

## GRAYS AND TILBURY GAZETTE 1905 to 1908

### 1 11 February 1905

A DASH FOR FOOD Claudius Pink, of no fixed abode, labourer, was charged with stealing two baskets and six cakes, value 1s 3d, the property of Peter Unwin, at Grays on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Herbert Dines**, waterman, 53 Bedford Road, Grays, said prosecutor had a shop opposite his house. On Saturday he saw prisoner walking backwards and forwards in the road, and then saw him enter Unwin's shop, pick up something, run out, and then go towards Clarence Road. Witness ran after him and saw him throw something over the brick wall of a corner house. He took prisoner back to Unwin's shop, where Mr Unwin had a look round and said he missed a basket of cakes. They then went to the spot where witness had seen prisoner throw something, and the two baskets produced were found in the garden.

Peter Unwin of 46 Bedford Road, Grays, corroborated the latter part of the former witness's evidence, and said the baskets and cakes produced were his property. He valued the whole at 1s 3d. Defendant Pink was again charged at Grays Sessions on Friday, and sentenced to one day's imprisonment.

### 2 11 March 1905

#### TILBURY DOCKS

OVERBOARD Late on Monday night, a lighterman named **Edward Willis**, of 13 Bryanstone Terrace, Tilbury, slipped off his barge in Tilbury Dock and fell into the water. He was rescued by some of his fellow lightermen.

### 3 8 April 1905

#### TILBURY DOCKS

ACCIDENTS On Monday, a Lascar fireman on the steamship *Britannia* was scalded on the back by a pail of hot water (canting?) over on him. On the same day, a Gravesend lighterman named **Charles Wallington** sprained his ankle whilst jumping from one barge into another. Thomas Beasley of Custom House was taken out of the Dock on the ambulance and removed to Tilbury Hospital, he having injured his leg through a bale falling on him.

### 4 20 May 1905

DROWNED IN THE THAMES On Thursday an inquest was held at the Ship Inn, East Tilbury by Mr Coroner Lewis on the body of **Charles Goodsall** of Gravesend, who was drowned in the Thames on the 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Henry Goodsall of 13 Cobham Street, Gravesend, identified the body as that of his son. He was a waterman and was 23 years of age.

Richard Tryhorm, gunner, RGA, Coalhouse Fort, said on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> inst about 3 pm he was walking along the salting, when he found the body of deceased on the side of the river wall, apparently having been left by the tide.

**Harry Barker**, waterman, Gravesend, said on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April he was with deceased in a waterman's skiff. Witness had the boat made fast to a buoy. Deceased, with another man, was on the buoy. They were getting ready to make fast the sailing ship *Port Elgin* to the buoy, when the breast rope, which was made fast to the buoy from the starboard hawse pipe of the vessel, broke and struck Goodsall, knocking him into the water. The second mate jumped into the water after him. The rope was really not sufficient for the purpose.

PC Burrows gave evidence as to taking possession of the body.

A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

The Jury added a rider that they were of opinion that, having regard to the state of the weather at the time deceased met his death, a wire rope should have been used instead of the manilla rope which broke.

## 5 3 June 1905

**TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AT GRAVESEND** A terrible tragedy, in which a man was instantaneously killed and a woman dangerously wounded, occurred at Gravesend at midnight on Saturday. It is alleged that a well known local waterman named **James Lygo Rowe**, who had for some time been living apart from his wife, caused a telegram to be sent to her at Gloucester, stating that her mother, who resides at Peppercroft Street, Gravesend, was seriously ill and desired the presence of her daughter. A similar telegram was received by the wife's brother, James William Manners Pearce of Stepney, asking for his immediate attendance at Gravesend. As a result of these messages, the brother and sister at once proceeded to their mother's home.

At midnight on Saturday, Rowe is said to have made his appearance in the room where the three were assembled and, producing a revolver, is alleged to have pointed it at his wife. Pearce, a young man of 24, immediately went to his sister's protection, and was shot dead on the spot. The man, it is further alleged, next fired at his mother-in-law, hitting her in the back, and she now lies in a critical condition. Rowe then left, and is said to have been seen by several of the neighbours, who had been aroused by the sound of the shots, hurrying from the house with the smoking revolver still in his hand.

Before any attempt could be made to detain him, he had made good his escape.

On Monday, the police received a clue that the murderer was seen going in the direction of Higham. Just after four o'clock on Tuesday morning, a workman named Randall, residing at Salt Lane, Higham, while on his way to work at a factory, was stopped by a man who was not wearing a cap, and whose appearance was very haggard. The man asked him where he could get a cap, and Randall replied that if he would go with him to his house, he would give him one. Shortly afterwards, they met another workman named Thomas Filmer, of William Street, Gravesend, who immediately suspected that the man without the cap was the fugitive waterman, Rowe. On being asked whether this was so, he admitted that he was the man, and thereupon Filmer and Randall requested him, if he had a revolver, to deliver it up to them. Rowe, without any hesitation, did so, and also gave the men a number of cartridges. Filmer and Randall then took charge of Rowe, and started off in the direction of Gravesend, intending to take their captive to the police station. On reaching the Sun Inn at Higham, Rowe said he was thirsty and hungry, and added, "I can do with a pint of beer". The others decided to arouse the landlord at the inn, and while this was being done, Rowe suddenly took a bottle from his pocket and drank the contents, which proved to be spirits of salts, before his captors could interfere. He died soon afterwards. His last words were, "I never meant to shoot him ; it is another Watkins job", alluding to a similar murder in Gravesend a few years ago.

At the inquest on Rowe on Wednesday, the following letter was read :- "I am going to tell you my intentions. To do this, I have obtained chloroform, also some poison, and I am going to buy a revolver, so you see I shall be fully equipped for the fray. I have well thought over these plans, and I know that I am in my right mind whilst writing this, and perfectly sober, so that you will know I am doing these deeds after long deliberation".

A verdict of "Felo de se" was returned.

## 6 17 June 1905

**GRAYS MAN DROWNED IN THE THAMES** On Friday of last week, a barge's mate named **Charles Walter Thomas**, whose parents reside at 11 Maple Road, Grays, was drowned in the Thames off Grays, whilst proceeding in a boat with his captain, **James Samuel Bannister**, of 108 Bridge Road, Grays, to the barge *Regent*.

It was stated that the boat was half full of water and easily capsized. Both men were thrown into the river, but the captain was able to save himself.

The body of the mate has not yet been recovered. He was a young fellow, 18 years of age, and was 5 ft 3 ins in height. He was dressed in a drab coloured jacket and vest, blue serge trousers, blue and white plaid cotton shirt and laced boots.

## **7 24 June 1905**

**DROWNING FATALITY ON THE THAMES** On Thursday night of last week, the body of **Charles Walter Thomas**, a barge mate, whose home was at 11 Maple Road, Grays, was washed ashore at Erith. It will be remembered that Mr Thomas, who was 18 years of age, was drowned through the capsizing of a boat on the river off Grays whilst proceeding with his captain to the barge *Regent*.

An inquest on the body was held at Erith on Monday, when a verdict of "Accidentally drowned through the capsizing of a defective boat" was returned by the jury.

The funeral took place at Grays Cemetery on Tuesday; the officiating minister being the Rev J J Winser. The father and other relatives of deceased were present, and the coffin was covered with a large number of wreaths from sympathising friends. Mr Thompson efficiently carried out the funeral arrangements.

## **8 29 July 1905**

**PURFLEET**

**TOWED FROM NEW YORK – A RECORD VOYAGE** The Standard Oil Company has successfully berthed at Purfleet a barge loaded with 4,700 tons of oil, which had been towed across the Atlantic by a vessel belonging to the Anglo American Oil Company. The company have been accustomed to coasting barges around the American ports, and felt encouraged to take its oil barges across "the pond". *The Colonel E L Drake*, laden with 7,000 tons of oil, and taking a barge with 4,700 tons of oil in tow, left New York on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. A quick passage was made, Prawle Point being reached in 15 1/2 days, against the 13 or 14 days taken by unencumbered vessels. The barge is finely built for ocean work, and has five masts, with sails fore and aft, and is fitted with wireless telegraphic apparatus. *The Colonel E L Drake* burns oil fuel only, and carries a searchlight. A Press representative was informed by the manager of the company at Purfleet that the time of the voyage was a record. The greatest previous feat in towing was the voyage last winter from New York round the Horn to San Francisco of one of the Standard Oil Company's barges. The time then taken was 72 days.

## **9 5 August 1905**

On Monday night, some excitement was occasioned on the river at Grays owing to a collier, the *Mid Surrey*, running into Messrs Goldsmith's barge *Tricolour*, which is considerably damaged, and also into the new Training Ship *Exmouth*, which it stripped of a boom.

## **10 5 August 1905**

**GRAYS PETTY SESSION**

**NO LIGHT** **George Ockendon** did not appear in answer to a summons for riding a bicycle without a light at Corringham on the night of July 15<sup>th</sup>. PC Fisher related the circumstances. The Chairman: What is defendant? Superintendent Jordan: A bargeman. The Chairman: Then he is earning money now, and does not attend the court. Fined 5s and costs.

## **11 16 September 1905**

**FOUND DEAD AT TILBURY DOCK** On Wednesday morning about 8.30, a lighterman named **Blundell** went down to his cabin on the barge *Reims*, belonging to Messrs Cook and Co, when his attention was called to a man lying there apparently dead. He informed the police, and the doctor was also sent for. Dr Kennedy of the P and O Company was quickly in attendance, but could only certify that the man was dead, and in his opinion had been so for some hours. The body was conveyed to the mortuary, the facts reported to the Coroner, and inquiries made by the Police and by PC Davey, of the County Police, to establish the unfortunate man's identity. It is believed that the deceased, who was, to all appearance, a ship's fireman, had gone down into his cabin to sleep, as he had removed his boots.

**12 23 September 1905**

**TILBURY DOCK**

**THE RECENT DEATH ON A TILBURY BARGE** On Friday of last week, Mr Coroner Lewis conducted an inquiry at the Basin Tavern, Tilbury Dock, into the circumstances surrounding the death of a man whose body was found in the cabin of the barge *Reims* on the previous Wednesday. The evidence corroborated the facts reported in the "Gazette" last week, with the addition that the body was identified by a brother as that of Albert Edward Collard, aged 27 years, a labourer of no fixed address. Dr Fowler stated that he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, and found that death was due to carbonic oxide gas poisoning. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

**13 4 November 1905**

**A COLLISION** On Tuesday about noon, the screw collier *Player*, when about to enter the basin of the Dock from the river, collided with the cement barge *Millie*, belonging to the Portland Cement Company, Grays, which sank almost immediately. The lightermen managed to scramble on board the tug *Lion*, which had the barge in tow at the time, and thus saved their lives.

**14 11 November 1905**

**TILBURY**

**A COLD BATH** On Friday week, **Walter Fairweather** of Dagenham, whilst stepping from his own barge into a sailing barge lying alongside, slipped and fell into the water of the Eastern Branch Dock. He was rescued little the worse for his immersion, and attended to at the Police Office.

**15 9 December 1905**

**GRAYS PETTY SESSIONS**

**PROSECUTION BY THE DOCK COMPANY** J W Cook and Co Ltd, Mark Lane, EC, were summoned for neglecting to remove the barge *Magnet* from the Tilbury Dock after receiving notice from the Dockmaster. Defendants were fined £8 with court costs 15s and witness's expenses £2 2s.

**16 20 January 1906**

**SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT TILBURY DOCK** On Thursday **Mr Crabbe**, a Little Thurrock man, whilst working on a barge alongside the Steamship *Comedian*, was accidentally struck by a beam and thrown against the combings with great force. The P and O doctor was immediately summoned, and ordered the unfortunate man's removal to the Hospital, where it was found his head had been seriously injured. On Friday, we were informed that Mr Crabbe was still lying in a most precarious condition.

**17 27 January 1906**

**FATAL RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT AT TILBURY DOCKS**

**AN UNFORTUNATE MISTAKE** On Wednesday morning, Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury of whom Mr W White was chosen foreman held an inquest at the Basin Tavern, Tilbury Dock, with reference to the death of **Mr James Crabb** of Little Thurrock, who died on Sunday morning at Tilbury Hospital as the result of injuries sustained whilst working on a barge alongside the SS *Comedian* at Tilbury Dock on the previous Thursday. Mr D E Wilson, Inspector of Factories, was present, and Mr Gardner appeared on behalf of Messrs Scruttons Ltd, by whom deceased was employed.

Frederick Crabb, brother of deceased, living at 11 Brooke Road, Grays, said deceased was a labourer in the employ of Scruttons Limited. He was 37 years of age, and a married man.

Jonas Hallett of 31 Maple Road, Grays, dock labourer, said on Thursday last he was working on the SS *Comedian* in Tilbury Dock, acting as gangwayman. James Crabb was in the barge alongside, which was being loaded. They were then about to shift the beam, which was on the barge, and put it in position. The beam was very heavy at one end and they had it laid on the bulk of the cargo so that they could alter the position of the strap. The winch driver asked him to get a piece of wood,

and as he went to get it, he heard a cry, "Look out, for God's sake ; you have killed Crabb!" Witness did not see what happened.

George Mason of 19 Manor Road, Grays, said that on the day in question he was employed as a winchman by Messrs Scrutton on board SS *Comedian*. He was driving the overside winch. The last witness instructed him to lift the beam and then to lower it to its proper place, and he did so. He then saw deceased leave his proper position, and thought the beam was shipped. Witness stepped down to another winch, and then heard Hallett say, "Heave up". He took that as an instruction, and did so, and then heard that someone had been hurt. He did not know that the beam was then hitched on.

In reply to Mr Gardner, witness said he wanted a piece of wood to put his foot on as he was standing on a naked steam pipe. At that time everything was free. If the men in the barge had not reattached the runner, nothing would have happened. He took the words "Heave up" as being addressed to him, but that was a misunderstanding.

By the Coroner : They sometimes had to take instructions from a man whom they could not see.

William Farr of 75 Parker Road, Grays, who was working in the barge, said the beam was unhitched, and who hitched the runner on again he could not say. There were two men alongside, and one of them must have hitched it on again. He saw the beam in the act of being raised. It sunk towards the ship and struck Crabb, knocking him down and catching his head against the beam and the combings of the barge.

By a Juror : If a man had been looking over the side, witness believed nothing would have happened. He thought there was insufficient attention paid to them, and heard someone complaining about the winchman.

John Clark of 5 Shakespeare Villas, Grays, foreman employed by Messrs Scrutton, said the men in the barge were casual hands. He questioned the men after the occurrence, and interviewed one of them named Hunyett, taking down his statement in writing, but he failed to ascertain who hitched the runner on.

Several witnesses were recalled with regard to the latter point, but nothing definite could be elicited. Dr Fowler said deceased was admitted to the hospital on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst, suffering a fractured base of the skull. He died on Sunday morning about 3.30.

The Coroner reviewed the evidence, and said he considered it extremely dangerous that a man should take an order from one whom he could not see.

A Juror : I think that struck most of the Jury.

The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and added as a recommendation that they considered no man working on a winch should take an order from anyone unless he could see them.

The Coroner said the Inspector of Factories had mentioned to him that two similar cases had been before him recently, and he therefore considered the recommendation a most necessary one.

Mr Gardner said he wished to express the regret of Messrs Scrutton at the unfortunate occurrence. Deceased was one of their best and most straightforward men, and if they could be more sorry in one case than another, this was the case.

The terrible occurrence is rendered all the more distressing by reason of the fact that deceased leaves a widow and six children, the oldest being only just over 11 years of age. He was a member of the Peculiar People, Liberty Section, and at the services on Sunday, sympathetic reference was made to his death by Elder J Hempstead. The funeral takes place today (Saturday) at 2.30 at the Cemetery.

## **18      27 January 1906**

### **GRAYS PETTY SESSION**

**BREAKING THE BYE LAWS** Charles Slowly denied interfering with a capstan upon the lock quay at Tilbury Dock, without permission, on the 16<sup>th</sup> December, contrary to the bye laws of the London and India Docks Company. Mr Hilliary appeared for the prosecution. Walter Symonds and William Goodrum gave evidence in support of the prosecution, and Edward George Dunmore was called for the defence. Fined £1 inclusive.

## 19 10 February 1906

### A STORY OF THE THAMES

GRAYS MAN MISSING About eleven o'clock on Sunday night, **Samuel Keeble** of 69 Clarence Road, Grays, the captain of the barge *Fanny*, reported at the Police Station, Grays, that about 10.35 pm he and his mate, **James Stone**, were on their barge, which was lying in the river a little way off the Chalk Quarries jetty, when they saw a barge's boat drifting. The mate went in their own boat to it, and picked up the paddle that was floating in the river, and also saw a man's cap floating away. As the boat bore the name *Zanita*, and the barge *Zanita* was lying a little way out, he went on board but found no one there, and he therefore surmised that someone had been drowned.

Enquiries were at once made, and the captain of the *Zanita*, **Herbert John Wright** of 15 Crown Road, Grays, was found, and stated that his mate, a young fellow 20 years of age named **Joseph George Smith** of 13 Kent Road, Grays, ought to have been on board. The captain went on board, but failed to find the mate, and further inquiries were made in the town.

It was ascertained that Smith had been in company of three other young men about the town during the evening, and left them about ten minutes past ten o'clock near the Police Station. He went along the London Road in the direction of his barge. Up till Thursday, nothing more had been seen of him, and it is feared that, whilst proceeding in the boat to the barge he, by some means, fell into the water and was drowned.

## 20 3 March 1906

### BARGES AND THEIR BERTHS

IMPORTANT COUNTY COURT ACTION At Plymouth County Court on Thursday, before Judge Lush-Wilson KC, Alfred Vandervord of Southend-on-Sea sued Messrs Matcham and Co Ltd of Mount Pleasant, Plymouth, carrying on business at Millbridge as the Phoenix Marble Works.

Plaintiff's claim was for damages sustained by his sailing barge *Jane* of London, and expenses incurred in connection therewith by reason of negligence of the defendants or their servants in placing the *Jane* in an improper berth owned by them. The claim was for £96 19s, made up as follows :- Shipwright's bill, £41 ; expenses incurred in pumping, £4 7s ; marine surveyor's fees, £7 7s ; civil engineers' fees and surveyors' fees, £18 7s ; shipbroker's fees, £5 10s ; plaintiff's disbursements and incidental expenses, £5 ; demurrage or damages for the detention of the barge *Jane* of London from August 16<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 1905, £15 8s.

Mr D Stephens, barrister, was for the plaintiff, and Mr Percy T Pearce represented the defendants.

Mr Stephens said the claim was for damages for negligence, viz, the uneven and defective state of a berth which caused damage to his client's barge when lying there discharging a cargo of stone. It was chartered by the defendants to bring stone from Portland. The *Jane* was a barge of 56 tons register, and 110 tons burthen. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the defendants chartered the vessel to load at Portland from the factors of the charterers a cargo of stone, and to proceed to Merchants' Wharf, Millbridge, and discharge. The vessel was loaded, and she arrived at Stonehouse Creek at 1 pm on August 13<sup>th</sup>, and was moored in a usual berth. The Master went up to Stonehouse lake to Millbridge to report the arrival and get instructions. He saw either the foreman or the manager of the defendant company, who said he would send someone down to bring the vessel up and berth her on the following day. Eventually, the vessel was brought up and berthed by the defendants' servants about 3 o'clock on the 14<sup>th</sup>, on a berth said to be all mud. By 7 o'clock in the evening, about 30 tons of cargo had been taken out of the middle part of the ship. At 8 o'clock the master proceeded ashore, and he did not return until 11 o'clock. Upon his arrival, his mate, who was on deck, reported to him that the vessel was straining back. The master examined her, and found that the seams had opened so that he could put his finger in. Being anxious to find the manager of the defendant company, the master asked a policeman, who went and saw the vessel. Going to the police station, he endeavoured to get into communication with the defendant, as he was afraid the ship would make so much water that she would sink. When the tide rose, the ship made water at the rate of five or six inches an hour. The port and starboard pumps were kept going till the vessel floated, when the seams closed again in the usual way. After that, only one pump was used. This pump was kept

going, and in the morning the manager came, and said he would discharge the vessel as quickly as possible. This was done, and the vessel was taken to Mr Hawke's for survey and repair. It was found that she was considerably strained, and certain repairs had to be done to her.

