

**1**      **21 January 1871**

AN INFANT STARVED TO DEATH AT RUNCORN

THE MOTHER COMMITTED FOR MANSLAUGHTER    On Friday last, an adjourned inquest touching the death of **Thomas Bridge**, an infant aged eight weeks, was held before H R White Esq (deputy coroner) in the Court of Petty Sessions, Runcorn. When the inquest was first opened on the previous Tuesday, the only evidence taken was that of

**Ellen Bridge**, who, being sworn, said : I am the wife of **Henry Bridge**, a boatman in the employ of Mr Joseph Davies, salt merchant, Runcorn. We have no settled place of residence, but live on board our boat. The body the jury have seen is that of my child Thomas Bridge. He was eight weeks old on Sunday. He died in my arms this morning at half past three o'clock, as I was coming down the street. He was very delicate from birth. I have had seven children. There are only three living. The first was stillborn, another died when nine weeks old from whooping cough, by which it choked, and the third went off in a decline with diabetes when a year and two months old.

The Deputy Coroner then adjourned the inquest until Friday, and ordered a *post mortem* examination to be in the meantime made of the body.

At the adjourned inquest on Friday, the first witness examined was

**Sarah Roberts**, who said : I am the wife of **John Roberts**, and reside with him on board the narrow boat *Elizabeth*, belonging to Elizabeth Potts of Agden. Between two and three o'clock on Monday afternoon, the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, I was in Mr Joseph Davies's office at the Top Locks in Runcorn. I followed Ellen Bridge into the office, and she asked Mr Giles (Mr Davies's manager) to advance her £1, saying that the boats were at Dover Lock (which is near Wigan), that the canal was frozen up, and that they had had nothing to eat for two days. Mr Giles refused to advance her that sum, saying they were already so much in Mr Davies's debt ; but after much persuasion he gave her 15s, and advised her to make the best of her way back to the boats, and get to Runcorn with them as soon as there was a road for them. She then left the office, saying that she would do so. About eight o'clock the same night I saw her again, in the Bridgewater Arms, kept by Mr John Higginbottom. She was sitting in the tap room asleep, and under the influence of drink. I awoke her, and she made use of bad language, telling me to go and mind my own business. The deceased was then on her lap, and I said to her, "You will starve that poor little innocent baby to death, let someone take charge of it for you". She replied, "I will take care of it myself". My husband told me not to interfere with her, and I left the house, leaving her in the taproom. Between eight and nine o'clock the same night I returned, and found her sitting asleep on the step at the front door. She was still drunk, and had the baby on her knee. I awoke her, and asked her if she was going to sit there and starve the baby to death, or whether she was going to her boat. She replied, "I shall go when I'm ready". I then asked her if she would come with me to my boat, where there was a good fire, and she cursed me and refused to go. I asked her to give me the baby, and she said, "No, I can look after the beggar myself". I said, "If that is your temper, I will leave you to it", and I then went to my boat, and I did not see her again.

**David Baxter** said : I am a boatman in the employ of the Bridgewater Trustees, and reside in Gilbert Street, Runcorn. About six o'clock on Monday night the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, I followed Ellen Bridge into the Bridgewater Arms. She called for a glass of whisky at the bar, which was supplied to her, and she drank it, and soon after came and sat near to me in the taproom. She was somewhat the worse for drink when she entered the house, and soon after sitting down fell asleep, with her baby on her knee. In about ten minutes her arms flew open, and the child was sliding down her legs, and would have fallen upon the ground had I not caught it. I shook her head, and did all I could to arouse her, but did not succeed. I placed the baby on her knee again, and put the corners of her apron under her apron strings, so as to prevent it from falling again. A few minutes afterwards, she stretched herself, and the child would have fallen again had I not caught it. I asked "Singer" (the man who was waiting in the taproom) to get some cayenne pepper and put it up her nose, to awake her. I said, "She will kill the child, and I am not going to stop here to be blamed". I then went and

sat at the other end of the room. In about fifteen minutes after, "Singer" caught the child in a similar manner, and then applied something to her nose. She woke up, and soon after asked for a glass of whisky, but Mrs Higginbottom refused to serve her. I left soon after, leaving Mrs Bridge there. The child appeared to be gasping for breath and starved with the cold. I have known Mrs Bridge many years. She occasionally takes too much to drink, but not regularly, so far as I have seen. I never had any quarrel with her. Mrs Roberts was in the Bridgewater Arms and offered to take Mrs Bridge and her child to the boat, but she made use of bad language to Mrs Roberts, and refused to go. I cannot say for certain whether Mrs Bridge drank whisky or gin.

**John Street** said : I am a flatman in the employ of the Bridgewater Trustees, and have known the mother of the deceased for six or seven years. Between eight and nine o'clock on Monday night last, I saw her in the Bridgewater Arms Inn. She was sitting in the taproom, and appeared to be rather forward in drink. Some time afterwards I missed her, and I found that she was gone out. She had a child with her. When I left the public house Mrs Bridge was sitting on the doorstep. She appeared to be partly asleep with the child in her arms, and I woke her up and told her she would be starved to death. She said she was too late for the train to Wigan, near which place her boat was. I asked her where she was going to, and she said she did not know, as she had nowhere for to go. I offered her a bed on board my boat, and she went with me to it. I partly undressed her, and she went to bed. She lay down in part of her clothes. I heard the child crying several times in the night, and as she did not appear to notice the child, I called her attention to it, but could get no proper answer from her. About five minutes past five o'clock in the morning (a man who was passing told me) I roused her, and told her it was time for her to be going to the station. I left the cabin while she dressed, and when she came out I offered her some tea, but she said she did not want any. I went with her down the street. I heard nothing of the child after I awoke the mother. I saw her put the child to her breast before she went to bed. I never saw her so much the worse for drink before. I don't know whether the child was living or dead when Mrs Bridge left the boat in the morning. The child's cry when I heard it was very weak. The mother was able on Monday night to walk to the boat, which was about half a mile off, and got into bed herself while I held the child.

**Ann New** said : I am the wife of John New, and I live in Runcorn. I saw Mrs Bridge, the mother of the deceased, about nine o'clock on Tuesday morning last, near the Top Locks. I said, "Good morning, Mrs Bridge, it's a sharp morning". She replied, "Yes". I said, "What have you done with your little boy. I heard last night of you having it in the cold". She replied, "Oh, it's dead". I said, "What have you done with it?" She said, "It's laid out at the Nelson. I am as glad as if anybody had given me a coal freight". I then left her. She smiled when she said she was glad. She did not say, "I would rather have lost two coal freights than my child". I am quite sure of what she said to me.

**Sarah Lowe** said : I am the wife of Peter Lowe, and live in Runcorn. On a Wednesday in December last, I saw Mrs Bridge, the deceased's mother, sitting on a step near the Top Locks in Runcorn, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning. She was asleep and in drink, and had a child with her on her knee. There were many people round her, and some sailors bought some milk for the child. A person took the child from the mother and gave it to me. Taking the child away did not appear to rouse her, and I took it into my house and warmed it. About half an hour afterwards, its mother came to the door and appeared to be looking for her child. I fetched it and gave it to her. I asked her how old the child was, and she said "a fortnight". I said it was very early to be out, and told her to take care of it, and she went away. It was a very fine child for its age from what I could see of it, and appeared quite healthy. I am sure the woman I then saw was Mrs Bridge now present. The child did not then appear to be at all neglected. It slept all the time I had it, and I did not see its limbs.

**Finlay McDougall** said : I am a surgeon and physician, and practice in Runcorn. On Wednesday last, I made a *post mortem* examination of the body of the deceased child Thomas Bridge. I found that the body weighed five pounds seven ounces. The body was much shrivelled and emaciated, and the eyes and cheeks were sunk. The child had a napkin on, in which was a small quantity of faecal matter. The scrotum was much bruised and discoloured, with a deep scratch of about two inches in length underneath. I opened the chest and found that the right and left lungs were

completely congested with the exception of a very small portion. The heart was healthy ; the left ventricle contained a small quantity of dark blood ; the stomach was distended with wind, and completely empty, with the exception of about half a teaspoonful of slimy mucus. There was not a particle of food in it. The intestines were also distended with wind and empty. The liver was congested and also the kidneys ; the spleen was healthy ; the brain appeared to be healthy and at the base was about a teacupful of clear fluid. The brain was very pale. There was scarcely a particle of fat to be seen in any part of the body. I consider the cause of death was congestion of the lungs and liver caused by exposure and cold, and accelerated by want of proper food. I attributed the emaciated condition of the child to its not being properly fed for some time past. The congestion which was the immediate cause of death might have arisen during 48 hours immediately preceding death.

Peter Buckley said : I am sergeant of police stationed at Runcorn. A little after six o'clock in the morning of Tuesday last, the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, I was sent for to the police station, and found Ellen Bridge in the office sitting by the fire, with deceased in her arms. I asked her what was the matter with the child, and she replied, "It is dead". I asked her where she had come from and what she was doing in the town, and she replied she had come from their boats near Wigan. She said, "I came yesterday to Mr Davies's office to ask him to advance us some money, because we were in distress". I asked her if she had got any money, and she said, "Yes, he advanced me 15s". I asked her what time she got to Mr Davies's office and what time she left it, and she said, "I got there about noon, and they kept me there until nine o'clock, and then I was too late for the train". She appeared "muddled" and as if she had been drinking the night before, and I asked her what she had left out of the 15s. She at first refused to tell me, but ultimately took out her purse and showed me half a sovereign, saying, "That's all". I asked her how long the child had been dead, and she said, "A short time since, in my arms, as I was coming down the street". I took her and the deceased to the Nelson Inn, and left her there while I went for someone to lay out the child. I found a person, and told Mrs Bridge to go home with her and get something to eat, but about an hour or rather more afterwards, I returned to the Nelson Inn, and found Mrs Bridge there beastly drunk, and she has been more or less drunk ever since.

The Deputy Coroner then told the woman Bridge, the mother of the deceased, that if she wished to make a statement she was at liberty to do so, but that what she said would be taken down in writing, and if a verdict were to be returned by the jury involving proceedings elsewhere, it would be used as evidence against her. She then said, "I have nothing to say". In reply to the question whether she wished to call any witnesses, she said, "Yes, Mrs Webster will speak for me".

**Ann Webster** was then called, and said : I am the wife of **Henry Webster**, boatman of Runcorn, and have known Mrs Bridge, the mother of the deceased, from a child. I was standing at the door of Mr Davies's office on Monday last about three o'clock in the afternoon, when she got her money. I persuaded her to go home with her baby, and she said she would, and went into the alehouse to get a glass of gin to warm both her and her baby. She went out afterwards in the direction of the station, and I did not see her again. She was a very good woman until she had her last three children, and since then she has taken to drinking.

The Deputy Coroner then summed up in a very able manner, and the jury retired into the adjoining room to consider their verdict. After an absence of a few minutes, they returned into court, and in reply to the Deputy Coroner, the foreman said the jury were of opinion that the deceased died in consequence of the criminal misconduct of its mother, Ellen Bridge, and returned a verdict of manslaughter against her. She was then taken into custody by the police, and committed on the Coroner's warrant to take her trial at the next Chester Assizes.

She was very callous and impertinent during the inquiry, but at the close shed tears and seemed to feel that she was in a serious position.

On Saturday, she was brought up before W W Brundett Esq, JP, at the police court, and the foregoing evidence having been given against her, she was also committed by him to take her trial at the next Assizes at Chester.

## 2 4 February 1871

**SAD DESTITUTION** A sad case of destitution caused by the severity of the frost was discovered on Thursday last. As Mrs Sorton, Canal Bank, Statham near Lymm, was proceeding with her daily avocations, her attention was directed to a little ragged boy, six years of age, standing at her door. He was in a most neglected condition, not even having a shirt under his torn and ragged jacket. On being interrogated, he stated that he and two brothers (whom he had left in the boat, jammed in the ice, near at hand) were without food. Proceeding thither, Mrs Sorton discovered in the cabin a baby, 18 months old, ravenously gnawing a bone, and another aged four years. Their mother had left them the afternoon of the previous day, in search of her husband at Runcorn. Great blame attaches to her for leaving the children at all, but especially in so destitute a condition. There was no food in the place. Through the liberality and kindness of people in the district, however, food and clothing were provided for them, after which they were placed in the care of a neighbouring boatman, and removed to his hospitable cabin.

## 3 1 April 1871

**FATAL NEGLECT OF A CHILD AT RUNCORN** At the Chester Assizes before Mr Justice Mellor, **Ellen Bridge**, 30, a married woman of stolid appearance, was indicted for the manslaughter of **Thomas Bridge**, an infant eight weeks old, at Runcorn.

Mr Horatio Lloyd conducted the prosecution ; Mr Dunn was counsel for the prisoner.

In opening the case for the Crown, Mr Horatio Lloyd said the prisoner was charged with the manslaughter of her little boy, Thomas Bridge, an infant who was only a few weeks old at the time of his death, the 10<sup>th</sup> of January. Her husband was a flatman in the employ of one of the canal companies, and in January last, while ice bound in the neighbourhood of Wigan, was employed with the ice boat in cutting a channel for the canal boats. The prisoner went to Runcorn, to Mr Davies's office, for the purpose of getting some money, on Monday January 9<sup>th</sup>. Between two and three o'clock she went to the office, with the little child in her arms, represented that she was badly off, and asked for some money. She was given 15s. In the afternoon she got into a state of intoxication, so much so that once or twice she let the child fall out of her lap, in the taproom of the Bridgewater Arms, and it would have fallen again but for a man who tied up the woman's apron to keep the child on her knee. On being told that she was starving the child, the prisoner used bad language, and told the people who interfered with her to mind their own business. It was quite clear that during the whole of that afternoon or night, the prisoner never attempted to provide the least comfort for the child. A flatman from Wigan gave her a bed in his boat, and in the morning she went away with the intention to return to Wigan. At that time the child was dead. The prisoner was told of it, and she said she was "as glad as if anybody had given her a coal freight". The child was laid out at the Lord Nelson Inn. The surgeon who examined the body found that there was not an atom of food in the stomach, which was considerably distended with wind. The surgeon's opinion was that the child had died from exposure, causing congestion of the lungs, accelerated by the want of proper food and nourishment. The neglect to supply the child with sufficient food and nourishment constituted the offence of manslaughter with which the woman was charged.

**Sarah Dunn**, the wife of **John Roberts**, said that on Monday January 9<sup>th</sup>, she heard the prisoner ask at Mr Davies's office at Runcorn for £1 for victuals, her husband being frozen up at Dover Dock near Wigan. Mr Giles gave her 15s, and told her to go back to Wigan. The same afternoon she saw the prisoner in drink and asleep, with the child on her knee, at the Bridgewater Arms. On being awoke, the prisoner used vile language, and said she would take care of the "little beggar" herself. She was asked by the witness to go home with her, but she refused. At night, the witness saw the prisoner, still with the child in her arms, asleep on the steps of the Bridgewater Arms, awoke her, and told her that she would starve the baby to death. She repeated her bad language, and told the witness to mind her own business. Witness then left, and saw no more of the prisoner.

**David Baxter**, a boatman in the employ of the Bridgewater Trustees and living at Runcorn, was in the Bridgewater Arms on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Prisoner was there, and called for a glass of whisky, which she drank. She then sat down by him in the taproom. He noticed that she was a little intoxicated,

and she fell asleep. The baby rolled off her knee, and as he saw it was going he caught it, put it on her knee, and tucked the corner of the woman's apron beneath the strings to keep the child on her knee. In ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, the woman stretched her legs out, and the child fell. He told the waiter to put a little cayenne pepper to the prisoner's nose to awake her. The woman awoke, and asked for another glass of whisky, but the landlady refused to serve her.

Cross-examined : The canal had been frozen up some three weeks before this occurrence.

**John Street**, a flatman, said he was in the Bridgewater Arms from half past eight to nine on the evening of January 9<sup>th</sup>, and saw the prisoner there. She was dozing, neither asleep nor awake. He went away, and in about an hour he saw her sat on the public house step, again dozing, with the child on her knee. It was a very frosty, cold night. He put his hands on the prisoner's shoulder and shook her. She said it was too late, when she got her money, for her to go to Wigan, and she had "nowhere for to go". He told her if she had nowhere to go, and was far from home, the baby would be starved to death. He told her that she might have his bed, if she liked, and he would lie on the locker. She went with him, carrying her baby, went into the cabin and began to doze. After the woman's bonnet, shawl and boots were off, he took the child until the woman got into bed. He then gave her the child, and he laid down on the locker. The prisoner gave the child the breast while she was sitting in the cabin. There was a fire all night in the cabin. He heard the child cry several times in the night. About five o'clock in the morning he awoke the prisoner, to go by the early train to Wigan, and went out of the cabin while she dressed herself. He walked with her from the boat to the main street in Runcorn. She did not say anything about the child being dead.

Cross-examined : The child was wrapped up in some kind of a shawl, and also in the prisoner's apron. The child's cry was not an unusual one – it was a very small, weakly cry. It was a small child.

Ann New, the wife of John New of Runcorn, on Tuesday morning January 10<sup>th</sup>, saw the prisoner in the street at Runcorn between nine and ten o'clock. She said, "Good morning, Mrs Bridge, this is a sharp morning after the frost. Where's your little baby you had last night in the town?" Prisoner said, "It's dead". "Dead!" the witness said, and asked the prisoner where. Prisoner said the child was dead and laid out at the Lord Nelson Inn. She was sucking an orange, and she said, "It's dead, and I'm as glad it's gone as if anybody had given me a coal freight".

Ann Lowe, the wife of Peter Lowe, Runcorn, testified to having seen the prisoner asleep and the worse for drink, sat on a step near the locks, with a crowd around her, one day in December. Three sailors bought the child a pint of milk. Another person took the child from the prisoner and gave it to witness. Prisoner remained asleep. Witness took the child to her own house, and to the fireside, as it was a cold morning. She had the child for about half an hour. It was a very fine baby, from what she saw of it. She did not judge its age. In half an hour the prisoner came next door to look for her child. On being asked what she wanted, the prisoner said, "Someone had taken her baby down there". At that time, the baby was laid upon a pillow in an armchair. She asked the prisoner how old the baby was, and she said a fortnight. Witness said it was very early for her to be out, and she had better take the child away. Prisoner did so, and she saw no more of her.

At this stage of the trial one of the jurymen was taken ill, and had to leave the box. He was examined by a medical gentleman, who said that the juror was suffering from dyspepsia, and would be scarcely able to sit out the trial, as he might be taken seriously ill. His Lordship thereupon discharged the juror from further service, and on another juror being sworn, the evidence above given had to be repeated.

Sergeant Peter Buckley said that he went to the Police Station at Runcorn on the morning of January 10<sup>th</sup>, on being sent for, and there found the prisoner and child. In reply to his questions, the prisoner said her child was dead ; that she had come to Runcorn the previous day, as she was in distress, and obtained 15s ; and that she had spent 5s out of that money. She took out her purse and showed him a half sovereign. He got a woman to lay the child out, and told the woman to take the prisoner home with her and give her some breakfast. From what the woman told him, he went to the Lord Nelson Inn, where he found prisoner asleep, in a beastly state of intoxication. She was drunk about the town every day for some days, until she was apprehended under the coroner's

warrant.

Cross-examined : When charged with causing the death of the child by wilfully starving it, she made no reply whatever.

In the deposition of the witness, which his Lordship read, it was recorded that before the magistrates the police-sergeant stated that the woman's reply was, "I did not starve it".

Mr McDougall, a surgeon in practice at Runcorn, made a *post mortem* examination of the body. The child weighed 5 lb 7 oz ; the body was shrivelled, with the eyes and cheeks sunk. It was dressed simply in a nightgown, and laid out. Both lungs were congested, but the heart was healthy. The stomach was very much distended with gas, and it contained about a teaspoonful of mucus. The intestines were empty. There was not a particle of fat about the body. The cause of death was congestion of the lungs, caused by exposure to the cold, and accelerated by want of proper food.

Cross-examined : The congestion might have lasted several days.

This evidence concluded the case for the prosecution.

Mr Dunn submitted to the learned Judge that there had not been adduced any sufficient evidence of criminal negligence.

His Lordship intimated that there was evidence which he should not withdraw from the jury.

Mr Dunn thereupon addressed the jury on behalf of the prisoner. Simple negligence, the learned counsel said, was not enough to convict the prisoner of the crime of manslaughter, but it must be such negligence on the part of the prisoner as to amount to utter recklessness. If there were not sufficient recklessness, the prisoner must be acquitted ; but if it were proved that she had been utterly reckless he could not struggle against a verdict. There was, however, no proof of such utter recklessness as would bring the prisoner to universal condemnation. The poor woman was worn out with the toil and hardship and want of food that she had undergone during the severe cold weather which prevailed in the month of January last ; but in the cabin, it was proved by the evidence of Street, the flatman, she took the baby and gave it the breast. He maintained that the woman, although weak and foolish, had not been guilty of utter recklessness in neglecting the child and refusing to give it food, and that she was therefore entitled to an acquittal.

His Lordship, in summing up the case, explained to the jury that manslaughter meant the causing the death of the child without any malice or intention to kill it. If she had such intentional malice, the prisoner would be liable to a charge of murder. The prisoner was not charged with that crime, but that, owing to her reckless conduct, when bound by every moral and legal duty to preserve her child, and to take such care which a child of such tender age required, she from the love of drink or some other cause neglected to take care of it, and it became for a longer period than was safe or right exposed to the severe weather which prevailed shortly after Christmas last, and its death was caused by congested lungs, but accelerated by want of some due nourishment. The circumstances must be looked upon in a reasonable point of view. If a person were without food for two days, a little drink would create a degree of drunkenness and insensibility, while a person in better condition would not be so affected. If the jury believed that there had been wilful neglect, it would be their duty to find her guilty of manslaughter ; but if they were of opinion that there was not wilful and reckless neglect, they would find her not guilty, for it would be a monstrous hardship to convict her.

