that conviction would follow or ought to follow, but in cases where death ensued from practices which were more or less illegal, then the parties concerned must go before a jury to answer the charge of having caused the death. This was certainly a case for a jury to say whether manslaughter had been committed or not, and he should commit the prisoners for trial on their own recognisances of £50 each.

In reply to the formal questions from the Bench, prisoners said they had nothing to say.

Inspector Pardo asked permission to amend his evidence by stating that on the printed paper he

received at the club, there was no mention of the contest having been for a prize, but he had learned that there was a prize when in conversation with the prisoners.

The accused then left the dock and, after a formal visit to the clerk's office, were again at liberty.

96 December 17 1898

WESTMINSTER

SPORTING BARGEMAN Edward Pearce of Lower Rainham, Kent, mate of the sailing barge *Borstal* of Rochester, was summoned before Mr Shiel under the Thames Conservancy Act, for discharging firearms from the barge while on the Thames off Pimlico. It was shown that defendant fired at a number of seagulls and, in pleading guilty, the defendant said he did not know that he was doing any harm. He had done wrong in ignorance. There was no desire on the part of the Thames Conservancy Board to be severe and Mr Shiel imposed a penalty of 5s. A second summons against the defendant for carrying firearms without a licence was supported by Mr Hawkins on behalf of the Excise authorities. Mr Shiel said he did not want to be hard on the defendant, who had apparently erred in ignorance. There would be a fine of 10s and 2s costs.

97 December 17 1898

SERIOUS DAMAGE TO SOUTHEND PIER

CUT IN TWO BY A PLEASURE BOAT An extraordinary accident occurred on Saturday morning about ten o'clock, whereby the pier, the pride and attraction of Southend, was cut in two pieces, and damage done to the extent of nearly £2,000. Curiously enough, the mischief was caused by a small pleasure yacht called the *Dolphin*, of about eighty tons, which for some time has been anchored off the pier. A strong wind was blowing from the west, and there was a fairly heavy sea. When the *Dolphin* began to drag its anchor, shortly after nine o'clock, it was soon noticed to be drifting on to the pier, and just before ten o'clock the vessel crashed broadside on to the structure, about fifty yards south of the last shelter.

The stout cast iron piles snapped like carrots, the decking was dislodged and fell, the tramway line was destroyed, and the length of ironwork forming the western boundary was severed from its connection. The vessel cradled itself between the broken ends of the iron piles, and sank as the tide ebbed. The pier, for about ninety feet, was completely wrecked and severed in two. On board the *Dolphin* were a crew of three men and the part owner. As she began to move towards the pier, the crew, taken apparently by surprise, made a hasty attempt to rig a sail forward, but this effort proved useless. When the boat crashed into the pier, one of the girders fell athwart her, doing considerable damage, while the wind rocked the boat from pillar to pillar. One by one the crew managed to clamber on to the pier from the rigging. It was some time before the decking of the pier collapsed. The swaying of the brig snapped the easternmost couple of piles, and nothing was then left to support the top planking of the pier. This, with the railway protection rails, tie rods and girders fell with a crash upon the vessel, the pier being cut clean in two.

All the damage was done in a few minutes, and few people noticed the accident until their attention was called to it by the shouting of the crew. Among the first who had notice of it were five amateur fishermen who, while casting their lines from the pier-head, were cut off from the shore by the accident. Ultimately two watermen succeeded in getting a small boat, the *Britannia*, out to their assistance. Men were at work all the afternoon with a view to releasing the vessel, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

98 December 24 1898

A HOMELESS MOTHER'S ACT A very sad and pathetic story was told at Westminster, when Sarah Moore, twenty, a servant with no home, was charged before Mr Shell with trying to destroy her illegitimate child by throwing it over the river embankment on to the foreshore at Chelsea.

The evidence showed that the accused was confined in Chelsea Workhouse Infirmary, and that she was discharged on Thursday with her girl baby. After wandering about till seven in the evening, she made her way to the Embankment and from there, it is alleged, flung her child over the parapet, as

she thought, into the water.

The story of the miraculous escape of the infant was told by a waterman named **Magner**. He heard that a baby was on the shore, and searched along the riverside.

On a small island of ballast, with deep water around, he saw the baby. A deep drain was close by, and witness had to take off his clothes and wade higher than his waist to get to the child, which was fully dressed and uninjured. When he got the infant, it opened its eyes and began crying. The baby must have been dropped 25 or 26 feet, and, but for alighting on the island, could not have been saved.

During the evidence, the prisoner sobbed bitterly.

A police matron said that the accused told her that she had only been three weeks confined, and that she felt strange and very weak. Witness asked her about the baby, and she said, "I only came out of Chelsea Workhouse in the morning, and I lost my purse with what little money I had. That drove me to do what I did, for I had nowhere to go and no home. I am only sorry that I did not throw myself over too".

The accused was remanded, Mr Shell rewarding the witness **Magner** for rescuing the baby.

99 January 7 1899

FOOTBALL OUT OF PLACE

FATAL SCRAMBLE AT THE CORN EXCHANGE Mr E N Wood held an inquest at Bermondsey on the body of William Lewis, 22.