Mr Stephens made reference to the Moorcock case, which decided that a person owning a wharf, in the use of which it was necessary for all vessels coming alongside to ground, must either make the wharf safe, or if they knew it was unsafe, they must warn the vessel coming. If they had taken no steps to ascertain whether it was safe or unsafe, they must warn the vessel back, and tell the master of the vessel that he would moor at his own risk.

**Augustus William Jarrett**, master of the *Jane*, corroborated the opening statements.

Cross-examined : There were five aboard the *Jane* when she was berthed, but he was the only one present in Court.

Did you tell Mr Hole that you had had an accident? - Quite right.

And did you ask about somebody who could repair the boat? - I said the davits had been bent and wanted somebody to straighten them.

Did you see men straightening the berth? - Yes, levelling it.

Did you make any suggestions? - No ; I asked one man if it were all mud, and he said yes.

So that you could suggest nothing ; the berth was all right? - Yes, so far as I could see.

In consequence of the way in which the vessel was laden, did you ask to have some of the cargo taken out? - I asked to have the vessel lightened.

Why did you do so? - Because I saw the berth was mud, and thought she might "suck".

Because the boat was overladen or heavily laden? - No ; she was only fairly laden.

Did you see any injuries as a result of a second night in the berth? - No ; I did not see any.

What were you upset about? - I was not upset ; It was the vessel. (Laughter).

What do you suggest was the cause of the vessel straining herself? - The bad ground underneath.

But you could not see it? - No.

PC Geo Sandy deposed to being spoken to by the master of the *Jane*, and to going aboard the vessel. He saw that the vessel was wrung.

Cross-examined : It was a clear night, and he could plainly see that the starboard bow and the port quarter were down.

**Henry James Pulsford**, master of the steel barge *Bucephalus*, gave evidence to the effect that his ship went on the berth and twisted. Had she been made of wood, she would have split.

Cross-examined : It was the fore part of the berth he complained of.

After the adjournment, Captain F S Willies, marine surveyor, said he considered the berth a very bad one.

Cross-examined : He came to that conclusion because for 22 feet the vessel did not settle down, and for 14 feet 10 inches he could look under the bottom. The position he saw the vessel in was after the second night after the berth.

**Thomas Richard Davey**, mate of the barge *Francis*, said his barge tilted while a cargo of sand was being discharged. That happened in about May of last year, and was due to the unevenness of the ground.

This concluded the case for the plaintiff, and Mr Pearce said the plaintiff had to prove that there was a breach of duty on the part of the defendants, and that the damage done to the vessel was solely due to her having been on the berth. He would show that the berth was a good one, and that it was visited and approved of. There was no evidence to establish the fact that the berth was a defective one.

George F Watson, shipbuilder, regarded the berth as a safe one. It was what was known as a "soft berth", but he considered it as a "beau ideal".

Cross-examined : The vessel was strained, and she had evidently been in a bad berth somewhere.

George F Hele, a clerk in the office of Messrs Matcham and Co, stated that the captain of the *Jane* asked him what sort of berth it was, and he asked the captain to go and examine it for himself.

John Tope gave evidence of taking the *Jane* to the berth. He noticed she was deep in the water, and when he drew the attention of the captain to it, he explained that the barge was very much

overloaded. No ship like the *Jane* need hurt on the berth.

Montague Victor Hancock, foreman at the wharf, said he noticed the water five inches above the Board of Trade disc on the *Jane*.

Cross-examined : He never promised the captain of the *Jane* to send a man to take the vessel to the wharf, but he offered to send a man to help him. Where the vessel was berthed it was all mud.

Re-examined : The berth was an absolutely safe one, and boats with heavier cargoes had gone on it since the *Jane*.

Samuel Albert Savoury, who assisted in unloading the *Jane*, said he saw water in the main hatch – about nine inches.

Mr R Hansford Worth CE said he had made a survey of the berth. He produced plans of the spot, and explained them in detail. He found nothing in the berth to account for the damage to a flat bottomed vessel such as the *Jane* had sustained.

Mr Pearce : Is there anything that you can point to as dangerous in the berth? - No.

Mr A R Debnam, managing director of the firm of Matcham and Co, said the berth had been used by a large number of barges, and not a single complaint had been received before.

Mr Pearce pointed out that the case was an important one, not only to owners of ships, but also to owners of wharves which vessels had to use. It was necessary that the plaintiff should substantiate the plea of negligence, and that reasonable care had not been taken. He ventured to say that there was no such evidence, for it was not sufficient to say that the ship went to the berth and, while there, sustained some injury. The defendants had taken all reasonable care, and even now they had their own vessels on the berth. The plaintiff would have to show, without any doubt, that the injury to the vessel was caused by the condition of the berth, but such had not been done. Where was the evidence that no reasonable care was taken, or that his clients were aware of any danger? There was none. If his Honour wished for an expert to examine the berth, the defendants would be willing to pay the expense. If a verdict were given against the defendants, and the berth had to be closed, it would seriously affect an industry in the town. The fact that the captain of the *Jane* stayed in the berth the night after his boat was damaged was, he contended, evidence which rebutted the charge of negligence. There was no evidence of negligence, which was the one essential if the plaintiff was to get a verdict.

Mr Stephens replied, inferring that the defendants should have known the condition of the berth, and the fact that they did not know implied negligence.

JUDGEMENT His Honour said the case was a difficult one, but the action was no doubt an action for negligence ; that was the gist of the case. There were two things to consider : (1) That the berth which adjoined the wharf was an unfit and improper berth for the barge, and (2) not only was the berth an improper and unfit one, but that the defendants had been guilty of negligence in relation to it. He believed the captain of the *Jane* had been speaking the truth, and his conduct was consistent with the truth of his story. Having reviewed the facts elicited in evidence, his Honour said it was impossible to doubt that the vessel sustained her damage on the berth, and he was bound to come to the conclusion that the berth was not a fit and proper berth for a flat bottomed vessel of the size of the *Jane*. With regard to the second point, he had made up his mind that he was not going to decide the case on that question at all, but upon another question altogether. It was given in evidence by the captain that a person was sent in the ordinary course of duty to fetch the barge up. He had been told to do so, and he took command of the vessel to a certain extent and placed it in the berth. That meant that the defendants not only made a contract with the plaintiff, which contract involved the necessity of plaintiff using the berth, but it did more, inasmuch as the defendants undertook to control the plaintiff's vessel in taking her to the berth. There was an implied warranty that the berth was a fit and proper place. His Honour asked Mr Stephens if he was content with a verdict on those lines.

Mr Stephens : I am.

Mr Pearce : But that is a phase of the case which has remained untouched.

Mr Stephens : It is purely a point of law.

Eventually, his Honour decided that the plaintiff should have costs, and that they should be taxed by

the registrar.  
Stay of execution was granted.

**21 12 May 1906**

**THE RECENT DOUBLE DROWNING FATALITY AT EAST TILBURY  
THE BODIES RECOVERED**

“CALLOUS CONDUCT” On Tuesday, two inquests were held at the Town Hall, Gravesend, by the Borough Coroner (Mr G Evans Penman) touching the deaths of Albert Edward Green, aged 18, and Frank Furner, aged 7, who, it will be remembered, were drowned off East Tilbury on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Henry Green, East Tilbury, powder magazine keeper to Messrs Curtis and Harvey, identified the body of Albert Edward Green as that of his son, who resided with and assisted witness. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, witness saw his son coming ashore from the ship, and heard the same evening that he had been drowned, but did not know for certain until the following day. Deceased was not capable of managing such a boat as that of which he was in charge at the time of the fatality. It was a yacht's dinghy, and of that class of boat, the deceased had no experience. Witness heard that a gentleman named Jones came down with the boat, but it being very windy he was afraid to go any further, and ran the boat ashore on Coalhouse Point, about a mile from the powder hulk. Deceased was walking round there at the time with the deceased lad Furner. Mr Jones asked whether he would take care of the boat, and he said that he would, promising to bring it round into the creek near the powder hulk. Mr Jones said that he would come down for the boat on the following day. That statement had been made to him by Mr Jones. The boat was found the day after the fatality below the Ship and Lobster. The other body witness identified as that of Frank Furner, whose father was an assistant on the powder hulk. Witness could only identify the bodies by their clothing.

The Coroner asked why Furner did not attend, and witness said that he was told by the police “on the other side” that there was no need for them to both come.

On the day of the fatality, continued the witness, a strong north easterly wind was blowing ; it was very stormy. Deceased took charge of the boat about 3.40. The tide was then running out.

In answer to the Coroner, the witness said that his son was very fond of the lad Furner, and probably never thought of an accident when he took him.

Samuel Mann, labourer residing at East Tilbury, gave evidence to the effect that on March 23<sup>rd</sup> he was on the river bank near Coalhouse Point. He saw the boat sailing down the river about 200 yards from shore. On looking a little later, the boat was bottom upwards ; there had been a sudden gust of wind. Witness saw the deceased Green clinging to the boat, but every now and then he disappeared as the waves hid the boat from view.

Cross-questioned by the coroner, witness said that he went on with his work for three quarters of an hour.

The Coroner : Did you say anything when you got home? - Yes.

Whom did you tell? - Several.

Where did the boat go? - Down the river.

Did you pay any particular attention? - Not particular.

Is this an everyday occurrence? A boat capsizing and a man clinging to it? - No.

It seems remarkable that you should see a man clinging to the bottom of a boat, and yet go back to work as if nothing unusual had happened. Did you see the owner of the boat on the river wall? - No, sir.

You had not seen anybody there? - No, sir.

Did you know why the owner beached the boat? - No, sir.

How far were you at work from the powder hulk? - A mile and a quarter.

How long had you been at work there? - All day.

And did you not see this eight foot boat beached? - No, sir.

You did not see the owner beach the dinghy? - No.

You did not see the man about three o'clock? - No, sir.

On which side of the wall were you working? - The river side.  
It seems curious that you did not see this as it happened at Coalhouse Point, and you were working there. You did not see deceased on the river bank? - No, sir.  
And yet you had been working there all day? - Yes, sir.  
Was anyone else working with you? - Yes, there were six of us.  
When the boat capsized, did you say anything? - We spoke to one another.  
How far was the nearest boat from you? - At the Magazine.  
Don't you think that it would have been the best thing for one of you to have gone to the Magazine and said that a boat had capsized? - We did not understand the water.  
You seemed rather callous about it ; the whole lot of you. When you first saw the boat, it was 200 yards from the shore? - Yes, sir.  
Within hailing distance. If the man had shouted, could you have heard him? - No.  
You did not hear him shout out when the boat capsized? - No, sir.  
You have heard how deceased came by the boat. It happened at Coalhouse Point where you were working all day, and yet you did not see anything of it? - No, sir.  
Well it seems to me most unaccountable. None of the other men working with you saw the owner or deceased take charge of the boat? - No, sir.  
What did you think when you saw the man clinging to the boat? - We thought we should like to do something for him if we could.  
I suppose you knew he was being drowned? - It looked to us like it at that distance.  
Yet you went on working for three quarters of an hour longer, and did not warn anybody that an accident had happened, although there were six of you. Who was in charge of you? - A man named Goldstone.  
Who were you employed by? - A Mr Harris, I believe.  
You believe. Is it the Thames Conservancy? Who pays you? - It is not the Conservancy. A gentleman comes backwards and forwards to pay us.  
The Coroner (to the jury) : Any questions, gentlemen?  
The Foreman : I think it is not much use.  
The Coroner (warmly) : I never did hear of such a thing.  
**Jesse Penny**, a waterman residing at 12 Kempthorne Street, said that the previous day at 7.30 pm, he was just below the Ship and Lobster when he saw a body floating down the river. His mate made it fast, and they brought it to the New Bridge,  
**John Spiers**, waterman residing at 56 Queen Street, stated that on Sunday evening he was in a line with the powder magazines, in mid channel, when the body of a lad floated up the river. He conveyed it to the Town Pier.  
Detective-sergeant Thompson gave evidence as to taking charge of the body of Green. On searching it, he found £3 12s 9d in money, two keys and a knife.  
The Coroner (who had received a telegram from the owner of the boat) said that he was taking the boat to Burnham-on-Crouch, but becoming frightened at the heavy gale, beached the boat. He asked deceased what he should do, and deceased offered to take it to one of the creeks and look after it until the next day. The boy was with him and, not anticipating that anything was going to happen, took him in the boat. It certainly seemed to him a most unaccountable thing, listening to the evidence of the witness Mann, that six of them were working at Coalhouse Point where the boat was beached, where the deceased and his companion entered it, and the spot from which the owner walked away, and yet none of them saw anything of the occurrence except the capsized boat going down the river. It seemed to him most unaccountable. They saw a boat capsized and a man being drowned, and yet they went to work for nearly an hour without informing anyone, just as if it was an ordinary occurrence.  
The jury returned a verdict of death from "Accidental drowning", and added an expression of sympathy with the relatives of the deceased, in which the Coroner joined.

**22 12 May 1906**

GRAYS COUNTY COURT

Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup>, before His Honour Judge Tindal Atkinson.

COMPENSATION CLAIM ADMITTED Mr Minton Senhouse (instructed by Mr F E Green) appeared to make application for compensation from Messrs Scrutton of Tilbury Dock, on behalf of **Mrs Crabb** of 69 Hampden Road, Grays, for herself and six young children, owing to the loss of her husband, who was killed in an accident at Tilbury Dock whilst in the employ of the respondents. It would not be necessary for His Honour to try the case because the respondents had admitted, by a notice, to the extent of £263 7s 0d, which they were willing to accept. The deceased man was a dock labourer in a very good position, and at the inquest, the solicitor for the respondents expressed their regrets at the sad occurrence, stating that deceased was one of their best workmen, and if they could feel more sorry in one case than another it was this one. The accident took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1906, when deceased was engaged in loading a ship. His wages were, roughly, from 35s to 40s a week, and he had a wife and six children dependent upon him.

After some consideration, His Honour said he would make the order for the widow to receive £163 and the children £100 in equal shares ; the whole to be invested for £1 per week to be paid to the widow.

Mr Senhouse made application with regard to costs, stating that the respondents had tried to set up a legal defence to the action, and had adopted a policy of bluff from beginning to end up till the last moment. He asked for costs on scale C.

Mr Hurd, for the respondents, said there was a serious point under the law as to liability, and they were perfectly justified in endeavouring to negotiate a compromise. They ought not to be called upon to pay costs incurred in briefing counsel after their agreement to pay the amount stated.

His Honour gave judgement for costs on scale C.

WORKMAN'S ACTION AGAINST THE DOCK COMPANY An application for compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act was made by William Beard of 156 London Road, Grays, against the London and India Docks Company, applicant having sustained the loss of a thumb and finger whilst employed by the respondents.

Mr Minton Senhouse (instructed by Mr F E Green) was for the applicant, and Mr Wootten (instructed by Messrs Turner and Son) for the Dock Company.

In opening the case, counsel stated that the accident happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> October of last year, whilst applicant was engaged in shunting operations. He alleged that his earnings were 27s 6d a week, but he understood that the respondents had books which showed 25s 4d, and he accepted that figure. Applicant's thumb and second finger on the left hand were injured, and were operated upon at Tilbury Hospital by Dr Fowler, the thumb and the top joint of the finger being amputated. He was in the Hospital some time, and he attended as an out-patient afterwards. He subsequently made application for compensation, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November the Company wrote offering half pay of 12s 6d a week, which his client accepted. In March, respondents refused compensation until they got a certificate from Dr Fowler stating that the applicant was unable to work. The applicant called on the Dock Company on the 5<sup>th</sup> March and asked for light work, and was told to come on the 12<sup>th</sup>. He made application for £100, but the Company replied that they could not entertain it. Before the 12<sup>th</sup> he tried his thumb, but found it was so painful that he could not work with it. It was his (counsel's) duty to tell His Honour what was the matter with the thumb. It was periostitis of the metacarpal bone. (Laughter).

Counsel for the respondents volunteered the information that it was inflammation.

His Honour thought that if they had simpler language they would be able to understand the case better. Otherwise they would want an interpreter sworn. (Laughter).

Mr Senhouse said the man was examined on several occasions by Drs Fowler, Sibbard and Floyd, and the point for His Honour to decide was whether on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, since then, and that day, the applicant was capable of doing work.

An assistant in the employ of Mr W A Coldwell, x-ray photographer, London, produced

photographs taken of the hand.

Dr Sibbard said he had examined the applicant's hand, and he was of opinion that he could do work provided he did not have to use the stump of the thumb.

Cross-examined : The thumb was tender on pressure, but there was no continuous pain. The present condition would gradually improve. The applicant could do watchman's work.

Dr Floyd gave similar evidence.

Applicant bore out counsel's statement. He applied for light work, and was told to attend on March 12<sup>th</sup>, but before that day he tested his hand and found he could not work with it.

In cross-examination, witness said he believed he could do light watchman's work, or tallying when he learnt it, but considered the latter unthankful work. He did not believe there was any improvement in his thumb during the past month.

Counsel : Don't take too despondent a view of it.

His Honour said it had been suggested that the Company would have given the man light work, but there was no evidence before him as to what sort of work they were in a position to give him.

**Mr J Braithwaite**, Dock Superintendent, was here called. He said he saw the applicant and spoke to him about work, and he thought he could do some light truck work. The man had previously written asking for a small sum as compensation, and witness asked him to name an amount. He agreed to consider it, and came back afterwards and said he wanted £100. Witness said he did not think the Company would give it to him. He reported the interview to the Managers, and received instructions to give the man as light employment as possible. He therefore told him that light work would be given him. He proposed to engage him as watchman – watching a shed belonging to the Company to see that nothing was taken away. His wages would be 6d an hour, and his average would be quite equal to what he had received as a shunter. When there was no watching to do, he could have given him tallying.

His Honour said the whole question was as to this offer.

Mr Senhouse agreed that it might have been in Mr Braithwaite's mind that he intended to offer the man watchman's work, but it certainly could not have entered the imagination of this young, strong, active shunter that they were simply going to offer him a place to look on at other people working. (Laughter). The only suggestion made was with regard to truck work.

His Honour said the applicant might have gone to ascertain what work the Company would have given him. It looked as if the reason why he refused to go was because the Company refused his application for £100.

After some further arguments, His Honour said he would give the respondents a week in which to inform the applicant whether they were willing to give him light work which he could do at the same wages as he received before the accident. If within a week they declined to give it, then he could come to the next court and he (the Judge) would make an award.

## **23 26 May 1906**

### **LINER IN FLAMES AT TILBURY DOCK**

#### **LASCAR'S FATAL LEAP**

**EXTRAORDINARY SCENES** At an early hour on Tuesday morning, a destructive fire suddenly burst out on the Steamship *City of York*, whilst lying alongside the eastern berth in Tilbury Dock. The vessel is owned by the Ellerman Lines Limited, and is one of the largest of the City Line. She arrived from Calcutta on Monday afternoon, with passengers and a general Indian cargo. The passengers at once entrained for London, leaving on board a crew of about 20 Englishmen and 100 Lascars.

The fire was first discovered about 25 minutes past 2 pm, and was seen practically simultaneously from three directions, viz, North End, Lock Entrance and the Manor Way Gate. All the men agree as to the time and the circumstances. Sparks shot upwards, and then a

**HUGE VOLUME OF FLAME.** The alarm was at once given, and in a few minutes, the Dock firemen and police, under Inspector Hill, were on the spot. It was seen at once that a very fierce fire was in progress. The flames were leaping about 40 or 50 feet in the air, and setting fire to the main

mast, boats, crane, and the corner of the Docks shed.