The jury found the prisoner guilty, with a recommendation that his Lordship would be as lenient with her as possible.

His Lordship wished that he could attend to the recommendation of the jury, but, although he should not pass a severe sentence, he should not allow that recommendation to induce him to change the sentence which he had contemplated. Probably if the jury had known as much of the antecedents of the prisoner as he did, they would not have made the recommendation. Unfortunately, this was the third case in which children of the prisoner's had died under suspicion of gross negligence, and one of them under circumstances of strong suspicion. It was his belief, therefore, that she was really glad, as she had said, when the child was dead. He was afraid she was a drunken and depraved woman, in whom the love of drink had destroyed the instincts of a woman and a mother. His Lordship sentenced the prisoner to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**4 13 March 1871**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DRUNK AND RIOTOUS **Charles Jackson** of Elton, boatman, was charged with being drunk and riotous on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May. PC Green gave evidence, and the defendant was fined 5s and costs 9s 6d.

**5 22 April 1871**

PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

HIGHWAY OFFENCE **William Ashley**, a boatman, was charged by PC Taylor of Whixall with allowing two asses to stray on the highway. Ordered to pay the costs, 7s.

**6 10 June 1871**

CANAL OFFENCES **James Kershaw**, boatman, was charged with drawing up the two bottom cloughs of the inside gate of a lock, thereby wasting a lock full of water, at Middlewich. Fined £1 including costs.

**James Smallwood** was charged with throwing stones into a lock with the intention of delaying a boat behind him. This case might have been brought under another section, which would have rendered him liable to transportation. Fined £2.

**Joseph Green** was charged with wasting water at Church Lawton on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. Fined £1 including costs. **Thomas Allman**, for a similar offence, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May at Church Lawton, was fined £1.

**Mr Glass**, canal constable, conducted the cases for the Trent and Mersey Canal Company.

**7 8 July 1871**

CREWE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ANOTHER CHARGE AGAINST MR BASFORD – EXTRAORDINARY SWEARING Mr Basford, landlord of the Oddfellows' Arms, Nantwich, was summoned for unlawfully and wilfully permitting drunkenness in his house on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. Mr Tennant appeared for the defence. Police-constable Hollingworth stated that on the day in question he was instructed by his superior officer to go to the defendant's house. He did so, and found there eight men, three of whom were drunk. One man was laid across the table, and another man who was sat down was drunk. There were two quart jugs on the tables about half full – one on each table. The man who was laid on the table got up to sing ; and another man got up and asked him to have a glass of beer. The man who asked him to have the beer was very drunk, and could not hold the glass straight. Witness came out and went across to the sergeant and told him what he had seen, and the sergeant told him to go and inform Mr Basford that he would be reported for permitting drunkenness in his house. Mr Basford replied that there was no man in the house who was drunk. There were, however, two or three who were drunk, and others not so bad. One man came out directly after witness and staggered down the street. In half an hour after, while he was in the Police Station, two others came out, and they could not walk straight. Cross-examined by Mr Tennant : He could give the names of the three men. One was in court that day, and his name was Jim – something – Mr Tennant : That's a very bad start. (Laughter). Witness : There was a man named Isaac Barker and his wife there ; the former was a convicted thief. Mr Tennant : You always have to introduce something like prejudice. We are not trying him now.

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Mr Tennant : (.....) him before. (Renewed laughter). Witness : There were three. He did not know the man who came out first. One man followed him out and went towards Acton, and he believed that was the man who had his trousers down. A man of the name of Thomas was asked by Mr Tennant to come forward, and witness said he was the man, he believed, who had his trousers partially down. He could speak positively about that. Thomas spoke to him in the lobby, but he could not remember what he said ; indeed he took no notice of him because he was drunk. Basford was present and asked if there was anyone drunk. Thomas might have said, "Do you mean to say



that I am drunk?" but he did not recollect it. Witness did not think he replied to Thomas's question. He did speak to him, but did not recollect what he said. He did not point out to Basford the man who he thought was drunk. It had not been customary to summon men for being drunk in a public house ; but it was for a man to be seen with his trousers down in the street. Mr Superintendent Laxton : That will be done in future. Mr Tennant : Never mind what will be done. Witness : He had no instructions from his superior officer to summon a man for being drunk in a public house. He did not know Mary Ann Darlington by name. Some of the men who were in the house were boatmen. Defendant's house was the nearest house to the canal, where they stopped. When the defendant said that the men were not drunk, witness said, "You know you mustn't blame me ; you know it's not my fault". By this he meant he was directed to visit the house by his sergeant, and that he himself had no personal feeling in the matter. He led defendant to understand that it was his opinion he ought not to be summoned. He had cautioned defendant before. He did not know that there was any ill feeling between the defendant and the sergeant. He would not swear that Mrs Basford did not speak to him the second time he went. His impression was that he did not see her, but he would not swear to it. The sergeant and he visited the place at a quarter to eleven at night, and found two men there drunk, and talking about fighting. He did not know Thomas Barnes. The name of one was William Jones, and the other man was a boatman. He did not speak to the defendant about it. The reason why he did not speak to the defendant was because he left those things to his sergeant. Sergeant McAllam said that about six o'clock on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May he noticed some men coming out of the defendant's house, beastly drunk and conducting themselves disgracefully, knocking about and larking. It was not long since he had an information against the defendant. He therefore sent in another constable, so that he could not say there was any ill feeling in the matter. Hollingworth went in and reported to him, and he told him to go again and inform the defendant he would be summoned. One of the men came out with his trousers unbuttoned, and went towards Acton, followed by others in about half an hour. At a quarter past eleven, they heard cursing and swearing at Basford's, and on going inside they saw a boatman who was coming out with filthy language. Basford was there, but he neither looked nor spoke to him either one way or the other. He had no ill feeling in the matter, but he must say that the conduct of the house was simply disgraceful. Cross-examined by Mr Tennant : He told the defendant he should say to the magistrates that it was the worst conducted house in the town. Upon his oath, there was no ill feeling between them. He would swear that he did not recollect the occasion of a quarrel on a charge being made of whisky being fetched. He never heard of it before. He sent another officer because he had reported the defendant before, and he thought he would send another officer to show that he had no ill feeling. When he went in at eleven o'clock he did not caution the defendant, because he thought he had been cautioned before. Mr Tennant then addressed the Bench on behalf of the defendant. He argued that if the evidence of the officers was to be relied upon, and that these men were drunk, he should have nothing to say on the part of his client ; but he should be obliged, and he was sorry to be obliged, to put several witnesses in the box who would positively swear that there was no drunkenness. He called **William Thomas**, who said he was a boatman and lived in his boat. He was not a native of Nantwich, but he went and came again. When they had finished at the basin, they went to Basford's. On the day in question, he went there about two o'clock and again at six. He had not been there all the time. He left off work about half past one, and then called at Basford's for a glass of ale. He remained about an hour and a half. That was the first time. About five in the evening he went again, and soon afterwards a policeman came in. When he went in, he was as sober as he was at that moment. There were five or six other men there. They had been talking together, but there had been no quarrelling. There was not a single person drunk there at the time the officer came in, and that would be about six o'clock, but he could not say to a moment. When the officer came in the second time he said nothing, but went out again. He asked the officer whether he (witness) was drunk, and Basford refused to fill him any more drink because the officer said he was. He was, however, as sober as he was at that moment. When he left the house, Mr Basford was sober enough. By the Bench : There was no one drunk during the time he was in the house. Mary Ann Darlington said she was a widow and resided at Ravensmoor. On Tuesday the



30<sup>th</sup> of May, she was at Mrs Basford's. It was a sort of holiday at Nantwich, and she was on a visit to Mrs Basford. Somewhere about five or six o'clock in the evening, she remembered about five men coming in, all of whom were boatmen, and Mrs Basford served them with a quart of ale. They were perfectly sober, and remained some time. She remembered PC Hollingworth coming in. Thomas was in at the time. There had been no disturbance, and when Hollingworth came in there was not one man drunk in the house. The men were talking about bargaining for a donkey, and their conversation was right enough for men of their position. Thomas was quite sober. He had been to his work, and had not long been in. She would swear that the rest of the men were sober. When Hollingworth came in, he looked round him and went out again. In two or three minutes afterwards he came in again, and told Basford that he would be summoned. Basford asked what for, and Hollingworth replied for permitting drunkenness. Basford then asked him to point out who was drunk. In the meantime Mrs Basford came out of the bar and said, "As we have not trouble enough, you had better send us five or six more", meaning policemen. That referred, she believed, to a previous summons against Basford. Hollingworth made no reply when asked to point out who was drunk. When Basford was told he would be summoned, he refused to fill any more. In consequence of what the officer said, Thomas left the house, and said he was sorry to have to take his money away, as he could get what he wanted elsewhere. Thomas asked the officer if he was drunk, but he made no reply. Mr Basford was perfectly sober. The company had about four quarts of ale. By Sergeant McAllam : She had been there frequently ever since the gala, helping Mrs Basford. It was not true that she got frequently drunk herself. She would swear that upon her oath. Mr Tennant said he hoped that what witness said was true. **James Kinsey** said he was a wharfinger, and lived at Nantwich. He remembered being at Basford's house on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, between five and six o'clock. Thomas and some other boatmen were there. Witness was there when the policeman came in. There had been some conversation amongst themselves, but no quarrelling nor noise. The officer came and looked in and went away again, and in a few minutes came in again. On his second visit there was no one drunk no more than the first. Thomas was sober. They had only had four quarts of beer altogether, and there were five or six of them to it. Everyone in the place was sober, none of them being even "fresh". By the Bench : There was no one lying drunk on the table. There was a man leaning on the table, but he was sober. Sergeant McAllam : When do you call a man drunk? Witness : When he cannot walk straight. (Laughter). Mr Tennant : That is about the best poser I ever heard. I believe that is the first symptom of drunkenness. In answer to Sergeant McAllam, witness said he asked the officer to drink when he came in. He did not see the man go out of the house, but he could tell from the quantity of drink he had that he would be able to walk straight. Barnes, the man previously alluded to, said he happened to be in Basford's house on Whit Tuesday evening. He remembered seeing the policeman come in about eleven o'clock. There was no one in the house who was drunk. He was quite certain of that. William Jones was in, and he was quite sure he was sober. Mr Superintendent Laxton said this individual was scarcely ever sober. Sergeant McAllam said the man was not in the room at all. He knew for a fact that he was not. The Bench then retired, and after an absence of seven minutes returned into court, when the Chairman said they had come to the conclusion that the defendant was guilty of the charge laid against him, and he would be fined £3 and costs, or two months ; and the Bench wished further to caution him that he must be more careful in future, otherwise his licence might be taken from him.

## **8 15 July 1871**

NANTWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

WASTING CANAL WATER **John Lyth** of Audlem, boatman (of the boat *Plato*) was charged by **W Edgeley**, lock-keeper, with having on the 14<sup>th</sup> ult wasted water at lock 15 of the Shropshire Union Canal. Fined 20s and costs 17s.

## **9 15 July 1871**

RUNCORN COUNTY COURT

**DOBSON** v H E FALK This was an action brought by the plaintiff, who is captain of a flat, to

recover from the defendant, who is a salt merchant, carrying on business in Winsford, Runcorn and Liverpool, the sum of £2 17s balance of freight for a cargo of salt, and £8 8s as demurrage for alleged unnecessary detention at Runcorn. Mr Bretherton appeared for the plaintiff and Mr Fletcher for the defendant. Mr Fletcher said the defendant had paid the £2 17s claimed for freight into court. It had been offered to the plaintiff before the action was commenced, but he refused to take it and it, with the £1 which had been paid to him on account, was the full amount of his freight on a cargo of 77 tons at 1s a ton. The only question, therefore, to be tried was the claim for demurrage. Mr Bretherton having stated the case, called William Dobson, who said on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May last, he agreed with the defendant to take a cargo of salt, 77 tons, from Winsford to Runcorn for £3 17s, being at the rate of 1s a ton. He left Winsford before dinner time on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, and arrived at Runcorn on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> of May. When he took in the cargo, he said to defendant he did not mind being detained at Runcorn for a day or two, but would not like to wait there too long, and he replied that he would not have to lie longer than that, and perhaps not even so long. He did not finish discharging until the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, and had had to pay the owner of the flat £1 for the detention, besides 19s 9d for the hire of her. He had also a horse and the hand of the flat to keep for that time, and could not get away for any other cargo. By His Honour : He had carried salt previously for Mr Falk, and on this occasion should have been discharged into his warehouse at Runcorn. By Mr Fletcher : He had been for seven years in the trade between Winsford and Runcorn and Westleigh, but not so much in the salt trade. He had been detained three weeks before time by Mr Falk, and neither got nor claimed demurrage. He never claimed any before now. By His Honour : He did not claim before as he did not know if he would get anything, and he did not know if he should get anything yet. By Mr Fletcher : He could not live on the air, and was trying it on to get something on which he could live. Several besides him had given notice of claims for demurrage. It was not the defendant but his man, Mr Noden, that he asked if he could give him a cargo to Runcorn, and he said that he could. He told him that others had loaded that week for Runcorn before him, and he would have to take his turn with them. He hesitated some time before he decided to accept the offer, because of others having loaded before him. He wanted to be in Runcorn on Whit Monday, as it was a great day there, and he was got off as soon as they could get him, so that he could get past the Weaver stops to Runcorn on the Saturday night. He saw Mr Falk's agent at Runcorn, and he had great difficulty to get men to discharge him. The hand of his flat was his own boy, who was 14 years old. By Mr Bretherton : He gave notice of demurrage when he had been detained 48 hours. Mr Fletcher said he objected to the claim for demurrage on a point of law, it having been decided in the case of (Brancker?) v Scott that no demurrage could arise except on an expressed contract, and not on an implied one. The next point was the custom of the trade, which even the evidence of the plaintiff showed that it was against, the freight being understood to pay the costs of detention. The salt merchant was as much interested in a quick dispatch as the flatman was, and the plaintiff admitted that this was an experimental action. The salt trade fluctuated very much in demand as much as any article of export did, and when a cargo was sent down, if there was a ship ready to load there was a quick dispatch, but if there was no ship so waiting, the cargo was discharged into the warehouse in its turn. In this case there was no ship to load, and the plaintiff's cargo was discharged into the warehouse in its turn. On the Monday, the men at Runcorn who had to discharge the flat wanted to be off on that day, and in order that they might do so, they commenced work at two o'clock in the morning and worked until after eight o'clock, and then went off. They refused to come to work on the Wednesday unless they were paid a sum of money in advance. They were so paid, but failed to come, and he, Mr Fletcher, contended that the plaintiff had done all he could to get men to discharge the defendant's flat. Robert Noden said he was overlooker for Mr Falk at the rock and salt mines at Winsford, and on the afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> of May the plaintiff came to him and asked him for a cargo of salt to Runcorn. He told him he thought he could load him with one for the grinding mill at Runcorn, for which he would give him a shilling a ton, and he was to load and discharge in turn after others that had gone. For some time he would not consent, but when he said he would load him early on Saturday morning, he agreed to take the cargo. The men came to load him about four o'clock in the morning, and he got away about ten o'clock. By His Honour : He

had been 34 years in the business, and never knew a claim paid for demurrage. About six years ago a man named **Pickstock** made such a claim, and it was tried in that court, and a verdict was given for the defendant. He had known flats to be detained three weeks at Runcorn and as much as 20 weeks at Liverpool. By Mr Bretherton : Did not hear plaintiff say he did not mind a day or two, but not longer. If every cargo was to be so detained the freight would not pay, and he would not like to have such a job. They had a right to detain the flat according to the circumstances under which the cargo was engaged to be taken. Thomas Lancaster said he was general manager for the defendant at Winsford, Runcorn and Liverpool, and had been with him in the salt trade for 27 years. The custom of the trade was that salt was sent to Runcorn and Liverpool on speculation, to wait for sale or for a ship, and the person conveying it thither took the risk of having to wait, and sometimes there was a quick dispatch, and sometimes a detention. The salt was sent to be ready in case of an order, and if it was put into the warehouse, it was as an act of kindness to the boatmen. They sold from 70,000 to 100,000 tons of salt per annum, and had never paid a claim for demurrage. By Mr Bretherton : The salt in question was not sent to be ground at Runcorn. William Welsby James said he was in the defendant's office at Runcorn, and remembered the *Black Rock* flat coming with a cargo of salt rock on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May. The *Edwin*, the *Gleaner* and the *Lively* arrived with cargoes before her. The *Edwin* was about half empty when the *Black Rock* arrived, and no other was discharged out of her turn. The men who discharged the cargoes asked to have a holiday on Whit Monday, and that they might do so, he got up at half past one o'clock in the morning to call them, and got them to work at two o'clock. They worked until about nine o'clock, and then asked him for some money. He gave them 4s each in advance of their wages, on their promising to come to work on the Tuesday, but only one of them came, and he was no use, as they could not get on with discharging unless there were five of them. They got to work either on the Thursday or Friday, and were then not in much humour for work. There was not room in the warehouse for the defendant's cargo, as the owner of it would not allow them to put above so much in. He had been four years in the trade, and had known flats and boats to be detained for two and three weeks. The flatmen did not grumble, but just said it was not right. By Mr Bretherton : If there had been a vessel waiting, the plaintiff's cargo would have been put in it, and if he had not given the men money, they would have borrowed it somewhere. (Laughter). The plaintiff was discharged in his turn. **William Corker** said he was a flat captain and owner, and had been in the trade for forty years, and during that time had to be satisfied with his freight whether the time was long or short. He had been detained ten weeks with one cargo, and did not get a halfpenny for the detention. They all knew they had to run that risk when they took a cargo which was not for a ship or an order. By Mr Bretherton : He carried for anybody, and a good deal for Mr Falk. The freight varied, he having received 1s 6d, 1s 3d and 1s a ton. By His Honour : It was at Liverpool that he was detained ten weeks, and he never heard of demurrage being paid to anyone. **William Bowden** said he was a flat owner, and had gone as captain of a flat for twelve years, and when he loaded at Winsford for Runcorn or Liverpool, he had to stand the market if the cargo was not for an order. He was once detained at Runcorn eight days with only five tons on board, and he was lately detained nine weeks at Liverpool and got nothing. The freight was understood to cover all detention. By Mr Bretherton : If when taking in a cargo, he said that he could not spare more than two days, and was told that he would not be detained more than that time, he would expect demurrage. Mr Bretherton replied on the evidence for the defence, and submitted that the plaintiff was entitled to a verdict for detention, as the cargo he took was not "on spec", but to go into the warehouse at Runcorn. It was sent there to be ground, and he did not believe the "perhaps" of Mr Noden, which was purely an afterthought put in that day. The plaintiff was led to believe that he would get a quick dispatch, instead of which he was detained ten days, had to pay £1 for detention, and also during the time to keep a hand and a horse. His Honour said the action was an experimental one, and he did not blame the plaintiff for bringing it, for it seemed hard for him to come with a cargo and be detained so long as he was, but his hardship was not like that of those who had been detained nine or ten weeks and yet got nothing. He felt that the custom of the trade was a hard one, but the parties concerned could, if they chose, make their own bargains, and he did not think that in the present case there was either an expressed or an

implied contract. The plaintiff did hesitate, knowing that he was not going with cargo to a vessel, that other flats had loaded before him, and that it was an idle time at Runcorn, yet being aware of all that he took the cargo, and with it the risk of detention. It would, he thought, be better if there was a form of contract adopted something like a charter-party, but in the absence of such an arrangement or an expressed contract, the custom of the trade was binding. With regard to the £1 which the plaintiff had paid to the owner of the flat, he was not compelled to do so, as the owner of the flat had no more claim against him than he had against the defendant, and if the payment of that sum was to entitle him, as Mr Bretherton had agreed, to a verdict, anyone might hereafter get a verdict by collusion with another. He should, therefore, give a verdict for the defendant with costs.

## 10 15 July 1871

On Thursday July Twentieth  
RIVER FLATS AND GAS SHARES FOR SALE  
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION  
BY MR CAPPER

At the Crown and Anchor Hotel, Northwich, in the County of Chester, on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> day of July 1871, at six o'clock in the evening, in the following lots, and subject to conditions to be then and there produced and read.

LOT 1 – All that FLAT or VESSEL called the *Elizabeth* (100 tons burthen) navigating the rivers Weaver and Mersey, with the small boat, masts, sails, rigging and tackling thereto, and whereof **Richard Verdin junr** is captain.

LOT 2 – All that FLAT or VESSEL called the *Patience* (100 tons burthen) navigating the rivers Weaver and Mersey, with the small boat, masts, sails, rigging and tackling thereto, and whereof **Samuel Thomas** is captain.

LOT 3 – All that old FLAT or VESSEL called the *Howe*, with the tackling and appurtenances thereto, as she now lies near Gibson's dock in Witton aforesaid.

LOT 4 – All those 2/6 2/4 part or shares of all that FLAT or VESSEL called the *James* (100 tons burthen), navigating the rivers Weaver and Mersey, with the small boat, masts, sails, rigging and tackling thereto, and whereof **George Boden** is captain.

LOT 5 – All that new FLAT or VESSEL (130 tons burthen) which is unnamed and unrigged, lately built at Witton Dock.

NB Lot 5 has been sold by private treaty.

All the above flats were built by Messrs Gibson and are (except Lot 3) in good repair, and (except lots 3 and 5) are well found.

The flats will lie for inspection at Baron's Quay, Northwich, seven days prior to the sale.