Mr Edmund Lewis, the father, said he was a lighterman living at 18 Lockwood Road. His son lived with him, and was a corn sampler. Witness and his son were at the Corn Exchange on Friday December 23, when a scrimmage took place, three or four footballs being kicked about. Witness saw his son in the crowd and on the ground several times, but he could not get at him to rescue him. The Coroner : Were there no policemen there to keep order?

Witness : None at all. Continuing, witness said that when he next saw his son on the Sunday morning, he found he was ill in bed. Deceased's twin brother was "like it before", and he was sent to hospital, and died in a few hours. Deceased was taken to Guy's on Monday, and died the same evening.

In answer to the coroner, witness said that it was customary to play with footballs at the Exchange at breaking up time. It was not a proper game, but just kicking the ball about.

A Juror : Was it very rough play, such as would not be tolerated in a game?

Witness : Very rough horseplay. All the stands have to be closed through the scrimmage.

In answer to Mr Druce, who appeared for the Exchange authorities, witness said there were attendants at the Exchange but, as far as he knew, their duties were simply to attend the doors.

Mr Sidney Young, secretary to the Corn Exchange, said the authorities did not expect football to take place, and had tried to put it down when (*it*) did, but had not succeeded.

The Foreman : I trust, sir, you will make a special effort to stop this footballing in future years.

Witness : It is a Christmas game, and indulged in many such places, although it is not allowed.

Dr Rusby of Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, said death was due to strangulated hernia.

Dr Booker, house surgeon at Guy's hospital, said he attended deceased when he was admitted. He did not think the hernia was brought about by external injury. Deceased had suffered before.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased died from strangulated hernia, accidentally caused by a football scrimmage at the Corn Exchange. They added a rider that the Corn Exchange authorities were to blame for permitting football to be played at Christmas or any other time.

Mr Druce said steps would be taken by the Corn Exchange authorities to obtain further statutory powers to stop the game in future.

100 February 11 1899

STRATFORD

"A TIRESOME OLD WOMAN" **Hannah Broughton**, 42, the wife of the captain of a barge lying in the Royal Albert Docks, was charged with being disorderly at North Woolwich. Constable

Larner, 475K, said that at 9.30 on Tuesday week, he found the prisoner at Elizabeth Street. She was surrounded by a crowd, and could not be persuaded to go away. When arrested, she was very violent ; she threw herself to the ground, and the assistance of an officer in plain clothes had to be got. The prisoner said she went into a beerhouse and called for some beer, when the constable in plain clothes asked her to treat him. She refused, and he then said, "Then you shan't drink here". She had sipped her beer, but was turned out, and her money was kept. Whenever this constable saw her, he wanted drink. She had not been out of the dock long. He always stopped her, and if she did not treat him she got run in. Constable Brown, 428K, the officer referred to, said he was not in the beerhouse spoken of, and he had never had the prisoner in custody. Mr Burnett Tabrum : Have you ever said that if she did not give you a drink you would lock her up? No. Mr Burnett Tabrum : You are a very tiresome old woman, but we will give you one more chance. You must pay 5s and costs, or go to gaol for seven days.

101 February 18 1899

SINGULAR FATALITY IN THE THAMES A three masted schooner, the *Rose Hill*, owned by W Price and Co of Liverpool, foundered in the Thames off Barking on Wednesday afternoon, **Captain Jensen**, his wife and two children being drowned. The vessel had been lying in the Thames for a fortnight after discharging her cargo at Lawes's chemical manure works. Her crew, with the exception of the captain and mate, had been discharged, as the owners contemplated selling the vessel. A strong wind blew on Wednesday, and the tide in the Thames was very high in the afternoon. The vessel being light and without ballast, the ropes with which she was fastened snapped, and she was blown completely on to her side.

Lloyd, the mate, told a Central News reporter the following story : "About three o'clock in the afternoon, the captain and I went in a boat to the quay for the purpose of posting a letter. While we were rowing back, and when about fifty yards from the ship, we saw her suddenly heel over to port, and in the twinkling of an eye she was on her beam's end. Simultaneously with the heeling of the ship, we heard screams for help by Mrs Jensen, and we saw the two children roll overboard. Without a moment's hesitation Captain Jensen jumped into the water and swam in the direction of the poor children. I saw him disappearing and reappearing several times, but he was lost to my sight when he rounded the ship, and I cannot say if he ever reached the children. By this time I had got the small boat close to the ship, and I was able to climb on board. I saw Mrs Jensen clinging to the mizzen sheet, and when she caught sight of me she called most piteously for help. I proceeded as quickly as possible to render her assistance, but owing to the position of the vessel, my progress was slow. By climbing up the steering wheel I got on the mizzen boom, and managed to get hold of Mrs Jensen. But just at that time the vessel gave another heavy lurch, and Mrs Jensen and myself were thrown into the water. We were separated, and owing to the rough water I was unable to regain my hold of her. She sank and never rose again. I am not a particularly good swimmer, and it was all I could do to keep afloat till I was picked up by a boatman and taken ashore. Captain Jensen was a Dane and his wife was an English lady. When I first saw Mrs Jensen she had the youngest child in her arms, but when the vessel lurched the second time, it must have fallen overboard. At any rate, I did not see her with it when I got to her. I have learned since that the child was picked up by the steamboat *Message*, which came upon the scene shortly afterwards.