Three hydrants from the quay were immediately got to work, and a call was sent on for the Dock floats *Grampus* and *Sirdar*. The flames on the shed and crane were soon extinguished, but the fire on the ship had got such a firm hold that it was impossible to do anything but practically extinguish it. The *Grampus*, under Captain Pusey, now got alongside and set to work with six deliveries, and the *Sirdar*, which arrived shortly after, under Captain Miller, got to work with four deliveries. No exertions were spared, and the men who had now arrived worked splendidly with the police and dock firemen, Messrs Webber and Batchelder, and the dockmaster's staff, under Captain Buchan and Captain Johnson. The Superintendent of the Dock, Mr J Braithwaite, was present with other leading officials of the Dock Company. Inspector Rowe of the Dock Police, London, was also in attendance.

**LASCAR KILLED AND ANOTHER SERIOUSLY INJURED** After the first alarm of fire had been given, the Lascars, who were lodged in the after part of the ship right away from the fire, and who were really in no danger, seemed to be panic stricken. They at once made a rush to leave the ship, and many hurriedly proceeded down the rope ladder into some barges. In the excitement, one of them unfortunately fell into the barge and dislocated his neck. He was at once carried to Tilbury Hospital, where he expired shortly after admission. Another Lascar fell and injured three of his ribs. He also was taken to the Hospital and admitted.

**PRACTICALLY AN EXPLOSION** No part of the cargo had been touched on Monday, and at night the No 4 hold, where the fire broke out, was battened down. The force of the fire may be judged from the fact that some of the hatch boards were blown a distance of some 12 or 14 feet when the outbreak first occurred. The cargo was of a very inflammable nature, and consisted of jute, hemp, cocoa nuts, fibre, salt petre and bales of gunnies.

**THE FIRE SPREADS** About eight am, at which time there were 22 deliveries of water playing into the burning hold, the fire showed some signs of being subdued. It was thought in all that it had been got well under, and the ship's people took off the hatches of the adjoining hold, No 5, and commenced to discharge. There was no appearance then of the fire having reached that part of the vessel. After the work had been continued for some time, an alarm was suddenly given that the fire had broken out there, and the flames immediately shot up from the corner of the hold adjoining No 4. It appeared that the bulkhead separating the two holds had got overheated, and had ignited the cargo in No 5. Another huge task now awaited the firemen, who at once directed all their efforts to subdue the fresh outbreak.

**ARRIVAL OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL BRIGADE** Later in the day, Captain Gamble of the London County Council Fire Brigade attended and, with his smoke helmet, visited No 4 hold, where he was able to point out where the fire was most dangerous. Towards the close of the afternoon, the London County Council fire float, *Beta*, arrived with a crew of firemen, and assisted in filling the holds. Captain Black of the *City of York* directed the operations of his crew. During the afternoon, the salvage tug *Commonwealth* was sent for to assist and, under Captain Scarff, helped by pumping a huge jet of water through their 6in pipe into No 4 hold. Some idea of the magnitude of the fire may be gleaned from the fact that the Dock Fire Brigade and police were pouring 22 deliveries from their fire floats, hydrants, steam fire engine and the ship's donkey engine into the burning holds at one time. This was supplemented later by the tug *Commonwealth's* six inch delivery pipe, and six deliveries from the fire float *Beta*.

**THE FIRE SMOTHERED** The efforts of the workers were continued up until 4.30 pm, at which time the holds had been filled with water and the fire practically smothered out. The dock floats were then engaged for several hours in pumping out the water, the great volume of which had sunk the vessel aft, while her bows rose correspondingly out of the water. The Lascars, who had been watching the proceedings in a scared manner from a safe distance, now began to remove their belongings, and a curious site was witnessed. The men carefully carried away a remarkable collection of bags and bundles, while one was observed with a cage containing two parrots, and another with a strange assortment of some dozen umbrellas.

**THE DAMAGE** The cargo on Nos 4 and 5 holds was damaged by the fire and water. That in Nos

1, 2 and 3 was uninjured. The ship itself was, of course, very seriously damaged. The dock crane was injured and the glass windows in the roofs of the sheds broken through the intense heat. Some of the woodwork on the sheds was burnt and charred, and a dock truck was damaged. The intensity of the heat can be imagined by the fact that the paint on the boats of the Steamship *Staffordshire*, over 40 yards distant, was scorched and blistered. The extent of the damage in £ s d must be very considerable.

A WORD OF PRAISE is due to all who assisted in subduing the fire. Everyone worked splendidly, and had this not been so, it is impossible to imagine the damage which would have ensued. Getting out the cargo, the men looked on with great dejection, realising that they had lost the work which they had been expecting for some days past and which, in some cases, is a serious matter. The London County Council fire float and men left at 10 minutes to seven in the evening ; the dock floats being then still engaged in pumping out the water from the holds.

INQUEST ON THE DECEASED LASCAR On Thursday morning, Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury, of whom Mr Oscar Oxley was chosen foreman, were engaged for about an hour at the Basin Tavern, Tilbury Dock, enquiring into the circumstances surrounding the death of the deceased Lascar who was killed during the fire. It appeared that the unfortunate man's name was Casea Rula, and that he was 25 years of age.

Mr Cooper, Superintendent of the Board of Trade, was present, representing the India Office.

Janna Rula, fireman, said deceased was his brother, and also was a fireman. On Tuesday morning, he was asleep in the forecabin of the ship with his brother and other men, when they were roused about 2.30 am by being told that the ship was on fire. They all went on deck, and tried to climb down a rope to get into a boat. Witness saw his brother fall on to a boat. He also saw another man fall onto the boat, but he did not fall so far.

Adrian Woodsmith, fourth officer of the *City of York*, said he was roused on Tuesday morning about 2.15 by the noise of flames. Witness was in his cabin at the time, and he immediately went out and found that the after well deck was in flames. He proceeded with other officers to the after part of the ship and found there was a

PANIC AMONG THE NATIVES which he tried to quell. He saw that the natives were trying to get from the ship to the dock by means of a rope. A rope ladder was at once put over. Some went down the ladder, but some did not go at all. There was no immediate danger to the men where they were. The deceased man had fallen before witness got there, and he saw him being removed. No European actually saw him fall.

By the Coroner : The ship arrived on Monday afternoon. Its cargo consisted of jute and jute manufactures.

PC Lingard of the Docks Police, said on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst, he was on duty at the fire and saw the deceased man falling from the rope ladder into the hold of a barge. Witness assisted in taking him out. There were signs of life in him but he was unconscious. They removed him to the Hospital.

Dr Foster said he saw deceased about six am on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. He was then dead. His neck was fractured.

The Coroner said it was quite clear that deceased met his death in attempting to escape from the ship whilst the fire was taking place.

The Jury at once returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

At Lloyds on Thursday, it is stated that the claims upon underwriters arising out of the fire on the Steamer *City of York* at Tilbury Docks on Tuesday cannot fall short of £250,000.

## **24 2 June 1906**

### **GRAYS PETTY SESSION**

DOUBLE D'S **William Pearce**, bargeman, Grays, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Grays on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Defendant did not appear, and after a statement by PC Carr, a fine of 10s inclusive was imposed.

**25 9 June 1906**

**LODGER CHARGED WITH MURDER**

**WOMAN FOUND WITH A FRACTURED RIB**

**SENSATIONAL EVIDENCE** On Saturday morning at No 1 Albert Cottages, Beach Road, Southend, the dead body of Caroline Elizabeth Lewin, aged 51, a widow, was found lying on the floor in a bedroom. Dr W Cardy Black was sent for and, on examination, found a fracture of the eighth rib and other injuries on the lower part of the body. The police took possession of the body and conveyed it to the mortuary, and, as the result of inquiries, a man named Robert William Poynter, who has been living with deceased, was arrested on Monday and subsequently charged with murder.

**THE INQUEST** On Tuesday morning, at the Park Hotel, London Road, the Coroner (Mr C E Lewis) held an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of the deceased.

Mr Frank Harding was elected foreman of the jury.

Superintendent Pryke was present, and the man Poynter was also brought up in the custody of P C Crockford.

Mrs Phoebe Wood senr, who was very much affected, said : My daughter's name was Caroline Elizabeth Lewin. I lived with her at No 1 Albert Cottages, Beach Road, Southend. I am a widow. I last saw her alive on Saturday night about ten o'clock ; my daughter and myself had supper together. A young man lodger lived with her, and his name was Robert William Poynter. When we were having supper, he was upstairs in bed. He lived with my daughter. He came in about seven o'clock that night, and went to bed very soon after coming in. My daughter and he occupied the same bedroom. She was 51 last birthday and was a widow, and had been for four years,

The Coroner : This inquiry cannot be concluded this morning. I take it there are no questions the jury would like to ask now.

None were asked.

Dr W Cardy Black of York Road said : I first saw the deceased on Saturday morning last at eight am. She was lying on her back on the floor in the room upstairs at No 1 Albert Cottages. She was quite dead, and had apparently been so for six hours, and probably eight or nine hours. Her knees were drawn up and her elbows were bent. She was in her nightdress, and had a blanket over her knees, also a bundle of clothes under her head. I made an external examination of the body, and found a very bad and recent contused wound on the left side of the body, and an old bruise on the abdomen. I have since made a *post mortem* examination. I noticed there was vomit on the bedclothes and the pillow on the bed. I made the *post mortem*, and externally found the marks already described. On opening the head, there was no sign of any disease of the brain, or haemorrhage. There was a fracture of the eighth rib at a point corresponding with the external wounds. The position of the wound was six inches below the breast on the left side. The heart was quite healthy. The left lung was very much adherent to the chest wall, partly due to some old pleurisy, but there were no recent adhesions. The right lung was quite healthy, and there was no particle of food in the air passages. On opening the abdomen, there were several large blood clots and a quantity of fluid matter. The source of the bleeding was a rupture of the spleen which was under the fractured rib. The spleen was torn. The liver was enlarged and fatty, and the stomach was dilated and did not contain much food.

The Coroner : To what do you attribute death, Dr Black? - I attribute death to haemorrhage from the rupture of the spleen due to some injury.

Must it have been considerable force to produce that rupture? - Yes, and to produce the fracture of the rib.

Would a fall produce it? - Yes, possibly.

But it would be necessary to fall on something sharp? - Yes, to fall on something pointed and angular.

Superintendent Pryke : You say a fall against something, do you mean in the ordinary way a drop with great force? - If she fell on something sharp, say a chair, it would need great force.

Would anyone with a sharp toed boot produce such a fracture? - Yes, certainly.

When you were in the room, did you notice anything on the floor, which, supposing she had fallen from the bed, would have caused the fracture? - No, I did not.

A Juror : She may have fallen down in the kitchen and then gone upstairs? - Yes, it is possible.

The Coroner : Do you think she might have fallen and received the injury some time before she arrived in the house? - I think not, in view of the fact that she sat down and ate her supper, and when the spleen is like that they generally die in a few minutes.

Superintendent Pryke : May I just ask another question?

The Coroner : I don't think so now.

The Coroner (addressing Poynter) : It would be well for you to reserve any questions until later.

Poynter : May I ask one question?

The Coroner : I don't think you had better say anything ; I don't wish to prevent you doing so, but it would be well for you to reserve anything you have to say.

The Coroner (to Mrs Wood) : You said you saw the deceased alive on Saturday night. Is that a mistake? - Yes, it was Friday night.

What time did your daughter go to bed? - I don't know. I was abed when she came upstairs.

Did she go out after supper? - She went next door a little while, but it was not long after she came to bed.

Did she complain at all at supper of feeling unwell or of anything else? - No, not at all. She appeared quite well when she sat down to supper with me. We had half a pint of beer each and some fish.

The Coroner (to the Jury) : There are several other witnesses to be called, so I propose to adjourn the inquiry until Friday at two o'clock. You will all be bound over in £10 to appear.

A Juror (to the Coroner) : I don't know whether I am allowed to ask you a question, but it is this : Is there anything in connection with this case that leads one to imagine that it is manslaughter, murder, or an accident?

The Coroner : That is for you to ascertain.

#### CHARGED WITH MURDER AND REMANDED

STARTLING EVIDENCE On Tuesday afternoon, Poynter was brought before the Mayor (Alderman J R Brightwell) and charged that he did feloniously and wilfully kill and murder Caroline Elizabeth Lewin on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Julia Wood**, wife of **John Wood**, said : I live at 3 Albert Cottages, Beach Road, Southend. My husband is a waterman, and the deceased woman is my husband's sister. She is a widow and has been so for just over four years. I have lived where I now am living twelve months this month, and my sister-in-law lived next door but one. Poynter lived with her, and they both occupied the same bed until a month ago. From what mother has told me, I believe he came back to her about three nights ago. I have heard them jangling several times, but not what you would call a row. A month ago, she asked me to fetch the police. She came to me and I was in my house. My husband would not let me go for the police. She told me prisoner said he would rip her ---- out. I said, "He is not safe to live with", and prisoner said, "Isn't he?" They both went into their house together, and I did not hear any more bother. I remember Saturday morning last, at a quarter to seven, Poynter called to me. I was dressing upstairs, and he called out, "For God's sake come, I have just found poor Carrie dead". I rushed downstairs and was the first to get to her bedroom. I could not believe she was dead. I thought she had fainted. I saw she was dead, and was lying on the floor on the clothes she had taken off before getting into bed. She had her nightdress on, was lying on her back with her knees up. Her head was inclined towards the bed. I did not speak ; I was too frightened. I went downstairs to my mother-in-law, **Phoebe Wood**, and said, "Mother, get up ; poor Carrie is dead". I met prisoner on the landing as I was going to mother, and mother turned round and said to him, "You have killed my poor girl – you have murdered her". I said, "Mother, be careful what you are saying", and he said, "I have never hurt a hair of her head". I went and called my neighbour, Mrs Gillow, who lives at No 2. Mr Gillow came, and went upstairs with me to deceased's bedroom, and his wife followed up. Prisoner was downstairs in the sitting room on a chair. When I came downstairs with Mr and Mrs Gillow, I found my mother-in-law in the room with the prisoner. I

went to my house and sent for the doctor and police. I afterwards went back to No 1, and prisoner said, "You had better send a wire to Bob at Barking", deceased's brother. My son took the telegram to the post office, and when he returned he sent another wire to his daughter, Mrs Wadley, Shakespeare Drive, Prittlewell. The telegrams read, "Found poor Carrie dead at quarter to seven this morning". Prisoner only wrote the addresses for the telegrams, and I told my son what to say. I told him to go and inform Mrs Wadley, and also send one to Phoebe.

Superintendent Pryke : When did you last see your sister-in-law alive? - At 10.30 Friday night.

Where? - In my house.

Did you see her? - Yes : I just saw her head.

Was she sober? - Yes : sober as I am now.

Was she cheerful? - Yes.

Where was she? - Standing at my door.

She didn't complain to you? - No. Nothing at all.

Or about her health? - No.

The Mayor : It seems inconceivable, Mr Superintendent, that her own sister-in-law should stand at her door with her head just round the door.

In answer to the Deputy Magistrates Clerk (Mr Playle), witness stated that the conversation they had at the door was in respect of taking lodgers in for the holidays.

Prisoner had no questions to ask.

Dr W Cardy Black repeated the evidence given before the Coroner in the morning, and added that he made the *post mortem* examination in conjunction with Dr C Francis Williams.

By the Mayor : In my opinion, the injury to the spleen was caused by some external violence, such as a blow. Vomiting would not cause the rupture of the spleen. The wound might be caused by the toe of a boot or something angular.

When Mr Playle was reading Mrs Wood's evidence over to her, she stated that when her mother-in-law told Poynter he had killed poor Carrie, she said, "What did you run up and down stairs three times in the night for?" and he replied, "Didn't I go to get a light?"

Superintendent Pryke, on this evidence, asked for a remand until Tuesday next.

Prisoner, who appeared perfectly calm during the whole of the proceedings, was remanded until Tuesday in custody.

At the adjourned inquest on Friday, an open verdict was returned.

## 26 23 June 1906

### THE DEPARTURE OF THE *T S SHAFTESBURY*

POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS The removal of the Training Ship *Shaftesbury* from Grays to a Dutch port to be broken up resulted in a waterman named **James Tester** being summoned at Gravesend Police Court on Saturday by **Walter Cyril Hodd**, a Trinity House pilot, for acting as a pilot after a qualified man had offered his services.

Mr Clinch, who appeared for complainant, explained that at 8.15 am he boarded the Dutch tug *Otye*, which was towing the *Shaftesbury*, and offered his services. They were refused, but complainant went on board and there saw defendant in the wheel house on the bridge, controlling the vessel. In order to prove the case, the pilot cutter followed the tug for two miles down the river, and saw defendant navigating the ship without receiving orders from anyone. The total fees for the tug and tow were £10 0s 3d.

Complainant gave evidence bearing out his solicitor's statement. He saw defendant steering the tug, and on getting on board he told the captain that he had an unlicensed man on board, and if he had anyone it must be a properly qualified pilot. He then turned to defendant and told him to desist from steering the ship or he should take proceedings against him. Turning to the Bench, complainant exclaimed with contempt, "An unmanageable ship, a foreign tug and an unlicensed man in charge in our waters".

In answer to defendant, complainant denied that the captain of the tug was giving orders.

Evidence as to defendant being in the wheel house was given by Alfred Henry Nightingale, William Mully jun and Captain Jones.

Defendant told the Bench that the *Shaftesbury* was brought to Greenhithe, and the captain wanted someone to unmoor her. He did the work and then someone shouted that the captain had got his money. He went to the tug, and the captain asked him to take the wheel as the mate had to look after the tow rope. For that work he was promised something extra. He knew nothing about navigating a vessel and had never had charge of one in his life. When complainant came on board, the captain told him that he was his own pilot. For his work at Greenhithe and acting as wheelman, he received 35s. He would have given up the wheel when complainant came on board, only there was no one to take it.

George Driver gave corroborative evidence.

After an adjournment, the Bench thought the case was proved, but defendant seemed to be under a misapprehension as to the law. That case would not prevent an action being taken against the captain of the tug if he returned to England. Defendant would have to pay 40s and costs. On learning that the costs amounted to £6, however, they decided to make the penalty £5 inclusive, the money to go to the pilot, in default one month's imprisonment. A week was allowed for payment.

## 27 7 July 1906

AN OLD INHABITANT'S DEATH The death occurred on Monday at his residence, 9 Exmouth Road, of **Mr James Bannister**, in his 86<sup>th</sup> year. Deceased was one of the oldest inhabitants of Grays, having been born there and lived there all his life, and he was well known as a Waterman Freeman of the Thames. Thirty years ago, he received the certificate of merit, under the hand of Lord Mayor Cotton, for his heroic behaviour in saving the lives of some of the boys during the fire which occurred on the Training Ship *Goliath*. He retired from active duties on the water 17 years ago, but sailed for several barge owners, one of the latest being Messrs E J Goldsmith. He was very active until within a short period. The interment takes place in the old Churchyard today (Saturday).

