

DUDLEY MERCURY

1 5 February 1887

BRIERLEY HILL DISTRICT POLICE COURT

THE CHARGE OF STEALING PIG IRON **Arthur Bishop**, boatman, Buck Pool, was charged on remand with stealing 13 cwt of pig iron, the property of Mr H O Firmstone of the Leys, on the 18th of November. The evidence was to the effect that on the 18th of November a boat gauged at 26 tons was consigned from the prosecutor's works to Mr Robinson's foundry at Wollaston, and on the same day, two boatmen named **Benjamin** and **David Smith** took the boat to the Coalbournbrook Wharf, where it was tied up for the night. About six o'clock on the following morning, John Careless, a man employed at Messrs Cookson's foundry, was walking along the canal to his work, when he saw two men removing pig iron from prosecutor's boat, but it was dark at the time, and Careless could not identify the men. Shortly after nine on the same morning, the prisoner went to Messrs Cookson and Son's foundry, and told Mr Emmanuel Cookson that he had brought some iron which he had got out of the canal. After examining the iron, Mr Cookson said the iron had not been in the water, and told him to take it away. Prisoner replied, "It's all right". Mr Cookson, seeing that the iron had been made at prosecutor's works, threatened to tell Mr Firmstone, and the prisoner went away, leaving the iron at the foundry. The Bench thought the case had not been proved, and Superintendent Wollaston said there was the greatest difficulty in the world in getting information. He asked for an adjournment to enable him to get more evidence. The case was adjourned for a week.

2 5 March 1887

TIPTON DISTRICT POLICE COURT

A SAVAGE ASSAULT **Richard Hale** (30), boatman, Ryder's Green Road, West Bromwich, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and with savagely assaulting Police-constable William Smith. He was fined £1 and costs for being drunk, or seven days ; and £1 and costs or twenty one days' hard labour for the assault.

3 2 April 1887

SUPPOSED EXTENSIVE ROBBERY OF PIG IRON Police-sergeant Stanton arrested a man named **John Cross**, dredging boatman of New Meeting Street, Oldbury, on suspicion of stealing about three tons of pig iron. It appears that about nine o'clock on Thursday morning, Police-sergeant Stanton found the prisoner, in company with two other men, loading the iron into a cart on the canal side. One load had been sold to a local ironfounder, and just when this was delivered, the officer stepped in and arrested the accused. The other two men decamped, and as Cross failed to give what the police considered a satisfactory account of the iron, he was taken into custody and conveyed to the station. It is new pig iron, and is marked "Kettering". Prisoner, in answer to the charge, stated that he found the iron in the canal. The police are endeavouring to ascertain the whereabouts of the other two men, and also the owner of the iron.

4 2 April 1887

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT

A DISHONEST BOATMAN **Robert Swaine** (28), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing an overcoat and a pair of trousers, of the value of 5s 6d, the property of **William Chatten**. The two men worked together and lived in a boat called the "*Rose in June*", in which they slept on Saturday night, at Knowle in Warwickshire. Early on Sunday morning the prisoner ran away, taking with him the prosecutor's overcoat and trousers. Later in the day, Police-constable Booth found the prisoner at Brierley Hill, wearing the overcoat and carrying the trousers, and arrested him. Prisoner was sent to prison for a month with hard labour.

5 30 April 1887

ROWLEY POLICE COURT

INEBRIATES **George Horton**, boatman, Windmill End, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Windmill End on the 16th inst. Police-constable Jackson proved the case, and the Bench imposed a fine of 1s and costs, or seven days.

6 6 August 1887

WORDSLEY

BURGLARY At the Staffordshire Assizes on Saturday, before Mr Justice Grantham, **Solomon Hughes** (24), boatman, was indicted for breaking and entering the house of James Bakewell at Kingswinford on May 14th, and stealing one bottle of brandy. Mr Kettle prosecuted. Prosecutor keeps the Black Horse, Wordsley, and about midnight on the date named he was awakened by a man being at a box which was under the bed. Prosecutor turned up the gas, and threw a chair at the man, who was then going out of the door. He caught hold of prisoner on the landing, and said, "Halloa, you are Prothero's son ; I know you". Prosecutor then loosed prisoner, and he went away, and prosecutor put on his clothes and went for a constable. Prisoner was apprehended shortly after at his own house. Prisoner was found guilty, and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.