Inspector Starkey and John Plumb proceeded in a boat, and took the rescued child to the house of Mrs Middleton, but it subsequently died. Some time afterwards, the body of the little girl was washed ashore.

102 February 25 1899

FATAL FIRE ON A BARGE A fire, which was unfortunately attended with loss of life, broke out at a quarter past four o'clock in the morning on the barge *James*, lying in the Regent's Canal alongside the Iceland Wharf, Old Ford Road E. The craft is one of forty tons, and had been used for the purposes of carrying liquid gas refuse to a factory where it was converted into ammonia. It was owned by Messrs Forbes, Abbott and Leonard of the Ordnance Wharf, East Greenwich, SE. A

quantity of the gas had accumulated in the hold, and ignited when one of the crew lifted the hatch with a lighted taper in his hand. The immediate result was that the entire barge was speedily in flames.

James Baldock, 45 years of age, and **Henley Grondge**, aged 21 years, were terribly burned, and had to be at once removed to hospital.

After the fire was extinguished – by which time the barge had been gutted – the charred remains of a man named **Charles Saunter**, who was 40 years of age, were found in a crouching position in a corner of the vessel.

Baldock expired shortly after.

103 June 17 1899

AN UP-TO-DATE PIRATE

LAUGHABLE ADVENTURE A lad named William German, aged 16, of Luton Road, Chatham, had a singular escapade at Rochester the other day.

He armed himself with a dagger, which he placed in a sheath in a belt around his waist, with an improvised boomerang, a knife, a gimlet and a chisel, and, taking possession of a waterman's boat, set out for a cruise on the river Medway. His skill in navigation, however, was not equal to his zeal, and he got aground on the mud flats, where he lay all night without food or drink. He was discovered and rescued by the river police next morning, by which time his enthusiasm for buccaneering had cooled down. He was taken to the lock up.

On Saturday he was brought before the magistrate. It was explained by the police that the lad had apparently gone forth as “the bold pirate of the Medway”. The charge of stealing the boat was withdrawn, and the accused was released on his father paying 12s compensation to the owner for the damage done to the boat.

104 July 8 1899

WOMAN AND CHILD DROWNED OFF KEW An empty canal barge was being worked up the Thames on the tide when, on approaching Kew Bridge, the helmsman, **Buck**, tried to shoot the middle arch of Kew Bridge. The barge collided with the bridge, and the rudder going over, the tiller swept Buck and the wife and little girl of **George Halford**, the boatman, into the river.

A waterman named **Thomas Prince**, who was at work on the temporary bridge close by, put off in a boat and rescued Buck, and another man put off almost simultaneously and rowed towards Mrs Halford and the child, but before he could reach them they both sank, and Halford, who was left on the barge, saw his wife and child drown without being able to render any assistance. He was so distracted with grief that he had to be taken charge of by the police, and it is reported that his mind has been seriously affected.

Buck was apparently little the worse for his immersions, and was subsequently able to work his barge up to Brentford.

105 August 5 1899

FATAL BOATING DISASTER ON THE THAMES

WOMEN LOSE THEIR PRESENCE OF MIND AND CAPSIZE THE BOAT About four o'clock on Thursday afternoon, four women and a child went out for a row on the Thames at East Molesey. The boat was in charge of a man named **Hill**, in the employ of Mr Harry Tagg. Near the old weir, the boat got on an old stage, and a hole was knocked in the bottom.

Some of the women were thrown into a state of panic, and stood up and screamed. The boat capsized, and all the occupants were thrown into the water. Hill behaved with great pluck and presence of mind, and succeeded in saving two of the women.



FATAL BOATING DISASTER ON THE THAMES.
WOMEN LOSE THEIR PRESENCE OF MIND AND CAPSIZE THE BOAT.

The remaining three persons were drowned, viz :-

Fanny Stockwell, a widow aged 63, of Dean Street, Wandsworth Road.

Kate Stockwell, her daughter aged 29, of the same address.

Sybil Major, aged six and a half, granddaughter of the eldest victim, who lived in Craven Terrace, Lancaster Gate.

The deceased and their friends formed part of a party of about 300 persons who had gone to East Molesey on an excursion from All Saints' Church, Knightsbridge.

A correspondent suggests that the extreme lowness of the Thames was the cause of the disaster. According to his account, the hole was stove in the bottom of the boat by a submerged stump, which would have been missed had the water been at its normal level.

On Saturday evening, Surgeon-General Lake, the West Surrey deputy coroner, held an inquest on the bodies of Mrs Fanny Stockwell, aged 63, Miss Kate Stockwell, aged 29, and Sybil Major, aged 6 1/2 years, victims of the boating fatality which occurred near Molesey Lock on Thursday evening last.

Evidence showed that the boat ran on to a submerged stump. A hole was knocked in the bottom of the boat, which immediately filled and capsized.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and added as a rider : “That no blame is attached to Hill, the boatman ; that he did his best to save life ; and that the attention of the Thames Conservancy should be called to the stumps of old weirs, which are very dangerous, and especially at times of such extraordinarily low water”.