## 28 14 July 1906

STABBING AFFRAY ON THE PIER HILL, SOUTHEND

A MIDNIGHT SCENE On Tuesday at midnight, a somewhat serious stabbing affray took place on the Pier Hill, and the victim, **William Henry Mallinson**, a young waterman of (S???) Street, Southend, is now in the Victoria Hospital suffering from wounds in his left arm and under his chest. It would appear that Mallinson was on the Pier Hill talking to a friend of his named Alfred Cullum, and PC Barham, who was in plain clothes, was standing near. Two women passed by, and Mallinson went and spoke to them. PC Barham then entered into conversation with Cullum, and together they saw a foreign looking man go to where Mallinson and the two women were talking. Immediately after, Mallinson came up to PC Barham and complained of being stabbed, saying, "I am stabbed". The foreigner, who, it is said, had had a little altercation with Mallinson, took to his heels and fled down the Marine Parade shouting, "Murder", and the two women cleared off. In the meantime, PC Barham and Cullum conveyed the injured man to Dr Bridger's surgery in High Street, where he collapsed. Dr Bridger and Mr King examined his wounds and dressed them, and as they appeared to be somewhat serious, his removal to the Hospital was ordered. PC Barham, with the assistance of PC (????) conveyed Mallinson on an ambulance to that institution, where he was further examined by Dr Silva Jones and detained.

ARREST OF A MAN Darkness aided the foreign man in his flight, but fortunately PC Barham had got a very good description of him, and about eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning, a foreigner living at Southchurch named Barney Successitte was arrested on suspicion by Sergeant Prime, PC Barham and PC Crockford.

## 29 14 July 1906

FATAL FALL FROM THE SS *EAGLE* WHEN OFF SOUTHEND PIER An inquest was held at

the (?Cameron) Hotel, Shoeburyness, on Wednesday afternoon by Mr C E Lewis, Coroner, into the circumstances surrounding the death of John Samuel Hampton, whose body was picked up off Shoeburyness on Monday afternoon and who, it was ascertained, fell from the Steamship *Eagle* on Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr B Notley was foreman of the jury.

William Hampton of 15 London (????), Southend, identified the body of deceased as that of his father, aged 55 years and a cab proprietor. Witness last saw him alive a little over a week ago, but not to speak to. On Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup> deceased left home for the purpose of doing a sea trip, and nothing was seen of him after that alive. He wanted witness's youngest sister to go with him, but as she was rather poorly she did not go. On Monday July 2<sup>nd</sup> he heard someone had fallen from the *Eagle* off Southend (?Pier). He had since seen the captain of the *Eagle* and other members of the crew and, from the description of the man, was satisfied that it was his father who had fallen overboard. It appeared that he was sitting on the handrail on board, and was suddenly seen to fall. No one could tell him what it was that caused him to fall. He saw the stoker who went after him, and that man told him that deceased was dead when he rose in the water – the paddle wheel must have struck him and broken his back or his neck. The steward also dived in after him.

By a Juror : He was in no trouble. He had his worries the same as other men. Nobody actually saw him fall. He should think he fell in accidentally.

William Robert Dawson of (????) Cottages, Shoeburyness, master of the Department vessel *Palissor*, stated that on Monday afternoon about 2.30, he saw the body of a man off Shoebury (????), secured it and brought it ashore.

PC Game received the body of deceased from the last witness. With the assistance of Sergeant (Tettenhall?), he removed it to the mortuary. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition, was bruised, and had a big hole in the left jaw, at the back of the head and on one of the hands. He found a tax notice on the body in the name of Hampton, 9 Canterbury Terrace.

The Coroner did not think any good could be done by getting members of the crew of the *Eagle*, as nobody saw him fall.

The Jury agreed, and returned a verdict that deceased was “found dead, having fallen from the *Eagle*, but how he came to fall was unknown”.

The Jury expressed their sympathy with the members of the deceased's family.

### **30 28 July 1906**

**ROCHFORD MAN'S SAD DEATH BY DROWNING** A sad drowning fatality occurred off a barge lying by East Blyth Buoy on Wednesday week. It appears that between 5.30 and 6 pm, **Frank Steers**, mate of the barge *William Little* and a native of Rochford, was turning off the East Blyth Buoy. The barge was beating down the river and a fresh wind was blowing at the time. Steers had only been on a barge three or four weeks, and it is (thought) that he came up from the cabin and commenced to haul in the “vang”, when a sudden gust of wind caught the mainsail and Steers was swept off his feet. He relinquished his hold of the “vang” and dropped to the deck, falling backwards. He could not save himself and dropped into the river. The captain of the barge, **Alfred Edmonds**, directly he saw his mate's difficulty, threw a life belt, but Steers was unable to reach it. Seeing further efforts in this direction futile, the captain jumped into a dinghy which was behind, and rowed towards the drowning man. He, however, only reached the spot where Steers had disappeared in time to see a few air bubbles rise to the surface. The water was shallow and, although the captain probed about with his oar in the vain hope that Steer might grasp it, his efforts were of no use, and he returned to find the barge had gone ashore at Blyth.

**A BODY FOUND** On Tuesday morning, Francis Brand, a Pier employee living at 61 Pleasant Road, recovered a body which was floating off the pier extension. He communicated the fact to the Pier Master (Captain Kempton?) who telephoned to the Police Station. PS Putman and PC Weedon proceeded to the pier extension with the ambulance, and conveyed the body to the mortuary. A large crowd followed the ambulance from the pier. The man was about 30 years of age and 5ft 7in in height. He was wearing a pair of blue mackintosh overalls and a pair of blue pants, a new blue and white Oxford shirt bearing the maker's name, “N Lawrence and Co, High Street (????) Bush

Street, Gravesend” and a pair of merino socks and a pair of old blucher boots. The body had apparently been in the water some days and was decomposed.

THE CONNECTING LINK The inquest was held at the Park Hotel on Wednesday before the Coroner (Mr C E Lewis) and a jury, over whom Mr Robert Smart was chosen foreman.

**Alfred Edmonds**, 2 Albion Parade, Gravesend, identified the body as that of William Frank Steers. He was the mate of the barge *William Little* of which he (witness) was the captain. On Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup>, the deceased was on board with another man named **Cooper**. They were sailing down the Sea Reach with a head wind. Witness gave an order for the mainsail to be hove up. Deceased heard witness, came up and asked if witness wanted any assistance, and he told him, “Yes”. He let go the “vang” and it slipped through his hands and he fell backwards on the weather quarter into the river. Witness got hold of the lifebuoy and threw it to him, but he could not reach it, and witness rushed round and got the dinghy and rowed to the spot. He got to him just as he sank with arms in the air. He rowed about for some time and then went ashore and reported the facts to the police at All Hallows. The shirt and socks deceased was wearing were bought by witness's wife for deceased. He could not swim, and witness had known him since a boy.

William Frank Steers, father of deceased living at Ashingdon, said he could not identify the body. He had not known the whereabouts of deceased for the past six years. He knew he had been working on barges. His name was Francis Steers and his age 27. He had no doubt from what he had heard that deceased was his son.

Francis Brand, pier employee, 61 Pleasant Road, Southend, said he recovered the body at 4.40 on Monday evening. It was floating towards the pier. He secured the body and had information given to the police.

PS Putman said on Monday evening he received the body and conveyed it to the mortuary. Deceased was only wearing shirt and trousers, socks and boots, and a pair of overalls.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death”.

### **31 28 July 1906**

#### SHOEBURY

A BRAVE BARGEMAN On Saturday afternoon, Ethel (L????) aged three, daughter of Henry (L????) gunner in the RA, was playing on the sea wall at Shoeburyness, when she fell into the water and was carried away by the tide. **George Wilson**, captain of the barge *Our Boys* saw the accident from a distance. He hurried to the spot, and after diving several times, he recovered the apparently dead body of the child. He immediately began artificial respiration. At the end of half an hour's persistent effort, he was rewarded by the little girl's gradual return to life. When seen on the next day, she seemed none the worse for her experience. It is to be hoped that Wilson's heroism may be suitably recognised.

### **32 18 August 1906**

#### GRAYS PETTY SESSION

WANDERING ABROAD George Hallett pleaded guilty to wandering abroad and sleeping in a barge without visible means of subsistence. PC Aldous stated the facts and said he had previously cautioned the defendant. Remanded to the Workhouse for a week in order that defendant's parents might be called.

### **33 25 August 1906**

#### RAINHAM SMELLS

Sir – In your issue of Saturday last, reporting the meeting of the Romford Rural Council, Mr Poupart (*yes, it does say that – appropriate!!!*) drew attention to the dreadfully bad smells at Rainham.

I heartily endorse his remarks. The stench from the barges loaded with dung lying just outside the station is too horrible for words, and what the Sanitary Authorities are about in permitting such a nuisance passes my understanding. It says much for the vitality of us residents that fever is not

rampant amongst us.

The authorities spend so much time on minor matters that they evidently neglect such important questions as those of the filthy dung barges in our midst.

I trust you, sir, will give us the aid of your valuable paper with a view to putting an end to this terrible nuisance.

Yours very truly,  
ONE WHO SUFFERS

### 34 15 September 1906

**DROWNED OFF GRAYS** On Thursday, an inquest was held at the Basin Tavern, Tilbury Dock, on the body of a man named **Walter Downer** of Canning Town. Mr C E Lewis conducted the inquiry, and Mr J Collins was foreman of the jury. It appeared that on the previous Friday, deceased rowed his captain ashore, but, in alighting from the small boat, he slipped, fell into the water, and was drowned. The body was not recovered until the following Wednesday. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### 35 1 December 1906

**MARQUIS DE LANTIDI**

**"DISTINGUISHED" VISITOR AT TILBURY AND GRAVESEND** A few days ago, a stranger of dark and foreign aspect, aged somewhere about 30, made his appearance on the Terrace Pier, Gravesend. He was dressed in a long military coat decorated with red stripes, with beautiful gold bands on his coat cuffs and large buttons on each band, the buttons being curiously adorned with a star or cross. Under the coat he wore a suit of nautical blue. His cap was a yachting one and bore a gold cross in front. With him was a young and beautiful lady, who was also arrayed in gorgeous style.

"I am the Marquis de Lantidi, yes, oui", he said to **Mr Fred Pattison**, a waterman, whom he beckoned to approach him. "I am inspector of se *Pilayo*, one of ze ships of ze Spanish fleet lying off this port". He went on to explain that he was expecting one of the fleet to put in at Gravesend that evening.

"Do you want a boatman, sir", asked the waterman.

The Marquis said he did, and asked what the cost would be of a pilot to take the vessel up the river and dock it, and of a waterman in addition. Mr Pattison replied that it would come to £5, and an arrangement was then entered into for his brother, who was a pilot, to do the job.

"But zis ees ze only money that I 'ave", said the Marquis, producing a cheque for £50. "I ave wish to telegram to ze owners, and I 'ave to dine with Mistaire Fairlamb at ze Tilbury 'Otel zis evening so it ees awkward".

Eventually Mr Pattison obliged the Marquis with the loan of £4, which he accepted with thanks and the promise to meet the waterman the next morning and return the £4 and also pay £5 for the pilot.

Mr Pattison afterwards conducted the Marquis to the Old Falcon Hotel, as he desired to engage a room for the night. He explained, however, that he had to go across to Tilbury to see the lady off to London and then to dine with his "friend" Mr Fairlamb, so that it was a little doubtful if he would occupy the room, but he would engage it in case, and settle the bill the following morning.

The Marquis and his lady then parted with the jolly waterman. They ferried across to Tilbury, and at Tilbury station repeated the impression which they made at the other side of the water. The Marquis here described himself as the Spanish Consul, and in return for the courtesy of the railway officials, who paid him a number of extra attentions on account of his distinguishing rank, he promised to bestow diamond pins and other decorations. He took tickets for himself and the lady to West Ham, and bowing affectionately to the railway staff, was borne off to London. After that the movements of the "Marquis" are swallowed in mystery, but the Gravesend waterman is £4 to the bad, whilst the Tilbury staff are still awaiting the arrival of their jewellery.

A warrant has been issued for the man's arrest, and it is believed he is also wanted for other similar frauds.

### 36 5 January 1907

The mate of a sailing barge named **George Watson** was accidentally knocked overboard and drowned at Clacton.

### 37 23 February 1907

**MYSTERY OF THE THAMES** An inquest was held at the Lennard Arms, Aveley, on Monday, by Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury, on the body of Thomas Frederick Neward of Woolwich, who was washed up at Wennington from the Thames on the previous Wednesday.

From the evidence, it appeared that the body was found lying on the saltings, face downwards, by Mrs Ada Bunn of Wennington. She gave information to PC Britton who, with PS Freeman, removed the body. Mrs Mary Ann Neward, of 8 Paradise Hill, Woolwich, identified the body as that of her husband. She last saw him alive on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January at 7.10 am. He told her he had had a fall the previous evening and had hurt his back. He was a good husband and steady man. He was afraid of water. He had the cramp once in the baths, and never would go near water afterwards.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was found dead in the river, but as to how he got there, there was no evidence to show.

**THE SECOND MYSTERY AND SOME EXCITING EXPERIENCES** An inquest was also held at the Lennard Arms on Monday touching the death of **Thomas James Noller** of Stanford-le-Hope.

Albert George Warren, 2 Laundry Cottages, Wennington, stated that on Saturday morning he found the body lying on the saltings near the Mardyke.

PC Britton said he removed the body. The left leg below the knee was broken, and the left jaw was also broken.

Mrs Eliza Noller of School Road, Stanford-le-Hope, identified the body as that of her son. He was 23 years of age, and mate of the barge *Caleb*. He could not swim.

**Walter Hubbard**, captain of the barge *Caleb*, stated that deceased was his mate. They were on board the barge off Rosherville about 5 pm on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. It was calm, but hazy. A steamer came down the river being towed. The tug passed the barge, but the steamer collided with it. Just before the ship struck the barge, the mate got into the small boat and asked witness if he was coming with him. He replied no, as he did not think there was any need. The barge was damaged somewhat, but kept afloat. Witness put her ashore. If the mate had kept on board with witness, he would have been all right. The tide was running down hard at the time, and he thought it took the steamer out of her course.

The Jury returned that the deceased was found dead at Aveley on the foreshore of the Thames, but how he lost his life, there was not sufficient evidence to show.

### 38 2 March 1907

**LAST WEEK'S GALE** Last Wednesday morning at four am on the 20<sup>th</sup> ult, the sailing barges *Florence Steer* and *Robert Powell* were coming from Newhaven Harbour. The *Florence Steer* got in after just missing the east pier ; she had her topmast over the side, her jib all to pieces, her standing vangs broken and the foot of her mainsail in ribbons. The *Robert Powell* which, by the way, is named after a man who is well known to many people in Grays, either shifted her cargo or her mast went overboard when she jibbed. She came ashore bottom upwards about a quarter of a mile to the eastward of the harbour. The captain, mate and third hand were drowned.

### 39 23 March 1907

**FOUND DROWNED AT PURFLEET** At the Royal Hotel, Purfleet, on Saturday morning, Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury held an inquest on the body of a man which was found floating in the Thames in Long Reach on the previous Wednesday, and which was subsequently identified as that of **William Russell** of the barge *Francis Fisher*, who was drowned from the deep water jetty at Northfleet on the 16<sup>th</sup> January.

William Henry Rushbridge, Ingress Tavern, Northfleet, identified the body of deceased as that of

William Russell, who was cook on board the barge *Francis Fisher*. On the 16<sup>th</sup> January, deceased was in his house until 10.45, when he said he was going on board his ship, which was lying just off the deep water pier, Northfleet. He came into the house just after 9 pm. He was quite sober when he left. He purchased a bottle (produced) containing half a pint of whiskey at the house. Deceased was, he should think, about 50 years of age. The fall from the jetty would be from 20 to 30 feet.

**Christopher Aldred**, St Ives, West Thurrock, lighterman in the employ of the Anglo American Oil Company, said he found the body floating in the river on Wednesday morning, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. He made it fast, and communicated with the police.

PC Cole spoke as to receiving the body and removing it to the mortuary. The body was very decomposed, and the neck was broken. He could find no other bruises. He found the bottle produced in the coat pocket.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was found dead, but as to how he met his death, there was not sufficient evidence to show.

#### **40 13 April 1907**

##### **“CORNWALL” BOY DROWNED**

**RIVER MYSTERY** Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury held an inquest at the Fox and Goose Inn, West Thurrock, on Saturday, touching the death of Charles Edwin Ince, aged 16, a lad under detention on the Training Ship Cornwall off Purfleet, whose body was found washed ashore near Gibbs' Cement Works, West Thurrock, on the previous Wednesday.

Thomas Henry Merryfield, chief officer of the *Cornwall*, said that deceased joined the ship on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1906, and was to be detained until he was 19 years of age. Witness last saw him alive just after midnight on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April. He was then turning out of his bunk to go forward to the lavatory. Between 2.30 and three o'clock, witness was informed that a boy was missing. He instituted a search, but the boy could not be found. He ascertained that everything belonging to the boy had been left behind, with the exception of his flannel, which he surmised he had on. He made enquiries as to who had seen him last, and found that he was seen by another boy between 2 and 2.30.

The Coroner : What was his character on board? - Good, sir.

Was he undergoing any punishment at all? - No, sir.

Had he been sick at all? - For about two months, he had suffered from sore feet and broken chilblains. He also had broken chilblains on the back of his hand.

Do the boys go about with bare feet? - No, sir, with boots ; this boy wore slippers.

Did he appear to be happy and comfortable? - Yes, sir.

Have you been able to ascertain whether or not he was on bad terms with anyone? - I found him very popular amongst the boys.

How far was the lavatory from his bunk? - About 60 feet.

Would he have to pass any officer on the way? - It is possible, sir.

A Juror (Rev J W Hayes) : Did he ever walk in his sleep? - I have never known him to.

Another Juror (Mr J T Mead) : I suppose you can give the jury no idea how he got overboard? - I have not the slightest idea.

The Coroner : Is there any gangway he would have to pass to go to the lavatory? - Only by crossing the deck. There was a porthole it was possible for him to fall out of, but we did not deem it a source of danger.

Thomas Raymond Boden, a *Cornwall* boy, said he saw deceased just after two am on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. He was in the bathroom where the lavatories were, and he complained of diarrhoea. There was a light there. Witness left him there alone. He did not sleep in the same part of the ship as deceased. Witness returned to his hammock and saw no more of him.

The Coroner : Did he make any complaint to you? - No, sir.

Was he a chum of yours? - Not particular.

Did he appear to be comfortable on board as far as you know? - Yes, sir.

Mr Mead : Had he any clothes on barring his flannel shirt? - No, sir.

Could he fall overboard from where he was? - No, sir.

Another Juror : Who first missed the lad? - One of the watch boys.

The Coroner : I was going to ask, myself, how it was the boy was missed.

Chief Officer Merryfield : We count the hammocks every now and then to see if every boy is present. If a boy is missing, we make inquiries.

A Juror : I suppose there are a number of boys on watch during the night? - Yes ; two on each deck.

In reply to other questions, Mr Merryfield said there were portholes open in the ship that a boy could get through.

**George William Page**, 6 Mill Lane, West Thurrock, stated that he recovered the body of deceased about 9.30 on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. He was working near the jetty on Messrs Gibbs and Co's Cement Works, on board a barge at the time, and saw the body lying on the mud. The tide was then going down. He secured the body and handed it over to the police. Deceased had only an undershirt on. He was in a crawling position in the mud as though he was trying to get out.

A Juror : He had got a long way down in so short a time. It is almost incredible.

Another Juror : There is a mystery about it.

The Jury discussed the matter of the tide, and Mr Mead again remarked that it was almost incredible that the body could have floated to the place where it was found. If the lad was drowned, he would have sunk. His idea was he had not been dead very long when he was brought in.

PS Goodey said he received the body from the last witness about 10 am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst at Gibbs and Co's jetty. The body was not stiff, but it was quite cold. There were no marks of violence on the body. The distance from the *Cornwall* to Gibbs's jetty was about 2 1/2 miles by the river.

Joseph Ince, 5 Inland Grove, Gospel Oak, said deceased was his son. Witness saw him on Monday. He appeared to be comfortable on board, though at the same time he said he did not like the ship. Witness told him that probably no one did, but he must try and get a good character on board, and then they would see if they could get him out again. He made no complaints of any sort.

