

## LEICESTER CHRONICLE 1900 to 1915

### 1 27 January 1900

#### LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

RUNNING HIS WIFE ROUND **William Horsley**, boatman, Bridge Street, Loughborough, pleaded guilty to using obscene language on Thursday last. Sergeant Gotheridge stated that a complaint was received at the police station about the defendant knocking his wife about. On going to Bridge Street, witness found defendant running his wife round, and using disgusting language. Defendant said he had been a it put out. Mr Winsor : And is that the sort of language you use when you get in a temper? Defendant : I am very sorry, but it is not often I do. Fined 15s including costs, or six days hard labour.

### 2 17 February 1900

#### COUNTY ASSIZES

SERIOUS OFFENCE BY A MARRIED MAN **William Hinton**, 28, boatman, was indicted on a charge of having indecently assaulted Clara Baum, 18, at Mountsorrel on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1899. Mr Magee prosecuted. Prosecutrix deposed that on the evening of the day named, she and her friend, Clara Paget, went to the Barrow-on-Soar wake. They started to walk home about 9.45 pm by way of Mill Lane, where they saw the prisoner, who offered to escort them to Mountsorrel. Prosecutrix and her companion, being afraid of the man, turned back to Barrow in the hope of seeing some friends there who would be going to Mountsorrel. They failed, however, to see anyone, and again started for home. When well on the way, the prisoner again accosted them, saying, "It is late for you to be out". They ran away and the prisoner followed, and caught up prosecutrix when she was in the act of getting over a stile. It was then that he indecently assaulted her. She struggled with him, and he struck her several violent blows in the face. She begged him to allow her to go, and said she was nearly done for, to which he replied, "Then I had better have you in here", meaning the canal which ran alongside. At the moment when the prisoner was in the act of further assaulting her, assistance arrived, whereupon prisoner jumped into the canal, swam to the other side, and made off. The next day she picked out the prisoner from among other men on a boat at Mountsorrel. Clara Paget corroborated the prosecutrix as to the prisoner speaking to and following them, and interfering with Baum, and William Hickling deposed to the latter asking him to go to Baum's assistance. He went, and when at the spot indicated, shouted out, "Where are you?" whereupon he heard a man say, "I'm off", and immediately after there was a splash in the canal. He looked, and saw a man swim to the other side and make off. A boatman named **Gilbert**, who worked on the same boat as the prisoner, spoke to Hinton returning to the boat with his clothes wet from head to foot, his explanation of his condition being that two men had thrown him into the canal. Sergeant Collis deposed to arresting the prisoner at Nottingham, where he was in custody for having deserted his wife. When charged with the offence, he replied that he should plead guilty if his brother did not get a lawyer to defend him ; but he hoped to be defended, as judges gave them so much time for such offences. Prisoner, who did not elect to give evidence, said, addressing the jury, that he did go to Barrow Wake, and when returning fought with other boatmen, who threw him into the canal. He knew nothing whatever of the offence. Sergeant Collis, in reply to his Lordship, said prisoner had a wife and three children at Nottingham. The Judge, in passing sentence, regretted that there were so many offences of this class occurring in the Midlands. They must be put down. He supposed the sentence he was about to pass upon prisoner would entail some suffering on those dependent upon him ; that could not be helped. He must go to prison for six months.

### 3 10 March 1900

#### LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

FISH POISONING **John Draper**, boatman, Steeple Row, Loughborough, was charged with putting lime into Garendon Brook with intent to destroy fish, on August 16<sup>th</sup> last year. Mr G R Eddowes, Derby, prosecuted, and said a great deal of brook poisoning had been carried on, and he

hoped the Bench would fix a deterrent. Alfred Greasley and Joseph Elliott, keepers, stated that they saw the defendant and another man putting lime into the Garendon Brook, and taking dead fish out. The other man was caught and had been dealt with by the magistrates. Defendant said he knew nothing about it. He only stood on the bridge and watched the keepers take the other man. The Bench convicted, and the Chairman said defendant appeared to have been before the Court every year for the last twenty years. He would go to gaol for two months with hard labour.

#### 4 24 March 1900

SUICIDE OF A LEICESTER PAINTER Mr G E Bouskell, county coroner, conducted an inquiry at the Union Inn, Blaby, touching the death of John King, aged 43, a painter, of 21 Catesby Street, Leicester, who was found drowned in the canal near Glen Parva on Monday. **Lydia Swannick** stated that she was the wife of **Edward Swannick**, lock-keeper, Glen Parva. On Monday at about 8.45 am, she was informed by a boatman named **Phipps** that there was a man in the canal, about five yards below the locks. William North, a groom, came up at the time, and went on the opposite side of the canal, and said he thought he could see the body of a man. A constable was then brought. On the previous Friday, the canal gates became fouled, and witness could not close them. Witness did not see anything, but thought perhaps the body of a dog was blocking the gates. PC Hemsley stated that he found the deceased in the middle of the canal, apparently in a standing position. With assistance he got the body out of the water, and found that it was in a very decomposed state, while the throat was cut, and the hair was falling off the head. Witness searched the clothing of the deceased, and inside a small note book there was written :”To my wife : I am utterly ashamed of myself, and think it would be best to clear out. I am so disgusted that I think best not to show myself any more. Am very sorry I am such a disgrace. Why should I contaminate the world with my presence. - Jack – I am sorry to say the only cause is drink ; try and persuade the children to keep from it. I am now about to commit this deed. Oh this horrid ..... let the drink alone”. Nothing was missing apparently from the pockets of the deceased. Dr Wells said he examined the body and found it much decomposed. The wound in the throat would not be sufficient to cause death, which was due to asphyxia from drowning. A verdict of “Suicide whilst temporarily insane” was returned.

#### 5 31 March 1900

##### LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

A BOATMEN'S QUARREL **William Leatherland**, boatman, Loughborough, was summoned for assaulting **Edward Barratt**, boatman, Sandiacre, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. Complainant said there was a question of money owing by defendant to his (complainant's) wife. Their boats met at Mountsorrel on Thursday, and defendant came to him and struck him several times, saying he would “take it out of him”. Defendant admitted the assault, and had nothing to say in excuse. Fined 20s, including costs, or 10 days in default. Defendant : I'll do the ten days.