## 11 19 August 1871

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE **Henry Green** was charged with having stolen a bag of corn, the property of **William Dukes**. Complainant said he was a boatman on the Trent and Mersey Canal. On Saturday morning last, about daybreak, he was in his boat at Morkin's Bank. He had some corn in a bag in the boat, about two yards from the cabin. He heard the cloth covering above slip, and in a few minutes after looked outside, when he saw a man running on the far side of the canal. He was 200 or 300 yards off when he saw him, and did not know him at the time. Witness dressed himself, and followed him in the direction he had gone. He saw a boat going down the canal and followed it, and when he got up to it he found a bag of corn in the boat, which was going into a lock. He asked the prisoner if he had taken the corn, and he said he had not, but would bring it back, and he afterwards did so. Witness knew him well. The value of the bag and corn would be under 2s. He did not wish the man any harm. James Cotton said he was an engine tender, and was on night duty at the time of this occurrence, which took place at Morkin's Bank on Friday night fortnight. He was going up the canal side between three and four o'clock in the morning, and met the complainant 20 or 30 yards from his boat. He said that Henry Green had stolen a bag of corn, but did not say where

from. Nothing more was said than that. He did not see the prisoner at all that morning, nor did he notice whether the complainant had got his corn back again. The prisoner was then charged in the usual way, and preferred being dealt with summarily. He pleaded not guilty. The Bench, however, considered the case proved, and committed the prisoner to Knutsford for one month with hard labour.

## 12 2 September 1871

**A NORTHWICH FLATMAN DROWNED IN THE MERSEY** On Tuesday, the Liverpool coroner held an inquest on the body of **Edward Yates**, 38 years old, who lived at Barnton and was captain of the flat *Annie*, now lying in the George's Basin. On Friday night, deceased and **Enoch Farrell**, mate of the flat, were ashore together, and the latter returned to the boat about half past ten o'clock, leaving deceased on shore. Farrell went to sleep in the fore-castle, and was awoke at two o'clock in the morning by deceased coming on board. Deceased unlocked the cabin, and Farrell went into it to bed. Farrell called to deceased asking him if he was coming to bed, but he did not go into the cabin before Farrell fell asleep. When Farrell awoke next morning, deceased was not on board, and his body was found in the river about 20 yards from the flat. The mate said deceased did not appear the worse for drink when he came on board on Saturday morning. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

## 13 9 September 1871

### MYSTERIOUS AFFRAY IN CHESTER

**VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER** The inquest on the body of Thomas Simpson, who came to his death by a blow received in an affray in Queen Street, and which had been adjourned for a fortnight, was brought to a conclusion on Monday by a verdict of manslaughter against the mysterious boatman, who now appears pretty plainly to have been one **Matthew Edwards**. Edwards was not, however, in custody, the police not having up to the day of the adjourned inquest ascertained his whereabouts. The following was the additional evidence.

William Burns examined : Live in Sharpe's Court, Boughton, and am a labourer. Did not know Thomas Simpson. Was in Queen Street on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> August. I, King, John Bancroft and Roberts were passing Queen Street. We had got about three yards beyond the end of the street when Davies came after us and told King he wanted him to see fair play. We turned up the street, and Jim Simpson called after one of three boatmen and a boat lad, who were standing at the end of Queen Street, to see fair play. Then Simpson and this boatman came up the street following Davies. The deceased, Thomas Simpson, came up with his brother. His brother stripped his coat and waistcoat off as he came up the street. He said to Davies, "Come on now". King said, "Give him time to pull off his jacket and waistcoat". While Davies was pulling them off, James Simpson ran over to Douglas and struck him, and then the tallest of the three boatmen came up and hit Douglas. James Simpson and Davies then fought, and had three rounds. The third round, Davies knocked Simpson down. Simpson lay on his face for about three minutes. Davies was putting on his clothes and said to Douglas, "Come, I want to go home". He went about two yards when James Simpson got up and called him back. Davies went back and pulled his coat and waistcoat off again, and stood before Simpson. Then the tall boatman went between them and knocked Davies down. Then Davies got up and the boatman knocked him down again. Davies lay there for some time, and then got up and ran away home. When Davies had gone home, the boatman and James Simpson ran at Douglas, and the boatman knocked him on the floor. While he was down, James Simpson bent down and hit him with his fist. Then the boatman got hold of Douglas by the collar, lifted him up, and dashed him down three or four times. Then James Simpson and the boatman kicked him, and Douglas shouted out, "I'm spoiled", and afterwards called for the police. Then the boatman and James Simpson looked down the street for the police, and then hit Douglas again. Then they again looked down the street, and were again going to hit Douglas, but instead of that the boatman hit the deceased, who was standing on the same side of the street with his brother's coat on his arm, near the Britannia. Don't know where he struck him. It was with his fist. Deceased fell on the back of

his head on to the flags. He stretched out his arms and never spoke afterwards. Someone shouted the police were coming, and the boatman and another man got hold of the deceased, and carried him off in the direction of the canal. As they were going along, I heard the boatman say he was sorry he had done it, he meant to have struck Douglas. Deceased was simply standing by, holding his brother's coat on his arm, when he was struck. He had taken no part in the disturbance in any way. He never spoke a word. Am sure he was only struck by the boatman. Neither Douglas nor Davies struck him. Was present at the last hearing. Heard Huxley say that he and Griffiths helped to carry deceased home, and no one accompanied him. This is not true. Huxley helped to take him from the end of Union Walk, but the two boatmen carried him to there, and Huxley and his mother carried him from there. When they lifted deceased at the end of Union Walk, he said, "Where am I going?" I was sober. Then the tall boatman who had struck him struck a match and looked at the back of his head to see where deceased was hurt. Then someone said the police were coming, and the boatmen went off. Should know the boatman who struck deceased if I saw him again, but do not know his name.

PC Houghton, examined : On Sunday morning, August 6<sup>th</sup>, about 25 minutes to one, I and PC Plummer were standing at the end of Frodsham Street and heard a noise a little along the street, went up the street and saw deceased, James Simpson, Huxley and Douglas. Told them it was Sunday morning, and they had better get away. Huxley said, "Come along Simpson, let us make a start", at the same time laying hold of deceased. Douglas then said, "Yes, you had better go, or I will knock your ----- head off". Told Douglas if he did not go away he would find himself in the Town Hall. He then went up Frodsham Street with Davies, and the deceased and James Simpson went down Foregate Street in the direction of Queen Street. When I first went to them, James Simpson said Douglas had stolen his brother's hat off his head. Douglas said he was a liar. I and PC Plummer remained there, and about seven or eight minutes afterwards, Mrs Huxley came to us and said a lot were fighting in Queen Street. I and Plummer went there, and about 50 to 60 yards, and near the Britannia, saw a crowd of people. A woman pointed to James Simpson, who was then running up the street, as the instigator of the row. I went and fetched him back. Douglas said, "I give that man into charge, he has kicked and struck me shamefully". James Simpson said he would give him in charge for stealing his brother's hat. Douglas said it was not his (Simpson's) hat, but that of a friend of his. Did not see deceased there, nor any boatman. Saw James Simpson and Douglas only. Had not got to Union Walk before I came up with James Simpson. It was a light night, though the moon was a little overcast. The lamp in front of the Britannia was not lit.

Robert Griffiths, a former witness, was recalled, and his previous evidence, in which he described the appearance of the wanted boatman, was read over to him. He declared distinctly that he did not know who the man was. Had been in his company only just ten minutes before. Had not been drinking with him that night. Had only bade him good night. Met him by Williams' the grocer, Foregate Street. He was going towards Frodsham Street and in in the direction of Queen Street. Had seen him several times before, by the canal side. They call him **Mathew Edwards**. Could not swear that the boatman who said he was sorry he had struck the deceased was Mathew Edwards. When I met the man by Williams', he said, "Good night, Robert". Did not stop, and the man did not turn round and come along with me. Mathew Edwards was dressed in the same way as the man I saw in York Street, who said he was very sorry. Would not say it was him. Have no doubt it was Mathew Edwards. Have known Edwards two months before this happened.

No further witnesses were called.

The Coroner, in summing up, said the first thing they had to ascertain was the cause of death, and perhaps it would be convenient to refer at once to the medical evidence. That was to the effect that when the deceased was first received into the Infirmary, he was treated as suffering from the effects of drink, but subsequently symptoms of apoplexy showed themselves, and he died two days afterwards. Dr Hamilton, who made the *post mortem* examination, told them that he found the skull fractured, and a clot of blood pressing on the brain, which must have been caused by a blow or fall. Then they had evidence of the deceased having been engaged in a row in Queen Street, and having been struck there. There was, he thought, no doubt that the cause of death was from a blow or fall



received in the affray in Queen Street and, if so, who inflicted that blow? The first witness, James Simpson, gave a very clear account of the transaction, and he said distinctly that Davies knocked the deceased down. But at the time that he said that happened, it must be remembered that he was himself fighting with Douglas. James Simpson was the only witness who swore distinctly that Davies knocked deceased down, the others all giving varying statements. The witness Huxley did not see deceased struck at all, but he spoke to something that was said by the man who did strike him. Another witness, King, said a boatman knocked both deceased and Douglas down, and this statement was more or less confirmed by several others of the witnesses, some of them, however, saying that the boatman came from the direction of Foregate Street, and others from the canal. Douglas said the boatman came from Foregate Street, and he himself denied striking deceased at all. To the statement of the witness Frederick Blayney, who said he saw deceased struck by Davies, he did not attach much weight, as it seemed probable that he only saw the row between Davies and James Simpson, and had made a mistake in the identity of the parties. Then they had the evidence of Robert Griffiths, who gave his evidence respecting the boatman in so unsatisfactory a way. Griffiths said on the last examination, while he was going down York Street, he heard some man say he was sorry he had struck deceased, and that man he now stated was Mathew Edwards. Another of the witnesses, Bancroft, they would remember spoke of a man knocking Davies down and then running away, and also of a boatman striking deceased. It would be for the jury to consider whether, taking all the facts deposed to, they could come to the conclusion that the man who struck deceased the fatal blow was this Mathew Edwards. It would appear by the evidence that had been given today that the deceased really took no part in the disturbance, and that at the time he was struck he was merely holding his brother's coat. The jury would have to consider first whether deceased came to his death by the blow, of which there could be no reasonable doubt ; and, secondly, if the offence committed by the person who inflicted the blow in question was murder or manslaughter. If they were of opinion that the blow was given with such violence as to cause death, and given at the same time with the intention of doing serious bodily harm, reckless of consequences, then the crime became murder, not manslaughter only. If, however, they were of opinion that the boatman engaged in the fight with provocation and struck deceased by mistake, it would be reduced to manslaughter. In any case, however, it must be either murder or manslaughter – there was no question of accident in it.

The Jury retired, and after a brief deliberation, returned a verdict of manslaughter against Mathew Edwards, for whose apprehension a warrant has accordingly been issued.

#### **14 9 September 1871**

**SHOCKING ACCIDENT AT PRESTON BROOK** An inquest was held on Tuesday last at the Red Lion Inn, Preston Brook, before H B White Esq, deputy coroner, on the body of a boatman named **Eli Pollard**, who met with his death as shown in the following evidence :- **Eliza Bournes** said : I am the daughter of **Edward Bournes**, captain of the boat *Stourbridge*, and I live with him on the boat. I know deceased by sight, but do not know his name. Between seven and eight o'clock this morning, I was sitting on the stern of our boat, and I saw the deceased on the cabin of his boat with a shaft in his hand. He put the shaft down, jumped on the hatches, and put the tiller “downstraight”. His boat went between two empty ones, and deceased went to bear off one of the boats, when his foot slipped. He fell with his arms and head over the side of the boat, and the boats jammed together. I afterwards saw that his head was smashed, and he was quite dead. The body was identified by John Burgess, Stockton Heath, as that of his son-in-law, Eli Pollard of Stockton Heath, boatman, aged 48. Verdict : “Accidentally killed”.

#### **15 9 September 1871**

**CREWE COUNTY COURT, THURSDAY**

“HIS WATCH AT FORE (FOUR) THE SAILOR KEPT” **William Fairclough**, canal boatman v Edward Worrall, publican, butcher and general shopkeeper of Bunbury. Mr Taylor of Chester for the plaintiff ; Mr Brooke for the defendant. Mr Taylor said this was another watch to be wound up.



(Laughter). Mr Brooke : It is a boatman's watch, and I'm afraid it won't go. (Laughter). His Honour : Who is for the defence? Mr Taylor : Mr Brooke is the watchman in this case, your Honour. (Laughter). Mr Taylor said that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1869, plaintiff was married, and the bride was married from the defendant's public house. They had a wedding breakfast there, in which was included some beer. (Laughter). The bride also had a bonnet and shawl from the shop, and 7s 6d on account. The defendant hesitated about letting her have the bonnet and shawl, and her husband accordingly said that if they were afraid of paying they could keep his watch. He accordingly left the watch with them, and since then he had never been able to get it back again, or an account of what he owed, from the defendant. The plaintiff claimed £3 as the value of the watch, against which defendant pleaded his account of 17s 6d as a set off. The plaintiff admitted all the items for tea and groceries, but not for the ale, nor for the bonnet and shawl. The plaintiff had never had the bonnet and shawl. If defendant would give up the watch, they were willing to pay for all the rest. Mr Brooke said his client would be glad to exchange if the plaintiff would pay for the ale &c ; the boatman's watch did not go. To show how reasonable defendant's bill was, he said there was one item – a fowl, plucked, roasted and dressed, and all for 1s 9d. (Laughter). Mr Taylor : Then there is 7s 6d for ale ; they must have been very drunk, your Honour. (Laughter). The defendant agreed to knock off the bonnet from the bill. His Honour entered a verdict for plaintiff of £2 2s.

## **16 16 September 1871**

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

**CRUELTY TO HORSES** **William Maddock**, a lad about 14 years old, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a horse at Dutton on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, by working it when it was unfit to work. PC Capper said the horse, which belonged to **Samuel Hickson**, was hauling a flat which was going from Weston Point to Northwich, and had four wounds on each shoulder. The Bench ordered defendant to pay a fine of 10s and 9s 6d costs, or in default to be imprisoned for 14 days.

**Robert Mills** was charged with the like offence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September at Dutton. PC Capper said the horse which the defendant was driving had two very raw wounds on each shoulder. The defendant was fined 10s and 9s 6d costs.

**Walter Barker**, a lad about 11 years old, was charged with ill-treating a horse at Dutton on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, by working it when it was unfit to work. PC Capper said the defendant was driving a horse which was hauling a flat on the Weaver. The horse had two wounds on the near shoulder. The defendant was fined 10s and 16s 6d costs.

**John Peach** was charged with the like offence at Dutton on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. PC Capper said the horse the defendant was driving was hauling a flat, and had a raw wound on one of its shoulders. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 10s and 9s 6d costs.

**BREAKING INTO A FLAT** Thomas Murphy, a navy, was charged with breaking into the flat *Eliza* in Welsh Row Basin on the previous Saturday night with intent to commit a felony. **John Brimelow** said he was captain of the flat *Eliza*, which he tied up on Saturday night, and after locking up the cabin safe at nine o'clock, left and went home. Since then, he had found the cabin broken open. Joseph Cook said he was a constable in the employ of the Bridgewater Trustees, and at twenty minutes to one o'clock on Sunday morning, saw that a man was in the cabin of the flat *Eliza*. He went there and found the prisoner, who said he had come there to take up his lodgings. He then took him into custody. The prisoner was committed for one month with hard labour.

**TREATMENT OF THE APPARENTLY DROWNED.**

[From the *English Mechanic.*]

The too-frequent occurrence during the present holiday season of fatal accidents by drowning at the sea-side and elsewhere, has induced us to reproduce the very useful set of instructions issued by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for the restoration of the apparently drowned, and which, by the kindness of Mr. Richard Lawin, the Secretary to the Institution, we are enabled to do. The leading principles of the following directions are founded on those of the late Dr. Marshall Hall, combined with those of Dr. H. H. Sylvester, and are the result of extensive inquiries which were made by the Institution in 1861-2 amongst medical men, medical bodies, and seamen throughout the United Kingdom. These directions have been extensively circulated by the Institution throughout the United Kingdom and in the Colonies. They are also in use in Her Majesty's Fleet, in the Coast Guard Service, and at stations of the British Army at home and abroad.

I.—Send immediately for medical assistance, blankets and dry clothing, but proceed to treat the patient instantly on the spot, in the open air, with the face downwards, whether on shore or afloat, exposing the face, neck, and chest to the wind, except in severe weather, and removing all light clothing from the neck and chest, especially the braces.

The points to be aimed at are—first, and immediately, the restoration of breathing; and secondly, after breathing is restored, the promotion of warmth and circulation.

The efforts to restore breathing must be commenced immediately and energetically, and persevered in for one or two hours, or until a medical man has pronounced that life is extinct. Efforts to promote warmth and circulation, beyond removing the wet clothes and drying the skin, must not be made until the first appearance of natural breathing; for if circulation of the blood be induced before breathing has commenced, the restoration to life will be endangered.

II.—TO RESTORE BREATHING.—To Clear the Throat.—Place the patient on the floor or ground with the face downwards, and one of the arms under the forehead, in which position all fluids will more readily escape by the mouth, and the tongue itself will fall forward, leaving the entrance into the windpipe free. Assist this operation by wiping and cleansing the mouth.

If satisfactory breathing commences, use the treatment described below to promote warmth. If there be only slight breathing—or no breathing—or if the breathing fail, then—

TO EXCITE BREATHING.—Turn the patient well and instantly on the side (see Fig. 1) supporting the head, and excite the nostrils with snuff, hairbrush, and smelling salts, or tickle the throat with a feather, &c., if they are at hand. Rub the chest and face warm, and dash cold water, or cold and hot water alternately, on them. If there be no success, lose not a moment, but instantly—

TO IMITATE BREATHING.—Replace the patient on the face, raising and supporting the chest well on a folded coat or other article of dress.

Turn the body very gently on the side and a little beyond, and then briskly on the face, back again, repeating these measures cautiously, efficiently, and perseveringly, about fifteen times in the minute, or once every four or five seconds, occasionally varying the side. By placing the patient on the chest, the weight of the body forces the air out; when turned on the side, this pressure is removed, and the air enters the chest.

On each occasion that the body is replaced on the face (see Fig. 2), make uniform but sufficient pressure with brisk movement, on the back between and below the shoulder-blades or bones on each side, removing the pressure immediately before turning the body on the side.

During the whole of the operations let one person attend solely to the movements of the head and of the arm placed under it. The first measure increases the expiration—the second commences inspiration. The result is respiration or natural breathing; and if not insulate, life. Whilst these operations are being proceeded with, dry the hands and feet, and as much as dry cloth-

III.—Should these efforts not prove successful in the course of from two to five minutes, proceed to imitate breathing by Dr. Sylvester's method as follows:—

Place the patient on the back on a flat surface (see Fig. 3), incline a little upwards from the feet; raise and support the head and shoulders on a small firm cushion or folded article of dress placed firm against the shoulder-blades. Draw farward under the patient's tongue, and keep it projecting beyond the lips; an elastic band over the tongue and under the chin will answer this purpose, or a piece of string or tape may be tied round them, or by raising the lower jaw, the teeth may be made to retain the tongue in that position. Remove all tight clothing from about the neck and chest, especially the braces.

TO IMITATE THE MOVEMENTS OF BREATHING.—Standing at the patient's head, press the arms just above the elbow (see Fig. 3), and draw the arms gently and steadily upwards above the head, and keep them stretched upwards for two seconds. (By this means air is drawn into the lungs.) Then turn down the patient's arms, and press them gently and firmly for two seconds against the sides of the chest (Fig. 4). Air is thus pressed out of the lungs. Repeat these measures alternately, deliberately, and perseveringly, about fifteen times in a minute, until a spontaneous effort to respire is perceived, immediately upon which cease to imitate the movements of breathing, and proceed to induce circulation and warmth.

IV.—TREATMENT AFTER NATURAL BREATHING HAS BEEN RESTORED.—To Promote Warmth and Circulation.—Commence rubbing the limbs upwards, with firm grasping pressure and energy, handkerchiefs, flannels, &c. (By this measure the blood is propelled along the veins towards the heart).—The friction must be continued under the blanket or over the dry clothing. Promote the warmth of the body by the application of hot flannels, bottles, or bladders of hot water, heated bricks, &c., to the pit of the stomach, the arm-pits, between the thighs, and to the soles of the feet. If the patient has been carried to a house after respiration has been restored, be careful to let the air play freely about the room. On the restoration of life, a teaspoonful of warm water should be given, and then if the power of swallowing has returned, small quantities of wine, warm brandy-and-water, or coffee should be administered. The patient should be kept in bed, and a disposition to sleep encouraged.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.—The above treatment should be persevered in for some hours, as it is an erroneous opinion that persons are irrecoverable because life does not soon make its appearance, persons having been restored after persevering for many hours.

APPEARANCES WHICH GENERALLY ACCOMPANY DEATH.—Breathing and the heart's action cease entirely; the eyelids are generally half closed, the pupils dilated; the tongue approaches to the under edges of the lips, and these, as well as the nostrils, are covered with a foamy mucus. Coldness and pallor of surface increase.

**CAUTIONS.**

Prevent unnecessary crowding of persons round the body, especially in an apartment.

Avoid rough usage, and do not allow the body to remain on the back unless the tongue is secured.

Under no circumstances hold the body up by the feet.

On no account place the body in a warm bath unless under medical direction, and even then it should only be employed as a momentary excitant.

Several cases of drowning having recently occurred in this locality, it is requested that the above directions and illustrations be cut out and preserved. By having them posted up in the vicinity of rivers, canals, &c., they may prove instrumental in saving life.



