

LEICESTER CHRONICLE 1856 to 1879

1 January 5 1856

BOROUGH SESSIONS

STEALING IRON **Henry Dennis** (40), boatman, John Hall (39), labourer and George Reynolds (25), higgler, were charged with stealing, on the 18th December last, 172 lbs of iron piping, the property of Alfred Burgess. Mr Mundell prosecuted ; the prisoners were undefended. Henry Brock deposed that on the day in question he was looking out of a window and saw the prisoners carrying ashes, and afterwards he charged the prisoner Reynolds with the robbery, but he denied it. He found a quantity of iron piping (produced), PS Sturgess proved apprehending the prisoner Hall, when he said, "It's a bad job ; it's the first time and I hope it will be the last". The prisoners were called upon for their defence, when Hall said he knew nothing about it ; Dennis said he was a higgler, and knew nothing about the piping ; and Hall denied having had anything to do with the cart ; he was merely standing in the yard. The jury returned a verdict of guilty against all the prisoners, and they were sentenced to five calendar months hard labour each.

2 March 8 1856

CONCLUSION OF WEDNESDAY'S ASSIZE BUSINESS

SHEEP STEALING AT HOLWELL **George Billson** (25), boatman, and Sarah Billson (45) were charged, the former with stealing one ewe, the property of Josiah Gill, at Holwell on the 24th February, the latter with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. The jury found the prisoners guilty, George Billson of stealing and Sarah Billson of receiving. A previous conviction was proved against the prisoners in 1849. Fifteen calendar months hard labour each.

3 March 15 1856

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE, SATURDAY MARCH 8 **Liskom Newbold**, boatman of Leicester, pleaded guilty to stealing a pole, the property of James Wain, wood dealer of Belgrave. He was sentenced to fourteen days hard labour.

4 March 15 1856

MAGISTRATES' CLERK'S OFFICE, LOUGHBOROUGH, MARCH 8 **Henry Matlock**, boatman, who had been apprehended on suspicion of receiving property stolen from the Stanton colliery, was discharged for want of evidence.

5 May 3 1856

A FATAL BOILER EXPLOSION took place on Monday evening at the works of Messrs Rose and Co, Bilston, situate on the line of the Birmingham Canal. The boiler, which was 5ft 6in in diameter by 36 ft long, and made of 7-16ths iron, while one end was blown into the canal, was propelled with terrific force into the works, bringing down a chimney stalk 60 ft high, tearing a neighbouring boiler from its bed, and ripping up rolls and their bedding, which were so firmly secured that a force equal to hundreds of horse power must have been required to move them. At this obstacle the further progress of the boiler was stayed, and there it now lies torn to pieces. The rooting of the works and its surrounding brickwork were cast to an almost incredible distance. Massive iron uprights were broken to pieces and scattered, with disjointed heavy machinery upon every hand. The canal was nearly dammed up with the ruins which fell into it, sinking beneath them a longboat that lay near the works and endangering the lives of the boatmen. Benjamin Plant, the engineer at the time, was found in the canal quite dead with a severe wound upon his head. Thomas Court, a boilermaker, was found near to Plant, also dead from an injury upon the head of a more severe character than that by which the engineer was killed. Joseph Hill, another engineer, was found dead at a considerable distance from the immediate site of the explosion. He was surrounded by pieces of iron piping and bricks, some portions of which had struck him about the head and neck and deprived him of life. A youth named William Harris, an under hand puddler, was the fourth person killed. In addition to the

above persons who are killed, a few have been injured. The sad accident is supposed to have originated in water having been turned by Court into the boiler while it was in a state of excessive heat. The shattered boiler gives evidence of its having been allowed to get nearly empty. Court had been at his work nearly an hour when the explosion occurred.

6 May 3 1856

INQUEST AT HEMINGTON A captain of a boat named **Thomas Ironmonger**, aged fifty six years, died suddenly on the canal on Sunday last. He had been on a voyage to Gainsborough, and was returning up the Trent. When in Holme Pierrepont parish he was taken ill with a pain in his stomach, and went to lie down. His fellow boatman went to him shortly afterwards, and found that he was dead. The body was taken in the boat to Shardlow, and from thence in a cart to Hemington, his place of residence. He had been troubled for some time with occasional pains in the stomach, and had consulted many doctors for it. It is supposed that he died from the rupture of some blood vessel in the neighbourhood of the heart, and at the inquest held on Monday, a verdict of "Natural causes" was returned.

7 May 17 1856

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MAY 8 **William Jeffcoat** of Loughborough, boatman, for having unlawfully killed a hare on the 25th of April last, on land at Quorndon, was fined £2 and costs, or six weeks hard labour.

8 May 24 1856

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS, MAY 17 Two boatmen named **Jesse Ordin** and **William Wells** were apprehended by Mr Price, the parish constable of Ashby, for having a quantity of malt in their possession. They had offered some at Moira at 6s 9d per bushel, and this being considerably under the regular price, they were suspected of having stolen it, and taken into custody. Remanded for further examination, and removed to the Ashby lock up.

9 May 24 1856

LUTTERWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, MAY 12 A long case, in which **William Rowson**, boatman, Liverpool, was charged by William Gardner, farmer, Welford, with having stolen two cows on the 13th instant, his property, value £28, was dismissed, the Chairman telling him that he had been discharged without a spot or stain upon his character.

10 August 23 1856

TOWN HALL, MONDAY AUGUST 18

BRUTAL ASSAULT A young boatman named **Thomas Halford** was charged with assaulting Elizabeth Astill, a young woman about eighteen years of age, on the 9th inst in Grosvenor Street. The complainant stated that she was in trouble by defendant, and that her mother went to ask him what he should do for the child when it was born. Defendant assaulted her mother, and hearing the disturbance, complainant went out into the street, upon which defendant came up to her and struck her on the cheek. He then knocked her down, dragged her along the street by the hair of her head, and kicked her several times while she was on the floor. He was fined 10s or three weeks imprisonment.

11 December 27 1856

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, DECEMBER 18 **Benjamin Ross** of Loughborough, a boatman, was charged with having left his wife and family chargeable to the parish. His wife and four children had cost £47 14s in relief, and from £5 to £6 in expenses for seeking and fetching him from Chertsey in Sussex last week. The bench committed him for three months hard labour.

12 January 10 1857

TOWN HALL, LOUGHBOROUGH, JANUARY 2 **John Merriman** and **Henry Hickingbottom**, both of Castle Donington, boatmen, were further remanded on a charge of stealing two hams and 140 lbs of bacon on the 26th ult, the property of Mr Abraham Welsh.

JANUARY 7 A little old woman named McDonald was brought up and remanded on a charge of drunkenness. She was found on Sunday night in Swan Street, helplessly drunk, and rolled up more like a hedgehog than a human being.

13 January 31 1857

DEATH BY DROWNING An inquest was held at the Limekilns in the parish of Burbage yesterday week, on view of the body of **Eliza Nicholls**, between seven and eight years of age. From the evidence adduced, it appeared that her father was a boatman on the canal. On the previous Wednesday, at the above place, her father stopped for the night, and took the little girl along with him to put the horse in the stable, leaving her mother in the boat. He afterwards sent the deceased to her mother to get some money to pay for the stable, and on her not returning he went in search of her along with another boatman, but could not find her. They then procured two boat hooks and tried the canal, and after some time they succeeded in finding the body of the girl about two yards from the bank of the canal. A surgeon was sent for, and every means taken for her recovery, but life was extinct. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

14 April 25 1857

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE, MONDAY

ATTEMPT AT RAPE AT KILBY **John Falstead**, a youth seemingly about eighteen years of age, was brought up on a charge of attempting to commit a rape on the person of Ann Smith, servant to Mr Freer, landlord of the "Black Swan" near Kilby Bridge, on the previous afternoon (Sunday). It appeared that the defendant was a boatman on the canal, and that the complainant, together with a little girl, daughter of Mr Freer, named Sophia, had gone to take a walk with the baby on the towing-path. The prisoner, who was in an adjoining field picking cowslips, came up to them and seized the complainant, when the outrage complained of was committed. The girl, Sophia (who showed a great amount of intelligence in giving her evidence) ran off with the baby to procure some help, but in her fright she fell ; and three young men, who had met the girls just before, and had also seen the defendant as they passed, hearing screams, ran to the spot and saw prisoner run away from complainant, and captured him and took him to the house of Mr Freer, where a policeman was sent for, and he was given into custody. The particulars are, of course, unfit for publication. He was committed for trial at the assizes.

15 May 2 1857

MOIRA A fight having been got up at the Moira Arms here, on Saturday April 18th, the landlord, Mr Hough, called in PC Challinor to separate and eject the combatants, one of whom struck the officer a violent blow on the face, which bled profusely. The offender was, however, taken into custody who, as he refused to walk, was conveyed to the Ashby lock up in a dung cart. He was charged with the outrage at the Royal Hotel on Monday the 20th, before W W Abney Esq and T Mowbray Esq, and fined £10 ; in default, committed to the County Gaol at Leicester for three months with hard labour. The prisoner (who is an Oxford boatman) having no effects, was removed in custody for a quarter's retirement on Tuesday.

16 May 30 1857

POLICE CASES (Before the Rev J C Roberts at the Rectory, Witherley Hall) **John Barnsley jun**, boatman, was charged by Inspector Male with being drunk and disorderly at one o'clock in Sunday morning last. He was discharged from custody by Mr Roberts, and information was ordered to be laid against him for assaulting and resisting the police in the discharge of their duty.

17 June 20 1857

HARBOROUGH COUNTY COURT, JUNE 15 (Before Mr Sergeant Miller)

Brown v **Shelton** Claim £1 6s for ten sacks and two pack sheets. The plaintiff is a farmer living at North Kilworth, and sold twenty two quarters of wheat to Mr Bromhead. He engaged the defendant, who is a boatman, to take it from Bosworth Wharf to Mr Bromhead's mill. The corn was in fifty bags, and two wool pack sheets were lent him to cover the wheat with, but only forty were returned to him. John Biggs, miller to Mr Bromhead, said he received the wheat. When the bags were empty he put them up in three bundles, twenty each in two of the sacks and ten in the other. The pack sheets he never saw. When he gave them to defendant, he asked for 3s sack money, but he did not pay it. The defendant contended that he delivered all the bundles delivered to him at the wharf, but there was no one present to receive them. When pressed by his Honour, he said he believed there were three bundles, and he put the sheets into the small bundle. Verdict for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed.

18 July 1 1857

FELONIOUS ASSAULT AT WIGSTON **John Felstead** (17), boatman, pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging him with unlawfully assaulting Ann Smith at Great Wigston on the 19th of April, with intent, &c. He was also charged under a second count with the commission of an indecent assault. Mr Palmer prosecuted ; the prisoner was not defended. The prosecutrix, it appeared, was a domestic servant in the employment of the landlord of the Black Swan at Wigston. In the afternoon of the day mentioned in the indictment, she was walking with her master's children by the side of the canal, when the prisoner came from beneath a bridge, and attempted to commit the major offence with which he was charged. He was found guilty on the second count in the indictment, and sentenced to eighteen calendar months imprisonment, with hard labour.

19 July 18 1857

On Saturday afternoon last, a young man named **Henry Ashton**, 19 years of age, who was employed as a boatman on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, was killed in a fight with **Henry Webster**, another boatman, at Shevington near Chorley. For some time past a grievance had existed between the two men, who were cousins, and on the day named they agreed to settle the dispute by a stand up fight. In the third round, Webster struck Aston a blow in the region of the heart. Ashton fell to the ground from the effect of the blow, rose again and died immediately. Webster was deeply affected at the fatal result of the quarrel, and gave himself up to the police.

20 August 5 1857

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, JULY 30 Benjamin Rose of Loughborough was sentenced to one months hard labour for having, on the 19th of July at Loughborough, stolen two blankets of the value of 5s, the property of **Thomas Brown** of Mountsorrel, boatman, from Mr Henson's premises in the North Street, Loughborough.

21 August 5 1857

ACCIDENTAL DROWNING On Monday, John Gregory Esq held an inquest at Moira on the body of **Isaac Masters**, seven years of age, the son of **John Masters**, a boatman on the canal. It appeared that as the boat was proceeding slowly, the unfortunate boy fell over the side of the boat into the water. His father perceived him after they had left him about a boat's length, but not being able to swim and the water being very deep, the poor boy sank before assistance could be rendered.

22 October 31 1857

A MAN KILLED BY A TURNIP On Saturday afternoon, a boatman named **John Sanderson** went up at a stall kept by a greengrocer named Ann Hayes at Barnsley, and commenced a conversation with her. He afterwards became very abusive. Feeling insulted, she took up a turnip from the stall and threw it at him. He was the worse for liquor, and fell backwards on the ground. He was taken

up insensible, and after lingering for two hours he died, never having spoken after the occurrence. He has left a widow and one child. Mrs Hayes was at once apprehended.

23 October 31 1857

EXTENSIVE ROBBERY ON THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY An important case has been tried at the Quarter Sessions at Stafford, which occupied nearly three days in its investigation. The trial commenced on Friday morning, and the Court sat on Saturday night until five minutes to twelve o'clock, when it adjourned until Monday. The property stolen was 500 lbs of cotton lace thread, valued at between £200 and £300. The names of the prisoners are William Lane, a beerhouse keeper of Crewe, formerly an engine driver in the employ of the North Staffordshire Railway Company ; Thomas Bentley, a fireman in the company's service ; Samuel Parker alias John Lee, greengrocer of Macclesfield ; Samuel Bloore, writing clerk of Macclesfield ; and **John Bentley**, a boatman. They were charged with stealing cotton lace thread, the property of the company, and a second count charged them with receiving it with a guilty knowledge. On behalf of the prosecution, forty five witnesses were examined and to connect the prisoners with the robbery, **James Holland** and a man named **Gould** (two boatmen), who had been in custody as accomplices and who had turned approvers, together with several disinterested persons, were examined. The only fact against Thomas Bentley was his being seen with Lane several times that day. All the other prisoners were proved to have assisted in carrying away the stolen lace by a canal boat to Macclesfield. The principal point elicited on cross-examination was that the approvers were placed together in one cell at the Stoke Police Station, from which circumstance it was contended they had ample opportunity to concoct the charge against the prisoners, The summing up of the evidence occupied the learned chairman nearly two hours, after which the jury acquitted John and Thomas Bentley, and returned a verdict of guilty against the other three. Parker and Bloore were then each sentenced to four years penal servitude, and William Lane to two years imprisonment with hard labour. The jury were driven out for an airing on Sunday, both morning and afternoon.

24 December 19 1857

LUTTERWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, DECEMBER 10 (Before H R Harper Esq (chairman), D R Jones and H S Douglas Esqs, and the Rev E Elmhirst). **Samuel Shelton** and **William Worth**, boatmen of Leicester, were charged by James Hutchin, sawyer, North Kilworth, with having stolen an axe at North Kilworth on December 4th, value 2s 6d, the property of prosecutor. After the evidence had been taken, Shelton declared his innocence, and having elected that their worships should dispose of the case, was sentenced to one months imprisonment with hard labour. Their worships discharged Worth, and told him that he left the court with his character unblemished.

25 March 6 1858

LENT ASSIZES

BOROUGH COURT **William Carter** (23), boatman, **Thomas Stenson** (19), boatman, **Thomas Ward** (23), boatman, and Sarah Ann Towers (18), glove seamer, were indicted for assaulting and robbing Richard Thomas, and at the same time using personal violence to the said prosecutor on the 3rd ult. Mr Simpson prosecuted, and Mr O'Brien defended. As the particulars of this case appeared in a lengthy form in the columns of the *Chronicle* at the time, a very brief recapitulation of the main features will doubtless serve to bring the whole fresh to the minds of our readers. It will be remembered that the prisoner is a commercial traveller from Halifax ; that he was staying at the "Fox" on the night of the robbery ; that at a late hour he went across to the "Barrel" liquor vaults ; that there he saw the four prisoners ; that the female prisoner asked him to treat her with a glass of something ; that he did so ; and that when he went out, shortly afterwards, the female prisoner followed him, and whilst standing with her in the middle of the street close to the Old Workhouse, the male prisoners came up, and whilst one of them seized him by the throat, which rendered him insensible, the others rifled his pockets. They were all apprehended immediately by Inspector Smith. Prosecutor gave his evidence rather differently to that he gave before the magistrates on the

day following the robbery, and in consequence Mr O'Brien put the depositions in as evidence, and prosecutor then modified his statement. The jury, after a very short deliberation, found all the prisoners guilty. His Lordship, in passing sentence, said the prisoners had been found guilty of a most detestable and atrocious offence on the clearest of evidence – evidence that left no doubt in his mind that they were in the habit of systematically committing such robberies. He had not the least doubt that they acted in conjunction for that purpose, and that the female prisoner was employed to decoy men away, in order that they might be the more easily robbed. The practice of garrotting had become so dangerous that he felt bound to deal with the prisoners in a very severe manner. He should make no distinction between males and female ; the prisoners at the bar were all equally guilty ; and the sentence of the court was that each of them be kept in penal servitude for the term of seven years. One of the male prisoners, upon hearing this, threw his cap up in defiance, and the rest called out, “Goodbye, friends!”

COUNTY BUSINESS

NIGHT POACHING Joseph Twells (37), Pierce Bosworth (24), labourers, **Thomas Bosworth** (19 – on bail), boatman, and William White (28 – on bail), collier, were charged with unlawfully by night, on the 22nd October last, entering, together with several others, certain lands at Newton Linford in the occupation of John Watson, for the purpose of taking and destroying game, they being armed with bludgeons, sticks and large stones, and assaulting John Dawson, assistant gamekeeper, who had lawful authority to apprehend them. Mr O'Brien and Mr Mundell prosecuted ; the prisoners were undefended. John Dawson deposed that on the night in question, he saw the prisoners and four others in a field at Newton Linford near a wood. The prisoners made a stand, and began to throw stones, which they took out of their pockets. One of them was setting a long net. They had dogs with them, which they “lood” on to the keepers. Witness received several blows on the head and face. He took one of the men into custody, and gave him to William Moulde ; but he was not one of the prisoners. He afterwards took the two Bosworths into custody. The next morning witness went to the spot, and found a quantity of sticks and stones. Thomas Wade took Twells into custody, and he was struck with a stick by him, which he took out of his pocket. W Radkin apprehended White, when he was struck by him and knocked down. The prisoners being called on for their defence, all denied the charge. The learned Judge having summed up, the jury found the prisoners guilty. Twells was sentenced to three months hard labour, and the other three to six months hard labour each.

26 May 22 1858

ADJOURNED BOROUGH SESSIONS

LEAD STEALING **Robert Bullivant** (17), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing ten pounds weight of lead, fixed to a building, the property of Sarah Tibbs, on the 23rd of March. The prosecuting counsel recommended him to mercy, and he was sent to prison for two calendar months.

27 May 29 1858

TOWN HALL, MONDAY Mr Crick, a commercial gentleman, made a complaint against a boatman named **James Carpenter**. Complainant was passing along Redcross Street on Sunday morning, when he saw the defendant with two or three women and a jug of ale, creating a tremendous noise, and when complainant hinted something about the police, the defendant made use of some abusive language. Defendant being in a state of intoxication, the case was remanded for a week.

28 July 17 1858

FATAL TERMINATION OF A QUARREL On Wednesday evening, an inquest was held at the Coach and Horses Inn, Humberstone Gate, on the body of George Abel Barsby, who met with his death on the previous day, under the following circumstances :-

An old blind man named Burbage, coal higgler, deposed that the deceased was a framesmith about 52 years of age, but was then out of work. On the previous day he asked him to assist him in

fetching some coal, which he agreed to, and on crossing Humberstone Gate together about five o'clock for the purpose of fetching his donkey from the stable, two men made use of some foul expressions towards witness, when deceased said, "Don't abuse the poor old man". They continued abusive, however, and the deceased said to witness, "Lend me your stick", and he took it out of his hand. Witness heard no blows struck, though he was close to him, but knew he was on the ground, and said, "Come, George, get up, and let us go". Deceased never spoke or took any notice. A man then came up and said he was dead, and that those who did it were running down Clarence Street. Mr Bowmar, surgeon, came up immediately. Witness heard neither scuffling nor blows.

Mr James Sheffield said he heard an altercation between four men near the cab stand in Humberstone Gate ; deceased and Burbage were amongst them. He saw deceased take the stick out of Burbage's hand and brandish it at the other men, one of whom he struck several times over his arms ; but he could not hit very hard, as he was close upon him. The man endeavoured to take the stick from deceased, who was walking backwards. At the corner of Nelson Street, deceased caught the man a very sharp blow with the stick, when the man threw out his arm and struck deceased upon the face, and he fell to the ground, apparently from the effects of the blow. The man tried to get the stick from deceased while he was upon the ground, but failing to get it, he walked away towards his companions, a distance of 13 or 14 yards. The deceased got up again when the man left him, and shouted after him, and on Barsby turning round to go away, he staggered and fell upon the causeway. The affair occupied not more than two or three minutes altogether. Mr Bowmar, who was passing by as the man fell, came up while deceased was still upon the ground. He appeared very excited after he had been knocked down. The second man did not interfere at all. There was no blood upon the ground, but witness saw a little in his mouth after he fell. In the affair, Burbage was left some distance behind, and might not hear the blows.

A cabman named George Hammond spoke to seeing the blows interchanged, and also that he saw deceased fall with his head upon the kerb stone. While down, deceased said, "Don't strike me while I'm down" ; the man did not strike him, but walked towards witness, to whom he said, "I'll serve the b----s out if they interfere with me". He then walked away, and deceased got up and walked several paces, when he fell flat upon his face, and witness ran and picked him up. Believing him to be in a fit, witness untied his neckcloth, and saw some blood oozing from his mouth. Witness believed that the deceased and the two boatmen were intoxicated. Deceased appeared very excited the whole of the time.

Mr Charles Bowmar, surgeon, deposed that he was called upon to see the deceased, as he was passing at the time, and found him in a sitting position, supported by the last witness. He gasped once or twice, and died immediately. The blood from the mouth might be caused by the gums bleeding ; there was nothing in that. He was taken home, and on the following afternoon witness made a *post mortem* examination of the body, when he found no marks of violence except a contusion of the right temple. Upon opening the head he found a considerable extravasation of blood upon the brain, caused by the rupture of a large blood vessel called the superior longitudinal sinus. The vessels of the brain were very much distended, which might have been caused by the combined effects of excitement and intoxication. He had no doubt but the rupture of the vessel was the cause of death, and might have been caused by the excitement. A youth named Hutchinson, who saw the whole affair, said when deceased got up, after he had been knocked down, he threatened that he would have a warrant for the man for assaulting him ; but had not gone above a yard or two when he fell and died. This being the whole of the evidence, it was decided to adjourn the inquest for a week, to allow of the apprehension of the man implicated in the affray who, it appears, had absconded ; and we understand a reward has been offered for his apprehension. (The inquest is to be resumed at 7 pm on Wednesday next).

The friends of the deceased, Barsby, wish us to say that he was *not* in a state of intoxication, as deposed to by one of the witnesses. He had not been from his home ten minutes before he was brought back dead.

29 July 24 1858

THE FATAL AFFRAY AT HUMBERSTONE GATE The adjourned inquest on the body of George Abel Barsby was resumed on Wednesday evening last at the Coach and Horses, Humberstone Gate. The Coroner remarked that the men engaged in the quarrel had not then been apprehended. The following additional evidence was heard :- Mr B G Chamberlain said, on Tuesday afternoon, the 13th inst, about five o'clock, he was passing down Humberstone Gate, near the Horse and Jockey, when he saw four men on the bank near to Nelson Place. He knew one of them (Burbidge) but the others were strangers. Burbidge seemed very excited, and witness guessed the men had been teasing him. He saw deceased take the stick out of Burbidge's hand and go up to one of the men with it, saying, "I'll teach you to plague an old man". He then struck the man several times with the stick, using as much force as he seemed to possess. The man struck appeared drowsily drunk, and at first did not seem aware that he was being assaulted. He then tried to collar the deceased, who retreated until he got up to near Nelson Street, flourishing his stick so as to prevent the man getting hold of him ; but he ultimately seized Barsby by the collar with his left hand, and with his right tried to get hold of the stick. He then attempted to strike him with his left hand, holding his collar with his right, but he appeared too drunk to get his blow home, striking somewhere about his neckerchief. The deceased's heel seemed to trip, and he fell, the man still holding by the collar. The deceased seemed to fall very gently, and continued to fight with the stick as he lay upon the ground. The man continued on his feet, and after trying to get hold of the stick he walked away. The deceased got up and shouted after the man that he would have a warrant for him in the morning. Barsby then went towards the Black Lion public house, but had not got above two paces before he fell to the ground, apparently quite stiff. Saw Mr Bowmar come up immediately afterwards. Did not think deceased was drunk, but thought he had fallen in a fit. Never saw a drunken man fall in such a manner. The deceased appeared to be in a furiously excited state when he got up. Thomas Watchorne said he was a labourer, living in Carley Street, and was in company with the missing man, **John Simpson**, on the day above named. Simpson is a boatman and lives in Russell Square. They went to several public houses in the course of the day, and had drink. Witness was quite sober, and Simpson was "as near sober as possible". The last place they were at was the Three Caps in Halford Street. They left there, and passing down Yeoman Street came into Humberstone Gate. Heard Simpson say something which gave offence to old Burbidge, when the latter struck Simpson across the back with his stick. Barsby then came up, and taking the stick out of Burbidge's hand, struck Simpson with it. A scuffle ensued, but witness did not see Simpson strike Barsby. As soon as the deceased fell, witness walked away. Simpson overtook him, and they both walked together, witness observing that he ought to have come away and not have stopped. Simpson replied that he only stood on his own defence. They went on to their respective homes, and witness had not seen Simpson since ; nor did he hear anything more of the deceased until he got home. Did not know where Simpson was. William Ellis said he saw the deceased two or three times on the day of his death, and believed him to be quite sober ; indeed, he believed he had only drunk one glass of ale during the day. He was a sober man generally, but of an excitable temper. He came forward purposely to contradict the statement made by one of the witnesses last week, as to the state the deceased was in at the time of the occurrence, as it was likely to set prejudicially against deceased's family, for whom a subscription had been commenced. Other witnesses were in attendance to corroborate this statement ; but the Coroner and jury deemed it unnecessary to examine them, considering Mr Ellis's evidence quite sufficient. Mr C Bowmar, surgeon, was again present, and stated that the vessel ruptured might have been slightly open when the deceased first fell ; and that on rising again, and being in such a state of excitement, it would cause a very rapid effusion of blood. He repeated his belief that the excitement, without the blow and fall, was quite sufficient to cause the rupture. The Coroner, in addressing the jury, said it would be for them to consider whether the deceased died through excitement alone, or through the combined effects of excitement, the blow, and the fall. The case was a very simple one ; if they considered he died from excitement alone, they would return a verdict to that effect. On the other hand, if they believed it to have been the result of the combined effect of the blow and fall, it would amount to manslaughter,

though of the simplest character ; but if they found that the blow was given in self defence, their verdict would amount to what in law was called “chance medley”. After some consultation, the jury unanimously agreed to the following verdict :- “That the deceased died from the effects of excitement, caused by the blow and the fall ; but the jury consider Simpson was justified in giving the blow in self defence”.

30 October 2 1858

BOY DROWNED On the 22nd inst, **George Simmons**, about ten years of age, son of **Samuel Simmons** of Loughborough, boatman, was thrown into the river near Kegworth by the boat line, and was drowned before he could be got out. An inquest was held the next day before J Gregory Esq, coroner, when a verdict of “Accidental death” was returned.

31 November 27 1858

CHILD BURNED On Monday last, the 22nd inst, at Loughborough, a child five years of age, son of **Joseph Smith**, a boatman, was so severely burned as to lose its life. The weather being very severe, and the mother having but little fire and no coal, sent deceased and an elder sister to purchase half a hundredweight, and in the meantime went into a neighbour's house to warm an invalid child. The two children returned sooner than was expected, and the mother still being absent, the elder child was preparing to mend the fire, when deceased picked up a piece of paper and put it between the bars. The paper was soon in a blaze, and the child creeping too close to the fire for the sake of warmth, its clothes ignited. He immediately ran into the street, and a man named Pilsbury passing at the time soon extinguished the flames. The child was at once taken to the Public Dispensary, when prompt attention was rendered, but to no avail. The child was so severely burned about the back, breast and arms that it expired the following morning. On the 24th inst, an inquest was held over the body at the Ram Inn, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, and a verdict of “Accidental death” was returned.

32 December 4 1858

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

PETTY THEFT **Thomas Marlow**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, value 9d, from the Public Wharf, Belgrave Gate. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and having a good character, was sentenced to the mitigated imprisonment of one month with hard labour.

33 December 11 1858

A SEVERE BUT MERITED PUNISHMENT At Oxford Assizes on Friday, **Francis Kilburne**, 36, boatman, and Thomas Smith (who had been out on bail) were charged with feloniously assaulting Edward Finch, and stealing from his person 6s 9d, on the 9th of August 1858 at Burton-upon-Trent. It appeared that on the night in question the prosecutor had seen the prisoners in a public house, and was followed by them when he went towards his house. Kilburne followed him across a field, and jumped upon his back, and so knocked him down ; but, though Kilburne was a very powerful man, the prosecutor managed to get away. The other man, Smith, then came up and, having tripped up the prosecutor, robbed him of his money. The two men were clearly proved to have been together at the public house, and to have gone out after the prosecutor and, according to the evidence of the latter, they were the men who assaulted and robbed him. The jury found both the prisoners guilty. A previous conviction was then proved against Kilburne, under which he had been sentenced to ten years transportation, which had only expired a short time before he committed the offence for which he was now convicted. Mr Baron Bramwell sentenced Kilburne to twenty years penal servitude and Smith, against whom no charge had been previously made, to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

34 January 8 1859

TOWN HALL, FRIDAY JANUARY 7

ROBBERY FROM A WHARF **William Garrett**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal from Mr Bowmar, Augustine Friars. George Mann, in the employ of Mr Bowmar, said on Monday night the coal heap was all right, and on Tuesday morning some were missing, about two cwt. Prisoner pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two weeks hard labour. The Bench said they believed he had been subject to much temptation from the conduct of his master, which was very suspicious.

35 January 22 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, JANUARY 15 **Samuel Wormleighton**, a boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 8th instant, a meat saw, the property of Robert Dakin, butcher, Barrow-upon-Soar. The saw was found in prisoner's possession, but he denied stealing it, and pleaded that he had found it on the road near to Barrow Mill. It appeared that on the day in question the prosecutor had agreed to kill a pig for Mrs Goodman, who lives near the mill, and being himself rather infirm, he had got a man named Venable (who works at the mill) to carry his cratch and saw close to Mrs G's house, where he considered they would be safe. PC Cousins, on learning that the prisoner had been seen near the house, followed the boat with which he was travelling into Derbyshire, where he apprehended him and took possession of the saw. On his way back, prisoner admitted stealing the saw, and wanted to make the matter up. Sentenced to one months hard labour.

36 January 29 1859

TOWN HALL, MONDAY JANUARY 24

TURNING THE TABLES **Thomas Marlow**, boatman, charged **Francis Withers**, a fellow boatman, with having assaulted him on the 18th instant. The complainant stated that he had recently been in the employ of Mr Lawrence, and that having left his service, he proceeded to Lawrence's boat, after receiving permission from the master, to fetch his boots and other articles belonging to him. Withers, who had charge of the boat, refused to allow him to take them, assaulted him violently, and several of the other men who were near kicked him and struck him also. The defendant, however, put quite another complexion on the affair. He said that the complainant came to the boat in a very offensive manner, and demanded to be allowed to take his things away. This defendant would not allow until he had orders from Mr Lawrence, and complainant immediately struck him with an ash plant which he had brought with him. A fight then ensued, in which the complainant appeared to "come off second best". Several witnesses were called who corroborated the defendant's statement, and the case was summarily dismissed.

37 February 19 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, FEBRUARY 11

RIDING ON THE RAILWAY WITHOUT PAYING THE FARE **Henry Upton**, a boatman of Shardlow, who has been taken into custody on a charge of travelling on the Midland Railway without having paid the fare, and with intent to avoid payment thereof, was brought up on remand. Mr R Mitchie, the station master at Loughborough stated that prisoner arrived at the Loughborough station by the 25 minutes past 8 train on Sunday the 13th inst, and upon producing his ticket, finding it to be from Beeston to Long Eaton, he demanded the additional fare which defendant refused to pay, and in consequence thereof he gave him in charge. Prisoner said that having had drink he had fallen asleep and was not aware he had travelled so far as Loughborough. He was therefore discharged from custody, with the understanding he would be summoned to answer the charge before two magistrates on Thursday the 24th.

38 April 16 1859

A YOUNG PICKPOCKET At Derby Borough Police Court last week, a man and a woman named Hurst were apprehended on a charge of robbing a lad at the Dusty Miller. The lad was in court, and

said his name was Herbert Storer and that he came from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, whence he had run away because he had picked a woman's pocket of £1 10s and her purse. On Monday he went to the Dusty Miller and paid for 15 or 16 pints of ale for the people who were drinking in the house. He also drank so deeply that he became very sick, but returned again to the intoxicating liquor, notwithstanding that he was only eleven years old! The female prisoner was sitting near him, and the male prisoner was engaged in playing a fiddle. The lad was too drunk to know whether the woman robbed him or not. A boatman who was in the house at the time attended at court, and said he saw the woman fumbling round the lad's pockets and the male prisoner stood before them to cover her operations. They soon afterwards left, and were found by Constable Veasey at a lodging house at tea. The lad said he had spent all the money he had stolen from the Ashby woman, excepting three half crowns, which it was supposed the woman Hurst had stolen. The magistrates indignantly protested against the conduct of grown men and women allowing a lad like that to treat them with ale for hours together. They felt much annoyed that they could not send the prisoners for trial ; but, though there was no moral doubt of their guilt, there was not sufficient evidence to convict, and with regret they must order them to be discharged.

39 May 7 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MAY 5 **William Cooper**, boatman, William Brown, baker and Joseph Woolley, framework knitter, all of Loughborough, who had been remanded on suspicion of having, on the 23rd ult, feloniously stolen a wooden pump from the "Lower Mill" at Loughborough, the property of Mr Thomas White, were brought up for examination. Inspector Hague applied to have the prisoner Woolley discharged in consequence of being unable to procure evidence against him. Prisoners Cooper and Brown were committed for trial at the sessions.

40 June 4 1859

DEATH AT HINCKLEY FROM THE KICK OF A HORSE On the 27th ultimo an inquest was held at the Waggon and Horses, Hinckley, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, upon the body of a youth aged 19 named **Edward Tomlinson**. On the previous Tuesday, Mr Joseph Perkins, baker of Hinckley, was proceeding down the Public Wharf Yard, and when passing the stable, observed a person lying across the doorway. Upon going nearer he found it to be the deceased, who was quite motionless and senseless. A horse was in the stable with his heels towards the door. Witness observed that the deceased bled from the face, and he immediately sent for medical assistance. Witness observed that deceased had the head stall of the horse on his arm, and that a portion of the wall near the door had been broken, apparently by a kick from the horse. Mr Jarrad, surgeon, soon arrived, and ordering deceased to be taken into the Waggon and Horses, he attended him for about two hours. He then left after giving proper instructions as to the care of the deceased, but at the time had no hopes of deceased's recovery. Deceased never rallied, and died about four o'clock on the following morning. He was bruised seriously on either cheek, had a scalp wound on the right side of the head and one on the ribs. It appeared that the unfortunate youth was a boatman in the employ of **Mr Bird** of Moira, from whence he had arrived at Hinckley with coals only a few minutes previous to his injuries. Verdict : "Accidental death" ; the jury recommended that Mr Bird should either destroy the horse or go with it himself, and not allow anyone else to do so.

41 June 4 1859

DEATH FROM DROWNING AT MOIRA On Saturday last, a little girl named Ann Brooks was drowned in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal at the above place. It appears that her father is an engineer and resides near the canal above mentioned. On that day the girl's mother requested her to empty the contents of a utensil on the dung hill. The mother then went upstairs. Having remained there a short time, and finding that the deceased did not return, "a terror", as she said, "came over her that something had happened to the deceased" ; and she immediately went in search of her husband's brother, Henry Brooks, who sent for the father of the child, and from the fears of the mother, the canal was tried. Shortly a boat came along the canal, and by request of the boatman in

charge, was made to proceed very gently, and when nearly opposite Brook's house, the body of the deceased child was washed up. The mother believed that the girl had, after obeying her orders, gone to the canal to fetch water. Verdict "Accidental death", the jury recommending that a wooden guard should be put along that particular place, the responsibility of which was undertaken by Mr Hough, foreman of the jury.