#### 6 7 April 1900

The son of a boatman named **William Moseley** came by his death in a tragic manner late on Thursday night. He was, with his father, in charge of a long boat laden with sand, and when near the Tower Parting of the Severn at Gloucester, the boat was pulled up into the side to allow the tide to go by. The deceased, a youth of 15, went down into the cabin, and whilst there the “bore” swamped the boat, which sank, and he was drowned in the cabin.

#### 7 14 April 1900

##### ASHBY POLICE COURT

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE William Carey Shuttleworth, labourer, Measham, was charged with attempting to commit suicide by cutting his throat at Measham on March 6<sup>th</sup>. **Eliza Shuttleworth**, wife of **William Shuttleworth**, boatman of Oakthorpe, said that on the morning of the date named, the defendant, her son, came to her house, and she said to him, “Carey, my lad, you have not gone

to work this morning, “ and he replied, “I have been in a pucker this morning, and I have come to die with you. See how they have served me”. She saw blood on the front of his shirt, and sent for Dr Hart. Geo Simpson Hart, surgeon of Measham, said defendant had a severe wound in his throat, which severed the upper part of the windpipe, and such a one could have been inflicted by the razor (produced). Defendant had suffered from mental depression and loss of sleep. PC Iliffe of Measham said he went with Sergeant Crofts to see defendant who, when asked how he came by the wound, said he did not know. Witness then went to defendant's house, and saw a large pool of blood under a looking glass on the floor, and in the fireplace, he found the razor blade produced, which had marks like bloodstains upon it. On the 30<sup>th</sup> March, defendant made a statement, saying that he could not think what made him do it, and that if he had to go through it again it would kill him. In reply to the usual caution, defendant said he was very sorry he did it. The Chairman was about to commit the defendant for trial to the sessions, when Mr J H Joyce, one of the magistrates, expressed a wish for the bench to retire before deciding as he was of opinion that deceased was insane, and he ought not, therefore, to be committed for trial. After some consultation, Dr Hart, recalled, said that, although defendant had an outburst of insanity after the occurrence and previous to it, he was suffering from mental depression. Mr Joyce maintained that he was insane, but added that he was willing to take the clerk's advice on the point of law. The Clerk (Mr Hyde) said that all the Bench had to do was to find if there was a *prima facie* case against defendant and commit him for trial, and to accept bail if they thought fit. It was not for them to decide whether he was insane or not. Mr Joyce asked the clerk if the Bench must commit if the defendant was insane. The Clerk replied that the doctor had not said he was insane. Mr Joyce expressed a wish for the question to be put to the doctor who, in reply to the Clerk, said he did not consider defendant was insane. Defendant was committed for trial, bail being accepted, himself in £20 and two sureties of £10.

#### **8 14 April 1900**

**FOUND DROWNED** The body of a man was found in the canal near St Mary's Mills yesterday morning, and was removed to the mortuary. It had evidently been in the water a considerable time, as it was in an advanced state of decomposition. Last evening, the body was identified as that of Benjamin Hipwell, aged 50, a corporation labourer who had been missing from his home since February 16<sup>th</sup>. On the morning following that day, his coat was discovered on the towing-path near the Aylestone Bridge. Every endeavour was made to ascertain his whereabouts, but unsuccessfully, until his body was found by a boatman named **Chambers** in the canal yesterday. An inquest will be held.

#### **9 30 June 1900**

##### **LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS**

**TWO CONVICTIONS** **John Draper**, boatman, Steeple Row, Loughborough, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. PC Kirby stated that the defendant was in the Rushes wanting to fight a man whom he was inviting into a yard to “take it out of him”. The officer stated that the case had not been brought forward earlier because the defendant went away on a boat, and the summons could not be served.

Draper was then charged with being drunk and disorderly on the 21<sup>st</sup> inst in Churchgate. PC Rigby gave evidence. Defendant, against whom a long list was handed in, did not appear, and was fined 15s in each case, or seven days hard labour, the sentences to run consecutively.

#### **10 14 July 1900**

##### **LEICESTER COUNTY POLICE**

**ALLEGED THEFT OF DUCKS** John William Sarson alias Pick, labourer, and John Henry Hewitt, shoe hand, Syston, were charged with stealing two tame ducks, value 6s, at Syston, the property of Alfred Adcock, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Prosecutor said that on the day in question he let his ducks out of the pen, first counting them. On returning home he counted them again, and found the number short. He gave information to the police, and the next morning identified the ducks (produced) as his. Mr

E F Holyoake, postman, Syston, said on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> he was walking by the side of the brook and saw the two prisoners there. Hewitt carried a handkerchief with something in it. In the brook, witness noticed the ducks, and one he particularly noticed puffing and panting on the opposite side of the brook. It had lost some feathers. He walked on a little further, when he heard a splash, and looking round, saw Sarson throwing at the ducks. Witness informed Mrs Adcock. **Arthur Dakin**, a boatman, deposed that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, he was in a public house in Wanlip, and saw prisoners there. Hewitt called him out, and offered a duck for sale, demanding 1s 6d. Witness refused and went into the house, but prisoner followed and again offered the duck. Witness refused once more, and asked him where he got the duck from. Prisoner said it was his own, and also said he would put it in the boat, and witness would give him a shilling for it. This was done. Witness did not take the duck out of the handkerchief, and did not see it until the next morning, when Sergeant Pegg coming to the boat, he handed the parcel to him. PC Pegg said he arrested the prisoners, and in Sarson's pocket he found a handkerchief smeared with blood and feathers. Mr Keitel appeared for prisoners, and submitted there was no evidence against Sarson. The evidence against Hewitt was too highly circumstantial. There was no evidence to show that Sarson was with Hewitt if the duck was stolen, and the duck was sold by Hewitt, Sarson not being present. With regard to Hewitt, there was no direct evidence, though there were circumstances which he would be doubtless able to explain. The Bench committed prisoners to the Quarter Sessions, and accepted bail, prisoners themselves in £10 each, and each to find a surety in £5.