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

ing or blankets can be procured, strip the body, and cover or gradually re-clothe it, but taking care not to interfere with the efforts to restore breathing.

illustrations be cut out and preserved. By having them posted up in the vicinity of rivers, canals, &c., they may prove instrumental in saving life.



**18 11 November 1871**

**STREET ACCIDENT AT NORTHWICH** On Saturday last, **James Smallwood**, a boatman in the employ of the Anderton Carrying Company, purchased a horse from Mr Starkey of the George and Dragon Inn, Northwich, and after concluding the bargain he unfortunately indulged somewhat excessively in the imbibation of alcoholic stimulants. About nine o'clock the same night, he mounted his steed for the purpose of taking it to Broken Cross, where his flat was lying. No sooner had the animal got into the street than it became restive, reared on its hind legs, and threw the unlucky rider with violence to the ground. The horse was secured, and Smallwood was carried in a helpless condition into the George and Dragon. Mr Joynsen, surgeon, and Mr Evans, assistant to Mr Williams, surgeon, were called in, and found him suffering from a scalp wound and concussion of the brain. The injuries were promptly attended to, and the man was so far recovered at midnight that he was in fit state to be removed to his flat at Broken Cross.

**19 11 November 1871**

**COLLISION ON THE RIVER WEAVER** An accident, attended by a considerable pecuniary loss, occurred on the River Weaver on Saturday last. Early in the morning, the steam flat *Aerial*, commanded by **William Rowbottom** and owned by Mr Higgin, salt proprietor, Anderson was proceeding up the river to Winsford for the purpose of taking in a cargo of salt, and when in the vicinity of the Hartford Turnbridge, the lookout having, it is said, gone into the cabin for a few moments, she suddenly came into collision with a salt laden flat belonging to Mr Blackwell, which was being hauled down the river. The engines of the steamer were at once reversed and further mischief avoided, but not before both vessels had sustained such serious damage that they had to lie up for repairs. Various rumours are current as to whom the blame is to be attached, but it would be unwise to give credence to any until the proper authorities have made a thorough investigation into the circumstances attending the accident. There was happily no one hurt.

**20 18 November 1871**

**SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY**

**WASTING WATER** **Thomas Frost**, a boatman, was charged with wasting the water of the canal at Betchton. Defendant's boat was following another boat, and in order to pass him wasted a lock full of water. Fined 20s and costs.

**21 2 December 1871**

**CHESHIRE INTERMEDIATE SESSIONS**

**THEFT OF A HORSE** **John Bold**, 36, boatman, was indicted for stealing a horse, the property of the Traders' North Staffordshire Carrying Company Limited, at Rudheath Lordship on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October. Found guilty, and sentenced to four months' hard labour.

**22 9 January 1878**

**OPENING OF THE CANALMEN'S "BETHEL", CHESTER** On Friday afternoon, the "Bethel" for the use of canal boatman, which has been built near Cow Lane Bridge, was formally opened. It consists of a lecture room and classroom built upon a large flat, and is intended for the use of boatmen only, as a place in which can be held religious and other meetings, Sunday School and the like. Among those present were the Mayor of Chester (Mr W Farish), the Rev P W Darnton (Congregationalist), the Rev J Dawson (Wesleyan), the Rev F Anderson (All Saints', Hoole), the Rev J Williams (Prebyterian), Admiral Massie and Mr A Potts. The proceedings commenced with singing and prayer; and the Mayor, who presided, then called upon the Rev P W Darnton to give an explanatory statement concerning the "Bethel" and the purposes for which it was intended.

Mr Darnton said that four or five years ago the friends at Queen Street Chapel became interested in the condition of the boatmen on the canal. They constantly saw the boat people on the canal bank at the end of Queen Street, and noticed that there were a great many children playing about, for on Sundays a large number of boats were usually moored against the quay there. It was found very

difficult to do anything on behalf of these men and women. Many of them lived on board the boats. In some cases, persons had been born, married and had children of their own on the boats ; and there were two or three generations of persons who had never had houses on shore. These persons were cut off a good deal from the usual influences of civilisation and education. They were ignorant, not one in ten being able to read and write. Moreover, it was found that many of these lacked what were called Sunday clothes, and were therefore very unwilling to show themselves in any place of worship. Once or twice he (Mr Darnton) had seen women from the boats in the Queen Street schoolroom, when service was held there ; but it was very rarely that any of the boatmen and their wives could be persuaded to go to a place of worship. **Mr Bowles**, who was now City missionary, used to go among them and distribute tracts and talk to them on board their boats ; but the tracts were of very little use because so many of the people could not read. It seemed, therefore, very important that something should be done especially for that class of people. In other parts of the country work had been set on foot. At Runcorn there was a building, and a large and useful work was being carried on. At Lichfield, the Bishop had obtained a boat that would go up and down the canal, and a missionary travelled with it and visited the various stations where the boatmen mostly congregated. It seemed therefore as if there were precedents for work among the canal people ; and that, if a room could be obtained, good work could be done. The Canal Company were applied to, and they put at the disposal of those interested in the matter the large flat upon which the existing building was put up. It was really a large barge, which had been lying up for some time. By dint of considerable exertion, and after some little time, the building had been erected, and it was now theirs for the purposes to which he had alluded. A small room had been formed at one end, and this was intended for a classroom or schoolroom for children, because it was very important to get hold of the children. Very few of them could read, and thus there was abundant opportunity for work in that direction. The large room was intended to be a kind of meeting place for boat people, and it was to be only for boat people, not for the general public. The boatmen and women were to feel that it was their own place, where they would not be interfered with by others. There would be a lending library ; and the boat people could be trusted, for they were very honest, notwithstanding their want of education. The books might be taken away, or read in the Bethel on Sunday afternoon. And it was desired to have a service every Sunday – a prayer meeting in the morning, and after the Sunday School, work in the afternoon. The services would be short and simple, with no long sermons, so that the people might not feel they were being put upon. There was only one thing more he wished to state, namely that that enterprise owed its origin and success to a lady ; it was not his doing, it was his wife's. The rev gentleman then read the following statement of accounts up to the present time. Total receipts : £41 17s 11d. There had been paid for building £35 ; and other payments had taken all the funds except 10s 7d. The bill which he had, and which included almost everything they owed, was for £106 17s 3d ; and those who knew what building was, and what was the kind of work that had had to be done there, would agree with him that they had a very reasonable contractor in their friend Mr Hughes, who had shown a very great deal of personal interest in the work. Mr Hughes had deducted £6 3s 7d, leaving the amount due £100 13s 8d, against which they had to place the £35 paid, and there was still £65 due. Mrs Hudson of Bache Hall had given £20, reducing the deficit to £45 ; and it might be said they wanted £50 to complete the whole affair. Mr Hughes had very kindly made and presented a reading desk. Letters were then read from gentlemen unable to be present at the meeting – from Mr W Johnson JP ; from the manager of the Bethel at Runcorn ; from Mr Jones, manager of the SUR and Canal Company, who had throughout taken a great interest in the work ; and from others.

Admiral Massie, having served for sixty years in all parts of the world, could say that these Bethels had always succeeded wherever established. He entirely approved of the intention to educate the children, because as these grew up, the seed sown would bear fruit.

The Mayor, who was received with applause, said he had lived in that neighbourhood for very many years, and had noticed the great want of something of that kind for the poor neglected boatmen and their families. This was a sort of missionary enterprise ; and in his simplicity he had always thought that missionary enterprise should “begin at Jerusalem” - that they should always as far as possible

begin at home. It had always been a source of grief to him to find people whose hearts were bursting and whose eyes were never tired of weeping for the calamities of the heathen, but who could pass by with callousness and indifference the misery nearer home. He did not say that happened at Chester ; but it might be, and that Bethel would remove any stigma that might have vested upon them. The importance of those little places of course did not need to be urged at all. It was well known that the best work sometimes began in the most simple and unostentatious way ; and the importance of the smallest efforts could hardly be gauged. He hoped that Bethel would be fruitful of much good ; and he had great pleasure in declaring it open for the purposes for which it had been designed. (Applause).

The Rev F Anderson was glad to assist at that opening. A great many of the existing agencies did not touch certain classes of people, and the canal population formed one of the most neglected classes. He believed this was not the first effort that had been made in Chester for the welfare of the canal boatmen ; the city missionaries had visited them in their boats on Sundays and at other times ; yet he felt that this work was quite a different one from that. He proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor for attending to open the Bethel. (Applause).

The Rev J Dawson seconded the proposition. He thought it a great blessing to the city to have a Mayor who would take part in such a work as that, not simply in a formal manner, but with real heartiness. They knew that the Mayor was not present simply because he was Mayor, but it was because the work was one in which he had a lively interest. The work had cost Mrs Darnton a great deal of thought and labour, and their thanks were due to her also.

The Rev J Williams supported the vote. He hoped the Bethel would be what its name implied – a “house of God” - and that it would also be what Admiral Massie had termed it, a Bethlehem, a “house of prayer”.

The Rev Mr Darnton put the proposition to the vote, and it was carried with acclamation.

Mr James Smith pointed out that the religious interests of the boatmen had not been altogether neglected, for it was the work of the first city missionary in Chester to visit on a Sunday those congregated in the basin by the Wall, and this had been continued ever since. As a member of the city mission committee, he desired to state that they should not look upon the work connected with the Bethel in any way as opposition, but should be prepared to give Mr Darnton every assistance in their power. (Hear, hear).

The Mayor proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Darnton, and this was acknowledged by Mr Darnton, who also thanked Mr Potts for his eloquent speech. (Laughter). That speech was a practical one, having taken the form of a bank note which he had just handed over. About £25 a year would be required to meet the current expenses of that place, and he should be glad to receive promises of annual subscriptions. He took the opportunity of mentioning that the work would be carried on by the Queen Street Compassionate Society, for it would be better done by laymen than by clergymen.

In a concluding speech, the Mayor said he had been sitting as a magistrate for two months, and the sickening spectacles that had come before him had been something terrible. He would just like the managers of that Bethel to impress upon the people to let the drink alone ; any teaching that omitted that, omitted a very important element.

The benediction terminated the proceedings.

### **23 10 August 1878**

CHESHIRE INTERMEDIATE SESSIONS

STEALING HENS AT MACCLESFIELD **Joseph Ward** (34) and **Richard Brereton** (40), boatmen, were found guilty of stealing twelve hens, the property of Walter Henry Rudyard, at Macclesfield on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July. The first named prisoner was sentenced to six months imprisonment and the other to two months imprisonment.

### **24 28 September 1878**

NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

NEGLECT OF A WIFE AT CASTLE NORTHWICH **Thomas Lambert** of Castle Northwich was

brought up under a warrant on a charge of neglecting to support his wife **Ellen Lambert**, who had been chargeable to the Guardians of the Northwich Union, from whom she was receiving 4s a week relief. Mr G Arrowsmith, relieving officer, stated that the prisoner had neglected his wife, who was bedridden, for a considerable time, and she had borne with him as long as she possibly could. He was in constant work on the Weaver Navigation ; and **Mr Wells**, the engineer, had done his best to get him to do his duty to his wife, but he spent his money in drink, and she could not get the necessaries of life. The prisoner said he only received 16s a week, and he made the best of it. Committed to prison for one month with hard labour.

**BREACH OF THE WEAVER BYE LAWS** **Mark Atherton**, master of the flat *Mark*, was summoned by the Trustees of the Weaver Navigation for a breach of the river bye laws on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. Mr Rogers, from the office of Messrs Blake and Trafford, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Fletcher defended. Not far from Barnton an island is formed by the river Weaver, and it is approached by a turnbridge. The land is occupied by Mrs Clarke, and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August her son, William Clarke, accompanied by Clement Burgess, went upon it, and when they wanted to get off, they found the bridge was open and the defendant's flat was being towed past by the steamer *Emperor*. They alleged they requested the men on both vessels to close the bridge to enable them to get across, but the answer they received was that they must go round by the Saltersford lock. They eventually went over the lock, which was three quarters of a mile out of their way. In cross-examination by Mr Fletcher, Mr Clarke submitted that there was another drawbridge between 200 and 300 yards from the one in question. He did not see one of Deakin's steamers coming up at the time. PC Jones said that when he served the summons, the defendant said, "It was not that we would not do it, but we could not get ashore". Mr Fletcher, addressing the Bench for the defence, said the rules under which those proceedings were taken were evidently framed in accordance with the ancient order of things. They were made before steamers were plying on the river, and the state of things which arose in this case was not contemplated by them. It would therefore be a great hardship upon the defendant if the penalty were to be inflicted. His (defendant's) vessel was entirely at the mercy of the steamer, and it would have been utterly impossible for him to have got ashore and to have overtaken the flat, considering the rate at which the steamer was going. In addition to that, there was another steamer close upon them, and they had a choice of two evils. With regard to Clarke not being able to get across, the defendant spoke courteously to him, and merely suggested that he should go round by the other bridge, never thinking that so much would be made of it. He asked their Worships either to dismiss the case, or if they thought that an offence had been committed, to visit it with a very small penalty. The Bench considered that there had been a breach of the bye laws, and fined the defendant 10s and 13s 6d costs.

**A DRUNKEN FREAK AT THE NORTHWICH STATION** **William Sandbach**, a boatman living at Barnton, was summoned for obstructing William Evans, foreman porter at the Northwich railway station, while in the execution of his duty, and also for being drunk on the railway company's premises. Mr Inspector Hanks appeared on behalf of the Cheshire Lines Committee. The defendant, who pleaded guilty to both charges, arrived at the Northwich Station by the train from Runcorn due at 3.26, having booked to Acton Bridge. As the train was being shunted on to the line at the opposite side, the defendant opened the carriage door and dropped on to the ground. On the complainant going up to him, he (defendant) used very bad language, seized his neck-tie and pulled it to pieces, and kicked him on the leg. He also threatened what he would do for the witness and the inspector if he caught them outside. He was in a beastly state of intoxication. For obstructing the officer, the defendant was fined 20s and costs ; and for being drunk he had to pay 5s and costs.

## **25 16 October 1878**

### **CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS**

**A DUCK STEALER AT RUNCORN** **William Jones**, 26, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing four ducks, the property of Henry Crowther, at Runcorn on the 28<sup>th</sup> September. Mr Marshall prosecuted.

The prosecutor is a tanner living in Halton Road, Runcorn, and on the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> September he left 29 ducks and three geese safe in the cots. At six o'clock next morning, he found that the cots had been broken into and four ducks stolen. The head of one of the ducks was lying near. The police, receiving information of the robbery, proceeded on board a canal boat upon which the prisoner was employed, and there found concealed four ducks, one of which was minus its head. Sentenced to two months hard labour.

**26 27 November 1878**

INQUEST AT NEWTON, NEAR MIDDLEWICH On Thursday afternoon, Mr Garside, Coroner, held an inquest at the King's Lock Inn, Newton, near Middlewich, on the body of **William Gault**. The mother of deceased said that her husband was a boatman on the North Staffordshire Canal. On Monday last, witness brought the boat from the Potteries to the King's Lock. The deceased, who was six years of age, was with the boat. Witness left him on another boat while she put the horse up, and on her return he was missing. **John Davies**, lock-keeper, said that he helped to drag the canal on Monday afternoon, and recovered the body of deceased quite dead and cold. The jury returned an open verdict.

**27 27 November 1878**

A MAN DROWNED IN THE CANAL AT SANKEY Matthew Cavannagh, 53 years of age, a rag gatherer who lived in Green's Court, Warrington, was drowned in the Sankey Canal near Bewsey Locks on Wednesday evening. It appears that the deceased got on the canal side at Winwick about six o'clock, and commenced to walk in the direction of Warrington. When near Bewsey Locks, he overtook a man named **John Mason**, captain of the flat *Richard*, and the horse driver **Patrick McGovern**, whom he wished "Good night". In about a minute after the deceased left them, they heard him shouting out for help, and they at once proceeded in the direction whence the sounds came. Taking lanterns with them, they began to search for him, and at length they found his body floating in the middle of the canal. It was placed in the boat *Richard*, and PC Houghton of Sankey Bridge was communicated with, and he conveyed it to the Black Horse to await the inquest. A dense fog prevailed on the night in question, and there is no doubt that the deceased accidentally slipped into the canal.

**28 30 November 1878**

A BOAT HAND DROWNED AT BADDILEY Mr Churton, Coroner, held an inquest at the Farmers' Arms, Baddiley, on Thursday, on the body of **Henry Charles Woodward**, aged 18 years, who was drowned in the Baddiley lock on Tuesday. The deceased was employed on board a boat named "*The Trial*" belonging to the Shropshire Union Railway Union and Canal Company. There is no lock tender at Baddiley, and the deceased, who got out of his boat, was engaged in raising the paddles when he accidentally slipped into the canal and, getting beneath the boat, the boatman was unable to rescue the body until after the lapse of a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, when life was quite extinct. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

**29 1 January 1879**

CHARGE OF FELONY AT WINSFORD On Monday last, Peter Thompson was brought before Mr Richard Burgess (Mayor of Over), charged with being an accomplice with one Margaret Astles, in stealing a watch and guard and other articles belonging to **Isaac Davies**, with whom Astles had been cohabiting for some years. Margaret Astles, who had been arrested at Birmingham by PC Richardson of Over, was charged with stealing the articles named.

Isaac Davies said that on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1876, he lived at No 1 Weaver Street, Winsford. On that day he left the furniture all right. He could not say whether the watch was in the house at the time. He thought the other things were in, but learned afterwards that they were not. The box was in the house. There was a good set of furniture, including a set of drawers, six chairs, long table, two pictures and two funeral cards. He left Margaret Astles in the house when he went away on (he



believed) the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1876. He was certain it was a Monday. She was his housekeeper. He did not give her or anyone else any authority to take the things away. On the Wednesday following, he was told that the things were being taken away, and he went home. John Walker told him when he was with his flat at the Old Quay at Runcorn. He went home, and found nothing but a set of horse gears, a clock and a suit of clothes. Astles had gone, and he had never seen her until that day. He saw nothing taken away. He received the waistcoat about June. Astles' sister brought it and a bed, water can and dog kennel. He had since received from Charles Walker a hearth rug and funeral card, having entered him in the County Court for them. He had also received various articles from T Bailey. The watch (produced) is his (witness's). He had left it in the house. Was not sure about it being in the house on the Monday. He had seen it about a month before. He had not seen the male prisoner with any of the articles. Cross-examined by Mr Dixon (of Messrs Green and Dixon, solicitors, Northwich and Winsford), who appeared for the prisoners : Astles and he commenced living together about nine years ago. Before then she was not a housekeeper. The house was in his name. He had then no furniture. He bought some furniture and she bought some, but he paid for all. He found the money. He gave her the greater part of his money to keep house. He sometimes asked how the money was spent. He would swear that he bought the first lot of goods. He did not remember making any arrangements about who the horses and goods should belong to. She sometimes drew his freight money. She had no boxes when she came to live with him. She had a box when she came to him, but neither of the two referred to. She had no box that he was aware of which belonged to her grandmother. The box which he got from Pye of Northwich might possibly have belonged to Astles' grandmother. Did not know why they quarrelled. They had often quarrelled. When he came home after a month's absence, two men were waiting for wages. Astles asked him for some money. He did not tell her that he would sell the things if she did not. He said on the Monday that he would sell up. He said this because he was tired of her. He wanted to get rid of her. William J Walker came to Runcorn to tell him on the Wednesday following that she had sold the things. He then said, "All right, she has saved me the trouble, for if she hadn't I should". (Witness afterwards said he did not say "all right"). He had sued in the County Court for the watch, but the judge ruled that the watch did not belong to witness. There was a velvet waistcoat. He bought the velvet at Runcorn, could not remember what he gave for it. It was not stolen property. He had had considerable litigation in the Northwich County Court. He was sued for a provender account. His horses had had the provender, but he disputed it because Astles had ordered it without his authority. Cross-examined by Mr J H Cooke (the magistrates' clerk) : He knew that Astles was going, and he told her she might go, but gave her no authority to take any of the articles.

Thomas Price stated that he was porter at the London and North Western Railway Station, Winsford. He remembered a Mr Lightfoot bringing two boxes which witness labelled for Crewe. Thompson and Astles went with them by the 9.10 train. They did not come to the station together. Astles came first, and then Thompson, but both came after the arrival of the boxes. Saw both the prisoners talking together after they had been on the platform. Could not say whether they got into the same carriage. The male prisoner did not assist with the luggage. Astles told witness to label her boxes to Crewe. Davies came up a few days afterwards. He knew Thompson before he went away, but had not seen him since then until Saturday, or it might be Sunday, before he was apprehended. Did not know Thompson's trade. Cross-examined by Mr Dixon : The prisoner Thompson did not interfere in any way with the boxes.

**William Hatton** said that he lived at Meadow Bank, and was a flatman. He saw Thompson, Astles and the latter's mother in the house of Isaac Davies between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. He was assisting to remove the goods in consequence of being asked to do so by J C Pickstock. Henry Beswick and Samuel Pickstock also helped. He could not tell who handed the things to him. He could not remember what the goods were except a bedstead and mattresses. Afterwards remembered some chairs. The goods were taken to J C Pickstock's. The two prisoners were handing things for the purpose of being taken away. He heard no remarks made. It was moonlight. Mr E I Pickstock said that Margaret Astles bought the drawers from him about two years before she went away. They were mahogany drawers. She paid for them by instalments. There were some

chairs and other articles also bought by Astles. Her brother was surety for the payment. Astles paid for all except a balance of 6s, which he managed to get from Davies. He thought that he was selling the goods to Charles Walker, at all events they were booked to him.