7 6 August 1887

BOARD OF GUARDIANS

THE BURIAL OF THE DROWNED The Clerk read the following letter from the Local Government Board :- " I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th ult, with reference to the question raised by the Tipton Local Board as to the burial of the body of a man found drowned in the parish of Tipton. The Board directs me to state that whilst the 7th and 8th Vic c 101 sec 31 does not make it the legal duty of the Guardians to bury the bodies of poor persons in their Union, it empowers them to do so, and the Board think that the Guardians might, under that section, have given directions for the burial in the present instance. As regards the contention that it rested with the Local Board, I may say that the Board are not aware of any provision of law imposing any such obligation on the Local Board. - Your obedient servant, W B PROVIS, Assistant Secretary". The Clerk remarked that the relieving officer was not compelled to bury in a case of this sort. Mr Morgan thought it was placing this Board in an awkward fix. Mr S Smith was of opinion that the Local Government Board ought to take the matter up, and it was not fair to the parish that the expense should be borne by the Union. Mr Millington humorously remarked that Bumbledom was in a dilemma on this question. Nothing was definite for them to act upon, and they were amenable to no law on the subject, for the Local Board, like themselves, was governed by the Local Government Board. He thought the present position of the Guardians aptly illustrated the necessity of the establishment of increased power being invested in local authorities. Mr Bedworth considered that good reasons could be advanced why the Guardians should take the matter up, and it lay in their province to do so. While disputes of this kind arose, a body might be kept above ground in a high state of decomposition. It would be wise if they passed a resolution to bury bodies under such circumstances as the present. He did not say this because he desired to put more work upon the Union officials, nor did he wish to increase the expenses of the Board ; but seeing these disputes arose, and also seeing the Local Government Board would not acknowledge their liability to bury, he begged to move that an instruction be given the relieving officer to have the body buried forthwith. Although the Board would be put to a little expense, they could afterwards recover part of it from another authority equally liable. Mr Round seconded. Mr Millington dissented from the view taken by the mover of the resolution. Whose duty was it to bury these bodies? He thought the sanitary authority's, for they ought to remove all nuisances arising in their district. When a body was found, it should at once be buried, and it was a natural question who should have the trouble of doing so. The very name of the nuisance inspector proved that it was his duty to remove the body. He therefore moved an amendment that the Board be not saddled

in the expense of burial. Mr Green seconded. The Clerk advised Mr Bedworth, who was continuing the debate, that he must confine himself to the question of whether the relieving officer had power to act in the matter. Mr Bedworth characterised the proceedings of the Guardians in this matter as discreditable. Mr Pitt rose to a point of order, and the chairman intervening, the discussion closed, and a division took place. Eight Guardians voted for the amendment and three for the resolution, which was declared lost.

8 13 August 1887

BRIERLEY HILL

THEFT BY A BOATMAN At Solihull Police Court on Saturday, **Henry Webb**, boatman, Brierley Hill, was charged with stealing a small quantity of coal, value 6d, from the wharf of William Taylor, publican, (?Hornfield). About three o'clock on the morning of the 20th ult, prosecutor saw defendant in his yard. The man took up a lump of coal and carried it to his boat. Prosecutor went down and accused him of stealing the coal, whereupon the defendant returned it, and offered him money to keep the matter quiet. He was fined £2 including costs.

9 20 August 1887

TIPTON POLICE COURT

WASTING CANAL WATER **William Bradney**, boatman of Wood Street, was fined 1s and costs for unnecessarily opening a lock on the Birmingham Canal and wasting the water.

10 22 October 1887

BRIERLEY HILL

MAGISTERIAL **James Burgess**, boatman, was summoned by Messrs Harris Bros for the recovery of £5 damages caused by defendant's negligence. Mr J W Clulow appeared in support of the summons. Mr Thomas Harris said defendant was engaged by the plaintiffs in January last, and on the 24th ult was ordered to take a boat to the Potteries. He was paid £2 in advance. Defendant deserted the boat at Wolverhampton, where it was found floating on the canal. Defendant also left the horse without food, and part of the harness was missing. The Stipendiary ordered defendant to pay the amount claimed, with costs, including solicitor's fee.

11 31 December 1887

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, TUESDAY

CAUTION TO BOATMEN **George Walker**, boatman, Virgin's End, was charged with throwing a quantity of rubbish into the Stourbridge Canal at Brockmoor on the 21st inst. Police-constable Lafford said that about half past eleven on the night in question, he saw the defendant wheeling a large quantity of ashes and broken bricks out of a boat into the canal. When defendant was asked what he was doing, he said that he was stopping a leakage. Defendant was employed in wheeling ashes out of a boat on to a mound, but instead of doing this he put them into the canal. Defendant was fined 5s and costs.

12 14 January 1888

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY

CHARGE AGAINST A BOATMAN **Joshua Worrall**, boatman, was charged with contravening the bye laws of the Stourbridge Canal Company by opening the slides or valves of the bottom gate of a lock before the top gate was properly closed, at Wordsley on the 20th ult. Mr Holmes appeared on behalf of the Canal Company. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, amounting to £1 2s 2d, or fourteen days.

13 11 February 1888

BRIERLEY HILL LOCAL BOARD

INSPECTION OF CANAL BOATS It was reported that under the Urban Sanitary Authority, 117

canal boats had been inspected during the past year, the condition of both boats and their occupants being fairly well in keeping with the Acts and regulations. No case of overcrowding had occurred, no contravention of the Acts had been met with, and no complaints had been received from other districts of this kind. One complaint had been made with regard to one of the boats, but this was now taken off the water and broken up. No case of infectious disease had been met with, neither had the authority been told of any. There had been no case of refusing to admit the inspector. The number of boats down upon the register was 140.