42 July 2 1859

LEICESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

STEALING LEAD PIPING &c William Brown (26 : on bail), baker, and **William Cooper** (19), boatman, were charged with stealing 60 lb of lead piping, value £1, and one pump rod and bucket, value 3s, the property of Thomas White, at Loughborough on the 24th of April 1859. They were also charged with receiving the same. Mr Palmer for the prosecution, and Mr O'Brien defended Brown. The prosecutor's brother stated that the prosecutor occupied the Lower Mill at Loughborough ; witness resided on the premises. There was a private yard to the mill, and on the 19th of April last, there was a common hand pump, not covered, standing in the yard. On the following Sunday he found the lead piping, rod and suckers taken away. The pin had been taken out of the handle and replaced. John Wragg, a marine store dealer of Loughborough, said that on the 23rd of April last, the prisoner Cooper went to his shop, and asked him to purchase some lead, as he had some to sell which was at Brown's house in the Ashby Square. Afterwards went to Brown's house, when he found Brown at home ; Brown said, "Come on, it's here". That was before witness told him what he had come about. Brown took him into the kitchen and emptied some lead out of a bag ; the lead was run down into three pieces. Weighed two pieces and bought them for 5s 51/2d. Took the lead down to Clark's, another marine store dealer, and sold it him for 8s 6d. By Mr O'Brien : It was a profitable job, because it weighed 13lb more than when he bought it. Did not go back and tell Brown that it was heavier than he had bought it for. Gave no information about the lead till the police asked for it. By the prisoner Cooper : Never saw him with any lead at all, nor at Brown's house. Did not say if the lead was run down it would be all right. Edward George Clark, marine store dealer, said that the last witness sold him a quantity of lead on the 23rd of April, It was run down, and weighed 68lb. Gave him 8s 6d, which was a fair price for it. On the following Monday gave up the lead to PC Ball. William Tebbutt, plumber and glazier, said he examined the pump rod produced, and it fitted to the handle of the prosecutor's pump. The leaden part of the pump was cut or broken off four feet, which would weigh about 70lb. By the Court : The value of old lead was about 1 1/2d per lb. PS Ball said, on the 25th of April he got the lead in question from Clark's. Afterwards searched Brown's house, and found a quantity of small bits of melted lead and the pump rod now produced under the stairs amongst the coals. When Brown was apprehended, told him the charge, to which he replied, "I know nothing of either the pump or rod". Then showed him the lead and rod produced, when he said he did not know how he got them, but he afterwards said he bought them of two Nottingham boatmen, that they brought them to him in a barrow, that he paid 4s 8d, wheeled them home, and returned the barrow to the men, whom he found standing on the bridge where he left them ; that he run the lead down because it was dirty, and he wanted to clean it. Apprehended Cooper the following day, and told him the charge, when he replied, "Am I charged with stealing it?" Witness replied that he was, and he then said, "I can easily get over that". On the following Sunday was in company of the two prisoners, when the prisoner Brown said, "I bought the lead off Cooper and a man named Bob, that lodged at Collard's, about the 21st or 22nd of April, and gave 4s 9d for it. I paid the money to Bob, and Cooper was by. Cooper asked me if I wanted to buy some lead, and I said I would buy some if it was all right, if I knew what to do with it". Cooper said, "Jack Wragg will buy it. I brought it up in a boat from Nottingham, and if you send Jack Wragg to our house, I'll sell it". Cooper then asked Brown, "Who did you pay for it?" Brown said, "I paid Bob, and you was by". Cooper said, "That'll do". (By Mr O'Brien) Found there had been a person of the name of "Bob" lodging at Collard's. Cooper here denied having bought the lead. He cross-examined PS Ball, but failed to shake his testimony. He said Mr Martin, the magistrate, was not going to discharge Cooper at one time. A man named Woolley was taken

into custody on the charge. PC Bosworth corroborated. At the station, Brown said he bought the pump off two boatmen, and that he burnt the woodwork out of the rod. Mr O'Brien having very ingeniously and ably addressed the jury on Brown's behalf, the Chairman summed up, and the jury found both prisoners guilty of receiving the pump, knowing it to have been stolen. Six months hard labour.

43 July 23 1859

TOWN HALL, YESTERDAY **William Sabin**, boatman, was charged with assaulting PC Robinson, in the execution of his duty in Belgrave Gate on Sunday night last. Fined 40s or a months imprisonment.

44 August 13 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, AUGUST 11 **William Hewitt** and **Thomas Whitcroft**, two boatmen of Loughborough, were charged with having, on the 25th of July at Loughborough, obstructed the Loughborough Canal by allowing their boats to remain there for an unreasonable time, contrary to the statute. Defendants admitted the fact, and agreeing to pay 10s each to the Loughborough Dispensary, besides the court costs, the case was withdrawn.

45 September 10 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, SEPTEMBER 8 **Henry Leatherland** of Sawley, boatman, was charged with having, on the 5th of September at Loughborough, assaulted Susannah, wife of William Alvey of the latter place. The case being a trivial one, the Bench convicted in the small penalty of 6d and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment.

46 December 31 1859

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, DECEMBER 29 **William Whitcroft** of Loughborough was charged by Susannah Alvey, one of his neighbours, with having unlawfully assaulted her on the 16th of June. The explanation given of this case was that defendant, who is a boatman, had gone away soon after the assault was committed, and the summons had not been served until lately. Mr Coope attended with defendant, and the facts elicited were that the two neighbours had long lived at variance, and the assault complained of happened in consequence of the defendant's wife and plaintiff having trolled their mops in each other's windows. The Bench thought it would be better for the parties to arrange the matter, but that appearing to be out of the question, the Bench dismissed the case, and ordered each to pay their own costs.

47 January 14 1860

MARKET HARBOROUGH On Tuesday, **William Roe**, a boatman, was committed to prison for two calendar months for stealing some hay, the property of Mr John Bradder of Wistow.

48 January 21 1860

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

STEALING COAL **Charles Fox**, boatman, 65 years of age, was charged with stealing half a hundredweight of coal, the property of Samuel Smith Harris, coal merchant. John Peberdy said he was at the West Bridge coal wharf on the 15th instant at six o'clock in the evening, when he saw the prisoner take about half a hundredweight of coal, value 4d, from a waggon which was standing in the wharf, the property of Mr Harris. Witness then went to the prisoner, who said to him that he wanted the coal as it was better than that which he had in the boat. He then took the prisoner to Mr Harris, and thence to the police station. Charles Spittlehouse, agent of the prosecutor, said the prisoner was not in the employ of Mr Harris, and that the latter did not wish to press for a heavy punishment. Sentenced to 14 days hard labour.

49 May 19 1860

BRUTAL MURDER Another of those disgraceful outrages for which South Staffordshire has of late become so notorious occurred in the outskirts of Wolverhampton late on Saturday night last, resulting in the death of a woman named **Elizabeth Evans** by the hand of **Edward Humphreys**, a boatman with whom the unhappy woman lived as his wife, assisting him in the management of his boat. As is general among their class, Humphreys and Evans lived in the boat, which was moored against Sheldon's timber yard at the bottom of Canal Street, and not far from the stations of the Great Western and London and North Western Railways. About ten o'clock, Evans left the boat in company with some female acquaintances, and Humphreys, suspecting with truth that they had gone to get drink, regarding which he had had a quarrel with Evans earlier in the night, followed them. He overtook them near the railway bridge on the Cannock Road and, accosting the unfortunate woman, asked her with an imprecation how she would like his fists. She replied that she was not aware that she had done anything to induce him to strike her, to which he rejoined by beating her savagely (he was a very powerful man, about six feet high and stout in proportion) until she reeled and fell against the fence. A companion of the deceased expostulated with him, on which he, looking at his victim, cursed her, and declaring that if she was not dead he would kill her, dealt the half conscious wretch a violent kick on the side. She gave a faint scream, and apparently ceased to exist, for she showed no signs of life afterwards. The body was conveyed to the Fountain Inn hard by to await an inquest. The murderer was taken into custody about two hours afterwards, and lodged in the lock up.

50 June 9 1860

TOWN HALL, YESTERDAY

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYED **Frank Orton**, boatman, charged John Harris, his employer, with neglecting to pay him 7s, being a portion of a week's wages. Complainant said he engaged with the defendant for 14s a week, whether he worked or not. The last week he only worked three days, and the defendant gave him but 7s. Defendant called two witnesses to prove that complainant had notice that there would be only half work that week, owing to the canal being cleaned ; and he denied having agreed to pay defendant for time when he did not work. The case was dismissed.

51 June 16 1860

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS, JUNE 9 **Thomas Taylor**, boatman of Measham, was charged with unlawfully fishing on property belonging to Earl Howe at Shakerstone, on the 8th ult. Thomas Beacher, gamekeeper, stated that on the day in question he saw defendant take two night lines out of the canal and put another in. There was no house near, and Lord Howe had right of fishing. Fined £1 including costs.

Thomas Taylor, boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of pots from a crate while standing at Moira Wharf on the 4th instant, the property of Mr Derry, who stated that he left the pots all right on the previous night. PC Brooks stated that from information received he went to defendant and found the pots. Prisoner stated that he was very tipsy on the night in question, and did not know what he was doing. An excellent character was produced from his master, and the Bench taking that into consideration, committed him for fourteen days.

52 July 21 1860

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

DESERTING FROM THE MILITIA **John Green** was charged with deserting from the Leicestershire Militia during the late training in May last. Defendant, a boatman, pleaded guilty, but said he was ill at the time. The Magistrates, having no alternative, fined defendant 40s or two months imprisonment.

53 July 28 1840

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, JULY 26 **Charles Wade** of Loughborough, boatman, was

charged with having on the 21st inst at Loughborough, unlawfully assaulted Jane Jenis of the same place, singlewoman. Allowed to arrange.

Thomas Newton, John Newton, labourer and **John Newton**, captain, three boatmen, were charged with having on the 22nd of July at Knight Thorpe, unlawfully used a certain dog for the purpose of taking game on land there situate, in the occupation of Mr E A Harley. Defendants were passing along with two boats on the Loughborough Canal, and when past the swing bridge, the latter defendant "looted" his dog into a meadow, where it succeeded in finding a rabbit, of which the man took possession. The prosecutor failing to prove the case against the two former defendants, they were discharged, but the latter was fined £1 or fourteen days hard labour.

54 October 6 1860

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL, OCTOBER 3 **William Whitcroft**, a boatman, for having assaulted John Bullock, licensed victualler of Loughborough, was allowed to arrange out of court.

55 December 22 1860

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT, DECEMBER 20 **George Polkey** and **Caleb Simmons**, two boatmen of Loughborough, were charged with having stolen from the township of Knightthorpe a bar of iron, the property of the Loughborough Canal Company. Committed for fourteen days each to hard labour.

56 January 5 1861

COUNTY CRIMINAL BUSINESS

BREAKING INTO A DWELLING HOUSE **William Connor** (21), boatman, pleaded guilty to having, on the 19th of October last at Mountsorrel North, broken into and entered the dwelling house of James Statham at that place, and stealing therefrom a coat, value 8s. The Chairman said he had pleaded guilty to a very serious offence, and one on which the law inflicts severe punishment, that of breaking into a dwelling house when locked up. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

57 April 27 1861

WILFUL MURDER NEAR BILSTON On Tuesday afternoon, an adjourned inquest was held at the Bull's Head, Darkhouse Lane, near Bilston, Staffordshire, on the body of **Walter Piper**, a boatman aged about 60, who was knocked down in a field near that place on the night of the 25th of last March, and robbed, and who died of the wound which he then sustained on the 2nd of April. The old man was of a quiet disposition and steady habits, and he was returning to his lodgings at Darkhouse Lane about nine o'clock, carrying a bag with some marketings, when he was pounced upon by two men, one of whom garrotted him, the other dealt him a violent blow with a weapon on the forehead, and both rifled his pockets, and then decamped with their contents and his bag of provisions. Two men were seen darting out of the field immediately after the offence, and the old man was found lying insensible on the ground and bleeding profusely from the wound on his head. These facts were elicited from the deceased's dying statement, and from the evidence of the man who found him where his murderers had left him. On Tuesday, Mr H D Best, surgeon of Bilston, having been examined as to the nature of the old man's wounds, the jury, after learning that there was no more evidence forthcoming, returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown". The Coroner said that he should apply to the Home Secretary to offer a reward, and it was said that a similar course would be taken by the Chief Constable of Staffordshire.

58 May 4 1861

CHILD FOUND DROWNED On Tuesday last, the body of a full grown female child, about ten days old, was found in the Canal basin, close to the Public Wharf, Rushes, Loughborough, and accordingly an inquest was held at the house of Mr Bullock, the Ram Inn, Rushes, on Wednesday evening before John Gregory Esq, coroner, when the following evidence was adduced :-

John Alvey, boatman, residing on the canal bank said that on Tuesday afternoon his attention was directed to the body of a child, which was close to the side of the canal, and he stooped down and pulled it out by its arm. Round its loins was a piece of calico ; its back looked quite fresh, but the rest of its body appeared quite putrid. He took it to the Ram Inn, and placed it in the parlour. He had often seen something floating about for several days, but supposed it was the carcass of some dog or other animal, which was often the case. He had not the slightest idea to whom it belonged, or how it got into the canal. Mr W G Palmer, surgeon, said he was requested on Tuesday afternoon to examine a child that had been taken out of the canal, and found it at the Ram Inn, lying upon a table. The lower portion of the body was enveloped in a coloured cloth, which he removed, and found it was the body of a full grown female child, in a partial state of decomposition. On further examination, he found that the umbilical cord had been cut close to the body, but had not been tied. There were no external marks of violence upon it. On Tuesday he had examined the lungs and found them quite crepitous and inflated. He had not the least doubt in his own mind that the child had fully breathed. The lungs were gorged with blood, and there was also a clot of blood in the heart. The lungs were but little decomposed, and there was no mark of violence whatever. He could not say whether the child was thrown into the water alive or not. His opinion was that the child had died of asphyxia. The jury returned a verdict of “Found dead in the canal, but how it came by its death there was no positive evidence to show”.

59 July 27 1861

INQUEST An inquest was held on Wednesday last, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Heber John Biddles**, who died on Monday afternoon. The deceased was five years old, and the son of a boatman. From the evidence taken at the inquest, it appeared that he was playing with some other children at the Public Wharf, and accidentally fell into the basin, death ensuing before he could be rescued. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death”.

60 September 14 1861

FRIGHTFUL ACCIDENT IN A CANAL TUNNEL A dreadful accident occurred on Friday night in a tunnel on the Grand Junction Canal near Blisworth. A barge called the *Wasp*, fitted with a small screw propeller, was on its way from Birmingham to London, having another boat in tow. In the first boat were two men named **Gower** and **Jones**, engine drivers, and one or two other men employed on the canal. They were passing through the tunnel, and stopped at a place called a “stanks”, which is a number of piles driven in to afford a standing place for some workmen engaged in repairing the tunnel. Here they took in a carpenter named Edward Webb. They proceeded on their way, and soon afterwards met in the tunnel two other boats, which were being worked by “leggers”. They became entangled, but were by some exertion – on whose part cannot now be ascertained – set free. The boat which the steamer was towing was, however, unloosed from it, and was left behind. The smoke from the engine flue became dreadfully dense, and very much affected the “leggers”, so much so that they could not work. On board the steamboat, its effect was such that it suffocated two men, one of whom fell into the water. A third man in the company's employ was so overpowered that, on arriving at the mouth of the tunnel, he too fell overboard ; the water, however, restored him to partial consciousness, and he managed to climb on board the boat again and shut off the steam. When the boat arrived at the lock, the young carpenter was found lying dead in the hold, one of the boatmen was missing, and the two engine men were lying near the furnace awfully burned. The following is a list of those who were killed and injured :- Dead : William (*sic*) Webb, carpenter of Stoke Bruerne, **Edward Broadbent**, boatman of Braunston, living at Birmingham. Injured : Joseph Jones, engine driver, severely burned ; William Gower, engine driver, severely burned ; **John Chambers**, boatman of Warwick, injured by immersion and partial suffocation.

61 September 28 1861

HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24 **George Polker**, boatman,

was charged with stealing a can value 1s, the property of Joseph Monk of Foxton. The prosecutor is the landlord of the Black Horse Inn. On Saturday last, he lent a can to William Saddington to take some ale to the wharf at the canal. He sent for it back again, but it was gone. He, in company with PS Sharpe followed the prisoner and the boat to Newton, where the can was found in the boat. The can now produced was his property, and he valued it at 1s. The prisoner was committed for trial.

62 October 5 1861

THE GADDESBY MURDER (which took place some seventeen years ago) will be still in the recollection of some of our readers, and the circumstances have been revived within the last few days, by a statement made by William Holmes, who was convicted on Tuesday last at Melton of riot and drunkenness, and sentenced to three months imprisonment. We subjoin his statement, and it must be taken only for what it is worth. John Haynes, gamekeeper of Thrussington, said : I was at the Star Inn public house, on the evening of the 26th September, and heard Holmes say that he sat under a bush and saw the blow struck that murdered the young man Garner at Gaddesby Lodge, and the man that struck the blow was Messenger. William Clark, framework knitter of Thrussington said : I was at Thomas Hubbard's public house between seven and eight o'clock last night, and heard Holmes say, "I saw the first blow that killed Garner, under the bush in Messenger's field, and it was Messenger that struck the blow". He also said, "I was offered £5, when drinking at Frisby about a fortnight ago, not to say anything about it, by the girl who lived servant there at the time that the murder was committed". A man named **John James**, a boatman of Loughborough, was also in the public house at the same time, and Holmes wanted him to take him to Loughborough and give him up to Mr Hague, and he would tell all he knew about the murder. Holmes has since declared that his statement was false, and that he knew nothing whatever about the matter.

63 October 26 1861

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

STEALING IRON **James Taverner** was charged with having stolen a quantity of sheet iron, the property of Mr J F Stenson, his employer. William Skelson said that on the 16th inst he was on the towing-path, when he saw the prisoner come from the dock of Mr Stenson with two sheets of iron upon his back. Prisoner lived in the Pingle, and was a boatman, working on the wharf for Mr Stenson. Called after him, and told him he was doing wrong, and to take the iron back. Prisoner went away, and the iron had not been found. Mr Stenson said he was from home at the time, and had not had an opportunity of ascertaining whether any iron was missing. Prisoner denied having seen or spoken to Skelson on Wednesday morning. Inspector Haynes deposed to hearing prisoner admit having seen Skelson and spoken to him, when brought to the station. Prisoner was remanded till Friday.

64 November 9 1861

DEATH FROM LOCKED JAW An inquest was held on Friday week, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Robert Smith**. Deceased was a boatman living in this town, and on the 22nd of October, he and two other men were going from Mountsorrel to Wistow with a boat load of stone. When they arrived at the wharf at Blaby, there were two other boats in the lock and deceased, in trying to avoid a collision between them, slipped down, and his right arm fell over the boat's side and was severely crushed between it and a rail. He was conveyed to the Leicester Infirmary, where he was immediately attended to. Deceased progressed favourably for three or four days, and then symptoms of locked jaw set in. It was then deemed advisable to give him a chance of surviving by amputating the arm, which was accordingly done. No favourable result however followed, and he died about twelve o'clock on Thursday night from locked jaw, consequent upon the injury to his arm. Verdict "Accidental death".

65 November 23 1861

LUTTERWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, NOVEMBER 21 **Thomas Pashley**, a boatman from

Wolverhampton, was charged with stealing a live fowl, at Claybrooke Magna on the 18th inst, value 1s 6d, the property of Mr John Toone of High Cross, farmer and grazier. The facts of the case, as given in evidence, are briefly as follows :- On Monday last, PC Garton was conveying a prisoner from Lutterworth to Ullesthorpe, when about half way between Bitteswell and Lutterworth, he met the prisoner carrying a bundle, and from his manner he suspected something wrong. He stopped him and found some fowl feathers in his bundle. On searching near the spot, on the other side of the hedge, a dead fowl was found, which was quite warm, and which corresponded in colour with the feathers in prisoner's bundle. Garton then apprehended him on the charge of stealing the fowl, and ascertained that it was the property of Mr Toone, who at once identified it. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to one months hard labour.

66 November 23 1861

TOWN HALL, YESTERDAY **John Marston**, boatman, was fined 20s, or one months hard labour, for having assaulted John Rudkin.

67 November 30 1861

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28 **Charles Walters** of Leicester, boatman, was charged with having committed a trespass in search of game on land at Lockington, on the 28th of May 1860. In consequence of defendant's absence the case has been hitherto delayed, but being now fully proved, defendant was convicted in a penalty of 20s and costs, or one months imprisonment.

68 April 26 1862

EXTRAORDINARY CHARGE AGAINST A STAFFORDSHIRE IRON MERCHANT At the Birmingham Police Court the attention of the stipendiary magistrate, Mr Kynnersley, was occupied during the whole of the day on Tuesday and in the morning of Wednesday, in hearing the summonses that had been taken out by Messrs Edward Bagnall, Thorneycroft and Co, against William Izod, Stafford Street, Birmingham, iron merchant ; Frederick Hill, Jacob Poole and James Sutton, his clerk ; and **Thomas Leighton**, West Bromwich, steerer and haulier, charging them with conspiring to defraud the complainants of a large quantity of iron. There was also a cross summons against Mr Sam Griffiths, ironmaster, and W Whitehead, his clerk, charging them with obtaining from Mr Izod, by means of false pretences, a cheque for £1000, and two bills (one at four months and one at six months) for £1000 each. From the evidence, it appeared that Mr Griffiths is a banker at Wolverhampton, the proprietor of several large ironworks in South Staffordshire, and of one in Northamptonshire. In some of these works Mr Thorneycroft holds an interest, but Mr Griffiths alone held three of the furnaces, one of which was at Bilston Brook and another at Windmill End. Mr Griffiths and Mr Izod had had many transactions in the iron trade, and on the 26th of December last, a contract was entered into between them by which Mr Griffiths was to supply to Mr Izod 3,000 tons of cinder bar iron at £2 3s 6d per ton, and Mr Izod gave Mr Griffiths in advance a cheque for £1000, and two bills, each for £1000. After some few weeks Mr Griffiths began supplying the iron, and by the 1st of January last had sent £450 worth. About this time there were rumours afloat about Mr Griffiths having made a compromise with his creditors, and Mr Izod began to fear he would never get his contract completed. He determined, however, to have some iron, and attempted to bribe Mr Chapman and Mr Merryman, two of the managers of furnaces, to send him some iron without the knowledge of Mr Griffiths. This failed, and then on Monday 4th February last, Mr Izod gave the two defendants Poole and Sutton each a cheque for £10, and in the evening they went in a cab to Wolverhampton, calling on the way at the house of Leighton, the other defendant. On their return from Wolverhampton with a man named Silvester, who they had tried to get to send some iron to Mr Izod, saying it was all right and that they had plenty of money, they went back to Leighton's and stayed with him about an hour. At about four o'clock on the next morning, Leighton spoke to a boatman named **Dingley** about some boats. At that time there were three boats at the Staffordshire Works, one of them loaded with nail sheets consigned to Mr Charles Shaw of

Birmingham ; one loaded with rounds and consigned to Messrs Western and Grice ; and one loaded with unfinished bars, consigned to an iron merchant at Rowley. Leighton ordered Dingley, who was his subordinate, to take the boat load of nail sheets consigned to Mr Shaw to Mr Izod instead, and Dingley took the boat to Johnson's wharf, Birmingham, where it was unloaded by Mr Izod's servants. The defendant Hill received the lading notes, in which the iron was consigned to Mr Shaw, and said it was all right. Mr Staveley Hill contended that Mr Izod had obtained the iron, which was not of the same kind as that for which he held a contract, in this manner with the intent to defraud Mr Griffiths, or with the idea that Mr Griffiths would connive at their proceedings, careless if the iron belonged to a creditor, either as to who had it or what became of it. On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Motteram that Mr Griffiths had had £1000, besides bills for £2000, for £450 worth of iron, and that, although Mr Izod had had £600 worth of iron besides the £450 worth sent, he had not had as much as he had paid for. There were two other transactions of exactly a similar kind to that detailed in the evidence, but before these were gone into, it was agreed to take an adjournment.

69 May 10 1862

MELTON MOWBRAY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY MAY 6 **Philip Booth, Joseph Wathey and George Wall** alias Black George, boatmen, all of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, were charged by David Marston, labourer of Melton, with stealing from the canal bank, in the parish of Melton, a shovel, value 3s. They were also charged by Thomas Timson, contractor, Melton, with stealing two picks and one axe, value 7s 6d. The prosecutor in the first charge did not appear, and in the second there was not sufficient evidence to convict. The cases were therefore dismissed.

70 June 14 1862

DEATH OF A HORSE BY DROWNING A heavy misfortune befell one of the tradesmen of Hinckley early on Whit Sunday morning, by the loss of his horse, employed in boating between Moira and Hinckley. It appears that the horse was tied up for a few hours by the canal side, with sufficient length of line to allow of a limited graze while the boatmen had a few hours repose. In the early dawn, the boatmen awoke to push forward their journey to Hinckley wharf and found, to their dismay, that during their slumbers their horse had got into the canal, and was then dead. The loss will be severely felt, as the animal was supposed to be in foal.

71 August 2 1862

HINCKLEY PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY JULY 28 Amos Pallett was summoned by **Joseph Hurst**, a boatman, for assaulting him on the 16th of July at Dadlington by throwing stones at him while in his boat. A witness was called in contradiction to the complainant's evidence, who admitted having struck the first blow after he got out of his boat on the canal bridge. Case dismissed.

72 October 25 1862

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT, OCTOBER 20 **William Whitcroft**, boatman, was ordered to find sureties to keep the peace for six months, for drunkenness on Sunday morning last, he having been previously convicted of a like offence.

73 November 29 1862

MAGISTERIAL **Richard Waite**, a boatman from Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire, was charged with stealing swede turnips, on the 22nd inst, from a field in the parish of Shenton, the property of Major Wollaston. Fined 10s and costs or, in default, to be sent to the House of Correction for 14 days.

74 December 6 1862

THE NEWCASTLE MURDER At the Newcastle assizes on Tuesday (before Mr Justice Keating), **John Dixon** (21), boatman and Thomas Miller (22), labourer, were indicted for having feloniously

killed and slain one Patrick Rogers on the 16th of August last. The circumstances of the case, which were reported at the time the offence was committed, are, that the prisoners pushed the poor fellow Rogers through one of the holes of a privy into the river, where he was drowned. The jury, after a short deliberation, found the prisoners guilty of manslaughter. The learned Judge, after commenting upon the wanton and cruel nature of the offence, sentenced the prisoners each to ten years penal servitude.

75 January 31 1863

BURGLARY On Sunday evening last, a burglary was committed at a small house near the Meadow Lane Bridge, Loughborough, when the thieves contrived to carry off about £10 in cash and goods. The house is occupied by a **Mrs Grimley**, whose husband, being a boatman, is seldom at home. She carries on a small grocery trade, and the robbery was effected whilst she was at the Baptist Chapel. The thieves emptied a till, a child's save-all, and carried off 30s worth of tea, and other articles.

76 February 14 1863

STEAM BOATS ON THE GRAND JUNCTION CANAL The value of property in the canals has latterly received a considerable impulse by the introduction of steam power as a means of locomotion. We believe the credit of this movement is in a great measure due to the efforts of the present Board of Directors and their energetic Chairman, G Anderson Esq, who in the face of apathy and doubt, had demonstrated the possibility of running steam boats with regularity and punctuality, and of raising by this means the value of canal property. Lately, a trial trip of a new steam engine connected with one of the Grand Junction Canal Company's large boats, named *Havock*, was made on the Grand Junction Canal at Stratford. The engine is an eight horse high pressure, with all the latest improvements, and is the manufacture of Mr Hayes of the Watling Works, Stony Stratford. The boiler of the engine is full size, and the arrangement of the engine is such as to allow of a full sized useful engine to be put in a very moderate sized engine room. The engine room is fitted up with four windows, which open and shut at will as the state of the weather may permit. It is light and cool, and the engine is so excellently fixed that the engineer can get at every joint and every working part, in case of repairs or wanting oil ; every part being distinct, can be separated with the greatest ease. The engine has ample bearing services, and is made of the best material. Steam engines have been attached to boats to work on the screw principle since July 1861, and now there are over twenty of these engines at work on the canal. It has been found also that through the adoption of steam there is a gradual improvement in the moral character of the boatmen. This endeavour to improve the morals of the men by affording them accommodation which they had not before, is being carried out in the steam boat trial trip which we now chronicle. The cabin is greatly improved ; it is much higher, more spacious, and has greater convenience for sleeping. A bookshelf has been introduced, which we found contained a Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Life of Captain Cook, Robinson Crusoe &c, so that the boatmen may, if they have a few minutes to spare, employ their time by reading instead of cursing and swearing at one another, as was but too much the custom formerly. From the engineer (Mr Elliott), we learn that since the introduction of steam there has been a gradual improvement in the conduct and manners of the men ; and in reply to a question a civil answer is given instead of an oath. The steam being got up to about 50 lbs at eleven o'clock, the boat started on the trial journey, accompanied by Captain Mansel, Mr Sanders, Mr Elliott, the engineer to the company, and Mr Hayes. The first mile was got through in about seventeen minutes, and on arriving at Cosgrave locks a boat was attached, and the steamer proceeded along as easily as if it were unburthened. It proceeded at the rate of nearly five miles an hour towards Wolverton, crossing the aqueduct called the "Iron Trunk", which carries the canal at a great height over the waters of the "lilled Ouze", meandering through the meadows beneath. The boat proceeded through Old Wolverton to Wolverton, and through New Bradwell, as far as Great Linford Wharf, where she turned back on the homeward journey, proceeding at a rate of over five miles an hour. The engine worked well, and it was truly amusing to see the youngsters of

New Bradwell running along the towing path, and frequently tumbling over one another in eagerness to keep up with the boat, which kept them running all the time. The vessel arrived at the starting place about four o'clock. The engineer expressed a high opinion of the qualities of the engine, and said it was a great success, as the piece of water that had been traversed was the roughest in the whole canal.

Northampton Mercury

77 April 11 1863

LEICESTERSHIRE EASTER SESSIONS **William Duckett** (37), boatman, was indicted for stealing a half sovereign, a half crown and a florin, the property of Charles Smith, at Ashby-de-la-Zouch on the 29th day of March last. Prisoner pleaded guilty. Mr Palmer, who appeared for the prosecution, stated that the prisoner was drunk at the time of the robbery, and on becoming sober he offered to make up the money by half a crown a week. Prisoner was sentenced to three months hard labour.

78 June 6 1863

HINCKLEY PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY JUNE 1 **Benjamin Hunt**, a boatman, was charged by George Ridgway with carrying away from his premises two eggs, value 1d, on the 29th of May. The prosecutor wished to withdraw the charge in consequence of the prisoner's advanced age – being between sixty and seventy years old. The Bench consented to his request, not because it was the wish of the complainant only, but as they were in receipt of a letter which had been received from his employer, giving him an excellent character of thirty years standing. The prisoner, on being dismissed, said he had never been before a magistrate before.

79 June 13 1863

MARKET BOSWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY JUNE 10 **William Kent**, boatman of Measham, was charged by Henry Tetley, labourer, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with stealing four ash saplings and two elm saplings, value 3s, from a plantation at Sheckerstone, the property of Earl Howe, and was fined, including damages and costs, £2.

80 June 13 1863

SINGULAR NARRATIVE OF A PROFESSIONAL VAGRANT OR WANDERER

A correspondent of the *Preston Chronicle* writes :-

Some days ago, a little business of inquiry led me into a low lodging house in Preston, when I met with a vagrant who had taken up his abode there for the night. Finding, during some conversation, that the man was a singular character, I induced him to give me some particulars of a career which I imagined must have been a strange one, from several hints at his adventures given to another vagrant who sat near the fire. He gave me the following short account, almost word for word, as to his history.

My name is Jeremy Casper, and I was born at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1801. My father was a travelling razor grinder, and before I was six years old I had been carried along with him through many counties. His machine was drawn by an ass, and had a sort of crib at the end capable of carrying me and his box of tools as well. It was not, however, until I got a little older that I discovered the object of his taking me with him. I had noticed, on several occasions, and in many places, that people gave my father copper without his sharpening their knives or razors, or doing anything for the money. Being at Worksop one day when about eight years old, I overheard my father talking to an old lady in black. I saw that she took out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes. She was crying. She came up to me and, patting me on the head, said, "My poor boy, pity it is that one so young should be an idiot". The truth somehow oozed out in a minute. My father had been carrying me about the country as an insane boy, who had been born so, and thus he was getting money by exposing me to everyone who came in his way. I could scarcely speak, from an impediment in my tongue. This circumstance gave colour to the imposture. On our way to Leicester, we called at a gentleman's house, that was approached by a long carriage drive. In the

grounds my father met with a young lady from whom he got some money. By and by the gentleman himself came out of an alcove or summer house, and asked my father what he wanted. The young lady answered for him, and pointed to me sat, as I was, on the machine lower down in the grounds. The gentleman came directly towards me and looked in my eyes. He talked to me and asked me some questions. Beyond a little stammering, I answered all his questions very readily. He felt my pulse, examined my head, and then bade my father bring me into the house. We left the machine where it was, and proceeded to the gentleman's study. When we arrived, we found ourselves in the surgery of a noted physician who had not long before returned from India. The gentleman, after we entered, closed the door, and proposed to my father that if I was insane, he would soon cure me. The operation would not take long, and my father could witness it. It was to cut off my left ear, make a slit in my tongue, and to give me an ounce of Epsom salts. My father trembled in every limb like an aspen leaf, and his colour went and came as if he was about to be hung. The doctor, however, kept as cool as a cucumber, placed a chair to which I was to be tied, and seemed quite ready to begin the operation. My father went down on his knees, and begged the doctor to spare me, that I was no more insane than the doctor himself. This was what the doctor evidently anticipated, for he gave my father such a lecture as I never heard in my life, before or since. He rang his bell, and on a butler appearing, he ordered three of his servants and a labourer to take my father's clothes off, and then to duck him over head three times in a sheet of water that cut off the shrubbery from the western part of the lawn. My poor father begged hard to be forgiven, and he said he would take me home at once and never again be guilty of any deception. But all was to no purpose. He was dragged by men much stronger than himself to the edge of the stream, and there ducked over head three times, with terrible precision. After his cold bath, the men applied a birch rod to his naked back, and then bade him be off about his business as fast as he could, a piece of advice he was not slow to act upon. On gaining the highway, and when a couple of miles from the mansion, we came to a plantation a mile in length, and being in the height of summer and having a good deal of furze and brush wood amongst the saplings, he took out his box, struck a light, and set fire to the plantation in twenty places. We then hastened on, as evening was far advanced, and took a contrary direction to that from which we left the mansion. When two or three miles away from the scene, we looked back, and all the heavens were lighted up with the conflagration. Of course our movements were too slow, and our identity with the villainy too clear to render it likely we could escape detection. We entered a deep valley quite out of the main road, intending to rest a while, to see if we were pursued. More than two hours elapsed, when my father thought we were safe. We were just trying to put the machine and the ass into an opening of a thicket, so as to be out of sight, intending ourselves to rest a few hours amongst the branches of a gigantic oak, but at that moment we heard voices, we knew not how many, and they seemed every moment to become more distinct. Hastily we shoved poor Teddy into the thicket, and were just going to climb the tree. The ass at this moment began to bray, and in so loud a manner as we had never heard him guilty of before. In another minute a whole host of gamekeepers, agricultural labourers and gentleman's servants, with police officers, were upon us. Escape was impossible. My father was secured, and between two men dragged along the road for several miles to the house of the doctor. Being only young, I was allowed to ride on the machine, as I had done for years. I was put to bed with a servant lad, but my father was carried off to ----- Castle. I was sent home by an overseer on the following day. The ass and machine were kept for some reason or other until my father should be brought to trial. This took place a short time afterwards and, as my father had no friends, he was undefended. He, however, was allowed to put some questions to the prosecutor, the doctor, and to make a statement as to the reason why he set fire to the plantation. The doctor, in the judge's charge to the jury, came in for a large share of blame for having instigated his servants to a breach of the law, by inflicting punishment in so strange a manner. As a magistrate the doctor was told his duty was, as he must have well known, to have summoned my father for obtaining money under false pretences, and not to have constituted himself the sole tribunal for judging and punishing a fault which hardly amounted to a misdemeanour. The upshot of the whole affair was that the doctor's name was struck off the roll of magistrates, while my father's sentence was

transportation across the seas for the term of his natural life. The ass and machine were restored to my poor mother, who disposed of both and all that we had, in a few days. We were then taken into the workhouse at Birmingham.

81 October 17 1863

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, OCTOBER 14 **Samuel Smith**, a boatman of Leicester, was charged by the Leicester Soar Navigation Company with having, on the 16th of September, at Sileby (he then being a captain of a boat travelling along the navigation) unlawfully and wilfully drawn a paddle at the Sileby lock so as to waste the water, contrary to the Company's Act. Upon application, the case was allowed to be withdrawn.

82 January 2 1854

TOWN HALL, THURSDAY

A SUSPECTED BOATMAN **Thomas Davis**, a boatman, was charged on suspicion of having stolen a coil of rope, the property of some person at present unknown. Charles Dawes, an agent of the Navigation Company, said he walked round the public wharf the previous evening after business hours, and saw the rope produced lying behind a cart. He inquired of **Mr Flude**, a boat owner, if he knew whose rope it was, and receiving an answer in the negative, he waited about three quarters of an hour until the prisoner came to take it away. He said it was his rope, but witness refused to let him go until he satisfactorily accounted for his possession of it. A policeman was sent for, and prisoner was given in charge. PC Smith said he received prisoner in custody who, in reply to his questions, said he was boating a fortnight ago up the river, and took the rope off a boat that lay beside theirs, brought it to Leicester, and hid it amongst the wood till last night. Afterwards he said he pulled it out of the water. Prisoner said he got the rope honestly. Remanded.

83 May 21 1864

DESTRUCTION OF A PLANTATION AND GAME COVER BY FIRE About eleven acres of a fir plantation and game cover belonging to Sir Robert T Gerard, Bart, of Garswood, Warrington, and situated on Bryn Moss in the township of Ince near Wigan, were wholly devastated by fire on Saturday last, and damage to the extent of several hundred pounds in trees alone inflicted upon the proprietor. It is strongly believed that the plantation was wilfully set on fire by some boatmen, or rather that an intervening space of heather, between the canal and the wood, was fired, with the view of communicating the flames to the cover. A reward of £50 has been offered for information which will lead to the conviction of the persons implicated. Sir Robert Gerard has not only suffered heavy loss in the destruction of trees, but the flames made sad havoc amongst the game, for when the fire was extinguished and the cover entered, the charred underwood was found in many places to cover the roasted remains of hares and rabbits ; and several pheasants' nests were found to have suffered in the general ruin. The police are actively engaged in directions which promise to lead to the detection of the men whose wanton and malicious act caused the conflagration.

84 June 4 1864

TOWN HALL, MONDAY Thomas Whittle was charged with stealing a pair of blucher boots, the property of Matthew Holder. **Thomas Bale**, a boatman, said on Tuesday last the prosecutor was at Mountsorrel, and requested him to see the prisoner, with whom he was slightly acquainted, and ask him for his (prosecutor's) boots, and if he refused to give them up, to have him taken into custody. On the following Thursday he saw prisoner at the Public Wharf, Leicester, and asked him for a pair of boots which he (prisoner) had stolen from Holder, but he refused to give them up, and witness consequently gave him into custody. Discharged.

85 July 2 1864

ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN On Wednesday an inquest was held at Barrow-upon-Soar on the body of **James Deening**, boatman of Atherstone, who fell into the lock near to the Navigation

Bridge at Barrow, on the previous day, and was drowned. Verdict "Accidental death". The jury recommended that a guard rail should be put upon the lock gates in question.