The Coroner : Could he swim? - He could not. He was afraid of the water. I used to try and get him into the baths but he would not go. He was a big lad, and overgrown and, owing to that, he used to suffer at times with a kind of convulsion. My idea is that, not feeling well, he went to the porthole for a little fresh air, and fell over.

A Juror : It seems a mystery how he got to where he was.

Another Juror : And it will remain a mystery.

The Coroner : It is an extraordinary thing what the tide will do.

In reply to a Juror, Mr Merryfield said nothing was missed from the ship. The lifebuoys and boats were all there.

Edgar Riley, Seaman Instructor on the *Cornwall*, told the Court how he discovered a lad missing on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. He felt his hammock and found it empty.

The Coroner briefly reviewed the evidence, and suggested that the Jury should return an open verdict.

A Juror suggested that bars should be put across the portholes.

Captain Steele said they did not like the boys to regard the ship as a prison ship, but rather to feel that they were free so long as they behaved themselves.

The Coroner thought they had better leave it with the officers of the ship to take what precautions they considered best. He was sure it was the desire of the officers that these things should not happen.

The Jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

The Coroner (to Captain Steele) : Do you think yourself that every precaution is now taken?

Captain Steele : Yes, sir, I do.

## **41**      **4 May 1907**

### **PROBLEM OF THE THAMES**

**A SCHEME FOR DEEP WATER JETTIES**      Naturally, the delay of the Government in producing a

scheme for dealing with the Port of London, and the announcement that meanwhile the plan of the dock companies is not allowed to proceed, says the *Westminster Gazette*, is giving a fresh opening to those who have alternatives to suggest. Some four years ago, there was much talk of a scheme for deep water wharves in the wider reaches of the Thames, which would have intercepted a good deal of traffic on its way to the docks. Subsequently, an attempt was made to raise the money in the City to carry out the construction of these, but it failed to get any financial support. Now, however, it is understood that arrangements have advanced so far for the construction of a line of wharves at Long Reach, Gravesend that the actual work of erection may be begun in a few weeks.

For years, those acquainted with Antwerp and other ports on the Continent have pointed to the wide reaches of the lower Thames as affording almost an ideal place for the construction of deep water wharves, which could be put up at very much less cost than would be involved in the construction of new docks, and which would give a rapidity in handling which is not now attained in the Port. London is accounted a slow port, and speed means money to the ship owners and to all concerned in trade where dues accumulate from day to day. The chief obstacle urged against the wharves has always been the extreme rise and fall of the tide in the Thames, but the number of these wharves has been increasing for years, the size of the ships discharged at them has grown also, and practical engineers contend that with modern appliances, the argument about the tides no longer holds good.

In the Long Reach there is an average depth of 30 ft at low water, ordinary spring tides, with the exception of a hump here and there on the bed of the river. It is there that the intention is to build, at the cost of about three quarters of a million sterling, some 6,600 ft of wharves, a million cubic feet of covered storage, and a dry dock into which any merchant craft can get at low water. The wharves are to berth twenty one big vessels, and be connected with a branch line of the South Eastern Railway. These jetties will be fitted with all modern appliances for the quick handling of cargo, and it is claimed that they will give a rapidity of despatch that cannot be approached where a vessel has to make its way miles further up the river and then be docked, with the chance of missing a tide and, in the case of big vessels, of having to drop down again to the deep water for safe anchorage. If the scheme goes ahead rapidly, Mr Lloyd George may have to take it into account in framing his plans next year.

In the meantime, the Thames Conservators have decided to send a deputation of their members to inquire into the working of some of the largest provincial ports ; and Mr Lloyd George and his newly appointed Board of Marine Advisers are presently going on a similar errand to a few of the chief Continental ports. Antwerp especially illustrates possibilities of the deep water wharves, although in that port the wharves are in reality a splendid range of stone quays with a railway alongside and a promenade overhead, from which crowds watch daily the loading and unloading of great liners.

Of course, wharves represent a serious competitor to the docks, although they might in some degree lessen the burden of the "freewater" privilege given to barges which, at present, is a most heavy tax upon revenue. Into the London and India Docks in one year there entered 142,217 barges. Over 91,000 of these entailed the labour of being "locked" either in or out. Their tonnage is about half that of the whole year's net shipping to the port, and they cost the docks quite £50,000 ; yet they paid not a penny for their accommodation to a concern that has at stake a capital of over eighteen millions sterling. It is these barges that carry in and out 81 per cent of all the cargoes that enter or leave the docks. They carry it to or from river piers or other vessels in the river, whence it is taken away from the port without paying the usual dues and charges. These are called "overside" goods ; and the dock company cannot charge on merchandise that does not cross their quays or wharves. Annually, about 40,000 barges pass in and out of Millwall Dock in the same way ; they take in some 90 per cent of the exported, and bring out, roughly, 60 per cent of the imported cargoes there. The yearly number of these non paying craft at the Surrey Commercial Dock is over 10,000, and the "overside" delivery of grain there has risen to an average of 46 per cent. The block of barges in some of the docks is a serious detriment to the proper handling of and the movements of the shipping. Yet the number grows fast, with an increasing demand. Taking the London and India Dock alone, the percentage of goods taken in and out by the barges in 1880 was 59 ; ten years later,

it had risen to 74 per cent ; since then it has gone up to 81.95, all of which proves that river loading and discharging is increasing at a rapid rate. The present state of affairs is seen in the fact that during the past year, 17,596,315 tons of shipping came up the Thames, 8,114,780 going into various docks and 9,481,535 doing the whole of their business on the river.

#### **42 18 May 1907**

**LIGHTERMAN'S APPRENTICE DROWNED IN TILBURY DOCK** **Sidney Pike**, a lighterman's apprentice of Greenwich, 20 years of age, was missed from his barge in Tilbury Dock on Tuesday. Inquiries were made and, as he could not be found, the water was dragged by the Docks Police. On Tuesday evening the body was recovered. It is not known how the man got into the water, but it is supposed that he slipped overboard whilst moving his oar on the barge.

AN INQUEST was held at the Basin Canteen, Tilbury, on Thursday, by Mr Coroner Lewis and a jury.

Susannah Pike of 8 Park Street, Greenwich, said deceased was her son. He was 20 years of age and a lighterman's apprentice employed by Blackfriars Lighterage Company.

**Edward Joseph Groves**, in the employ of the same Company, said that on the 13<sup>th</sup> May he came to Tilbury Docks, in charge of a barge from Blackfriars. Deceased was in charge of another barge astern of his. They had been towed down and were inside the Dock. At 9.40, deceased was shoving the barges to get through the lock gates, and witness was pulling the ropes. They arranged that witness should go home and he would stay the night and make the barges fast. Witness went home to Bermondsey.

**Samuel Anderson** said that on the night in question he was in the Dock with a barge, and deceased was coming on board it to sleep.

**Charles Holton**, Calcutta Road, Tilbury, deceased's foreman and in the employ of the same firm, told the Court that about seven am on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, he saw deceased's barge adrift. The oars were also adrift. Deceased's coat was aboard. Witness made inquiries round the Dock and in the evening, as he could not hear anything of him, he dragged the Dock and found the body of deceased about 10 pm.

PC Whiting said he received the body. There was a slight cut over the left eye, probably caused by the drag. Deceased's watch had stopped at 10.8.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

#### **43 18 May 1907**

##### **GRAYS PETTY SESSION**

**"FOR AULD LANG SYNE" - A CONVIVIAL EVENING** William Clark, Joseph Murphy, Thomas Broyd, Frank Outram and Thomas Apps were summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Grays on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. Mr F E Green was for the defendants, and pleaded not guilty. PS Carr said about 11.50 am on the night in question, he was on duty in High Street, Grays, with PS Lord, when he heard shouting, singing and swearing coming from the direction of the Railway Station. Shortly after, he saw the defendants coming from the Maidstone Road from the direction of the Workmen's Club. They were the ones making the noise. Some had their arms round each other's necks and were staggering about the street. The railway gates were across the streets, so they had to stop. Witness and PS Lord went towards them, when the gates opened and the defendants went towards New Road singing and shouting at the top of their voices. Witness went to them and stopped them. PC Mynott then came up and they took defendants' names and addresses. They said they "had beer with a pal who had gone away to Canada". Cross-examined : He had no doubt they were drunk. It was not a common thing for men to be staggering about when walking arm in arm. When he spoke to them, they did not deny being drunk. He did not say to them with regard to the circumstances, that he did not want any explanation. He did not know that about that time there was a policeman stationed outside the Workmen's Club. He could not say that any party had gone off by the train just before eleven o'clock. He thought they came from Maidstone Road ; that was the direction. By Superintendent Jordan : He knew nothing of what took place about the Workmen's Club. PS Lord

heard shouting near the railway crossing. He there saw men dancing about near the gates, which were across the road. He afterwards went to the men and saw they were drunk. When they first saw them, they came from Maidstone Road from the direction of the Workmen's Club. Defendant Murphy at first refused to give his name and address. Cross-examined : He had no doubt they were drunk. Mr Green : They had been having a social evening and were exuberant. Witness : They were drunk. Mr Green : So you say. Witness : And it's a fact. PC Mynott said the men's names and addresses were being taken when he came on the scene in New Road. The men were drunk. Cross-examined : They were respectable men, so far as he knew. Henry Lobley, signalman, Grays, said on the night in question he saw six men come up Maidstone Road, just as he was shutting the gates. In his opinion the men were drunk. Mr Green said all the defendants denied being drunk. On the evening in question, one of their friends named Alexander was invited to a social evening at the club, as he was going away to Canada. Near the station, Alexander and his friends commenced to sing "Auld Lang Syne", and the others to give him a good send off joined in the refrain. They maintained, however, that they were not drunk, and they apologised for singing in the streets as they had done. **James Surry**, lighterman, 65 Orsett Road, Grays, said on the evening in question he was present at the Club at a social evening with the defendants. They left at 11.40 and were quite sober when they left. They had been giving one of their friends a send off. Cross-examined : He did not go to the station with the defendants, but he could say they were not drunk. He did not know what happened near the station, and could not say whether the fresh air affected the defendants or not. Charles Hutchinson, 24 Exmouth Road, Grays, who said he was a teetotaller, said the men were quite sober when they left the Club. Superintendent Jordan : And quiet? Witness : When they left the Club they were. Superintendent Jordan : There was a policeman standing there? Witness : I don't know. I stayed behind to shift the piano. Edward Haylor said, in his opinion, the men left the Club quite sober. Superintendent Jordan said he should like to call PS Carr as to the men going away by train. PS Carr said when he took the men's names the down train had gone, and Alexander was with the men and he took his name. He could not have gone away by train. Defendants were fined 2s 6d each and 4s costs. A witness for the prosecution was allowed 2s 6d.

#### **44 22 June 1907**

**MARK TWAIN AT TILBURY** Amongst the 140 passengers landed at Tilbury on Tuesday morning from the *Minneapolis* was Mark Twain, the celebrated humorist. His fellow travellers spoke in high terms of appreciation of the manner in which he entertained them during the voyage home.

#### **45 6 July 1907**

##### **MYSTERIOUS DROWNING CASE AT TILBURY**

**DOCK COMPANY TO BE COMMUNICATED WITH** The adjourned inquest on **Isaac Robert Nunn**, watchman in the employ of Messrs W Cory and Sons at Tilbury Docks, whose body was recovered from the Dock Basin on Sunday June 23<sup>rd</sup> by his brother, was held at the Basin Canteen, Tilbury on Wednesday morning before Mr J I Quennell, Deputy Coroner. Mr A K Clark-Kennedy, Inspector of Factories, was in attendance.

In reply to the Factory Inspector, Clifford Nunn said his brother's duty was to watch the barges and take them to the *Koh-i-noor* when it arrived. He would be alone in his watching operations ; but there was another watchman on duty on the Saturday night in question in another part of the Dock.

John Rush, in addition to the evidence he gave last week, stated that there were no drags on the quay ; neither were there any lifebuoys.

PC Partridge, stationed at Tilbury Docks, said about 6.15 pm on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, he saw the body of deceased in the Mortuary. He examined it, and discovered no marks of violence. On searching his clothing, he found three keys, a knife, 11s 6d in money and a piece of paper containing the names of barges.

Inspector Hill, Docks Police, stated that the regulations for the provision of life saving appliances on the quays were fully observed, drags and lifebuoys being placed at intervals. On the Basin Quay, where deceased was presumed to have fallen into the water, there was a station of appliances.

There were no beams of wood under the water's edge for a person immersed to catch hold of and support himself. Where the deceased fell in was a tidal basin.

The Deputy Coroner, in summing up, said the circumstances did not point to any violence having been inflicted on the deceased. There was absolutely no evidence to show that deceased took his own life, or that anybody else took it. The probability was that he accidentally slipped into the water and was drowned, though there was no evidence to conclusively prove that. How he got into the Dock Basin was a mystery which it seemed impossible to clear up.

In reply to a jurymen, deceased's foreman did not consider it necessary that two men should be told off for the particular duty deceased was doing.

**Simeon Geering**, foreman lighterman for Messrs Cory and Sons at Tilbury Docks, gave evidence as to deceased's duties, which were to attend to the craft to ensure their safety. On the Saturday night in question, witness left orders, which were to be carried out by Rush and Nunn. Deceased was not trying to do two men's work, otherwise he and Nunn would not have separated. Rush was in the barge navigating it. It was not customary for two men to be in the barge ; one was quite sufficient under ordinary circumstances. Of course, there were times when it would be an impossibility for twelve men to shift a barge.

Another jurymen thought if there had been something round the quay side to catch hold of, deceased would probably have saved his life, as he was able to swim.

A verdict of "Found drowned, there being no evidence to show how deceased got into the water" was returned ; and the jury added a rider to the effect that the Dock Company should be communicated with and requested to observe the Board of Trade regulations as to the placing of chains or other means of support alongside the Quay for the protection of watermen who accidentally slip into the dock.

After some general discussion as to who should communicate this rider to the Company, the Deputy Coroner said no doubt Inspector Hill would make it his duty to acquaint the Company of the fact ; and the Factory Inspector added that it would be his duty to see that the regulation in question was enforced.

#### **46 13 July 1907**

**MARK TWAIN AND HIS TILBURY WELCOME** On Saturday evening, Mark Twain was the guest of the Savage Club and, in replying to the toast of his health submitted by Mr J Scott Stokes, said : I am glad to be here, and to see you all again, because it is very likely that I shall not see you again ("No,no"). It is easier than I thought to come across the Atlantic. I have been received, as you know, in the most delightfully generous way in England since I came here. It keeps me choked up all the time. Everybody is so generous, and do seem to give you such a hearty welcome. Nobody in the world can appreciate it higher than I do. It did not wait until I got to London, but when I came ashore at Tilbury the stevedores on the dock raised the first welcome – (applause) – a good and hearty welcome from the men who do the heavy labour of the world, and save you and me from having to do it. They are the man who, with their hands, build empires and make them prosper. It is because of them that the others are wealthy and can live in luxury. They received me with a "Hurrah!" that went to my heart. (Applause) They are the men that build civilisation, and without them no civilisation can be built. So I came first to the authors and creators of civilisation, and I blessedly end in this happy meeting with the Savages, who destroy it. (Laughter and prolonged applause).

#### **47 31 August 1907**

**LIGHTERMAN'S NARROW ESCAPE** A lighterman named **J Warren**, whilst following his employment in Tilbury Dock, had the misfortune to break his hitcher whilst poking a barge away from the quayside. He fell into the water, and although a line was thrown him when he came up the first time, he failed to clench it and went under again. Fortunately the man was rescued by his mates as he came up the second time.

## 48 5 October 1907

### GRAYS MARSH TRAGEDY – ADJOURNED INQUEST ON MRS SMITH MYSTERY REMAINS UNSOLVED

#### STEPHENSON CENSURED FOR HIS DISGUSTING CONDUCT

**POLICE COMPLIMENTED** The adjourned inquest on Mrs Sarah Mary Jane Smith, 17 Quarry Hill, Grays, whose dead body was recovered from a ditch along the Manor Way, Grays, on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> September, was held at the Police Court on Wednesday afternoon by the Coroner (Mr C E Lewis).

At the previous sitting, it will be remembered, Joseph Stephenson, a dock labourer, spoke to accompanying the deceased woman on the day preceding her death to East Ham, where they spent the day in public houses, finishing up at a music hall. They returned late at night to Tilbury, Stephenson leaving the woman near the Dwellings there in the early hours of the following morning. Two constables saw the man proceeding alone along the Dock Road in the direction of Grays, and he was followed an hour later by the deceased woman, who enquired of them the road to Grays, saying she had lost her way. Her body was found in the ditch on the Manor Way about 5.30 the same morning.

George White, 50 Prospect Place, Grays, engine driver employed by the dust shoot, said he went to work by way of the Manor Way, and passed the ditch where the deceased woman was found. On the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> September, he left home about five minutes to five, and would be in the Manor Way about five o'clock. He met an old man within about 100 yards of Messrs Wall's jetty. He was picking up wood. It was a clear morning. Witness heard no screams. He was walking in the middle of the road, and did not look in the direction of the ditch. It would take him about a quarter of an hour to walk from the Brewery to the jetty, where he saw the old man.

The Coroner said this witness did not prove anything, but the object was to get before them all the persons who were known to pass along the Manor Way on the morning the woman's body was found.

Walter Eaves, Orsett Heath, employed by Mr Rons, Bridge Road, Grays, as a carman, said on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> September he went down to the marshes to fetch a horse. That was about 5.15. He went straight along the Manor Way, arriving there about five minutes later. He returned about half past five. Witness did not see anybody either coming or going back till he got to the Brewery, when he met Sadler, who discovered the woman's body. He did not hear any cry. Coming back he was riding the horse, but he too did not glance in the direction of the ditch.

**Reeve H Taylor**, Parker Road, Grays, captain of the barge *Alice*, also remembered the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> September. He was sailing his barge up the river close to the Essex shore – about twenty or thirty yards. When between Messrs Wall's jetty and the Training Ship *Exmouth*, he heard a scream – only once. It appeared to him to come from the direction of the marshes. That was between five o'clock and half past. It was a distinct, shrill scream. His mate heard it as well, and made a remark to witness about it at the time. He could not see the marshes ; only the wall, on which there was not a soul.

A Juror : Was it a scream as though somebody had been hurt?

Witness : It was a scream ; and that's all I can say. He added that it seemed to proceed from the marshes, some distance from the wall. The sound appeared to come straight from inland in a line with his barge.

Arthur Henry Kicks, 48 Hampden Road, Grays, stated that Stephenson was a lodger in his house. When he retired to bed at 11.30 on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, Stephenson was not at home. He (witness) was the last to go upstairs. An oil lamp was left burning downstairs in the kitchen ; and he noticed the usual light in Stephenson's room on going up to bed. The door of the room was wide open. Witness did not hear Stephenson come home. Next morning, he (witness) got up at six o'clock and knocked at Stephenson's door. He answered, "All right". Stephenson, however, had not come downstairs when witness left. If there was anything doing at the Docks, they usually went down together by the local train. The lamp in the kitchen was turned down low. More often than not, witness was indoors of a night when Stephenson came in.

Mrs Kicks, wife of the last witness, produced the lamps she left burning in the kitchen and Stephenson's room. There was only a small drop of oil in the kitchen lamp the next morning.