INQUEST

STRANGE STATEMENTS On Saturday an inquest was held on the bodies of Mrs Fanny Stockwell, aged 63, Miss Kate Stockwell, aged 29, and Sybil Major, aged 6 1/2 years, the victims of the boating fatality which occurred near Molesey Lock on Thursday evening last.

Mr John Stacey, manager to Mr Harry Tagg, boat owner, described the circumstances of the accident. He said that when near Molesey Lock the boat ran on to a submerged stump, evidently part of an old weir fifty or sixty years ago. It had been broken off, and the sharp edge had pierced the bottom of the boat. Continuing, witness said the water was very low at the time, and the top of the stump was only covered by about five inches of water. He had not known the river to be so low for the past forty years.

The Coroner : It is highly dangerous then that this stump should be allowed to remain there. Have the Thames Conservancy been communicated with?

Their men have been down to the spot.

Ernest Hill, an employee of Mr Tagg, who was in charge of the boat, said after the craft capsized he rescued one lady of the party, assisted in rescuing another lady, and swam back for another, but was overcome and had in turn to be rescued. He added that he had never seen the stump before, and did not know such a thing was there.

Mr Young : It is suggested that you did not do your best to save life?

I did as much as anyone could under the circumstances.

The Coroner : I think so too. (Hear, hear, from some of the jury.)

Miss Emily Vivian, a relative of the deceased, and one of the party in the boat, deposed that when Hill's attention was drawn to the fact that there was water in the boat, he jumped out. He said, “Follow me”, and then swam away strongly towards the shore. Previous to the accident, when the party had objected to being rowed near the weir, he said, “It is time enough for you to be alarmed when you see me with a scared face”.

Miss Lizzie Stockwell stated that Hill certainly did not save her. As he was swimming off, she caught hold of his belt, and he had to pull her ashore. Witness threw an oar to Miss Vivian and that was the means of saving her.

The Coroner : But surely he didn't shake you off?

No.

Mr Young : And he may have come back to save someone else?

I didn't notice, but he may have done.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death” and added as a rider, “No blame attached to Hill, the boatman ; that he did his best to save life ; and that the attention of the Thames Conservancy should be called to the stumps of old weirs which are very dangerous, and especially at times of such extraordinarily low water.”

106 August 26 1899

BRAVE MRS BARNADO GOES FOR A THAMES WATERMAN At Kingston, **Edward Holmwood**, a waterman of East Molesey, was summoned for assaulting Mr Thomas Newman.

It appeared that complainant was on the river, and landed on an island near to Hampton Court Palace. The defendant came up and ordered him off, and then dragged him down to the boat by the heels.

Mrs Barnado, accompanied by some friends, arrived upon the scene and went to Mr Newman's assistance, and the upshot was that Holmwood was given into custody.

Mrs Barnado said defendant was about to strike one of her friends, when witness stepped in and

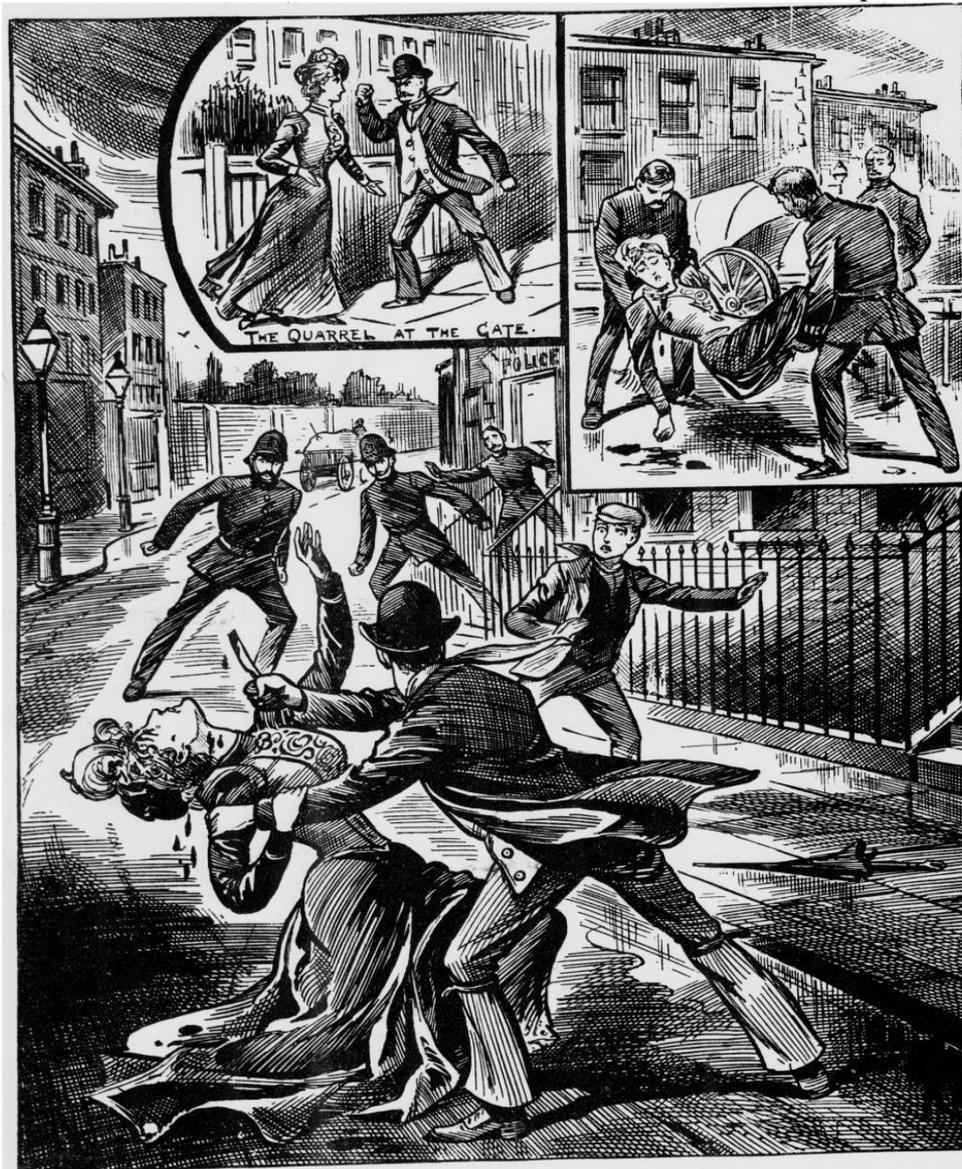
said he must hit her first. She had been accustomed to the East End of London, and was able to take her own part.