86 July 9 1864

DEATH FROM DROWNING On Tuesday an inquest was held at the Lock House in the parish of Kibworth Beauchamp, on the body of **Emily Pilgrim**, the wife of a boatman, she having fell in the water the previous morning and was drowned. The inquest was held before J Gregory Esq, coroner. The first witness called was **Charles Pilgrim**, who said he was a boatman and lived in Bath Lane, Leicester. The deceased was his wife, and was 29 years of age. He was in the employ of the Mountsorrel Granite Company, and had been to London with two loads of stones, and was returning with the empty boats. He stopped at Theddingworth bridge on Monday night, and left about four o'clock on Tuesday morning. He had with him the deceased, their three children and a nephew. The deceased had been with him assisting in boating for the last eight years. At the end of Saddington tunnel, the deceased left them, brought the horse over the top of the tunnel, and then went forward to fill the locks, which was her usual custom. He followed with the horse and boats. When he came to the top lock it was full, and the gates about a foot open. The inside paddle was up. He took the boats into the lock, and expected his wife was gone forward to fill the other locks. He took a windlass from the cabin to draw up the bottom paddle to empty the lock, and told his nephew to let down the top paddle, but it would only go part down. He gave him a windlass to turn it down, but it would not go. He then crossed the lock while the top paddle was drawn up again, and opened the other bottom paddle to clear the top paddle, thinking some weeds or sticks might have obstructed it from going down. He soon found it was cleared. After they had left the lock about one hundred yards, his nephew said the paddles were not drawn up. He ran forward to see, and found the locks only partly full. He ran back, and felt sure his wife was drowned in the top lock. He called **Amos Smith**, the lock-keeper, when he procured a drag and found his wife in the lock. She was taken out, but was quite dead. He should think she had been in the water about half an hour. He thought his wife must have been crossing the lock when her foot slipped and she fell. It was considered a good gate, and quite as safe to cross as any of the gates. His wife had repeatedly crossed over it. Amos Smith said he was lock-keeper, and resided near the top lock. Yesterday morning about half past eight o'clock, Charles Pilgrim came running and shouting wildly, in a very distressed manner, saying he believed his wife was drowned in the locks. He took a long hook and tried the lock, when he found her on the opposite side. The windlass he found near the corner of the paddle hole. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned", and suggested that it would be much safer for crossing if another guard rail was put up.

87 September 3 1864

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, AUGUST 31 **William Varnham** of Mountsorrel South, boatman, was charged with having on the 14th of August at Mountsorrel assaulted Mary Bagley, singlewoman. Arranged out of court.

88 October 1 1864

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 28 **John Biddles**, a boatman living at Leicester, was brought up in custody of PS Bosworth on suspicion of having stolen from a barn on the canal side, a quantity of sack bags and a rick cloth of the value of £4 10s, the property of Mr Reuben Cayless of Loughborough. Bosworth said part of the bags had been already identified, and therefore asked for a remand to enable him to obtain further evidence in the case. Remanded for a week.

89 October 15 1864

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY OCTOBER 7 **William Strong**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a brush, the property of Mr Huff of Moira, on the 3rd instant. Prisoner pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven days hard labour.

90 October 22 1864

LEICESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

STEALING BAGS **John Biddles** (40), boatman (on bail) was charged with stealing twelve sack bags, value 12s, seven lbs of tar cord, value 2s 6d and two hemp sheets, value 2s, the property of Reuben Cayless, at Knightthorpe on the 8th of September. Mr Sills prosecuted and Mr Hensman defended the prisoner. The prosecutor stated that he was a farmer living at Loughborough and had a barn in the liberty of Knightthorpe. On the 8th of September, he and some of his men collected some bags and tar cord, and two sheets. They tied them up and placed them on a heap of corn in the barn. There was also a wagon cover near the bundles of sacks in the barn. William Shepherd, a labourer in the employ of Mr Cayless, confirmed his master's statement, and added that on the following morning he went to his master for the key of the barn, and on entering the barn he missed the bundle of sacks, tar cord and hemp sheets. He went back and told his master of their disappearance. On the same day, he saw the prisoner near the Albion stable, which was about 100 yards from the barn. Sergeant Bosworth stated that on Friday the 23rd of September he went to Leicester and searched the prisoner's house. He found the sack bags and took possession of them. He took them to Loughborough, and the prosecutor identified two as his property. On the following day, he went in search of prisoner, and found him in his boat on the canal at Birstall. He told him the charge, and he said he knew nothing at all about either the sheet or bags. He then told him that he had searched his house and found several bags, two of which Mr Cayless identified. Prisoner replied that he lay against them that night, and as he was going to get his horse, he kicked against a bag on the towing-path. He picked it up and put it in his boat. Prisoner showed him the bag which he picked up on the towing path. Mr Hensman addressed the jury, who found the prisoner guilty of receiving the property knowing it to be stolen. Three calendar months imprisonment.

91 November 19 1864

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT, NOVEMBER 14 **John Mee** of Loughborough, boatman, was charged with stealing a drake, the property of Mr Tebbutt of Kegworth. Remanded.

92 November 19 1864

BANKRUPTS **J Wright**, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, boatman.

93 November 19 1864

LEICESTER COUNTY COURT, JURY CASE

J HAYLE v T MONK AND T ROBERTS

Jury : Messrs Andrew Morris, Markfield ; George Billington, Belgrave ; Thomas Glover, Blaby ; William Herrick, Whetstone ; Charles Kilby, Humberstone ; and William Frearson.

Mr Inglesant appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Haxby for the defendant.

Mr Inglesant, in opening the case to the jury, stated that the plaintiff was a boatman residing in Leicester, and at the time of the occurrence was proceeding to Buckinghamshire, and the defendants were gamekeepers in the service of Lieut Henry St John Halford. Plaintiff claimed £10 for the loss sustained by defendants shooting his dog. It seems that on the morning of the 3rd July, plaintiff was passing on his boat and dog along the canal adjoining the property of Lieut H St John Halford. The dog left the side of plaintiff, who shortly afterwards heard the report of a gun. A man came to him and told him that the dog had been shot dead on the towing-path. The keepers had found the dog on Lieut Henry Halford's preserves, and shot at it but did not kill it. Defendants then pursued the dog, and had shot at it while on the towing-path, and the dog was killed. This, he contended, was quite an illegal act, and the plaintiff, therefore, claimed compensation.

Mr Haxby objected to the case being proceeded with, on the ground that no notice of action had been given, as was required by the 47th cap of the Game Law Act.

The case was adjourned till next court day.

94 December 19 1864

LEICESTERSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

PLEAS OF GUILTY **John Pew** (14), boatboy, and **George Harper** (18), boatman, were indicted – the first named for unlawfully and carnally knowing and abusing Elizabeth Smith, a girl under the age of twelve years, at North Kilworth on the 14th July last ; and Harper for aiding and abetting in the commission of the offence. Both prisoners pleaded guilty. There was a legal difficulty in the way of a lad fourteen years of age pleading guilty to such a charge, and the learned Judge directed the plea of guilty to be withdrawn. The second indictment, charging the prisoners with an indecent assault, was then read by the Clerk of the Arraignment, and to this they pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to twelve months hard labour each.

95 December 10 1864

BANKRUPTS **Henry Bird**, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, boatman. December 16th at 11.

96 December 24 1864

A knotty point in “Crown’s Quest Law” has arisen at Claverley (*Calverley?*) in Cheshire. About a month since, a man was found hanging to a tree there, was cut down, and laid out for identification. A couple of boatmen recognised him as one **Joseph Bebbington**, whom they knew well, and Joseph Bebbington’s relatives were sent for. A brother, the brother’s wife and a nephew all recognised the dead man as Joseph, and followed him to the grave, sorrowing. It now turns out that Joseph Bebbington is alive and well. In strict law, he is no doubt a suicide – it has been so found by a coroner’s jury, and his death has been registered. But, in fact, he is alive. The authorities have been consulted as to what course ought to be pursued, and there is talk of holding another inquest on the dead man.

97 December 31 1864

COUNTY OFFICE, SATURDAY

BELGRAVE **George Wigley**, boatman, Belgrave, was charged with assaulting William Roe, framework knitter, at Belgrave on the 3rd September. Arranged.

98 January 21 1865

LEICESTER COUNTY COURT, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 18

JOSEPH HALE v THOMAS MONK AND THOMAS ROBERTS This was an adjourned jury case, in which the plaintiff, a boatman residing in Buckinghamshire, sought to recover £10, the value of a dog shot by the defendants (one of whom is a gamekeeper and the other a servant in the employ of Sir H Halford, Bart) by the side of the canal in the parish of Wistow. Mr Inglesant appeared on behalf of the plaintiff and Mr Haxby for the defendants. Mr Inglesant having explained to the jury the legal bearings of the case, and detailed the circumstances in connection therewith, called **Henry Parsons**, who said he lived at Newton Harcourt and was lock-keeper there. Knew plaintiff and his dog ; they were in the habit of passing the lock. On Saturday the 23rd July, he saw plaintiff’s dog about half a mile from his house. His attention had been attracted by the report of a gun, and on going out he saw the dog come through the spinney and to the water side. Subsequently, Thomas Roberts came out of the spinney, and the dog was running towards him, and as soon as it saw Roberts it turned into the spinney. Roberts then cocked his gun and shot at it. The dog afterwards came out, and with difficulty got over the gate of the lock. When it ran past witness, blood was running down its leg. It went on up the towing path after the boats, and when it got about a hundred yards further up, a shot was fired, and it killed the dog. Did not see who fired the shot. It was a kind of snap dog. (Cross-examined) Believed poachers’ dogs were generally called “snap” dogs. It was the kind of dog that could run if it were wanted. It would be a poor dog that would not run after a hare. A lock was a convenient landing place for a dog. The close on the other side the spinney was Sir H Halford’s rearing ground for pheasants and other game, and a dog might do a great deal of damage. **John Skidmore** said he was a boatman. On Saturday the 23rd July, he

was coming down the Union Canal in the direction of Leicester. Saw plaintiff's dog first on the off side of the canal on the footpath by the side of the spinney, and he also saw Roberts come over the stile and shoot at the dog, and around it. Monk was in the plantation, and he heard Roberts say to Monk meet him at the bridge ; but before the dog got to the bridge, Monk shot it dead. Told Hale Monk had shot his dog ; it was a cross bred one, and a kind of snap. After a dog had been used to a boat, it became more valuable. He would have given £10 for Hale's dog. (Cross-examined) If he had known the dog had been guilty of such tricks as going off the boat into the preserves, he would not have had it at any price ; he should have knocked it on the head at once. Mrs Skidmore deposed that she saw Monk shoot the dog and kill it. Thomas Hale deposed that he had had the dog in question about two years. It was a cross between a shepherd and a lurcher. The dog left the boat at Newton lock, and he did not miss it till he was told the dog was killed. Heard four shots fired in the plantation, and they had not gone 800 yards with the boat before the dog was shot dead. The dog was worth more than £10 to watch the boat and take care of the goods he carried. It was a difficulty to get a dog that would stop and mind the boat. Since his dog had been shot, his boat had been robbed twice ; it was never robbed while he had the dog. He had not been able to get one to suit him since. (Cross-examined) He gave £2 10s for the dog ; it had been used to a boat when he bought it. (By his Honour) Never knew the dog to go into any game preserves before, and when he heard it had been in them he was surprised. Mr Haxby having addressed the jury on behalf of his client, called Thomas Monk, who said he was gamekeeper to Sir H Halford, who was the owner of the land on both sides of the canal from Newton lock for about a mile. They reared pheasants and partridges at the back of the spinney which abutted on the canal. The spinney was about ten yards wide. On the 23rd July, he was on the breeding ground and saw a lurcher dog in the field adjoining the breeding ground. It was eating a rabbit when he saw it, and he ran after it and tried to shoot the dog. He saw three partridges worried, pulled to pieces and quite dead. The dog ran away when he approached it, and he shot at it and knocked it over. It then ran in the direction of Col Halford's house, and he followed it and saw it fall down, and gnawing the wound. It afterwards went through the plantation, and he told Roberts to stop it. Heard him shoot, but the dog went on the same, and when witness got through the spinney he saw it lying down on the path outside, and again gnawing at the wound. He thought it to be dying, and shot it to get it out of its misery. He shot the dog because he believed it had been worrying the birds. His deputation authorised him to seize and take dogs. (By his Honour) Knew that his deputation only authorised him to seize and take dogs ; but he thought that seizing and taking a dog was pretty much the same thing as shooting it. If he had seized the dog, he should have shot it directly afterwards. His Honour : Then you would have done very wrong then. (By his Honour) He understood from his deputation that it authorised him to shoot dogs on trespass if he were unable to seize and take them. Plaintiff's dog was the kind usually used by poachers. Thomas Roberts corroborated, and asseverated most positively that he never shot the dog, but that it was dying when it passed him on the towing-path on the way to the lock. Mr Haxby having taken a legal objection, Mr Inglesant replied on the whole case, and his Honour summed up the evidence at some length. The jury found that the defendants had no right to shoot the dog, and further that they knew they had no power to do so. Verdict for £2 10s.

99 April 8 1865

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

NEGLECT OF FAMILY **Liskom Newbold** was charged with leaving his wife and family chargeable to the common fund of the union, he being able to maintain them. Mr Cartwright deposed that defendant's wife and daughter had been chargeable to the union five or six weeks. Defendant was a boatman in employ, and he (witness) believed him to be able to maintain his wife and family. Defendant said that the winter had been so severe that he had only been engaged about half time, and when in full work only got 2s a day. Sent to prison for one month with hard labour.

100 April 15 1865

On Sunday morning, three dead bodies were found in the Rochdale Canal at Gaythorn, a child, its

mother and its father, a boatman, who clasped in his hand his wife's shawl. The suggestion – and it seems a reasonable one – is that the child fell overboard, that the mother jumped in after it, and that the father is trying to rescue both was drowned himself. The boat, with no one on board, was found near.

101 April 15 1865

ACCIDENTS On Wednesday night, **Isaac Greenwood**, a boatman living in Crab Street, had been to Thurmaston with a boat load of manure and was returning home, when a quarrel arose between him and a man named Thomas Marlow, who knocked Greenwood down and kicked him violently, fracturing his ribs, knocking out some of his teeth and inflicting severe contusions about the face.

102 April 22 1865

COUNTY OFFICE, SATURDAY

NEWTOWN LINFORD Robert Price, labourer, Leicester, was charged with using a dog for the purpose of taking game at Newtown Linford on the 27th ult ; and **William Carter**, boatman, Leicester, was charged with aiding and abetting the above defendant to commit the offence. Martha Smith deposed that she was wife of James Smith and resided at Newtown Linford. On the 27th March, she saw the defendants together in a cart in Ansty Lane, and two dogs in a field ; they ran a hare out of the hedge, and she saw Price pull up the hare and put it under his coat. Prisoner then got into the cart again, and the two drove away together. The dogs went into a field opposite witness's house, and were hunting some time after they had gone away. Eliza Wain corroborated. Price said they did not get out of the cart from Ansty to Newtown, and denied the charge altogether. He said he had picked up a piece of a hare which, on the previous day, the people had been kicking about the street, and that he had several witnesses who could speak to the truth of his statement, but dare not come for fear of being turned out of the village. Price was convicted and fined, including costs, 30s, or twenty one days. Carter was dismissed. The gamekeeper remarked that it was not an uncommon practice for the dogs to hunt the fields both in advance and behind their owners ; the dogs were trained to do so, and gave the gamekeepers considerable trouble.

103 September 2 1865

ACCIDENTS Yesterday (Friday) week, **Alick Attenborough**, a boatman of Ilkeston, when passing through Mountsorrel, endeavoured to stop a runaway horse with a vehicle containing a little boy, but was knocked down in the attempt, and sustained a fracture of the right leg, and severe laceration of the face and head.

104 October 7 1865

BIRMINGHAM ONION FAIR This celebrated annual gathering of onions, shows, nut barrows, toy shops and gingerbread stalls commenced last week, and about 30,000 persons arrived there by special and other trains. There was about the usual amount of bustle, crowding, toe-treading, laughter and joking. Many of the so deemed popular places of “fair time entertainment” were in their accustomed spots, but there was a “drefful” falling off in the matter of wild beasts. What has become of them we could not learn. Possibly, in an unfriendly contest, the animals may have eaten the showmen and be wandering at large, or exhibiting each other by way of variety. The supply of onions was very large, the trade done good, and the prices moderate. At the Public Office on Friday, before Mr T C S Kynnersley, a boatman called **Hartless Pitts** was charged with assisting to steal a watch from the person of an elderly gentleman named Samuel Butter. Mr Butter said he arrived at the Star Hotel in Birmingham on the preceding morning by the special train from Evesham, at which place he resided. He spent the day in Birmingham, imbibing pretty freely, and towards night he made his way towards the New Street Railway Station with the intention of returning home. As he was going down a street he did not know the name of, he was met by a girl who stopped him, and he began talking to her. During the conversation, she quietly relieved him of his watch, and on his attempting to regain it, two men came up to prevent him. In his own

language, he then “up with his fist and knocked them down”, and pursued the girl, who reluctantly delivered up the watch. Flushed with his success, he pursued his way towards the station, but found that the train had just started. He then returned into the town to get a bed, and knowing a person in Wharf Street, went in that direction. On his way, he met a company of “ladies” who accosted him. In the course of conversation, he mentioned what he was in search of, and they volunteered to find him a bed. They conducted him to a house in Wharf Street, and everything appearing respectable, Mr Butter suspected nothing ; and after being there a little time, he detailed to the ladies the story of his recent robbery, and the restoration of the property. The ladies all at once appeared to become deeply interested in the story, and one of them asked to examine the watch to see how the ring at the top had been severed. Mt Butter innocently and politely handed the watch to the lady, who, it is needless to add, immediately made off, as well as the other ladies. On Mr Butter attempting to follow, a man, whom he stated to be the prisoner, prevented him, and he was not so fortunate the second time in regaining his property. He then came away, and gave information to the police. About three o'clock in the morning, the prisoner was apprehended knocking at the door of the house in Wharf Street. On cross-examination, it turned out that Mr Butter could only recognise the prisoner by his voice, and it being highly improbable that he could safely recognise a man from his voice in the state in which he acknowledged himself to be on the previous night, and as several persons gave the prisoner an excellent character, the Bench discharged him.

105 November 11 1865

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

BOAT ROBBERY A ragged fellow named **Walker**, remanded on a charge of stealing a black coat, was again brought up. **George Cable**, a boatman, said on the 8th September 1864, he was with his boat at the Wharf in Pasture Lane, and left a coat and a scarf in it when he left the boat at eight o'clock at night. When he returned to the boat at four o'clock the next morning, the coat and scarf were gone. He had not seen them since. The iron swivel block produced was also taken from the boat on the night in question ; it was the property of **James Pollard**, the owner of the boat. Thomas Hughes deposed that he saw the prisoner walking up and down the towing-path near the Pasture Lane Wharf on the 8th September 1864. Had known prisoner before. PC Miles of the County Constabulary said he remembered seeing prisoner on the 9th September 1864 at Rearsby, lying in a field where there was no road. Went to him and asked him what he was doing there, and seeing something bulky in his pocket, asked him what he had got. He replied that he had got nothing. Searched him, and found the block produced wrapped in a rough towel, which he said he had found on the road between there and Syston. Went with prisoner to point out where he had found the block, but he could not do so. Knew prisoner and took possession of the block and let him go. A few days afterwards, he showed the block to George Cable, and he identified it as the property of James Pollard. Prisoner was wearing at that time a rough blue pilot coat and red neckerchief. George Cable, recalled, said the coat he had missed was a blue pilot one, and his neckerchief red worsted. PC Thompson, also of the County Constabulary, deposed that he apprehended the prisoner on the 26th October last, and charged him with stealing a block from Mr Pollard's boat. He made no reply. Prisoner said he found the block at this end of Syston, on the foot road. Committed to the Sessions.

106 December 30 1865

WOLVERHAMPTON

A CAREER OF CRIME – STEALING A CHILD On Thursday, at the Wolverhampton Petty Sessions, a young woman, scarcely twenty years of age, was committed for trial at the Borough Quarter Sessions, charged with stealing a child, its clothes, and also some wearing apparel belonging to another person, a boatman. The prisoner's name is **Mary Ann Dyke** ; her father is a labourer, and lives in Wednesfield. She has been often in custody, but has not wanted friends. Summarily convicted some time ago at Willenhall, and sentenced to imprisonment and confinement in a Reformatory, she received the imprisonment but was too old to be admitted to the Reformatory.

She then got into trouble in Wolverhampton, and the Rev Mr Stephens, the vicar of Wednesfield, interested himself on her behalf. The rev gentleman appeared before the Stipendiary, got her leniently dealt with, and received £1 from the poor box towards the expenses of getting her into a kind of private reformatory or "home" in Birmingham. The conductors of the institution could not, however, keep her long, and her bad conduct resulted in her expulsion. She had some friends in Liverpool, and she went to that port, and got into honourable service. For a time she conducted herself properly, and Mr Stephens was gladdened by receiving letters from her master to that effect. But this steadiness was of only brief duration. She robbed her master, decamped, and entered the service of a boatman as steerer, in which capacity she had been before employed. Him, too, she robbed ; and this was one of the offences proved against her on Thursday. Running away from the boat, she commenced work as a banks' girl at Rough Hill, and lodged next door to the house of Thomas Lewis, a labourer, who, on the 9th instant, had a child six weeks old. At about eight o'clock, Mrs Lewis wished to go to market, but did not like to leave her infant alone in the house. Dyke proffered to keep watch over the cradle, and the mother went out. Returning home, both nurse and child were absent. About half past one o'clock on the morning of the 19th inst, just two days afterwards, an infant denuded of all but a little flannel was found to have been placed on one of the streets of Liverpool, and it was taken to the Workhouse. On the next morning, enquiries were received in Liverpool from the police of Wolverhampton for such a child, and Dyke, who there was now reason to conclude had returned to Liverpool. The mother of the infant went over to Liverpool, and pointed out her child from several others as it lay in the Workhouse ; and Dyke was given up by her friends in the same town, with some of the infant's clothing in her possession. When before the magistrates on Thursday, she had nothing to say in her defence, but added to her previous long list of crimes by suggesting to the boatman whether, before she stole his property, he had not attempted to grievously wrong her.

107 January 6 1866

BOROUGH SESSIONS

ROBBERY FROM A BOAT **Thomas Walker** (53), boatman, was indicted for stealing a coat and scarf, the property of **George Cable**, and an iron swivel block, the property of **James Pollard**, on the 8th of September 1864. Mr Inglesant prosecuted, the prisoner was undefended. George Cable said he was a boatman. On the 8th September, he was with his boat at the Pasture Lane Wharf. About eight o'clock that night, he had a coat and scarf in the boat where he left them. They were locked up. About four o'clock the next morning, the coat and scarf were gone ; he also missed an iron swivel block from another compartment of the boat, which was also locked up. The block produced was his master's. The coat and scarf he had not seen since. Thomas Hughes said he was an innkeeper, in Pasture Lane. On the night of the 8th September 1864, he saw prisoner there ; he was emptying a boat at the time. It was about twelve o'clock in the day. PC Miles said he was stationed at Syston. On the 9th September 1864, saw prisoner at Rearsby ; he was lying in a field a distance from the road. Went to him and asked what business he had there. He replied that he was only lying down. Saw something bulky which, on examination, proved to be the block produced, which he said he had found in Syston, but he could not point out where he had found it. He let prisoner go, and took possession of the block. Afterwards showed it to Mr Cable, who identified it. Prisoner was wearing at the time a blue pilot coat with velvet cuffs and collar, and a red muffler handkerchief. George Townshend deposed that he apprehended prisoner at Harborough. George Cable, recalled, said the coat and scarf described by the prisoner(*sic*) corresponded with the coat and scarf he lost. Guilty : six months hard labour.

108 April 14 1866

TOWN HALL, YESTERDAY

NEGLECTING SERVICE **Alfred Hunt**, a boatman, was charged with having left the service of **John Russell** without notice. Defendant pleaded guilty, but said he was willing to return to his work. Case arranged.

109 May 5 1866

DEATH FROM DROWNING On the 27th ult, an inquest was held before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Henry Ward**, who met his death by drowning. It appeared that the deceased was a boatman and lived at Nottingham, and was about 40 years old. On Wednesday week, he and other men brought a boat load of malt from Nottingham to Mr Eaton's brewery at Cavendish Bridge in the parish of Castle Donington. They were engaged in loading the boat for about seven hours, during which the deceased had something to eat and four pints of ale, but he was not intoxicated. They started on their return to Nottingham about half past four, and their boats, which were lashed together, went down the stream of the Trent to a point where the horses were left. When they got to this point, the wind was very strong and blew the boats on to the bank. The sudden shock caused the deceased, who was standing on a plank against the boat side, to fall over into the water, but he caught hold of the boat side and, with the assistance of one of the men, was pulled into the boat again. He then went towards the cabin with the view of changing his wet clothes, and fell overboard a second time. He swam twelve or fourteen yards towards the opposite bank, and when about six yards from the bank, he sank. Every effort was made to find him, but it was nearly two hours before the body was recovered. It is supposed that when deceased got on the top of the cabin, into which he was going to change his clothes, he caught his foot against a piece of rope, which caused him to fall into the water. Verdict, "Accidental death".

110 June 16 1866

TOWN HALL, YESTERDAY

THE QUESTION AS TO THE RIGHT OF FISHING IN THE CANAL William Greaves, Thomas Moysey and James Chester were charged with fishing in waters, the property of the Union Canal Company. Mr Inglesant appeared to prosecute on behalf of the Angling Association ; and Mr Flewker appeared with the defendants.

Mr Inglesant briefly stated the facts of the case, explaining that the Angling Society, at whose instance the information was laid against the defendants, was formed a short time ago, for the protection of private property, to prevent the wholesale destruction of fish, and to provide good angling for the lovers of the sport – adding that the rules of the society were couched in the most liberal terms, and that altogether the association was a most useful one. After citing some of the details of the case, he called,

George Foxon, who said he was the surveyor of the Leicester and Northampton Canal Company. Part of the canal ran through the parish of St Mary, a portion of which was cut, and was the property of the Canal Company.

John Pratt said he was one of the keepers of the Angling Association ; Shaw was the other keeper. On the night of the 2nd inst, they were watching the water between eleven and twelve o'clock, and saw Moysey first against the wooden bridge, under which the water runs. Asked him what he was doing there, and he replied that as he was caught he should fish until morning, in spite of him and his masters. Witness then looked round and saw Greaves, who was standing against the water with the end of a trammel net in his hand, about six yards from where he first saw Moysey. He also saw James Chester. Moysey had a long pole and Chester had a flail. Heard Greaves say to Moysey, "When you get the fish out of the water, put them in the bag". Greaves had the bag on his shoulder, and it appeared very bulky. He (witness) then went to see if he knew another man whom he saw on the other side of the water, and when he returned heard one of them remark, "We're caught, bring the net round". He afterwards saw Greaves and Moysey near the New Bridges ; Moysey pulled out a shut knife from his pocket and threatened to stick him. He whistled for Shaw, and Moysey then went away. Cross-examined : He signed the information against defendant. Was not present when Sergeant Keene, the secretary, asked defendant to take him two dozen perch, on the 23rd December, at the place in question. Did not know that the public insisted on fishing there, and had done so without interruption.

Mr Foxton deposed that the spot indicated by Pratt as the place where defendants were fishing was the property of the Canal Company. Cross-examined : Did not know who were the Lords of the

Manor at the spot indicated. There was free navigation from the River Soar at one end to the River Nene at the other, and by the Oxford Canal to the river Thames at Brentford.

William Shaw, keeper, corroborated the testimony of Pratt, and added that he saw the defendants pull the net out of the water, which contained sixty or seventy perch and roach, which they put in a bag. Moysey then said, as we are caught, we may as well fish until daylight. They put the net over a pole and went towards Aylestone. He saw them when they came back. They had not then got the net. He followed Chester to his house in Grafton Street. Cross-examined : Had stopped other persons fishing besides defendants.

Mr Fewker held that the defendants were not liable, and that they had committed no offence whatever. In the first place, in the face of the Canal Act itself, there was no case. That was not a complaint of the Canal Company, it was the complaint of the Fishing Society. The section of the Act under which the information had been laid referred to rivers in which there was a private right of fishing. The Canal Act said that was a public navigable water, connected with the Soar at one end and the Nene at the other, and it had been laid down in the law books – there were cases without number – that navigable waters were free to the public to fish. To call the canal a private fishery would be absurd. It was not a private fishery as contemplated by the Act. In support of his argument, he quoted from the case of *Carter v Murcott*, in which it was laid down that it was the common right of the public to fish in the sea and navigable rivers ; and to the case of *Warren v Matthews*, in which it was also laid down that every subject had a common right to fish with lawful nets in navigable rivers as well as the sea. He then asked what had the defendants done beyond what was there permitted? He maintained that the defendants had the right to fish in the canal, and not they alone, but the inhabitants of the town generally claimed that right ; and he could call before them, if necessary, a large number of persons who had exercised that right without interruption, and under the very eyes of the officers of the Canal Company, for a long series of years. When the Canal Company did not appear there to complain, the Angling Association ought not. If they wished to try the case fairly, why did they not summon some respectable men – of whom he was informed there were numbers who exercised their right of fishing in the canal – and not three poor men like the defendants, who were, it might be thought, unable to defend themselves. It was not fair, upright or manly of the Association to summon such men as the defendants.

Mr Stone explained that the Association had no standing there as an Association ; anybody could lay an information against the defendants under the Larceny and Malicious Trespass Acts. He would suggest to Mr Fewker to confine himself to two points – whether the water was the private property of the Canal Company, and whether it was a navigable river except under the Acts of Parliament making it into a canal.

Mr Fewker said, with the latter question he had nothing to do. The Act itself made it a navigable water, and he contended that it was so within the meaning of the cases he had cited, and that it was not the private property of the Canal Company. The 108th section of the Act took away from the Company all right whatever in the canal except for the purpose of navigation ; it reserved the right of fishing to all persons who had previously enjoyed that right ; and prevented them giving leave to the Angling Association to preserve the water.

Mr Stone pointed out that the Act only reserved the right of fishing to the land owners on either side, and to the Lord of the Manor, and asked Mr Fewker how he construed that into a public right.

Mr Fewker repeated that the clause to which Mr Stone alluded took away from the Canal Company the power of letting the fishing and converting it into a private fishery. He then called

James Adcock, a trimmer, said he was fifty seven years old. Knew the spot on the canal. He had fished in the canal from a boy, with a net and line. Had never asked leave of anybody, and was never interrupted. Had often seen the Canal Company's men on the towing-path ; they had never interrupted him. Had known many inhabitants of Leicester had fished there for years.

Edward Russell, a boatman, said he had worked on the Canal forty years. Had fished with nets and lines in St Mary's parish, during that time, without asking leave and without interruption.

James Walton, framework knitter, said he had fished in the Canal from a boy, without interruption. Fishing there was considered a birthright in Leicester.

William Baker, framework knitter, said he had fished uninterruptedly in the Canal for thirty years. Storer Taylor, framework knitter, corroborated.

Mr Flewker suggested that the opinion of the Recorder should be taken upon the case, which was agreed to by Mr Inglesant on behalf of the Association. The defendants were then bound over to appear on the 16th July, and the Court, which was densely crowded during the hearing of the case, was speedily cleared.

111 August 11 1866

COUNTY OFFICE, SATURDAY

NEWTON HARCOURT **Thomas Whittle**, boatman, Mountsorrel, was charged with stealing a purse containing £1 10s 1 1/2d from a boat at Newton Harcourt on the 2nd inst, the property of **William Brooks**. Prosecutor said he was a boatman and lived at Long Buckby. On August 2nd he was on the canal at Newton Harcourt with his boat, coming to Leicester. **Thomas Painter** was steering the boat. Before they left London, prisoner came to him and asked him if he would let him ride to Mountsorrel. He agreed to do so, and prisoner came with them. When he got to Foxton he missed his purse and a sovereign and a half sovereign in it, and three half pence loose. There were in the boat himself and Painter, the prisoner, and the engine driver, **John Edwards**. Told Painter of his loss, and when he got to Leicester he gave information at the Police Station. Had not seen prisoner since till he saw him in that room. The purse produced was his property. Thomas Painter said he was a boatman and left London on Monday night in company with William Brooks, the captain, and John Edwards, the engine driver, and the prisoner as steersman, on the Grand Junction boat. When they got to Foxton he saw prosecutor go to bed – the prisoner was then with the driver in the engine hole. While prosecutor was asleep, he saw prisoner go into the cabin and unhook Brooks's trousers and lay them down. He then began to mend his own trousers. When they got to Newton lock, prisoner got out of the boat and said he was going to Kilby Bridge, and if he were not there, he (witness) was to blow the whistle ; but they did not see prisoner. PC Chapman deposed that he apprehended prisoner at his father's house at Mountsorrel on Thursday, and told him the charge, to which he made no reply. Searched him and found the purse he produced, and 1s 6d. Asked him if 1s 6d was all he had, and he replied, “Yes ; I changed half a sovereign at Kilby Bridge and bought a pair of boots, and gave half a crown for them, and I've been robbed of some of the money”. Committed for trial at the Sessions.

112 August 11 1866

TWO CHILDREN DROWNED On Tuesday, an inquest was held in the parish of St Margaret, upon Reuben and Edward Weston, deceased. Charlotte Weston said she was the wife of Benjamin Weston, Britannia Street, framework knitter. The deceased, Reuben Weston, was nearly ten years old, and Edward was about six months. On Monday afternoon, Reuben was nursing Edward, and about two o'clock she saw him go out of the back door with Edward in his arms, into Burley's yard. She heard no more of them till about a quarter of an hour afterwards, when they were brought home apparently dead, having been found in the water in the public wharf yard. Mr Denton and Mr Blunt came and tried to restore life, but without success. **William Gilbert**, a boatman, said he was in the Wharf yard between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, when he saw a little child in the water close to the side of the basin. There was a boat of Mr Field's moored to the side, and the child was between the boat and the wall. As soon as he saw the child he shouted, and Mr H Flude came running down, and then he pulled the child out and laid it on the bank, and said to Mr Flude, “This little child could not walk to get in, and it must have been thrown in by someone”. Another young man then came up, and either he or Mr Flude said, “Why, there's another child under the boat”. Someone got into the boat, and with the hooked shaft laid hold of the child, and he caught hold of it and got it on the bank. The children were then identified as Weston's, and he assisted in taking them home. He did not see how they got into the water, having just come into the yard, but there were a good many children playing in the Wharf yard at times. Verdict, “Accidental death”.

113 August 11 1866

BOATMAN DROWNED On Thursday the 2nd inst, an inquest was held at Snarestone before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on **William Bayliss**, deceased. **John Randall** said : I am a boatman at Coventry, and work for Mr Goode of that place, coal merchant. The deceased came from a village in the neighbourhood, the name of which I forget, and he was about 21 or 22 years old. The deceased and myself had been in a narrow boat of Mr Goode's at Oakthorpe for a load of coal, and we left there between 12 and one yesterday and came to the tunnel at Snarestone about four o'clock. When we got to the tunnel mouth, we took the horse off as usual, and deceased gave me a feed of corn to give the horse to eat, while I took him over to the other end of the tunnel to meet the boat when it came through the tunnel. Deceased remained in the boat to push it through the tunnel. He had a shaft about seven or eight feet long, and the usual way is to push it against the bottom of the tunnel. I went over to the other end of the tunnel with the horse, and I looked into the tunnel and saw that the boat had not got far into it instead of being three parts of the way through. It is about three hundred yards long. I remained at the end of the tunnel perhaps about ten minutes, and I looked in again, when the boat seemed further off than at first. I then called out as loud as I could to deceased two or three times, but received no answer. I went to the cottage close by, and told the woman there I was afraid my butty had got into the tunnel, and just then two empty boats came to the end, and I got into the first one to go through the tunnel to see what had become of him. When I got to my boat, I found it just going out at the far end, the wind having blown it back, but deceased was not in it. I got in and looked about, and saw deceased's hat five or ten yards off the boat and just outside the tunnel, and then I made sure deceased had fallen overboard and was drowned. A search was made for the body of the deceased, and it was found in about an hour afterwards. Deceased's shaft was found sticking upright in the mud about three boats' length within the end deceased entered at, and I think he must have been standing on the hatchway, where the side of the boat is about a yard high, and his shaft having stuck fast, he was pulling at it and fell overboard. Verdict, "Accidental death".

114 August 25 1866

TAMWORTH COUNTY COURT, MONDAY Before Mr Welford, Judge

William Edkins v I Humpherson and H Harris

This was an adjourned action brought by the plaintiff, who is a boatman, to recover the sum of £10 for assault and false imprisonment against the defendants, the former of whom is clerk to Messrs E and I Nock of the Tame Valley Colliery, and the latter the Glascote police-constable. Mr T Argyle appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Edwards Wood for the defendants. The case was this : on the night of the 22nd February last, Messrs E and I Nock had several loaded trucks of coal near the Glascote basin ; **William Deville**, a boat loader in the service of that company, on coming to work next morning, found that a quantity of coal had been abstracted from one of the trucks ; and from information he received, he was led to believe that plaintiff was the guilty party, and communicated with his employer to that effect. The defendant, PC Harris, was immediately apprised of the robbery, with instructions to pursue Edkins, who had left the basin on the morning after the robbery, and take him into custody. The officer followed the plaintiff to Castle Bromwich, and there took him into custody on the charge of stealing the missing coal. The plaintiff was locked up from the Friday till the following Monday, and was then released on bail. On Friday the 9th of March, plaintiff was tried at the Tamworth County Petty Sessions, charged with stealing 10 cwt of coal, value 4s 6d, the property of Messrs E and I Nock, and discharged ; hence the present action. Mr Argyle, having briefly stated his case at the last sitting of the Court, Mr Wood now replied, saying he had witnesses who would testify to having seen Edkins take the coal on the night in question ; all Mr Humpherson did was to give notice to the police of a felony, leaving it to them to exercise their discretion in bringing the offender to justice. The steps taken by the defendants were, he thought, perfectly justifiable under the circumstances. The public liberty and the private property of no individual would be safe if the defendants were thus to be held liable in the discharge of a duty which they owed, the one to his employer and the other to the public. Mr Humpherson did not give

the party in charge, but merely gave information to the police to go after the person suspected ; the policeman then took every precaution in first examining a boat loading with stone near the wharf, before going after Edkins. Similar actions to the present, he was happy to say, were of rare occurrence, as they produced a very detrimental effect on the public ; for if a man is robbed, and puts the law in motion, he ought not to be liable to an action of this kind. Such a procedure would tend to an immunity for crime without parallel if such an action as the one now brought by plaintiff was enforced. For the defence, he called Mr John Humpherson, who said he was clerk to Messrs E and I Nock of the Tame Valley Colliery Company. On the night of the 22nd February, his employers had several trucks of coal on the wharf at the Glascote Basin. From information he received, he gave PC Harris instructions to take the man Edkins into custody for stealing coal. At the magistrates' meeting, at which Edkins was tried, he asked for an adjournment of the case for the production of witnesses, who were unavoidably absent, which application was refused, and Edkins was discharged. He did all in his power to get the witnesses present, but no subpoena or summons had been issued to bring the witnesses to the Court.