PS Carr said that since the last sitting he had walked from the spot where the two constables saw the woman to the ditch where her body was found. He was accompanied by PC Death, and they walked at a fair pace – about 3 1/2 miles an hour. It took them exactly 45 minutes to cover the distance. They took the nearest possible route. The distance was about three miles. He had made enquiries, and found that Stephenson was at work from seven am to four pm on Monday the 2<sup>nd</sup> September. He paid himself off. Witness had also made enquiries at Tilbury Dock Station, where they had no trace of any Grays tickets having been given up there on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup>; and no persons answering the description of the man and woman were noticed to leave the station. Neither was any excess fare paid. With regard to the ticket found near the spot where the body of the woman lay, he had discovered that the owner's wife sold a coat to a rag and bone gatherer. He had traced this man, and had a conversation with him, and he stated he worked round Little Thurrock and sorted the rags about twenty or thirty yards down the Manor Way. That would account for the ticket being found there. Sergeant Carr also said a brass plate off a dog collar bearing the name of "George Smith, Grays, Essex" was handed to him by a man living in Henry Street, who stated he found it on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> of last month, about three yards nearer the body than where the ticket was. He had traced the owner of the brass plate, and found that it was not lost till some days after the woman was drowned. He had also made enquiries at the Tilbury Dwellings, and found no one there who was friendly with the deceased woman at all.

The Coroner, in summing up, said all the evidence there was to place before the jury had been exhausted. Every person known to have passed along the Manor Way on the morning Mrs Smith met her death had been called before them, but they neither saw nor heard anything. There was really no evidence to prove how the deceased woman got into the position in which she was found.

The Court was cleared while the jury considered their verdict. After consulting in private for about a quarter of an hour, they returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased woman was found drowned in a ditch on the marshes, there being no evidence to show how she came there. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the evidence of Stephenson and Mrs Kicks, and recommended that the man be censured for his conduct.

The Coroner, addressing Stephenson, said : You have heard the verdict of the jury, and also heard what the foreman has said on their behalf. They are not at all satisfied with the evidence you have given, and also are of opinion that your conduct, the way you have been carrying on with this deceased woman, was certainly very discreditable. Your conduct on the day before she met her death, in going about from public house to public house drinking, and getting into that chronic beastly condition of intoxication which you evidently were at some time of the day, is nothing more or less than disgusting. I think your evidence on the whole was extremely unsatisfactory. As I told you on a previous occasion, your recollection was extremely vivid with regard to certain portions of the time you were desirous of accounting for; but when we came to the period when we really did want some accurate testimony, apparently your memory had forsaken you. Anyhow, it certainly does you no credit to have been with this unfortunate woman on the night before her death, and been associated with the distressing circumstances connected with it.

Stephenson : I only spoke the truth.

Mrs Kicks was also called before the Coroner, who said he did not wish to say very much to her ; but the jury had drawn attention to her evidence, which they did not think was very satisfactory. With regard to the lamp, he still had his suspicions that when Stephenson came home on the morning in question, the lamp was not alight ; nor did he think that the quantity of oil stated by her was in the lamp the night before. In conclusion, the Coroner said : I do not think your evidence was accurate ; I won't say any more.

Smith, the husband of the deceased woman, asked permission to make a statement, but the Coroner declined to grant his request.

The Coroner also referred to the actions of the police. He felt confident every effort had been made by them to unravel the mystery, and he regretted they had not been successful. Great credit was due

to Sergeant Carr and the constables for the way in which they had prosecuted their inquiries. (Hear, hear).

Superintendent Jordan added that Sergeant Carr had done his utmost to fathom the mystery.

The proceedings then closed upon one of the most sensational mysteries Grays has ever known.

#### **49 9 November 1907**

**BARGE CAPTAIN DROWNED AT RAINHAM** The body of an unknown man was washed ashore at Rainham on Tuesday. Later, **Joseph Street** of Dartford identified the body as that of his father Joseph, aged 75 years. He was captain of the barge *Atlanta*, which went down between Purfleet and Rainham on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Deceased was unable to swim, but was very active for his age.

#### **50 21 December 1907**

**RIVER GIVES UP ITS DEAD AT RAINHAM** About 1.30 am on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, **Mr William J Martin** of Anson House, Cromwell Road, Whitstable, captain of the barge *Globe*, had on board with him **Charles Barker**, mate, and his son **Alfred Martin**, who was third hand. Mr Martin was sailing his barge, which was light and going to Millwall Docks when, off Erith, a sudden squall came up. As the barge jibbed from port to starboard, the foresail went over by the force of the wind, knocking his son overboard. Every effort was made to find him, without avail.

The deceased, aged 22, was washed ashore at Rainham on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

The inquest was held at the Phoenix Hotel on Tuesday by Mr C E Lewis (Coroner), and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned". Evidence was given by Mr W Martin, and Mr John Shelley of Rainham proved to finding the body on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. PS Gross gave evidence as to the removal of the body.

#### **51 25 January 1908**

**TILBURY BARGE MATE IN TROUBLE** **Claude Beard**, mate of the barge *Jason*, was charged at Grays Police Court on Tuesday, before Mr E J Goldsmith Esqr, with the theft of a guernsey, value 5s, the property of **George Palmer**, mate of the barge *Argosy*, on the 20<sup>th</sup> inst.

Prosecutor, who lives at Gravesend, said his barge was lying in Tilbury Docks. The guernsey produced was his property, and he left it in his bunk at 12.30 last Saturday. He was away from the barge till Monday morning, when he missed the guernsey and gave information to the police. On Monday evening, witness and his captain went to the barge *Jason*, where they saw prisoner and asked him where the guernsey was. Prisoner denied knowledge of it. The captain sent for PC Smith, Docks Police, who, on searching the barge, found the guernsey in a locker.

PC Smith gave evidence as to finding the guernsey, which was covered up with clothes and blankets. In reply to questions, prisoner said he took the guernsey when in drink. He was then conveyed to Grays Police Station.

Accused was remanded.

At the Petty Session on Friday, a further charge of stealing a clock and a brush, the property of the captain of the barge *Argosy*, was preferred against prisoner, who was sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment.

#### **52 8 February 1908**

**DROWNED OFF RAINHAM**

**LIGHTERMAN'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE FROM A BARGE** An inquest was held at the Phoenix Hotel, Rainham, on Monday afternoon by Mr C E Lewis, Coroner, touching the death of **Patrick Arthur White**, a lighterman, whose body was washed ashore at Rainham on Saturday morning.

Mr A H (?????) and Mr Farnfield represented the Mercantile Lighterage Company Ltd, in whose employ the deceased man was, and Mr Kent (?????) watched the proceedings on behalf of the Amalgamated Society of Watermen and Lightermen.

Thomas Ernest White, Wapping Wall, deceased's brother, gave evidence of identification. He was a lighterman in the employ of the Mercantile Lighterage Company, and was 28 years of age. Deceased was a married man with three children.

Thomas Sydney Blaxland, 3 Prospect Place, Rainham, spoke to finding the body on Saturday morning on the foreshore. He gave information to the police. The body was fully dressed, with the exception of a hat.

PC Gross, stationed at Rainham, said about 8.45 am on Saturday, he went, in company with PC Britton, and took possession of the body, which he removed to the Phoenix Hotel. In the clothing was 9s 9d in money, a waterman's licence, and one or two insurance papers. The body was very much decomposed. There did not appear to be any injuries. The body was in a good state considering the time it had been in the water.

**Robert Winter**, Customs watcher, Deptford, deposed that the fatality occurred on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. Witness was in charge for the Customs authorities of three barges from Tilbury Dock, and left the latter place at eleven o'clock on Christmas Eve. The three barges were being towed by a tug, and the witness was on the one astern. Deceased was on the same barge, together with two more lightermen. Everything went all right till about one o'clock. The tug and the barges were bound for the Albert Docks. Witness, deceased and the other men were in the cabin of the barge *Nantwich*. One o'clock on Christmas morning was the last time he saw White. They arrived at the Albert Dock about 2.40. In the ordinary course of things, the tug rounded and cast off the barges, when each of the lightermen would go into his own barge for the purpose of docking it. He missed deceased when the tug had cast off the barges. He had no idea how deceased got into the water ; it was a mystery to him. There was no other light in the cabin except that given out by fire. The barge carried her stern light. Witness was in the barge as representing the Customs authorities. At no time did he hear deceased, or anyone else, leave the cabin. On the way up, the lightermen were conversing together about Christmas. The cabin was so dark that witness did not miss White till he got to the Albert Docks.

**William John Hobbs**, lighterman, said he knew the deceased very well. On the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> December, witness, another man and deceased were attached to three barges being towed from Tilbury to Albert Docks. He believed it was in the port tow rope barge in which they congregated, and not the one astern. After seeing everything clear, they all went into the cabin. Witness went off to sleep after having passed Erith. They were all sober, and there had been no disagreement between them. Deceased and himself went up on deck as they were getting into the Long Reach, and both returned to the cabin. They then continued their conversation. After that, he did not hear anybody leave the cabin, and it was not till some minutes after arriving at the Albert Dock that they missed White from the craft. They left London on Christmas Eve by the 9.5 train, and were aboard the barges at Tilbury Docks by half past ten.

**Thomas Brown**, Stepney, another lighterman, corroborated the evidence of the previous witness. He was in the cabin with them all the time. They were in the port tow rope barge. They were all good friends and in the habit of working together. The *Nantwich* was deceased's barge.

The jury returned an open verdict, there being no evidence to show how the deceased got into the water.

## 53 11 April 1908

### PURFLEET

**LIGHTERMAN DROWNED** On Saturday, the Coroner, Mr C E Lewis, held an inquest at the Royal Hotel, Purfleet, on the body of **William John Spragg**, a lighterman and second hand on the barge *Sandy*, who was drowned off the barge on February 25<sup>th</sup>, and whose body was discovered on the previous day in the Long Reaches at Purfleet. Robert Thomas Harvey identified the body as that of his step son, who was a single man aged 27. He was a lighterman, and he last saw him alive on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The Coroner then adjourned the inquest for a week to enable other witnesses, who were at sea, to be called.

## 54 11 April 1908

### CHALK AND CEMENT WORKERS

**REPORT ON CHECKWEIGHING** An important official report on checkweighing in chalk quarries and cement works and lime works has just been issued. A Bill on the subject was introduced in the House of Commons and had passed on the second reading, when Mr Gladstone agreed to appoint a Committee to take evidence, and in the event of this being favourable, he would introduce a Government Bill to give effect to it. This may be said to be the outcome of the efforts of the national Amalgamated Union of Labour, of which Mr T C Smith is the local representative.

The conclusions of the Committee are summarised as follows :-

We recommend that the workmen called "uncallowers", who are employed in chalk quarries in removing the top soil, if paid by measurement, should be allowed to appoint a representative to check the measurements by which their wages are computed.

For the workmen employed in digging chalk who are paid by weight, we recommend :-

- (1) That in cases where the waggons of chalk are weighed, the men should be allowed to see those weighings or appoint a checkweighman to check these weighings, whichever the men prefer ; they should also be allowed to check the tares of the waggons.
- (2) That in cases where the waggons are not weighed, the men should be allowed to check the capacity of the waggons by seeing one weighed full and empty, or by having a waggon load of chalk tipped out and weighed, and the capacity should be published either by mark on the waggons or by a statement posted in a conspicuous place in the works. The men should also have the right to have a waggon load weighed or measured in cases where a dispute arises as to whether a waggon is filled or not to the estimated weight for which they are paid.

In cement works, we recommend :-

- (1) That where the men are paid on the weight of clinker without reference to the weight of cement, they should be allowed either to see the clinker weighed or to appoint a checkweighman, whichever they prefer.

Where the actual weights of the waggons are recorded, and consequently the mere tallying of the waggon loads would not show the amount of wages due, the workmen should, if there is no checkweighman, be shown the records of the weights.

- (2) That where the workmen's wages are adjusted to the weight of manufactured cement, the provisions set out above should apply.

The men employed in unloading coal and coke at cement works should be given the right to inspect any delivery notes sent to the consignee, on which is shown the weight of coal and coke in the ships and barges.

In all cases, the checkweighman or other representative of the workmen, such as the representative authorised to check the measurements in uncallowing or the auditor to check the books, should be paid by the men. As in the case of the checkweighman under the Coal Mines Regulation Act, he should be appointed by a majority of the men in the class of workers for whom he will act, and having been appointed by such majority, should be empowered to recover his wages or his fee from all the members of that class.

In any legislation on the subject, provisions should be inserted similar to those in the Coal Mines Regulation Act for the removal of a checkweighman who abuses his powers ; or, in the case of a representative or auditor visiting the works at intervals, the employer should be empowered, by provisions also similar to those in the said Act, to obtain an order of summary jurisdiction prohibiting any particular person who has abused his powers from again acting in that capacity, such an order to be without prejudice to the appointment by the workmen of some other person to undertake the same duties.

Further, as there is some fear among employers of a checkweighman obtaining knowledge of trade secrets and using it to their detriment, we recommend the insertion in any legislation on the subject of provisions making such action on the part of a checkweighman a criminal offence.

**Lime Works** – A certain amount of lime is made in cement works, though we were informed that in the district of the Thames and Medway this is a diminishing industry. The men working the lime

kilns are paid by the amount of lime made, which is generally calculated by the kiln or the "yard". In some cases, the lime is measured at the works, but in others the consignee, who sends a voucher showing the amount to the manufacturer.

Under the former system, the workmen ask to be allowed to check the measurements, and under the latter to see the vouchers sent by the consignee to the manufacturer. The employers who own cement works where lime is made have raised no objection, and the Committee think this right should be accorded to the workmen.

This subject is dealt with more fully in the second part of the report, dealing with limestone quarries and lime works.

The Committee desire to express to their secretary, Mr Alexander Maxwell, their best thanks for his services, and their high appreciation of the unremitting care and attention with which, throughout the enquiry, his duties to the Committee have been carried out.

The report is signed by Messrs Ernest F G Hatch, Alfred Brooks, J N Bell, J Lloyd Morgan and John E Harston.

## **55 18 April 1908**

### **PURFLEET**

**ACCIDENTALLY DROWNED** On Friday evening, the Coroner, Mr C E Lewis, concluded the adjourned inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of **William John Spragg**, a lighterman aged 27, whose body was discovered in the Long Reaches at Purfleet, as was recorded in our issue of last week. The inquiry had been adjourned for witnesses to be called when deceased was drowned. Evidence was given that deceased was a lighterman, and on February 25<sup>th</sup> he was engaged on a barge. The same evening he was missing from the boat, and his body was discovered on April 3<sup>rd</sup> – six weeks afterwards. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental drowning".

## **56 23 May 1908**

### **THE SAD DROWNING FATALITY**

**A CRY FOR HELP IN THE NIGHT** The inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of **Christopher James Adams** of Abbs Cross Lane, Hornchurch, whose fatal accident was reported in our recent issue, was held by the Deputy Coroner at the Schools, Dagenham, on Saturday afternoon. The body was recovered from the Thames by Herbert George, Dagenham, on Wednesday morning. Mr A Hitchens was chosen foreman of the jury.

The Coroner, who arrived 25 minutes late, apologised to the Jury, explaining that he had had an inquest at Walthamstow and, as there were counsel on both sides, the enquiry had been delayed. As there was not another train till seven o'clock, he did the next best thing and cycled.

The Deputy Coroner asked the jury if they were satisfied with the view of the body.

The Jury : Yes, sir.

The Deputy Coroner : It will be a good thing when the new Act comes into force that makes the viewing of the body unnecessary.

The Jury : It is very unpleasant.

Dr A Wright of South Street, Romford, said he was called in shortly after one o'clock on Wednesday to view the body. It was just in the period of decomposition. He found no marks of violence, and had no doubt death was due to suffocation by drowning. The body appeared as if it had been in the water about a week.

Mr Adams : You say you found no marks on deceased at all?

The Doctor : No : the forehead was in such a state of decomposition that it was impossible to see. If there had been a wound, I should have been able to see it.

James Adams, father of deceased, a gardener, said his son was aged 22 years. He lived at Abbs Cross Lane, Hornchurch, and was a waterman. He last saw him about six o'clock in the morning on May 4<sup>th</sup>. He was then in his usual health and spirits. He went out to work, as was customary. He had never heard him say anything that would lead him to think he was tired of life.

The Deputy Coroner : Can you tell us anything more? - No, sir.

**Frederick Hoskings**, 8 Florence Road, Hadley Wood, a lighterman, said he knew the deceased well. He last saw him about 2.5 on Tuesday morning. He was on board the barge *Palace*. Witness saw him about to make the tow rope fast. Witness was on another barge alongside the *Palace*. He turned round as if he was going to come back to the barge.

**Thomas Harris**, 19 Conway Road, Plumstead, said he was a lighterman. He was on the same barge as the last witness at the same time. He left deceased to take the tow rope in, and went aft with the light. Upon looking round to see if the barge light was alright, he heard a faint cry of "help" twice. He looked in the direction of the sound, but could not see anything. He told the Captain there was somebody overboard, and upon looking round, they missed deceased. The captain rounded the boat to search in the wake of where they heard the sound. They could hear nothing, and cruised around, but did not find deceased.

A Juryman : He hit his head as he came up.

The Coroner : That is a theory you must discuss between yourselves.

**Charles John Mansfield**, 6 Ripple Villas, Dagenham, captain of the steam tug *Princess*, said he was on the tug at the wheel on the morning in question, when deceased cried out, "Right away", a signal to the effect that he had taken the tow rope in. Directly after, the last witness came up and said he heard a cry for help. He told him to look round and see if anybody was missing. Adams was found to be absent, and he immediately turned the boat and cruised round the spot. The life belts were got ready, but the night was extremely dark and they could see nothing. They remained round there about an hour with the tug and skiff, but could find no trace of him.

Herbert George, a watchman of Crown Street, Dagenham, said on Wednesday morning at 6.10 he was working right opposite Dagenham Docks when his attention was drawn to the body. He went out in a boat and secured it, and informed the police.

The deceased's father : How many barges had the captain? - Two.

And how many men? - Three.

The Coroner said the jury knew more about barges than he did, but he had often seen them on the river, and had wondered there were not continual accidents of that kind when the men were walking about on board on a dark night. The Captain and his fellows had done everything human power could do. He asked the father whether deceased was a good swimmer.

Mr Adams : Yes, sir.

The Jury then returned a verdict of "Accidental death through drowning".

Captain Ingle, who represented Messrs Williams and Son, on behalf of the firm, expressed their very deep regret at this sad accident, and sympathy with relations of deceased, and testified that deceased was a very steady hand.

The funeral of Adams took place at Hornchurch Parish Churchyard on Sunday.

The Rev A C Kibble conducted the services in the church and at the graveside. A large number of deceased's fellow workmen at Dagenham Docks followed his remains to the churchyard. Mr Varco Williams was also present. The mourners included deceased's father and mother, brothers and sister, and a number of other relatives. There were signs of sympathy everywhere. There were many beautiful tributes to Adams's memory, including : In loving memory of our dear boy Chris from his father and mother ; To my dear brother, from his only sister, Winnie ; In affectionate remembrance of a true friend from Jack, Tom and Tim ; Heartfelt sympathy from Mrs Bruce, May and family ; With deepest sympathy from Uncle Eddie ; In loving memory of a dear brother from George and Vin ; In affectionate and loving remembrance from his broken hearted Cissie ; A harp : A mark of esteem from employees, Yard Department, Dagenham Dock ; With deepest sympathy from the Lighterage Department, Dagenham ; With deepest sympathy from his fellow club members of Hornchurch Conservative Club ; In deepest sympathy from his old chum George Newman ; A harp : With deepest sympathy from members of Hornchurch Social Club ; An Anchor : With deepest sympathy from the crews of the tugs, *Marquis*, *Rodney* and *Benbow* ; With sincere sympathy from Mr and Mrs Odd ; With deepest sympathy from "The Diver", E Hollands. The "Dead March" was played in the Parish Church on Sunday.

**57 23 May 1908**

**ANOTHER DROWNING FATALITY AT PURFLEET**

**RIVER GIVES UP ITS DEAD AFTER THREE WEEKS** *Note : this article is very faded*

Following on the drowning fatality some few weeks ago, another was brought to light on Sunday by the recovery from the Thames at Purfleet of the body of **Walter Henry George**, a captain of a barge, residing at Sittingbourne. Three weeks previously he was swept off his barge by the mainsail in a gust of wind, and being unable to swim, sank, and nothing more was heard of him until his body was seen floating off Purfleet.

