

LEICESTER DAILY MERCURY

27 January 1879

County Public Office

BIRSTALL **Philip Boswell**, a boatman, residing at Long Buckby, was charged with firing off a gun within 50 feet of the highway, to the danger of passengers. He pleaded guilty, and was fined 5s and costs 10s 6d, or 14 days.

26 February 1879

County Public Office

BELGRAVE **John Wrigley**, boatman, was charged with wilfully damaging a fence, the property of Elizabeth Carr, at Belgrave on the 17th February. Defendant had been convicted several times before, and was fined 40s and costs, and 10s damages, or one months imprisonment.

28 March 1879

Market Bosworth

PETTY SESSIONS **Stephen Edwards**, boatman, Abingdon, pleaded guilty to killing a hare without having a license on the 7th inst at Market Bosworth. John Cope, gamekeeper, saw defendant shoot the hare from the boat as he was passing along the canal. Fined £2 and costs, or one month.

28 March 1879

Rugby

PETTY SESSIONS – TUESDAY George Reynolds, Pailton, labourer, and **John Cooper**, Brinklow, boatman, for trespassing in search of game, at Pailton on the 16th inst, were fined £1 and 16s 6d costs each.

15 December 1879

GLEN PARVA Michael Giblin was charged with stealing two shovels, value 7s 3d, at Glen Parva, the property of Francis Allsopp and Joseph Barratt, on the 5th inst. In the first case, Allsopp said he left his shovel in the machine house at the works where he was employed, and on the following morning, he missed it. In the second case, the evidence was similar, the shovel being left in the machine house, and being missed on the succeeding day when Barratt went to work. PC Choppin said on the day on which the robberies were committed, he saw prisoner at the Union Inn, Glen Parva. He had Allsopp's shovel with him. While he was talking to the landlord outside, prisoner walked out, carrying the shovel in his hand. Witness followed, and apprehended him. He said the shovel was his own, and that he bought it at Loughborough for 3s 9d. His account not being satisfactory, he apprehended him. Subsequently, prisoner confessed to him that he stole the two shovels, and that he had concealed the remaining one in the hedge near the canal bridge on the way to Blaby. Choppin went to the place indicated, and found Barratt's shovel. Defendant was then charged with stealing a shovel, value 3s 6d, the property of Thomas Letts, plasterer of Leicester, at Aylestone on the 28th ult. Prosecutor was working at some houses at Aylestone Park, and last saw his shovel safe in a lock up on the 28th November. On the 3rd, he missed it. **Frederick Marlow**, a boatman, said on the 28th ult, he bought the shovel of prisoner for 1s 6d. PS Hawkesworth said he received the shovel from the last witness on the 30th ult. He charged prisoner at the Police Station (where he was in custody on the former charge) with stealing it. At first he denied ever having seen it, but subsequently said that he sold it, but did not steal it ; that a strange man gave it to him, and that he did not know who he was. Prisoner was committed to trial on all the charges.

12 February 1889

This day's police

TOWN HALL – ALLEGED THEFT OF HAY George Timson, labourer, lodging at the Workmen's Home, Bedford Street, and Martin Richardson, labourer, Coach and Horses Yard, Humberstone Gate, were charged with being in company with another and stealing 6 cwt of hay, value £1 16s, the property of William Prentice and others, from a building in Foundry Lane, between Jan 30th and Feb 8th. Mr Waring (Haxby and Partridge) prosecuted. Reuben Saunt, labourer in the employ of the prosecutors, said on Wednesday Jan 30th, he locked up six trusses of hay in a building in Foundry Lane, and on the 8th inst, found the place unlocked and the hay gone. He communicated with his

employers, and identified the hay produced as similar to that stolen. It was of a special kind. On Friday last, Timson made a statement to witness. **Mary Foster**, wife of **Edward Foster**, boatman, Charlotte Street, deposed that about a week ago prisoner took two trusses to her house. Timson said "they had brought it for Foster". Her husband was not at home, and she paid Timson 4s for which he asked. A few days later, Timson took two trusses, and on a third occasion, when he also took two, he was accompanied by another man (not Richardson). She paid Timson 4s at each visit. This was all he asked, and she thought it was all right. The men put the hay in the loft, and it remained there until the police fetched it. Questioned as to whether her husband had been at home during the period she had spoken to, the witness several times contradicted herself, but adhered to her statement that her husband was not present when the hay was delivered. PC Morris said yesterday he arrested Richardson, and charged him with the offence, to which he replied, "Yes". Detective Sergeant Palmer deposed to apprehending Timson, and when charged he said, "It's quite right". Witness afterwards jointly charged the prisoners, when Richardson admitted having carried one of the trusses for the other prisoner. The men were remanded until Tuesday next.