SANITARY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE This committee's report stated that the canal boat "*Mabel*", belonging to Messrs Harris Brothers, had been registered. The canal boat inspector had made his annual report of the condition of the boats in his district. The bridge in Bull Lane, Brettell Lane, was ordered to be lengthened by the railway company. The main roads had been examined by the county surveyor, and passed. Complaints had been received with regard to the removal of night soil as late as 9.30 am, and it was recommended that the clerk remind the contractor of the proper hours for the work to be carried out, and that the Board insist upon having it done at the proper time. During the month, 581 loads of night soil had been removed. The death rate for the month ending January 28th was 12.12 per 1,000, with no death from zymotic disease, as against 19.50 per 1,000 with two deaths from zymotic disease in the corresponding month of last year. There appeared to be a case of overcrowding in Potter Street, where two families, numbering nine inmates, lodged in a small house with one dwelling room and one bedroom. The medical officer reported that the sanitary condition of Cottage Street was bad, and required improvement. The report was adopted.

14 18 February 1888

DEATH FROM STARVATION AT ENVILLE A painfully sudden death, which was without doubt due to exposure and want, occurred at Enville on Saturday last, the deceased being **Benjamin Meredith** (55) of Wolverhampton. On Saturday morning, Police-constable Wood, an officer stationed at Enville, was walking near Enville Hall, in the Stourbridge Road, when he found Meredith lying in an exhausted condition at the side of the road. The poor fellow was unable to stand, and was immediately removed to the Trysull Workhouse. When Meredith was found by the officer, restoratives were at once administered, and a surgeon was promptly fetched, but Meredith died the same night. Deceased was searched, and it appeared from a communication found in one of his pockets that he had recently been discharged from Gloucester Gaol. Upon the gaol authorities being communicated with, it was found that deceased was discharged on the 4th inst. The identification was clearly proved by marks on the deceased's body. In July last, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment at Gloucester for horse stealing, and it is believed that he was walking to Wolverhampton to see his friends when he was overcome by want and the cold. Deceased was well known to the Wolverhampton police, who reported that he was a boatman of no fixed residence, and some time back was in the service of Mr John Yates, hay and straw dealer, Raglan Street. Meredith has a married daughter living in Wolverhampton, and sometimes he lived in Wolverhampton and sometimes in Gloucester. On Monday, Mr W H Phillips held an inquest on the body of the deceased at the Trysull Workhouse. Evidence as to the finding of the deceased having been given, Dr Fraser said deceased died from want and exposure. The Jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

15 18 February 1888

QUARRY BANK LOCAL BOARD

THE POLLUTION OF THE STOUR A letter was read from Messrs Bernard, King and Sons, in reply to one from the Board, with regard to the pollution of the Stour. Nothing had been done to prevent the pollution, except possibly with regard to acid from galvanising works ; and house slops and soapsuds were still running from the drains to the river. No steps were taken in the matter.

16 3 March 1888

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT

GAME TRESPASS John Simpson, boatman, Buck Pool, was charged with trespassing in pursuit of game on land belonging to Mr H J W Foley, at Prestwood on the 11th inst. A gamekeeper in the employ of Mr Foley said that on the day in question, he saw the defendant put a lurcher dog into a meadow. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment. Mr Foley did not adjudicate in this case.

17 19 May 1888

STOURBRIDGE BANKRUPTCY COURT, TUESDAY

FAILURE OF A BRIERLEY HILL BOATMAN Henry John Webb, master boatman, The Delph, Brierley Hill, came up for his public examination. The debtor's liabilities amounted to £153 1s 9d and his assets to £59 8s 9d. Mr G S Plant represented the bankrupt. In reply to Mr E P Jobson (official receiver), the debtor said he began as a boatman thirty years ago. Eight years ago he had six boats, but lost them through bad luck and bad trade. He borrowed £50 of Mr Herbert Humphries, and gave him a bill of sale. Mr Humphries sold him up, but he did not know what his estate realised. He failed seven years ago, and Mr Humphries was then appointed trustee to the estate. He subsequently bought boats of Mr Humphries, who served him with a writ, and again sold him up. Mr Chappell (the Registrar's Clerk), referring to the file of the liquidation seven years ago, said the figures it contained showed liabilities £645 and assets £618. The debtor, in reply to the Official Receiver, said he did not know any of the creditors had anything. Mr Humphries did not give him an account of what the estate realised. Mr Jobson said Mr Humphries ought to have reported to the Board of Trade. The Registrar said that apparently the liquidation had never been closed. Mr Jobson had better see if there were any assets in the hands of the trustee and ask the mortgagee of certain freehold property known as the Britannia Inn, The Delph, for an account. The examination was closed.