Emma Peugh stated that she had charge of her father's boat, which was loading at the Glascote Basin, with stone. She knew Edkins, and on the night of the 22nd February saw him between eight and nine o'clock take the coal in question in his arms, from the truck, and carry it to his boat ; her sister was also present and saw the occurrence. She told the circumstance to her father when he came to the boat at nine o'clock, in the presence of her sister, and acquainted her mother with it next morning. PC Harris asked her some questions about the thief next morning, and searched the boat, but found no coal, when she related to him all she had seen the previous night. She could not attend at the trial of Edkins at the Tamworth Police Court, having gone with the boat to London. By Mr Argyle : She never asked Edkins to give her any coal. **Lucy Peugh**, sister of the above, corroborated. **William Peugh**, father of the last witness, said he belonged to Wolverhampton. He remembered on the evening of the 22nd February last, when he came to the boat, his daughter informed him of having seen Edkins taking coal from the trucks of Messrs E and I Nock. It was a fine moonlit night, and anyone standing on his boat could have seen the coal taken from the truck, which was but a few yards distant. Witness saw Deville next morning, who told him between twenty and thirty cwt of coal had been stolen, and at his request he searched his boat, as did also the policeman afterwards. Whilst the boat was being searched, his girls informed PC Harris and Deville of their having seen Edkins take the coal. PC Harris said, from information he received, he followed Edkins to Castle Bromwich, and after looking over his boat for the missing coal, charged him with stealing the coal and took him into custody. He used his best endeavours to obtain the attendance of the witnesses Emma and Lucy Peugh at the magistrates' meeting, but was unable to do so. He thought he had reasonable cause in taking Edkins into custody from the information he had received. If he had not done so, he would have been liable to have been dismissed from the force. William Deville said he was a boat loader at the Tame Valley Colliery Company at the time of the robbery ; he left the trucks packed so that he could tell if any coal was stolen. On coming to work next morning, he immediately missed a quantity of coal, and being informed by the Peughs that they had seen Edkins take it, he informed PC Harris and his employers of the occurrence, who immediately took steps to bring Edkins to justice. Edkins's boat was loaded with the Kingsbury Wood coal, which is very soft, whilst their coal is very hard ; no one unused to coal could distinguish one coal from the other. The boats are not always gauged and paid for at the Canal Company's office ; they should be gauged and paid for before they leave the basin, which it was his duty to perform. A man named **Summerfield** is the person who should do the same duty for the Kingsbury Wood Colliery Company. He remembered having loaded Edkins's boat once with the Tame Valley coal. At one time, he had no gauge, when he guessed the weight. The trucks were all six and eight tons, and generally had the weight ticketed on them. This concluded the case for the defence.

William Edkins, re-examined, said his boat was loaded soon after six o'clock with the Kingsbury Wood coal, on the night of the 22nd February last, and he went to bed with his family soon after seven. His boat was deeply laden, and if 30 cwt more coal had been put on, it would have sunk.

His boat on the above occasion was gauged for 21 1/2 tons ; he had carried 24 tons in the same boat ; but at that time had canvas nailed round the sides, which prevented the water coming in. Sometimes the boat would roll the water a foot up the canvas ; he was paid by the voyage, and therefore it was no benefit whatever to him to steal the coal. After taking the evidence of plaintiff's wife and John Summerfield, his Honour said his impression was, from the evidence adduced, that the defendants had sufficient cause to set the law in motion. The question was a very important one; he should therefore take time to consider his verdict, which he would communicate to them in the course of a few days.

115 September 15 1866

TAMWORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 7 **Thomas Cox**, boatman, was charged with assaulting **Henry Thomas** at Bodymoor Heath on the 22nd August. Complainant deposed that he was toll collector to the Birmingham Canal Company at Kingsbury Locks. He was in his office on duty on the above date. At 5.30 pm, Cox came in the office, and told him he was a long time in making his ticket out, and abused him disgracefully. After a few words had passed between them, he ordered him out of the office, when defendant struck witness a severe blow on the face, which knocked him down. He afterwards challenged him out to fight. Fined £1 and £1 1s costs, or one months imprisonment with hard labour.

116 December 1 1866

INQUESTS

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN On Monday last, an inquest was held on the body of a man named **Henry Dennis**, a boatman residing at Barrow, sixty years of age. **Frederick Pallett** said he was a boatman and lived at Leicester. He knew the deceased quite well. On Saturday week, he arrived at Sileby lock, between two and three in the afternoon. The deceased arrived there at the same time with another boat. The deceased came from his boat to my boat in order that he might ride down to the next lock, to get it filled ready for his boat. After the deceased got in, our boat came out of the lock, and as the deceased was walking along a plank on the side of the boat to pull the line over the foot bridge there, the chain which holds the mast in its proper place gave way and struck him on the arm, and knocked him off the plank into the water. The smack which holds the windlass barrel was out of repair, and that caused the chain to give way. It had done the same the night before. His cap came up against the boat after he fell in, but he never saw anything more of the deceased. There was quite a flood at the time. Stopped the boat as soon as he could, and dragged for him for some time, but without success. Afterwards went on to Mountsorrel and gave information of the accident. The deceased had been used to boating all his life, and he was perfectly sober when the accident occurred. The body was afterwards found on the following afternoon, about 100 yards from the place where he fell in. A witness named Francis Brooks assisted in the recovery of the body. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and recommended that the smack, if not already repaired, should be immediately seen to by Mr Pepper, the owner ; and that he be immediately informed of the same.

117 December 8 1866

TAMWORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 30 **Jacob Welsh** and **John Dawson**, both boatmen, were charged with unlawfully taking a rabbit from a snare belonging to Charles Bailey. From the evidence, it appeared that the defendants were passing along the canal when they heard a rabbit cry out, and immediately proceeding in the direction of the noise, discovered it in a snare. They took possession of it, and were caught in the act. The charge not being pressed, the defendants were discharged on payment of costs.

118 January 19 1867

FATAL ACCIDENT ON THE ICE AT MOIRA An inquest was held on the 15th inst at Moira, before J Gregory, Esq, coroner, on the body of Arthur Smith. The deceased, who was fourteen years

of age, was the son of John Smith, a collier. On Sunday afternoon he went with two boys named Shuttlewood and Parker to slide on the ice of Barratt Pool at Moira, and being more venturesome than the others, he walked further on the ice than they did, and although he was admonished by his companions, he kept venturing on until the ice broke in and he fell into the water. Shuttlewood handed him a stick and tried to pull him out, but as the ice kept breaking in towards them, they were obliged to leave hold of the stick and run to Mr Parker's for a rake. When Shuttlewood returned, the deceased had sunk. The body was recovered about two hours afterwards by a boatman named **Dash**, who said the ice where it was broken in was only about the thickness of a penny, and the water was only three feet deep. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

119 February 16 1867

TAMWORTH – MAGISTERIAL On Friday the 8th inst, before Messrs C Garnett, G Skey and Captain Stewart, **Robert Hargill**, boatman, was charged by George Wise, under gamekeeper to Sir R Peel, with trespassing in pursuit of game on land belonging to Sir Robert at Drayton, on the 1st instant. From the evidence of the keeper, it appeared he was on his watch when he saw defendant put a dog out of his boat, and send it into the fields adjoining the canal, where a number of hares were feeding. The dog pursued several, and the defendant went to help to catch them, but was unsuccessful ; and the keeper then made his appearance and put an end to the pursuit. He refused to give his name, and the police were sent after him. Fined £2 and 25s costs, or two months imprisonment. The money was paid.

120 March 2 1867

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

ALLEGED ROBBERY Eliza Wilford was charged with stealing a pocket book containing a cheque for £7, and a purse containing £2 16s, from the person of **Thomas Jones**, on Saturday night. Prosecutor said he was a boatman and lived in Russell Street. On Saturday night, he met prisoner against the corner of Bond Street, near a wine shop. She asked witness to treat her, but he refused to do so, and then she asked him to take her into the Porter's Lodge. They went round the corner together, and up Freeschool Lane to the corner of Union Street. They stood talking together about five minutes. She asked him to give her something, and he replied that he did not want to have anything to do with her, but he gave her 6d out of his purse. He replaced the purse in his left hand trousers pocket, and they stood talking together a few minutes, against the palisades at the bottom of Union Street. He felt prisoner take his purse out of his pocket, and missed his pocket book from his inside coat pocket at the same time. He had his pocket book safe when he met prisoner. When he felt prisoner's hand in his pocket, he collared her and shouted for the police. She endeavoured to get away, but he lifted her up and carried her into Union Street. Whilst he was bringing her along, he heard someone say they had picked up his purse and pocket book. Met a policeman near High Street, and gave the prisoner into custody. The purse and pocket book produced belonged to him. There was a cheque for £7 on the Leicestershire Bank in the pocket book, which he paid away yesterday. William Gibbons said on Saturday night he heard cries of police in Union Street, and on going to the place he saw prosecutor and prisoner scuffling together at the bottom of the street. Asked prosecutor what was the matter, and he said prisoner had robbed him of about £10. She asked any female present to search her. Prosecutor picked prisoner up in his arms and carried her about thirty yards. He then set her down, and as soon as he did so, witness heard something drop on a cellar grate. When they moved on he saw something lying on the grate. He picked it up and found it was a purse. Told prosecutor he had found the purse, and just then two other men came up and said they had found the pocket book. They all came towards the Police Station, and met a policeman near Cart's Lane. At the station, witness gave the prisoner up to the policeman. Edward Brown said he heard the cries of police, and saw prosecutor and prisoner together. He picked up the pocket book near some palisades, and followed the parties up Union Street. Gave the pocket book up to prosecutor at the station. PC Pemberton said he met prosecutor carrying the prisoner in his arms. Took her into custody on the charge of picking prosecutor's

pocket. PS Timson said he was on duty at the station when prisoner was brought in. Received the purse and contents from Gibbins. Saw the witness Brown give prosecutor the purse. In reply to the charge, prisoner said, "He gave me 6d, and that is all I know about it". Prisoner now said she never took the purse ; but that the prosecutor gave her 6d for an improper purpose, and wanted her to go to a wine shop. Committed to the sessions.

121 July 27 1867

TAMWORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **John Lloyds** of Draycote, Derby, boatman, and **George Purcell**, engine driver of Fenny Stratford, Bucks, both in the employ of the Grand Trunk Canal Company, were brought up, charged with attempting to defraud the Midland Railway Company by travelling from Derby to Tamworth without having previously paid their fare. One of the prisoners had no ticket, and the other had a ticket from Derby to Burton, and had come on to Tamworth with the same. The prisoners, who arrived at Tamworth by the 1.19 am mail train from Derby, refused to remain at the station until the arrival of the station master, whereupon the porter on duty communicated with the police, and Sergeant Longdon with PC Gilbride went in pursuit, and caught them after a smart chase of two miles, the prisoners intending to join their boats at Fazeley. They were both discharged on paying 5s excess fare and 5s 6d expenses.

122 August 10 1867

DEATH FROM DROWNING AT MOIRA On Friday week, an inquest was held before J Gregory Esq, coroner, at Moira, upon **Daniel Seymour**, deceased. **Ann Humphrey** said she was twelve years old. Deceased was four and a half years old, and the son of **John Seymour** of Oxford, boatman. She went with Seymour's boats, which had been lying in the canal at Moira for some time past, in order to be loaded with coal. There were three more children with the boats besides deceased. They had got the boats loaded on Wednesday afternoon, and were about to start off that evening. She was in one of the boats about half past three, and deceased was in it also. His mother was in the other boat which lay alongside. She went out of the boat at that time to go to Mr Shakespeare's for some butter, leaving deceased alone in the boat playing with the cabin door. She got back again in about half an hour, when her sister met her and told her deceased was missing, and wanted to know whether he had been with her. As he had not, it was supposed he had fallen out of the boat into the water ; and **Daniel Masters** and other boatmen dragged for him, and found him almost directly between the boat and the bank. He was quite dead. His father was in a coal waggon by the side of the boat. His mother sent her for butter, and knew deceased was alone in the boat when she left. Daniel Masters said he had a shaft in his hand for the purpose of pushing one of his boats off, when he heard the last witness say something about deceased's cap being in the water, and as he was missing, she asked him to feel for him with the shaft. He did so, and found deceased between one of their boats and the bank. Some men came up and he was pulled out, and means used to restore animation, but without effect. Verdict, "Accidental death".

123 October 2 1867

DEATH FROM DROWNING AT CONGERSTONE An inquest was held at Congerstone on Tuesday last, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Joseph Measures**, a boy between five and six years old, who was drowned in the canal near the village. The deceased was the son of **Thomas Measures**, a boatman living at Measham. On Monday last, the father was bringing a boat load of coal from Oakthorpe Colliery to Congerstone Wharf. Whilst moored at the wharf, a waggoner, who was crossing the canal bridge with a waggon load of wheat, asked him if he would lead the forehorse over the bridge. He consented to do so, and went ashore to lead the horse, leaving his son, who was the only other person in the boat, sitting across a plank in the middle of the boat. On his return, about five minutes afterwards, he missed his son, and on looking into the canal he found his cap floating on the water. He jumped into the water and searched for him, but he could not find him. He then got a drag, and after dragging about for more than an hour, he found the body and got it out. It was supposed that deceased had got to the edge of the boat during his

father's absence, to play with the water, and had accidentally fallen in. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

124 October 19 1867

LEICESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

STEALING WEARING APPAREL **Henry Knight** (21), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a pair of trousers and a waistcoat, value 7s, the property of John Knight, at Loughborough on the 31st of July last. He was sentenced to six calendar months imprisonment.

STEALING MONEY **Thomas Parker** (19), boatman, was charged with stealing three sovereigns, a half sovereign, a silver watch and a silver chain, value 30s, the property of **Samuel Humphries** at Moira on the 16th of September, and pleading guilty was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.

125 October 19 1867

TAMWORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY OCTOBER 11 **Edward Jennings**, boatman, was charged with embezzling £1 19s 9d, the moneys of his master, Mr Richard Greenhill of Cleveland Street, Birmingham, on the 3rd inst. The prosecutor stated that prisoner was employed by him to fetch a boat load of coal and slack from the Amington Colliery near Tamworth, and that he gave him £2 7s 6d to pay the necessary expenses of tonnage &c. The next he heard was that the boat had been stopped at Cudworth for tonnage. He went there, and found that prisoner had absconded, taking with him £1 19s 9d of money belonging to him. He gave information to the police. **Martin Cassidy**, driver of the boat horse, said they had been to Amington and obtained their load, and were returning, and when at Kettlebrook, prisoner left him saying he was going to purchase provisions &c, and he was to go on slowly and he (prisoner) would overtake him, but he never did. When he got to Cudworth, he was stopped for tonnage, and left his boat and reported the matter to his master. T Walters of the Birmingham Police Force, proved apprehending the prisoner. He was committed for trial at the Warwick Quarter Sessions.

126 February 1 1868

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29 **Richard Garner**, boatman, was charged with unlawfully passing by a certain chain, which was locked, with his boat, on the Leicester Navigation Canal at Loughborough on the 19th inst. Mr Gibson, the Canal Company's agent, attended, and explained that the chain was drawn across the canal during certain hours on Sundays to prevent boats from passing, and the present case was brought in order to convince boatmen that they would not be allowed to pass the chain during the restricted hours. Defendant was in charge of a steamboat, and because the agent refused to allow him to pass, ran his boat against the chain and broke it. Defendant did not appear. The case was adjourned for a fortnight, as there was a doubt whether the right person was summoned, Mr Gibson not being sure whether defendant was in the boat at the time or not.

127 February 22 1868

BANKRUPTS **John Brittan**, Fiskerton, Nottinghamshire, boatman.

128 February 29 1868

POURING BOILING WATER ON A FAMILY At Bolton on Monday, a man named **Richard Barrow** was charged with wilfully scalding his wife and two children. The prisoner is a boatman, and the occurrence took place at Blackrod, near Wigan. He entered the cabin of the boat late on Saturday evening, in a state of intoxication, his wife and children being then in bed. She reproached him with his conduct, on which he deliberately took the kettle off the fire and poured its boiling contents upon them. The wife was badly scalded on one side of her face and arms, but the poor children sustained the worst injuries ; the youngest, a baby only twelve months old, lies in a dangerous condition. The prisoner was remanded to await the result of the injuries.

129 February 29 1868

SUICIDE IN LEICESTER On Monday, an inquest was held in the parish of St Margaret, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, upon **Hannah Powell**, who had died on the previous day in consequence of taking laudanum. **Elizabeth Powell** said : Deceased is my mother. She was the wife of **Thomas Powell** of Foundry Lane, boatman, and was 54 years old. On Friday last, deceased scarcely spoke to any of us. She had been very curious in her manner for the last two or three weeks. I got home about seven that evening, and my mother was at home, and my father as well. A little before eight, she went out without speaking, and came back in a quarter of an hour or rather more, and sat in the house. A little before nine, she went out again without saying where she was going, and she returned in about half an hour. I left her in the kitchen and went upstairs to make a bed, and when I came down again, she was just going out of the back door into the yard. I had a very bad headache and lay down on the sofa, and in about half an hour, as she had not returned, I went into the yard to look for her, taking a light with me, and found her in the closet. She was sitting on the seat, and there was a small ale glass on the seat by her side. I asked her what she was doing, but she seemed stupefied and made no answer. I led her into the house as well as I could, and on the way I found the bottle produced lying in the yard. There was a label on it, on which were the words, "Laudanum, poison. Teear, Belgrave Gate". My father was then gone to bed, and we called him down, and I and my sister Martha went to Mr Teear's to enquire what quantity she had had, and we found three pennyworth. I then went to fetch a surgeon, and Mr Thompson came down and saw her. My mother appeared to get better till about three or four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, when she changed for the worse, and died about three on Sunday morning. She had been subject to fits for upwards of thirty years. We perceived a change in her manner ever since last Christmas, but more particularly so during the last two or three weeks. She had been silent, and when we got in from work she would leave the room, as though we had done something to offend her. I have been subject to the same kind of fits as my mother ever since I was born. I never knew her to be in the habit of taking a drop of laudanum. Mr Thompson, surgeon, said : The last witness and her sister called upon me a little before eleven o'clock on Friday night, and wished me to go and see their mother, who they informed me had taken, as they believed, three pennyworth of laudanum. I went, and found her in a partially insensible state, very drowsy, with the pupils contracted, and suffering severely from the effects of narcotic poison. I pursued the usual means in such cases in order to relieve her, and remained with her till about six in the morning, when I had to leave for a time. I saw her again between eight and nine, when she appeared better, and when I saw her at one that day, she was so much recovered that I thought she was in a fair way of getting over it. About five the same afternoon, I saw her again and found her not so well, and after nine she seemed about the same, but comatose and stupid. About eleven or a little after, I was sent for again, and I found her decidedly worse, and about three in the morning I was informed of her death. She survived about thirty hours after taking the poison, and I have no doubt her death is due to an overdose of laudanum. Her fits were, no doubt, caused by some diseased condition of the brain, and if a person continued to be attacked by them, the brain would become more and more weakened ; and from all circumstances, I am of opinion that the deceased took the laudanum when her mind was impaired and weakened from the effects of the fits she had been so long subject to. Verdict, "Insanity".

130 March 28 1868

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY MARCH 21 **Thomas Gilbert** of Mountsorrel, boatman, was charged with being drunk and riotous at Loughborough, in the Rushes, on the 28th inst. Admonished and discharged on paying the costs.

131 May 2 1868

SUICIDE OF A YOUNG WOMAN AT LOUGHBOROUGH A most determined act of self destruction was on Sunday committed by a domestic servant, named Sarson, whose father resides in the Orchard, Ashby Road. Deceased's father, it appears, has married a woman much younger than himself, and there seems to have been some misunderstanding between wife and daughter as to

which should be mistress at home. Nevertheless it is most extraordinary that the lass should go to the extreme of drowning herself ; as, according to evidence, she must have done, by leaping into the canal near Berrington's lock. Her body was got out of the river about ten o'clock on Sunday night, and conveyed to the Albion Inn, where an inquest was held over the body on Tuesday, before Mr Harrison, deputy coroner. Thomas Blood, who was returning from Normanton, where he had been fulfilling duties as local preacher, heard a noise in the water like a struggling, and on approaching the part where the sound seemed to proceed from, he thought he perceived the form of a man, but the struggling had ceased. He ran for assistance, and found a man, whom he did not know, and they went and got the body out. William Sheppard, labourer, deposed to being called up by Blood, and following him and a man named Walton and assisting to recover the body. Elizabeth Yeomans, wife of William Yeomans, bricklayer, Mill Street, said the deceased, Fanny Sarson, had been residing with them, and had not been well since last November. She (deceased) was thirty years of age last December. Last saw her about eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when witness and deceased had some words about the latter having beat one of her (witness's) children. She was subject to St Vitus Dance, and had heard her say she would make away with herself when suffering from disease. John Sarson, deceased's father, was next examined, who deposed to seeing his daughter about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, but had never heard deceased say anything to lead him to believe she meant to destroy herself. **Sarah Bexon**, wife of **Charles Bexon**, a boatman residing on the canal bank, said she saw the deceased walking slowly along the towing-path alone, about half past nine o'clock on Sunday night. The jury, without retiring, returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

132 August 29 1868

SUTTON CHENEY – ACCIDENT **Mr Thomas Lee**, parish clerk, who is the keeper of Sutton Wharf, was roused up early on Thursday morning by some boatmen to wind up the chain which crosses the canal, that they might pass through. In answering the summons, Mr Lee, who is far advanced in years, fell downstairs and broke his thigh near to the hip.

133 September 12 1868

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5 **William Butlin**, boatman, was charged with having, on September 3 at Moira, killed **Edward Brain**. Committed to take his trial at the next Assizes.

134 September 12 1868

FATAL FIGHT AT MOIRA On Thursday the 3rd inst, a boatman from Henshaw named **Edward Brain**, lost his life in a fight at Moira. An inquest was held on the deceased before J Gregory Esq, coroner, when evidence was given by **Joseph Beauchamp**, a boatman of Oxford, and Joseph Bye of Challern, Bucks, the seconders of deceased and his opponent, **W Butlin**. From the evidence, it appeared that deceased and Butlin quarrelled and fought on Wednesday night, and agreed to finish the fight the next morning. On Thursday, deceased called upon Butlin and asked if he was ready, but the latter said he did not want to fight, and began to cry. Deceased added that he could kill Butlin if he came out. He then stripped and he, with twelve or fourteen others, went to an old brick field, where Butlin also stripped. The two then fought two rounds, and in a struggle fell, deceased underneath. In the fall, deceased's head came upon a brick. The combatants were lifted up and commenced a third round, in which blows were exchanged on the chest, but deceased then fell, and said, "I have done ; the back of my head is so bad". He never spoke again, but being removed into the shade by his friends, died in a few minutes. Dr C Wall, who examined the deceased, found there was extravasation of blood on the brain, which he considered to have been caused, in all probability, by the fall on the brick in the second round, and to which he attributed the death of the deceased. The jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter against W Butlin", and he was committed for trial at the next assizes.

135 **October 5 1868**

FOUR CHILDREN SHOT IN LEICESTER A wanton and cruel case of shooting occurred in Leicester on Thursday afternoon. The teachers and children of the Bishop Street Sunday School held their usual holiday – it being the Races – on Thursday afternoon in a field near the Abbey Meadow, which abuts on the canal. Between four and five o'clock, a boat passed the field, which was steered by a youth named **Charles Mitchell**, who stated that he belonged to Cleethorpes and was seventeen years of age. As the boat passed the field, the teachers heard the report of a gun, and found four of the children, named Edwin Brown, Emma Food, Arthur Bull and John Shelton, had been shot. The children were taken from the field, and Dr Crane, who happened to be passing at the time, conveyed two of them in his carriage to the surgery of Mr C R Crossley. The boy Brown was found to be the most seriously injured – one shot had entered just under his right eye, another had penetrated the ball of the left eye, one of his teeth was gone, and nine shots had entered his cheeks. The other children had each received a portion of the charge in the face, but their wounds were of a less serious character. The boatman, when taken into custody, stated that the children threw stones at him as he passed, and that as they took no notice when he told them to desist, he shot at them. He was brought up at the Town Hall yesterday, when he was charged with shooting Edwin Brown, and the following evidence was taken :-

John Annis, teacher in Bishop Street Sunday School, said he was with the scholars in a field, near Mr Wheeler's factory, yesterday. Heard the report of a gun between four and five o'clock, and also heard shots go through the factory windows. A boy named Edwin Brown came up with his eyes bleeding. Witness caught hold of him, and saw prisoner in a boat on the canal, and saw him drop a gun into the cabin. Witness and another person followed the boat. Prisoner was steering. The other person jumped on the boat and witness went on to Belgrave and waited till the boat came up. Asked prisoner what he shot for, and he said the children threw stones at him and he shot at them.

John Ballard, parish constable at Belgrave, said he received prisoner in custody from the last witness, who charged him with shooting a boy. Prisoner said, "Is the boy dead?" Witness said he did not know, and prisoner then said he would pay the doctor's bill. He told prisoner he must go with him, and he came away very willingly. Gave him in charge to PC Whitmore. A medical certificate from Mr C R Crossley was read, stating that the boy was quite unable to attend, and prisoner was remanded for a week.

136 **October 31 1868**

BOROUGH SESSIONS

SHOOTING AT CHILDREN **Charles Mitchell** (16), boatman, was charged with unlawfully and maliciously wounding Edwin Brown on the 1st of October 1868. Prisoner pleaded not guilty to the charge. Mr Jacques for the prosecution ; Mr Inglesant for the defence. John Annis said, on the 1st of October last, the children of the Bishop Street Sunday School had a holiday on Mr Wheeler's ground adjoining the canal. He was a teacher in the Sunday School. He heard the report of a gun, and on turning round, saw the boy Edwin Brown was bleeding from the wounds he had received. He then saw the prisoner, who was steering a boat on the canal, with a gun. He went after him, and asked him what he fired the gun for. He replied if anyone was hurt he would pay the doctor's bill. Told him that would not do, he must go to Leicester with him. He replied he did not know the gun was loaded, and on trying it the second time, it went off. He saw the boy was wounded in two or three places. Edwin Brown said he was 12 years of age, and on the 1st of October, the school children had a holiday. He was playing at football, and some of the children were throwing and skimming stones in the water to make "bubbles". This was before the boat came up. He heard the report of a gun, and found that he was wounded. Hugh Skelton, a boy 7 years of age, said he was playing with the other boys on the race day. He was playing at football, and the other boys were throwing stones in the water. He saw a boat come along the water, and when the boat got up to them, he saw prisoner in the boat. Heard prisoner say, "If you don't leave off, I'll put this into you". He saw that he had a gun in his hand. He afterwards found that he had received gun shot wounds about the head and other parts of the body. Charles Bass said he was present when the gun was

fired, and saw the prisoner take a gun from his shoulder, and it was smoking. He shouted to the boy who was driving the horse attached to the boat to stop, as the prisoner had shot a boy. Prisoner shouted, "Go on, it's all right". He then followed the boat until it got to the locks. He (witness) jumped into the boat and went down into the cabin and saw prisoner. Asked him what he shot the boy for. He replied, "Is he dead?" I told him I did not know, he was very ill when I left him. He then said, "If he lives, I'll pay the doctor's bills, and if he dies, I suppose I must have the rope, that's all". He afterwards said he did not know the gun was loaded ; that he did not think the gun would carry so far ; that he did not think he could aim straight enough ; and that he thought the shots would have gone over the boys' heads. Asked him what he had done with the gun, and he said he had put it in the cabin. The gun was fetched up, and he found the barrel was warm. Prisoner was then given into the custody of the Belgrave parish constable. John Bollard, parish constable at Belgrave, said the prisoner was given into his custody, and he charged him with shooting the boy. He said, "Is the boy dead?" PC Whitmore of the Leicester force received prisoner in custody from the last witness, and on charging him with shooting the boy, he said, "If the boy lives I'll pay the doctor's bill, I can do no more". Robert Robinson, assistant to Mr Crossley, surgeon of this town, said the boy was brought to his surgery on the 1st of October, and he found he had received wounds in several parts of the face and body. Probably he might never see again from the right eye, owing to the injuries he had received from the discharge of the gun. This being the whole of the evidence, Mr Jacques made some remarks in support of the prosecution ; Mr Inglesant then replied for the defence, after which the jury returned a verdict of guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to six calendar months hard labour.

137 December 19 1868

LEICESTERSHIRE WINTER SESSIONS

CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER **William Butlin** (18), boatman, was charged with the manslaughter of **Edward Brain** at Moira on the 3rd September. Mr Jacques conducted the prosecution, and Mr Merewether defended prisoner. **William Dawson** said he was a boatman living at Oxford. On Monday August 31, he went to Moira with a boat for coals. Knew prisoner and the deceased well, and saw them both there on September 2 in a public house, having some beer. When witness went out of the house, they were fighting in a field near the house. They were parted, and he saw them again the next morning, when they were differing with each other. Deceased went to prisoner and asked him if he meant to fight it out, but prisoner said he would settle it in a quart of beer. Deceased said he did not care which way it was, and the prisoner said he would sooner have some beer than fight. Deceased said they had better go and fight it out, and went into his boat and took off his shirt. He then came out and called to Butlin to come on, and they went into the field to fight, and deceased stood with his arms folded whilst prisoner stripped. They then fought three rounds. After the second round, the deceased complained of being giddy, and in the third round they exchanged blows, and deceased fell and never spoke again. Did not see prisoner strike deceased just before he fell. They had closed together, and deceased fell from prisoner's arms. As he fell to the ground, deceased said, "I can't ; I can't ; I'm done". They carried him away, and he only lived about ten minutes. By Mr Merewether : It was a very hot day, and they carried him under the canal bridge for the draft of air. Deceased staggered a few yards away from prisoner and fell forwards. Deceased had been drinking a day or two, and was very quarrelsome. When deceased came out of the boat to fight, the prisoner shed tears, and said he did not want to fight. The night before, a man named Whitehouse struck deceased in the public house, and deceased fell with his head on the bars of the grate. **Joseph Beacham**, boatman, said he was at Moira, and saw the deceased and the prisoner fighting in the field, and gave a similar account of what occurred. Christopher Hall, MD and surgeon, Swadlincote, said he was called to see deceased, and examined the body. He made a *post mortem* examination subsequently, and found the most serious injuries were on the left temple and over the left eye. The most serious external injury was on the right side of the head at the back. The cause of death was extravasation of blood on the right hemisphere of the brain, caused in his opinion by the blow at the back of the head. The

injury would be caused, in his opinion, by coming in contact with some very hard substance. There was no wound, only a bruise. Prisoner's statement was read, in which he stated it was all deceased's fault, he would make him fight. Mr Merewether briefly addressed the jury on behalf of the prisoner, contending that in all probability death was caused by the fall on the grate. His Lordship said if that were the case, and the encounter in which prisoner engaged had shortened the deceased's death one minute, then prisoner had been guilty of manslaughter. The jury found prisoner guilty, and strongly recommended him to mercy. Mr Merewether called the attention of the court to the fact that the prisoner had been three months in prison. His Lordship sentenced the prisoner to one day's imprisonment, and as that commenced yesterday, he would be now discharged.

138 December 26 1868

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY DECEMBER 22 **James Pinnock**, surveyor of the Grand Union Canal, charged **James Gadd**, boatman, with breaking a lock off one of the gates at Foxton. Mr Rawlins appeared for defendant. This case was adjourned a fortnight ago, as there was only one magistrate present. Today, Mr Pinnock said he had received instructions to withdraw the case, and wished to do so. Mr Rawlins asked for the expenses of his client, as he had again come a considerable distance to defend the case, and he was ready to do so. The defendant's costs, £1 02 5d were allowed, and the other costs, 6s 6d, were also paid by the complainant.

139 January 23 1869

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH COUNTY COURT, THURSDAY JANUARY 14 **Bale v Bird** – Claim 5s, damage done to a boat line. Plaintiff and defendant are both boatmen on the Eaveshouse and Hinckley Canal, and their boats recently came into collision with each other. To avoid any serious injury, the line was severed by defendant. Mr Wilson of Burton, who appeared for defendant, in his cross-examination of the plaintiff, elicited that the rope had been spliced, and was still as serviceable as ever. The case was dismissed.

140 February 27 1869

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

NEGLECT OF FAMILY **John Malin** was charged with neglect of family. W D Smith said defendant's wife and child became chargeable on December 15. They were living in a yard in Crab Street, and were destitute. He ordered them into the Union, and they had been chargeable ever since. He had been to the house, but could not find defendant. Defendant was a boatman. His wife was confined on November 9, and they gave her relief out, and buried the infant, which died. PC H Smith said he apprehended defendant on a warrant at Newbold-on-Avon, about two miles beyond Rugby. He was driving a boat horse on the canal side. Read the warrant to him, and he said he expected someone after him. Defendant said he had sent money to his sister for his wife all the while he was in work, and was not aware that his wife was in the House till his sister sent him word. He had sent 26s altogether. One months hard labour.

141 February 27 1869

BODY OF A CHILD FOUND On Tuesday last, an inquest was held at Hemington, near Kegworth, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of an unknown new born male child, which was found floating in the canal near Sawley Lock by **Joseph Turner**, boatman, on Saturday the 13th instant. The child when taken out of the water was wrapped up in a piece of cloth, and was in a very decomposed state, having apparently been born about three weeks. The medical evidence went to show that the child had taken some slight inspiration during the progress of delivery, but was not born alive. The surgeon saw no appearance of violence, but the body was so much decomposed that it might not be detected. The jury returned a verdict of "Found dead" and no evidence to show that it was born alive.

BODY FOUND IN THE CANAL On Friday last, the body of a youth was found floating in the canal against the Lock at the North Bridge by a boatman, who went and informed Mr Hawksworth

of the North Bridge Inn of the circumstance and he, with PC Bancroft, recovered the body and moved it to his house. On enquiries being made, it was ascertained that the deceased was the illegitimate son of a servant named **White**, and was employed with a boatman named **Joshua Baker**. On the 22nd, White was left in charge of his master's boat at the North Lock in Leicester, and on Baker returning to the boat he missed deceased. Baker afterwards made enquiries of the boy's aunt at Wigston, where he had previously resided, but hearing no tidings of him he began to fear he was drowned, and information was given to the police. On Saturday an inquest was held at the North Bridge Inn in the parish of All Saints, on the body of deceased, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, when a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

142 April 10 1869

COUNTY OFFICE, SATURDAY

GREAT WIGSTON **Thomas Marlow**, boatman, Leicester, was charged with damaging a live fence, the property of the Union Canal Company, to the amount of 2s, on March 10. Mr Owston appeared to prosecute. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was fined 16s 6d, including damages and costs, or 10 days hard labour.

143 June 26 1869

MELTON MOWBRAY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY (Before Rev G E Gillett and Major Claggett, H C Woodcock and W A Pochin Esqs) **James Draper** and **William Turner**, boatmen, Melton, were charged by PC Farmer with drunkenness at Thrusington on the 17th inst. Fined 5s each and costs.

144 July 10 1869

ATTEMPTED MURDER NEAR HANLEY A most horrible and determined attempt to murder was perpetrated on Saturday morning at Etruria. The would-be murderer is **Thomas Vaughan**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Williamson, coal and iron masters, Golden Hill, and the victim is his wife **Emma**, who was about 15 years of age when he married her, and who is only 29 now. She has two children, who have been living on the boat with their parents ; and only three weeks ago her husband, by his ill-treatment, brought on a premature confinement. On Friday the boat was at Longport, where Vaughan had been staying on a two days drinking "bout", and was taken on by the children to Etruria. The wife walked on from Longport late on Friday night, and came up with the boat at Etruria Locks. The husband, who was in the cabin, on seeing her, declared he would kill her, and took up a windlass handle (an iron key carried in every boat for the purpose of opening the locks) and struck her with it on the head several times. He again declared he would "do" for her, and said if he could have dragged her out of the boat he would have drowned her. She fell upon her knees and begged him to spare her till morning. He rejoined he would kill her, and put her head into a stove of the cabin, remarking that if there had been any fire in it he would have burnt her to death. As she lay upon the floor, he got upon the hatches and kicked her violently on the throat and lower part of the face. She screamed, "Murder", and someone coming up, she managed to get away from the boat and drag herself to the house of Mr Glass, the canal inspector, who had her conveyed to the Infirmary. The injuries she had received were pronounced by the house surgeon (Mr Taylor) to be very dangerous, and it was deemed necessary to take her deposition. On Saturday, the Mayor (Mr Taylor), with the Magistrates' Clerk and Superintendent Barker, went to the Infirmary for that purpose. The poor woman presents a most horrible spectacle. Her eyes were puffed up so as to almost exclude sight, a terrible gash ran across her cheek, and her face and head generally were a mass of bruises. The sight was too much for one of the officials engaged in taking the deposition, and he fainted ; while his Worship himself found it necessary to retire for a short time. The husband, who was apprehended at Stoke about 8 o'clock on Saturday morning, was present, and appeared utterly indifferent to everything that was going on ; in fact, on coming into the presence of his wife, he gave a sort of chuckle on seeing her. She made a statement in which, besides what is given above, she said her husband struck her with the windlass ; he looked about for a grass hook

(or hay cutter) and said if he could find it he would cut her head off. She also said that her son was in the cabin while this was taking place, and that he was in great fear of his father, who had ill-treated him. She was married to the prisoner fourteen years ago at St Mary's, Wolverhampton. He had but recently returned from seven years penal servitude for horse stealing. She was tried with him, but acquitted. She made a statement against him at the trial, and ever since he had borne her spite. The poor woman added that she did not think she should recover, and that she was dying. The prisoner was remanded.

145 September 4 1869

SUDDEN DEATH IN LEICESTER On Saturday last, an inquest was held before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Mary Chater**. It appeared that the deceased, who was 21 years of age, was the wife of a boatman, and lived in Great Holme Street. On Friday she was in her usual health, and at night ate a hearty supper of beef and pickles. In the night, however, she was taken ill, and called up a neighbour who summoned further assistance, and some brandy was administered. They remained with her some time, and then left her in bed somewhat better. About six o'clock on Saturday morning, one of the neighbours went to see how deceased was, and on going into the room found her under the bed, dead. Dr Sloane was called in, and was of opinion that deceased died from the rupture of a blood vessel near the heart. A verdict of natural causes was returned.