PC Richardson stated that from information he had received from first witness on Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> inst, he went to the house of Charles Walker, Weaver Street. He asked him if he had a watch, and he handed witness the watch produced (a Geneva one). On Thursday he went to Birmingham, and he there apprehended Margaret Astles under the warrant now produced. She said, "I never stole no watch ; he never had one to steal. The watch belonged to my brother, and I pawned it to get money to get away. The other things we made a bargain between ourselves that I should have the furniture and he should have the horses".

Police-sergeant Hardern said that he apprehended the prisoner at Wharton under a warrant. He said he knew nothing about it. Witness took him to the lock ups and searched him, and found the letter now produced. There was no name and address on it. Witness asked him if it was from Margaret Astles, and he said it was.

Mr Dixon, for the defence, called

**William John Walker**, who said that he lived on Winsford Hill and was a "lofter". He was a driver for Isaac Davies in November 1876. Margaret Astles paid him his wages. She lived with Davies. Had seen her pay **Reuben Bratt** wages. Isaac Davies told him to go to Astles for his wages. Remembered Astles and Davies quarrelling, and then the former going away. She was asking Davies for money. He said that he would not give her any. She said that if he did not, she would sell some of the things out of the house. He said, "Very good, Marget". He had heard him tell her to go on the Saturday before she went. He told her to sell the things, or else he would. Reuben Bratt was present. She said, "Very well". The Mayor : Was that to raise money to pay you and Bratt? Witness : Yes, sir. Mr Dixon's cross-examination resumed : He did not get his wages. He afterwards heard that she had sold the things, and he told Davies so on the Wednesday following at Runcorn. He said that she had saved him the trouble, for if she had not, he would have done so when he got home. Was quite certain he said that. Davies did not appear vexed. Had heard Astles tell Davies that the arrangement was that she should have the furniture and him the horses. Davies only laughed when she said it.

Reuben Bratt gave similar evidence.

Mr Dixon was about to call another witness, when

The Mayor said that he would not trouble him to do so, as he had decided to dismiss the case.

The Mayor's decision seemed to give satisfaction to the large number of persons about the Court House.

### **30 8 February 1879**

**A MISSING MAN'S BODY FOUND** On Monday an inquest was held by Dr Baird, Deputy Coroner, at the Red Lion Inn, Winsford, on the body of **Enoch Cousins**, whose disappearance was chronicled in November last.

Ellen Pickstock said the deceased was her brother and was 23 years of age. He was a labourer. She last saw him alive 11 weeks ago, when he came to her house in his usual health and spirits. He had had no fixed place of abode for 9 months previously, and told her he was in the habit of sleeping on cinder boats.

**William Clough**, labourer, Moulton, said in November last he was working the cinder boat *Two Sisters* on the "Flashes" at Winsford. Deceased was a "mate" of his. Eleven weeks on Saturday last, he met deceased in Winsford Market Place at closing time. Deceased, who was the worse for drink, told witness he was going down the river to see a party, but witness persuaded him to go to the boat. They purchased some bread and haddock, and then went to the boat, and after eating a portion of the food went to sleep. A youth named Warburton came into the cabin about midnight and awoke witness and deceased. Warburton went to sleep on the lockers, and deceased got up and said he should go "down the water". Witness asked him to stay, but deceased said he must go and left the cabin. Witness heard no splash or cry. The boat was moored close to shore in about 15 feet

of water. He heard a day or two after that deceased was missing.

Walter Warburton, labourer, Winsford, said that having had a quarrel at home, he went on board the *Two Sisters* about 12 o'clock on the night in question to sleep. He went into the cabin, and found deceased and the witness Clough both asleep. He also went to sleep, and awoke about half past five, when he found deceased had gone, and Clough was still asleep. He awoke Clough and asked him when Cousins had gone, and Clough replied that he must have gone away when he was asleep, and he knew nothing about it. They had no squabble on board, and he knew nothing whatever about the deceased's disappearance. The deceased was a big strongly built man.

William Clough, recalled, stated, in answer to questions from the Deputy Coroner, that he did not tell Warburton he had not seen the deceased leave the cabin but, on the contrary, he had told him that deceased left about half past 12 to go down the river. Warburton was drunk.

**William Atherton**, a flatman, said that on Saturday morning last he was going down the Weaver, and saw the body of deceased floating on the surface. He got a rope and secured it, and it was afterwards removed by the police. The deceased was fully dressed. It might have floated from the "Flashes" to the spot where he found it.

The Deputy Coroner, addressing the jury, pointed out the discrepancies between the evidence of Clough and Warburton. The jury under the circumstances could do no more than return an open verdict ; and it would be for the police to enquire further into the matter if they thought it necessary. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

### 31 2 April 1879

#### CHARGE OF STEALING TARPAULIN AT NORTHWICH

A CURIOUS CASE At the Northwich Police Court on Saturday, before the Rev J Royds and Mr H Neumann, James Cross, a rocksalt miner living in Witton, was charged on remand with stealing two pieces of tarpaulin, the property of **Mary Ann Green**, in February of last year. The arrest of the prisoner was rather curiously brought about. Some three or four weeks ago, a man named Joseph Arrowsmith was charged with stealing a piece of tarpaulin from Thomas Houghton in Witton, and in the course of her evidence Mrs Houghton stated that she bought it from a man whom she professed not to know. The result of the investigation before Mr Neumann was the discharge of the accused man. The case was reported in the *Guardian*, and Mrs Green, of Winnington, who was in Liverpool, seeing the account, wrote to Inspector Naylor, reminding him of a theft of two pieces of tarpaulin and other articles from her flat *Thomas* in February 1878. The police proceeded to make a further investigation, which ended in the apprehension of James Cross. Mr Fletcher appeared for the defence.

**Robert Brock**, captain of the flat *Thomas* belonging to Mrs M A Green, said : In February 1878 my flat was lying at Mr Steenstrand's quay in Witton Brook. On Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> of that month, I left the flat tied up there, with the cabin locked, and the three hatches covered with tarpaulins battened in. The tarpaulins, which were new, from Messrs Taylor and Perry of Liverpool, had recently been painted with coal tar and oil, which was not then dried. I did not go near the flat again until Monday morning the 11<sup>th</sup> February, and when I got on board I discovered that two pieces of the tarpaulin which covered the main and after hatches were gone, but the piece which covered the fore hatch was left. I also discovered that the door leading out of the hold into the cabin had been broken open, and a gun, a powder flask, shot canister, box of caps, some spoons and a book (*Gulliver's Travels*) were missing from the cabin. I reported the loss of those articles to the police at Northwich the same day. I have seen the two pieces of tarpaulin now produced by the police, one of which appears to have been recently painted, and I identify them by their general appearance to the two pieces stolen from my flat in February 1878. The piece which has been painted I believe to be the piece off my main hatch, though a piece has been cut off one end, I think the mast end, of it. The other piece I believe belongs to my after hatch. Holes have been cut in the sides of each piece since they were stolen, but the breadth remains about the same as when stolen. I produce the fore hatch tarpaulin which was left on the flat when the other pieces were stolen. By Mr Fletcher : I also know the tarpaulin by its having been painted with coal tar and oil. That preparation is not usual for

the first coat. The breadths, too, are a little wider in places than others. I instructed Mr Taylor what width to make them.

**Samuel Whitehead**, the hand on board the flat, gave evidence as to the loss of the tarpaulin, and said that the two sheets now in court corresponded with those that were stolen. By Mr Fletcher : He could only speak to the general appearance. Flat's tarpaulins did not differ much.

Susannah Houghton, wife of Thomas Houghton, Rock Mines, Witton, deposed : I have seen the two pieces of tarpaulin now produced by the police. I bought them from the prisoner about twelve or fourteen months ago. He asked me £2 for them, but I gave him 30s. He brought them to my door in a wheelbarrow on a Saturday afternoon. He first came and told my husband that he had bought the tarpaulins cheap off a boatman whose boat was in Witton Brook. He asked my husband to go and look at them. When he brought the tarpaulins his hands and face were as black as though he had been up a chimney. I paid him for them. I felt one of the tarpaulins and it was very oily ; one was a great deal larger than the other. There was not a hole in either of them, nor did they appear to have been much used. I can't say whether there was a mast hole in either of them. After keeping them for a little time, I used the smaller one for covering my cart, and sold the other to my brother-in-law, Joseph Stanley. In the one we kept, we cut holes in it to tie it on the cart. The tarpaulin was stolen from me on the 24<sup>th</sup> February last. It has since been cut and painted, but I am able to identify it still. By Mr Fletcher : I knew the prisoner before he came to my house – just to speak to him. When we met, he would say, “Good morning, Susie”, and I would say, “Good morning, James”. I knew he lived in the sandhole, Witton, when I bought the tarpaulins from him. I never bought any others from him. When the prisoner was first brought before the magistrates on this charge, I said it occurred as near 18 months ago as I could think of. My attention was then called to a previous statement I had made, that it was 11 months ago. I said I had had it some time before putting it in wear. I have sold tarpaulins many a time. I have bought flats' sails and sold them for floor cloths to various people. Last Monday but one, prisoner was passing my house, and I called him in. I told him a flatman had said the canvas I bought from him (the prisoner) had been stolen from his flat. He didn't say he would tell the police all about it. I told the magistrates when before them, “I did not know the man I had bought the tarpaulin off”. The reason for saying that was I did not want to mention the name of the man. The police afterwards told me I must produce the man. I then told that it was Cross. I have bought flats' sails from Mr Hayes, and a man named Perry. I bought them in loads. I produce invoices from Mr Hayes. By Superintendent Cooper : I believe it to be 13 or 14 months ago that I bought the tarpaulin. When I called the prisoner into my house, he said, “It is a bad job”. I said, “Brock has been over and sworn to it”. He replied, “Really ; where is the other part of the canvas?” I told him my brother-in-law had got it on his cart. He then said, “Can you get to see you brother-in-law and cut a piece off or make it away, and I'll buy him another in place of it”. He further said, “I shall take off the other canvas off my front place and make away with. It is a white piece, and they might perhaps want to know where I got it from”. My brother-in-law lives in Witton Street.

Thomas Houghton, husband of the last witness, said the sheets produced were the same that his wife bought from the prisoner.

Thomas Stanley, a salt hawker in the employ of Houghton, identified one of the sheets by the holes he cut in it and its general appearance. By Mr Fletcher : Mrs Houghton bought the tarpaulin on a Saturday. I cannot speak to the time to a month or two. I had it in use about 11 or 12 months, and it was lying by five or six months.

Henry Taylor, of the firm of Taylor and Perry, sailmakers, Liverpool, said that the tarpaulins for the flat *Thomas* were made in July 1877, by his firm, from his own actual measurement of the flat. He believed the two pieces of tarpaulin produced to be part of the missing main and after sheets his firm made for the *Thomas*. He had also examined the fore hatch sheet produced by Brock, and in texture it entirely corresponded with the others. All the tarpaulins made by his firm had both a flat seam and a round seam, and all the sheets produced had such seams. So far as his observation went, other makers usually made a round seam only. Coal tar and oil was a usual coating ; some used Stockholm tar. The measurements of the tarpaulins produced corresponded with those made by his

firm. By Mr Fletcher : Other sailmakers in Liverpool use the same seam as I do. The tarpaulin produced undoubtedly correspond with those I made for the *Thomas*. A piece is missing from the main hatch sheet, which prevents me from positively identifying it. The cloth is a common one. It is usual to have a tarpaulin with three narrow pieces inside and two wider ones outside.

PC Leah stated that from information he received from Mrs Houghton, he apprehended the prisoner, who, in reply to the charge, said, "A man called Toty Joe asked my wife to buy a piece of canvas, and I went down to the boat and bought a piece of canvas".

This concluded the case for the prosecution.

Mr Fletcher, in addressing the Court for the defence, submitted that this prosecution was the result of an unholy alliance between the police and Mrs Houghton, and it was for their Worships to say whether the prisoner was to suffer for that charge of which, according to the evidence he should lay before them, he must be entirely innocent. The case turned upon two points – the identification of the canvas and the credibility of the witness Mrs Houghton ; and he contended that on both respects the prosecution had failed. The identity of the canvas was not distinctly sworn to by a single witness, and it seemed to him a very bold thing for anyone to attempt to swear that such a canvas as that, which had been in use so long. No words could be too strong to characterise the conduct of Mrs Houghton. This was not the first time that this canvas had been brought before their Worships. When Arrowsmith was brought up, Mrs Houghton most distinctly stated that she did not know the man from whom she bought it ; but now, under pressure brought upon her by the police, she said it was Cross, who lived close to where she did, and whom she knew perfectly well at the time she said she bought the canvas from him. He thought he was justified in saying that if she told a lie on one occasion, it was not beyond the bounds of possibility and probability that now she found she was in a scrape, as she thought, she would tell a lie again. Her evidence as to the conversation was distinctly denied by the prisoner, and it was not corroborated in any way. If the prosecution knew about the conversation, why didn't they put it in the woman's evidence in chief? Because if it was worth anything at all, it was the strongest bit of evidence they had got. They did know about it, because their Worships would remember the glee with which the Superintendent got up and said, "Now, Mrs Houghton, I'll have the whole of this conversation out of you. What did he say?" The Superintendent must have known what was coming ; he knew that Mrs Houghton, if irritated and provoked, was prepared to go a bit further, and to say something more to damage the prisoner in the eyes of their Worships. Mr Fletcher then commented upon other portions of the evidence, especially directing attention to the different statements made by Mrs Houghton as to the time when she bought canvas from the prisoner. He should call evidence to show that the canvas taken from the police from Arrowsmith was never in Houghton's possession at all, and that the transaction between Mrs Houghton and the prisoner took place two years ago, the canvas having been bought by the prisoner from a boatman.

Joseph Arrowsmith, blacksmith, Witton, stated that the piece of tarpaulin taken by the police was bought by him in September 1878 from George Gorst, sailmaker, for 8s.

This statement was corroborated by Mrs Arrowsmith, and her sister, Margaret Nugent.

George Gorst, journeyman sailmaker, said that in September last he sold a piece of canvas to Arrowsmith. The piece in question was like it in every respect. He had had it in his possession from eighteen months to two years. He got it from one of **Mr Thomas Gibson's** flats, for which he had been making a new suit. He should not like to swear to the sewing. It was quite usual to make flat and round seams. There was nothing unusual about the breadths.

**Joseph Thomason** of Bedford Leigh, said in April 1877 he was in charge of a boat at Witton Brook, and sold a piece of canvas to the prisoner for 3s. None of the canvas now produced was that which he sold. He was not called "Toty Joe". He had been called that, but not for many years. By Superintendent Cooper : He had known the prisoner rather more than two years. The last time he was called "Toty Joe" was when he was at Witton Brook.

Ann Edgerley, wife of John Edgerley, of Limekiln Hill, Witton, and Ann Lowe, mother-in-law of the prisoner, gave evidence as to the transaction with the boatman Thomason.

Ann Taylor, wife of Charles Taylor, said that about two years ago the prisoner asked her father,

William Salkin, to buy a piece of canvas which he said he had bought from Thomason. When her father went to see him about it the next day, he said he had sold it to Mrs Houghton.

Thomas Gibson said that in April 1877, having heard that Cross had bought a piece of canvas from Thomason, he went to see him about it ; he said he had sold it to Mrs Houghton.

Thomas Jackson, sailmaker, Northwich, said that the pieces of canvas now before the Court were sewn in the ordinary way, and there was nothing unusual about them. Mr Fletcher : If these tarpaulins were made 16 months ago, would it be possible to swear to them except there were special marks upon them? Witness : Neither maker nor owner could swear to them. Mr Neumann : If you had made them in your own shop, could you swear to them? Witness : I could not.

The magistrates retired to consider their decision, and on their return into court, Mr Royds said : We think, after hearing the whole of this case, there is *prima facie* evidence to justify us – indeed to compel us – to send it for trial at the sessions.

The prisoner was then committed for trial at the next Knutsford Sessions, bail being accepted.

### 32 10 May 1879

INQUEST AT RUNCORN An inquest was held on Wednesday last at the house of Mr John Marsh, the Bridgewater Arms Hotel, Gilbert Street, Runcorn, by Mr Ridgway, coroner, touching the death of **Mary Annie Taylor**, aged 2 years and two months, daughter of **Joseph Taylor**, waterman residing in Gilbert Street, Runcorn. It appeared that on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst at 7.30, deceased, with a number of other children, was playing by some timber near the Alexandra Buildings, Top Locks, when a piece of timber fell, striking the child on the head, injuring her very severely. She was conveyed home, and Dr Mouritz was called in. His assistant attended the deceased until her death, which occurred at one o'clock on Monday morning. On the day previous, deceased had been seized by convulsions caused by the injuries to the head. The jury returned a verdict of “Death from convulsions caused by injuries received”.

### 33 14 May 1879

ROW AMONGST BOATMEN AT RUNCORN On Saturday morning last at the Runcorn Police Court, before Messrs William Bankes and John Brundrit, **John Bailey** and **Richard Cresswell**, two boatmen, were brought up in custody, the former charged with having on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst assaulted PC Sweeney whilst in the execution of his duty, and the latter with resisting the constable at the same time. Bailey pleaded guilty, and Cresswell not guilty.

PC Sweeney said on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst he was on duty near the Top Locks, in company with Inspector Buckley. About 9.20 there was a row in Lowland's Road among a lot of boatmen. He entered the crowd and seized a man who was striking a woman. As he was taking him away, the prisoner Bailey followed him out of the crowd and asked him where he was taking the man to. He said to the police station. The prisoner said he should not go ; he would rather go himself, and in the scuffle which ensued the man got away and he apprehended the prisoner Bailey. As he was taking Bailey away, he tried to trip him, and he was obliged to take him to the ground. He then became very violent, kicked him in the stomach, and bit his finger very severely, and he would probably have been worse ill used had it not been for some respectable people in the crowd who prevented the prisoner. When he got the prisoner along to the Midland Bank in High Street, he got hold of the rails, and the prisoner Cresswell came up, took hold of Bailey, and said he must not take him. He (witness) told him to go away or he would be taken also. Two or three gentlemen then interfered and told Cresswell to go away, and said the constable had been ill used sufficiently. Cresswell again interfered when near St Paul's Chapel in High Street, and near the Nelson Hotel, when Inspector Buckley and PC Bossoms came up and took charge of Bailey, and he (witness) apprehended Cresswell. He had since suffered very much from the effects of the kicks he received.

Superintendent Williamson said there was no doubt PC Sweeney had been in a rough engagement, as his clothes were very much torn and his watch broken.

Mr Alfred Ellwood said he saw the row in Lowland's Road on the night in question, and saw the prisoner Bailey kick the officer very severely in the stomach. When in High Street, he also saw



Cresswell try to take Bailey away.

The prisoner Cresswell, in defence, said he only told the officer he was taking the wrong man, and did not touch him. He called

**Richard Green**, a boatman, who corroborated that statement.

The Bench said the assault by Bailey on the policeman was a very great one and ought not to be allowed. It was his duty to endeavour to assist the police. As that was the first offence against him, they should not deal as severely with him as they otherwise would have done. He was ordered to pay a fine of £2 and costs ; in default of payment, two months' hard labour. Cresswell would have to pay a fine of £1 and costs ; in default, one months' hard labour.

Edward Godfrey was brought up under warrant, charged with having on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, wounded **Frederick Orme**, a boatman, by striking him on the jaw with a piece of brick. He pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, who appeared to be in great pain from various scars on his face, and the left jaw very much swollen, said about 9.30 on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, he, together with his wife and a boy who worked with him, were standing near the Vine Hotel in Lowland's Road, when the prisoner, followed by a large crowd, came from the direction of Doctor's Bridge, and when about twenty yards distant he advanced from the rest, and without saying a word struck him a violent blow on the jaw. He remembered nothing more until he found himself in the cabin of his boat, which was lying near in the canal. Before the prisoner struck him, he saw a half brick in his left hand. He had known the prisoner about twelve months, and was quite sure it was he who struck him. He had had some words with the prisoner about six or seven months ago. He was quite sober when struck by the prisoner. By the Bench : He had no recollection of being struck by anyone beside the prisoner, and could not account for the other marks on his face.

**Sarah Orme**, the wife of the prosecutor, corroborated that statement, and in reply to the Bench said she was quite sure the prisoner was the man who struck her husband.

**Thomas Foster**, aged 14, who worked with the prosecutor, corroborated his statement, and said he was quite sure the prisoner was the man who struck his master, as he called out his name, "Ned Godfrey" as soon as he was struck. By the Bench : He was quite sure no one else struck his master.

Mr Finlay McDougall, a surgeon practising in Runcorn, said he had examined the prosecutor, and found the right shoulder swollen, but not discoloured, and gave great pain when the arms were moved. The left angle of the lower jaw was swollen, very much discoloured, and the bone fractured. He was of opinion that the fracture of the jaw was from direct violence, and might have been caused by the flat side of a brick. The scars on the face might possibly have been produced by a fall, but the one under the right eye he thought had been produced by a kick. He was likely to suffer some time from the injuries.

Inspector Buckley said he apprehended the prisoner under a warrant the previous night in the Queen's Head Hotel, Waterloo Road. As soon as they got in the street, the prisoner said, "I expected you would have fetched me before now". He took him to the police station, read the warrant over to him, and charged him with maliciously wounding Frederick Orme. He replied, "That's a lie. I never struck a man this last six months, or lifted my hand to one". The prisoner was then charged, and said he was going to his work about 9.30, but instead of going direct he turned over Doctor's Bridge and went through a large crowd of people that was there. He saw a woman named Jones with some stones in her stocking or handkerchief strike the wife of the prosecutor. He did not strike the prosecutor, but went straight on to his work.

His Worship said the charge against the prisoner was a very serious one. Apparently without the slightest provocation he had deliberately walked up to a man who he had not seen for some time and gave him a violent blow in the face. His own impression was that he fully intended to do the man a violent injury, and he should commit him to the Sessions at Knutsford.