18 23 June 1888

THE ALLEGED MURDER AT BRIERLEY HILL At the Brierley Hill Police Court on Monday, before H Smith Esq and Major Webb, John Welch (26), ironworker, Chapel Street, was brought up on remand charged with murdering Mary Ann Millward (12), daughter of Isaac Millward, Potter Street, by drowning her in a lock of the Birmingham Canal on the 3rd inst. Mr W O C Addison prosecuted. The interest in the case has by no means abated. In the morning, a large crowd congregated in the street to get a look at the prisoner as he walked from the railway station to the court on his way from Winson Green. The workmen, who make it a rule to strictly observe Saint Monday, assembled in good numbers round the court, and when the public were admitted, a rush was made for the entrance. The court was crowded, but many were unable to gain admission, and these lounged round the building during the day, waiting to hear the result of the trial, the general impression being that the prisoner would either be discharged or committed for trial before the rising of the Court. The prisoner's fortnight's incarceration has had a marked effect upon him. When first before the magistrates, he seemed to treat the matter with indifference, and smiled complacently at his friends in Court. But when brought up on Monday, he listened attentively to the evidence, although he asked the witnesses no questions of importance. The following witnesses, who were called at the coroner's inquest last week, repeated their evidence : Emily Millward (mother of the deceased), Mr G Ashmead, **George Lowe**, Annie Hall, John Wooldridge, Samuel Snelson, John Snelson, John Deeley and Sarah Jane Palmer. The witness George Lowe, the lock-keeper, said there was a footboard to the bottom gate of the lock in which the body was found ; but there was no footboard to the top gate, near which the body was found. People could cross by the "balancing beam" on the top of the gate and by the "(?boating) beam", but both were dangerous, the latter being the more dangerous of the two. The Bench said some circumstances had transpired which rendered it necessary for further enquiries to be made, and in the meantime the whole facts would be laid before the Public Prosecutor. Prisoner would be remanded for a week, and next

Monday, the Bench believed, the prisoner might be released or otherwise.

19 23 June 1888

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY **Edward Millward**, boatman, Mill Street, was charged with assaulting Mary Ann Fossit on the 20th ult. Mr Waldron defended. Defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs.

20 18 August 1888

BRIERLEY HILL

MAGISTERIAL At the Police Court on Thursday, before Mr N C A Neville, stipendiary, **Thomas Hawkins**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being drunk at Brettell Lane on the 13th inst. Police-constable Booth said he found the defendant drunk in a field belonging to Mr J Wassall. The Stipendiary said the defendant had not committed an offence, as he was not on the highway. But the officer had done the defendant a kindness, and he must not give him an opportunity of doing so again. The case was dismissed. The following were also fined the sums set against their names for drunkenness :- **Thomas Kent**, boatman, Delph, 2s 6d and costs.

21 13 October 1888

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

CHARGE AGAINST A BOATMAN **John Adams**, boatman, Albion Street, was charged by his employers, Messrs Harris, canal carriers, with stealing one horse cloth, of the value of 19s, on the 13th of April last. Prisoner was supplied by the prosecutors with the horse cloth, and the evidence showed that he pledged it. He was remanded for further evidence.

22 20 October 1888

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY **William Kent**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with committing a breach of the peace by fighting on the 12th inst at Brierley Hill, and was ordered to pay the costs, 8s 6d.

23 12 January 1889

THE DROWNING OF LOVERS AT BRIERLEY HILL Mr E B Thorneycroft (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Bell Hotel, Brierley Hill, on Saturday, touching the death of Richard Walters (26), bricklayer, of Potter Street, and Fanny Cornock (19) of New Street, whose bodies were drawn from the canal on the previous Thursday. Henry Cornock, engineer, New Street, identified his daughter's body, and said that for some time she had kept company with Walters. About half past eight on Wednesday night, they left his house together, and he did not see them again alive. His daughter generally came home before ten o'clock, and as she did not return on that night, he stopped up till nearly midnight, and he and his wife then went to bed. Two other daughters remained downstairs until one o'clock, and then witness's wife got up, as she was so troubled she could not sleep. Shortly after four o'clock witness got up, went to Walters's house, and found that he had not returned home. This caused him to fear that something had happened, but he went to work, and at dinner time he was fetched home and there found the dead body of his daughter. In his opinion, the two were accidentally drowned in the fog. Walters and his daughter were very affectionate towards each other, and he had no reason whatever to suppose that there had been any violence on the part of Walters or anyone else. The handmuff (produced) belonged to his daughter. Eliza Walters, widow, Potter Street, Brierley Hill, identified the body of Richard Walters as that of her son. She last saw him alive about six o'clock on Wednesday morning. When he returned from his work in the evening, she was away from home. As he did not return at the usual time at night, she suspected that something had happened, and did not go to bed that night. On the following day, she heard that her son's dead body had been recovered from the canal. She had no reason whatever to believe that there had been foul play. She was of the opinion that the deceased were accidentally drowned. The walking stick produced belonged to her son. A boatman named **Hutt** of Potter Street, deposed to