146 January 1 1870

TOWN HALL, TUESDAY

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **Joseph Fipkin**, boatman, was charged with assaulting PC Joseph Moore on Sunday December 26th. Complainant said he was on duty on the Bow Bridge on Sunday afternoon, and found defendant drunk and disorderly. PC Bancroft caught hold of defendant first, and defendant struck at him several times, and was very violent. He went to Bancroft's assistance, and defendant kicked him over the legs. They put the handcuffs on him and took him to the station house. He was very violent at first. PC Bancroft said he heard a noise in the Bow Bridge Inn yard about five o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and went in and turned defendant and several more out. When defendant got out, he said, "You ----, if that's what you mean, here's at you", and struck at him several times. Moore came to his assistance, and defendant kicked Moore. Defendant said he knew nothing about it, and if he had done anything wrong he was sorry for it. Fined 10s, or seven days imprisonment.

147 January 1 1870

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY DECEMBER 24 **Joseph Reed**, boatman of Berkhamstead, was charged by William Robinson, butcher, Ashby, with stealing from his shop a beast's heart, on Thursday December 23rd. Fourteen days hard labour.

148 May 28 1870

MARKET BOSWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY MAY 25 Amos Barsby, gamekeeper to Sir A B C Dixie, charged **John Giddins**, boatman, with trespassing in search of game and conies upon land in the parish of Market Bosworth on the 23rd inst. Complainant said he was out watching on the day named, and saw the defendant catch a leveret. He threw it into his boat. But witness went and demanded it, and he produced it there today. Fined £2 and costs, or one months hard labour. The money was paid.

149 August 13 1870

CASTLE DONINGTON

FATAL ACCIDENT On Saturday morning last, August 6th, an inquest was held at Castle Donington before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Sarah Davis**, widow. Mrs Taylor said : Deceased was my great aunt, and she lived with me and my mother. She was the widow of **Thomas Davis**, a boatman, and was 79 years of age last May. On Thursday, I was in the back yard

about eight o'clock in the morning, and I heard a noise in the house. I ran in to see what it was, and I found my aunt lying on the floor at the bottom of the stairs, with her feet on the stairs. She lay perfectly senseless, and there was a pool of blood against her head. I did not meddle with her, but called to my assistance neighbours William James and Frederick Millard, who came and removed her to a sofa. We sent for Mr Smith, surgeon, who came at once. My aunt lived about half an hour after her fall. She was alone in the house at the time of her fall, and had gone upstairs for the purpose of dressing, to attend the club of which she was a member. The stairs are straight and steep, and the floor on which she fell was brick. She was subject to giddiness, of which she had recently complained ; in other respects her health was good, considering her age. Mr John Smith, surgeon, said : I was called in to see deceased, and found her on a sofa, still breathing, but the bleeding had ceased, and she died in a few minutes. I found an extensive wound on the back of her head, and from her bleeding from both ears, the skull must have been fractured across the base. I have not made a *post mortem* examination. My first impression was that a fall could not have caused such extensive injuries, but on looking again at the stairs, which are very steep, I think it probable that the deceased became giddy and unconscious, and lost all power of attempting to save herself. She was a stout heavy woman. Verdict, "That the deceased died from the effects of an accidental fall downstairs".

150 September 3 1870

DEATHS At Hinckley : On the 27th ult, Caroline, infant daughter of **Thomas Bird**, boatman.

151 September 10 1870

MOIRA

DEATH FROM DROWNING On Thursday the 1st inst, an inquest was held before J Gregory Esq, coroner, at Moira, upon **George Darley**, deceased. **William Darley** said : I am a boatman, and came from Knapton in Northamptonshire, and deceased, who was turned 11 years of age, was my son. I arrived at Moira on Saturday last with my boat of coal, and yesterday morning I took it to the limekilns. Deceased was with me, and had been in the habit of going with me for the last three years. I left my boat lying in the canal about 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon to go to get a letter written for me, and deceased was then in it and alive, and I told him to take care of the horse which was on the towing-path. Between two and three hours after, I heard he had been drowned. He could not swim. He was always a careful boy. John Morehead said : I am a collier and live at Moira. Yesterday afternoon, between three and four o'clock, I was by the side of the canal on the opposite side of the towing path against the limekilns, when I saw deceased on the deck of a loaded boat tying a rope from one side of the boat to the other, to make a plank safe which runs along the boat. He was down on his knees at the rope to tighten it, when he rose rather on his feet to tighten it, and his feet slipped and he fell backwards over the side of the boat into the canal. He tried all he could to save himself, and I called to a woman who was on the same side as he was to get assistance. The woman called out, and her husband and two more men came. I went round as quick as I could get, but the boy had then sunk. I went to fetch a drag and, on my return, found he had been got out, and was being taken to Mr Hugh's, the Roydon Arms. I had called to deceased a few minutes before he fell in the canal, and had cautioned him to be careful and not slip in, as the water was very deep there. He was then doing something with the rope. He said he should not slip, and I said no more to him, There was a horse belonging to the boat on the towing-path. PC Joseph Garratt said : I saw the last witness running round to get on the towing-path yesterday afternoon. I went to see what was the matter, and found that there was a boy in the canal. I sent for the drags, and the body was found in the course of about half an hour, dead. Deceased had sunk before I got up. Verdict, "Accidental death".

152 March 25 1871

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A BOATWOMAN On Tuesday last, an inquest was held in the parish of St Mary, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, upon the body of **Jemima Johnson**, aged 33 years. **Henry**

Johnson, boatman living at Northampton, said deceased was his wife, and used to accompany him on his travels with boats. On the 10th inst, she was assisting in bringing two empty boats from Harborough down the canal into Derbyshire, for coal. The boats were behind each other, and were drawn by a horse. His wife was steering the first boat, and had done so all the way from Foxton Locks. About twelve o'clock on the day in question, he was driving the horse, and the boats were coming out of a lock just above Blaby, called the Brush Lock, and his wife was in her usual place in the steerage of the first boat. Just as it got about half way out of the lock, he heard his wife scream out, and he stopped the horse and ran back to the boat, where he found her in a sitting position on the top of the cabin which joins the steerage, and the line which attached the second boat to the first had got round her leg and thrown her back on the cabin. She told him that the rope caught under the cabin door, and that she was pulling it to throw round the pins which hold it, when it caught her round her leg. He found that the bone of deceased's leg had come right through her stocking, and he placed her in the cabin and brought the boats on to Blaby Wharf, where he got a conveyance and brought her to the Leicester Infirmary. Mr A W Moseley, assistant house surgeon at the Infirmary, said deceased was admitted on the 10th inst, suffering from a compound fracture of both bones of the right leg, with considerable bruising of the surrounding soft parts. She appeared to get gradually worse, and died on Monday from the shock and exhaustion, the result of the injuries. Emma Worthington, head nurse at the Infirmary, said deceased had been under her care ever since her admission. She told witness that she considered it quite an accident, and attributed it to the horse being a fresh one. Deceased said she had a child with her at the time. Verdict, "Accidental death".

153 June 10 1871

MELTON PETTY SESSIONS, JUNE 6 **James Draper**, boatman, Melton, was charged by PC Holloway with drunkenness at Melton on the 24th ult. Fined 5s and costs 9s 6d.

154 June 24 1871

MELTON PETTY SESSIONS, JUNE 20 **Henry Matlock**, boatman of Mountsorrel, was charged by William Hives, miller of Asfordby, with allowing his servant, **Thomas Whittle**, to wilfully neglect to shut the lower gates of Asfordby Lock on the navigation canal, in the parish of Frisby, on the 11th inst, before he drew the cloughs of the upper gates of the said lock, contrary to the Act of Parliament of the said navigation canal. T Whittle, boatman, was charged by the same person with committing the offence on the day in question. Fined £1 5s each, including 14s costs, in each case.

155 July 1 1871

LEICESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

STEALING PORK, &c **George Hardy** (22), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing 2 lbs of pork, 4 lbs of bread, 1/2 lb of cheese and 1 oz of tobacco, together of the value of 2s 6d, the property of John Woolley, at Kegworth on the 12th day of June last. Sentenced to 12 months hard labour.

156 July 29 1871

FATAL QUARREL On Tuesday, an inquest was held at Mountsorrel, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, upon **James Draper**, deceased. **Henry Mattack** said : I am a boatman and live at Mountsorrel. I knew deceased, who worked for me. He was, as I am told, about 45. I was at Leicester on Sunday morning last, the 23rd July, with an empty boat, and I left with it to go to Mountsorrel between six and seven. Deceased and a man named **William Burbidge** were in the boat, and I drove the horse. They had both of them drink overnight, and they had some in a bottle on the boat, which they drank on the road. When we got to Belgrave Bridge, deceased and Burbidge got arguing one with another in a noisy way, and when they got to Birstall they challenged one another to fight. They got out of the boat and had three or four rounds on the grass. I begged of them to give over, and they did so, and got into the boat again. Deceased put some ale out of the bottle and gave it to Burbidge, and asked him to drink, and he did so. In about ten or twenty minutes, however, they began differing again, and they had a round in the boat, and I told them they

were two fools, and would go and hurt one another with falling. They gave over, and drank together again. Just before we got to the junction lock, they quarrelled again, and had another round in the boat, and that was the last they had. Both appeared very drunk. I did not perceive that either of them was much hurt. Burbidge bled from the nose. Deceased steered the boat after that, but before we got to Mountsorrel he ran it on the bank, and I took the horse out, and left deceased and a man named Thomas Myring in it. He had got in at Belgrave, about two miles from Leicester, in the evening. I and some others went and got the boat down to the lock at Mountsorrel. They called to deceased, who was in his sleeping place in the boat, and he looked out and spoke in the usual way. I advised him to get up and wash himself and put a clean shirt on, but he said he would lie a little longer, and we left deceased and Myring in the boat, and I never saw him again alive. The next day about twelve o'clock I heard from Myring, who was on the wharf, that deceased was in the boat, and that he had tried to stir him up, but that he could not, and that he only groaned. I went to the boat and looked under the beam where his sleeping place was, and I saw him lying on his face upon a bag and some straw. I tried to stir him and he would not, and I made an alarm. I said I believed he was dead, and several men went to him, and he appeared to be dead. A doctor was sent for, and Mr Wright and Mr Paulson were the first who came, and deceased was brought out and taken to Mr Whitehouse's. When they fought the last round, a man named Tuckwood had got into the boat. He did not interfere. After the round was over, deceased lay still a few minutes, but whether it was from the effect of drink or from being hurt I cannot say. I never saw Myring interfere. He was not in the boat at the time. I never saw any kicking. Thomas Myring corroborated. John Smith said : I am a builder at Mountsorrel. I was in my garden about nine yesterday morning, which joins the river, and Mattack's boat was close to it. I saw deceased lying on his face under the beam, and he was breathing hard and snoring. Myring was in the boat at the time. I saw no more of him till about twelve, and I then saw him lying in the same position, but with his elbows raised, as though he had been trying to push himself up. I went to him and felt him. He was quite warm, but I did not hear him breathe. He was not taken out of the boat until some time afterwards, and he was then dead. W Paulson said : I am in partnership with Mr S Wright. I and Mr Wright were called to see deceased in a boat about two yesterday. We found him dead, and he had been so from two to three hours. He was conveyed to his house. In consequence of an order to that effect, I and Mr Wright made a *post mortem* examination this morning. Externally we found considerable marks of violence. There were several large bruises, one on each temple and one on each side of the ribs. There were several abrasions on the face and nose. I saw his shirt, which was bloody. On examining the skull we found a considerable quantity of blood effused on the right temple, and on raising the skull cap we found large clots of blood upon the brain, and some effusion into the ventricles. The lungs and heart were both healthy. The cause of death was pressure upon the brain caused by the clots of blood. It was caused by the rupture of vessels on the surface of the brain, and I have no doubt it was the result of external violence, such as blows or falls, or both. William Burbidge made the following voluntary statement : We were never at variance, always friends. We were together on Saturday night late, and I took Mattack and deceased to my house. They were the worse for liquor. I locked the boat and put the things by. Both slept at my house. They got up between six and seven, and deceased said he would go home by the train to Melton, but he was too late, and I said I would go down in the boat a little way, and I did. There was a bottle of beer in the boat. I went with them as far as below the junction. Draper and I quarrelled, but not with the intention of doing harm to one another, and I went back home. I left the boat at the Paper Mills, where deceased began to steer. That was between eleven and twelve. The jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against William Burbidge, and he was committed for trial on the coroner's warrant, and removed in charge of the police to Loughborough.

[Note : Name is shown as Henry Bastock not Mattack on the Assize record]

157 August 12 1871

TOWN HALL, FRIDAY AUGUST 4 **John Riley**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit condition. Superintendent Choyce said, on Thursday evening he found

a horse at the North Locks in charge of the defendant. It was attached to a boat belonging to the Grand Junction Canal Co. He examined it and found wounds on both shoulders. Mr Bailey, veterinary surgeon, proved that it was cruelty to work the horse. Defendant said he acted under orders – there were other horses in the same condition. Fined £2 and 19s costs, or 21 days imprisonment.

158 August 12 1871

WEEKLY MORTALITY IN LEICESTER

Deaths registered for the week ending August 5 38

Ditto for corresponding week of last year 64

Average for corresponding week of last ten years 50

But if the increase of population is taken into account, this number would be augmented to 57. The return therefore shows a decrease of 19 upon the average mortality of the last ten years.

The following is a selection of the number of deaths from important special causes :-

Zymotic diseases : Smallpox 1, measles 1, scarlatina 2, enteric fever 1, diarrhoea &c 8

Diseases of uncertain site : Cancer 1

Scrofulous diseases : Consumption 5

Diseases of nervous system : Paralysis 2, convulsions 1, other diseases of brain and spine 2

Diseases of the organs of circulation : Diseases of heart and blood vessels 1

Disease of the respiratory system : Bronchitis 1

Diseases of digestive organs : Disease of liver 1, other diseases of stomach &c 2

Childbirth : 1

Diseases of children : Teething 1, atrophy and debility 2

Old age : 2

Deaths from violence : Accidents or negligence 2

Other causes : 1

J WYATT CRANE, MD, Officer of Health

159 September 16 1871

DEATHS At Melton on the 11th inst, **James**, son of the late **Mr James Draper**, boatman, aged 2 months.

160 December 9 1871

LEICESTERSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER **William Burbidge** (52), boatman, was indicted for the manslaughter of **James Draper** on the 24th of July. Mr Jacques prosecuted, and Mr Merewether defended prisoner.

Henry Bastock [Mattack ?] said he was a boatman and lived at Mountsorrel. Prisoner and the deceased man (Draper) worked with him for some time. On the 22nd of July he, prisoner and Draper brought a load of granite to Leicester, and unloaded on that day. On the following morning, they started back between six and seven o'clock. Witness attended the horse, and deceased and prisoner were in the boat. They had some beer with them. At Belgrave, deceased said he should not go any further, as he was going home to Melton. When they got to Belgrave bridges, the prisoner and the deceased began to quarrel. At Birstall Locks, they challenged each other to fight, and went out and had three or four rounds. He did not see that deceased was injured. They got into the boat again, and appeared to be good friends, the deceased pouring prisoner a "tot" of ale out. At Thurmaston Locks they quarrelled again, and had a "round" in the boat, when both fell together. When they got below the lock, they began to fight again in the boat. They afterwards sat down, and were peaceable until they got to the Junction Lock, when they began to fight again. The deceased was knocked down and fell to the bottom of the boat, and lay for a few minutes, as though injured. He went to deceased's assistance and got him up, and he appeared all right. At Cossington Lock, Burbidge went away. When near Mountsorrel, the boat was run on to some flags by the deceased.

He (witness) then took the horse away and left the boat. A man named Myring got on the boat at Belgrave Lock. He left Myring and the deceased on the boat at twelve o'clock on Sunday. By Mr Merewether : Saw deceased next morning. He was almost dead then. They were about three hours going from Belgrave Lock to Cossington. Prisoner wanted the deceased to give over fighting once. Witness and Draper slept at prisoner's house on Sunday. Thomas Myring said the first fight took place at Birstall Lock, and the prisoner's nose bled. He then corroborated the above witness's testimony, and added that on Monday morning about ten o'clock he saw deceased, who was then groaning very heavily. William Pallson, surgeon practising at Mountsorrel in partnership with Mr Wright, said he was called to see the deceased about one o'clock on Monday morning. Deceased had been dead several hours when he saw him. He made a *post mortem* examination subsequently, and found extensive bruises on his head and on the side of the neck. On moving the scalp, he found two clots of blood on the brain. He considered the cause of death to be effusion of blood on the brain, consequent upon rupture of the blood vessels in the head. His Lordship here informed Mr Jacques that there was no evidence to show whether deceased died from blows or falls. Upon the case as presented, his Lordship held that there was no evidence to go before the jury, and a verdict of Not Guilty was then returned. The prisoner was accordingly acquitted.

161 December 16 1871

TOWN HALL, WEDNESDAY

DISHONEST BOATMEN **Joseph Burgess** and **Paul Pickering**, two boatmen, were charged with stealing 1 3/4 cwt of bones, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company. It appears that the prisoners were in charge of 2 1/2 tons of bones consigned from London to Leicester on the 1st December. At Leicester, the bones were delivered, and it was found that 1 3/4 cwt were missing. Information was given at Derby, where the prisoners were found offering bones for sale, and they were taken into custody and brought to Leicester. Remanded till Monday.

[Note : name shown as Samuel Pickerill in the next article]

162 January 6 1872

BOROUGH SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **Joseph Burgess** (26), boatman, and **Samuel Pickerill** (40), boatman, to stealing 196 lb of bones, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company on the 4th December. The first named prisoner was sentenced to six calendar months hard labour, and the last named (who had been previously convicted of felony) was sentenced to twelve months hard labour and to two years police supervision.

163 May 11 1872

ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT BIRMINGHAM On Thursday afternoon, a boatman named **Whitehouse**, from Hereford, was charged at Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, with brutally assaulting his wife and endangering her life. A policeman hearing screams, ran to the boat and found defendant's wife covered with blood, and Whitehouse violently assaulting her. Upon the officer interfering, defendant thrust him away, and threw his wife into the canal, from whence she was rescued in a lifeless condition. Whitehouse was sentenced to six months imprisonment. Upon hearing the sentence, Mrs Whitehouse cried out loudly and fainted in court.

164 August 31 1872

AYLESTONE

FOUND DROWNED Mr Gregory, coroner, held an inquest at Mr Stable's public house on Monday morning, on the body of Frederick Johnson, whose body was found on Sunday morning near St Mary's Mill, under the following circumstances. **George King**, lock-keeper, Aylestone, said that about six o'clock on Monday morning he was going down the river with a pair of fly boats. One of the boatmen directed his attention to a body floating in the water about 100 yards above Mary's Mill. Witness borrowed a drag and a rope from the boatmen and pulled it out. It was

afterwards removed to the Union Inn, Aylestone. It appeared to have been in the water several days. Elizabeth Squire Johnson, who resides in Raglan Street, Leicester, said the deceased, Frederick William Johnson, was her husband, and was book keeper to his father, William Johnson, a shoe manufacturer. He was 22 years of age. She last saw him alive at ten minutes past two o'clock on Tuesday. He complained of his head, and said he had been making mistakes with his books all that morning. He had been before the Borough Magistrates that same morning, as a witness against one of his father's men, Samuel Greatrix. This put him about very much, and quite unnerved him. He could not eat any dinner on the Tuesday, and had taken very little for a day or two before. She put a pillow on the couch and he lay there a short time. He gave her 5s before he went out, and said that was all he had. She shouted after him when he left not to be late in coming home, and he said that he should be back early. He did not come back, however, and she heard from those at the warehouse that he had said that he might go out of town for a week, as he did not know what to do. When he did not return, she supposed he had gone somewhere for the purpose of not appearing before the magistrates on the Friday, when Greatrix was to be brought up on remand. She tried to content herself as well as she could, for his friends said he would return. The watch found on his body had stopped at twenty minutes to three o'clock. He was a steady man and a good husband, but was nervous and subject to headache. William Smith, clicker, said he was in the employ of deceased's father. He had known deceased a long time, and for about three months he had complained of pains in his head. The last time he heard him complain was at his father's warehouse, on the Tuesday morning. He seemed much put about by having to appear at the Town Hall. He was a very nervous young man. On the Tuesday morning, he had said he hardly knew what he was doing, for he had been making several mistakes. He told witness that he thought he should go out of town for a week, and it might do his head good. Witness left him at the warehouse at one o'clock that day, and never saw him afterwards. All the work people did think he had gone to the country for a week. Jane Ogle, who lived next door to deceased, spoke to seeing deceased on the Tuesday, and to hearing him complain of his head. An open verdict was returned.

165 March 14 1874

SPRING ASSIZES – CROWN COURT, FRIDAY

THE WISTOW POACHING AFFRAY John Lewin Taylor, alias Didlum, described as 28 years of age and by trade a shoe finisher, was indicted for killing and murdering Thomas Monk at Wistow on the 30th July 1873. The prisoner, who appeared in the ordinary dress in which he appeared before the magistrates, pleaded not guilty.

Mr O'Malley, in stating the circumstances of the case, explained that deceased was head gamekeeper in the employment of Sir Henry Halford Bart of Wistow Park in the neighbourhood of Leicester ; but had retired and was succeeded by his son, who would be called as a witness ; and both lived in a cottage near the Hall. On the morning of the 30th July – a strange time for poachers to be out – about five o'clock, the deceased was wakened by the discharge of firearms, and roused up his son and the gardener, Enos Atkinson, to his assistance, and all proceeded in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded. They saw some men in a field, went towards them as well as they could without showing themselves, and soon came comparatively near them. They observed two of the men sitting upon a stile, and endeavoured to get up to them. The poachers then disappeared, and the gamekeepers soon afterwards heard more shots some distance off ; proceeded in that direction, and at last almost came up to them. The poachers next proceeded in the direction of a bridge. Now, during the greater part of the time up to that moment, the gamekeepers had remained so far concealed that though the poachers were able to see that they were being followed by men, yet they were unable to ascertain the precise number. Now it appeared that the gamekeepers were adopting that course which, certainly so far as the learned counsel's own experience went, was most creditable to them. It appeared that the best course gamekeepers could pursue under such circumstances was to keep near the poachers, but trace them as far as they went until they had made themselves entirely acquainted with their persons ; ascertain their names and addresses. Their great object ought to be to avoid coming into contact with the poachers. Now the

gamekeepers in this instance seemed to have exactly pursued that course ; they did not close with the poachers, but kept them steadily in view, and followed them up as they retreated towards the bridge. At length the poachers made a stand, and endeavoured to drive the gamekeepers off by throwing stones at them. However, the gamekeepers still held on, and came at last into the open field, where their number was fully displayed, and the poachers then perceived that there were only three men in pursuit. These were armed in this way ; one of them, the deceased man, held a double barrellled gun, which had changed hands in the course of the morning, and which his son thought was loaded ; the other two were armed with flails. The four poachers had between them two guns ; and he was not sure what other weapons they had ; they had also two of those game bags which poachers required for the purpose of their work. As soon as the gamekeepers got well into the field, two of the poachers laid their bags down upon the bridge, and took up a quantity of stones. The whole of the four, who were thus armed with guns and stones, then returned into the field where the gamekeepers were, a distance of from fifty to eighty yards, threw their stones, and eventually came within two or three yards of the gamekeepers. The latter then had no alternative but to defend themselves ; they accordingly closed with the poachers, a struggle ensued, and it was in the course of the contest that the deceased met his death. Now the precise manner in which the deceased was killed remained in obscurity ; and it would be his duty under these circumstances to throw as much light upon it as he could. He had had the matter investigated, and the results of that investigation, which would be stated, led to the strong inference that one of the causes by which deceased met his death was a shot from his own gun. That would appear very probable in the course of the case, and therefore it would have been wrong to have withheld it from the consideration of the jury. The gardener would tell them that he was attacked by one of the men, felled to the ground, sustained most severe wounds and injuries, and rendered totally insensible. However, he would also state that before he was struck down, he heard the deceased's gun go off ; but he knew nothing whatever of what was going on about deceased, being fully engaged in defending himself. The son of the murdered man could not give them other than a very confused representation of the matter, but he saw his father felled to the ground ; observed his father's gun in the hands of one of the poachers, who had previously handed his own to another of the party. The deceased was by this time covered with wounds and blood, being not only shot through the thigh but severely beaten about the head. Indeed, whether they were caused before or after the firing of the fatal shot, the doctor would tell them that the blows about the head would in themselves have been sufficient to have caused death. When the poachers found that they had levelled the gamekeepers to the ground, they retreated, and their pursuers were of course unable to follow them. The poachers were unknown to the gamekeepers previously and, with the exception of the prisoner at the bar, none of them, so far as could be ascertained, had been seen since. The learned counsel then proceeded to explain that whether the deceased was shot with his own gun or by the gun of one of the poachers, and whether the gun went off in the struggle or was deliberately aimed and fired at the deceased in the course of the murderous assault, did not matter in the slightest degree so far as the criminality of the prisoner was concerned. It was the duty of the jury to look to the purposes of the poachers and their motives in the attack ; not whether the results were merely accidental or really deliberately planned. They would find that the gamekeepers were not seeking to arrest the poachers, and that they did not leave the land of Sir Henry Halford for the purpose of following them. On the other hand, the poachers deliberately returned at least eighty yards upon their track, and made the attack upon the gamekeepers. For what purpose? The jury would have to look to what they did – they disabled and wounded them, independently of the gunshot wound, and inflicted upon them grievous bodily harm. They disabled and wounded the keepers. For what purpose? Could the jury doubt for one moment that in returning to make that attack upon the keepers, they were animated by the desire to do them grievous bodily harm ; by a desire to disable them from persisting in the pursuit. If the jury were satisfied on the point, the learned counsel – subject to the correction of his Lordship – submitted that the poachers were engaged in the perpetration of a felony – engaged in that which independently of the man's death, would amount to a felony. The result of their conduct was that the deceased's life was sacrificed ; and whether it was sacrificed by the gunshot wound in the

struggle which took place at the time, or whether by a gunshot wound the result of an accidental discharge, did not appear to him to be of any consequence whatever ; whether the gun was discharged accidentally or not was a matter of little practical importance. Since the prisoner's apprehension and committal, the two barrels of the gamekeeper's gun had been discovered concealed in the neighbourhood, covered over with slush, mud and filth. Sir Henry Halford, who had a good deal of experience in matters of that description, had seen the gun, and had satisfied himself that one of the barrels was unloaded. As the stock of the gun had been found near the scene of deceased's death, and as there was no doubt that it must have been discharged before being separated, it was evident that the gun must have been discharged on the night of the fatal poaching affray. Such was the evidence which would be laid before the jury on the subject, and it would of course be the right of the learned counsel for the defence to make such use of it as he thought proper. The evidence of the doctors made it extremely improbable, however, that the gun was discharged while in the hands of the deceased because, although the wound in the thigh took a downward course, yet the declension downwards was so slight that it could scarcely have been caused by the barrel of a gun held in deceased's own hand. Now, under these circumstances, if the jury were of opinion that the poachers did attack the keepers with the intention of disabling them and doing them grievous bodily harm ; that they used their weapons while together engaged in the perpetration of that which in the eye of the law was felony, and if death ensued to a fellow being in the prosecution of that intention, it followed that the poachers were legally guilty of murder. It did not matter under these circumstances by whose hand the murder was committed ; the poachers were all implicated, and all together caused the death. It was their concerted action on that occasion, and their concert in the act from which death ensued, that made all principals in the crime of murder in the first degree. Every man present was just as guilty of murder as the man by whose hands the murder was actually committed ; it did not matter which of the men inflicted the fatal wound ; if they were satisfied that the prisoner at the bar was one of the persons engaged, he was in the eye of the law, and certainly in the eye of common sense, he was as guilty of murder as the others. Moreover, it was quite unnecessary for them to ascertain which of the wounds caused death, if death ensued from such wounds as were inflicted in the struggle. Coming to the question of the identity of the prisoner, the learned counsel proceeded to state that Enos Atkinson, the gardener, and one of the men present on the night in question, had a distinct recollection of the face of the prisoner at the bar ; recognised him months afterwards, picked him out from amongst a number of people ; and had no doubt, as he would tell the jury, that the prisoner was one of the poachers engaged in the assault. In such a serious case as that, the jury might naturally have some hesitation in convicting the prisoner upon the evidence of but one witness. However, his statement would be supported by that of others. On the day after the murder, the police, suspecting from what they had heard that the prisoner was one of the men implicated in the attack, went to his house, and found that he had left home. The prisoner, moreover, had never returned to it, and had not from that time up to the date of his apprehension been seen there or, so far as they were aware, in the county of Leicester. Some time in the month of November, he was apprehended by the Derbyshire police on a charge of theft ; and while in custody on that charge, the police were struck by the resemblance between his personal features and a description given of one of the men, described in a bill widely circulated throughout the kingdom, offering a reward for the capture of the four poachers engaged in the fatal affray at Wistow. The result was the prisoner was discharged on the charge of theft, and at once re-apprehended on the present charge of murder. The jury would also find, moreover, in the course of the proceedings, that his own statement while in prison in Derbyshire clearly and explicitly showed him to have been one of the men present when the murder was committed ; proved that he had left that part of the country in consequence of the charge. Now whatever had led him to make such admissions, there they were ; they would be searched into by the learned counsel for the prisoner ; but he (Mr O'Malley) felt no doubt that in the result the jury would find that the statements had been fairly taken. They would not fail to observe, moreover, how accurately, considering how far the prisoner was at the time from the scene, he described the affray. Now, independently of the evidence of the police, the prosecution would produce that of another witness, who had not been

called before the magistrates, but the substance of whose evidence had been communicated some days previously to the prisoner's solicitor. It appeared that the last named witness, while in the prison at Chesterfield on a charge of assault, overheard a conversation between the prisoner at the bar and the police. Some words therein excited his curiosity, and the consequence was that when the policeman had left, the witness asked the prisoner, upon being placed in the cell together, to what they related. The prisoner thereupon informed him ; gave him a full description of the whole case ; explained that he was in custody on a charge of murder ; told him about the deceased being shot, said that he had been shot through the stomach ; and detailed the course he had adopted from the morning of the affray down to that moment. The jury would have to judge for themselves whether or not that witness spoke the truth. If they thought he did, his evidence, with that of a policeman to whom the prisoner had made the admissions, would leave no doubt upon their minds as to the identity of the prisoner. The learned counsel concluded by pointing out that if they were satisfied the prisoner was one of the men who committed the murder, it would be their duty, however painful it might be, to return a verdict of guilty ; and reminding them that if, on the other hand, they entertained any reasonable doubt on the subject, they were equally bound to give him the benefit of it. Mr O'Malley then proceeded to produce the following evidence :-

Enos Adkinson was the first witness called. He said : On the 30th July last, I was under gardener to Sir Henry Halford at Wistow. I knew the deceased, Thomas Monk. He had been in the service of Sir H Halford and lived with his son John at Wistow. Deceased was about 43 years of age. He had been gamekeeper to Sir Henry Halford. On the morning of Wednesday the 30th July, I was called up about four o'clock by John Monk. I went with him to his father's house, and his father came out. We went towards the bridle road to Arnesby. I had a flail, Thomas Monk had a flail, and his son had a double barrellled gun. After we started, I heard the report of a gun, and we proceeded in that direction. Afterwards I saw two men. We had then gone about 300 yards, and the men were 200 or 300 yards off. When we got to the place where I saw the men, they had gone. I had lost sight of them as we were advancing, the fields being surrounded by hedges. I heard the report of a gun, and afterwards two others. When I heard the third report, we went in the direction of it towards the canal. I saw two men afterwards sitting on a stile, and one walking in a field beyond the stile. One of the men on the stile had a gun, but I could not see whether the other had anything. We went towards the stile, and the men moved off. I and Thomas Monk went towards the stile, and John Monk went on the side of the hedge. When we got over the stile, I saw four men about fifty yards off. We proceeded after them. I saw two with guns and two with bags across their shoulders. We continued to advance. The son of deceased had given his father the gun, between the second and third reports of the guns carried by the poachers. When we had got about fifty yards in the field from the stile, the men turned round and threw stones at us for about five minutes. One of the party pointed a gun at me, and one of the others said, "Let the b--- have it". They then walked across the field to the canal bridge, and we walked after them. The poachers went to the bridge, and we were not more than fifty yards from them. I saw the men pick up some stones. They had the bags when they went on the bridge, but they had not them when they came back. The men came towards us and began to throw stones again. They were then ten or fifteen yards from us, and we were not more than ten yards apart. I was on the right, John Monk in the middle, and deceased on the left of him. The men threw stones at us for five or ten minutes, and two of them then set upon me. One had the barrel of a gun, and the other the stock of a gun. I was struck over the left eye by a stone. I knocked the man with the gun barrel down with the flail I had, and I was then knocked on the back of the head, and fell down. I do not know what I was struck with. I could not see what was taking place between the other men, but I heard the report of a gun. This was before I was knocked down, about five or ten minutes after the men had come close to us. From the blow which knocked me down, I became insensible after a short time. When I was on the ground, I was beaten about the back and legs. When I recovered consciousness, the men had gone. I got up and walked towards the deceased, who was ten or fifteen yards from me ; further from the bridge than where I had fallen. He was on the ground, and his son was getting up to go towards his father. When I got to the deceased, I spoke to him, but he made no answer. I put my knee against deceased's back and

held him up, and noticed some blood on his trousers on the left thigh. Deceased's son unfastened his father's trousers and found the wound. I was bleeding at the time. I went to deceased's house and gave information, and then went to the Hall. It was from five to half past five o'clock when the affray took place. I was ill for ten days afterwards, and was confined to the house for four days. I was in bed two days, and was attended by the doctor. John Monk was bleeding when he came to his father. I could see the four men's faces quite plainly. They were strangers to me. It was a bright morning, and the sun was up when the affray took place. It was quite light. The prisoner at the bar is one of the men. Prisoner : Inspector Clarke told you I was one of the men. His Lordship : Don't interrupt. Witness : Prisoner was not one of the two I was engaged with. I saw prisoner the first time they threw stones, and again when the men were coming back from the canal bridge. I was taken to the Leicester police station in the first week in November, and I picked prisoner out amongst a group of six or seven. It was a mile or a mile and a half from Monk's house where the affray took place. By Mr Sims Reeve : We were fighting for about a quarter of an hour. A flail is an unpleasant instrument, and in this instance it brought down a man. In November, Superintendent Burdett told me there was a man in custody at the police station, and he asked me to go to look at him. Mr Burdett said one of the supposed men was at the station, but I do not remember his telling me his name or height. I saw Inspector Clarke at the station when I came out. I saw prisoner in a room with six or seven other prisoners. Their faces were all in one direction, and they were ordered to turn about. When I saw prisoner's back I picked him out ; I thought I should like to see his back as well as his face (slight sensation). I had never seen a bill offering £100 reward, and had not seen a description of the prisoner. All the men had dark clothing on. Wistow is about seven or eight miles from Leicester.

John Monk said : I was gamekeeper to Sir H Halford in July last. On the morning of the 30th July, I was aroused by the report of a gun. I aroused my father, and went and called Enos Adkinson. We went out together. I had a double barrellled gun which I had loaded the previous night ; the other two had flails. I caught sight of two men as they were going through a gate. I pointed out to Mr Beaumont Smith the gates, the stiles and the fields where the affray took place.

John Beaumont Smith was called and said : I am a surveyor, and made the plan proposed from a survey of the ground and the information I got from John Monk and others. There is a red spot on the plan showing where there was a large patch of blood.

[The plans were then handed to the jury for their inspection.]

John Monk, recalled, continued : After I had seen the men going through the gate, I heard another shot, and we all three went in that direction. We saw two men walking up the bridle road to Arnesby. When we went towards where we had seen them, they were gone. I afterwards saw two men sitting on a stile, and one had a gun. My father and Adkinson went up the fence together, and I remained in the ditch to watch them. The men moved off, and went in the direction of the lock house, across the fields. When he got over the fence, I saw four men, and they saw us. The men commenced to run away, and I told them they need not run away as I knew them. This was in the field before they came to the one in which the affray took place. The men turned round and began to throw stones at us. The men pointed their guns at us, and one of them said, "Let it into the b---s". They next turned away and went towards the lock house, and we followed. The men kept on towards the bridge, and when we got to it they were about 30 or 40 yards in advance of us. When they were going through the fields, I noticed that they had two guns and two bags with them. When they went on the bridge, the men picked up some stones and put down their bags. They then turned back into the field and began to throw stones at us. We drew back, and they followed us for some distance. After we had retreated some distance, my father said, "Go into them". I then heard a shot fired. I was in the middle, and my father was a few yards off me. When the shot was fired, I turned and saw my father fall. The poacher who was before my father took his gun out of his hand as he was falling. The poacher passed his gun to another poacher, who struck at my father and broke the gun. The other man struck me, and I was knocked down partially insensible. One of the men struck my father twice on the head with a weapon of some kind or other. I got up when I recovered myself and went to my father. I was much cut and injured. My father and Enos Adkinson were lying on

the ground. I saw the blood on his trousers but not on his head. Enos Adkinson came up, and I unfastened my father's trousers and saw the blood on his thigh. I remained with my father until the cart came to fetch him away. After the affray was over, I saw my father's gun stock a little distance from where he had lain. The gun stock was broken near the hammer. It would require violence to break it. I had an opportunity of seeing the figures and faces of the men. I have seen prisoner, but I do not feel sure enough to identify him. By Mr Reeve : After my father said, "Go into them", we advanced towards the men, and they advanced towards us. It was directly after we had closed that I heard the shot fired from which my father fell. I went to the Police Station to see if I could identify prisoner and five or six other men. I said I believed prisoner to be one of the men, but I would not swear to him. I have said I was not able to pick him out.