The defendant was fined 13s 6d, including costs.

107 September 16 1899

SHOCKING MURDER OF A WOMAN AT STRATFORD

THE ASSAILANT CAUGHT RED HANDED IN HIS CRIME Shortly after eight o'clock on Thursday night, a man named Edgar Smith, 32 years of age, a labourer living in Vernon Road, Stratford, attacked a woman named **Martha Clay**, the wife of a bargeman, residing in Preston Road, on the Carpenters' Estate at Stratford, with a razor, inflicting such serious injuries about the throat that the woman died about half an hour afterwards in the West Ham Hospital.



SHOCKING MURDER OF A WOMAN AT STRATFORD.
THE ASSAILANT CAUGHT RED HANDED IN HIS CRIME.

It appears that Mr and Mrs Clay were married several years ago, but twelve months ago the murdered woman suddenly left her husband, and it is alleged went to live with Smith. Subsequently she took a house at 15 Preston Road, where she was frequently visited by Smith. Occasionally she went to see him at his lodgings at 53 Vernon Street. It is also alleged that ever since she left her husband, Mrs Clay has been leading an immoral life.

PRISONER IN COURT Smith was brought up at West Ham Police Court on Friday.

PC Menzies, 36KR, said that he was on duty at West Ham Police Station on Thursday night when

he heard a woman screaming in the street outside the station door. At the same time, a lad named Ellis entered the door, shouting, "Policeman, oh, policeman, a man is assaulting my aunt". Witness rushed into the street, where he saw the prisoner struggling with the deceased woman. He was hacking at her throat. Witness seized him and took the razor produced from his hand.

Mr Fowler (the clerk) : No words passed, I suppose?

Menzies : No. I took him into the station, where he was detained. He made no statement.

Mr Fowler : Was he in drink at all?

Witness : No, he was perfectly sober.

Edward Ellis (or Baragwanth) of 18 Gladstone Road, West Ham, a lad of 15, said the deceased was his aunt. He went to her house at 15 Preston Road, Stratford, at about seven o'clock. She occupied two rooms downstairs, and lived with **Thomas Clay**. When witness went there, he saw the prisoner walking up and down outside the house, and a little girl over the road spoke to witness about him. Witness then said to the prisoner, "Are you waiting for anybody?" Prisoner made no reply, but continued to walk up and down. Witness did not know him. Witness went into the house and had something to eat.

Witness went on to say that when he left the house with his aunt, they went into the High Street, Stratford, and in the direction of West Ham Lane. The prisoner joined them just outside his aunt's door and walked by the side of the deceased. Witness was on her other side. When near the Town Hall, Stratford, witness said to his aunt, "I asked this gentleman (referring to the prisoner) if he wanted anybody". His aunt replied, "He is going to cut my throat, and I am going up to see about it". Prisoner heard this. They walked on, and when they got near the police station, his aunt pointed to the door and said, "You go in there". Prisoner made no reply, but he sprang at her. Witness saw him "fiddling" with the pocket of his coat and take out something. His aunt ran away – about four yards into the roadway – and screamed, "Murder!" He caught hold of the back of her skirt, and then witness ran into the police station, and called out, "Policeman". Then Constable Menzies came running out, and his aunt came towards the officer and fell.

Police-sergeant Paterson, 87K, station sergeant, said he was in charge of West Ham Police Station when the last witness ran in. Witness caught the woman, who fell into his arms. She screamed, "Oh", three times, but said nothing else. She was carried into the charge room, and as he was about to lay her down, the prisoner was brought in by Police-constable Menzies, who said, "This is the man who has caused the injuries. I saw him hacking at her throat with this razor". Prisoner said nothing. The woman was sent to West Ham Hospital.