finding the muff (produced) at the side of the canal ; and **Samuel Westwood**, boatman of the Delph, spoke to finding the walking stick in the pound near the fourth lock. Superintendent Wollaston said neither of these witnesses gave information of what they had found, or the bodies might have been recovered hours before. The Coroner pointed out to the witnesses that it was their duty as boatmen, when they found anything in the canal, to give it up immediately to the lock-keeper or the police. Thomas Tonks, bricklayer's labourer, Mount Pleasant, said that between half past nine and ten o'clock on Wednesday night, he saw Walters, with a young woman, walking arm in arm in the direction of Stourbridge, near the Roe Buck at Amblecote Lane. It was very foggy at the time. Police-constable Booth said that in consequence of information received he searched the canal at the Nine Locks on Thursday morning. He commenced dragging at half past twelve, and an hour later found the body of the deceased, Fanny Cornock, in the pound near the fourth lock. There was a scar on the nose of the deceased. She was dressed, but her hat was missing, and had not since been found. About four yards nearer the third lock, witness found the body of Walters a few minutes later. Walters's hat was also missing. He had a slight cut on the eye and a bruise on the left side of the forehead. In his opinion, deceased fell into the third lock, and their bodies afterwards floated into the pound. Walters had 1s 3d and a watch and chain in his pockets. The watch stopped at 10.20. Witness had made enquiries, and saw no reason to suspect violence. The muff was found a few yards from the place where the bodies were recovered. Superintendent Wollaston said he had no other evidence to offer. The Coroner, in summing up, said it was for the jury to say whether the deceased came by their deaths accidentally or otherwise. He pointed out that there was not the slightest evidence of suicide, and that there was no suspicion of foul play. In his opinion, there was nothing suspicious about the marks, as they might have been caused by falling into the lock or struggling against the lock gate. The Jury returned a verdict that the deceased accidentally fell into the water in the fog.

24 20 April 1889

WORDSLEY

DEATH FROM CHOKING **John Wassell** (70), boatman, Kinver Street, Wordsley, has died under peculiar circumstances. It appears that the deceased was on Wednesday night in charge of a boat travelling on the canal between Wordsley and Park Head, Dudley. At the latter place, he and his son commenced their evening meal, consisting of coffee, bread and beef, in the cabin of the boat. His son noticed his father put some large pieces of beef in his mouth, and shortly after he fell back choking, and expired in a few minutes. At the inquest on Thursday, evidence was given that death was due to suffocation (from choking) and a verdict was returned accordingly.

25 11 May 1889

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

FOOLISH MEN **Joseph Male**, boatman, Wordsley, was charged with furiously driving a horse on the 6th inst. Police-constable Lafford said that on the date named, he was on duty in Crescent Lane, Brockmoor, and saw the defendant galloping a horse up the lane. He had to get on a wall with a number of persons to avoid being run over. Witness, however, caught hold of the horse and asked defendant for his name, but he refused to give it for twenty minutes. **John Wood** (50), boatman, Wordsley, was charged with obstructing Police-constable Lafford in the execution of his duty at the same time and place. The officer said that when he had hold of the horse, Wood came up and said that the horse belonged to him. Male gave him a strap out of his pocket, and then defendant beat the horse, and told Male not to get off the horse. Male, who had been previously convicted five times, was fined 10s and 11s 9d costs, or fourteen days. In the case of Wood, the Stipendiary said that the officers must be protected in the execution of their duty. He would be fined 10s and 11s 9d costs, or twenty one days.

26 15 June 1889

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, TUESDAY

THEFT OF PARTRIDGE EGGS **Robert Harris**, boatman, Kidderminster, was charged with taking out of a nest on land in the occupation of Mr H J W H Rowley, on the 10th of May, nine partridge eggs ; and **Arthur Rowley**, boatman, Kidderminster, was charged with aiding and abetting Harris. Mr Waldron prosecuted. A gamekeeper named Edwards saw Harris among some rushes on the side of the canal at Green's Forge. He saw him pick up a nest, but receiving a signal from Rowley, who perceived witness, he threw them over a hedge, and witness heard a noise like the breaking of eggs. On going to the spot, Edwards found nine partridge eggs. An officer from Kidderminster proved five previous convictions against Harris, and he was fined 40s and costs 11s 6d ; Rowley was fined 20s and costs 9s ; in default, one month's hard labour.

27 22 June 1889

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY

ALLEGED NIGHT POACHING **Frederick Elton**, boatman, Stourbridge Road, Kidderminster, was remanded for a week on a charge of night poaching with several others on land in the occupation of Joseph Whitmore, at Kinver on the 27th of August 1887. Mr W Waldron prosecuted. Bail was allowed – prisoner in £20 and one surety of £10.

WIFE DESERTION **Samuel Rogers**, boatman, was charged with deserting his wife, and was summoned to show cause why he should not contribute towards her maintenance. She stated that they had been married seven years, and that he had deserted her since November. Defendant alleged that his wife was in the habit of pawning his clothes. An order was made on the defendant to contribute 5s a week, and he was told by the Bench that in case he provided his wife with a home, this order would cease.