Henry Parsons, lock-keeper at Newton Harcourt, said : I live at the lock house, a mile from the bridge. A boatman named **John Woodhouse** passed my house at a quarter to five o'clock, going in the direction of Turnover Bridge. Woodhouse went on before the boat. I went to Turnover Bridge, and got there about a quarter past five o'clock. I heard the report of a gun when I was about 600 yards from the bridge, and also heard voices. When I got 200 yards further on, I saw a man going across a field in the direction of Wistow. The man was staggering. I went on towards the first lock, 60 yards from the bridge, but heard nothing. When I was going from the first lock to the lock near the bridge, a person asked me to go to them. The man was about 50 or 60 yards off in a field. I went to him and found it was John Monk, and his father was lying on the ground near him. John Monk was leaning on his elbows, and his father lying on his back. I did not recognise them when I first saw them, as they were smothered with blood and wounds. I remained with them a few minutes. Deceased wanted some water, and I called out to the men in the boat to bring him some. One of them brought it, and I gave him some. I then went round to my own house and sent for the doctor. I next went to Wistow and ordered a waggon, and met Enos Adkinson. I went back and met the waggon near Turnover Bridge. I noticed the ground, and saw where the deceased had been lying a patch of blood. About an hour after, I went in company with PC Grainger, and found some stones. When I first went to deceased, I saw a gun stock lying on the ground near to him. The gun stock was put into the waggon with the deceased. Some of the stones were close to where the deceased lay, and others a few yards off. They were round large stones. I saw the stones on the bridge, and they appeared to be the same sort.

John Woodhouse, boatman, said : I work on the Grand Junction Canal. I remember being with my boat on the morning of the 30th July. I passed Parson's house at about four or half past four in the morning, and went on to Turnover Bridge. I began to fill the first lock at about five o'clock in the morning, and heard a whistle blow. I saw a gang of men coming across a field – four in the first lot and three in the second. They were 100 yards from the bridge when I first saw them. The men had bags on their backs and guns in their possession. The four men were 30 or 40 yards from the three when I first saw them. The four men came on the bridge, picked up some stones, and turned back into the field to the three. The four men began to throw stones at the three. I passed from the bottom lock to the top lock, and lost sight of them. I saw the largest of the three men point a gun towards the four. When I passed from the top to the bottom lock, the biggest of the four men pointed a gun towards the three. The other men were throwing stones at the time. I lost sight of the men when going from the bottom lock to the top lock for a short time, and heard the report of a gun. When opening the top lock, I saw two out of the three men down, and three out of the four men were ill-treating the others with guns and other instruments. One man was running across the field, and another was following him, having a gun in one hand and a gun stock in the other. I saw the man who was chasing the man running away throw a gun stock at him, but it did not hit him. The man who was running away fell down, and the other man went up to him and beat him with the gun stock, having the barrel in his hand. I could not see the other two men out of the three. The four men then left the three in the field, went to the bridge, picked up their bags, and "went about their business". (Laughter). When the last man was knocked down, I was 130 yards off, but when it first began I was only 30 yards off. The four men had billycock hats on, dark clothes, and one appeared to be wearing an apron. By Mr Reeve : There was nothing to hinder me going across the canal.

John Merriman Fewkes, surgeon of Glenn, said : I was sent for to see deceased on the 30th of July at about six o'clock in the morning. I went to his house, but not finding him there, I went on the road and met him. I examined him, and tried to stop the bleeding. When he got home I examined him further. He had blood all over his face. I found a gun shot wound in the thick part of the thigh just below the groin. The wound was bleeding freely. Deceased was in a state of collapse, but he lived four or five hours after, his body being drained of blood. After death of deceased, I made a *post mortem* examination. The wound penetrated six or seven inches, and some of the shots had passed completely through the thigh. Some portion of the trousers had been carried into the wound, and the shirt was singed, showing that the gun had been discharged close to the body. The wound had completely severed one of the principal veins. The wound was twenty degrees from the horizontal line. It was sufficient to cause death. I have no doubt the wound was received while standing. I noticed two wounds on the outside of the skull. The integuments were cut through. I removed the scalp, and on the upper portion of the skull I found the skull fractured on the opposite side to the wounds. A blow on one side would cause a fracture on the other, or a blow on the top of the head would cause a fracture at the bottom. I examined the brain, and found a tolerably large patch of blood on the brain. The wounds on the head, independently of the gun shot wounds, would have occasioned death. I examined Adkinson, who had a wound on the head and a cut on the eyebrow, and his legs were very much bruised. Adkinson kept his bed for a day or two afterwards. I also saw John Monk, and attended him for several weeks. He had some deep cuts on the eyebrows and on the scalp. They appeared to be cuts made by stones and sticks, or the barrel of a gun. He had been beaten about the legs. Unless he had been carefully attended to, he would have had inflammation on the brain. By Mr Reeve : I do not think if deceased had fallen on some stones the wounds would have been produced.

Inspector W Clarke produced two barrels of a gun he received from Sir H Halford in November last.

Sir H Halford was called and said : I gave the two gun barrels produced to Inspector Clarke. They were given to me by a constable. I know they belonged to my keeper. They were given to me on a Sunday in November last. One of the barrels had been discharged, but the other contained a charge of shot and powder.

John Lord said he found the gun barrels produced in a ditch in a field near Countesthorpe on the 13th September. The place where he found the gun barrels was two miles from Wistow. When he found the gun barrels, they were rusty and dirty.

The Court at this stage adjourned. On resuming,

PC Grainger said : I was stationed at Great Glenn in July last, and on the 30th received information of the affray at about six o'clock. I went to deceased's house and found Thomas Monk in a dying state. I went to Turnover Bridge, and about 60 yards from the bridge in a field, I found the ground saturated with blood. I found six stones, and three small pieces of gun stock. [Stones produced.] Found the stones fifteen or twenty yards from the blood. On the Saturday, I went with Enos Adkinson, and found three stones in the first field where the keepers first came in contact with the poachers. They were marked with bruised grass, as though recently thrown. On the following Monday, I made a further search and found a ramrod near a brook, half a mile from the bridge. I also found a flail in some rushes. I examined the brook and found marks showing that three or four persons had passed over. I traced the marks across the brook into the road near to the Kilby toll gate. The footsteps were going from Turnover Bridge. I found the three pieces of the gun within three yards of where the deceased had lain. I received a billycock hat from John Monk on the morning of the affray.

PS Smith said : I produce a broken gun stock which I received from William Grant. The gun stock has been broken off. I received a second gun stock from John Monk which has also been broken off. I produce 19 shot corns I received from John Monk from a bag.

William Grant, joiner of Kilby, said : On July 30, I was in the field near Wistow side of the bridge, and found the stock of a gun with the lock on it. It was six or seven yards from where deceased had lain. I took it to the constable at Kilby, and gave it to him.

Inspector Clarke said : I have known prisoner 10 or 12 years. In July last, he lived in West Square, West Street, Leicester. On July 30th, in consequence of what I heard, I went to the prisoner's house between one and two o'clock, and found it locked up. I went an hour after and found his wife at home. I went repeatedly afterwards, but could not find the prisoner. I found him in custody at Chesterfield. Prisoner is called Didlum Taylor, but his proper name is John Lewin Taylor. A bill was issued describing him, offering a reward for his apprehension, and it was widely circulated, and search was made for him. On the night of the 8th November, I went to Chesterfield and at 2 o'clock the next morning, I saw prisoner in custody in the lock up. Prisoner is the man described as Didlum Taylor. I received him in custody, and next day conveyed him to Leicester.

Superintendent Oldham said : On the 8th November last, prisoner was in my custody on another charge. I took the bill and read the description to him, and then showed him the bill. He said he had nothing to say about it. On the same day, he went before the Bench, and I withdrew the charge of larceny. I produced the bill and called the magistrates' attention to it, and then charged him with this offence. Prisoner said, "I am the man described there as No 1. My proper name is John Lewin alias Didlum Taylor. I went away, being suspected, but I am innocent". On his being so charged, I asked the magistrates to give me an order to detain him until I communicated with the Leicestershire Constabulary, and they did so. He was in charge of John William Ockford until he was fetched away.

John William Ockford, a police-constable, said : I received prisoner into my custody in November last. There was another person in the same cell with him, named Allen. I saw prisoner in the cell several times, but had no conversation with him. I asked him to make no statement, but he made one voluntarily. He said it was on the 30th July last he and three others were in pursuit of game at Wistow, when they were met by Thomas Monk and two other keepers, and an affray took place. They beat them with hedge stakes and guns, leaving them insensible. He added, "After my return to Leicester, I found Thomas Monk was dead and the police were in pursuit of me. I left the same day for London, where I arrived about midnight. On the next day, I was in a public house, drinking, and a young man who was there, a native of Leicester, knew me from a piece he was reading in a newspaper, saying I and three others were wanted for the murder of Thomas Monk. He said the best thing for me to do was to leave London as quickly as possible, which I did, not working long at a place ; travelling nearly all over England for fear of being apprehended." By Mr Reeve : I left the cell and wrote down the statement. I was locking another prisoner up, named Allen, at the time. I did not caution prisoner. I believe he did it to relieve his mind. As the prisoner made the statement, I thought it my duty to hear it. I had seen a bill offering £100 reward, charging four persons with the offence at Wistow. So long as I didn't ask the prisoner for the statement, I thought there was no harm in hearing it. Prisoner : It's all your own making up ; every word of it".

Thomas Allen said : I am a native of Leicestershire. I was committed to prison at Chesterfield for an assault on November 8th last. I know the prisoner at the bar, and was in the lock up with him. I was present at a conversation between prisoner and Ockford. I heard prisoner say, "When they come to fetch me, put me among half a dozen of others, and see if they can pick me out". When the policeman went out of the cell, I asked prisoner what he had done, and he said he was in a case of stealing leather, but they could find none upon him. I asked him why they did not set him at liberty, and he said they had got a case against him of Wilful Murder. I asked him where it was, and he said in Leicestershire. He told me the place, but I have forgotten it. He said it was some such place as West or Weston. He asked me if I had not seen it in the papers, and I told him I had not, and he said it was in the papers, and "catalogues" put out. I asked him how many poachers there were, and he said four poachers and three keepers. I asked him if they were caught, and he said no ; they ran a distance and then turned round and fell on the keepers. He said one of the poachers shot one of the keepers. I asked him where, but he said nothing, and put his hand to the bottom of his waistcoat. I asked where the other three poachers were, and he said they had gone out of England altogether, and that if he had had the money, he should have gone as well. Prisoner said, they've got me now, and I shall have to stand for the lot. He added he did not care what imprisonment they gave him as long as they kept off his neck. Prisoner : Did Sergeant Clarke tell you all that? There's a bit of

money at the end of that. Witness : Prisoner said he had been twice through Leicester ; he rode through once and walked through the second time. The last time he was tired and about half famished, and he did not care whether he was caught or not. By Mr Reeve : I had not seen the bills, and if I had I could not read them. All I know about it is what prisoner told me. I was in the room when prisoner was charged with the murder. There were two or three other persons in the room who could hear what prisoner said to me.

This concluded the case for the prosecution.

Mr Reeve asked the Court if there was a case of murder to go to the jury.

His Lordship ruled that there was. He said if the keepers commenced the affray, and one of them was killed by the poachers in self defence, then the case would be one of manslaughter, but if, on the other hand, the poachers commenced the affray, and one of the keepers was killed, it would be murder.

Mr Reeve pointed out that no efforts were made by the keepers to ascertain the names and addresses of the man before they pursued them.

His Lordship held that the keepers had a perfect right to follow the men.

Mr Reeve remarked that the evidence of young Monk went to show that he knew who the poachers were, as he said it was of no use their running away. It might be that that was correct. He took it for his own purpose that the keepers did know, and if they did, they had the right to follow them in the hostile way they did – armed with great flails and a gun. If they did know them they ought to have turned back at once. The law said that if they knew the men and they were out poaching in the day time, they had no right to apprehend them.

His Lordship : It is true that they had no right to apprehend them, but they had a right to follow them. Do you mean to say, that if the keepers with the flails and guns are following poachers, the poachers are at liberty to shoot them?

Mr Reeve : I don't mean that. I say it would reduce the crime to manslaughter, if the poachers had been given to understand that their names were known, and they were followed in a hostile way.

His Lordship intimated that the only thing that would reduce the crime to manslaughter turned upon the point whether the deceased man pointed his gun first towards the poachers. If before the gamekeeper pointed his gun, the poachers turned round upon them, that would be murder.

Prisoner expressed a wish to call witnesses.

Eliza Kirk was called, and said : Prisoner came to my house at Walton on the 1st August, and asked for lodgings. He stayed at my house for 5 or 6 weeks.

William Kirk was called, and corroborated.

Mr O'Malley then addressed the jury on behalf of the prosecution. He called their attention in the first instance to the question of identity, and stated that unless they were prepared to believe that the witnesses he had produced and the police officers had perjured themselves, they must be ready to say that they had no doubt as to the identity of the prisoner ; because he had, in the clearest possible way, asserted that he was one of the poachers present on the occasion. There was nothing extraordinary in a man making a statement of that description. Nothing was more common than for a man who had been haunted by a phantom – it might be the conception of his own conscience – making a confession. Here they had this man, brought before the magistrates, admitting his identity with the description given in the bill. The evidence, given in a straightforward way by the police officer, left no shadow of doubt that the prisoner was one of the men engaged in the affray on that day. Then they had this confirmed by a man who had no interest in the case, and who had not seen the bill, and even if he had, he could not read it. Unless he was a very clever man – and he did not seem to be anything like that – and had heard the whole of the statement they had heard that day, it would have been impossible for him to have detailed the facts he had spoken to them, unless he had heard them from a man who was an eye witness to the transaction. They had then, the evidence of Allen, which was wholly confirmed by the circumstances of the case ; and then they had this still further strengthened by the fact that this man had made a confession. He was positively sworn to by Enos Adkinson as one of the parties present on the occasion, and he was sworn to by John Monk as far as opportunity or means of knowing enabled him to do so. Mr O'Malley then went on to

point out that the persons engaged in a *melee* of this character could not be expected to give an exact sequence of events. They knew they had been assaulted – they knew they had been beaten – they knew that they heard the sound of a gun, but the exact moment or sequence of events it was difficult for them to arrange, and therefore some little discrepancies might be discovered between the evidence of Enos Adkinson and John Monk as to the exact order in which the events took place. And both of them differed from the evidence of the man Woodhouse, who was a spectator of the scene from a distance. He clearly described that he saw the four poachers going towards the bridge, and the three keepers following. And, notwithstanding what Mr Reeve had said, he ventured to say it was the duty of the gamekeepers to follow the poachers as long as they were upon their master's ground, in order to obtain a knowledge of their faces and persons as far as possible. The keepers did not in the least indicate any intention of violence, or any intentions of arresting the men. They were armed, it was true ; but they had a right to be armed with the means of protection. Well, the poachers arrived at the bridge, which had two towing-paths, one leading in the direction of Leicester, and the other in the direction of Market Harborough. Along either of these roads they could have gone at any pace they liked without any molestation. They did not attempt ; but in defiance of the keepers, being four to three and well armed, they deliberately prepared themselves for an attack upon the gamekeepers. They laid down their bags, took up stones, and thus armed they advanced towards the keepers and renewed the assault. Having the means of escape when they had got to the limit of the land, it was impossible for a man with an ounce of brains in his head to doubt that the poachers went back for no other purpose than that of assaulting the gamekeepers, and giving them such a beating as would enable them to escape, and perhaps obliterate from the minds of the keepers all the circumstances of the case. Whatever their purpose was – whether it was to be avenged for having been followed so far, which was too often the case in affrays of this kind, or whether being driven as it were to bay, they sought to gratify their animal passions, and to wreak their vengeance on their foes – that they went to assault the keepers seemed to him as clear as it possibly could be. There were three keepers, and four men advancing towards them. They had heard from the evidence that the keepers retreated before them for 20 or 25 yards, and when they saw that the poachers had no other object than that of inflicting injury upon them, the elder Monk thought the best way of protecting themselves from the assault was by closing in upon them and, therefore, whoever struck the first blow, whoever first came in contact ; he ventured to say the assault was begun when these men came on throwing the stones with which they had armed themselves on the bridge, indicating that they had a settled purpose of assaulting these men. Whether the first blow was struck by the keepers, or the second, the poachers were returning for the purpose manifested by their act of doing grievous bodily harm to these men, and they were the cause of whatever was done by the keepers. It had been attempted to be made out by Mr Reeve that this man received the wounds on his head by falling down upon stones, but they must remember this was a grassy field, and the doctor had said that no such wounds could have been inflicted in the manner he wished to make out. It was altogether a puerile idea, when they had positive evidence, whether it was that of Monk or Adkinson, that he was beaten by one of the poachers. That the wounds were received at the hands of one of the poachers admitted of no question. John Monk said he himself was knocked down and beaten in such a severe way about the head as to be rendered insensible, and that it was some time before he could render assistance to his father. If they looked at the evidence of Enos Adkinson, they could have no doubt that these men gave way to their passions and made a murderous assault upon the gamekeepers, and if they did so, they must answer for the consequences. Whether the man was beaten or shot so as to cause his death, it was produced by their murderous assault upon the gamekeepers, and the poachers were answerable for it. When men had a purpose to do, and that which they deliberately did caused death, it appeared to him they were guilty of murder. It was perfectly clear that the keeper's gun was not pointed at the poachers at the time it was discharged. If it was the keeper's gun that inflicted the wound, the only way they could fancy that being inflicted upon himself was either when the butt end of the gun was directed towards his assailants and the muzzle towards himself, or when the wrestling took place for the possession of the gun. If it was during the wrestling, it was the poachers who shot the man, as he

had no right whatever to touch the gun. It was an unlawful act to take that gun from the man's hand. But the gun was broken across near the lock by violence, and therefore he suggested that the true solution of this matter was that a violent blow was struck on the gun while the keeper held it in his hand, and immediately upon that the gun was discharged. Then he said the man was shot by the poacher who did that just as much as if he had put the gun to his own shoulder and fired it in a deliberate manner, so that whatever way they took it, it appeared to him that it was extremely difficult to come to any other conclusion than that the man was shot by the poachers. If it went off by accident while the keeper and a poacher were engaged in wrestling for the gun, the party would be answerable for it ; because the death of the man was occasioned by those who were in the prosecution of an unlawful purpose. If this man had tried to lay hold of the poachers, or inflicted grievous bodily harm upon them, the offence might have been reduced to manslaughter ; but in this case the gamekeepers were perfectly harmless and whatever was done was for the purpose of resisting the murderous attack upon them, in which their lives were threatened. The persons who made that attack, he again urged, were liable for the consequences, and if death was occasioned by struggling for possession of the gun, they would be guilty of murder. If the jury could see their way to either of the conclusions he had pointed out, he ventured to say that there could be no question that the crime of murder was established. After a few remarks on the evidence of Woodhouse, Mr O'Malley left the case in the hands of the jury, trusting that they would come to a just and right verdict.

Mr Reeve, for the defence, said no one regretted more than himself the end of Thomas Monk, but he was sure the feelings of the jury on account of his death would not affect them in the discharge of their duty. He then remarked that no effort had been spared, no stone left unturned, to avenge, in the legal sense of the word, the death of this man. Sir H Halford had stood by this servant as he thought a master ought to stand, and had spared no pains in getting up this case, and had employed persons of power to conduct the prosecution. He (Mr Reeve) was not aware that anything out of the common line had been done to make him feel under any particular obligation to the prosecution for the manner in which the case had been conducted. He felt bound to say this from a remark which had been made by Mr O'Malley in opening the case, about assuming it to be his duty to inform the jury a double barrelled gun had been found, having one barrel discharged. If information had been given to him (Mr Reeve) of that three or four days ago, it might have saved him a great deal of trouble, but he did not get the information about the gun being the property of Thomas Monk until long after he was prepared to deal with the case, and he did not care for his purpose whether it was Monk's gun which was discharged or not ; because it was absolutely impossible for the wound, with the clothes carried inward, to be inflicted unless the gun had been discharged close to the poor man's side. If one of these poachers had a gun in his hand and intended to use it, it would have been fired long before they were within that short distance. They were all satisfied that the gun went off close to the body, and this led them to the inevitable conclusion that the gun went off by accident. What was more natural than that when a keeper had the gun in his hand and was struggling with the poacher, it went off ; or that the keeper, seeing the poacher near him, felt nervous and himself touched the trigger, which caused the gun to explode. It might have been discharged by receiving a blow, or it might have been caused by the finger of Monk himself. There was no doubt that Monk came to his death in consequence of receiving the contents of his own gun, because they had heard that only the night before John Monk loaded the gun with the same kind of shot. Mr O'Malley had been kind enough to say that when he asked about the blows received on the head, such an idea as the deceased's falling on stones was puerile. He was not attempting to show that the stones caused death, but the doctor had not given a single reason why that could not have been the case. The man's death was no doubt caused by the wound in the thigh and bleeding to death. Why he dealt with the other question was that it was very possible it might have been so, and not so improbable at it might seem to be. It appeared to him that this case would divide itself into two portions, and he would deal first with that portion which he would call identity. The first question this jury would have to decide was whether or not this man was one of the four poachers who were out upon Sir Henry Halford's estate on the morning of 30th July, after day had commenced. The prosecution

asked them to say that he was, and had called Enos Adkinson, who said he picked the prisoner out at the station. And how did he pick him out? Six or seven persons were put into a room at the Station, and he was told to go and see if he could identify one of them, but he did not pick out this man until two minutes afterwards – a man who was rather pale, having been in prison, and whose description had been paraded throughout the country. Notwithstanding that, Adkinson walked in front of the men, and said not a single word until the order was given to face about, and then he picked him out by his back. He asked the jury whether they valued such sort of identity. Mr Reeve then referred to the evidence of Ockford and Allen, and asked the jury whether they thought it such as they could rely upon. They had heard the prisoner emphatically deny that it was correct. Mr Reeve next pointed out that the story told by Ockford could have been concocted from the bills offering the reward of £100 for the apprehension of the four men, and asked whether it was not altogether improbable that the prisoner should choose as his father confessor, in order to relieve his conscience and mind, that policeman? The evidence of the policeman, when he gave the flippant answer, “I suppose he did it to relieve his mind”, went down in his estimation one hundred fold. When a man came to speak in a question of life and death, he ought to be doubly careful what he said. He next went on to state that he supposed at first there was no one but the prisoner, Ockford and Allen in the cell when the statement was made, but Allen had told them there were three others, one being drunk. The country paid for this prosecution, and if it did not there was one man standing in the background who would, and therefore he wanted to know why the other persons had not been brought? Then, if Ockford wished to tell them the whole truth, why did he not tell them there were others in the room? Again, Allen had broken the laws of his country, and it would not be uncharitable of him if, on behalf of the prisoner, he asked the jury not to take for gospel everything he had said. He blamed Ockford for not cautioning the prisoner before allowing him to make a statement to him, and thought it threw some suspicion on what he had said. If for the reasons he had endeavoured to lay before them, and others which would suggest themselves to them, they were not satisfied – if they could not say that these witnesses were to be relied upon on the question of identity – seeing that there was no gun found upon the prisoner, no wounds, no torn clothing, nothing at all, so far as he understood, implicating him in this transaction – however much they might think about other matters, the prisoner was entitled to an acquittal at their hands. Mr Reeve next remarked that it was clear John Monk, his father and Adkinson went out to see what was going on on the morning of the 30th July, and no doubt there were persons there for the purpose of taking game, but as the offence was committed in the day time, they ought to have ascertained their names and summoned them before the magistrates. The poachers, it seemed, did what he wished poachers would do on all occasions, ran away, without stopping to resort to the use of firearms. The keepers, if they had started out to meet mad dogs, could not have gone out better prepared than they did. The men tried to get away, and as sure as the Heaven was Heaven, so sure was there no intention in the minds of the poachers to attack the keepers. The only person who had a right to speak was John Monk, the keeper, his father being no longer a keeper, and the under gardener only assisting. And what did young Monk say? Before a single stone had been thrown, he said, “I know you, and it's no use your attempting to get away”. It might be true or it might be false. If it were false, it was simply a trick, but if it were true, there was no earthly use in the keepers keeping the men in sight any longer, when they could have gone to a neighbouring magistrate and taken out summonses against them. Were the keepers the aggressors? Woodhouse said the first man to put up a gun was the dead man. If they were of opinion that the keepers were the persons who commenced the affray, there could not have been a crime of murder but one of manslaughter committed. There were three courses open to the jury. They could convict the man on the fearful crime of murder, which he hoped and trusted the evidence would not justify them in doing ; they could convict him of manslaughter, or they might acquit him altogether ; they might have fair ground for doing the latter if they were not satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt with the identity of the man. If Mr O'Malley had not satisfied them on the part of the prosecution, and he was sure he had spared no pains or labour in bringing the case before them, then the prisoner would be entitled to a verdict of “Not Guilty” at their hands.

His Lordship then summed up. He remarked that there could be no doubt that Thomas Monk received his death wound during the affray, and remarked that it was for the jury to say what was the intention of the four men at the time. The charge against the prisoner was that he was one of the four, and if he was, he would be guilty of whatever offence the whole four did. There had been no evidence given to prove that he was the man who caused the death of Thomas Monk, but the jury must satisfy themselves on the evidence given that he was one of the four. His Lordship then went on to review the evidence, especially pointing out the admission made by the prisoner, when before the magistrates in Derbyshire, when he was recognised by the police from the bills which had been published ; the statement he made to Ockford, and also to Allen. He asked the jury whether they thought Allen and the constable were wicked enough to tell a deliberate lie? If not, the prisoner must have said he was one of the four. If the prisoner was not one of the men, the case came to an end, and they must find him not guilty. His Lordship then explained the law of the case, that where certain parties acted in concert for the purpose of inflicting dangerous injury, and death resulted, it was murder, for which they were all equally responsible ; but if there was what the law considered provocation, the offence would be reduced to manslaughter. If they thought when the four men came from the bridge that they had made up their minds to attack the keepers and beat them in the way they afterwards did, and death ensued afterwards from a blow or wound during that attack, all would be equally guilty ; but if they thought the keepers calling out, "Go into them", on advancing towards each other, and above all, when the deceased man pointed the gun – if they had then commenced the assault – if they thought the excitement or provocation was an unlawful act on their part – if they allowed that this was done in hot blood, then it would mitigate the offence to manslaughter.

The jury then retired, and after an absence of about 23 minutes returned into court.

In answer to the clerk of arraigns, the foreman of the jury said they had agreed to a VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER.

His Lordship, in passing sentence, said the prisoner had been convicted of manslaughter on evidence as clear as possible – convicted for that which approached nearly to a crime of murder. The jury had given the prisoner the doubt to such an extent as to render the crime not that of murder, but that of manslaughter, and that saved his life. He thought it absolutely necessary that there should be a severe sentence passed. Prisoner : I should like to say a word. Thomas Monk knew me well – as well as any man in the world. He has had me up for poaching many times. - His Lordship said there was no doubt of that, and if Thomas Monk had been there he would have identified prisoner ; but Thomas Monk was dead. The offence that the prisoner had committed, he had had occasion more than once at these assizes to point out. It seemed to him that there was a sort of practice amongst a large class of the population – principally the mining population – in going out in large bodies, showing in itself an intent to use violence and to use dangerous violence to the keepers. He thought it absolutely essential that should be stopped, and that everyone should be aware that keepers were not to be attacked in the performance of their duty. When they exceeded their duty, they themselves were liable to be punished. Still less that justified the going out with the intention to fight and injure the keepers. If the jury had found the prisoner guilty of the crime of murder, he saw no reason whatever why the due sentence of the law should not be passed upon him. He should have had no alternative but to pass it upon him. The jury – and he did not blame them – had found him guilty of the crime of manslaughter, but it was so near to murder that he felt himself bound to pass a heavy sentence upon him, and he did this as a warning to everyone. The sentence that he passed was that the prisoner be kept in

PENAL SERVITUDE

during the rest of his natural life.

This concluded the business of the assizes, the court rising at 6.55.

The trial commenced at 10 am, and was brought to a conclusion about seven. A large crowd assembled in front of the Castle before the opening of the Court, in eager anticipation of getting a look at the prisoner or in obtaining admission to the Court. The police on duty had great difficulty in restraining the crowd, and the court was crowded in every part, considerable interest being

manifested. At ten o'clock, his Lordship entered with the "black cap" in his hand, and placed it on the desk before him, where it lay during the trial. The prisoner, on entering the dock, assumed a bravado appearance, and when the charge was read, answered in a firm tone, "Not Guilty". He then glanced round the court, and on the jury being called he eagerly scanned each of their faces. Two of the jurymen were challenged, and two others took their places. The prisoner is rather under the average height, has no whiskers, is of pale complexion and rather thinly made. In the course of the trial he occasionally hastily interrupted several of the witnesses, and throughout the examination of the witnesses, the addresses of the counsel, and his Lordship's summing up, his interest seemed to be intense. On the jury retiring, he assumed a heedless attitude, and eventually sat down on the floor of the dock. However, he apparently felt somewhat relieved when the verdict was returned, and on receiving sentence his temper manifested itself very conspicuously, but he was speedily removed. Among those present during the day were Sir Henry Halford, Sir F T Fowke, the High Sheriff, Mr Warner of Quorn Hall, &c.

166 April 18 1874

TOWN HALL

ASSAULT John Bruce, Samuel Bruce and Thomas Wardle were charged with assaulting and beating **Thomas Jones**. The complainant, a boatman, said he arrived at the Public Wharf on Thursday night, and went to the Full Moon, Russell Square, when he entered the parlour. A quarrel arose, when John Bruce struck him on the face and knocked him against the table. Samuel followed it up in more blows, and Thomas Wardle attacked him last. He eventually got away, but not before he had a pair of black eyes and a disfigured nose. The only provocation afforded was his asking a woman not to scream so loudly. Mrs Moseby, the landlady of the Full Moon, explained that the disturbance arose through John Bruce quarrelling with his wife. She subsequently saw the complainant emerge from the taproom with his face bleeding. Another witness having corroborated, the defendant, John Bruce, contended that the complainant attempted to throw his wife and another woman down while they were dancing, but not assaulted by him. The other two defendants had nothing to say. They called William Riddell who, though he did not happen to be present when the assault was committed, contended that the defendants were quite innocent. Mr Rowlett told him that he evidently cared nothing for the obligations of an oath. Mrs Davenport, also called for the defence, deposed that prisoner struck a woman in the face, and she was about to return the blow when he, being tipsy, fell against a settle with his nose bleeding. He did not seem to know precisely who had struck him, but declared that he would have somebody up if it cost him £10. Mrs Haddon gave similar evidence, adding that Mrs Bruce pushed the prisoner on to the settle, but that no man struck him. However, their evidence as to the time was quite irreconcilable with that of the prosecutor, and even with their own. The defendants were told that their defence had aggravated their assault, and were fined 40s, with the alternative of a committal for a month.

CROSS CHARGE The complainant in the previous case was now charged with assaulting Ann Bruce on the same night. The complainant, who appeared in court with two black eyes, stated that on the night in question, the defendant, who had had a "good sup" of beer, struck her several times between the eyes, without the slightest provocation ; and she, after a scuffle, thereupon pushed him on to a settle. Her husband was sitting near, but took no part in the affray. Mrs Haddon repeated the evidence she gave in the previous case, and declared that when John Bruce saw his wife assaulted, he contented himself with remarking, "You are a man, and she's a woman". Mrs Stevens, who likewise appeared with disfigured eyes, told a somewhat similar tale ; contending, however, that defendant struck complainant a good many times, and that she returned the blow. The defendant denied the charge, explaining that the affray took place at seven, whereas all the previous witnesses had alleged that it did not take place until between eight and nine. Mrs Moseley also repeated her previous evidence, explaining that complainant and her husband had previously been quarrelling. Mrs Martin deposed to seeing complainant fighting with her husband. She was eventually knocked on to the settle with her eyes bruised. At that stage the defendant was in another part of the room. John Bruce, on being remonstrated with for assaulting his wife,

indignantly asked, "Can't I do what I like with my own ; she's my wife". The defendant's employers having given him a good character, the bench dismissed the case, intimating that they did not believe the evidence of the complainant or her witnesses.

167 June 15 1874

OUR FLOATING POPULATION Mr George Smith FSA of Coalville, whose advocacy of the claims of the brickyard children resulted in the Act for their protection, writes to call attention to the miserable condition of the boatmen's families, and to urge that the Government shall include the children of our floating population in the coming Factory Bill. He estimates that something like 100,000 people live in boats on the rivers and canals, and neither School Boards nor sanitary inspectors look after their children. He describes a cabin in one of the 200 boats he lately found at Moira, in which cabin there were only 202 cubic feet of space, yet it was the sole abode, dwelling room and sleeping room, of a man and his wife and six children, of whom the eldest was 16, the next a girl of 14, and the third a girl of 10, the three others being younger. Two of them slept at night on the one table in the room, two under the bed, and two in a cupboard over it. Mr Smith describes this state of demoralising and unwholesome crowding as the normal condition of the population who make these canal boats their home, and asks that Government should order an inquiry to be made about them, or the application to them of laws which shall ensure their health, decency and education.

168 September 12 1874

FOXTON

CHILD DROWNED An inquest was held at the Black Horse Inn, Foxton, on Wednesday, on the body of a child aged three years, daughter of **William Fletcher**, lock-keeper, Foxton. It appeared from the evidence that on Monday afternoon the child had been playing on a piece of land on the opposite side of the water from the house, attended by its mother, when the latter heard her baby crying in the house. She went across the lock, and was returning with the baby when she found that the little girl she had left playing on the green had by some means fallen into the water. It was taken out by a passing boatman named **Tapper**. Verdict, "Accidental death".

169 October 10 1874

FRIGHTFUL GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION IN LONDON

LOSS OF A LEICESTERSHIRE CARGO

DEATH OF A LOCAL BARGEMAN About five o'clock yesterday week, a terrific explosion took place on board a gunpowder barge on the Regent's Canal, London. A line of barges, five in number, were being towed by a steam tug leisurely along on their way, it is said, to Derby, one of them laden with gunpowder. On arriving as far as North Bridge, Regent's Park, the tug and three of the barges passed through the bridge in safety. The fourth, named the *Tilbury*, was just nearing the arch when the explosion occurred. An earthquake could scarcely have created more alarm. The first shock was terrific, and this was immediately followed by a rocking and shaking of houses sufficient to increase the momentary fright. The noise was heard distinctly in Greenwich, five miles away, and few sleepers within a radius of three miles but were awakened to consciousness, and in many cases to extreme fear. The barge in which the explosion originated was blown to atoms, and three men and a boy who were navigating it were instantaneously killed. The fifth barge, named the *Limehouse*, was lifted completely out of the water, and reduced to a wreck, one of the poor fellows on board being blown on to the towing-path, where he was afterwards picked up and found not to be seriously injured. Strange to say, while the other two barges were greatly shaken, they were not damaged to any very serious extent. The bridge, a strong stone and iron structure, was shattered to pieces, some of which were blown into the air a distance of several hundred feet ; and North Lodge, the residence of the park superintendent, was all but brought to the ground. After the explosion, the servant girl in the Lodge was found upstairs in bed, with the ceiling upon her, but she was extricated, having only a few scratches, though much shaken. The son, while in bed, was also a

good deal shaken, but had received no injuries of a serious nature. The other inmates were more frightened than hurt. The Lodge now stands in a tottering condition. Some idea of the extent of the disaster can be obtained by a walk in the neighbouring streets. The railings in front of the house close at hand were torn down, and the trees close to the bridge stripped of their leaves and branches. A house at the corner of the Avenue Road is completely wrecked. Two large chandeliers in the dining room were stripped of their pendants and glass ornaments ; several of the doors were wrenched off their hinges, taking with them the door posts and jambs, and carrying with them the lath and plaster partitions between the lower rooms. The ceilings of this house fell en masse, and one of the drawing room ceilings lies upon a carpet, apparently entire, and as if it had been divided from the laths with a knife. The damage seems to have been felt most in the direction of Portland Town ; though the houses in the vicinity, for at least half a mile, felt the shock. The damage, in fact, has been enormous, and it will be in most instances the personal and direct loss of the tenants, as fire insurance companies decline to insure their customers against loss from explosion by gunpowder. Such was the force of the explosion that it put out the lamps at the Great Northern Railway Station, King's Cross. It also severely shook the St Pancras Station of the Midland Railway, but did not do much damage to the structure. As may be expected, the explosion caused great commotion amongst the animals in the Zoological Gardens, and their howling added considerably to the excitement which the disaster occasioned in the neighbourhood. All the glass houses in the tropical department of the Botanical Gardens were more or less damaged. The Colonel of the Guards in the Albany Barracks, in less than a quarter of an hour after the explosion, ordered on his own responsibility the men quartered there to load their carbines and proceed to the spot, the impression having spread that in some manner a Fenian conspiracy had something to do with the affair. The dead, so far as yet ascertained, number three, viz, the captain of the boat and the two other men on board. The bodies of the latter have been found and removed to the Marylebone Workhouse, where they are awaiting an inquest. One death through fright is reported to have occurred in Milton Street, Blandford Square. The houses of Mr Hepworth Dixon, Mr John Leighton (the book illustrator), Mrs Howard Paul, Mr Joseph Hatton, Mr Justice Lush and Mr Tademan, the painter, have been all more or less injured. The *Dee* was laden with paraffin oil for Loughborough and Nottingham, and the *Tilbury's* destination is said to have been Derby, and it is also hinted that the powder was intended for Government purposes, but on these points the London traffic manager of the Canal Company did not feel at liberty to speak freely. At half past four yesterday afternoon, the body of the captain of the barge *Tilbury* was dug out from under the *Dee*, and was conveyed to the Marylebone Workhouse. The body was identified soon after its arrival by **John Hill**, a bargeman, as that of **Charles Backston (Baxter)**, aged 34, master of the barge *Tilbury*. Backston's wife and family reside at Loughborough, Leicestershire, so it is probable that the news contained in this morning's journals was the first intimation the bereaved family has received of the calamity that has thus unexpectedly befallen them. In the pockets of Captain Backston was found the sum of 25s, which, together with the money which was in the pockets of the two others, namely 19s 2d and 1s 5d respectively, is being taken charge of by Mr Douglas. There is a circumstance which has not been mentioned, but which is thought by the authorities of the workhouse and the police to afford some means of obtaining a clue to the identity of the elder of the two men who were killed. In his pocket was a letter purporting to come from a solicitor, addressed to the name of **Taylor**, and requesting payment of the sum of 11s, which was overdue. The body of Backston appears to have been more exposed to the action of the fire than the other two. The face, which has but little hair upon it, is scorched and ruddy with blisters ; the right arm is fractured and greatly swollen, while the skin of both the forearms and hands is corrugated, drawn up and shrivelled to such an extent that those limbs could not be washed for fear of removing the skin from them altogether.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE LEICESTER BARGEMAN

On Saturday and Sunday, the vicinity of the great explosion on the Regent's Canal was visited by vast numbers of persons, in vehicles and on foot, and considerable time was spent by many in examining the ruins of the bridge and damaged houses. Owing to the excellent police

arrangements, public order was maintained. A considerable number of those who resided nearest to the bridge have already had their furniture removed to another locality. The work of clearing the canal from the debris has been somewhat retarded by the bursting of one of the dams on Saturday night ; but during yesterday, considerable progress was made, and it is hoped that by tomorrow the canal will be again opened for traffic. No additional fatality arising directly from the explosion has as yet been reported.