Inspector Taylor said he accompanied the woman to the West Ham Hospital, where she was seen by Dr Stalker, the house surgeon. Witness remained at the hospital till she died at 9.15. Prisoner made no reply when told of her death.

Jemima Ellis of 16 Gladstone Road, West Ham, said the deceased woman was her sister. She was about 30 or 32. She had been living with a man named Clay and was known as Martha Clay. She had lived with Clay about twelve years. She left him once, and from what witness heard this

The Clerk : You don't know of your own knowledge?

Witness : No.

The Clerk : Then you must not tell us.

Witness went on to say that she last saw the deceased last Sunday week.

Joseph William Tomlin of 195 Bow Road, a clerk, who was passing at the time, gave evidence of the attack.

On this evidence, Inspector Taylor asked for a remand, and prisoner, who stood in a military attitude all the time and asked no questions, was remanded.

The inquest on "Mrs Bertha Clay" was opened at the King's Head, West Ham, on Saturday by Coroner Hilleary. Smith was present in the custody of two warders, and seemed quite unconcerned. The evidence of **Thomas Clay**, a lighterman, showed that he had never been legally married to deceased, whose real name was Martha Appleyard, but that they cohabited for four years, when she suddenly left him and went to live with the prisoner. There had been no quarrel between them.

Police-constable Menzies and the other witnesses repeated the evidence they gave at the Police

Court, and then Dr William Stewart Stalker, assistant house surgeon at the West Ham Hospital, was called. He said that he examined deceased immediately upon her admission, and found she was suffering from a gash about 4 in in length on the left side of the neck. There was also a deep angular cut on the back part of the neck. The only chance of saving her life was by transfusion. This was resorted to, but the woman gradually sank, and died about an hour after admission. The muscles of the neck were severed and the jugular vein was partly cut through. On the left hand, several fingers were smashed and cut. The deceased had evidently put up her hands to ward off the attack.

At this juncture, the hearing was adjourned.

As the accused left the court in a cab for Holloway, he met with a hostile demonstration.

108 November 11 1899

SOUTHWARK

A NOCTURNAL NUISANCE At Southwark Police Court, **Robert Waterhouse**, 49, no fixed abode, described as a lighterman, was charged before Mr Paul Taylor with being drunk and disorderly at Stork's Road. Dawes, 148M, said a resident in that road complained that prisoner had been annoying her by knocking at her door. Susan Manser, a married woman, said prisoner had for a week past knocked her up between midnight and two am. He continued his annoyance for three hours at a time, and when spoken to declared that he wanted his wife. Prisoner said he had recently moved into a fresh house and, when a little the worse for drink, mistook the road. Mr Paul Taylor said that such conduct of a drunken man was insupportable. Fined 20s, or fourteen days.

109 January 6 1900

THE CHARGES OF CHILD MURDER AGAINST BATTERSEA BABY FARMERS

EXTRAORDINARY LETTER FROM THE FEMALE PRISONER At the South Western Police Court on Saturday, William Chard Williams, aged 41, clerk, and his wife Ada Williams, aged 24, were again charged with being concerned in the murder of Selina Ellen Jones, aged 21 months, the daughter of Florence Jones, a single woman of 75 Gee Street, St Luke's.

Mr Bodkin (who appeared with Mr Frayling for the prosecution) said on August 30 Miss Jones noticed this advertisement in a local paper :-

“A young married couple would adopt healthy child, every care and comfort, good reference given, very small premium. Write first to Mrs M Hewetson, 4 Bradmore Lane, Hammersmith”.

An arrangement was made that the female prisoner should take the child for £3 and a new outfit. A further £2 was to be paid after a little while.

The child was to be sent quickly, but its clothes should be good, because the woman's “mother-in-law was coming from Scotland, and she might take a fancy to it”.

Miss Jones met Mrs Hewetson at Charing Cross on August 31, and was told that the woman and her husband were about to move into a new house in the Grove, Hammersmith. Miss Jones, returning later to pay the balance, was astonished to find that the house in the Grove was occupied by different people.

As a fact, from July 12 of this year down to October 20, the prisoners lived at 3 Grove Villas, Barnes.

They appear to have taken the house in the name of Goodwin, the male prisoner being represented as a tutor in a Clapham college. At first they had a little boy named Freddy, but in September, a niece, Lily, was added to the household. It was said the female prisoner ill treated it. To Mrs Loughborough, the next door neighbour, the woman said, “She misbehaved herself and I beat her with a stick. My life has been a hell on earth since it's been here”. The child disappeared. The female prisoner said, “The mother took it away”.

A week later, the woman offered to exchange some child's clothes with Mrs Loughborough for a flower pot and ferns, and those clothes would be identified by Miss Jones as those with which she had provided her child.

On the morning of September 27, a bargeman saw a parcel floating in the river opposite Church

Dock, Battersea, and with a pole he pushed it ashore. It was found to be the child's body. The head was enveloped in a linen cloth which was tied tightly round the neck. Death had been produced by strangulation, and the body must have been in the water three or four days.