### 34 17 May 1879

THE OUTRAGE AT LYMM

THE OFFENDER IN CUSTODY **Thomas Hilton**, a boatman in the service of Messrs Carver and



Co, general carriers, Manchester, was brought up in custody at the Lymm Police Court on Saturday afternoon, before Mr G B Dewhurst, charged with feloniously shooting and wounding Matthew Mannion, a boy 13 years of age, with intent to do him some grievous bodily harm, at Lymm on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst.

Inspector Hollingworth of Lymm stated that he received information of the outrage shortly after it was perpetrated on the afternoon of Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. He went out to make enquiries, and met the prisoner, who gave him a minute description of the man who he said had shot the boy. He was a poacher living at Hollins Green, and he gave him a ride on his boat from Brook Bridge, Manchester, to Statham, Lymm. His statement was taken down in writing, and Hilton was allowed to go. The police now began to search for the poacher, but from information witness received, he came to the conclusion that the prisoner had been deceiving him, and that he was the man who had committed the outrage and not the poacher. He went to Manchester where he obtained important information, and that (Saturday) morning, between ten and eleven o'clock, he succeeded in apprehending the prisoner and brought him to the police station at Lymm and locked him up. About an hour afterwards, he (witness) was told that prisoner wished to see him in the cell. He went to him, and the prisoner, who showed the most abject fear, confessed that he was the perpetrator of the outrage, and said he should not have shot the boy if he had not annoyed him.

The prisoner was remanded.

### **35      28 May 1879**

**SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN BY DROWNING AT RUNCORN** An inquest was held on Friday afternoon at the house of Mr William Hayward, Waterloo Hotel, High Street, Runcorn, touching the death of **William Gore**, whose body was found in the canal at Top Locks, Runcorn on Thursday morning, with several wounds on the forehead and face.

The first witness called was

**Richard Gore**, who said he was a boatman, and lived at Boothstown, near Manchester. The body the jury had seen was that of his son, William Gore, who lived with him. He was 27 years of age and unmarried. He last saw him alive on Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, between six and seven o'clock in the evening, at Walton. He was then on board his own boat, on his way to Manchester. Witness was coming to Runcorn. The deceased was captain of the boat *Ernest*, and in the employ of Mr **Edmund Leigh** of Winsford. When he met him he did not speak to him. He had never known him to be unwell. The deceased, up to the past twelve months, was always very steady.

**Eliza Ogden**, after being duly cautioned, was sworn. She said she lived in Nelson Street, Runcorn and was a widow. The last time she saw deceased alive was on Tuesday afternoon, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. He shouted to her as he passed her house on his way to Top Locks, and asked her to come with him. She followed him, and saw him in the Waterloo Hotel. He gave her a shilling that he owed her, and a threepenny and a fourpenny bit. He also gave her a glass of beer. He gave her child a halfpennyworth of nuts. He bought for himself a loaf and some cheese and tobacco from Crosby's, and she saw him go with them towards his boat. He left her at the Waterloo Hotel between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. She did not see him again alive. He had been in the habit of going to her house. He was not at her house on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. She did not go on board his boat. He was not at her house on the Tuesday night or on the Wednesday morning. She was not with him in the street on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. By a juror : She would not think it strange if he did not come to her house when he was in Runcorn. By the Coroner : She was at the Blue Ball about three weeks ago. It was on the Thursday. The deceased was also there. She did not go to his boat with him, and he did not go to her house. She had seen a woman that day who was at the Blue Ball when she was there. She could not say how many times she had been to the Blue Ball. On Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, she had only one person in the house, a young woman named Lizzy who came from Chester. She came the night Gore was missing. She could not say what night it was. By a juror : He did not go to her house every time he came to Runcorn. He was there very often, but was not always there. She had known him for some years. He was not in the habit of going to her house when her husband was alive. Her husband was drowned about twelve months ago.

**Joseph Rowland**, a boatman, said he was at the present time in the custody of the Runcorn police on remand. He had known the deceased several years. Witness came from Knutsford to Runcorn on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, and saw the deceased in Runcorn the same day. That was the last time he saw him alive. He saw him standing outside the door of the Derby Arms in High Street, about half past ten o'clock in the evening. He was drunk. There was a woman with him. He knew the woman. It was Mrs Ogden, the last witness. He had known her for three years. After he had passed them, he heard Mrs Ogden and the deceased pass a remark respecting him (witness). He did not speak to her. She had her back to him. He had assisted her to work a boat for about two months. When he passed them near the Derby Arms, Richard Mores, who was then in custody on the same charge as himself, was in his company. He had not since seen the deceased alive. He could not remember what sort of a night it was. He had had about five or six glasses of port wine. The following day, he saw Mrs Ogden at Weston Point, in the cabin of Gore's boat. He went into the cabin. There was also another woman and Gore's mate in the cabin. They were talking about the deceased. Mrs Ogden said, "I know he is drowned". She took her baby out of Gore's bed and said, "I would drown this if it were not for myself". He did not say anything about Gore. Joseph Sturgeon was with him when he went into the cabin. By a Juror : He was not mistaken about the woman he saw with the deceased. He knew her too well. The woman he saw in the cabin appeared to be about 35 years of age. Ogden did not give any reason why she thought the deceased was drowned.

**Mary Ann Hillier** said she was the wife of **Edward Hillier**. Her husband was the captain of the narrow boats *Annie* and *Alice*, and was employed by **Mr Wm Brian** of Oldfield Road, Salford. She had seen the body of the deceased, and recognised it as that of a man she saw in the Blue Ball with Mrs Ogden. It was on Tuesday night, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. They went out at closing time, and she heard deceased say to Mrs Ogden, "Jenny, will you take me home?" She replied, "No, I shan't ; go home yourself". They crossed the street together, and went down High Street. She had not seen her until the present day. Both Mrs Ogden and the deceased had had some drink. They came to the Blue Ball about ten minutes to eleven. They had two glasses of beer, for which the deceased paid. The Coroner said there seemed to be a certain amount of suspicion, which might or might not turn out something serious, and it was important that everybody who could give any evidence in the case should be brought ; and he thought it would be well to adjourn the enquiry before taking any further evidence, so as to enable other witnesses who were not then present to attend. The enquiry was accordingly adjourned until one o'clock on Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> inst, to be held in the petty sessions room.

### **36      31 May 1879**

#### **SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN BY DROWNING IN RUNCORN**

**ADJOURNED INQUEST** The adjourned inquiry into the cause of death of **William Gore**, a boatman, who was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal near Top Locks on Thursday last, was resumed before Mr T J Ridgway, Coroner, in the Petty Sessions Room, Town Hall, Runcorn, on Tuesday afternoon. The jury having answered to their names,

The Coroner said they were again assembled to make further inquiry as to how the deceased, William Gore, whose body they had viewed, came to his death. Having read the evidence of the witnesses which was given when the inquiry was opened on Friday last, he then proceeded to take the following evidence :-

Robert Morris said he was at present in the custody of the Runcorn Police. On Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, he was in company with Joseph Rowland, one of the previous witnesses, who had that day come out of prison. He came out of the Derby Arms that night with Rowlands, between ten and eleven. He saw Gore, the deceased, standing close to the Derby Arms with Mrs Ogden. He knew them both very well. He did not speak to them. He heard Mrs Ogden pass an insulting remark to Joseph Rowland. Neither of them replied, but went on. He did not see anything more of them that night, neither had he seen William Gore alive since. He (witness) had only had three glasses of ale, and was quite sober. On the following Thursday or Friday night, he saw Mrs Ogden. He had then heard that Gore was missing, and he said to her, "What have you done with Gore?" She said, "I

know”, and came out with an oath. She was not sober at the time. He had not since seen her to talk to. By a Juror : He had no ill-feeling against Mrs Ogden. She had never done him any harm. When he saw Gore on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, he (Gore) was nearly drunk. Rowlands was not quite sober. On Thursday or Friday night, when he saw Mrs Ogden, she said, “I know”, referring to Gore in a nasty sort of way.

Mr Finlay McDougall said he was a duly qualified practitioner practising at Runcorn. He had made a *post mortem* examination of the body of the deceased. He had examined the body carefully externally. On the face (.....) at the junction of the nose with the forehead and extending up the forehead, the skin was discoloured and was very dark. He cut the discoloured part open, and found that the discolouration extended to the bone. The discolouration might have been caused by a blunt instrument or by a fall, and must have been caused during life. Under the right eye the skin was discoloured, and the soft part underneath bruised. That discolouration was probably caused during life, and might have been caused by a blow or a fall. The (...) on the forehead was the most extensive, but neither injured the bone. The one on the forehead would be sufficient to stun deceased, and in his opinion was caused shortly before death. Over the left eyebrow the skin was longitudinally cut about 2 1/2 or 3 inches long, and extending to the bone. Above that, the skin was cut about an inch and a half long. There was a cut across the nose from the inner angle of the right eye, over the nose, cutting the right (eyeball?) right open. These three cuts were produced after death, and were such as might have been caused by the propeller of a steamtug. These were all the marks on the face. On the back of the head, the skin was soft and the tissue underneath (...) and discoloured, a sign that it had been caused during life. The skull was perfectly whole and uninjured, and the (...) might have been caused by a blow or a fall. Over the right ear, there was another cut of about 1 inch long, caused after death in the same way as before. The eyes were closed, and the pupils slightly dilated. The mouth was closed, tongue swollen and slightly protruding between the teeth. On examining the inside of the mouth, he found a wad of tobacco in the left cheek, which seemed as if it had been in only a short time. The hands were slightly clenched. The skin was thickened, (...) and white. There was nothing in the grasp of either hand. Over the shin bone of the right leg, there was a cut, caused after death, such as might be produced by a boat hook. Over the left knee there were the remains of an old sore, nearly healed up. There were no other external marks. He could not say whether the bruise on the forehead and the one on the back of the head were caused by one and the same blow. He opened the body, and was of opinion that the cause of death was drowning. He could not account for death in any other way. The injuries would not account for death, and the man must have died in the water. In his opinion, the deceased must have been either insensible or incapable when he got into the water.

Samuel Tomlinson, landlord of the Blue Ball Inn, said he could not say whether Mrs Ogden or the deceased was in his house on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. He remembered seeing Mrs (Hilder?). By a Juror : Mrs Ogden might have been in the house without his knowledge.

Hannah Leathwood, after being duly cautioned, was sworn, and said she was a single woman, and lived in Nelson Street, Runcorn, with Mrs Ogden, until last Saturday. She had been with her about four or five weeks. She remembered Tuesday night, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. She was in Mrs Ogden's house all night, and also all the day. Some time before dinner on the day in question, she heard Gore shout out, “Are you in?” She lifted up the blind to see who it was. She saw it was Gore, and saw Mrs Ogden go to him on the canal bank. Mrs Ogden then went with Gore, and came back in the afternoon alone. On her return, she (witness) said, “Did you hear Bill Gore sing out this morning?” She said, “Yes”, and she replied, “He asked me to get on the flat. He was not a bit ashamed of me, and I steered her up to the bridge”. She also said that she had been in a public house with him, and that he had given her some money, but she did not say how much. She also said, “I have to meet him again tonight”. They both had some tea together. They were alone in the house both when she was speaking and when they had tea. After tea, between six and seven o'clock, Mrs Ogden went out. She (witness) also went out soon after seven, and returned after closing up time alone. Mrs Ogden returned soon after she (witness) got in. It would be about half past eleven or a quarter to twelve o'clock. She came in alone, and she (witness) asked her where she had been. She said, “I

have just left Gore ; he is following me". She asked her if he was drunk, and she replied, "Yes, very near". She (witness) said, "Let us wait up to see if Gore will come". They did so, but he did not come. On Friday after Gore was missing, she (witness) went into the Albion beerhouse at the top of Nelson Street, and saw a man named James Limb sitting there with Mrs Ogden. She sat down next to Mrs Ogden, and said to Limb, "Do you remember meeting me up the (.....)?" At the time she referred to, she was travelling with Gore, and that was the week before Gore was missing. Limb replied, "Yes, I saw you up there". Mrs Ogden said, "I had a row that time with Gore and his friends, and had to take the train and come home". Mrs Ogden said, "He is drowned now ; poor lad (referring to Gore) ; I know where he is drowned, but I am not going to tell, and no one will make me tell". She (witness) then got up and went out. Since Gore was missing, she had often heard Mrs Ogden say, "I know he is drowned ; I wish he was living". She had been warned to give evidence on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. Since that day she had not spoken to Mrs Ogden. On Tuesday night, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, she (witness) heard a disturbance in Nelson Street shortly after she came in and before Mrs Ogden came in. She did not say anything about any disturbance.

Hannah Tomkinson, wife of John Tomkinson, living in Nelson Street, said she knew Mrs Ogden and Gore also. She remembered the Tuesday night in question, and about half past eleven she heard a row in Nelson Street. She opened her door, looked out, and heard Mrs Ogden's voice. The row lasted a few minutes, and her door being open, she saw Mrs Ogden pass in the direction of her own house and towards the canal bank. She said something to her which she did not properly hear. She (witness) went to bed in a few minutes, and after dozing some short time, she heard some men talking loudly on the canal bank. She opened her window, and saw Mrs Ogden come off the canal bank alone down the steps, and call out to the last witness to open the door. She went into the house. It was Mrs Ogden's voice that she heard on the canal bank. She heard another voice (a man's) besides Mrs Ogden's, but could not say whose it was. She did not hear any other voices. The next day (Wednesday) about half past two in the afternoon, she saw a man go to Mrs Ogden's house, and afterwards heard her say to Mrs Nicholls, "My poor Bill ; I know he is drowned ; I could have said yes he was". Since Gore was missing, she had several times heard Mrs Ogden say, when speaking about Gore, "I know where he is, but I am not going to tell". By the Foreman : There was no ill feeling between her and Mrs Ogden.

**James Dellar** said he was a boatman, and was captain of the narrow boat *Faith and Hope*, owned by Messrs Abbott and (Walker?) of Runcorn. He had known Gore, the deceased, for some months, and had had a good deal to do with him. The last time he saw him alive was on Tuesday night, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, in Welsh Row, about half past ten. He told him he was going up to Eliza Ogden's, as she had done him. Gore was then "fresh".

**Frederick Wright** said he lived in Tipton in Staffordshire, and was hand of the *Earnest* under Gore, the deceased. He remembered Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. The boat was then at Weston Point. He and the deceased were with her. He knew Ogden. She had travelled one voyage with Gore in the boat. He had not known her previous to that. He remembered coming to Runcorn on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Ogden got on the boat near the Soapery, and rode to (Oxters?) Bridge, where she got off. The boat lay at the Top Locks in about an hour, and Gore was away during that time. When he returned, he brought a loaf of bread and some cheese with him. From Top Locks, they went to Weston with the boat. At half past nine, Gore, the deceased, left the boat, and told him he was going up to Runcorn. He did not see him alive again. When he went away, he told him he should return in about two or three hours' time. On the next morning, as Gore did not return, he came to Runcorn to look for him, and saw Dellar, who told him to call at the different public houses. He also told him where Ogden lived. After searching the public houses, he went to Ogden's and saw Mrs Ogden there. He spoke to her and said, "Have you seen anything of William Gore?" She said, "I have not seen anything of him since I got off the boat at the Top Locks". He again asked her if she had seen him, and she said, "No, I have not". He told her he had not seen him since half past nine on the previous night. She said, "Well, I am sure my lad's drowned". She then went with him and enquired at several public houses about Gore. He afterwards left her and returned to Weston. On the following day (Thursday) between six and seven o'clock, Ogden and another woman came to Weston to the boat.

They went into the cabin. Ogden had her baby with her. He followed them into the cabin to see what they had to say. Ogden kept on saying, "My lad's drowned ; William's drowned ; I am sure he is". She was referring to Gore. Rowland and Sturgess came on board whilst they were there. Ogden took the child off the bed, and said, "I would soon put it right", (referring to the baby), "if it was not for my neck". He went to a public house in Weston with Ogden and the other woman, where she again said she was sure her lad was drowned. He did not know who the other woman was, and had not seen her since. When Gore left the boat on the Tuesday night, he said he had promised to meet a person at Runcorn. He did not say who it was.

**James Limb** said he lived at 64 Nelson Street, Runcorn, and was a boatman. He knew Gore, the deceased. On Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> May, as he was going into Manchester, he met Gore with his boat coming from Manchester. Ogden was on the boat, with Gore beside her. Mrs Ogden spoke to him, saying, "Hello, Jim, is that thee? Where are you going to?" He said to Manchester. There was a man steering, to whom Gore was speaking. Gore seemed to be the worse for drink, and nothing more was said. He had not since seen Gore alive. He (witness) saw Ogden again on Friday night the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. He went into the Albion beershop in Nelson Street, and saw her sitting there. He sat down, and she came and sat down by his side. Leathwood was also there. Mrs Ogden said to him, "Do you remember meeting us on the new cutting?" He said, "Ay". She said, "We have had a row since then ; he is drowned. I know where he is, but I won't tell, and no one will make me tell". He understood she was talking about Gore. There were a good many people in the house, and he did not take particular notice of what was said. They had to leave the house then, as it was shutting up time.

Elizabeth Owen of Chester said she had lived at Mrs Ogden's since Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. She had never seen Gore.

PC (B.....) said at a quarter to four on Thursday morning, the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst, he was on duty near the Derby Arms, and saw a number of men standing near the canal. Some of the men called to him, and told him there was a man in the canal. He went and saw a body there, which he recovered, and took it to the stable attached to the Waterloo Hotel. The body was properly dressed, with the exception of a hat. The right trouser leg was torn and the right trouser pocket turned inside out. He noticed that the face was cut and discoloured. He searched the pockets, and found in the left hand coat pocket four bronze nails and a child's mouth organ. There was some thick twist tobacco in both waistcoat pockets. There was no money. The body was in the canal near the crane, opposite the Derby Arms.

Frederick Wright, recalled, said that when Gore left the boat on the Tuesday night, he told him he had only a shilling.

Mary Ann Hillier, recalled, said that when she saw Gore in the Blue Ball, she noticed a mark in the centre of the forehead. It seemed to be healed up.

Jane Hicks said she was the wife of Thomas Hicks and lived in Cooper Street, Runcorn. She knew Mrs Ogden. On Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, she went with Mrs Ogden to Weston Point. She went with her because Mrs Ogden came to her house and said, "Will Gore is missing from his flat, will you come with me to Weston Point?" On arriving at Weston Point, Ogden got on board Gore's boat, and she (witness) followed her. Ogden had her baby with her. They went into the cabin. She (witness) said to Wright, "Hasn't Will turned up?" He said, "No, I wish he would". She saw Rowland and another man come on board. (Here the witness, though much pressed by the Coroner, denied that Mrs Ogden said anything about Gore being drowned, and about the baby, as stated by the witness Rowland).

**Joseph Sturgess** said he lived at Bedford Leigh in Lancashire. He knew the deceased. On Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, he was with his flat at Weston Point, and Rowland was helping him. They were then about 50 or 60 yards from Gore's flat. In consequence of what Rowland said to him, he went with him to Gore's boat. They both went into the cabin. He saw there Wright, Ogden and Mrs Hicks. Rowland said when he got into the cabin, "Where's Bill?" He meant Gore, the captain of the boat. Ogden said, "He is drowned". She took the child out of the bed, wished that it was dead, and said if it was not for her own neck she would drown it. He was disgusted, and left the boat,

Rowland following.

The Coroner, addressing the jury, said they had now to consider what they thought had been the cause of death of the man Gore. The evidence, as they were aware, was certainly conflicting, and he thought it had indeed been made more so by some of the witnesses, who had evidently not told the whole truth. The evidence of Ogden of course they would take with caution, as she appeared to be an interested party. After being cautioned, she said she was only with Gore in the earlier part of the day ; but that, he thought, had been thoroughly contradicted by her own statements to other people afterwards, especially to the girl Leathwood, whose statement he did not see any reason to doubt. From the evidence it appeared that on the day in question the deceased was drinking with Ogden, according to her own statement, in the early part of the day. He then went to Weston, and Wright states that he again left Weston at 9.30 in the evening and came to Runcorn, where he had been seen by several people, Rowland, Hillier and Moores, and each time in the company of Ogden. There appeared to be nothing improper during the whole time ; simply a question of drinking, and if they took the least favourable view of it, then deceased was certainly "fresh". After that time it was all supposition. The next thing was Ogden's getting home and stating to Leathwood that Gore was coming in. He did not come in ; and it seemed the woman Tomkinson saw Ogden in the street that night, and just afterwards heard voices, one of which she recognised as Ogden's, and a man's voice. If the matter had ended there, he thought they would have very little difficulty about it, but would simply have returned an open verdict. The most awkward part of the case seemed to be in Ogden's own statement to different people that she knew where the deceased was, and that she knew "he was drowned". It would be for them to consider in what form they should put their verdict. Referring to the witness Hicks, he thought her evidence could not fairly be received, as it was flatly contradicted, and he would ask them to dismiss from their minds altogether her evidence. The evidence of Leathwood and Limb was very important, as when in the Albion Hotel, after Gore was missing, Ogden, as had been stated by the two witnesses, said she knew where the deceased was, and that he was drowned. To put it in the mildest form, the case looked awkward, and it was for them to consider what their verdict should be. There was one person in particular to whom suspicion pointed, and he would ask them to consider the case carefully.

The jury then retired for a few minutes, and on returning into the room, the foreman announced that they had agreed to the following verdict :- "That on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, the deceased, William Gore, was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal, between Doctor's and Waterloo Bridge but how he came there there was no evidence to show, but that from the evidence given, considerable suspicion attaches itself to the conduct of (?Keira) Ogden, a widow, residing in Nelson Street".