## **11 14 July 1900**

### LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

AN OLD OFFENDER **John Draper**, boatman, Steeple Row, was convicted, on the evidence of PCs Pinfield and Hiron, of being drunk and disorderly in the Rushes on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and a list of about 30 convictions was put in. He was sent to gaol for 21 days.

## **12 25 August 1900**

### TRENT

BOATMAN DROWNED On Friday night, an inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, touching the death of **William Lockwood**, a boatman, who fell into the Trent last Friday night. He came from Leicester, and stopped to feed the horse at Trent lock. On going aboard again, he slipped and fell into the river. His wife only saw him rise once. On Thursday, the body was found by Mr W H Baker, who was fishing not far from the mouth of the Soar. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

## **13 20 October 1900**

### LEICESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THEFT OF FOWLS John William Sarson (24), labourer, and John Henry Hewitt (27), shoehand, surrendered to their bail on an indictment charging them with stealing two tame ducks belonging to Alfred Adcock at Syston on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr C B Marriott prosecuted and Mr Gilmour was for the defence. Hewitt admitted the theft of one duck, but Sarson pleaded not guilty. Prosecutor spoke to missing two of his ducks from the brook at Syston. A dead duck afterwards shown him by a police officer, he identified as one of the birds lost. A postman named Holyoak stated that he saw both prisoners near the brook at Syston on the date mentioned. They appeared to be pelting the ducks. Sarson had in his hand a red handkerchief, similar to the one produced. A boatman named **Dakyn**, employed at Wanlip Wharf, spoke to meeting both prisoners at the Hope and Anchor Inn there. Hewitt asked him to buy a duck, which he reluctantly agreed to purchase for 1s. Sergeant Pegg said when he arrested Sarson at his lodgings, he had in his possession a red handkerchief (that produced), which was stained with blood, and also with some feathers on it. Sarson's trousers and boots were muddy. On visiting the spot whence the ducks were missed, he found feathers in the water and footprints in the mud. There was a place in the reeds, which looked as if something had been dragged up to the bank. Mr Gilmour, on behalf of Sarson, submitted that there was no

evidence to convict him. The jury returned a verdict of Guilty, and both men were sentenced to two months hard labour.

**14 24 November 1900**

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

OBSCENE LANGUAGE **George Perry**, boatman, The Rushes, Loughborough, failed to answer a charge of using obscene language at Loughborough on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. PC Hack stated that defendant was in Swan Street on Saturday evening, the worse for drink. He used obscene language, and refused to go away when warned. Eventually he was taken away by some relatives. Defendant, who has been frequently before the Bench, was fined 15s or seven days hard labour.

**15 5 January 1901**

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT

INCORRIGIBLE **John Draper**, boatman, Loughborough, was brought up on a warrant issued after he had disobeyed summonses for being drunk and disorderly in Mountsorrel on December 15, for being disorderly and refusing to quit the Crown and Thistle at that place, and further for doing damage to property at the public house to the extent of 10s on the same date. Prisoner pleaded guilty to all the charges. PC (Kirkland?) stated the facts as to Draper's drunkenness and disorderly conduct in the street. Ernest I Thomas, the landlord of the Crown and Thistle, said he ordered prisoner out of the house, and when he refused to go, witness had to put him out. He came back and was again ejected. The third time he came in nearly stripped and threatened to kill witness. A fourth time witness had to tackle him and put him out into the street, and then he said he would smash every door and window in the place. While witness was holding the door, some stones came crashing through the glass, and he had a very narrow escape from being blinded. Prisoner threw more stones into the passage and just missed witness's wife. Draper said he did not know anything of what he had done ( ) two days later. The Chairman said if prisoner was not tired of coming to the court, he was tired of seeing him. He was convicted five times in 1900, and since 1880 had been before the court 33 times. For being disorderly and refusing to quit, he would be fined 40s or 28 days in default ; he would go to gaol for 14 days for the damage, and 14 more for being drunk and disorderly.

**16 24 August 1901**

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT

THE DRINK **John Locker**, boatman, Canal Bank, for being drunk and disorderly at Loughborough on August 17, was fined 15s.

**17 20 February 1904**

LEICESTER COUNTY POLICE COURT **Joseph Brittain**, boatman, Alrewas near Burton, was fined 5s and costs 11s 6d, or seven days, for using obscene language on the 16<sup>th</sup> February.

**18 16 July 1904**

LOUGHBOROUGH POLICE COURT

RSPCA CASE **George Buckerfield**, boatman, Barrow, was summoned for cruelly working a horse at Barrow on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Inspector Short, RSPCA, said he saw Buckerfield in charge of a horse drawing a barge on the river at Barrow. Witness noticed the animal drawing rather awkwardly, and on examining it found three wounds on the shoulder and wither. The collar was pressing on the wounds and must have caused great pain. PC Thompson corroborated. Buckerfield said he had only been driving the horse half an hour when it was stopped, and he had not noticed the wound. Mr Edward Bailey, veterinary surgeon, Leicester, said he examined the horse at the request of the owners, Messrs Fellows and Morton. It had a slight (?????) on the wither and two small wounds on the shoulder. They were fresh wounds, probably caused since leaving Loughborough, and it was most probable that man knew nothing of them. **Thomas Prince**, boatman, Rockett's Wharf,

Leicester, was then summoned for causing the horse to be ill treated. The evidence for the prosecution was repeated, and the Inspector said Prince was the "captain" of the boat. When witness spoke to him about the wounds, Prince said he knew they were there, but they had to do their work and get to Leicester in a certain time. Defendant denied that he admitted knowing about the wounds. Sergeant Collins said defendants told him they had had the horse in the collar for 36 hours. Prince said the horse had only been working 2 1/2 hours, but the pulling was very bad, owing to the weeds. The horse was all right when they left Barrow. The magistrate allowed the summonses to be withdrawn on payment of costs, but considered it a proper case to be brought forward.