On December 3, the female prisoner wrote this very remarkable letter to Scotland Yard :-

“Dear Sir – I must apologise for taking this liberty, but I see that I and my husband are suspected of murdering a little female child found in the river at Battersea. The accusation is a positively false one. The facts are these : I, much against my husband's wish, advertised for a child to make a little money, and as a result we adopted this little child. My next act was to advertise for a home for the little girl. I used the address of some shop in Warwick Road, Kensington, and received several answers. I chose one in Grange Street or Road, Croydon, from a lady of the name of Smith. She agreed to take the child for £1, together with clothes for the child. I met her at Clapham Junction, the Falcon Hotel, about the middle of September, and I handed the child and the clothes over to her. It was then quite well. That was the last I saw of the child. I have, it is true, carried on a sort of baby farming – that is, I advertised for children and then got people to readopt them for less money. I have had five in this way. Two died while in my care, but I can prove that every kindness was shown them, and the others I have had readopted. I have been accused of carrying on this kind of thing for six years : but that is wrong, as I only started it in 1897. You will say that if I am innocent, why don't I come forward, but there have been innocent people hanged, and I must say the case is rather black. Things look very much against me, and it is not fair to go entirely on circumstantial evidence. I am trying to find the woman to whom I gave the child. If I come forward I must clear myself unless I give a clue to the woman. My husband is not to blame, as he has always looked on the whole thing with abhorrence. We left Barnes because we couldn't pay the rent”.

Counsel pointed out that on September 23, the child was certainly in the house at Barnes, whereas the prisoner said it was handed to Mrs Smith in the middle of September, and mentioned that three days after the receipt of the letter, when the prisoners were arrested, they were packing their boxes.

Mr Bodkin pointed out that the string which tied the wrappings round the child's body was knotted in a very peculiar and unusual way. It was what was called a “fisherman's bend” and it was very significant that several pieces of string and cord found in the prisoners' house at Barnes were knotted in precisely the same way.

Moreover, on July 24 or 31, two other children's bodies were found in the river, one at Barnes and the other at Twickenham – and it was proposed to give evidence to show the wrappings round the bodies were tied with string knotted in similar fashion. The suggestion of the prosecution, concluded counsel, was that all three bodies were put into the river by the prisoners.

Miss Jones, the mother, having given evidence, the prisoners were remanded.

110 January 13 1900

At Rowley, Staffordshire, two boatmen named **William Rowley** and **Benjamin Edwards** were each fined £3 for cruelty to a horse. The defendants started on a journey of sixty miles with the horse attached to a boat loaded with thirty tons of stone. The animal was seized with acute pneumonia, and although unable to eat for three days, the men made it work. It was eventually found in a dreadful state, and subsequently died.

111 January 20 1900

ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER AT WOOLWICH At Greenwich, an inquest was held before Mr E N Wood, deputy coroner, on the body of Richard Walsh, aged 60, of 46 Wilmount Street, Woolwich, who died early on Monday week from the effects of injuries alleged to have been inflicted by his nephew, **Matthew Frederick Blake**, lighterman, living at 6 Hoskins Street, East Greenwich.

The widow deposed that she and deceased, who was caretaker at St Peter's Schools, Woolwich, and vergar at the church, came to Greenwich on the Sunday evening to see her brother, Alfred Blake. She alleged that on entering the house, Matthew Frederick Blake accused the deceased of pawning the clothes of his (Blake's) sister, who had lived with them, and used very bad language to the

deceased and herself. Subsequently, Blake and his wife and son and two daughters, on the deceased's invitation, accompanied them to a public house. Young Blake again became abusive and struck the deceased. On going into the street, he again struck him, and deceased fell, striking his head on the pavement. He became unconscious, and remained so until his death, which occurred at 5.45 next morning.

Alfred Blake deposed that he was in bed when the deceased and his wife arrived at his house. In consequence of the deceased and his wife "setting on" his son, he went downstairs and they became quieter. While in the public house Mrs Walsh used very bad language, and ultimately struck the witness's wife and daughter. He denied that his son struck the deceased inside the house, and said that on going outside the deceased continued his abuse and took his coat off to fight Fred. The latter got out of his way and gave him a back handed blow, which knocked him down.

John Bew, landlord of the Golden Anchor, said he turned the party out in consequence of the deceased's wife's conduct and bad language. Young Blake did not strike the deceased in the house.

Dr Forsyth, divisional police surgeon, deposed to making a *post mortem* examination of the deceased. The cause of death was fracture of the skull, produced by a violent blow behind the right ear. The deceased had also had a blow on the mouth, cutting the lip. The fracture on the skull was caused by a blow, and not a fall.

The jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against Matthew Frederick Blake.

112 April 14 1900

DALSTON SWEETHEARTS FOUND DROWNED At Hackney, Dr Wynn Westcott held an inquest on the bodies of William Henry Rose, 19, lately residing at Shrubland Grove, Hackney, and Alice Smith, 16, late of Lavender Grove, Dalston, who were found drowned in the River Lea under tragic circumstances.