19 February 1889

This day's police

STEALING HAY George Timson (32), lodging at the Workmen's Home, and Martin Richardson, Coach and Horses Yard, Humberstone Gate, labourers, were charged on remand with being concerned in stealing six trusses of hay, value 36s, the property of Messrs W Prentice and Co, hay and corn dealers. Mr Waring (Haxby and Partridge) prosecuted, and Mr Bouskell watched the proceedings on behalf of the man Foster, to whom the hay was sold. No additional evidence was offered. Timson was formerly in the employ of the prosecutors as an occasional man. Between the 30th ult and the 8th inst, six trusses of hay, each of which weighed about a cwt, were abstracted from a store in Foundry Lane, and sold by the prisoners and another man to **Mrs Foster**, the wife of a boatman, living in Charlotte Street. Prisoners pleaded guilty, and having both been previously convicted of larceny, they were each sentenced to six weeks hard labour.

13 July 1889

Atherstone

PETTY SESSIONS A fine of 10s with 19s 6d costs was imposed upon **John Hemsley**, boatman, Polesworth, for trespassing in search of game upon land in the occupation of Messrs Mallaby and Atkins at Grendon on the 23rd ult.

26 July 1889

Town Hall

EDUCATION ACT PROSECUTIONS The following were summoned for non compliance with the regulations of the Education Act, and fined 5s, or in default 5 days :- **William Withers**, boatman, 33 Britannia Street.

17 October 1889

STARVING A HORSE TO DEATH **William Jenks**, boatman, was charged at Wolverhampton on Wednesday with cruelty to a horse belonging to the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company, by whom he is employed. Mr T Dallow prosecuted. The defendant was sent with a horse to Oldbury to fetch back a boat. He put the animal in a stable there, and left it all night, neither removing its harness nor giving it food. When he returned to the company's stables in Wolverhampton, the horse was in a very bad condition, and it died the following day. It was found upon a *post mortem* examination that it had had no food for some twenty four hours. The animal was worth £10. The stipendiary said that the defendant had deliberately starved the horse to death, and fined him 40s and costs, or a months hard labour.

30 December 1889

A WOMAN DROWNED The body of a woman, identified as that of Hannah Warburton of 2 A Court, Gray Street, was found in the canal near the West Bridge about a quarter past nine o'clock on Sunday morning by a boatman named **Joseph Skidmore**. The latter, with the assistance of Joseph

Bodycot of 32 Redcross Street, recovered the body, and it was removed to the Bow Bridge Inn, where Dr Blakesley made an examination. The poor woman was seen near her home on Saturday night. She was married, but lived apart from her husband, and had latterly obtained a livelihood as a charwoman. At the inquest, which was held by Coroner Harrison this (Monday) morning, evidence of identification was given by James Brown, shoe maker, of 105 New Park Street, who said the deceased was about 53 years of age. She was the wife of Joseph Warburton, a bricklayer, by whom she was deserted 11 years since. From enquiries which witness had made, he ascertained that the woman was seen in Gray Street at half past eight on Sunday morning. He knew of nothing to cause her to destroy herself. Joseph Skidmore having deposed to seeing the body floating in the canal underneath the West Bridge, and its subsequent recovery, Dr Blakesley certified that death was due to suffocation by drowning. An open verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

27 August 1898

Borough Police Court

A CURIOUS CASE Charles Pilgrim (11), schoolboy, Dannett Street, was charged with stealing from a stationer's shop, No 95 King Richard's Road, on August 9, 16s in money, the property of William Taylor Mason. The case was one adjourned from the 22nd inst, the evidence taken on which date was read over. In the evidence was a statement by PC Hood that the boy admitted taking the money, having spent some of it, and having given 5s or 6s to another boy named Buley. Now, an alibi was set up. **James Chater**, a boatman, and the boy's uncle, said that on August 5, he went away with his boat, taking the boy with him ; and they did not return to Leicester for a week, The boy, he said, was with him all the time, and slept in the same cabin. The Magistrates' Clerk pointed out that the boy himself had admitted to the police having taken the money, and had also made a statement as to how he had disposed of it. The boy now said he did not take the money, and declared that he was with his uncle all the time. The Chief Constable said he felt justified upon this evidence in asking for a remand, in order that inquiries might be made as to the boy's statement. The boy was remanded until Saturday next.