## **19 22 October 1904**

### **LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS**

**MAINTENANCE ARREARS** **George Perry**, boatman, the Rushes, was summoned for non payment of £4 1s, arrears under two orders for the maintenance of his two children who were chargeable to the Loughborough Union. Defendant lives apart from his wife, and there being no home for the children, they are at the Workhouse. He said he had been out of work and could not keep up his payments. The case was adjourned for a month to give defendant a further chance.

## **20 13 May 1905**

### **MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS**

**THE BOATMAN AND "BULLER" - A PECULIAR CASE** Thomas R H Tye, innkeeper, Great Bowden, charged William Goodman, labourer, Foxton with stealing on April 20<sup>th</sup> a greyhound, value £2 10s, and **John Clifton**, boatman, Northampton, was charged with having the dog in his possession, knowing it to have been stolen. Both pleaded not guilty. Sergeant Grain said on April 22<sup>nd</sup> he questioned Goodman, respecting some dogs which had been worrying sheep, and he said he had found a greyhound which was among the sheep, and which he had handed over to a boatman, who paid for a quart of beer. Witness told him he should have reported the matter to the police. The next day, Mr Tye reported the loss of a dog answering to the description given by Goodman, and which was wearing a collar containing Mr Tye's name and address. On April 25<sup>th</sup> witness again saw Goodman in the Market, and told him that the dog belonged to Mr Tye, and that there were the name and address on the collar. He replied, "Yes, but I could not read it". On May 4<sup>th</sup> Clifton came to the police station, and witness went and asked Goodman to come in, and told them they would be summoned. Goodman made a statement which he afterwards signed, which was that on April 20<sup>th</sup> he was on his way to Foxton from Harborough when he saw a greyhound running some sheep. He called the dog and it came to him, and he put a strap through the collar and led it over the stop bridge, when a boatman shouted, "Buller!" The dog, however, would not leave him, but the boatman stopped and said he knew the dog and the owner, and that if he would let him take the dog, he could have a drink, and in the event of any reward he would send that to him. Clifton also made a statement which was that when near the stop bridge approaching Foxton, he saw a man leading a greyhound which answered to the description of one he knew was missing from Northampton, and responded to the name of "Buller". He shouted, "Buller!" but the dog did not come, and the man brought the dog to him at the wharf. He told the man he knew the owner, and leaving the dog on the boat, they went to the Black Horse and had two pints of beer. He took the dog to the Magpie Inn, Northampton, and the servant told him it belonged to the potato man, and the next morning a policeman came and asked him about it. Mr Tye said the dog was his ; that he kept it at home. The Clerk : Or ought to do – Laughter. And his name was on the outside of the collar. Goodman called John Pickering, who deposed to having seen the dog in the fields running sheep, when Goodman said, "If we can get hold of it, we had better take it to Harborough in the morning". A boatman shouted to them, saying that he knew the dog, whose name was "Buller". Witness was unable at the time to read the description on the collar, but the collar handed to him he could now do so. The case was dismissed.

**21 20 May 1905**

SUNDAY TRESPASS **Frederick Turner**, boatman, and Enos Stevenson, plumber, Sawley, were summoned for using guns to take game at Lockington on Sunday May 7. Mr H J Deare, who prosecuted, said that about 4.30 am on the Sunday morning, (Richard??) Langdon, a game keeper to Mr W (Curzon?), heard shots and found defendants and two other men very busy at an osier bed, which was good cover for game. The other two went away, and Langdon found a wood pigeon in one of the defendant's pockets. The defendants had nothing to say, and were each fined 20s including costs, or ten days.

**22 20 July 1907**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT **Herbert Gilbert** (28), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Belgrave Gate on Saturday evening. He pleaded guilty, and was fined 5s, or five days.

**23 21 September 1907**

A STRANGER'S DEATH AT THE WORKHOUSE **Mark Friar**, aged 33, a boatman whose address is not known, was conveyed to the Workhouse on Saturday by Mr Blake, relieving officer of Measham, where the man had been found suffering from an epileptic fit. He was attended by Dr Orchard and seemed to improve, but on Sunday had another seizure and died on Tuesday morning. The facts were reported to the Coroner, who did not deem an inquest necessary.

**24 18 January 1908**

ALLEGED THEFT AT SYSTON At the Leicester County Office on Wednesday, before E R Norman Esq, **Enoch Conway**, a boatman living in Northgate Street, was charged with stealing at Syston on January 9<sup>th</sup>, a boat line and pair of pulley blocks and chain, valued at £1 7s 6d, the property of the Leicester Corporation. Formal evidence was given, and the case adjourned till Saturday.

**25 25 January 1908**

LEICESTER BOATMAN FINED At the Leicester County Police Court on Saturday, before E R Norman Esq, **Enoch Conway**, a boatman living in Northgate Street, Leicester, was charged with stealing at Syston on January 9, a boatline and pair of pulley blocks and chain, valued at £1 7s 6d, the property of the Leicester Corporation. Defendant, when charged, said there was only one block. **John Phipps**, a boatman, said he left the pulleys etc in his cabin at Syston. On Saturday January 11, he found the cabin door had been forced, and the articles mentioned in the charge were missing. Last Tuesday, he was shown the articles in the County Police Office, and recognised them as belonging to the Corporation.

Superintendent Bowley said that when charged, the prisoner said he took the rope etc away for safety.

Prisoner pleaded not guilty. He was passing by and found the boat in the running stream. The cabin door was open, and he brought the rope with him.

One previous conviction for drunkenness and two for cruelty to horses were proved.

The Chairman (Mr E R Norman) said defendant should, under any circumstances, have given notice that he had found the rope and pulleys. As it was, the Bench could only think that he had stolen the articles. He would be fined £2, including the costs, or go to prison for one month in default.