William Rose, Blanchard Road, Hackney, a potman, said he was the father of the deceased, who was an improver bricklayer. Witness last saw his son alive six weeks ago. Deceased then left home on his own accord, and took apartments in Shrubland Grove, Hackney. Deceased lived in Shrubland Grove for a fortnight, and then disappeared suddenly.

The Coroner stated that the following note had been found on the deceased :-

"To Mr W Rose - At No 6 Shrubland Grove, you will find (2) boxes and a bankbook containing £5 or £4. There is also some loose about the house, and thirty four hours wages due."

Alice Smith, the mother of the deceased girl, said she had objected to her daughter keeping company with Rose because she was too young.

Herbert Pearce, a boatman of Bow, proved finding the body of Rose in the River Lea New Cut, near Pond Bridge, Clapton Park, on Sunday afternoon week, whilst Henry Budman of Mandeville Street, Clapton Park, deposed to finding the body of Smith almost on the identical spot.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane" in the case of Rose, and of "Found drowned" in the case of Smith.

113 June 23 1900

TRIED TO PERSUADE HIS SWEETHEART TO DIE WITH HIM At Greenwich, Mr E N Wood, deputy coroner, held an inquest on the body of **George Charles Ayres**, 18, a barge builder's apprentice.

Elizabeth Styles, a servant girl, stated that she had kept company with the deceased. Whilst out for a walk on Sunday evening, deceased said he had trouble at home, and he thought he had better drown himself. He asked her to jump into the water with him. She refused, but deceased pulled her into the river, where he tried to drown her. She screamed, and he released his hold, whereupon she was rescued.

Police-constable Stevenson stated that he resuscitated Styles after twenty minutes exertion. Ayres's body was found two hours later.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst temporarily insane.

114 June 23 1900

STRANGE STORY OF ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER BY A BROTHER An extraordinary case was investigated at Tunstall Police Court when a boatman named **Henry Bateman**, aged 31, of no fixed abode, was charged with attempting to murder his brother **Frank**, aged 11. It was stated that on April 19 prisoner called at his parents' residence and induced the boy to go with him along the side of the canal.

In a field, he struck the lad with his fists, and then took him to Westport Lake and threw him in. The boy endeavoured to get out, but was twice knocked back into the water by his brother, once with a blow across the face with a piece of wood. Prisoner eventually ran away, and the boy scrambled out and reached home in an exhausted condition. Prisoner, who absconded and was arrested on Tuesday week, was committed for trial.

115 August 11 1900

HORRIBLE DEATHS BY SUFFOCATION ON A THAMES BARGE Mr A W Wyatt (deputy coroner) held an inquiry at Southwark relative to the deaths of **William Stone**, 75, barge master, and **Joseph Tonks**, 42, barge mate, who were found dead in the cabin of the sailing barge *Webster*, lying at Bankside, Southwark, on the afternoon of Sunday week.

The barge, which is owned by Messrs Wakeley Bros of Southwark, contained a cargo of vegetable and other refuse, which was to have been carried down the river last week. Two of the barge's crew returning to the vessel soon after noon on the Sunday, discovered the bodies of the master and mate lying on the cabin floor, and called a doctor, who pronounced life extinct. The air inside the cabin was extremely foul.

Dr Collingridge, the Port of London sanitary inspector, stated that the barge's cargo was of an extremely dangerous description, and expressed the opinion that river barges intended to convey such cargoes should be specially constructed for the purpose.

Dr Ellingham said that death in both cases was due to suffocation, consequent upon inhaling carbonic acid gas, which had originated from decaying vegetable matter.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the evidence, adding a rider to the effect that the defects of the barge, as pointed out by Dr Collingridge, should be rectified in the manner suggested.

116 October 20 1900

EXTRAORDINARY FATALITY An inquest was held at Three Locks, Linslade, near Aylesbury, on Saturday afternoon, regarding the death of **Emma Simpson**, aged 6, the daughter of a boatman. It appears that three boats were passing through the 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.

117 December 22 1900

STRANGE DEATH OF A MUSICIAN Mr Baxter held an inquiry at Limehouse Coroner's Court with reference to the death of Charles Taylor, aged about 36, a flute and piccolo player.

Walter Levett, also a musician, said the deceased was in the habit of taking trips to South Africa and Australia. He left his employment at the Royal Army Stores on September 19, with a view to sailing for South Africa.

Catherine Heavingham of 26 St Leonard's Street, Pimlico, stated that the deceased had lodged with her, and left the first week in October to go to the Cape, and she had not seen him since. He had been engaged to a young lady who deceived him, and he used to sit and gaze at her photograph for hours. The deceased had also fretted very much about the death of his mother.

Thomas Birch, a lighterman, gave evidence of finding the body floating near the entrance to the London Docks on Thursday morning. The deceased was fully dressed.

Police-constable Ambler, 198H, who searched the body, said he found one penny in bronze only and a number of cards, a pair of scissors and a pipe.

Dr C G Grant deposed that the body had been in the water about a month. The witness found extensive bruising of both eyes, and an incised wound under the left eye, the brain was contused and there was considerable extravasation of blood under the scalp. The body was much decomposed, but it was the witness's opinion that the injuries contributed to the death. The jury returned an open verdict.