The Coroner, Mr C E Lewis, held the inquest at the Grand Hotel, Purfleet, on Monday afternoon.

Mr C Smith was foreman of the jury, and Superintendent Jordan was present on behalf of the police. William Allen George, 17 Lloyd Street, Sittingbourne, said he had viewed the body and was sure it was that of his brother. He lived at 11 Chalkwell Road, Milton Regis, and was master of the sailing barge *Samuel Bowley*. The barge was the property of Wells and Packham of Sittingbourne. He was aged 44, and was a married man. Witness was certain of deceased's identity, for on the body were deceased's clothes, his keys and his purse.

The Coroner : Was he able to swim, do you know? - No, sir.

PC (? J Green?), stationed at Purfleet, of the Metropolitan Police, said on Sunday about 3.30 pm, he was on duty on the Garrison pier when he saw the body floating on the water. He secured it with a boat hook and caused information to be given to PC Cole.

PC Cole said on Sunday afternoon about four o'clock he received the body from the last witness and removed it to the mortuary. There were no marks of identification on the body. Witness had heard (?????) that a man was missing, but he had (.....) Witness removed the clothing and found a purse containing £3 4s 11d and two small keys (.....) There were no marks of violence on the body with the exception of a slight bruise on the (....).

Deceased's brother said that he was informed that his brother was drowned on April 25<sup>th</sup> about nine o'clock in the morning.

Thomas Frederick Cook, labourer at the Garrison, Purfleet, said on April 25<sup>th</sup> about 9.15 he was standing outside the shoe room at the Garrison in company with PC Dunn. A barge was coming down the river and was passing close to the pier about 200 yards from the Government buoy, when the barge rounded. It seemed to him that the sheet sail would not go over. It was blowing very hard at the time, and it appeared that the mainsail would not go over. A man seemed to go to push it over, when the sheet caught him and knocked him overboard.

The Coroner : Was anything done to save him? - Yes, sir, the mate ran aft and appeared to throw something overboard.

After that, the mate ran to the tiller and brought the barge round. Witness then informed the Storekeeper, and a boat was sent out from the magazine to the barge's assistance. Witness saw the man struggling in the water. He would be about 800 yards from shore. Witness added that the mate was very quick in his efforts to save the man, and deserved credit.

Deceased's brother said that the mate had told him that he threw the lifebuoy overboard.

Later in the inquiry, the mate arrived and gave evidence. He said his name was **Percy Hodges**, and he lived at 23 Cheapside, Sittingbourne. On April 25<sup>th</sup> he was mate of the barge *Samuel Bowley*, with the deceased as master. When off Purfleet, coming down the river, the mainsheet caught deceased and knocked him overboard. Witness was standing close to deceased at the time, alongside the mainsheet on the starboard side. They were just about to tack. They were going to get the sail in a bit, and deceased was pulling it in when the sheet came right over and took him overboard. Witness immediately threw him the lifebuoy, but it was blowing hard at the time.

A Juror : Did he make any grasp for the buoy? - No, sir. I shouted, "Here's the life buoy", but he did not answer and did not struggle.

Another Juror : Did you throw it near? - Yes, within half a yard.

In reply to another question, witness said he did not think deceased received any blow.

Mr H W Harvey, on behalf of the firm, desired to say how deeply they sympathised with the relatives in this sad calamity. Deceased had been in their employ about twenty four years.

The jury returned a verdict of death from accidental drowning.

**58 6 June 1908**

**DROWNING FATALITY AT PURFLEET** On Saturday, information was given to PC Cole of Purfleet by George Southgate of 33 George Street, Grays, that about six am he had found a man's clothes lying packed up under the steps of the Royal Hotel causeway, Purfleet. The constable went there and found the clothes under the steps which lead to the water. Upon searching them, he found a waterman's licence with the name ; "**Charles Reece**, 3 Church Passage, Greenwich".

The man had been in the habit of visiting Purfleet for the past 25 years with a rowing boat to take visitors out in the summer. On this morning his boat was lying about 150 yards out in the river. Reece was known to have been a very good swimmer, and it is thought that he might have been drowned while swimming out to go to his boat. He was last seen about 8.30 the previous night. He was about 50 years of age, height 5ft 3 ins, of slight build with dark black hair and a slight beard, going grey.

On Thursday, the body of the man Reece was washed up in the parish of Wapping, and was removed to the Woolwich mortuary to await an inquest.

**59 20 June 1908**

**THEFT OF TROUSERS AT GRAYS** At the Grays Petty Session on Monday, before E J Goldsmith, Walter Henry Phillips, catsmeat man, and **James Simpson**, waterman, both of Grays, were charged with stealing a pair of trousers, value 7s 6d, the property of Walter Cardy of 45 Sidney Road, Tilbury, on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Prosecutor said he lived at 45 Sidney Road, Tilbury, and was a labourer. About five pm on Saturday, he bought a pair of trousers from Mr Marchant of Grays for 7s 6d. They were made to measure. He afterwards went to the Bull public house and laid the trousers down on the seat by the side of him. He went to sleep, and when he awoke he found the parcel missing. He reported the theft to the police. He did not see either of the men enter the house.

Alice Hare, wife of John Hare, landlord of the Bull, said she did not see the prosecutor come in, but later saw him sitting in front of the bar. Later the two prisoners came in, but were refused drink on account of their condition.

John Oxley, 145 High Street, said the prisoner Phillips lived at 147 High Street. On Saturday evening he came to witness's house and asked him to take care of a parcel for him. Later he handed the parcel to the police.

PS Ellis, who received information of the theft and made enquiries, deposed that about 6.30 on Saturday evening he went to Oxley's house and there found the parcel in a cupboard. He subsequently arrested the two men who made statements.

The prisoners were on this evidence remanded to the Petty Session.

**60 27 June 1908**

**MAN'S TERRIBLE DEATH AT PURFLEET  
ENTOMBED IN AN OIL TANK**

**ANOTHER MYSTERY** A mystery that will probably never be solved surrounds the death of an old man of 67 years of age named James Briggs, lately of Ladywell Workhouse, Bermondsey, whose body was found in an airtight oil tank at Purfleet on Saturday. How long the man had been there it is impossible to say, but he had evidently waited his end with philosophical resignation, being found in a sitting position in the bottom of the tank, which was seven feet four inches (...). The mystery lies in the fact that the aperture which opens into the tank, and is locked with a spring lock, is only 22 ins by 2 ft, and great force would have to be used for the man to squeeze himself through, and it would have been a matter of impossibility for him to have fallen down. When the doors of the tank were open, men were at work on or close by the tank, but nobody appears to have seen the man.

An inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death was held at the Royal Hotel, Purfleet, on

Monday afternoon, conducted by the Divisional Coroner (Mr C E Lewis) and a jury, over whom Mr Henry Howard was chosen foreman.

William David Briggs, Russell Scott Buildings, Cherry Garden Street, Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, identified the body as that of his uncle, James Briggs. He was 67 years of age, and single. He used to be a fireman on board ship. Witness last saw him alive on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, on Derby Day, between twelve and one o'clock at his (.....) house. He had had one day's leave, and he told witness he was going back on the same night. As they parted company, deceased told him that he was going down to witness's mother. He had never ascertained whether he went there.

Frederick George Saward, 5 Flint Street, West Thurrock, a tank ganger employed by the Anglo American Oil Company, said on Saturday morning just after eleven, witness was on the barge *Cheshire* in company with a man named Paterson. They were engaged in "dipping" the tanks. The barge lay at the oil works wharf. Witness unlocked the two tanks. Upon opening the second one, he found deceased. He was sitting up. There was no oil in the tank. The way in which he was sitting looked as though the man was sleeping, and witness knew that could not be, as the lids were airtight and they had been shut down about four days.

George Wood, 72 Burdett Road, a shipwright in the employ of the Anglo American Oil Company, said on June 11<sup>th</sup> the barge *Cheshire* came into Trinity Wharf, Limehouse, to be cleaned and repaired on the outside. Witness opened the tank on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup>, but he did not see anybody inside then. Witness's business was just to see if the rubbers on the door were all right, and directly after the work was done, witness locked the (.....) again. Witness next unlocked the after door, on Monday June 15<sup>th</sup>, but did not see anybody then. He would not have seen any person unless he had put his head right down to look inside. On the Wednesday witness unlocked the same door again and, after seeing to the ring bolt, locked it again. The tank was taken off the float on Wednesday and on the Friday was brought back for survey. Upon (.... ....) the surveyor examined the tanks outside, fore and aft, and the doors, but he was not required to look inside. The tank left Limehouse on Friday afternoon last.

The Coroner : If these doors are locked except when you are working on them, can you account for anybody getting inside the tanks?

Witness : I can't account for it at all, sir. There are a number of men working on the barge, so no strangers have a chance of getting about. In answer to the Coroner, the witness said there was no work carried on during the night, so the man must have got in during the daytime. How he succeeded in doing so, witness did not know. The tanks were about 25 feet by 14 feet and seven feet deep. There were very little fumes in the tanks. They were always steamed out. There was always a ladder from the bottom of the tank to the manhole.

By the Foreman : The tank was open about ten minutes on Wednesday, and witness was there the whole time, and the same on Friday.

The Foreman : It is strange how he came there.

Witness : My impression is that he had been down there some time.

The Coroner : On the day of the survey, was it not open at eight o'clock?

Witness : Yes. I opened it, and was there all the time till the surveyor came at eleven o'clock.

In answer to further questions by the Coroner, witness said there were several barges around. Anybody could get from the shore to the barge by climbing up, but it would have been a hard climb for a man of his age. The yard was private.

The Coroner : How big is this manhole?

Witness : 22 ins by 2 ft.

The Coroner : So it would have been impossible for him to have fallen down.

The Foreman : It would have required some exertion to have got down there.

PC Cole, stationed at Purfleet, said on Saturday morning he received information of the discovery of the body in the oil tank. He proceeded there, and saw the deceased sitting on the bottom of the barge with his hands hanging by his side. Witness obtained a rope and got him out. The fumes were terrible. The barge had been freshly tarred and the sun made the fumes terrible. He was glad to get out himself, and he felt rather bad. There were no bruises, but when witness pulled his

clothes off, the skin came off with it. The body did not appear to have been in the place long.

By the Coroner : It did not seem very decomposed.

Witness continued that deceased had been sitting in the paraffin, and the legs of his trousers were wet. He seemed to have nothing in his stomach.

The Coroner said that was all the evidence he could put before them. Of course, there had been no *post mortem* made, and it remained with them to say whether this was advisable. He thought the only positive conclusion would be that he died from suffocation. It was a most extraordinary thing how he got there. It had been stated that it was absolutely impossible for him to have fallen in accidentally.

His nephew, recalled, said Camberwell was quite three miles from witness's place.

(.....) Francis (Newell/Nevill?), 41 Loxley Street, Limehouse, foreman lighterman to the Anglo American Oil Company, said the barge left Purfleet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June to go to Camberwell. She would not have been at the latter place more than a day. She then went to Limehouse. It usually took two days to get there. At Camberwell the oil was pumped out of the tanks, and the engineer was supposed to lock the doors up. He stated that it would have been impossible to have fallen down, and it would be difficult to get down in any way.

By a Juror : The doors of the tank were locked by a spring lock.

Richard Brown, master of Ladywell Workhouse, Bermondsey, said deceased was an inmate up till June 3<sup>rd</sup>, when he went out on leave in the Union's clothes. It was quite a custom for their inmates to take leave and stop away a week with their friends and report it afterwards. Deceased had been there since May. He was a quiet old man, and rather absent, but nothing to speak of. He had never conversed with witness in any way as to his past. He was put to light work and did it.

The nephew, again questioned by the Coroner, stated deceased had been on big oil (....) and had told witness the danger a person was exposed to from the fumes from the tanks. He had never said anything else about the matter.

The Coroner asked witness if he thought there had been foul play.

Witness : No, sir.

The Coroner said there was no suspicion of foul play. If there had been, they could not have expected to find him in a sitting position, and if he had been pushed down there, there must have been bruises on his head or body.

The Jury thereupon returned an open verdict.

The funeral of the victim took place on Wednesday at West Thurrock, the only mourner being Mr W D Briggs, a nephew of deceased, who journeyed from Bermondsey. The final obsequies were performed by the Rev P Williams Edwards, curate of West Thurrock. Mr G H Rickett of Tilbury carried out the funeral arrangements.

## **61 25 July 1908**

### **ACCIDENT TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE TILBURY FIRE BRIGADE**

**INJURED ON A BARGE** On Saturday morning about eleven o'clock, a rather serious accident befell **Mr C Curtis** of Rhoda Villa, Broadway, Tilbury, who is the popular captain of the Tilbury Fire Brigade. It appears that Mr Curtis, who is a lighterman watchman in the employ of Messrs Perkins and Homer, was engaged in helping to load some rice into a barge at Tilbury Docks from the SS *City of Agra*. A set of rice was being lowered from the ship to the barge when it somehow or other became displaced and jammed Curtis up against the side of the barge. It was at once seen that he was badly hurt, and he was conveyed to his home in an ambulance. He was attended by Dr Fowler, who found him to be suffering from severe crushing and contusions on the body. He is, however, making very satisfactory progress.

## **62 22 August 1908**

### **ANOTHER DROWNING FATALITY AT GRAYS**

**LITTLE BOY'S SAD DEATH** Another sad drowning fatality startled Grays on Saturday morning, when it became known that a boy of 10 years of age, named Robert Pigg, had met his death while

bathing in the Thames. The sad calamity was due to the adventurous spirit of two boys, neither of whom could swim, venturing into the treacherous waters of a tidal river. The fact is all the more distressing because the Grays Urban Council have gone to great expense to provide a bathing pond, to put a stop to this very thing and to prevent these sad drowning fatalities. The bathing pond is open every Saturday morning, free, from 10 o'clock to 12 for the use of the boys of the town. Therefore, within a few minutes of the time when this fatality occurred, these boys could have had a swim in the pond, practically free from danger and with an attendant near. It should be a severe lesson to children not to venture in the river, especially when they cannot swim, and also to parents to see that they bathe at the proper place.

The deceased was a smart intelligent little fellow, and on Friday nights was always most energetic in disposing of copies of the "*Grays and Tilbury Gazette*".

The inquest was held before the Divisional Coroner (Mr C Edgar Lewis) at the Grays Police Court on Monday morning.

Mr W Brander was foreman of the jury.

Thomas Pigg, residing at 24 Globe Terrace, Grays, said he was a butcher. The deceased boy was his son, and was 10 years of age. He was not able to swim.

The Coroner : Did you know he went down there to bathe? - I have known him to go there, but I have cautioned him not to go there.

Robert Sinclair, a little boy of eight years of age, said he lived at No 2 Globe Terrace with his father and mother. On Saturday morning, witness went bathing in the river with Robert Pigg. They both undressed and got into the water. Neither of them could swim. Deceased walked out up to his neck and then started to try to swim. Witness was looking round and then lost sight of him. Witness did not see him go under, but another boy told him he had gone under.

The Coroner : Did anybody go in after him? - No, sir. I was going in, but it was too deep.

Didn't another boy go in? - No, sir ; he took his boots and stockings off, but he put them on again. (Laughter).

In reply to a juror, witness said he saw no men standing about.

James Chapman, another little boy, of 3 King's Terrace, Grays, said on Saturday morning he was standing on the causeway. Witness knew deceased and also Sinclair. He saw them both in the water undressed. Witness saw Pigg try to swim, and then he went under.

The Coroner : What did you do? - I went up the causeway.

You ran home and told your mother? - Yes.

**Harry Hart**, 92 High Street, Dartford, of the sailing barge *Castanette*, said on Saturday morning about nine o'clock, he was leaving the barge *Whitewell* in a small boat. He saw two lads on the causeway, and they told him a boy was drowned. Witness immediately undressed and dived in, but failed to find him. There were about nine feet of water at that spot. The grappling irons were subsequently procured, and witness was present when the body was recovered 30 minutes later. The body was found in about the same place where witness dived in. When he dived in, witness touched the bottom. The tide was about low water.

A juror desired to congratulate witness on his courage and promptitude.

Another juror endorsed this.

Dr A J Partridge of Grays said about 10.20 on Saturday morning, he was called to deceased. He met the police bringing him along on the stretcher in the High Street. They went to the mortuary and deceased examined the body, and deceased was quite dead. Death was due to asphyxia due to drowning.

PC Samuel Simpson, stationed at Grays, said on Saturday morning, from what he was told, he went down to the Grays causeway. The body had not then been recovered. When the body was brought ashore, witness tried to restore animation for about ten minutes, but it was of no use. The body had been in the water fifty minutes. Witness then conveyed the body to the mortuary. Witness himself took part in the dragging operations, and the body was recovered about five minutes to ten.

The jury then returned a verdict of "Death from accidental drowning".

### 63 10 October 1908

**ALLEGED THEFT OF COPPER AT RAINHAM** On Wednesday at the Police Court, Grays, **Hubert Stafford**, bargeman of Gravesend, was charged with stealing 42 lbs of copper, the property of some person at present unknown. The case was heard before G H Silverwood Esq.

Detective Sergeant George Johnson of Gravesend stated about 10.30 on Tuesday morning he was in Church Street, Gravesend, where he saw the prisoner offering for sale the metal produced, at a dealer's named Smith. Witness asked him if it was his property, and he said, "No, it belongs to my master. I have just brought a note to say so". Witness told him it was not satisfactory, and he should take him to the Police Station. At the police office, he said, "I will tell you the truth, sir. I wrote that note and I took the oil tank from the jetty and the fish wharf next to Field's soap works at Rainham about a month ago. My master knows nothing about it". Witness charged him and, in reply, he said, "I did take it".

Superintendent Jordan asked for a remand until Friday for enquiries. This was granted.

Stafford was again charged at the Petty Session on Friday.

Superintendent Jordan said he had made all enquiries possible to see if he could get the copper identified at Rainham, but had failed. He had therefore no alternative but to ask for defendant to be discharged.

The Bench allowed the charge to be withdrawn and the defendant was discharged.

### 64 12 December 1908

**STEWARD CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER AT GRAYS**

**LIGHTERMAN'S TRAGIC DEATH**

**CORONER'S JURY AND MAGISTRATES ACQUIT THE ACCUSED** On Friday night and Saturday, Grays was startled by a sad affair which happened in the heart of the town at one of the busiest times of the week, viz about 9.30 pm on Friday evening. What at first looked like an accident developed into a charge of manslaughter being preferred against a Swansea ship's steward named John Hill, who was employed on the SS *Orient*, then lying at Tilbury Docks. The unfortunate man was a member of a well known and respected family in Grays, who have long been connected with the barge and shipping trade. His name was **Herbert Henry Dines**, and he was 39 years of age, being a lighterman. A distressing feature of the affair is the fact that he leaves a widow and six young children to mourn his loss, and at the time of the fatal accident, his wife was in a delicate condition.

**THE INQUEST** The inquest was held at the Grays Police Station on Monday morning, before the Coroner (Mr C Edgar Lewis). Mr W F Umphreville was foreman of the jury.

The prisoner, John Hill, who was in custody on a charge of manslaughter, was present. He was of slight build, about 5 ft 6 ins in height, with a small dark moustache. Under his right eye was a discolouration.

Mr Charlton (from the office of Mr J W Nutt, solicitor, Grays) appeared on prisoner's behalf.

**William Claxton Dines** of 104 High Street, Grays, a waterman and tobacconist, stated that deceased was his brother. He was a married man, aged 39 years of age. He was a lighterman. On Friday evening, witness was passing the Railway Hotel, and seeing a crowd, he went to the spot and saw a man lying on the ground, which turned out to be his brother.