The Coroner said he was very much displeased with the manner in which the witnesses Ogden and Hicks had given their evidence, and to mark his displeasure, he should not allow them anything for attending.

### **37 25 June 1879**

CHESTER CITY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

**A COUPLE OF YOUNG RASCALS** Henry Whitby and Charles Heywood, two little boys, were charged with wilfully damaging growing flowers and shrubs in the garden of Mr R Jones, Cambrian View. At half past four that morning, a flatman named **Williams** was on the towing path of the canal, and saw Whitby in prosecutor's garden breaking blossom from a fruit tree and throwing it to the other lad. Inspector Lindsay arrested the boys at half past six. The prosecutor said he did not wish to press the charge, but he had suffered so much by the destruction of shrubs &c, and by the breaking down of walls, that he was obliged to put a stop to it. Both the boys confessed to having been out all night, having played truant from school and being afraid to go home. They were lectured by the magistrates, and the case was dismissed on payment of costs.

### **38 28 June 1879**

NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

**RELIEF CASES** **James Gerrard**, waterman, now of Birkenhead and formerly of Castle



Northwich, was summoned for disobedience of an order to contribute to the maintenance of his mother. Mr G Arrowsmith stated that the defendant was 38s 4d in arrears. Ordered to pay, or go to prison in default.

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE Samuel Bratt**, a young man, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working it when suffering from a severe wound. Defendant pleaded guilty. Inspector Harper, of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said that on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst near Vale Royal Lock on the river Weaver, he saw the defendant and another youth in charge of two horses going along the bank, hauling a boat towards Winsford. The appearance of the horse of which the defendant had charge caused him to make an examination. He had nothing to say about its condition, but on the shoulder on the near side there was a wound two inches long and more than an inch wide. It was very bad, and matter was adhering to the collar. He spoke to the defendant, who said that the horse had not been out for a fortnight in consequence of the wound, but he was obliged to bring it out that day or else lose his place. Witness asked him who had ordered him to take the horse out, but he would not tell. He then told him to cease working it and lead it quietly home. The wound must have been there a fortnight, and it seemed to cause much pain. The defendant, replying to the Bench, said he worked for Mr Evans, salt proprietor, to whom the horse belonged. The animal had been standing in the stable, and the wound was skinned over. On the day in question, he was obliged to take the horse to assist another horse in hauling a boat. The Chairman : How far had you hauled this boat when the officer saw you – from Weston Point? Defendant : No, from Pickering's Lock. The Chairman : You ought not to have brought this horse out when it was unfit to work. You will have to pay a fine of 10s and costs, or in default 14 days.

### **39 30 July 1879**

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING – GALLANT RESCUE BY RUNCORN POLICE OFFICER** About half past eleven o'clock on Friday night last, a boatman named **Somerwell Wallsbeen**, 64 years of age, of Chatterton, who had imbibed rather too freely and was wending his way towards the docks, managed to walk into the canal near Waterloo Bridge, Runcorn, and would, in all probability, have been drowned but for the gallant conduct of Police-constable Sweeney who, at the time, was standing near Waterloo Bridge, and hearing cries for assistance, rushed to the side of the canal and discerned Wallsbeen struggling in the water. Sweeney, who was in uniform, at once threw off his hat, jumped into the canal and swam towards the drowning man, who was then in a most exhausted state, and it was with great difficulty that Sweeney got hold of him. He then swam with him to the side, and they were assisted out by Joseph Booth, a constable in the employ of the Bridgewater Navigation Company. Wallsbeen was almost unconscious, and was conveyed to a house in Mersey Street, where restoratives were applied, and we are glad to say is now no worse for his sudden immersion.

### **40 23 August 1879**

#### **MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE Thomas Hatley**, a boatman, was summoned for cruelty to a horse ; and **Henry Malpas**, the owner, was summoned for causing it to be so treated. PC Turner said that on the 15<sup>th</sup> July he observed a horse (of which Hatley had charge) on the canal bank in Neston, towing a boat laden with slack. It appeared to be suffering great pain, and on being drawn up it stood on three legs. It was taken up, and on the following day it was examined by Mr Barker VS and Superintendent Hindley, and Malpas's wife came up and said if it was not fit for work it should be destroyed. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, witness saw it destroyed. Inspector Harper of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said that he saw the horse after it was slaughtered, and found that it had been suffering from extreme disease of the stifle joint of the off hind leg. As the horse had been destroyed, he did not desire to press the case. The defendants were each ordered to pay 5s 6d costs.



**41 10 September 1879**

LEGAL NOTICE

THE BANKRUPTCY ACT 1800

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF LANCASHIRE HOLDEN AT WARRINGTON In the matter of Proceedings for Liquidation by arrangement or composition with creditors instituted by **GEORGE CLAY** of Percival Lane, Runcorn, in the county of Chester, provision dealer and boatman.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a first general meeting of the creditors of the above named person has been summoned to be held at the Wilson's Hotel, Runcorn, in the county of Chester, on the Twentieth day of September instant, at half past ten o'clock in the forenoon precisely.

Dated this second day of September 1879.

ALGERNON FLETCHER

Northwich, Cheshire.

Solicitor to the said debtor.

**42 13 December 1879**

OPENING OF THE BOATMAN'S MISSION ROOM, NANTWICH The new Mission Room built by the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company at the Acton Wharf, for the use of the boat people employed on the canal, was opened on Tuesday afternoon. The Mission was first started in August 1877 by the Rev R V Barker, the then senior curate of the Nantwich Parish Church, and now vicar of St Paul's, Preston. When the Canal Boats Act reached its final stage in the House of Commons, Mr J A Davenport, Surveyor and Inspector for the Nantwich Union and Rural Sanitary Authority, was led to enquire into the social and moral condition of the boat people. The result was that he put himself in communication with Mr George Smith of Colville, Leicester, who took a deep interest in the welfare of this hitherto much neglected portion of the community. A supply of periodicals was forwarded by that gentleman and distributed by Mr Clay, the manager at the Acton Wharf, and at his suggestion Mr Davenport appealed to the Rev R V Barker, whose labours among the fishermen of Yarmouth, where he previously held a curacy, eminently fitted him for the work. Mr Barker entered warmly into the scheme, and with the permission of the Rev R S Redfern, vicar of Acton, agreed to hold a boatmen's service every Sunday afternoon. The first service was held on Sunday August 19<sup>th</sup> 1877, in the warehouse at Basin End. A little mission room was boarded off from the large cheese warehouse, and provided with desk, forms, (...) and chair. The accommodation was necessarily limited, and the solitary pane of glass in the roof admitted but a feeble light. Engravings and illustrations of Biblical incidents enlivened the walls, and when lighted up and comfortably filled, the little mission room presented a snug and cosy appearance. The average attendance of boat people was about a score, occasionally reaching to 30, and even more during the severe frost of last winter, when the boats were ice bound. The want of music was met by a small harmonium purchased by the subscriptions of a number of kind friends interested in the mission, including Mr and Mrs Tollemache of Dorfield Hall, Mrs Bellyse, Rev R Redfern, Miss Bennett, Captain Roberts, Mr Griffiths, Mr Hugh Cawley, Rev R V Barker and others. The service consists of prayers chiefly extempore, hymns, the reading of a portion of Scripture, and an extempore address or sermon, and very many encouraging results have attended the labours of the gentleman in charge of the mission. A Sunday School has also been established in connection with it, and under the care of Miss Clara Griffiths occasionally assisted by Mrs Clay, good work is being done among the boatmen's children. For some time past, it had been felt that the requirements of the congregation had outgrown the early provision made for them, and the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, in response to an appeal, undertook to build a room capable of accommodating between 60 and 70 boat people, which might be used as a place of religious worship on Sunday, as well as of relaxation during the rest of the week. The result was seen in the neat little mission room adjoining the cheese warehouse on the canal bank. The interior has been furnished by the liberality of various kind friends, the Rev R V Barker having made a present of the lectern. Some eight or nine substantial seats with backs accommodated the congregation, and the side windows afford ample light. A small raised platform at one end is reserved for the use of the

officiating clergyman, and this will eventually be kept distinct from the other part of the room by a moveable curtain. In this way the boat people will be able to meet together for social converse, and read, and in other ways spend a pleasant evening, different from what they are now able to do in their cribbed confined little boat cabins.

The opening of the new mission room took place at half past four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon by the celebration of Divine service. The room was closely packed with boatmen and boatwomen, to the number of between 60 and 70.

The Rector of Nantwich and the Rev LaGrange Leney read the prayers and lessons, and a sermon was preached by the Rev R V Barker MA, who made touching reference to his past connection with the mission, and the success which had attended the labours of himself and others on behalf of the boat people.

After service, the boat people assembled in the warehouse, which had been tastefully decorated with evergreens and the walls hung with scriptural mottoes and texts. A number of boat people whose boats were frozen in at Barbridge walked to Acton, and as a result about 80 sat down to tea, the provisions for which were kindly given by Mrs Worsey, Mr Hugh Cawley and Mrs Tollemache. The Misses Griffiths, assisted by Mrs Clay, undertook the management of the tea, and presided at the tables. The company was much larger than was anticipated, and necessitated the sending of a messenger to Nantwich for a further supply of provisions. About 20 children afterwards sat down, and there was ample store for everyone, supplemented by cakes and oranges later in the evening by the kindness of Mrs Tollemache. After tea,

The Rev R V Barker said he was very glad to have met so many boat people that day. He thought as he was coming to Nantwich what bad weather they were experiencing, and when he got to the Basin End found the canal frozen over. It illustrated the old saying about good coming out of evil, because had it been otherwise, he did not suppose there would have been half so many present to enjoy the good tea they had partaken of that evening. Something like two and a half years had elapsed since the opening of the Boatmen's Mission, and the first service held in the little room adjoining the cheese warehouse. For some time the want of a more suitable place was felt, and he felt thankful that it had been carried out. They ought not to forget to whom they were indebted. He remembered Mr Davenport speaking to him at the Sunday School at Nantwich, and saying what a good thing it would be to get up a service for the boat people ; and his replying that if it were held at a suitable time on a Sunday afternoon, he would do what he could to help it forward. From that time down to July, when he left Nantwich for Preston, he attended each service when at home, and he was thankful to see that the Mission had prospered so well with the assistance of Mr Davenport and other friends. The Directors of the Railway and Canal Company had given the land and built the mission room, and they had to thank kind friends in Acton and Nantwich for fitting it up, and presenting various other things necessary for carrying on the services and promoting the comfort of those who attended them. And having done so much, he hoped it would not be expected from Mr Leney, who would now take in hand the mission, that he should go round to the boats and tell the people it was service time. They had a bell which would ring ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before the commencement of service, so that they would be without any excuse for not knowing the time. Besides the services which would be held there on Sundays, it was hoped that eventually they would be able to arrange for having a few papers and magazines, and social gatherings on weekdays, which would keep them from the public house. He was glad to have met them in such large numbers, and thought they had to thank Jack Frost for having brought them together. He wished them all "a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year", when it came. (Applause).

Mr D Clay said he wished on behalf of the boat people to thank Mr Barker for coming amongst them on that occasion, as well as for his kind and valued ministrations in the past. No matter whether it was cold or hot, storm or wind, he never failed to come amongst them ; and although he had left Nantwich for another town, they all felt their hearty thanks were due to him for what he had done. It was the intention of one of their superintendents to have been present, and tender on behalf of the directors their acknowledgement of Mr Barker's services, ; but as he had been prevented coming by another important engagement, he (Mr Clay) would venture to do so, at the same time as

he tendered Mr Barker the thanks of the boat people, in whose welfare he had taken so deep an interest. (Applause). They were also much indebted to the rector of Nantwich and his curate Mr Leney, upon whom the work of the mission would principally rest now that Mr Barker had left.

The Rector of Nantwich said as he had had very little to do in connection with that gathering, he could join them most heartily in thanking the friends who had so kindly made provision for that gathering, and the ladies who had presided at the tables. It was no doubt a subject of great thankfulness to all of them that the new mission room had been opened. At one time, it seemed as if nobody cared for the boat people ; but now there were kind and sympathetic friends who felt that they had both bodies and souls to be cared for, and that their children should be brought up and educated in the fear of the Lord. He was glad to recognise amongst those present many who not only attended the mission services, but who also came occasionally to Nantwich Parish Church, which was as free and open to them as to anyone else. They must bear in mind that the Mission Room had been opened for the accommodation of the boat people, and he hoped they would appreciate and make good use of it. If any of them happened to find themselves in the neighbourhood with their boats, he would ask them to try and push on a few miles so as to get to the service, whilst those who were at the Basin End might delay starting on their journey in order to be able to attend. He was quite sure that the loss of an hour in that way would result in real and solid gain to themselves in the end.

The Rev R V Barker, in responding to the vote of thanks proposed by Mr Clay, said he could not forget the kindness shown towards him by the boat people on the occasion of his leaving Nantwich to enter upon his new charge. When he opened his front door in Preston, one of the first things to attract the notice of himself and anyone else who came to see him was the model of a canal boat which they presented him with, and which he had put into a glass case. It always served to remind him of his past connection with the boat people in the service of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, and he hoped they would bear him in kindly remembrance. (Applause).

Mr Davenport proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Griffiths for her services at the harmonium, which was most cordially rendered ; and was followed, at the request of Mr Clay, by several hearty cheers for Mr Barker, the Rector, Mr Davenport and other friends of the mission.

The children of the boat people, numbering about two dozen, afterwards partook of tea in the same room, and the remainder of the evening was spent in various amusements, the proceedings being enlivened by the playing of a band of juvenile instrumentalists, Master (White?) Davenport presiding at the harmonium.

### **43 17 December 1879**

**WARNING TO BOATMEN** At the Congleton County Sessions on Saturday, before Messrs E H Solley (Chairman) , R Besles, H W Williamson, and D Bradwall, a boatman in the employ of Messrs H W Williamson and Company, Stonetrough Colliery Company, Mow Cop, was summoned for having absented himself from the complainant's employ on the 4<sup>th</sup> October. The damages claimed were £3. Mr John Mollard, a clerk at the Stonetrough Colliery Company, proved that the defendant agreed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1879 to serve the company as boatman for twelve months, and that he absconded on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, without having given or received notice. The complainants' claim of £3 was inflicted on the defendant, the sum to be paid in instalments of 1s 6d per week.

### **44 10 January 1880**

**KNUTSFORD QUARTER SESSIONS**

**A PROSPECTIVE CONVICT** **William Tuck**, 20, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a watch and guard and some clothes, the property of **Job Jones**, at Runcorn on December 16<sup>th</sup> last.

Mr Higgins stated that the prosecutor was the owner of a canal boat upon which the prisoner was employed. On the day named, the prisoner was left in charge of the boat, and was afterwards found to have gone off ; a watch and guard, jacket, waistcoat and trousers being also gone. One of the articles was discovered to have been pledged at a pawnbrokers in Northwich, and the accused was

arrested the same night at a lodging house there, when he produced from under his bed the remainder of the things stolen. When taken into custody, he admitted the theft, and said, "This is the third time in four years, since I came out of the reformatory".

The Chairman warned the prisoner that he was in a fair way to penal servitude, and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment.

#### **45 14 January 1880**

##### **SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY**

**ASSAULT** **Elijah Sandbach**, waterman, Winsford, appeared on remand from Middlewich, on the charge of committing an assault on Mrs Dale of the same place. Mr Algernon Fletcher, Northwich, appeared on behalf of the defendant, and said that his client was prepared to plead guilty to a common assault. Mr Fletcher then stated that the defendant had, since the occurrence, been afflicted with epilepsy, and at the time he committed the assault he was insane through drink. The Chairman, addressing the defendant, said the magistrates had thought over the case, and were inclined to deal leniently with him, partly for the sake of his health, and partly on account of his previous good character. In consequence of the attack with which he had been visited, they would only fine him £3 and costs.

#### **46 31 January 1880**

##### **NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS**

**TILL ROBBERY AT RUDHEATH** **Jane Taylor**, the wife of a boatman, was charged with stealing £1 17s 6d, the property of Joseph Schofield of the Broken Cross Public House, Rudheath. Martha Schofield, wife of Joseph Schofield of the Broken Cross Inn, said : The prisoner slept at our house on Friday night last. Next morning, I did not get up until half past eight. Between six and eight, my husband got up and took downstairs with him a tin can containing about £2 in gold, silver and copper. About 8.20, I heard my husband say, "Now, mistress, you will just have nice time to catch the train". I heard the back door open and close, and then I heard my husband go down into the cellar. After that, I heard someone walk from the front door towards the kitchen and speak to the children, and I recognised the prisoner's voice. I then heard a noise of the money tin in the bar, as though money was being poured out. I screamed out, and heard my husband and someone also return into the house. I got up immediately and went downstairs. I got hold of the prisoner, who was in the kitchen, and accused her of having taken money from the tin. She replied, "Oh no, I haven't". I told her to turn out her pockets. She did so, and produced four half crowns, five shilling pieces, two sixpences, 1s 7 1/2d in copper and one sovereign. My husband pointed out a penny amongst the money, and said, "I can swear to this. You have been in my till". She replied, "It is all my own". We then let her go. She afterwards returned, and I saw a piece of gold in her mouth. My husband tried to take it from her, but could not.

Joseph Schofield, husband of the last witness, deposed that on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> January, he brought downstairs a tin can containing about £2 in gold, silver and copper, and he put it on a shelf in the bar, and the prisoner saw where it was. He went into the cellar about half past eight, the prisoner having then left for the purpose of catching the nine o'clock train for Middlewich. When he was in the cellar, he heard his wife screaming, and he ran upstairs. He met the prisoner coming out of the bar, and his wife cried out, "Mrs Taylor has been in the till". He went to the till, and found that a portion of the money had been abstracted. He accused the prisoner of stealing the money, and she ran into the back yard, screaming. He asked Mr (?Cookham), who was there at the time, to keep his eye on her, and he followed her out. She was fetched there, and his wife said, "Now turn that money out, and there shall not be any bother about it". Prisoner replied, "All the money I have got is a half crown and a shilling", and she produced a purse containing these coins. Mrs Schofield felt about her clothes, and found a pocket under her skirt, which she turned up, and the money now produced fell on the table. Amongst the money was an old penny which he had (.....), and had had in his possession till that time. He afterwards saw a gold coin in her mouth. He tried to get it out, but could not. He then sent for the police. PC (....) arrested the prisoner on Saturday at the Broken

Cross Inn. In reply to the charge, she said, "All the money they took off me was my own". The prisoner emphatically denied the charge, and in the course of a long statement, she said that she had £3 15s when she went to the house on Friday night, and that when she was put to bed that night she was quite drunk. The magistrates found the prisoner guilty, and sentenced her to two months' imprisonment.

**47 20 March 1880**

NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN **John Boden**, a flatman living in Witton, was summoned to show cause why an order should not be made upon him to contribute to the support of two of his boys, who are in the Stockport Industrial School. It was stated that the defendant was a steady and industrious man, but that his wife was addicted to drink, and neglected her children. He was employed at Birkenhead and very seldom came home. The defendant said he was a hand on a coal flat, plying between Birkenhead and Liverpool, and he received 18s a trip. Sometimes he made a trip a week and sometimes one a fortnight. He seldom came home, because he had no comfort when he did come. The Bench granted an order for payment of 1s a week in respect of each child.

**48 20 March 1880**

OVER POLICE COURT On Tuesday last, before the Mayor of Over (Mr Richard Burgess), **John Pickstock** of Over, waterman, was charged under a warrant with running away from the said township on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1879, leaving his wife on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1880 chargeable to the common fund of the Northwich Union. Mr Richard Arrowsmith deposed that he was relieving officer, and that the wife and children had been chargeable to the Union for a month. Prisoner had run away. Mrs Pickstock said that prisoner did nothing to keep himself. He ran away and left no means of support. Witness had to apply for relief for herself and children. Prisoner said he had not left his wife and children chargeable. They abused him and turned him out of the house. He was willing to live with her and find her a home. He would not pay anything towards her support. The Mayor committed Pickstock to prison for 14 days with hard labour, the sum of 9s 10 3/4d found upon him to be appropriated towards his maintenance and conveyance to prison.

**49 21 April 1880**

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DRUNK ON LICENSED PREMISES **James Dolla**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk at the Swan Inn, Shaw Street, on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. Sergeant Handford said on the day in question he visited the Swan Inn and found the defendant very drunk. He took him outside, and on one of his friends promising to take him home, he was allowed to go. PC Lowndes corroborated this evidence, and the defendant was fined 5s and 11s 6d costs.

**50 12 May 1880**

NOTICE I, **GEORGE HINDLEY**, of the "Best Way", Barnton, waterman, hereby give notice that I will not be responsible for any debt contracted by my wife, **ELEANOR HINDLEY**, after this date. Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 1880.

the mark of

GEORGE X HINDLEY

Witness : Jas Newell, Northwich

**51 15 May 1880**

CONGLETON COUNTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

PUBLIC HOUSE PROSECUTION Joseph Elkin, landlord of the Rising Sun, Kent Green, Odd Rode, was charged with a contravention of the licensing laws in having sold, at a quarter to ten on Sunday morning the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, intoxicating liquor to **John Machin**, a boatman, who was not a *bona fide* traveller. Machin was also charged with being on the premises during prohibited hours.



Mr John Latham appeared for the two defendants. PC Davidson stated that he was keeping a special watch on the defendant Elkins house on the date mentioned, and lay concealed for an hour and a half at a distance of fifty yards from the Rising Sun. Witness saw the defendant Machin approach the back premises of the public house, and after leaning for a short time over the back wall looking into the yard, he saw Machin receive a bottle which was handed over the wall to him. When witness accosted Machin, the latter replied that he had been getting half a pint of rum for a woman who had fallen into the canal. Witness, however, tasted the contents of the bottle, and found it to be whisky. The defendant said he came from Plant's lock, near Kidsgrove, this morning. The defence set up by Mr Latham was that Machin was not on the licensed premises, and that he was really a *bona fide* traveller, having walked more than three miles the same morning. The landlord of the public house was absent when Machin called, and the girl who was left in charge was induced to supply the liquor through the statement of Machin that it was for a "woman that had fallen into the cut". The Bench, after hearing the defendant Machin, dismissed both cases.