**26 4 April 1908**

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

DRUNKENNESS Albert Thornton, labourer, Mountsorrel, and **Benjamin Nixon**, boatman, no fixed abode, were each fined 10s or five days for being drunk and disorderly at Mountsorrel on the 21<sup>st</sup> ult. The men were by the canal, and Thornton fell in.

**27 18 April 1908**

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

THE DRINK **John Schofield**, a boatman, Loughborough, was summoned for being drunk at Loughborough on April 11<sup>th</sup>. PC A E Smith said defendant was on the canal bank and was very drunk. Near the Meadow Lane Bridge he fell into the canal, and had to be pulled out by two men. Fined 7s 6d, or three days.

**28 16 May 1908**

THE ASHBY CANAL

NEED FOR DREDGING

WHAT CHEAPER TRANSIT OF COAL WOULD EFFECT Giving evidence on Wednesday before the Royal Commission on Canals and Waterways, which resumed its sittings in the Westminster Palace Hotel, Mr Waddell said, with regard to the Ashby Canal, that unless dredging was immediately started on an extensive scale, the canal would soon become unnavigable by 30 ton boats containing 25 tons, or five tons short of full cargo. If the Ashby and other canals were maintained at their original width and depth, the present haulage cost could be reduced quite 40 per cent. At present boatmen would at times not quote a price per ton, and commanded a price per pair of boats, as the tonnage they could take altogether depended upon the water level of the canal. A boatman loading a cargo at, say, Brentford for the (?Bort) Wharf on the Ashby Canal could not safely take more than 20 tons per 30 ton boat, otherwise he would run a great risk of being neaped. If Mr Gordon Thomas's or a similar scheme were adopted, whereby the cost of transit on coal from Measham Collieries to (...) Thames did not exceed 4s 9d per ton, it would provide an altogether new and extensive market for the coalfields, brickworks, etc in the counties of Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and other districts tapped by the canals, namely, supplying requirements on the river Thames and adjoining waterways. A cost of 4s 9d per ton would enable these districts to compete and hold their own with supplies now being drawn from Scotland, Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire. The improvements in the canals proposed by Mr Gordon Thomas would revolutionise the mining industry in the Midland districts tapped by the canals, as the providing of this new market would enable the collieries to run 5 1/2 days a week during the summer months, in place of, as it is in most cases at present, two to three days a week. This would be a great boon to the miners, as it would provide them with regular employment and wages all the year round, instead of, as at present, starvation wages for about four months of the year. The miners and their families have often to undergo great privations during slack times, and if it were not for the system adopted by the tradesmen in mining districts of giving credit, many would not be able to procure what is necessary for existence without help from some source.

**29 13 June 1908**

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

ABUSIVE LANGUAGE **William Gilbert**, boatman, Mountsorrel, was summoned for using abusive language towards PC King at Mountsorrel on May 31. He did not appear, and PC King stated the facts. The Chairman said the defendant was fined by the Court as recently as May 13 last. He would now be fined 20s, or ten days.

**30 27 June 1908**

COUNTY POLICE COURT

SAYING THINGS **Edward Jukes**, boatman, Lower Willow Street, was summoned for threatening his wife on June 19. Defendant denied the offence. Mrs Jukes said her husband, while in drink, threatened to kill her. She did not think he meant it, but she did not intend living with him. Jukes said his wife threw a cup of hot tea at him, and this was enough to make any man "say things". Defendant was bound over in £5 to keep the peace for three months, pay costs, or go to prison for seven days.

**31 5 September 1908**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

A BOATMAN'S THEFT **Cornelius Church** (23), boatman, Dundonald Road, was charged with stealing between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July a nose tin, a line and a quantity of harness, value £1 5s, of which he was the bailee, and the property of Horace Maine. Prosecutor said prisoner was his nephew. He lent him some harness and tackle, and told him to return them when he had done with them. He never gave him permission to sell them. Thomas Wrigley, a carter, said prisoner deposited the articles mentioned in the charge with him in return for 5s, which he advanced as a loan. Detective Sergeant Kendall deposed to arresting prisoner, who expressed sorrow at what had occurred. A fine of 10s was imposed, or seven days imprisonment in default.

**32 7 August 1909**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

FIGHTING **Noah Kent** (42), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with fighting in the Public Wharf, Belgrave Gate, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August. PC Goodwin said the man defendant was fighting with had the misfortune to fall against a cart wheel, and cut his head so badly that he had to be taken to the Infirmary. Defendant said the man followed him about from one public house to another, and forced the fight upon him. He added, "I pushed him against the cart wheel, and when I saw the cut on his head, I thought I had killed him. I gave myself up to the policeman". He was bound over in the sum of £5 to be of good behaviour for three months, pay the costs, or in default seven days imprisonment.

**33 11 December 1909**

SUSPICIOUS LOITERING IN FOSSE ROAD NORTH

CONSTABLE'S SMART WORK At the Leicester Police Court on Wednesday, **John Gorton**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being a suspected person and found loitering in Fosse Road North at 12.30 am on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, for the purpose of committing a robbery.

The charge was explained to prisoner, who pleaded guilty.

PC Stretton said at 11.30 on Tuesday night he was on duty in Woodgate, and saw defendant acting in a suspicious manner, walking on the dark side of the road and appearing to be keeping out of the light. When he saw witness looking at him he hurried away. An hour afterwards, witness was in Fosse Road North, and saw defendant standing at the corner of Hospital Lane and Fosse Road North. He ran across the road into Great Central Road. Witness followed him and found him secreted in an entry in Great Central Road. Defendant said he was doing nothing in answer to witness's questions, and threw a key into a passage near to where they were standing. Witness took him to the police station, where defendant made no reply to the charge. The key in question was an ordinary house door key, and defendant had nothing upon him when searched, with the exception of a piece of soap.

Chief Superintendent Geary applied for a remand to enable the police to make enquiries. Defendant was a stranger to the district, and he believed he belonged to Birmingham.

Defendant had no objection to a remand, and the case was adjourned for seven days.