The Coroner : He was unable to speak to you? - Yes, sir.

And with assistance you placed him in a waggonette and took him to his home? - Yes, sir.

And you sent for Dr Outred, I believe? - Yes, sir.

You had not seen your brother earlier in the evening? - I had not seen him since the previous Sunday evening, when he left me to go home.

Thomas Allard of 27 Hampden Road, Grays, a dock labourer, deposed that on Friday evening about 9.30 pm, he was standing outside the Railway Hotel, Grays. Witness was standing at the corner of the railway approach.

The Coroner : Now what did you see? - I saw two men standing outside the convenience.

Did you know them? - I knew one, Mr Herbert Dines.

What position was he in to you? - Mr Dines was facing me.

Was he leaning against anywhere? - No, sir, he was about three feet from the wall. This man (prisoner) was about a yard away. Then I saw this man strike him.

Did you hear them talking? - No, sir, not a word.

Did they appear to be quarrelling? - No, sir.

And then, suddenly, the man Hill struck him? - Yes, sir.

What with? - A right hand punch, sir.

Did you see where he struck him? - I should say somewhere in the face, sir. I cannot say exactly where.

What was the effect? - The man fell against the wall backwards, from the force of the blow.

Did you see his head strike the wall? - I heard it, sir.

Did he fall just about where that spot of blood is on the wall now? - Yes, sir, and then on to his back.

You only saw one blow struck? - One blow only, sir.

Did you go across the road? - No, sir. As soon as he fell, this man's (prisoner's) friend got hold of his arm and took him away, and I followed. As he walked across the road, another of his friends followed.

That made three of them altogether? - Yes, sir.

I believe you subsequently pointed out prisoner to the Police? - Yes, sir.

Was he on the up platform? No, sir ; on the down platform. He cut across the metals.

Did you form any opinion as to the condition of the prisoner? - He had had a little drink, but he could walk all right. He appeared a little excited when the policeman spoke to him, but he could talk all right.

I suppose you mean he had a little more than he ought to have had? - Yes, sir. He seemed a little jolly and merry.

Did he appear to know what he was doing? - Oh yes, sir.

Prisoner : You did not see what occurred before?

Witness : No ; I own that.

A Juror : Were they in a fighting attitude?

Witness : No, sir.

Prisoner : Did you see him raise his hand to strike me?

Witness : No.

Prisoner : Nor my friend?

Witness : No. Your friend was standing about two feet away.

Florence Day, a little girl of 13 years of age, living at No 6 Bedford Road, Grays, stated on Friday evening about 9.30, she was passing by the Co-operative Stores and was going in the direction of the railway station, when she saw three men leave the convenience of the Railway Hotel. She was sure the prisoner was one of them. She did not hear them talking to one another.

The Coroner : What did you see happen? - I saw one man push another against the wall.

What was the result? - He pushed him again, and then he fell to the ground.

Witness, continuing, said deceased was afterwards lying flat on the pavement with his head against the wall.

The Coroner : Did you subsequently see prisoner pointed out by Mr Allard on the railway station. - Yes.

And was that man the same man as you saw push the other? - Yes, sir.

And you are sure it was only a push? - Yes, sir.

You did not see him strike him in the face? - No, sir.

You had not been standing watching them? - No ; I was just passing at the time.

The Foreman : Were there many people about at the time? - No, sir.

A Juror : Did you see where prisoner pushed the man? - No, sir.

John Ritchie, living at No 8 Alma Place, Grays, a labourer, said about 9.30 on Friday evening he was standing outside the Co-operative Stores.

What did you see? - I saw two men on the pavement and one in the gutter, just outside the conveniences.

The Coroner : What happened? - I saw one strike out, and the other staggered and fell against the wall. I heard the sound of the blow caused by his head coming in contact with the wall.

What happened then? - I saw prisoner assume a defensive position, and he said, "Come on", to deceased. Then prisoner's friend took him by the shoulder, said something to him, and they hurried on to the platform.

You heard no words spoken between them before the blow was struck? - No, sir.

Could you say if the prisoner was the man who struck the blow? - No, sir, not from his features.

The Foreman : Do you know if it was a right hand blow or not? - No, I could not say. Both hands might have been used.

By a Juror : He heard no altercation. He had been there some time and would have heard it had there been any. The back of deceased's head struck the wall.

Another Juror : Could deceased have struck prisoner without you seeing it? - Oh, yes.

The Coroner : They may have been there a minute, or half a minute, before you saw them? - Yes.

On behalf of the prisoner, the Coroner asked witness if deceased did not strike several blows?

Witness : I did not see any. I saw only the one blow.

Could you form any opinion as to what was the condition of the men? - Not the deceased, but the prisoner was certainly under the influence of drink.

How came you to form that opinion? By his eyes and his speech when he was spoken to by the policeman on the railway station.

Do you think he was dazed in any way, and that was what his condition was due to? - No, sir, only drink.

Why do you think the prisoner is the man that struck the blow? - From his dress, sir.

Ernest Course, 3 Broadway, Tilbury Docks, a ship's steward, stated on Friday evening he came to Grays in company with prisoner and a Mr Thompson.

Where did you go to on arriving? - After talking a few minutes outside the station, we went to the King's Arms.

Did you have something to drink there? - We had a glass of beer and remained there about ten minutes. We went to the extreme end of the New Road, and then came back and went to the Queen's Hotel. When we got there, it was about twenty minutes to eight.

How long did you stay there? - I played billiards there with prisoner in the billiard room upstairs. I afterwards played Thompson.

The Coroner : How many did you play up? - We played fifty up in each game. After that, we came downstairs and went into the bar, and stayed there a few minutes, leaving shortly after nine o'clock.

Did you have anything in the billiard room? - Yes, a glass of beer each.

And in the bar? - We had a glass of beer each there.

Where did you go next? - We left with the intention of catching a train. Instead I suggested we should have a drink. We went to the Railway Hotel and we had a stout and bitter each, the three of us. We were in there from about ten minutes past nine till about twenty past, or more. We then all left. Hill and I went into the convenience. We saw deceased inside and, in my opinion, he was the worse for drink, as he was reeling and staggering about.

What happened then? - When he went in, the deceased was making for the door. When Hill and I came to leave, deceased had not got outside. Hill went to open the door, and with that deceased pushed him away from it. Then deceased struck Hill six or seven times in the face. I went to stop deceased, and he then struck at me. He did not hit me, and I then opened the door. Deceased walked out in front of us. I then took my friend's arm and took him outside. As soon as they got outside, the man was anxious to strike Hill again, and with that he fell down in the act of doing so.

The Coroner : What caused him to fall down? - Hill was out of his reach when he fell down. Hill put up his hands to save his face, but there was no blow struck.

And that was the end of it? - After the man fell down, I took Hill to the railway station.

Witness further stated he did not know deceased, and had not seen him before, to his knowledge.

The Coroner : You tell us that deceased was drunk, what do you say about your friend, the prisoner?

- He was not drunk, but was dazed from the blows he received in the convenience.

Where had you been together before you left Tilbury Docks? - We met in the Seamen's Mission.

A Juror : There were three of you, where was the other party while this was going on? - As far as I know, he went straight to the station.

The Foreman : Did you meet Thompson again that evening? - Yes, on the railway station.

And he was not present when this occurred? - No, sir.

Another Juror : Is the black eye which the prisoner has got the effect of the deceased's blows? - Yes, I expect so.

A Juror : Was anything said between deceased and prisoner? - No, nothing whatever.

By another Juror : Prisoner had no marks on his face before he was struck.

Eliza Ann Downes of 56 Quebec Road, Tilbury Dock, stated shortly before nine o'clock, she was proceeding across the road to the Railway Hotel. Just as she was going into the public house, she saw a man go down "wallop". She went into the bar and told the young lady about it. She was frightened and stayed in the public house about twenty minutes.

By a Juror : She did not see anyone strike him. She was flurried at the time.

Alfred William Nash, 42 High Street, Grays, leather merchant, gave evidence that he had known deceased for the last fourteen years. Witness believed he was a man of sober habits, and had never seen him drunk in his life. Witness saw him on Friday evening about a quarter to nine. He was then in the King's Arms public house with another man.

The Coroner : Was he drinking there? - Yes, sir, he had a glass of beer on the counter.

Did you converse with him? - Yes, sir, about ten or twelve minutes.

Anything particular? - No, sir. He was laughing and joking, and seemed all right.

Did he look as if he had been out for the evening? - No sir, he seemed quite sober.

Witness added that he left the King's Arms about nine o'clock, and deceased was still in the saloon bar of the King's Arms.

The Foreman : Was he quarrelsome? - No, not then.

The Coroner : Was he a quarrelsome man? - I have known him to argue on politics and other things, but never to quarrel.

Dr Charles D Outred of Milton House, Grays, stated he saw deceased at his home on Friday evening about ten o'clock. He was dead, and witness noticed a bruise over the eyebrow. There was also a large bruise at the back of the head with a cut in the centre of it. The cut was about an inch and a half long. There was a good deal of blood between the cut surfaces and over the hair of the head. Witness smelt distinctly alcohol. On Sunday, witness made a *post mortem* examination, opening all three cavities and the spine. Upon opening the head, he found that the skull was very thick, and also there was no fracture of the skull. Upon removing the skull, in the centre of the brain he found a large haemorrhage.

The Coroner : What was that due to? - A ruptured blood vessel.

Dr Outred, continuing, said upon opening the chest, he found the lungs healthy. The valves of the heart were quite healthy, but the lining of the aorta was degenerated and probably would have been friable in a few years' time. The condition of the aorta might be due to excess of alcohol. There were many things that would cause it : it might be due to very trying or muscular work. Upon opening the abdomen, he found the liver enlarged and very hard, Large quantities of alcohol would produce that condition, but it did not necessarily follow that the man was a drunkard. There was a certain amount of food in the stomach, but there was a very strong smell of alcohol. The spleen was enlarged and hard, and the kidneys also enlarged. The laceration on the top of the head did not go down to the bone of the skull.

The Coroner : And death, in your opinion, was due to what? - Haemorrhage of the brain compressing the nerve centres.

To what do you attribute the haemorrhage ; due to violence? - Yes, due to violence.

Would a fall be sufficient? - Yes, if the fall had a good impetus with it. An ordinary fall would not cause it.

Would a fall against ordinary brickwork cause it? - I am of opinion that something more than an ordinary fall caused death. The skull was thick enough to save a fracture, but not thick enough to save the rupture of the vessel inside.

In reply to the Coroner, witness stated that the degeneration of the aorta was not sufficient to cause degeneration of the artery in the brain.

The Coroner : Do you think if deceased slipped as described by the man with him, that would have been sufficient to rupture the artery? - No, I should not have expected to have found such a big extravasation of the tissues of the brain.

Notwithstanding his weight? - That is my opinion.

It was stated that the deceased weighed about 14 stone.

In reply to the Foreman, witness said he thought the abrasion over the left temple was due to a blow. It was round and about three quarters of an inch in diameter. It might have been caused by a blow from a fist. Any undue excitement, coupled with excessive drink, might assist to bring about the rupture.

PC Bacon of Grays stated on Friday evening about 9.30 he was on duty in the High Street near the New Road, when he was informed by the representative of the *Grays and Tilbury Gazette* that a man had fallen down by the railway crossing and cut his head. He went there, and saw deceased in a wagonette between two men. The deceased's brother was also in the wagonette. Witness said to him, "What is the matter here?" He replied, "It's all right, it's only my brother, who has slipped up and cut his head". Witness said, "Is it a serious cut?" and he replied, "Yes, it is a nasty cut. We are going to take him home and send for a doctor". From what witness was subsequently told, he accompanied Allard on to the downside platform. They saw prisoner and another man sitting on a seat. Allard pointed to the prisoner, and said, "That is the man". Witness told prisoner that he heard he had struck a man in the street. He said, "Yes, he struck me seven or eight times in the face, and I struck him back in self defence". Witness noticed prisoner was drunk, and took his name and address. Prisoner went down by the 9.50 train, and they were afterwards told that Dines was dead. Later in the evening, witness accompanied Inspector Sutch to the Seamen's Institute, Tilbury, where prisoner was arrested.

By a Juror : Prisoner's face was red, and he pointed out to witness where he had been struck by deceased. He had not a black eye then, but later a discolouration appeared.

Inspector Sutch of the Grays Police stated on Friday evening about 9.45 he went on to the down platform at Grays railway station. He there saw the prisoner. Course was standing beside him. Witness said, "You have had trouble?" Prisoner said, "Yes. I will tell you all about it. Course and I went into the Railway Hotel convenience. We saw a man in there who was drunk. He turned round and started punching me in the face six or seven times. When we came outside, he tried to strike me again, and I hit him, but it was not a hard blow, and the man fell down and we came away". Witness remained on the platform and saw the prisoner go to Tilbury by train. Later, he found deceased was dead, and he caught the next train to Tilbury. He went to the Seamen's Institute and found prisoner in his cubicle, fast asleep. He woke up in a very dazed condition. When he was dressed and came downstairs, witness cautioned him, and told him he should arrest him on a charge of causing the death of Dines. He made no reply. Witness conveyed him to Grays, where he was charged and cautioned, and he again made no reply. The Inspector added that he could corroborate that the prisoner was drunk, but he spoke quite rationally. He did say to witness, "Look what he has done for me", and prisoner's eyes were then red and puffed.

On the advice of his solicitor and the Coroner, prisoner decided to say nothing that day.

The Coroner reviewed the evidence, and pointed out that the medical evidence went to prove that more violence was used than an ordinary fall. Having ascertained the cause of death, it was for them to see who was responsible for it. He was afraid that the evidence of Course was not altogether corroborated. The medical evidence went to prove that deceased took a lot of drink. He might have been able to take a lot of drink and not show it, but it might have made him quarrelsome. The jury must hear in round what was said to have taken place in the urinal and the time that had elapsed. If they thought prisoner did strike deceased, they had to consider what were

the circumstances under which the blow was given. If they thought prisoner acted in self defence, then they would be justified in saying deceased came by his death through misadventure, If, on the other hand, they thought prisoner aimed a violent blow at Dines, not perhaps with the intention of killing him, but such a blow which in the eye of the law he was not justified in dealing, then their verdict would be one of manslaughter.

After a brief consultation in private, the foreman said the jury were unanimously of opinion that deceased came by his death through misadventure.

The Coroner, after some moments of consideration, said he took it that the jury were of opinion that prisoner thought the deceased would do him some injury, and that he dealt the blow in self defence.

The Foreman said the jury thought prisoner acted in self defence.

The Coroner : Then I think you are justified in returning that verdict.

A verdict was then accordingly entered as death from misadventure.

**PRISONER'S VERSION OF THE AFFAIR** At the Grays Police Court on Tuesday morning, the Justices held an unusually early sitting at nine o'clock to investigate the charge against the accused. The magistrates present were E J Goldsmith, A W Boatman and G H Silverwood Esqs.

John Hill, ship's steward of Swansea, was charged with feloniously killing and slaying one Herbert Henry Dines at Grays on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr Edgar Swan, barrister instructed by Mr J W Nutt, solicitor, Grays, appeared on behalf of prisoner.

William Claxton Dines, brother of deceased, and Thomas Allard repeated the evidence they gave at the inquest.

Allard, in reply to cross-examination by Mr Swan, said according to condition of prisoner's face, it looked as if he might have been fighting.

Florence Day and John Ritchie also corroborated their previous evidence ; the last named saying that the blow was not a violent one such as would have been dealt by a man in a temper.

Cross-examined : Witness Ritchie thought by the condition of the prisoner that there had been a fight.

Ernest Course, in cross-examination, said he did not notice prisoner push deceased. Albert William Nash also repeated his evidence.

Mr Boatman : You would not call deceased a fighting man? - Oh, no.

The Chairman : He could box a bit, couldn't he? - I can't say. I did see him a little excited at the General Election. (Laughter).

Dr Outred, after his evidence in chief, in answer to Mr Swan, said he believed deceased was a heavy drinker, and the chief organs of the body were affected by this habit, which had been of long standing. Deceased was more likely to have a rupture of a blood vessel than a healthy man.

Inspector Sutch and PC Bacon recounted the police evidence, and this concluded the case for the prosecution.

Prisoner then elected to go into the box. He said he was 28 years of age, and was a steward on the SS *Orient*. He had been a steward on that boat for ten or eleven years without a break.

Mr Swan : I will take you shortly. If you did anything to the man, why did you do it?

Prisoner : I did it because he was going to strike me.

You have heard the description by Inspector Sutch as to what you told him. Is that substantially correct? - Yes.

What were the injuries you suffered from being struck? - It was done so quickly that I was quite dazed. He struck me several blows in the face, on the eyes, nose and mouth in quick succession. I had one tooth loosened in the upper jaw and one in the lower.

Dr Outred examined prisoner's mouth and said two of the teeth were loose, but the other teeth were quite firm and hard. There was also a recent swelling over the one tooth.

Prisoner, continuing, said these blows were struck inside the convenience. On coming outside, they were close together. Deceased made a dive for Course. Witness said, "Look out, Course, he's going to hit you". Course turned to take witness away, and deceased was then going to hit witness and put up one hand as if to hit him. Witness, quick as lightning, pushed his fist out, and deceased fell down. Course then caught hold of witness's arm and they went across to the station. When witness

struck out, his hand touched the right hand side of the face. Witness thought deceased had fallen down like any ordinary man. Witness was not drunk. He had had two glasses of beer in the afternoon, and four glasses of beer and stout at night in Grays. He was under fear that he might be seriously injured if he did not defend himself, having been so badly knocked about in the convenience.

Mr Swan submitted that this was a case which should not be sent for trial, as no jury would convict on such evidence. A man was always justified in defending himself with the weapons which nature had given him. There was no doubt that deceased was in a quarrelsome mood, and struck prisoner several times. The Coroner's Jury had exonerated this man from all blame, and he thought the magistrates in their hearts must exonerate him. Prisoner behaved with great moderation. He was a peaceful man. He did not defend himself until his treatment had passed all endurance.

The Bench retired to consult and, after an absence of ten minutes, the Chairman announced that the prisoner would be discharged.

**FUNERAL OF THE VICTIM** The funeral took place on Thursday afternoon of Herbert Henry Dines, the victim of the unfortunate affair. The body was conveyed from deceased's residence to the cemetery in a glass car, and was followed by two mourning coaches, containing the deceased man's brothers, sisters and other relatives. There were a number of other friends at the graveside, and several floral tributes. The coffin was of polished Canadian elm with brass fittings, bearing the inscription : "Herbert Henry Dines, died December 4<sup>th</sup> 1908, aged 39 years". Messrs Thompson and Sons carried out the funeral arrangements.

## **65      24 December 1908**

**BARGEMAN'S DEATH – THE COMPENSATION AWARDED** At a special County Court at Romford on Friday, **James Adams** and **Amelia Adams** of Rainham Road, Hornchurch, claimed compensation for the loss of their son, **Christopher Adams**, who was drowned by falling from a barge on which he was at work, belonging to Messrs **S Williams** and Sons Ltd, lightermen and wharfingers. Mr Abinger, for the claimants, said deceased earned £2 a week and more. He lived with his parents and paid them a sum for his board and lodging which was considerably beyond what the cost of his keep came to – namely 17s 6d. The father only earned about 16s or 17s a week, and had depended, when unable to work, on his son. The father was cross-examined by Mr Compton Smith, who appeared for Messrs Williams, to show that deceased was engaged to be married at the time of his death, and would shortly have left home. Witness said there was no question of the marriage taking place immediately. The date had not been fixed. Witness had received about £100 which his son had saved. Mr Compton Smith contended that the £100 ought to be taken into account. The Judge said he could not agree. He held that £50 would be fair compensation, and gave judgement accordingly. At the request of Mr Compton Smith, his Honour agreed to state a case.