On Saturday morning, Dr Hardwicke, the coroner for the district, opened the inquiry into the death of the sufferers by the fearful gunpowder explosion which took place on Friday morning at the North Gate, Regent's Park.

Edward Hall said : I live at Braunston, Northamptonshire. I am a boatman. I knew the deceased man, **Taylor**, who was a hand on the boats. I saw him last yesterday morning at Campden Town top lock, about 4.30 am. He was not a married man, and about 25 or 26. He was on a boat then lying above the lock, waiting for our boat, the *Limehouse*, to be pulled through the top lock. He was in tow by the *Ready*, the steam tug. I did not speak to him. He had a general cargo on board his boat, the *Tilbury*, and went through the lock before us. The *Ready* and the *Jane* were before him, the *Dee* was "butting" the *Tilbury*, that is, going through in pairs. We hung on behind, and went on up to the bridge where the explosion took place. We got there about five or six minutes (to) five. I was in the cabin of the *Limehouse*, and had undressed to go to bed as the explosion took place. I felt a tremendous explosion, which I thought was lightning, and my boat was knocked all to pieces. I was knocked out of bed against the stove, a fire place. I was stunned, and was in the water when I came to. I did not see anything more of Taylor after Camden Town top lock. I knew he must be one of the sufferers when I afterwards heard which were the boats above the bridge, and that he was missing. I have identified the body here. His father and mother work for Price and Co, Brierley Hill, Staffordshire. I thought it was lightning. By a Juror : I had a general cargo for Northampton. By the Coroner : We had a small fire in my grate. I never saw any sparks from the tug fly more than two or three yards. By the Jury : I don't think the sparks would fly further under the bridge.

John Hill : I live in Brunswick Road, Upper Holloway, and work in the brickfields as labourer. I have known **Baxter** the last six or seven years. He was captain of the *Tilbury*. I don't know his age ; about thirty five or thirty six. He was married, with three or four children, and lived at Loughborough. I saw him last alive on Thursday night about eight pm, at the City Road Grand Junction Wharf, loading his boat. I saw some of the goods – there were a few nuts, some sugar, bags and casks, and goods of all kinds. I did not see any gunpowder. I next saw him pulled out of the canal. I went up there at twelve o'clock yesterday, having heard of his death. I was told he had been drowned. I had heard of the explosion. I went to help to unship some of the goods. I saw the ruins of his boat. I was the first one who found his body. I felt him in shifting the goods from the boat. I was just under the cabin of the *Limehouse* aft, in the water. The body was taken out and put on a stretcher, and they took my name and address. I have seen the body in the deadhouse, and it is that of Charles Baxter ; that I am sure of. I don't know the other body, except having seen him passing.

The inquiry was then adjourned.

170 January 30 1875

TOWN HALL, MONDAY

BREACH OF CONTRACT **Benjamin Davis** was charged by Thomas Gulson with a breach of contract on the 18th of January. Complainant said he was a coal merchant, and had a boat of his own. Defendant was a boatman. About ten months ago, he entered into a contract with defendant to go with a boat, and assist in the trade generally. He told defendant when he engaged him that he would have to give a voyage's notice if he wanted to leave, and he would give him a similar notice. A voyage would occupy a fortnight at this season of the year. Defendant entered into his service on those terms, but on Saturday the 16th of January, he paid defendant his wages, when he wished him "Good night", and he went away. Defendant made no complaints, and had not returned to work since. He had sustained a loss of between £5 and £6. Eliza Gulson, who was present when

defendant was engaged, corroborated her husband's evidence as to the agreement under which defendant entered complainant's service. Defendant stated that he had a quarrel with the complainant's son, and they had a "fit", after which he made up his mind he would not go with the boat any longer. Defendant was ordered to pay £1 compensation and costs.

171 February 6 1875

THE CANAL POPULATION British philanthropy is not always well directed ; for it often finds deep concern in the welfare of remote humanity, overlooking the claims of those who are engaged nearer home in the "struggle for existence". Mr George Smith of Coalville, however, does not profess this kind of sentiment ; as his efforts to protect the poor "brickyard" children from cruelty and oppression have proved. His thoughts are now turned to another deplorably neglected and unfortunately placed portion of the community – boatman and their wives and families, who are employed upon the Canals of this country. In a plain matter of fact straightforward paper in the "Fortnightly Review" for February, Mr Smith tells the story of these semi barbarians of our water highways. Enquirers into the origin of mankind describe its condition in successive epochs ; and then inform the public that the Stone Age, long since passed in these islands, may still be seen, with all its peculiarities, in nooks and crannies of the world where savages dwell in their aboriginal rudeness and simplicity. After reading Mr Smith's description of the interiors of canal boats and their inhabitants, we recommend Sir John Lubbock, Mr Tylor and Mr Darwin to study it ; for they will there discover a race of beings who are now living in pretty nearly the same condition as did the people of the Bronze Age of man's history. Those distinguished enquirers may thus illustrate their theories remarkably well, without going to the islands of the Pacific for examples of low and barbarous forms of existence. We congratulate Mr Smith upon the publication of his excellent article, to the consideration of which we shall again invite the attention of our readers on the first eligible opportunity.

172 March 13 1875

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ASSIZES. MONDAY

ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER **John Berry**, boatman, was charged with discharging a loaded pistol with intent to murder John Cashmore at Cosgrove on the 1st March. The prisoner, on the day in question, walked up to the prosecutor, and without any provocation whatever fired the pistol at him. Evidence was given by the medical officer of the gaol and others of the insanity of the prisoner, and the jury acquitted him on that ground. The Judge ordered him to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure.

173 March 20 1875

GLIMPSES OF CANAL BOAT LIFE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRONICLE AND MERCURY

Sir – I crave your indulgence while I give you a picture or two of life among the Canal boatmen, although, perhaps, the performance may not be so graphic or telling as I could wish it. Anyone walking along the towing-paths of our canals, especially in the neighbourhood of large traffic, must soon become aware of the kind of life spent by the boatmen and their families, even if he fails to realise the full extent of it.

The following sad case of parental cruelty was brought under my notice a Sunday or two ago, between Nuneaton and Atherstone. It was about nine o'clock at night ; the moon was shining brightly ; the snow lay deep on the ground, and there was a nipping frost. The boatman, finding the horse did not get along quick enough, sent out a poor little child of six summers or so to drive the animal. The child not being big enough to reach the bridle of the horse, or to keep up to the pace required, was placed on the horse's back ; here, with a thick stick in his hand, he kept hitting away at the beast as they went along. This the child did as long as his strength allowed, and then his head drooped, he rolled about, and appeared as if suffering from the effects of the biting weather. But the inhuman father took no apparent notice of his little suffering child, but coolly steered the boat with

a bright fire by his side, and a short pipe in his mouth.

Here is another incident which happened on the same canal and near the same place. It was a dark and dismal night ; two emaciated donkeys, scarcely able to move, were coupled together, drawing a boat, as is the custom. They had nose tins on their heads, out of which they ate as they went along, with an old tin can (called a "lazy driver") at their tails. From some cause or another, one of the tired animals fell into the canal, dragging the other with it ; and before they could be pulled out by assistance, which happened to be at hand, one of them was drowned. Had it not been for the nose bag and the "lazy driver", it is more than probable that the donkey would neither have stumbled nor been drowned.

I mention these things to show how callous the boatmen are to the sufferings of either human or animal life, and not with any idea that they are at all exceptional or rare. Unfortunately, those who are acquainted with the habits of the boating people know that they are not so.

I am glad, however, to learn that the condition of our canal population will to a great extent be remedied before long ; the Home Secretary having promised Mr W E Price MP that the Government would institute an inquiry respecting them. This is very encouraging to those who have the welfare of these people and their children at heart.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE SMITH

Coalville, Leicester,

March 12th 1875

174 May 15 1875

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE

NEGLECT OF FAMILY **Henry Filby** was charged with neglect of family, whereby two of his children became chargeable to the Union on the 21st of March 1874. Mr W D Smith, relieving officer, stated that on the 21st March 1874, the defendant was able to maintain his family. Defendant's two children, however, became chargeable to the Union on that day, and remained in the House until November. Since that time, they had received out relief with their mother. The children were ten and seven years old. Defendant was a boatman, and worked near London. Sentenced to one months hard labour. Defendant : Thank you, sir.

175 May 22 1875

BIRSTAL

FATAL ACCIDENT Mr Coroner Harrison held an inquest at the Plough Inn, Birstal, on Tuesday, respecting the death of **Ann Cook**, the widow of a boatman, who lived at Birstal. Deceased, who was eighty four years of age, was at her daughter's house on Whit Monday, about four o'clock, sitting in a downstairs room. A band of music was passing, and the deceased rose from her chair to look at it. After it had passed she intended to resume her seat, but slipped and fell on the floor by the side of the chair. She did not seem very much shaken, and was taken to her own home. She, however, got gradually worse, and died at nine o'clock the same evening. Mr Hy Nuttall, surgeon, spoke to examining the body, and finding the left thigh broken, and gave as his opinion that the deceased died from the injuries received and the shock to the system. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

176 June 3 1875

CANAL LIFE IN ENGLAND Mr George Smith of Coalville writes :- The following sickening facts will be of sorrowful interest to your many readers. These came under my own notice while walking along the side of the canal a Sunday or two ago. First, **John Mellor** of Oakthorpe, with wife and three children, and a girl – not their own – about 14 years old, were working the boat. I noticed a tiny little delicate child of about three trudging after its father. "That", said he, pointing to the child, "was born in a cabin at Market Drayton, and I was very ill in the cabin suffering from bronchitis at the time, and never expecting to get better". He further said that he could only get

about 14s per week of seven days, of 17 hours in each day. He and his wife could, on an average, earn about 20s per week. **Thomas Cooper** of Brinklow said, when I questioned him as to how the children slept in the cabin, that “they slept like pigs – all of a heap”. He had been a boater 50 years, and had known hundreds of children born in cabins, and he knew but very few who could either read or write. **George Taylor**, Blackhorse, Foleshill, said he had been a boater 55 years and had ten daughters and two sons. He could not write, and had known scores of children born in boats. He could only get 2s 6d per day of sixteen hours in each day, and had to walk to and from Rugby at the end of each week. He further said that children often died in the cabins and were buried before they could get help. As a rule, the doctors do not care to visit them, probably for the simple reason that their fee is in jeopardy. He had known cases of fever in the cabins in which there were a man, his wife and seven or eight children. **Warton**, a boater of Hillmorton, said he never knew a boatman who worked on Sunday to get rich, but he had known one who did not do so get rich, and could afford to give his men better wages than anyone else. I learnt afterwards that he referred to himself. He had known a few families who had “tied up” on purpose to get to a place of worship, and they had prospered. There is more swearing among the people living in the neighbourhood of canals than in other parts of the country. This arises out of the fact that the children often go on the bridges and on the sides of the canals, to watch the boats move along, and it is there that the children learn from the boatmen, and in which the boatwomen and children seem to delight, the disgusting language. In this way the seeds of demoralisation are sown. The canals which run the low parts of our large towns, and in which many of these people have to live, are neither more nor less than cesspools of abomination and filth, black and muddy. Carcasses of dead animals float on the surface, from which a horrible stench proceeds. Bubbles of gas rise to the top from the decomposed animal and vegetable matter lying on the bottom. It is out of this water, if it can be called water, that these boatpeople have to wash and cook. Surely something needs doing for this ignorant, neglected, but useful class.

177 June 26 1875

OUR FLOATING POPULATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRONICLE AND MERCURY

Sir – Will you please insert the following few lines in your next issue? Reading many letters written by Mr Smith of Coalville on the floating population, as one who has moved amongst them, I feel called to justify their claim upon society to more consideration than he gives them. If the floating population are so illiterate and ignorant, how is it that so many have been made rich? We talk of appeal to Parliament ; I should like to know what Parliament have to do with them. Would it not be a disgrace to our civilisation, or enough to make the heathen point the finger of scorn?

I, for one, am ashamed that, with our wealth and commerce and missionary expertise, there are not gentlemen enough in Leicester alone (if they will consider their first impulse of success) to send their thousand each to the rescue. Some newspapers treat the boatmen as not worthy of human notice, but I give you a higher authority – the late Duke of Bridgewater, the largest canal and boat proprietor and philanthropist in England.

He says, “the boatmen are the most useful men in England, who have traversed our rivers night and day ; and brought wealth and commerce to our great manufacturing and industrial towns and cities”.

I, for one, would like to open all the depots as before, and give fair play to all. As these little children want help, bring your money from your coffers and banks as it will pay you hundreds more interest ; and I, your humble servant, a boatman, will double it according to position in society.

Yours very truly,

THOMAS HUGHES

78 Rutland Street, Leicester, June 21 1875

178 July 24 1875

SUDDEN DEATH On Wednesday night, an inquest was held by Mr G F Harrison, the borough coroner, on the body of **Joseph Townsend**, a boatman aged 71, living at 16 Durham Street. The

deceased was knocked down by a dray in the streets about ten months ago, and was admitted an inpatient at the Infirmary. He came out about a fortnight ago. He died somewhat suddenly at his house, about half past ten o'clock on the morning of the inquest, and according to Mr Fullager, surgeon, and Mr F H Hodges, house surgeon at the Infirmary, the cause of death was serious apoplexy. Verdict accordingly.

179 August 21 1875

A BOATMAN ON THE BOAT POPULATION
TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRONICLE AND MERCURY

Sir – As I have not studied the etiquette of politeness, I wish to deal straightforward with the main argument and the leading principle. I cannot reconcile Mr Smith's letters to my own common sense or apostolic teaching. According to him, our canals and rivers are overrun with savages. I ask Mr Smith, who was accountable for slavery in America? Was it not the slave holder who took upon himself the name of religion? Who made him stand for his own likeness and pictured his villainy to the world? That noble hearted lady, Mrs Beecher Stowe, the slave emancipator – she who believed in the power of the religion professed, practised and taught by her.

Mr Smith's letters remind me very forcibly of the style of Dr Dodd. When a boy, I well remember reading about a young clergyman consulting the doctor upon the merits of nearly his first sermon. The doctor, after perusing the manuscript, returned it, saying to this effect, “Sir, this is certainly all right and the truth ; but this doctrine will not do – it will not go down – it is not acceptable – it will not carry you through life – Christians are well furnished with eyes and ears”.

The boatmen's children's cries resound to heaven - “We have no friend ; be one to us. No home ; build us one. Don't live to yourselves ; we are of the same flesh and blood ; help us out of our distress ; better our condition ; then to pray to our Benefactor, who is neither partial nor unreasonable, but acts fairly and lovingly to the wanderer, wills us a home and a country, and a citizenship, from which only the oppressor at his own peril makes us fugitives”.

I am

Yours, &c

THOMAS HUGHES

78 Rutland Street, Leicester.

180 August 21 1875

A MOUNTSORREL BOATMAN STABBED At Derby, on Friday week, **John Major**, a boatman, was charged with stabbing another boatman named **Thomas Gilbert**, of Mountsorrel. Gilbert was at Long Eaton on the 23rd of July, and being unable to proceed on his “voyage” on account of the flood, he went in the evening to the Trent Lock Inn. Major was there drinking, and he and Gilbert began to toss for ale. Gilbert won, but there was a dispute and a quarrel. Soon afterwards, Gilbert was going towards his boat when the prisoner ran up to him and stabbed him in the right thigh, inflicting a wound about four inches long. The prosecutor became unconscious, bled copiously, and was carried into his boat. A surgeon was sent for, and he has been under medical treatment ever since. The prisoner ran away and concealed himself in a ditch, where he was subsequently found by Police-constable Peberdy covered with nettles. He was committed for trial at the Sessions.

181 August 28 1875

MR G SMITH AND OUR CANAL POPULATION Mr G Smith, FSA, Coalville, in an article in the current number of the *Argonaut*, says :- The boatmen's habits are filthy and disgusting beyond conception. I have frequently seen women in a half nude state washing over the sides of the boat as it was moving along, out of the water of the canal, upon the top of which has been floating all manner of filth. They wash their clothes – those that do wash – out of the canal water, and instead of their being white, owing to it, they look as if they had been drawn through a mud hole, wrung out, and hung upon the boat line to dry. How a man, his wife, and six or seven children can live, wash, cook and sleep in a cabin containing little over 200 cubic feet of space, scarcely large enough

to hold a good sized bed, is a mystery to me. When I questioned them on this point, they hung down their heads and seemed ashamed to tell. One boater said, "Like pigs, all of a heap". Another said, "As best they could". Another said, "One child at the head of the father and mother, and another at their feet, and the rest on the side seat and on the floor". When it is taken into account that children of both sexes, and of different families, and of various ages, are all huddled together in this one wretched hole, we must come to the conclusion that it is quite time the Government came to the rescue. Swearing and drunkenness seem to be the two ruling passions. Fighting, ruffianism and blackguardism of the worst kind are indulged in. Swearing is taught to the children before anything else ; nearly every sentence begins with an oath, and finishes with blasphemy, cursing their own "eyes and limbs to all eternity", and the children can do as much of it as their parents. I have heard children curse their own fathers and mothers till my blood has run cold. Some time since, a boater's woman died. Another woman who had some grown up daughters, hearing of this a little time after the sorrowful event, said to Jim, "I understand thee has no woman ; thee shalt have our Bess". Away went the woman to a neighbouring boat, and fetched "Bess" ; the boater and the woman there and then agreed upon terms, and were married according to their plan. The courtship and marriage, according to their custom, was all done within 24 hours ; and today they are floating about in their "cabin home" with a large family of children. It is a very rare thing to see a boater read anything, for the simple reason he cannot do so. The men, as a rule, are not long lived. They look old enough to be 70 when but 45. They are thick set and short, and many of their children do not look healthy. The women are coarse and vulgar and, if anything, can outdo the men in resorting to obscene language and disgusting conversation. On the canals and river in England, there will not be less than 22,400 woman, 22,400 men and 72,000 children – and if the estimate before given of the number of married boaters is anything like true, we have something like 13,000 men and 13,000 women living as men and wives in an unmarried state, and 40,000 illegitimate children – floating up and down our country on our rivers and canals. In the *Fortnightly Review*, I suggested three courses of action. 1. The Education Act made compulsory, pure and simple. 2. The Workshop Act to prohibit children under certain ages working on boats. 1. I would not allow boys under thirteen to sleep or work on boats. 2. I would not allow girls under the age of eighteen, unless married, to live and work on boats. 3. I would not allow a less space in each cabin than seventy five feet for each adult above eighteen, and fifty feet of space for each youth between the age of thirteen and eighteen. 4. I would have the name of the boat owner, with the name of the captain, painted on each boat, and properly registered as to the amount of tonnage the boat carries, and the number of persons allowed to live and sleep in the cabin. 5. I would give power to workshop inspectors, sanitary inspectors, or other officials, which will ere long be appointed by the Government, to assist the sub inspectors of factories to enter a cabin and detain the boat until all the law required was carried out. 6. Power to be given, as in the case of the workshops, to the inspectors to summon either the captain or owner, whichever he thought well. 7. A proper certificate, as to the date of birth, duly signed by the parish authorities, should be deemed sufficient proof as to the age of the children. This to be carried about with them. 8. The Act should not come into operation for two years, and then the children only required to pass the second standard of the Education Act.

182 September 11 1875

STABBING AT PETERBOROUGH At Peterborough Petty Sessions on Wednesday, before C I Strong Esq (Chairman), Dr Walker, and J M Vipian Esq, **Charles Thompson**, London, boatman, was charged by Sergeant Scotney with unlawfully wounding **Henry Read**, on the 17th August at Peterborough. It appears that Read and Thompson were on a lighter on the river Nene, and they had a quarrel ; whilst they were fighting, Thompson stabbed Read in the left side. A man named Miller saw Thompson and Read on the lighter. He saw Thompson stab Read, the latter first running up to him to fight, and he at once got into the boat. Seeing that Read was all over blood, he at once sent for a doctor. Dr Thompson came and ordered Read to be removed to the Infirmary. Thompson and Miller helped to remove him there, and whilst they were going, prisoner said he should go and drown himself, for he knew he should get seven years for stabbing Read. When they got to the

Infirmary, Sergeant Moiser was sent for, and he found a knife in the pocket of prisoner ; he also heard prisoner say that Read hit him first. Mr Wilson examined the man three days after his admission, and found that there was a penetrated wound in the lung, and for some days he was in danger of his life. The prisoner was committed for trial at the next assizes

183 September 25 1875

SCHOOL BOARD The ordinary meeting of this Board was held at the Town Hall on Thursday week. Mr W G Farmer presided, and there were also present Messrs A Atkins, G Hamson and G Pilgrim. The minutes of the former meeting were read and confirmed. A large number of cheques were signed. Mrs Goodwin applied to the Board to allow her son to attend school half time. He was just about to go through an examination for standard III, and there was an opportunity of him having a situation and earning money. The application was allowed. The visitor reported that Mrs Towers's child had only attended nine times in nine weeks. A summons was ordered to be issued. In another case, there being fever in the house, it was thought advisable the matter should stand over. In the case of Sarah Tilley, living with her sister (Mrs Beasley), there had been only one attendance in a week. The visitor was instructed to inform them that if the proper attendance was not kept up, a summons would be served upon a certain day. The case of **James Norton**, a boatman, was mentioned. It appeared he had two sons who did not attend school ; one of them, being in London, was of course beyond the control of the Board. A girl of the name of **Taylor** was mentioned. It appeared she was often employed with her father in a boat, and did not attend school at all. A boy (**Albert Taylor**) was also engaged in a boat. It appeared the family occupied a house in the town. It was arranged that father should be seen, and if the proper attendances were not made, he was to be summoned. Mrs Towers (Cuckold's Alley) attended. She said she had one child of twelve years of age, and one between nine and ten. They earned between them 4s 6d per week. She was anxious for them to attend school ; but as she had nine children, seven of whom were at home, she could not afford to pay the school fees. The Board to communicate with her through the visitor. The case of Maria Richardson and Ellen Richardson, daughters of Thomas Richardson, the visitor said he had found them seaming in a neighbour's house. They did not attend school and had not done so for the last twelve months, so far as could be ascertained. It was arranged the father should be summoned. In the case of Clara Hall, aged nine, daughter of Charlotte Hall, Hunter's Row, it appeared the mother said she could not afford to let her go, and she was ordered to be summoned. As to Flora Wright (Vernon's Yard), it appeared the mother said the child was over thirteen. There being every probability she was only eleven, it was explained the onus of proof lay with the mother. With reference to the case of Alice Ford, residing with Thomas Everton, Upper Broad Street, it seems the attendances at school being four in a month, the Board decided that if half time, commencing on Monday, be not fully filled up, a summons should be issued. Charlotte Farmer (Wheatman's Yard) had made but seven attendances in the month, and the decision was as in the previous case. Ellen Palmer, daughter of James Palmer (Cork Hole), aged eight, had made five attendances in a month, though ostensibly a full timer, and the decision was as in the other cases. Anne Holland, daughter of Joseph Holland, had made but two attendances in a month. If a full attendance was not made in the forthcoming week, a summons was to be issued.

184 October 16 1875

COALVILLE – MR SMITH AND THE CHURCH CONGRESS A miserably petty slight has been passed on Mr G Smith FSA, the well known champion of the brick yard children. He was requested by the Church Congress Committee to read, at their meeting last week at Stoke, a paper on “Church work among Boatmen”. Mr Smith, though immersed in business, consented to comply with the committee's request with the hope, as he says, “of drawing together the latent energies of the various churches, and concentrating them on this, the blackest spot of our civilisation”. He took much trouble in preparing his paper, all arrangements were made, and lodgings were assigned him. At the eleventh hour the terrible rumour got abroad that Mr Smith was “a Dissenter”!!!..Mr Smith was called upon to verify or deny this fearful assertion. He confessed that it was quite true.

Whereupon the committee informed him that they “must forego his promised assistance”, and that his “name would not appear in future editions of the programme”. Shall we say “Poor Mr Smith!” or “Poor Committee!” The Church Congress, we think, is the more to be pitied for the shame thus brought upon it by those who thus mismanage its meetings with such narrow minded and high handed proceedings. Mr G Smith is the man of all others in England who is qualified to speak on the subject of “Church work among the Boatmen”, and those who read the able paper that he prepared for the Church Congress will not find a line to which a true churchman would object.

Figaro

185 December 11 1875

A coroner's jury has returned a verdict of “Wilful murder” against **James Walker** of Bull Bridge, boatman, in respect of the death of another boatman named **Thurman** at Bull Bridge on Saturday night. The deceased was found in the canal, his head being fearfully battered. The prisoner, at the lock up at Belper, admitted striking the deceased with the tiller of his boat.

186 December 11 1875

MURDER OF A THURMASTON SHOEMAKER Considerable excitement prevails at Ambergate and Belper, consequent upon the brutal murder committed in that neighbourhood on Saturday night. A young man named **James Walker**, 23 years of age, is implicated, and the name of his victim is **William Thurman**, a man about 29 years of age. The deceased, whose father resides at Thurmaston near Leicester, was formerly a shoemaker, but had latterly followed the vocation of a boatman. Walker is also a boatman, and they were employed on separate boats on the Cromford and Butterley Canal, and appear to have been intimates. On Saturday, Walker's boat was moored alongside the wharf at Bullbridge, and during the afternoon, Thurman is said to have been drinking at a public house. Shortly after ten o'clock at night, a woman named Cooper, living within a few yards from Walker's boat, heard a noise as of two men quarrelling on the canal side, and recognised Walker's voice calling to her to bring a light. James Hogg, who was standing on the canal bridge, also heard a disturbance in the direction indicated, but was unable to distinguish who the disputants were, and went home. From that time until about eight o'clock on Sunday morning, nothing appears to have been known of either of the parties, but shortly after eight o'clock Walker told a number of people that there was a man in the canal. A publican named Raynes and three other persons accompanied him back to the canal side, and near to his boat, Walker pointed out a man's arm just discernible above the surface of the water. The body was got out as quickly as possible, and discovered to be that of deceased who, it was evident, had met with foul play. The face bore marks of a severe blow, and the hair and upper parts of deceased's clothes were covered with blood. Some of the party observed blood on the towing-path, and also on the side of Walker's boat, as well as on the cabin door. It was also remarked by one of the party that there was blood on one of Walker's hands. The body having been removed to Raynes's public house, information was given to Police-constable Cholerton of Crich, who apprehended the accused, and charged him with the murder, to which he replied, “He wanted to take my tommy (provisions) from me, and I gave him a shove. That was all I did.” He was removed to the lock up at Belper. On searching the cabin, the constable found a blanket with stains of blood upon it, and a lad named Raynes stated that immediately previous to his giving information about the body, he had seen Walker on his boat washing his hands and wiping the tiller of the boat with a wet cloth, the supposition being that it was the instrument with which the injuries on the deceased's head were inflicted. An inquest was held on the body on Monday by Mr Whiston, coroner, Derby, when evidence was given in corroboration of the above facts. Drs Allen and Johnson, who had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, stated that there were three wounds on the deceased's head, the heaviest blow having been struck in the back part of the head, which had completely split the skull from one ear to the other. They were of opinion that the blow was of itself sufficient to cause death, and the jury returned a verdict of “Wilful murder” against Walker. It is stated that after the inquest, the prisoner admitted having struck the deceased with the tiller three times.

187 December 11 1875

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY DECEMBER 7 **Richard Hern** and **John Bedford**, boatmen, were charged with being drunk and riotous at Foxton on the 25th November. Neither of the defendants appeared, and they were each fined 10s and costs 9s 3d.

188 December 18 1875

At Stafford Assizes on Saturday, **Frederick Musson**, 25, boatman, and **Hannah Maria Hillman**, 21, living with the male prisoner as his paramour, were found guilty of the manslaughter of **Elizabeth Lowke** at Tettenhall, Staffordshire. The deceased was a motherless child, seven years of age, who had been entrusted to the care of the prisoners and lived with them in the boat. By a course of most brutal treatment, they caused her death. The prisoners were sentenced to twenty years penal servitude.

189 December 18 1875

THE MURDER OF A THURMASTON MAN At Derbyshire Assizes on Friday week, **James Walker**, boatman, put down in the calendar as 23 years old, but who looks much younger, was brought up charged with the wilful murder of **William Thurman**, in the parish of Crich on the 4th December. The prisoner was described as unable to read or write. The prisoner handed a document to the officer near him for the Judge, who stated that it was a requisition for the postponement of the trial on the ground that sufficient time had not elapsed to prepare his defence. His Lordship said the application was so reasonable that he could not refuse it, and the case was adjourned to the next Assizes.

190 March 18 1876

Charles Horace Lewis, a boatman, was on Tuesday indicted at Kent Assizes for the manslaughter of **Kate Lewis**, his wife, on the 5th November. The wife had been subjected to a long course of ill-treatment from the prisoner. He was found guilty, and Lord Coleridge sentenced him to ten years penal servitude.

191 April 15 1876

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT, APRIL 7 **William Monk**, framework knitter, and **Henry Leatherhead**, boatman, were remanded on a charge of stealing five boat ropes, value £3, from the ropewalk of Mr W Wood.

192 May 13 1876

BARROW-ON-SOAR

CHILD DROWNED An inquest was held on the 8th inst, on the body of a boy, John Marlow, four years of age. **Henry Squires**, boatman, said on the 17th ult, the boy went down the steps towards the water, walked on a plank, fell sideways into the water, and was carried through the archway of the bridge. The flood was large, and the stream remarkably strong. Verdict, "Accidental death".

193 June 3 1876

ACCIDENTS On the 31st ult, **James Chater**, a boatman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company, and living at Stoke Albany, was stepping off a boat when he fell backwards and broke the ankle of his right leg.

194 June 10 1876

NUNEATON POLICE INTELLIGENCE, THURSDAY **Samuel West**, boatman, was charged with assaulting and beating Martha Rotherington and Sarah Newcombe at Nuneaton, on the 3rd inst. Fined 5s and costs 15s 6d in each case.

195 August 19 1876

On Wednesday, **Samuel Parkin**, boatman, found the lifeless body of John Gateley, labourer aged 40, in the Birmingham Canal near the borough boundary, the hands of the deceased being tied together.

196 October 21 1876

BRICKYARD AND CANAL BOAT INSPECTION PAPER BY MR GEO SMITH, COALVILLE
In the Economy and Trade Section of the Social Science Congress on Tuesday, Mr Geo Smith of Coalville read a paper on "The Inspection of Brick and Tile Yards and Canal Boats", from which we extract the following :-

The subject embraces two things : 1st The inspection of brick and tile yards. 2nd The inspection of canal boats.

1. THE INSPECTION OF BRICK AND TILE YARDS If there is anything in this world that will undermine the foundations of any family, institutions, Church or State, and prevent our Factory and Workshops Act being properly respected, observed and upheld, it is disorder, confusion and laxity ; and this is apparent, to a large extent, in the way the Brickfields Act of 1871 is being carried out. How could it be otherwise ; when we take into consideration that the inspectors, by the passing of the Act had, in addition to their other duties, of visiting 100,000 factories and workshops, some 4000 or 5000 brick and tile yards, in which are employed nearly 20,000 men and women, and the same number of children and young people to look after. Many of these yards – as mostly the case with brickyards – are up to the knees in mud and clay, miles away in the country, and far away from any railway station. Nevertheless, one of the best Acts that was ever placed upon the statute book, viz, the Brickfields' Act of 1871, has been passed, and no female under 16 and no child under 10, and between 10 and 13, unless upon half time, can be lawfully employed in making bricks and tiles, not being ornamental tiles. It has been estimated that 10,000 children were sent out of yards on January 1st 1872, to home or school to be educated. It is quite time something was done to improve our system of factory inspection. I have visited brick and tile works and potteries in various parts of the country over and over again, and especially during the last few weeks, which have been in operation for years, and an inspector had not at the time of my visit, set his foot upon the place, nor had any papers been sent to the employers, informing them that they were under the Act. I find, as a rule, it is the selfish employers, and not so much the men, that are opposed to the Act. For the life of me I cannot see the reason : for in taking the whole country through, making bricks, tiles &c does not cost the employers one penny per thousand more than it did before the Act was passed – at least, so far as regards the children, and this fact was brought out in evidence before the Commissioners, and appears in their report. The Brickfields' Act has been a peg upon which to hang all sorts of complaints, such as high prices, scarcity of labour, and a host of other things which, when looked at, will not bear the light of day. Great objection has been raised as to the scarcity of children. The Act did not lessen the number of children – it only sent them to school for a time. If the Act had been properly carried out at the commencement, the difficulty – if any – would long before this have been removed. Notwithstanding all the hard things that have been heaped on my head, it is pleasing to see the vast improvement among the men, women and children at brick and tile yards. The Brickfields' Act, if wisely enforced, lessens the amount of drunkenness so prevalent – sorry to say – among brickyard employees. From half a gallon to a gallon of beer per day will be a fair average for each man. A large works with which I was connected for 14 years carried out, as nearly as possible, the Act as it now stands, during the whole of the time ; and the result is that I have not seen one dozen cases of drunkenness among the men. They go to their work on Monday as on other days, and all the children can read and write. During the last 12 years, in the neighbourhood where I reside, some very large brickfield works have sprung up – about 40 kilns – and owing to the large collieries in the vicinity, boys command high wages and

female labour is cheap ; and the bricks and tiles are made by hand. With these difficulties to contend with, bricks and tiles are made better and cheaper than in those districts where females are employed and the Act not strictly carried out. A few weeks since, a large colliery owner, a brick maker and a thoroughly practical man, told me that his experience was that it was cheaper to employ boys at 13 than it was at 12 ; generally speaking, a boy of 13 would do the work of two at 11 or 12. Some of the inspectors have done their duties well, as far as they were able ; at the same time, there are those among them who, if they thoroughly and practically understood their duties better, would have had less complaints about the Act. To be armed with the Queen's authority gives an inspector all the influence he needs for brick and tile yards, collieries, iron works and similar places. My idea of an inspector is one that will make the most visits, and carry out the Act thoroughly with the least amount of annoyance and number of prosecutions. It would save a vast amount of trouble if all the brick and tile works were registered ; this could be done by the registrar of births and deaths as he travels through the country places &c. The inspector would know of their existence and locality without waiting to hear by chance of them. The certifying surgeon should visit all factories and workshops ; but in factories and workshops employing under twenty hands, his visits should be monthly instead of fortnightly.

2. THE INSPECTION OF CANAL BOATS When the Bridgewater canal was made in 1759, the labouring classes were as nearly on a level as possible as regards wages, education and morality, and since that time, those who took to boating have step by step to a certain extent – by the nature of their employment – been separating themselves from the rest of the labouring population and getting lower ; while those in towns have been drawing close together, and by means of education, a cheap free press, social intercourse, careful combination with the Bible, have become more enlightened, better educated, better workmen and better citizens, commanding more wages and getting more home comforts. In the village of Braunstone, near Rugby, there are ten public houses adjoining the canal in a distance of little over a mile, at which the boatmen, their wives and children are to be seen at any time of the day. One boatman, who has worked between the Potteries, Birmingham and London during the past forty years, does not know of half a dozen boaters who are members of a Christian Church. He further says that two parts out of three of the men and women living as husbands and wives are unmarried. If my estimate of 100,000 be true, and I am led to believe it is under the mark, we have 22,400 men, 22,400 women and 72,000 children, which may be termed “our canal population” ; out of this number, we have 13,000 men and 13,000 women living together in an unmarried state, and 40,000 illegitimate children living, floating and working in connection with canal boats. Owing to our canals being narrower and the locks shorter than in any other country, the boats and cabins must be smaller ; many of the boats carrying not more than 25 tons. The cabin is scarcely the size of a gentleman's dog kennel, into which are stowed, or huddled together, man woman and six or seven children of both sexes, big and small, to live, sleep and die in. I advocate the entire prohibition of women and children living and working on canal boats. The work can be done cheaper without them. The men would become more sober and industrious if “the women and children were out of the way”. During the whole time I have been advocating the cause of my young clients, I have not met with a dozen objections to the plan roughly sketched out by me, in dealing with these good hearted people. I have received encouraging letters from all quarters, including the Queen, and down to the boatmen. The boatmen and their children have been left to themselves too long already. As one said to me, they might live and die like dogs, on pieces of old sacks and in the stables with their horses, and the Government does not notice them. They have been supplying inmates for workhouses and hospitals long enough. They have neither the money to pay nor accommodation for the poor weakly sickly children in their cabins. We have a law that prevents over crowding in houses and in berths of ships, and yet we have had in our midst during the last century blacker and darker spots than the blackest in our towns, and the inspector has not had power to lift the

latch, much less look into those “hell holes” of filth and disease, actually swarming with the most sickening and loathsome vermin, which might almost at times be taken out of the cabins by shovelfuls, causing a stench unbearable for some distance. I am anxiously waiting to see what the Home Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board are going to do with them, for I have their assurance that they are preparing a bill on the subject. What I want to see is, the children educated, and the women good wives, happy homes for their husbands, and I do not care what plans are adopted, whether it be the Royal Commissioners' plan, or Mr Baker's plan, or my plan. I am hoping it will come to the same in the end. No inspection could be carried out so effectively and cheaply as the inspection of canal boats. With the assistance of the lock tenters or boat gaugers, two inspectors will be sufficient ; and if they are stationed at proper places, they will be able to see the 20,000 boats on our 4,800 miles of rivers and canals twice a year, much easier than a Factory Inspector would visit 1,000 factories and workshops. I would station one at Birmingham, and give him the Black Country and all the canals south and east ; I would station another at Manchester and give him all the canals north and west of Birmingham. And their duties should not be to look after the children only, but to inspect the boats and canals, and report where life and property are in danger. The time has now come when overcrowding in boat cabins must be stopped. Sunday travelling, except in special cases, done away with ; the cabins cleaned as if they were on land and not on water, and the children educated. Anything short of this will not be satisfactory to the country. In conclusion, so far as my experience goes, I think there will not be such opposition to the Act as was the case in the Brickfield Acts. In this case, the Queen takes special interest in “Our Canal Population”, and we have the “heartly good wishes” of canal companies, directors, canal managers, boatmen and their wives. To those – if there be any – who seek to annoy, obstruct, and delight in keeping this useful class of our labouring population in dense ignorance and misery, to reduce the women and children to worse than beasts, as they did with those employed in making bricks and tiles, we say, “too late, too late”.