28 29 June 1889

NIGHT POACHING AT KINVER – A CULPRIT'S STORY At the Brierley Hill Police Court on Monday, before Colonel Fletcher, G K Harrison, H A Payne and J S Evers Swindell Esqrs, **Frederick Elton**, boatman, Kidderminster, was charged with night poaching on the 26th of August 1887, on land in the occupation of Joseph Whitmore, at Kinver. Mr W Waldron prosecuted, and in opening the case, said that on the date named in the charge, a keeper named Matthews was in company with two other keepers and Police-constable Plant. They heard a noise in the furze, and went through the furze to the side of the fence leading from the Sewerage Farm towards the cemetery. A net was found and was pegged. The net was 220 yards long, and when the keepers were halfway along the net they saw four men, the prisoner being one of them. The four men were armed with stones and sticks, and they threw a number of stones at the keepers. A man of the name of Harris was taken into custody. One of the men struck Matthews with a stick. A bag was found containing two warm rabbits. All the other three men had been convicted. William Matthews bore out Mr Waldron's statement. Prisoner said he had his arm broken at the time. The other men asked if he would go, and he went because his wife and child were clamming. He was very sorry it happened. The Bench fined prisoner £5 and costs, and ordered him to find surety not to offend again for twelve months, or in default three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

29 17 August 1889

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY

DRUNKENNESS The following persons were fined 2s 6d and costs for drunkenness :- **Henry Webb**, boatman, Delph ; **William Bennett**, boatman, Delph Lane.

30 14 September 1889

A CHILD ATTACKED BY RATS AT TIVIDALE An inquest was held at the Boat Inn, Tividale, on the body of a fully developed child, which was found wrapped in a brown paper parcel on a small embankment near the canal on Monday afternoon by a boatman, when passing in his boat

under the canal bridge near the Globe Ironworks, Tividale. It was shown that **James Jones**, the boatman referred to, found the parcel containing the body on a piece of land lying immediately under the Seven Stars Bridge, to which it was impossible to get without a boat. The parcel could easily have been dropped there by a person on the highway. Police-constable Winfield deposed that the parcel was about two feet from the water's edge. He had made all enquiries about the affair, but had been unable to learn anything further. Part of the left foot of the child was missing, and in his opinion there was no doubt it had been eaten away by rats. Some of the paper in which the body was wrapped was nibbled away. The jury adjourned the inquest for the purpose of a *post mortem* examination being held.

31 14 September 1889

FAILURE OF A BOAT BUILDER **Francis John Bryce**, late boat builder of the Delph, came up for his public examination at the Court House, Stourbridge, on Tuesday afternoon, before Mr Registrar Collis. His liabilities were £110 8s 10d and assets nil. In reply to the Official Receiver (Mr Jobson), he said he was now a journeyman, and had been so since he came back from America in December last. He went to America owing to there being an execution in the house, and to threatening letters saying what creditors were going to do with him. He left all his estate behind him, and everything was sold up in the dock where he carried on boat building, and at his house. He was doing no business just at the time he went away. He made his business pay up to the time trade fell off, and then he had several bad debts, and could not meet his creditors. He only found it out a few days before he went away. The examination was closed. Mr Pritchard appeared for the debtor.

32 12 October 1889

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, MONDAY

A BOATMAN AND HIS WIFE **William Kent**, boatman, Delph, was charged with assaulting his wife **Elizabeth Kent** on the 13th July. Mr W Waldron prosecuted and Mr J W Clulow defended. Mr Waldron explained that circumstances, over which no one had any control, had caused the case to go on till now. A warrant had to be issued for the defendant's apprehension, and on the day he was bailed out, he went to the Stourbridge sports, and there had his leg injured. On the night of the 13th July, the wife and husband were drinking at the Bell Inn, Delph, but she left first. She saw her husband leave the public house and walk towards the canal side. She asked him into the boat, and some words took place, the wife asking him where he had been. He then took her by the hair and pulled out a handful, and said if she was not satisfied with that he would drown and murder her. He would not support his wife, and refused to have her in the boat, and she had been obliged to do the best she could for herself and her children. Complainant, in her evidence, said she had not been in the boat ten minutes when her husband came in and assaulted her. He pulled a handful of hair out of her head. She said, "Don't do that, let me dress me". He punched her on the arms and face, and blacked one of her eyes. He said he would drown her if she did not get out of the boat. She had been living with her mother since the assault. She was afraid the defendant would do her some bodily harm. Cross-examined : Since her husband's leg had been hurt the boats had been at work. Her husband was lying at his father's house while his leg was injured, and she had never been there to enquire after him because his mother threatened to scald her eyes out. She had had all the children till that day (Monday) week. His mother had not offered to keep them all. She did not get drunk the night she was in the Bell Inn. When her husband came in, she did not mention anybody's name or say he had been with Ben Taylor's wife. She did not begin to swear and curse at him. Sometimes she used bad language, "but not on an average". She did not use a bad word that night. She did not scratch him, or mark his face with her nails. She did not use a stool upon him. She did not ask and beg of him to hit her, and say what she would do if he did. Her husband had not offered her a home, and she wanted her husband to keep from his mother, as she was the "indication" of all their quarrels. In re-examination, witness said her husband in nine days earned £12 to £14. Mr Clulow, for the defence, denied that any assault was committed, and if the complainant had any