**34 18 December 1909**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

SUSPECTED PERSON **John Gorton** (19), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged on remand with being a suspected person found loitering in Fosse Road North at 12.30 am on December 9<sup>th</sup>, for the purpose of committing a felony. This case was before the court last week, when defendant pleaded guilty, but an adjournment was granted to enable the police to make inquiries. The Chief Constable stated that defendant had been previously convicted at Birmingham and elsewhere, and the Bench imposed a sentence of three months hard labour.

### 35 3 December 1910

#### LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

SCHOOL CASES **Joseph Horsley**, a boatman, Cradock Street, Loughborough, was summoned for not sending his son regularly to school. Mr Turner (attendance officer) said the boy had only made 21 out of 32 attendances for the months to which the summons referred. Fined 5s or three days.

### 36 24 June 1911

#### FOUND DROWNED AT KEGWORTH

A MYSTERIOUS CASE The adjourned inquest at the Anchor Inn, Kegworth, touching the death of **Robert Woolley**, whose body was found in the river, was held on Monday evening before H J Deane.

Albert Henry James, farmer, Kegworth, said that about four o'clock on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>, he saw Woolley working on the plaster wharf with a man named Callaghan and another, loading a boat. Next day, Callaghan brought his horse to witness's place, and said the other man "had run it". Witness asked where "Bob" was, meaning deceased, and Callaghan replied, "I doubt he's in the river". Witness said if he thought that he should report it to the police, but Callaghan said nothing more. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Callaghan came to fetch his horse, and witness asked if he had heard anything more of Bob, and he said he had had a look in the water, but could not see anything.

The Coroner : Didn't it strike you as curious that he should say he was in the river? I thought it seemed very funny.

Did you report what had been said to the police? No, I only asked him why he did not report it. I asked everybody I saw if they had heard anything of him.

A Juryman : It is reported that he said to you, "Don't tell anybody". He didn't say that to me.

**Samuel Callaghan**, boatman, Park Row, Loughborough, said that on Wednesday June 14, he was working a canal boat with **John Brooks**, and brought it to Lord Belper's wharf. They came up to the Anchor, and saw deceased, whom witness had not known before. Witness said he could have a job, and deceased then went down and worked with them. That night, deceased slept in the cabin with Brooks. On the Thursday they worked together again, but they came up to the Anchor about three times, and "there was not a deal of work done". They knocked off about five o'clock, and were then sober. Deceased

HAD HAD SOME DRINK,

but was not drunk, and witness last saw him about six or half past in the boat.

The Coroner : Did you tell the policeman that you were all three the worse for drink? I didn't say we were the worse for drink.

Continuing, witness said he expected deceased to sleep on the boat that night. Witness went to bed about 6.30, as he was bad, and Brooks came back after dark, but witness saw no more of deceased.

In the morning, witness found two pieces of coal on the deck, which were not there the previous night when they turned in. Brooks said he didn't bring it. During next morning, witness could not find Brooks, and took the horse to Mr James, and told him he had lost Bob.

Mr Deane : Did you say he must be in the river? I believe I did say so.

What made you say that? Because the coal was on the deck, and I knew it couldn't get on itself.

Witness added that he left the boat on the Friday and came home to Loughborough, and found Brooks at his house next day. Early on Thursday night witness had heard a lumbering noise on the deck, but did not take much notice of it. There had been no disagreement with deceased. Witness had not sent for any coal. He first thought he had got in the water when he saw the coal on the deck, because he did not know how it got there.

John Smith, landlord of the Anchor Inn, said that on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>, deceased did some wood stacking for him after he had finished work at the boat. Just before nine o'clock, he said he was tired and would finish another day. He was sober. He wanted some beer, but witness would not serve him, because he

THOUGHT HE HAD HAD ENOUGH.

He went away about nine o'clock towards the boat. When Callaghan came next day and said Bob hadn't turned up, witness said, "He's in the water then".

The Coroner : What gave you that idea? I don't know, I'm sure. It came across my mind.

The Coroner : I don't see why the fact that he was not on the boat should make you think he was in the water. It crossed my mind that way.

A Juryman : Do you think he was drunk and fell in? No, he was not drunk when he left here.

The Coroner said it was a curious case, to say the least of it, and it was not made easier for the jury by the way in which Callaghan gave his evidence. He did not think the man was trying to conceal anything, but he certainly gave evidence in a way that might excite suspicion. How the deceased came to be in the water was still an open question.

A juryman referred to the bruises on the body, and said there was some expectation that a doctor would have been called to give evidence.

The Coroner said that when a body was found in a decomposed condition, he did not think a doctor was needed to tell the jury he was dead.

A juryman said the external marks might have been caused by violence, and the parishioners thought medical evidence would have been obtained.

The Coroner did not know what a doctor could have told them more than they had seen for themselves, that there were abrasions. It was not his practice to call in a doctor unless there was something very suspicious or needing further explanation. He could adjourn the case again if the jury desired it.

The jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned", and the Coroner, in reply to a question, said that left the matter in the hands of the police to make further inquiries.

### **37 28 October 1911**

#### COUNTY POLICE COURT

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** **Arthur Whitehouse**, horse driver, 7 Canal Street, Loughborough, was summoned for cruelty to a mare by working it when unfit, at Glen Parva on October 14, and **Edward Simmons**, boatman, of the same address, was summoned for causing the animal to be worked. Both pleaded guilty. PS Stapleton said the offence was detected on the towing path at Glen Parva, where the horse was at work. There was one large wound and a smaller one on the shoulder. When witness drew Whitehouse's attention to the horse's condition, the defendant said he "had to do his whack" of five miles. The other defendant said the sore ought to have been better by now, as he had been dressing it for a week. The collar, which had matter adhering to it, was very dirty. Simmons was fined 20s and 12s costs, or 21 days, and Whitehouse 10s and 12s costs or 14 days. The Chairman said they were both young fellows ; if they had been older, they would have been sent to prison.