29 August 1898

Giles Smith, boatman, charged with shooting at and injuring three Gloucester boys on the banks of the Severn near Gloucester, was committed for trial on Saturday afternoon. It was alleged that because the boys threw lumps of clay at the boats as they were travelling up the river, Smith fired two shots at them. Prisoner said he did not aim at the lads or intend to hit them. His sole intention was to give the boys a fright.

3 December 1898

WORK ON THE CANAL BOATS – A HEALTHY OCCUPATION The report of Mr Brydone, the Local Government Board Inspector under the Canal Boats Acts, has just been prepared. During the year, Mr Brydone's inspections extended to most of the districts in England and Wales where there is any canal boat traffic. The total number of boats which have been registered since the Act came into operation is 15,148, but in 4,740 cases, the registration has been cancelled. 314 new boats were registered during 1897, and the number of boats actually in use as dwellings is estimated to be 10,408. Boats were inspected by 326 Councils, and the aggregate number of inspections amounted to 33,431.

Mr Brydone attests very confidently to the great improvement which has been brought about in canal boat cabin homes since the Acts first came into force. The cabins formerly were, as a rule, filthy and uncared for ; men, women and children were all huddled together, and little or no attention was paid to the proprieties of life. As it was the exception then to meet with a good, clean boat, neither overcrowded nor improperly occupied by the two sexes, so it is the exception now to meet with any boat which is dirty and dilapidated, or to find one overcrowded or improperly occupied. The fact that in so many cases now the wives and children are left at home on land has exercised a beneficial influence upon the boat people generally. At no time during the year did he meet with or hear of any grave instance of overcrowding or improper occupation.

As evidence of the healthiness of a boatman's occupation, the inspector was told by the agent of the Glamorganshire Canal Company that for the ten years ending 1897, only one of their boatmen had died, and he was a very old man, and only 17 cases of infectious disease were met with in 33,431 inspections. The large number of inspections made – an average of between three and four inspections during the year of each registered boat in existence – is evidence, if any be needed, that efficient surveillance over the canal boats and boat people is vigorously maintained. Mr Brydone concludes : “It is now twenty years since the passing of the first Canal Boats Act, and I think the legislation on the subject has produced great and beneficial results, and with very little friction. For the comfort and cleanliness of the cabins, little more can now be done than to keep up the surveillance which is at present exercised. The men and woman engaged in boating contrast favourably with any of the working classes. The one regrettable incident, however, in connection with the carrying out of the Canal Boats Acts, is the difficulty in securing the education of the children of the boatmen.”

13 December 1898

A CANAL BOAT TRAGEDY At Leeds Assizes today, **Peter Keeling**, aged 31, a boatman, was found guilty of the manslaughter of Jos Croft at Shipley, and was sentenced to ten years penal servitude. Prisoner was committed for trial on the capital charge, but the grand jury returned a bill for manslaughter. The tragedy arose through jealousy. Prisoner smashed the deceased's head with a hammer on a canal boat.

19 December 1898

SAD DEATH OF A LEICESTER WOMAN – DROWNED IN THE CANAL The body of a young woman named Charlotte Chapman, aged 20, a shoe machinist, who had been missing since the 3rd inst, was found in the canal, near the Abbey Park Bridge, about 9.30 this morning. **Enoch Skidmore**, a boatman, made the discovery, and at once communicated with PC Cookman, and together they recovered the body, which was in an advanced state of decomposition. It was removed to the mortuary, where a friend, with whom the deceased had lodged, and who reported her missing, identified it by means of the clothing. It is presumed that the body had been in the water since the 3rd inst. An inquest will be held.