marks and bruises upon her, they were caused in the struggle between her and her husband, who was trying to prevent her getting out of the boat, as she was behaving indecently and was in a beastly state of drunkenness. Could they believe that the woman was in bodily fear when she slept with her husband the same night as the quarrel, and stayed in the boat with him until the following Wednesday? Susannah Kent, Thomas Kent and William Bourne gave evidence to the effect complainant started on her husband, and that she behaved most indecently. The Bench, after retiring to consider the case, said they had come to the conclusion to dismiss the case, and to bind both parties over to keep the peace for six months, and to pay the expenses between them.

33 21 November 1889

LOCAL LABOUR GRIEVANCES

BOATMEN AND WAGGONERS' GRIEVANCES The boatmen and waggoners engaged in the collection of railway traffic in the Dudley and surrounding district held a meeting at the Dudley Workmen's Hall on Saturday night, and agreed to accept the directors' terms to cease work at seven five nights a week, and three on Saturdays. At the same time, they decided to leave work punctually, to form a union, and send out circulars to traders requesting their co-operation to secure the six o'clock movement on the five working days of the week.

A large and enthusiastic meeting of boatmen belonging to various towns in the Black Country was held at the Volunteer Inn, Smethwick, on Saturday night, for the purpose of considering the wages question and the desirability of forming a boatmen's association for the districts named above. A boatman presided. Mr A H Flavell (Old Hill) reported that he had, in accordance with the instructions received from the men, prepared a memorial for presentation to the employers, asking for an advance of wages as follows :- Captains to East Cannock 11s, underhands 8s ; for daywork, captains 4s 6d, underhands 3s 6d, and no half days. Cabins and stoves to be provided on all boats. It was resolved to form a boatmen's association.

34 23 November 1889

ROWLEY REGIS LOCAL BOARD

THE HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT

HOW TYPHOID FEVER IS CAUSED The Medical Officer of Health (Mr J Beasley) reported that 31 deaths had taken place during the past month, with an annual average of 13.2 per 1,000. There was only one death from zymotic disease, viz, croup, at 47 Pear Tree Street. Five cases of typhoid fever, five of scarlet fever and one of whooping cough had been reported. There was a heap of night soil in the fields opposite the lower end of Chapel Street, which had been there twelve months or more, and the people round about complained very much of the smell. A case of typhoid fever occurred in this district, which probably was due to this cause. He requested the Board to take steps to get it removed as soon as possible. He also asked for an order to be issued against John Dingley, 29 Birmingham Road, to abate a nuisance caused by his keeping pigs and cows in a yard at the back of his house, for which there was no proper drain provided.

BAD WATER The assistant Medical Officer (Mr T V DeDenne) reported that 21 deaths had taken place in the lower district during the past four weeks, giving an average of 5.2 per week, and a mean annual rate of 16.00 per 1,000 inhabitants. Only one death from zymotic disease was reported, viz, a child from croup. There had been four cases of typhoid fever reported within the last ten days. Two cases occurred in Halesowen Road, and these were apparently due to the well water, and were of a severe character. The other two occurred in Pear Tree Street, and were probably due to the dirty state of the yard behind the premises. Since the cases had come under his notice, every precaution had been taken to prevent the spreading of the disease. He should ask for the well at the back of the houses, No 200 and 202, in Halesowen Road, to be filled in immediately, the water being totally unfit for drinking purposes, and that the tap water be laid on. One case of scarlet fever had been reported in Wright's Lane, but was now convalescent. The necessary precautions had been taken.