197 January 6 1877

At Runcorn on Thursday week, a boatman named **Carrington** “bought” for 18s **Sarah Tyrer**, who lived with **John Taylor**, another boatman, as his wife. The woman took up her abode with her new lord, and received a sum of money from him for family expenses. Returning next day to her former floating home to fetch her wardrobe, she found Taylor disconsolate, and elected to remain. Carrington was furious over his loss, and unfolded to the magistrates the tale of his wrongs. The answer was that he had no assistance to expect from the police.

198 January 20 1877

NUNEATON POLICE, TUESDAY **James Kibbler**, boatman of Warwick, for being drunk in Wash Lane, Nuneaton, on the 12th instant, was fined 5s and costs 14s ; or in default of payment, to be imprisoned for fourteen days.

199 February 3 1877

FLOODED OUT Mr George Smith, whose name is well known in connection with benevolent works among our canal population, writes to us from Coalville, Leicester :- “During the usual Christmas appeals, and appeals for help in distress caused by the late disastrous floods, the wretched and pitiable condition of the women and children living in canal boats seems to have been entirely overlooked in the rush and crush of other philanthropic objects. No class of the labouring population suffer so bitterly and severely through extreme changes of the weather as “our canal population”. Frost, floods and drought prevent them from earning a living. Cribbed and confined in their cabins, with no means of sending their children to factories or other places or of getting anything for themselves, and with but little credit, the hardships the women and children have to endure are fearful. Boat hire must be paid and animals fed under any circumstances. A number of

boatmen, almost wild with despair, said to me a few days since at Birmingham, that “in consequence of the floods, for a long time they had not been getting enough bread for their women and little ones – meat they never had any – and a red herring was a treat for a Sunday's dinner”. In fact, they said they were almost driven to a state of desperation. Anyone visiting the canal wharves where numbers of boats are collected together may hear the same state of misery and woe. It will be a red letter day for the boaters when the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners are carried out.

Times

200 February 17 1877

WIGSTON

THE FATAL ACCIDENT Mr Harrison, coroner, held an inquest on Monday afternoon at the Navigation Inn, Kilby Bridge, on the body of **Benjamin Voss**, who was found drowned in the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Canal on Saturday last. An unusual amount of interest was manifested in the neighbourhood, the result of rumour, and the strictest inquiry was instituted accordingly. The jury having viewed the body, **Sarah Jane Voss** said she was the widow of deceased, who was a lock-keeper. He was 56 years old and had lived at the lockhouse three years. She last saw him alive about five o'clock on Saturday morning, when he spoke to her and then went downstairs. She expected from what he said to find him in the house when she came downstairs. As he did not come home, she went to Mr Parker's and told him that her husband could not be found. The drags were accordingly used. This was about twelve o'clock at noon. Mr Parker was the surveyor of the canal. It was about six o'clock when she saw his body. Dr Hulme was then sworn, and deposed that he was a surgeon and MD practising at Wigston. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, he was sent for to see deceased. He saw the body which was lying a few yards from the house. It appeared to have been in the water ten or twelve hours. He had the body removed to the house for the purpose of stripping it. After stripping the body, he made a careful examination, but found no marks of violence whatever. There was nothing that raised the slightest suspicion, and he had no doubt death resulted from suffocation by drowning. There was nothing to lead him to suppose that he came by his death by unfair means. **Edward Swanwick** said he was employed by the canal company, and deposed to finding deceased, who held a bit of paper in his hand. Superintendent Moore : Was he dressed? Witness : Yes. **James Rigley** said he was a boatman and lived at 41 Melton Street, Leicester. He owned two boats, which stopped at Kilby Bridge on Friday night. He did not stop there with them himself, but left them at Newton, and went to his home in Leicester. Once he happened to leave a bit of a paddle up, which was the cause of some angry words between him and deceased. This occurred a month ago. He had not seen him since. Alfred Clay, a baker living at Wigston, identified the last witness as the person who asked him at Newton to give him a ride. He rode with him to Wigston. A juryman : What time did you get to Wigston? Witness : About half past five o'clock. **James Rigley**, a youth, was called. He was the son of James Rigley of Melton Street, Leicester, and he called himself a boatman. There were three of them left with the boats on Saturday. The boats were his father's, and they stopped at Kilby Bridge on Friday night. It was a quarter to seven o'clock on Saturday morning when they started out of the wharf. When he got to the lock, he opened one gate and another boy who was driving opened the other. The boy's name was **Joshua James**. They passed through without any obstruction. He saw nothing of deceased. A juryman asked what depth of water would be in the lock when the boat passed out. Mr Parker said there would be about six feet of water. Joshua James and William Lang corroborated the evidence of the previous witness. The Coroner observed that it was reported in the neighbourhood that suspicions had been excited in consequence of some words that had passed. There was a suspicion in the mind of the wife of the deceased man that Rigley had something to do with the death of her husband. That would be a most serious imputation, and would amount to something like murder. The widow, who, perhaps, honestly enough fancied that the man had something to do with the death of her husband, had circulated that report very much in the neighbourhood. The police had collected all the evidence that was procurable, and he thought it would be satisfactory to hear everybody, so that there could be a

complete clearing up of the case. There was not an atom of suspicion against Rigley, who had given a true account of his time, and it was merely to clear the man that he made these observations. The jury unanimously returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

201 April 7 1877

PETTY SESSIONS, RUGBY **William Barnwell**, boatman, Hillmorton, was charged with neglecting to send his three children, aged 12, 10 and 6, to school. Mr Fuller appeared for the Hillmorton School Board. The case was dismissed on defendant promising to see that they attended.

202 April 28 1877

THE SUPPOSED MURDER OF A BOATMAN **John Probert**, master of the *Usk*, was on Saturday at Tattenhall charged on suspicion with the murder of **Charles Moston**, a boatman under him. The deceased was found with his neck dislocated on the towing-path of the canal, between Beeston and Waterton, on Monday morning last. The prisoner was remanded until Saturday.

203 April 28 1877

MR GEO SMITH AND "OUR CANAL POPULATION" Mr Geo Smith, writing to the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, says :- I should think there was scarcely a man, woman or child in this country but will rejoice to hear the statement made by the Home Secretary to the effect that he had prepared a Bill which would shortly be introduced to Parliament, the object being to lessen some of the misery and wretchedness the poor women and children living and working on canal boats are undergoing. The following facts, seen by my own eyes within the last few weeks, will give a glimpse of canal life. In a cabin at Paddington, a poor boatman died very suddenly during the night, and it was stated by the jury in their verdict that it was partly due to suffocation, caused by the need of sufficient fresh air. There were three men and one woman sleeping in the cabin at the time he lay crouched in death. I saw the unfortunate man a few hours after the sad event and, owing to there not being room to "lay him out", part of the cabin had to be taken down. Another case was that of a poor woman who had four children very ill of scarlatina, and a drunken husband ; she had not a crumb in the cabin or sixpence in her pocket. I was told that the drunken brute had, during the preceding week, reeled to his cabin swearing, foaming and raging, turning the poor woman, with her sickly children, out of the cabin on to the towing-path, to dabble in the mud on a bitterly cold wet night, compelling her to fetch the horse up at twelve o'clock and begin their journey – and a journey it was – with three poorly children trudging after her heels, while her man lay snoring and boozing in the cabin, the other child steering the boat as well as its feeble strength and emaciated body would let it. Not one on either of these boats could read and write. But it is not all as black as this, for since I ventured on the crusade in 1873, and the publication of my little work, more of the better class of boatmen have houses on land. The manager of a large canal company, who have 335 boats, writes to me to say that they have only six women and ten children on board their boats, and employ no youths unless they are apprenticed as sailors and can read and write, which nearly the whole of the men can do ; and 105 boatmen, out of 662 in their employ, are total abstainers ; and 646 have homes on land. This plainly shows that an Act can be put in force to prevent overcrowding in cabins, without much inconvenience to either boatmen or boat owners.

204 May 12 1877

On Monday at Wakefield, Mary Spence, a young widow who appeared in a delicate state of health, was charged with having, on the 21st ult, murdered a female infant, of which she was the mother ; and **Mary Jane Lightowler**, the wife of a boatman of Methley, and the mother of the first named prisoner, was charged with being an accessory. A remand was granted.

205 May 19 1877

The Government Canal Bill was read a first time on Monday night. Mr Cross has informed Mr

George Smith that he will be gratified with the provisions affecting the welfare of the boatmen and their families.

206 June 2 1877

OUR CANAL POPULATION Mr George Smith of Coalville, in a letter to the *Nonconformist*, remarks :- As there is now a probability of daylight dawning upon the boaters, and the blessings of education being extended to their children, it would be well to place within their reach on the sides of the canals “by hook or by crook” pleasing and instructive literature of a highly moral and religious character. It would be a pity if the back slum trash of our large towns should find its way into the cabins. A word to the wise will be sufficient.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A CHILD An inquest was held on Wednesday, before G Harrison Esq, coroner, at the Brickmakers' Arms, George Street, on the body of **John Thomas Wormleighton**, six months old, a child of **Samuel Wormleighton**, boatman, Loughborough. The child's mother brought it on Tuesday to Leicester by rail, and on the road it became unwell, and died about six o'clock in the evening. She had made a mixture by boiling a quarter of an ounce of caraway seed in about a gill of water, and adding 20 drops of laudanum, had given the child half a teaspoonful of this mixture on Sunday afternoon, and the same quantity at dinner time on Tuesday. Mr Charles Whitmore, assistant to Mr R S Mutch, surgeon, gave it as his opinion that the child had died from the effects of opium incautiously administered, and a verdict was returned accordingly.

207 June 30 1877

MURDEROUS ASSAULT On Saturday a murderous assault was committed on Constable London of the Birmingham force by **Henry Smith** (22), a boatman on the Birmingham and Warwick Canal. Smith quarrelled with his wife, and followed her out of the cabin of the boat. London told him he must not interfere with his wife or he should take him into custody. The exasperated boatman then came out armed with a poker, with which he threatened to knock out the policeman's brains. While he was stepping off his boat upon the towing-path, London struck him sharply on the arm with a light stick, and caused him to drop the weapon into the water. Returning to the cabin, Smith seized a heavy axe, but the boatman's wife replaced it in the cabin. Smith, again armed with the axe, rushed towards the constable shouting, “You swine! I will murder you!” He struck furiously at him with the axe, which he wielded with his left hand. The constable tried to disable his assailant by striking at his arm with the stick, but he missed, and the axe struck him on the right side of the head, fracturing his skull. Smith ran away, but was secured directly afterwards, and London lies at the hospital in a critical condition.

208 July 7 1877

MR GEO SMITH AND THE BOATMEN There is nothing like making personal and practical investigation if one desires to obtain reliable information. The Canal Boatmen's Bill having been referred to a Select Committee, Mr Salt, Secretary to the Local Government Board, who represents the Government on the committee, and Mr George Smith of Coalville, spent some hours in making inquiries among the boatmen of Paddington on Saturday afternoon, finishing up their visit by taking tea in one of the cabins with a boatman and his family.

209 July 7 1877

NUNEATON POLICE NEWS, FRIDAY JUNE 29 **Eli Hubbard**, boatman, and Charles String, both from Foleshill, were charged with being drunk in the Midland Road, Nuneaton, on the previous night. They both pleaded guilty, and PC F Smith said he found both the defendants lying about the road, drunk. They were each fined 5s and costs 13s 6d ; in default to be committed for 14 days with hard labour.

210 July 7 1877

WIGSTON

ACCIDENTS On Saturday afternoon last, two accidents happened to two little girls, who fell into the canal which runs near Wigston. The first occurred to a girl, the daughter of a boatman who, in attempting to jump into the boat as it lay in the lock, missed her footing and fell into the water. Her father, who was on the boat, seeing her fall, immediately jumped in after her, and finally succeeded in rescuing her from her perilous position. The second was to a little girl named Driver, who slipped into the water while playing near Kilby Bridge. A gentleman who was fishing near, on seeing what had happened, instantly jumped in after her and, with the help of his companion, was successful in getting her out.

211 July 14 1877

MAN FOUND DROWNED AT BELGRAVE On Saturday Mr G F Harrison, coroner, held an inquest at the Talbot Inn, Belgrave, on the body of a man who has since been identified as **Thomas Clover**, boatman of Enderby, who was found drowned in the canal in Belgrave on Friday. The body was found by a boatman named **Thomas Ison** and he, with PC Eli Hoe, who was near at the time, got the body out of the water. Mr A W Emms, surgeon, Belgrave, who examined the body on Friday night, said deceased had been dead about 24 hours. There were no marks of violence, and there was no doubt death resulted from suffocation by drowning. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

212 July 14 1877

EDUCATION AMONG CANAL BOATMEN The annual gathering of a number of Sunday School scholars from each of the schools belonging to the Free Christian Churches of the metropolis, numbering about 800, took place on Sunday afternoon in South Place Chapel, Finsbury. The service was conducted by Mr G Smith of Coalville who, in his address, referred to some incidents and results of his brickyard agitation and more recently his canal movement. Among other things, he mentioned the case of a boat girl whom he saw at Birmingham a few weeks since. She was the only one out of a family of six who could read, and she had learned by means of reading the public house signboards on the sides of the canal as the boat moved along. For this accomplishment, she was called the pet of the family. He also mentioned the case of a boatman at Sheffield, who offered in his presence, three weeks ago, £5 to another boatman if he would teach him to read and write. This offer the boatman declined, saying that he "hadn't time, and could hardly read and write himself". Mr Smith further stated that a boat child of respectable parents was recently sent to school near one of the wharves in the neighbourhood of London, and instead of being placed with other children, it was put by itself on a form, and not a question was put to it during the whole of the morning.

213 July 14 1877

A BOY SHOT BY A BOATMAN On Monday afternoon a boy named Connor, whilst looking over Lee Bridge, over the Birmingham and Wolverhampton Canal, was shot in the forehead by a boatman named **Boswell**, who was passing in a boat laden with chalk en route to Spon Lane. Boswell states that the boy and his companions were dropping stones upon him and he, with the intention of frightening the lads, discharged his gun at the parapet of the bridge. The lads, on the other hand, deny the stone throwing. A boy, who was on the canal side, informed the police that he heard the boatman say he would blow out their brains, and he deliberately fired the gun at the boys, who were looking down upon him. Connor was taken to the Queen's Hospital, where it was found that shots had lodged in his nose, his forehead, his right ear and left eye. It is feared he will lose the sight of this eye. Boswell, who is a native of Braunstone, Northamptonshire, is in custody.

214 September 8 1877

COALVILLE

OUR CANAL POPULATION During a harvest thanksgiving service held in College Chapel, (?Steeney/Stepney?) Green on Sunday, Mr George Smith of Coalville, who conducted the services for the young, took occasion to refer in his address to the many advantages the boat owners and boatmen will receive in the long run by the recent Canal Boats Act, which has lately passed, and which he had taken some interest to obtain. He further said that owing to the many difficulties to be overcome, and the interests at stake, great wisdom and care would have to be exercised in carrying out the act.

215 September 29 1877

RUGBY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **Joseph Barratt**, boatman, was charged by Mr H Hewitt, coal merchant, with stealing a boat mooring chain on August 30th. There not being sufficient evidence, the case was dismissed.

216 November 3 1877

At Runcorn on Monday, **John Hughes**, a boatman, was committed for trial on the charge of having murdered Nicholas Stevens, a Cornish man. Deceased jumped on board prisoner's boat to stop Hughes from ill-treating his wife, and he was followed by a comrade named Dart. Hughes resented the interference and knocked both men overboard. Dart was got out at the point of death, but Stevens was drowned.

217 December 1 1877

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **Alfred James Clawe**, boatman, was charged with stealing a fowl, value 3s, the property of Thomas Congreave of the Royal Oak Inn, Polesworth, on the 21st ult. Mr Bland appeared for the defendant, who had a witness in attendance to prove that the fowl, which was found cooked in the defendant's possession, was purchased. Superintendent Walker intimated that it was not intended to offer any evidence against the defendant, and he was discharged.

218 December 8 1877

MYSTERIOUS DEATH NEAR HUSBANDS BOSWORTH

INQUEST AND VERDICT Mr G F Harrison held an inquest on Friday at Husbands Bosworth, on the body of **Edward Bramley**, a boatman, who met his death in a long tunnel on the Grand Union Canal. On Wednesday morning, the deceased had charge of a canal boat with two men named **Smith** and **Maddocks**. Smith and Bramley had some words and fought, but they became friendly before reaching the tunnel. The deceased and Smith lay on their backs to push the boat through with their legs, but on coming out at the other end, Bramley was missing and Smith stated that he had fallen into the water. Smith afterwards told a woman that he must have fought with Bramley in the tunnel, adding that the deceased caught hold of his hand when in the water, saying, "Goodbye, Sam : God bless you ; I am going", and then sank like a stone. Smith was drunk when he made this statement, which he afterwards contradicted. The body, when recovered, presented the appearance of death by drowning, there being no injuries whatever. Smith's face bore several marks as if caused by fighting. On making inquiries, it was found Smith had made some very strange and contradictory statements, and under the circumstances Superintendent Holloway thought it necessary to detain Smith and Maddocks until the matter should be cleared up. They were consequently removed to Market Harborough Police Station, and were present at the coroner's enquiry, but on a verdict of "Accidental death" being returned, they were at once set at liberty.

The following evidence was adduced at the inquest :-

Jeremiah Stain said : I am an innkeeper, and keep the Union Anchor Inn at Kibworth Wharf, Husbands Bosworth, near the Grand Union Canal. I have seen the dead body, and identify it as that of Edward Bramley. On Wednesday morning, deceased and the two men present called at my

house; they were then sober. Bramley was the captain. They stayed until nearly ten o'clock, and had six pints of ale between them. They appeared friendly. After Maddocks had left, deceased struck the man Samuel Smith a blow in the face and told him to go out. He did so. I said to Bramley, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for hitting an old man". Bramley said, "Smith hit me in the eye, or else I should not have struck him". The men were sober when they left.

Betsy Coleman : I am the wife of Sheldon Coleman, grazier, Husbands Bosworth. On Wednesday afternoon, Samuel Smith asked me if I had heard the tidings of a man having been drowned in the canal. He said, "I think we had been fighting, and he slipped off the board in the tunnel". I said to him, "Were there more with you at the time?" and he said, "No, only us two, and I have come to tell the people". He was intoxicated and staggered about while he was talking. He was crying, and seemed in trouble. There was a fresh scratch on his lip, and I could see it bleeding. There was also a scratch on the back of one of the man's hands, but I cannot say which. I also noticed a little blood on his ear, but I don't know which ear it was.

James Carter : I am a constable at Husbands Bosworth. On Wednesday afternoon, Maddocks made a statement to me, in consequence of which I saw Smith. I said, "I suppose there is a man drowned in the tunnel?" Smith said, "Yes there is, and he's dead". I asked him how it happened. Smith said the deceased man was on the board footing, and he missed him when he got from about 250 to 300 yards in the tunnel. Smith said he turned round and he could see the deceased swim for about 20 yards after the boat, and that the deceased man caught hold of his two fingers, and as soon as ever he caught hold of his two fingers he let them go, and said either "Good night", or "Goodbye, and God bless you", and the deceased man then sank down on the off side of the boat. He said they had got a good way in the tunnel before he missed the deceased. We were about two hours and a quarter dragging in the tunnel. I asked Smith several times whereabouts the man went down. He said, "He's in the water, and you may find him". He went into the cabin and gave us no assistance at all. He was under the influence of drink, but not so incapable but that he could have assisted us if he had been so minded. Maddocks assisted us. He was not drunk. I searched the boat and found three half sovereigns and 19s 6d in the bottom of the boat, and a knife on the top of the deck. Cross-examined by Smith : You did say you got from your board, and the man caught hold of your fingers. Thomas Charles Marsh, surgeon, assistant to Mr Shuckburgh, Shackleford, Husbands Bosworth, surgeon, said, "I have made a *post mortem* examination of the body, and find no marks of violence or suspicious appearances. Deceased died from suffocation by drowning. Smith had a slight scratch on the left ear, and a wound on the lower lip.

James Thorold Holloway : I am superintendent of police at Market Harborough. On Wednesday afternoon I received a telegram from Carter, and went there and saw Smith at the Wheat Sheaf Inn. I took Smith into the parlour, and then Maddocks came in. I said, "How did it happen?" and cautioned them. Smith said, "We were "legging" it through the tunnel, and when we got about 200 yards he fell off. I tried to get hold of him, when he got hold of my two fingers (holding out his right hand), and he couldn't hold, and he said, "Goodbye, God bless you Sam : I'm going", and sank like a stone. I then got out of the tunnel the best way I could. A puff of wind came, and such like". I said, "I've been told there's been a quarrel between you and Bramley". He said, "That's not right, master ; we never had a wry word at all, and there was no quarrel at all". I then took him into custody. Maddocks said, "We left Welford Wharf about six o'clock in the morning, and we got to the tunnel about nine o'clock". He also said, "We stopped at Kibworth Wharf, and had a pint of ale each. Smith and the captain had been jangling in the morning about the money", (this was said in the presence of Smith), "but I never saw any blows struck, and they seemed to be as right and comfortable as they could be before they went into the tunnel". Maddocks said, "It was my turn to "leg" it, but Smith did it instead. If there's anything wrong, I know nothing about it. I heard him shouting (meaning Smith), "Dick, Dick", and when he came out of the other end, he told me he had left him (Bramley) in the water". He said Smith seemed put about, but he also said, "I can't understand about the deceased getting hold of Smith's two fingers and letting go again, and I myself have fallen in many times, but could get out again, but there's more difficulty getting into an empty boat than a loaded one". I then helped to pull the body out of the water. On conveying him to

Market Harborough in the trap, Smith said, "The last time I struck at him he seemed to go down all at once". He also said, "I mean when I struck at him to get hold of him".

The Coroner, in carefully summing up the case, pointed out that too much stress ought not to be laid on the statements of a man who was almost helplessly intoxicated, as the man Smith was when he made a communication to the woman Coleman, and who in his incoherent statements claimed relationship with the deceased which they knew was not the case. Under all the circumstances, it was for them to say, there being no marks of violence on the body, and considering how easily the deceased might have fallen into the water, whether the deceased met with his death through the act of someone or by a pure accident.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death",

219 December 22 1877

NUNEATON POLICE COURT, THURSDAY DECEMBER 20 **Joseph Chenler**, boatman, for ill-treating a donkey at Nuneaton on the 1st inst, by working it while in an unfit state, was fined £1 and costs 14s, or a months imprisonment.

220 December 29 1877

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE, MONDAY **Absolom Hampton**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was charged with assaulting **Ellen Hampton**, his wife, at Aylestone on the 22nd inst. Complainant was called, and said she did not wish to press the charge, and the case was dismissed.

221 December 29 1877

The Bible Society have made a grant of 100 Bibles and Testaments to Mr George Smith of Coalville, "The Boatman's Friend", for distribution amongst the boatmen and their families.

222 January 12 1878

SUDDEN DEATH Mr Harrison also held an inquest at the Marquis of Hastings Inn, Navigation Street, as to the death of **Elizabeth Sparks** aged 54, widow of **Frederick Sparks**, boatman. Deceased lived with a single woman named Sarah Burley at 12 Queen Street, Archdeacon Lane. On Sunday she appeared to be in her usual health, and slept well, and on Monday morning had her breakfast as usual at nine o'clock, and did not make any complaint of feeling unwell. Shortly afterwards she went to the water closet which, as she did not return, was forced open, and she was discovered to be dead. Mr M Dundon attributed death in this case to heart disease, and a verdict to that effect was returned.

223 May 11 1878

COALVILLE

CANAL BOAT POPULATION The Canal Boat Act came into operation on the 1st of January this year, but the penalty clauses are not in force until next year. The passing of this Act is allowed by all to have been mainly due to the information given by Mr George Smith of Coalville, and to his zealous advocacy. It will be a sad disappointment to many if this Act is not fully carried out. No better way of ensuring this could be suggested than the appointment of Mr Smith, "the boatman's friend", as her Majesty's inspector under the Act. A memorial to this effect, signed by the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Duke of Westminster, Lord Fortescue and other influential and philanthropic men, has been sent to the Home Office. We entirely concur in the concluding words of this memorial when it says that the appointment would do credit to the Government which made it, and tend greatly to the public benefit, while it would be a fitting acknowledgement of great public services rendered without the hope or the expectation of reward.

Leisure Hour

224 June 1 1878

"ROB RAT" The Wesleyan Conference Office, Paternoster Row, has published a most interesting and pathetic story from the pen of the Rev Mark Guy Pearse. It is entitled "Rob Rat", and possesses

unusual local interest from the fact that it is not only dedicated to Mr George Smith of Coalville, and published on behalf of the great cause with which his name has so long been closely identified, but presents a vivid picture of the life of our canal boatmen and their families. The subject of the narrative is found in the philanthropist's well known work, "Our Canal Population", and its dedication is as follows :- To George Smith Esq, Coalville, Leicester, whose noble and unflagging efforts on behalf of the brickyard children and the canal population have made his name one of the most blessed of our age. May the success that has gladdened his heart in the former work, and rescued thousands of little ones from a horrible bondage, crown his endeavours on behalf of our bargemen and their families". "Rob Rat" is published at the modest price of sixpence, and possesses the treble advantage of being admirably written, abounding in excellent illustrations, and being printed on behalf of a most commendable cause – to promote the welfare of the boatmen. The story of "Rob Rat" and the boat children is peculiarly touching and cannot fail to excite and sustain the interest of its readers ; while the woodcuts will enable them at a glance to realise some of the daily experiences and abodes of our "boaters". The work, in short, deserves an extensive circulation.

225 June 15 1878

INQUEST AT BELGRAVE – CAUTION TO WITNESSES An inquest was held on Wednesday by G F Harrison Esq, coroner, at the Talbot Inn, Belgrave, on view of the body of a newly born male infant, which had been found by two boatmen named **John Ginns** and **Thomas Rigley** on the previous day, wrapped up in a brown paper parcel, floating in the canal near the Talbot Inn, where its progress down the stream had been halted by an overhanging bush. Thomas Rigley, boatman, having spoken as to the finding of the body and calling the attention of PC Foster to it, Dr A W Emms, Belgrave, said he had examined the body, and had found that it was the body of a newly born male child. It was very much decomposed, and had been in the water, as he judged, about four or five weeks. He was unable to say whether it had been born alive or not, but the appearances were such as to lead him to suppose that the birth took place without medical assistance. A post mortem examination would not assist him in arriving at any safe conclusion as to whether the child had been born alive or not. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the facts of the case. During the inquest, one of the men, John Ginns, living in Syston Street, Leicester, who had found the body, was called as a witness, but he did not answer to the call. The Coroner accordingly enquired of PC Foster whether Ginns had been duly summoned to attend and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, he remarked that it was highly necessary that a witness, when summoned, should obey the summons. In this particular instance it so happened that Ginn's evidence was not absolutely essential to enable the jury to arrive at their decision, for his evidence would have been a mere corroboration of that of Rigley ; but in many cases, as they would easily recognise, the absence of a material witness would result in the most serious inconvenience. The Coroner then had the absent witness formally called upon three times and, as no answer was received, he explained that according to the powers conferred upon him, he was authorised to inflict a penalty of £2 on any witness who should not obey his summons to appear. He was always most averse to take such a proceeding, but as the absence of this witness might have brought the whole proceedings to a standstill, he should require some explanation from the man as to the reason why he did not appear and, in the meantime, he reserved to himself what steps he should take as to inflicting the penalty which the law enabled him to do. The jury fully agreed with all the Coroner had said, and quite recognised the importance of a witness obeying his summons.

226 July 13 1878

NUNEATON

SAD CASE OF DROWNING IN THE CANAL On Tuesday evening last, an inquest was held at the White Horse Inn, Nuneaton, before Thomas Dewes Esq, coroner, on view of the body of **William Henry Jones**, six years of age, the son of **George Jones**, boatman. From the evidence, it appeared that the father's boat was moored in the canal near the Punch Bowl Bridge, and on the

father of the deceased going to it, he observed his lad's cap in the water. Suspecting that all was not right, he made a search, and before reaching the cap he saw his son in the water, immediately beneath the surface, the hair of his head being just above. He got him out, and Mr A N Cookson, surgeon, who happened to be passing, was called in and did all in his power to save the lad's life, but in vain. No one saw the deceased get into the water, but it is supposed he fell off the boat. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that death ensued from congestion of the lungs, the result of accidental immersion.

227 August 17 1878

NUNEATON POLICE, THURSDAY **Henry Broadfield**, boatman of Birmingham, was charged with having stolen, at Polesworth on the 10th inst, a horse, value £5, the property of George Jones, coal merchant, Birmingham. Defendant was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

228 August 24 1878

THEDDINGWORTH

BATHING FATALITY An inquest was held on Monday afternoon by G F Harrison Esq, coroner, at the Crown Inn, Theddingworth, as to the death of Henry Wybro, aged 19, apprentice to Mr George Jayes, carpenter, Aylestone. From the evidence, it appeared that a boatman named **James Charter**, living at 29 Great Holme Street, Leicester, was with a boat at Theddingworth on Friday afternoon when he noticed a man's clothes lying on the side of the canal. He did not then see anyone in the water or any body. He went into the village and raised an alarm. Having obtained the assistance of a shepherd named Benjamin Bull, he went back to the spot where he had seen the clothes and, with the boat poles, dragged the canal. After a while, they raised the body of a man to the surface. The body was conveyed to the Crown Inn, where it was on Saturday identified as that of the deceased. The evidence of Dr Marsh showed that the young man had been dead about an hour, and that the appearance showed that deceased had been seized with a fit or with cramp whilst bathing. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

229 September 7 1878

Mr George Smith of Coalville, Leicestershire, has in the press another edition of his work "Our Canal Population", which will be strongly bound in cloth and illustrated with wood cuts showing various phases of canal life. A copy of the Canal Boats Act, Mr Smith's plan for carrying it out, and the kind of mission which, in his opinion, should be adopted among the boatmen and their children, and other interesting matters will be added.

230 September 21 1878

Mr George Smith of Coalville has just received a free grant of several hundred interesting volumes from the Religious Tract Society for distribution among the canal boatmen.

231 October 5 1878

TOWN HALL, WEDNESDAY

CHARGE OF ILLEGAL PAWNING **Mary Pilgrim** was charged with unlawfully pawning a watch belonging to her son-in-law, **Thomas Pilgrim**, a boatman. Prosecutor said about six weeks before his mother died she gave him a watch, which he gave to his father to keep for safety. It was placed in the cabin of the boat. His father subsequently married prisoner, and a short time ago he noticed her wearing the watch. Last Monday week he made enquiries, and found the watch had been pledged at Mr Stowe's, Belgrave Gate, for 15s. Prisoner said the watch had been given to her by her husband. Arranged.

232 December 28 1878

OUR CANAL BOATMEN Writing to the editor of the *Daily News*, Mr George Smith of Coalville says :- While the deserving poor in our large towns and villages are receiving some of "the good

things of the world” which the kind liberal hearted and Christ like amongst us have for disposal, I do sincerely hope that in the midst of the thousands of jovial festivities taking place at this interesting season of the year in the cottage homes, mansions and palaces of “Old England”, the wives and children of canal boatmen living in the floating huts on our silent highways will not be overlooked by those who have the disposition and ability to show the deeds of Canon Kingsley's “Practical Christianity” to suffering humanity. The condition of our boaters is uncommonly severe this winter, the trade bad, canals frozen, causing many of them to be away from their friends, and the Canal Boats Act coming into force on the 1st of January, renders their case worthy of the attention of clergymen, ministers, benefactors and others all over the country, as a visit to our canal wharves and basins will reveal.

233 December 28 1878

THE QUEEN AND “OUR CANAL POPULATION” Mr George Smith of Coalville has received the following letter from the Queen relating to the new edition of his work, with supplements, in which reference is made to the carrying out of the Canal Boats Act of last year and the mission work among boatmen :- “Lieut-General Ponsonby has received the Queen's commands to thank Mr George Smith for sending a copy of his work on “Our Canal Population”, which her Majesty has been graciously pleased to accept. Buckingham Palace, 19th December 1878.”

234 January 25 1879

It is feared that the Canal Boats Act has become law only to become a dead letter. This measure, which will be mainly associated with the name of Mr George Smith of Coalville, was placed upon the Statute Book in order to promote the moral and social improvement of our floating population. Unfortunately, the very first step towards reform has apparently not yet been taken. Every canal boat, barge or flat used as a dwelling, ought by this time to have been registered and placed under inspection. What is the testimony of Mr George Smith? He has walked a good part of the distance between Rugby and London by the canal side, and on Wednesday he saw from 130 to 150 boats in the Regent's Canal ; but not one had undergone the requisite registration, not could he learn from the boatmen he met “that such a thing had taken place”. The state of things in other districts is equally significant. At Paddington, of fifty boats tied up and afloat not one had been registered ; while from Sowerby Bridge and Aylesbury came the complaints of boat owners that they have actually endeavoured to get their boats inspected, without success. It is thus only too evident that the registration authorities have, so far, treated the Act as a complete nullity. But the welfare of the thousands of men, women and children engaged upon our canal forbids that such apathy should be permitted to continue. If the Act can only be enforced by an accession to the ranks of our inspectors, then that addition ought to be made, and that forthwith.

235 January 25 1879

CANAL BOATS ACT “A Boat Owner” writing to the *Daily News* says : As a boat owner, and one who has tried to get his boats registered under the Canal Boats Act, but failed as yet, I felt pleased to see Mr George Smith's letter in your issue of the 7th or 8th inst, as I am fully convinced the urban authorities are not paying the attention to, and showing that regard for, this Act to anything like the extent it is deserving of, considering the large and neglected population it so very seriously concerns. I have had to do with boatmen for nearly 30 years, hence must have some knowledge of their habits, mode of living, wants, &c, hence have felt much interest in Mr Smith's noble efforts on their behalf, and for which he richly deserves the thanks of the whole nation. I don't think it can be carried out as it should be without properly appointed inspectors vested with full powers to enforce the provisions of the Act.

236 February 1 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.

237 March 1 1879

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE, WEDNESDAY

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.

238 March 29 1879

MARKET BOSWORTH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY 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.

239 April 26 1879

Mr George Smith of Coalville has received from the Christian Knowledge Society and the Rev J E Dalton, conjointly, 1,000 strongly bound Testaments for distribution among the canal boatmen and their families in various parts of the county of Leicester.

240 May 24 1879

RUGBY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY Jesse Morris, miner, was charged with stealing a watch and chain, the property of **William Jones**, boatman, at Rugby Wharf on 30th May 1878. The parties slept together, and prosecutor found his watch missing. Two previous convictions being recorded, prisoner was committed for six months.

241 July 12 1879

THE VENTILATION OF CANAL BOAT CABINS Mr G Smith of Coalville writes as follows to the *Daily News* :- During the last few weeks I have visited a number of canal wharves in various parts of the country, and find that the way in which the ventilation of the cabins is carried out is causing some irritation among the boatmen. It would be well if our big sanitary engineers could devise some simple and uniform plan for ventilating these little cabins ; at present the subject baffles them, at least it would appear so. I cannot but think that such a little difficulty can and should be got over without, to any great extent, inconveniencing anyone, especially when it is taken into consideration the interest involved. Only a few weeks since, two boatmen were suffocated in a cabin for want of fresh air. If men are smothered who can struggle for themselves, what becomes of the poor children, especially of those parents who are allowed to bid defiance to the laws, and to live and sleep in unregistered boats as thousands are doing today. The boat owners and boatmen cannot now complain if they are fined for the non registration of their boats, for they have had abundance of time to get ready. When once the boats are registered, the children come within the power of the School Board officer, and I firmly believe that one School Board inspector will do more good towards improving the next generation of boatmen than fifty canal missionaries can do among the old boaters.

242 August 16 1879

Three boatmen named **Hollinshead** and **Smith** were remanded on Monday morning for a murderous outrage on a man named Lockett, who is not expected to recover, and who has not sufficiently revived to have his depositions taken. Returning home on Saturday night, he crossed the canal at Tunstall, when he was attacked by four men and assaulted and kicked in a brutal manner, being found with his head cut open, utterly helpless, and apparently dead.

243 September 20 1879

EDUCATION OF GIPSY CHILDREN AND ROADSIDE ARABS The following letter appears in

the *Daily News* :- In reply to Mr Gorrie's letter which appears in your issue this morning, I consider that it would be unwise and impracticable to build separate schools for either the brickyard, gipsy or other children moving about the country in tents, vans, &c, for their use solely. What I have been and am still aiming at is the education of these children, not by isolating them from other working classes – colliers, potters, ironworkers, tradesmen &c – but by bringing them in daily contact with the children of these parents, and also under some of the influences of our little missionary civilisers who are brought up, and receiving some of their education in drawing rooms, and whose parents cannot afford to send them to boarding schools, and have to content themselves by having their children educated at either the national, British or board schools. I confess that it is not pleasant to hear that our children have picked up vulgar words at school ; and it requires patience, care and watchfulness on the part of parents to counteract some of the downward tendencies resulting from an uneven mixing of children brought up and educated under such influences. Better by far put up with these little ills than others we know not of, the outcome of ignorance. On the other hand, it is pleasing to note how glad the parents of gipsy, canal boat and brickyard children are when their children pick up “fine words” and become more “gentlerified” by mixing with children higher up the social scale. Bad habits, words and actions are generally picked up between school times. It would be well for all of us to rub down class feeling among children as much as possible as regards their education. The children of brickmakers, canal boatmen and gipsies are of us and with us, and must be taken hold of, educated and elevated to things pertaining to their future welfare. The “turning up of the nose” by those whose duty, education and privilege should have taught them better things, to these poor children, has had more to do in bringing about their pitiable and ignorant condition than can be imagined. The Canal Boats Act, if wisely carried out, will before long bring about the education of the canal boat children ; and in order to bring the gipsy children, show children, and other roadside arabs under the Education Acts, I am seeking to have all moveable habitations ie tents, vans, shows, &c, in which the families live who are earning a living by travelling from place to place, registered and numbered, as in the case of canal boats, and the parents compelled “by hook or by crook” to send their children to school at the place wherever they may be temporarily located, be it national, British or Board schools. The education of these children should be brought about at all risks and all inconveniences, or we may expect a blacker page in the social history of this country opening to our view than we have seen for many a long day. Very sincerely yours, George Smith, Coalville, Leicester, September 13

244 **December 20 1879**

COUNTY PUBLIC OFFICE

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. On the 3rd he missed it. **Frederick Marlow**, a boatman, said on the 29th 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 for trial on all the charges.