### **38 10 August 1912**

#### AN ARRANT COWARD

**STRANGE DROWNING CASE AT DONCASTER** At an inquest on the death of George Clark, aged 33, bricklayer's labourer of 31 Church Street, Bentley, held at Doncaster, some sensational evidence was given concerning the conduct of Fred Allen, who admitted having witnessed the drowning of the deceased without having made any effort to save him.

It was stated that the deceased left home at 9.20 on Saturday night, the worse for drink. **George Lee**, a boatman, met Allen, who said to him, "During the time I have been waiting for you I have seen a man drown himself". Witness did not ask him where this happened, as he thought Allen was "romancing", but he admitted saying, "We shall have to see about getting him out in the morning".

The Coroner : But we don't talk about dealing with drowning men next morning – were you serious?

Witness : I can't say I was. He admitted that both Allen and he had been drinking, and that Allen was fairly bad. The place where the deceased sank was near a loaded barge, and he thought anybody who had got on the barge might have saved the man.

“WENT AWAY”

Fred Allen, labourer, Bentley, said he was waiting for Lee, and had gone to the boat under the canal bridge, when the deceased came and asked him the way to the trams. He directed the deceased, but directly afterwards the latter returned. There was a splash, which witness thought was caused by a boatman. When he got up, he saw two arms stretched out of the water. He then went away.

Witness related a conversation he had with a man named Gray in a public house, and said he thought Gray was a likely man for getting the deceased out of the river. He told Gray where the deceased had gone down.

The Coroner : Did you suggest that he could get him out in the morning? Yes : something like that. Have you ever done something brave in your lifetime? Well, I don't know.

What is the bravest thing you have ever done? I can't say.

Have you ever done anything you can prove yourself a man? There was no reply.

Do you think you were a man on this occasion? Well I don't think anybody could have done much better. There was no one about, and it would not have been wisdom for me to have gone in. If it had been the river bank I could have done something.

The Coroner : Would you do the same thing if you saw another man in the water? I can't say.

NOT ASHAMED

It was such a wonderful event, you thought you would go and have a drink on it? I don't know that particularly.

Don't you feel a little bit ashamed of yourself for having been such a coward? I don't see where the cowardice comes in.

The Coroner : I hope we have got some better Englishmen than you are.

According to **John Gray**, a boatman, Allen told him in the public house what had happened, and he (witness) recovered the body. Allen said to him, “You are a very good hand in getting deceased men. I will tell you where there is one. I have seen him fall in under the bridge, against the new dock”. Witness said, “Get off, you are jesting”, but Allen replied, “I am not : I have seen him go down with his arms up”. Allen had had some drink, but was not drunk. If witness had been there, he thought he could have saved the deceased.

The Coroner, summing up, characterised Allen as an arrant coward, remarking that he hoped his friends would dissociate themselves from his company.

The Jury, returning a verdict of “Found drowned”, requested the Coroner to censure Allen, which he did in strong terms.

### **39 26 October 1912**

COUNTY POLICE COURT

TOO MUCH TO DRINK **Chas Morris** (26), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being drunk and incapable in Market Place on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Pleading guilty, defendant was fined 5s, or five days.

### **40 13 December 1913**

HOUSEBREAKING AT NEWTON HARCOURT

ANOTHER ARREST AND A DISCHARGE Before W H Ellis at the County Police Office on Wednesday, **Chas Cox alias Pilgrim** (26), boatman, no fixed abode, and Harry Ashby Cooper (34), tube maker, no fixed abode, were charged with breaking and entering the dwelling house of **Joseph Faulkner**, Newton Harcourt, on Saturday last, and stealing therefrom a pair of boots and a piece of cake, value 10s 6d.

Cooper was before the court on Monday, when Inspector Grain of Market Harborough spoke to the arrest. The boots were found in the possession of prisoner, but he denied having stolen them.

This morning, Detective Inspector Taylor stated that he had been making inquiries with respect to the robbery. He traced Cox into Hoton, Warwickshire, yesterday, and called him off a barge. Witness asked him if his name was Cox, and he replied that it was not. On being told that he was suspected of breaking into a house at Newton Harcourt, prisoner replied that he knew nothing about

it, adding that the man in custody knew nothing about it. Cox was brought to Leicester. Superintendent Bowley stated that from the manner in which Cooper had acted throughout, he quite thought he knew nothing of the "initial robbery", and under the circumstances, he asked that he be discharged. With regard to Cox he asked for a remand. Cooper was discharged and Cox remanded until Monday. Cooper : I hope this will not go against my character. Superintendent Bowley : Not at all.

#### **41 20 December 1913**

##### **CHARGE OF HOUSEBREAKING AT NEWTON HARCOURT**

**BOATMAN COMMITTED FOR TRIAL Chas Cox alias Pilgrim** (26), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged on remand at the Castle on Tuesday, before F W Everard Esq, with breaking and entering the dwelling house of **Joseph Faulkner**, Newton Harcourt, on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and stealing therefrom a pair of boots and a piece of cake, value 10s 6d.

Prosecutor, a lock-keeper, stated that on the day in question he left the house secure. On his return at 3.30 pm on the same day, he noticed that the window was broken and a flower pot which should have been on the window board lying on the sofa. The window had been unfastened. Going inside, he missed a piece of cake, and afterwards a pair of boots.

Acting Inspector Gray of Market Harborough stated that Cox told him at the police station that he had the boots from a boot dealer at Nottingham. He added that he had been on the drink and missed his boat. He wanted to sell the boots in order to pay his fare to Northampton. Prisoner was allowed to go, witness thinking that he was a straightforward man, and giving him 2s. Later, information was received as to the theft of the boots.

Detective Inspector Taylor repeated the evidence he gave at the previous hearing. He arrested prisoner on a barge at Olton, Warwickshire, on Tuesday last. Prisoner told him that he intended to return the boots.

Prisoner said he saw a man leave prosecutor's house with the boots, and knowing that he did not belong to the house, he took them from him. He intended to return them.