35 14 December 1889

ALLEGED THEFT OF A HORSE AT KINGSWINFORD

A PENITENT PRISONER At the Brierley Hill Police Court on Monday, before Henry Smith and George King Harrison Esqs, Frederick William Joscelyn, alias Frank Smith, a native of Kingswinford but now of Burton-on-Trent, was charged with stealing a horse, of the value of £25, the property of Frederick Hinton, Kingswinford, during the night of the 25th ult. George Bate, waggoner to Mr Giles, Kingswinford, said that at a quarter past four on the 25th ult, he saw the horse belonging to the prosecutor in a field on his master's farm. He missed the horse out of the field on the 26th ult. **Samuel Holloway**, boatman, Oldbury, said that on the morning of the 26th ult, the prisoner offered him a horse for sale. Prisoner asked £8 10s for the horse. Witness questioned him as to whether it was his own horse or not, and he said it was. Witness bought the horse, and afterwards gave information to the police. Police-constable Davies, Oldbury, said he saw the prisoner in a public house at Oldbury on the 26th ult, and the horse was standing outside. Prisoner said that the horse belonged to him, and that he had it from Halfpenny Green. On the same night, the prosecutor identified the horse at Oldbury as his property. Prisoner gave the name of Frank Smith. Frederick Hinton, Kingswinford, said he did not miss the horse until Davies came to him. He saw his horse in the possession of Davies at Oldbury. Police-constable Adams, Kingswinford, said that on the 3rd inst he received the prisoner into his custody from the Oldbury police. In answer to the charge, prisoner said, "Yes, that's right ; if I had got into Birmingham I should not have been caught". Prisoner was further charged with stealing a leather headstall, value 3s, between the 5th and the 25th ult. **David Stokes**, boatman, Kingswinford, said he missed a headstall from his stable on the 25th. He had not seen the headstall for some time previously. The headstall produced was his property. Police-constable Davies said the headstall produced was on the horse at Oldbury. Prisoner said the headstall was on the horse when he had it out of the field in Bromley Lane. Police-constable Adams said he charged the prisoner on the 3rd inst. In reply he said, "Yes ; a week last night". Prisoner was further charged with stealing a concertina, value 30s, the property of Henry Palmer, landlord of the Swan Inn, Pensnett. Prosecutor said that on the 31st of October the prisoner called at his house, and asked him if he would allow him to take the concertina, which he said he would get repaired by a friend of his. Witness allowed him to take the instrument, which he said he would bring back in a week. A fortnight afterwards, prisoner said a man in the next street would return it. He received the concertina from Police-constable Adams. Wallace Poulton, High Street, Kingswinford, said that on the 9th ult, the prisoner asked him to lend him 6s on a concertina. Prisoner said it was his own. In answer to the charge, prisoner said that he was deeply sorry for what he had committed. It was poverty and company which had brought him to this. He was sorry to say that people he had spent his money with and done his best for had turned out to be his bitterest enemies, and when his money was all gone, they turned their backs upon him. He had been for three or four days at a time without a bit of food. He pleaded hard with an honest heart for the Bench to have tender mercy on him. He had prayed day and night to Almighty Father to forgive his sins. During the last three or four months he had suffered hard, especially during the last fortnight he had been in prison. Prisoner was committed to take his trial at the Sessions. At the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions on Wednesday, prisoner pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing the horse and the headstall mentioned above, and was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

36 11 January 1890

BRIERLEY HILL POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Joseph Pardoe**, boatman, a native of Gloucester, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Police-constable McHugh said that at twelve o'clock on Wednesday night, he found the defendant lying asleep in Level Street. Defendant was drunk and became very violent and knocked witness's helmet off. Defendant was fined 1s and costs.

37 11 January 1890

SERIOUS CHARGES AGAINST A KINVER LICENSED VICTUALLER At the Brierley Hill Police Court on Monday, William Emery, landlord of the Plough and Harrow, High Street, Kinver, was charged with selling beer at 12.15 am on the night of the 23rd ult, at the house of William Parker, ironworker, High Street, Kinver ; also with selling beer at 12.30 on the same night to **Thomas Nixon**, boatman, High Street, Kinver. Mr Walton (West Bromwich) defended. Police-constable O'Leary stated that at 12.15 on the morning in question, he saw Emery leave Palmer's house, enter his own house, and turn to the tap and draw beer. Witness saw defendant draw the beer through the window. Two men came up, and witness had to go into the adjoining garden to avoid being seen. Whilst there, Emery came to his door, looked round, and turned back and picked something up out of the passage. Witness went towards him, but before he could stop him he had entered Palmer's house. With the light from Palmer's door, witness saw defendant carrying a jug. Shortly afterwards, defendant came out and went to Nixon's, which was about thirty yards distant. He immediately came out, and again returned to his own house, and went in. Defendant went to the tap, and witness went to the window and saw him apparently draw beer. Witness concealed himself, and the defendant came out, looked at the door, and proceeded towards Nixon's house. Witness stopped him and asked where he was going, to which defendant replied, "I am going to see a friend". Witness asked him if he had any drink with him, and he said, "No". He searched the defendant, and found in his left hand pocket the pink bottle (produced) which contained ale. Upon being asked how he accounted for the beer being upon him, he said he was going to have supper with his friend, and he was taking them a drop of beer. Witness took possession of the bottle, and defendant said, "I hope there will nothing come of it. I would not wish it for £10". Witness accompanied defendant to Nixon's house. Nixon said he had invited Emery for supper. In the house were three men named Wadely, Sergeant and Oldnall. Nixon was drunk, and the others appeared to have had a good deal to drink. When in the street, defendant said he was sorry if he had done wrong. Defendant also said he had received no money for the beer he took to Palmer's. On the table in Palmer's were glasses containing ale and a jug containing about two quarts, the jug being similar to that which he had previously seen Emery take to the house. In the house there were seven persons. Witnesses for the defence stated that Emery was invited to supper at Nixon's, and that the supper was on the table. They had no beer in the house, and so defendant fetched himself some to have with his supper. Mr Foley said the Bench considered that there was not sufficient evidence in the case of Nixon, and in that case the defendant would be discharged. They however thought the case of Palmer proved, and the defendant would be fined £2 and costs, or in default one month.