## 52 22 May 1880

### IMPUDENT ROBBERY BY BOYS AT WARRINGTON

WELL DESERVED PUNISHMENT At the Warrington Borough Police Court on Monday, before the Mayor and ex-Mayor, John Murray, 14 years of age, Edward Jeffries, 14, John Kearns, 17, and James Butler, 16, were charged with stealing the sum of 3s from the person of **John Sankey**, the 5<sup>th</sup> inst.

The Chief Constable stated that the principal witness was the prosecutor, a lad 13 years of age, employed at a newspaper office, and he was the son of a waterman living in the Twelve Houses, Howley. All of the prisoners had been convicted of felony, and Kearns only came out of gaol on Saturday morning, having suffered three months' imprisonment. Having detailed the facts of the case, he called

The prosecutor, who said he was employed in a newspaper office in the town. On Saturday afternoon he left the office, having received two florins as his wages, and went into the market, where he spent a penny. He then started for home by way of Church Street, and whilst going across a field near Mr Jackson's (pawnbroker) shop, he saw the prisoners, who were playing at pitch and toss. Murray came up to him, took his (witness's) cap off, and kicked it about the field. Murray then knocked him down and put his hand in one of his pockets. Witness told him he would give him a penny if he would allow him to get up. Butler said, "Don't let him get up", the other two prisoners kneeling upon him and putting their hands into his pockets. He was robbed of the money, but a shilling was subsequently brought to his father by a lad, who said he had found it in the field. He heard one of the prisoners say that Butler had got a two shilling piece, and witness told him he would give him a penny if he would give him the money back. Murray said, "I will tell you who has got the shilling if you will give me a penny". He then told him that Kearns had got it, but Kearns said he had not seen it. The prisoners told him he had better go home to his father, which he did, and information of the robbery was afterwards given to the police.

At this stage of the proceedings, the prisoner Jeffries was discharged, the evidence against him being the weakest, and he was called upon to give evidence against the prisoners. He said he saw Murray knock prosecutor down, whilst Butler got on him and said, "Let me get into his pockets". Butler then took the money out of Sankey's pockets. In answer to the Chief Constable, he said he never told a policeman that he saw Murray take the money.

PC Monaghan said he apprehended the prisoners and charged them with the robbery. Murray replied, "I knocked Sankey down, but I didn't take any money from him" ; Jeffries, "I saw Murray knock him down and take the money out of his pockets" ; Kearns, "I never touched him. I saw Murray knock him down and take 3s out of his pocket" ; Butler, "I only pulled a paper out of his pocket".

The Mayor said this was Kearns's sixth appearance. He had twice served three months' imprisonment, and once fourteen days. The prisoners would be committed to gaol for three months with hard labour.

Kearns : Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you. You are very kind, sir.

The Mayor, addressing Jeffries, said : Let this be a warning to you. It is a great mercy that you have not also been committed to gaol on the same charge. Take care what you are doing in future. See if you cannot act better for the remainder of your life.

### 53 26 May 1880

#### ALTRINCHAM PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS Robert Glover**, a boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse at Sale. PC Dawson stated that he was on duty near Dr White's bridge, when he saw the defendant kicking his horse in the stomach in a most brutal manner. He kicked it for about 20 yards. Defendant had nothing to say. The horse would not draw, and he was a little bit vexed. He was fined 10s and costs 9s 6d. The money was at once paid.

### 54 29 May 1880

**DISPUTE AND ASSAULT ON THE CANAL AT MIDDLEWICH** At the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Tuesday, before Lieutenant-Colonel France-Hayhurst (chairman), Messrs W H Court, E H Moss and John D Kay, **Charles Williams**, boatman, was charged with assaulting, on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, **John Tuckey**, likewise a boatman, and **Harriet Tuckey**, his wife. Mr J H Cooke appeared for the defence. John Tuckey said that on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, he and his wife were in their boat, laden with crates, going to Runcorn. As they approached Lowe's Lock, and already within the "distance post", Williams, who was going with his boat in the opposite direction, began to draw off the water. He went to him, his wife at that time being on the towpath, and Williams knocked her down, at the same time using abusive language. Tuckey went to her assistance ; when Williams, saying, "I'll kill you", struck the complainant with the windlass he held in his hand three or four times on the head, and kicked him in the body. Mr Cooke said that before cross-examining the complainant, it would be better that the witnesses should leave the court. In answer to Mr Cooke, the complainant said that at the time of the occurrence their boat was about 120 yards from the lock ; and the defendant's boat, which was lying below the lock, was run against the lower gates, and forced open, the water at that time not being out of the lock, and not ready to receive his boat. Mr Cooke : When his boat was in the lock, did you lift the paddles to let the water in again? Complainant : Yes, of course I did. He denied having kept the paddle up after the defendant had said his boat was sinking. He did not say, "Let the boat sink". He denied that his wife commenced the quarrel by spitting in the defendant's face. He characterised the conduct of the defendant as that of a raving madman. **Sarah Wilkinson**, daughter of the lock-keeper, stated that she was present, and said the gates were open ready for Tuckey to come through, as his horse had passed the distance stamp, and because he came to fill the lock again. Williams struck him several times with a windlass, and then threw it into the garden. She generally looked after the lock in the absence of her father. Williams's boat was not in the lock first. She heard Williams say his boat was sinking ; but did not see Tuckey do anything, as he was so badly abused. She afterwards stated emphatically that the Tuckeys still kept the paddles up after Williams had said his boat was sinking. Williams dropped the paddles himself. There were only two paddles up, and the water was not going on his boat. In answer to the Chairman, witness said she heard no bad language used. Harriet Tuckey, wife of the complainant, gave corroborative evidence, and said that when Williams attempted to let the lock off, their boat was in the lock's mouth. When Williams said his boat was sinking, her husband dropped the paddles. Mr Cooke, addressing the Bench, said the defendant had a good character. He had been employed for a long time by the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company. Mr Cooke then read a letter of recommendation as to the defendant's good character. The boat of the defendant's was within the distance stamps according to the complainant's own evidence. It was admitted that the defendant got to the lock first and commenced to let the water down. As to the assault, Mr Cooke contended that if the defendant was entitled to the lock, he was also entitled to keep it by all measures. Any aggravation which might have arisen was caused by the complainant and not by the defendant. The complainant had allowed the paddles to be up and the water to come through the top gates, and the

consequence was Williams's boat got jammed between the two gates. His boat was loaded with 200 bags of wheat, valued at £400, and the complainant admitted that the boat was in danger of sinking. There was no doubt the amount of violence used was greatly exaggerated. Mr Cooke concluded by hoping their Worships would deal leniently with the defendant. **William Furber**, mate of Williams's boat, gave evidence, but stated that Williams struck Tuckey with his fist and not with the windlass. The Chairman thought the case had been proved, and ordered Williams, for the assault on John Tuckey, to pay 20s and costs, and for the assault on the woman 10s and costs, or in default 14 days.

## 55 12 June 1880

EXCITING SCENE ON THE RIVER AT LIVERPOOL Shortly before ten o'clock on Tuesday night, a young cow broke loose from the Central Railway Station, Ranelagh Street, Liverpool, and proceeded at headlong speed along Church Street, Lord Street, Castle Street and Water Street to the river, scattering people in all directions on the way, knocking down several men and boys, and also running against a tramcar. At the corner of James Street, the animal ran over a youth who endeavoured to stop her course, and he was seriously hurt. On approaching No 2 bridge of the George's stage, leading down to the Woodside boats, she threw down a lady, who had to be taken into the stagemaster's hut. The infuriated animal, being pursued by hundreds of men and boys, all shouting and yelling, now ran at great speed down the bridge, and after clearing the whole of the Prince's Stage, on which there were hundreds of people, she plunged into the river and made for the Cheshire shore. A boatman named **Robert Stewart** and four others manned a river gig and proceeded to row after the animal, which they overtook after about half an hour's pulling, in the presence of an excited multitude, who cheered lustily when the beast was captured. They towed her into the space behind the stage, and landed her at the boat slip. Here she crushed two men badly against the wall, and was near pitching two others into the river. Ultimately she was made fast to a post, and allowed some time to rest. She was then handed over to an official from the railway station, and driven, or rather dragged with ropes, by half a dozen men to Lucas's Repository in Great Charlotte Street, with the utmost difficulty, making several attempts to break loose on the way. It was half an hour after midnight before the animal was finally secured. So far as could be ascertained, the injuries sustained by the people thrown down were not of a very grave character.

## 56 7 July 1880

SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN AT BUNBURY This case, which is exciting great interest in the neighbourhood and which was briefly noticed in last week's *Guardian*, is assuming unmistakeable signs of being a bad one. The additional information we have gathered is to the effect that the boat worked by the three men, **Roscoe**, who was steering, **John Evans**, who was driving, and the deceased, **Richard Price**, left Nantwich on her way to Ellesmere Port on the afternoon of Wednesday last ; when she arrived at Bunbury Locks, a distance of eight miles, which would be about 11 o'clock at night, the deceased was found in the cabin under such circumstances that led to the detention of the boat. It appears that several men were noticed riding on the boat as it left Nantwich, and as these were seen returning some hours later in a drunken state, the agent, **Mr Jay**, immediately went after the boat, knowing that among the cargo were some barrels of porter. He overtook it at Wardle, and found his suspicions correct, and that the porter had been tampered with. Upon this, he sent back to Barbridge for the assistance of the agent there, **Mr Bowcock**, who accompanied the boat to Calveley, where the porter was taken out. At Wardle, Mr Bowcock's attention was called to the state of Price, who to all appearances lay drunk in the cabin. The cabin, however, was not entered. After staying a short time at Calveley the boat proceeded, and arrived at the Bunbury locks, a mile further on, about a quarter past eleven o'clock at night, when the man in charge of the locks found Price lying dead in the cabin with the back part of his head almost knocked in. The inquest was opened before Mr Churton, coroner, on Friday morning, at the Inn, Higher Bunbury ; but for convenience sake was removed to the girls' schoolroom near, the schools being closed for the holidays. The jury having been sworn and the body viewed, the canal boat was

visited whilst lying at the Bunbury locks, about a mile distant. The boat is of the ordinary kind, the cabin being about seven or eight feet long by four or five feet high ; seats are along each side, and a small stove near the door. A quantity of blood was noticed on the floor at the further end of the cabin, where the deceased's head lay. A small hammer and poker were also spotted with some dark liquid, and these were taken possession of by the police. Previous to the inquiry, Dr Kirkpatrick of Bunbury was ordered by the Coroner to make a *post mortem* examination of the body, and upon the jury reassembling,

**John Cadman**, who was the first witness, stated that he was on duty attending to the Locks on the night of Wednesday. At about a quarter past eleven o'clock, the boat *Eytan* came up in the locks ; William Ruscoe was steering and John Evans was driving. Ruscoe asked him to come into the cabin with his lamp, for he thought "Dick" was dead. He went to the cabin and found the man lying on the floor on his left side, with his feet towards the door. He was very much bruised about the head. He felt his hands, and they were cold. There appeared to be spots of blood on the stove and a quantity on the floor. The stove was at the last end of the body, and there was no fire in it. He saw nothing in the cabin to lead him to think that there had been a struggle, nor anything he could have been struck with. He suggested that a doctor and policeman should be sent for at once.

Dr Kirkpatrick of Bunbury said that he was called up early in the morning of Thursday, and went to the Locks by request, and found the dead body of a man lying in the cabin of the boat. He noticed some bruises on his head and a deal of blood on the floor, but the place being too small he could not make an accurate examination. The body was cold and stiff, and death had taken place several hours previous – three or four hours, if not more. That morning, he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body. He found the head very much congested. Behind the right ear there were several bruises, one extending down to the bone, and a good deal of swelling on the same side. Over the left eye there was also an injury. Behind and below the left ear there was a great deal of effusion, and a small slit about a quarter of an inch long extending half way through the ear, which was almost bloodless. There was discolouration of the upper part of the chest. He found considerable effusion between the scalp and skull. At the bottom of the skull there was a large fracture, penetrating the outer and the inner table. The cause of death was the fracture of the skull, and death must have been almost instantaneous. A single fall or blow might have caused all the injuries on the left side, but it was not probable. The other organs of the body were healthy.

Samuel Bowcock, agent for the canal company at Barbridge, said on Wednesday evening about a quarter to eight o'clock, the boat in charge of Ruscoe arrived at Barbridge. Some cargo was discharged, and in about a quarter of an hour the boat went on. He did not see the deceased until he was sent for by Mr Jay, and then he only noticed through the door a man lying in the cabin.

PC Lathom said he went to the Bunbury locks on the morning of Thursday, and found the deceased lying dead in the cabin of a boat. He caused him to be removed to Bunbury. That morning, he had made a thorough examination of the boat. There was a quantity of blood on the floor of the boat and some splashes of a dark nature on the stove. The hammer and poker produced were also spotted. The greater part of the blood on the floor was under the deceased's head, and he lay with his feet towards the cabin door.

This was all the evidence taken.

The Coroner stated that the case appeared to him to be one of great suspicion ; and to afford an opportunity for the superintendent of police to get other witnesses, he should adjourn the inquest until that day week.

The case causes the greatest interest in the neighbourhood, and judging from appearances, little doubt is entertained but that the man had met with foul play.

**57**      **17 July 1880**

BANKRUPTS (From the *London Gazette* of Tuesday)

**R Blower jun**, Leftwich, waterman.

**58 24 July 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

NEGLIGENT BOATMEN **John Batley**, a boatman, was summoned for damaging one of the locks on the Trent and Mersey Canal by allowing his boat to run into it. The defendant pleaded guilty, and was fined £1 including costs, or in default 14 days' imprisonment. Defendant went to gaol. **David (?Jelly)**, another boatman, was charged with a similar offence, but did not appear. Fined £1 including costs.

**59 31 July 1880**

CHESTER CITY POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY

A CANAL BOATMAN IN TROUBLE **James Wood**, captain of the canal boat *Rover*, was charged with stealing four boards from his boat, the property of a gentleman at Middlewich, on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, and valued at 4s. **Mr Steele**, agent to the Shropshire Union Canal Company, said the boat was loaded at Ellesmere Port the previous night, about six o'clock, with deal, and was to proceed to Middlewich. PC W Wright deposed that about a quarter to twelve o'clock on the previous night, he saw the defendant put the boards in the cellar of the Grosvenor Arms. He asked him why he was putting the boards in there, and he made no reply. On the road to the police station, the prisoner said, "I hope you will forgive me this time ; it is my first offence", and also offered the officer a half sovereign. The prisoner was remanded until Saturday.

**60 7 August 1880**

I, **JABEZ PICKSTOCK** of No 109 Weaver Street, Over, in the county of Chester, provision dealer and waterman, do HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the General Annual Licensing Meeting to be held at the Court House in Oakmere in and for the Petty Sessional Division of Eddisbury, in the county of Chester, on Monday the thirtieth day of August next, or at some adjournment thereof, for a licence to sell by retail beer, ale and porter, to be consumed off the premises, at the house and premises situate and being Number 109 Weaver Street, Over, aforesaid, now in my occupation, and which John Garner of High Street, Over aforesaid, corn dealer, is the owner, and which licence is intended to be in lieu of and by way of a removal of a licence now in force granted to the said John Garner, in respect of a house and premises situate at High Street, Over aforesaid, occupied by me.

Dated this third day of August 1880

JABEZ PICKSTOCK

**61 7 August 1880**

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION

PURSUANT to an Order of the County Court of Cheshire holden at Northwich, made in an action Harrison against Harrison, the creditors of or claimants against the estate of **ROBERT HARRISON**, late of Witton in the county of Chester, waterman, who died on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 1878, and whose will was proved on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 1879 by Robert Harrison and William Harrison, the executors therein named, are on or before the 14<sup>th</sup> day of August next, to send by post prepaid to the Registrar of the County Court of Cheshire holden at Northwich, their Christian and surname, addresses and descriptions, the full particulars of their claims, a statement of their accounts and the nature of the securities (if any) held by them. In default thereof they may be excluded from any benefit in the estate. Every creditor holding any security is to produce or transmit the same to the Registrar aforesaid, on or before the 17<sup>th</sup> day of August 1880, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, being the time appointed for adjudicating upon the claims.

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of July 1880

WALTER C CHESHIRE

Registrar



**62 4 September 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

A GIRLS' QUARREL Maria Cotton of Odd Rode was summoned for assaulting Sarah Shaw on the 13<sup>th</sup> August. There was also a cross summons against Sarah Shaw and George Shaw for assaulting Maria Cotton. Mr Selfe appeared for Cotton and Mr Cooke of Middlewich for the Shaws. Sarah Shaw stated that she and Cotton had been having words about some kid gloves a few days before, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, as witness was going over a bridge at the canal, Cotton came, and without saying anything to her, knocked her down and kicked her on her forehead, breast and shoulder. **Samuel Hodgkinson**, boatman, Eaton Moss, gave corroborative evidence. Maria Cotton said that Shaw and some other girls were always insulting her, and would not leave her alone. She caught hold of witness, and they went down together. George Shaw, the father, caught hold of her by the throat and said he would make her fight it out. The Bench dismissed both summonses, and ordered the parties to pay the costs between them.

**63 22 September 1880**

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

THEFT **William Jackson**, a boatman, was charged by **Frank Rothwell** with stealing from a boat on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst, one skirt, one shirt body and one pot of jam, value 4s. It appeared that Jackson had been employed as hand on Rothwell's boats for a number of years. On the day in question, he was seen to go to the cupboard where the things mentioned in the charge were kept, and afterwards they were missing. James Moore, son of Mr Wm Moore, manager of the Runcorn Cocoa Rooms, said on Friday the prisoner came to the Cocoa Rooms and asked him to give him a twopenny pie, or twopence for the pot of jam produced. He refused, and he allowed him to leave it in the Cocoa Rooms at his request, and he said he would call for it the following day. Sergeant Handford proved apprehending the prisoner. The Bench said the prisoner had committed a serious breach of trust, and sent him to prison for three months' hard labour.

**64 22 September 1880**

KEEPING A DOG WITHOUT A LICENCE **Charles Fletcher**, canal boatman of Ellesmere Port, was fined 5s and costs for keeping a dog without a licence.

**65 9 October 1880**

INQUEST AT WINSFORD An inquest was held on Friday last, before Mr Churton, Coroner, at the Golden Lion Inn, Winsford, on the body of **Richard Lightfoot** of High Street, 84 years of age, lately a waterman, who was found dead in bed on Thursday last. Mr Eli Pickstock was foreman of the jury. A verdict of "Died from the visitation of God" was returned.

**66 30 October 1880**

MAN DROWNED AT WINNINGTON On Tuesday, Mr H Churton held an enquiry at the Angel Hotel, Northwich, respecting the death of **Richard Pye**, a ship carpenter, who resided in Beswick's Lane, Winnington. Joseph Ellison deposed that on the morning of Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> inst, the deceased was in charge of a number of empty barges which were moored in a "cut" leading from the river Weaver near Winnington. He last saw him at about a quarter to ten, and he was then in the act of moving one of the barges with a boat hook. On Tuesday he heard that he was missing. **Thomas Barker**, a waterman, stated that he found the body of the deceased with a grapnel on Saturday afternoon in the "cut" not far from where he was last seen by the witness Ellison. It was placed in a boat, landed on the Winnington side of the river, and conveyed to the late residence of the deceased in Beswick Lane. There was no marks of violence on the body. Sergeant Batty said that he found in the pockets of the deceased five small keys, a knife and a penny. The Coroner said there was only one verdict suggested by the evidence, namely that the deceased was found drowned. Although it was morally certain that he lost his life accidentally, yet they had not the fact proved absolutely. The jury then returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**67 17 November 1880**

MIDDLEWICH POLICE COURT On Saturday at the Middlewich Police Court, before Mr W R Court, **Thomas Taylor**, boatman, and his wife **Mary Taylor**, both of Newton, were charged by Henry Fox of the same place with using threats to him on the 12<sup>th</sup> instant. The prosecutor had previously taken out a summons for assault, which was (.....) at the next Sandbach Petty Sessions. The defendants were each bound over to keep the peace for six months, and to pay the costs.

**68 4 December 1880**

A BOATMAN CHARGED WITH ASSAULT At the Sandbach Police Court on Wednesday, before Mr G W Latham, **Thomas Lunt, alias Thomas Shenton**, boatman, was charged with assaulting Thomas Vaughan at Church Lawton on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult, with a poker, and thereby injuring his eye. Defendant was remanded to the next Congleton Petty Sessions.

**69 25 December 1880**

OBTAINING A HORSE BY FALSE PRETENCES AT SALE At the Altrincham Police Court on Tuesday, before Mr Allen, a boatman named **William Clifton** was charged with obtaining a horse by false pretences on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, from Arthur Twigge of Sale. The prisoner went to the prosecutor and brought a postcard which purported to be from Messrs Joseph Davies and Co, asking him whether he could let him have a horse. He allowed him to take one, and subsequently Messrs Davies and Co wrote him that the man did not work for them, and that they would not be responsible. In consequence of what the prisoner's wife said to him, he went to Manchester and found the horse had been sold to a horse slaughterer at Newton Heath for 25s. If it had not been for the statement made by the prisoner, he should not have delivered him the horse. He had hired another horse from witness and paid him £1 per month for it. He was remanded until Friday next.