Prisoner was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

#### **42 23 May 1914**

##### **ROTHLEY**

**INQUEST** A verdict of death from natural causes was returned at an inquest held at Rothley House Inn, before Mr H J Deane, on Saturday afternoon, into the circumstances attending the death of **Alfred Slater Nixon**, the nine week old son of **Benjamin S Nixon**, a canal boatman of (?Oldrust) Lichfield, Staffordshire. The child's mother said that the baby, although apparently strong and healthy since birth, had been subject to fits. He had a seizure on Friday afternoon but seemed to recover. About two hours later, however, she realised that he was breathing heavily and picked him up, but he died in her arms. Dr T L Bryan, who saw the baby after death, said death was probably due to syncope, the result of gastroenteritis. He did not think there had been any neglect on the part of the mother. The baby was well nourished.

#### **43 18 July 1914**

**TRYING TO KEEP COOL** It is not often that bathing offences are dealt with by local magistrates, but on Monday at the Borough Police Court, William Martin (17), farm labourer, 36 Morton Road, was summoned for bathing in a prohibited portion of the canal on July 3. Defendant said it was a very hot day, and seeing other lads in the water he thought it was a bathing station, and he went in. The Chief Constable said numerous complaints had been received about this sort of conduct. Fined 5s or five days. **John Jukes** (33), boatman, Awsworth Road, Ilkeston, was summoned for a like offence on June 29. Defendant did not appear. PC Moore said he saw the defendant in the water. When he charged defendant with the offence, he said, "I shouldn't think I shall get 20 years for it". PC North corroborated, and added that the fact that these boatmen went into the water encouraged

youths to go in as well. A fine of 5s or five days was imposed.

#### **44 15 August 1914**

##### **BOROUGH POLICE COURT**

**DRUNK AND DISORDERLY** **William Garner**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Belgrave Gate on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Fined 5s or five days hard labour.

**AN ILLEGAL WASH** **John Brace** (34), boatman, Sandiacre, Derbyshire, summoned for bathing in a prohibited part of the canal on June 29<sup>th</sup>, was fined 5s or five days.

#### **45 17 October 1914**

##### **SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A LEICESTER BOATMAN**

**ALLEGED OBTAINING A HORSE BY FALSE PRETENCES** A special county police court was held in Leicester on Thursday, when **Charles Pilgrim** (28), boatman, no fixed abode but described as a native of Leicester, was charged with obtaining by false pretences from Abraham Chaplin a horse, value £30, the property of Geo Goodman, and a bridle, value 2s, the property of Abraham Chaplin at Markfield on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The magistrate was T W Everard Esq.

Abraham Chaplin, a carrier, said he occupied some land at Shaw Lane, Marksfield. On September 29<sup>th</sup> last, he received from Mr Goodman of the Wholesale Fruit Market, Leicester, a brown mare to turn out in the field. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, the defendant came to his house and said Mr Goodman had sent him for the brown mare, as he was going to work it. Defendant further said that Mr Goodman's sons were unable to come, and added, "I wish they had fell dead before I had had this journey tonight". He also said that Mr Goodman was sending over a grey horse, which had fallen lame, in place of the brown one. Witness asked him where his halter was, and he said he had not got one. He stated that Mr Goodman said witness could lend him a halter and he would bring it back on the grey horse next morning. Witness lent defendant the bridle produced and went to the field with him to catch the mare, which he took away about six o'clock. On Wednesday morning, witness received a telegram from Mr Goodman, and then communicated with Police Sergeant Sanders. Later the same day, he saw the bridle at the County Police Office, and identified it. He also easily picked out defendant from among six other men.

Police Sergeant Sanders of Anstey said about 10 am on Wednesday, from information received from the last witness, he came into Leicester and with Inspector Taylor went in search of defendant. They found him about 2.30 pm in a public house in Belgrave Gate. The inspector told him they were making inquiries about a brown mare that was fetched from Mr Chaplin's, and he said, "I don't know anything about it". Witness cautioned him, and told him that he answered to the description of the man who fetched the mare away. He said, "You're on a wrong 'un this time". On the way to the police station, he said, "Let us go into a pub and have a drink, and I will tell you all about it". He was brought up to the office, where he was placed with six other men and at once identified by Mr Chaplin as the man who fetched the mare. The bridle produced was in the defendant's jacket pocket. Whilst in the office, he said, "I didn't fetch the horse out of the field. I stopped talking to Mr Chaplin while someone else fetched it". Witness told him that Mr Chaplin said he went to the field with him, and he said, "That's done it then". When told what he would be charged with, he replied, "It's a false pretences, then".

Defendant said he did not make the last three remarks in the sense that the last witness had stated them.

After an adjournment, Wilfred Goodman, a partner of the firm of Goodman and Son, wholesale fruiterers, Leicester, stated that on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, he sent a brown half legged mare to Abraham Chaplin of Markfield, to be turned out to grass for the winter. On Wednesday, from something he was told, he went to the stable at the George and Dragon Inn, Stanley Street, and there saw his brown mare. It was handed over to him by a man named Marriott. Witness did not know the prisoner, and he had no authority to take the mare away from Markfield.

John Marriott, general carter, Ash Street, said he occupied stables at the George and Dragon Inn, Stanley Street. On Tuesday last, he saw prisoner with "a stiff old cob", which he said he wanted to

sell, adding that he had bought it cheaply in the country. He said he was a carting contractor and had a dozen horses working in the town. He asked £7 10s for the animal, and eventually witness gave him £1 and a dray for it. Witness gave him the pound, and the dray was to be sent to his address on the Narborough Road. He sent the dray next day, but the address could not be found. Prisoner, who preferred to say “nothing at present” in answer to the charge, was committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

**46      23 January 1915**

ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN **William Gilbert** (45), boatman, Public Wharf, Belgrave Gate, was summoned for an assault on Betsy Pleat of the Public Wharf on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Complainant said defendant hit her on the head with a stern beam and she had to receive attention at the Royal Infirmary. Defendant, who said he had had “a tin of beer” was fined 20s or 14 days.