

## NANTWICH GUARDIAN 1900 to 1919

### 1 6 January 1900

**ALLEGED BREACH OF THE LICENSING LAWS AT WINSFORD** At the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Wednesday, Colonel Francis Hayhurst presiding, **William Fitton**, the licensee of the Swan Inn, Wharton, was summoned for a breach of the licensing laws on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, and John Cotterill, labourer, Winsford Hill, Wharton, was summoned for being on licensed premises during prohibited hours. Mr A Fletcher, Northwich, appeared on behalf of the defendant Fitton.

PS Thomas stated that at 12.15 am on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, he, in company with two constables, visited the Swan Inn. The front door was locked, but they got in the back way. They walked through the kitchen into the taproom. Mrs Fitton was there hanging pictures on the wall, and the defendant Cotterill was there lying in front of the fire, under the influence of drink. There was a glass and a jug on a table in the room.

PCs Milner and Burgess corroborated.

Mr Fletcher said in the evidence of the police there was nothing against the defendant Fitton. The charge against him was not for selling drink during prohibited hours, but for keeping open for the sale of drink during prohibited hours. Before the defendant could be convicted, it must be proved that the premises were kept open for the sale of drink during prohibited hours. It mattered not whether the defendant Cotterill was on the premises, if he was not there for the purpose of contravening the Licensing Act. As the police had said the house was locked both at the front and the back, and therefore it could not be said to have been open. Mr Fitton had given instructions to his wife to call to the defendant Cotterill any time when he was away, if she required assistance. It was doubtless a case which called for an explanation at the hands of the licensee, and he considered it quite right that the magistrates' opinion should be obtained on the matter.

**Lucy Fitton**, wife of William Fitton, licensee of the Swan beerhouse, said her husband was employed by Mr Garner, Winsford, as a bargeman. On the day in question, he was in Liverpool. She knew the defendant Cotterill, and by the direction of her husband, he did little odd jobs for her, such as tapping barrels, &c. He left the house at 10.30 on the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, and about 11.30 came in the house again. He said he was nearly starved to death, as he had been in the yard. He asked her what she was going to do, and she told him she was going to decorate the gas pipes. He remained with her in the house, which was locked up. She did not sell him any liquor. The reason she was up till midnight was because she was decorating the house. In answer to the Chairman, witness said the defendant (...) some barrels of beer that night, and he received two glasses of beer for it.

The defendant Fitton, on being called, said he had authorised the other defendant to help his wife if she needed assistance when he was away.

The Bench considered the case for a few minutes, and then the Chairman said they had decided to take both cases together. As far as the case of William Fitton was concerned, they considered it should be dismissed. There was some doubt about Cotterill's case, and that would also be dismissed. At the same time, the police were perfectly justified in bringing such a case forward.

### 2 20 January 1900

#### NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS

**NEGLECTING THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG** The following persons were fined for not sending their children regularly to school :- **William Jackson**, boatman, Marston, 10s.

### 3 11 April 1900

#### DRUNKEN FREAK OF A FLATMAN

**FATAL RESULT** At the Liverpool City Coroner's Court on Friday, Mr T E Sampson held an inquest on the body of **George Jones**, a flatman, aged 38 years, of Rooney Street. On Wednesday evening, the deceased was the worse for drink, and was seen staggering and singing as he made for his flat, which was lying in the canal near Lightbody Street. Instead of pursuing the proper

footpath, he crawled over the lock gates of the canal. He lost his balance and fell, his head coming in contact with the sill. He died a few minutes afterwards from a fractured skull. Verdict, "Accidental death".

#### **4 23 May 1900**

NANTWICH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

NO LICENCE **Aaron Thomas**, a boatman, was fined 5s and costs for keeping a dog without a licence.

#### **5 27 June 1900**

SHIP BUILDING AT NORTHWICH There was a large gathering at the Castle Dockyard, Northwich, on Saturday afternoon, to witness the launch of the *Weaver Belle*, constructed by Mr W J Yarwood for Mr Henry Seddon, salt manufacturer, Middlewich. The ceremony of cutting the cord was performed by Mr Rowland Seddon, son of the proprietor, and the vessel appeared to be gliding gracefully into the water, when suddenly a portion of the embankment under one of the ways slipped into the river, and this caused the craft to ground. As is their wont on the occasion of launches, a number of men who had been employed in the construction of the steamer decided to accompany her to the water, and the sudden jerk caused one of them – William Corker – to be pitched into the river. Fortunately he was an expert of the natatorial art, and soon made his way to *terra firma*, apparently little the worse for his unexpected "ducking". A number of Mr Yarwood's employees soon set to work to get the vessel properly afloat, and had almost succeeded when the *National*, one of the Salt Union steamers, came up the river. Assistance was rendered by this, and amidst a hearty cheer the *Weaver Belle* was floated. She is a vessel 190 feet long overall, with a 21 feet beam, whilst the depth of her hold is nine feet six inches. Her carrying capacity is 260 tons, and she is fitted with compound surface condensing engines and a horizontal multitubular marine boiler, eight feet six inches by eight feet six inches diameter, and having a working pressure of 100 pounds to the square inch. She is also fitted up with the most modern tranship machinery and is composite built, namely, steel frames throughout, and main and sister keelsons of steel girders. The hull down to the bilges is of English oak, whilst the bilge is of rock elm and the bottom of pitch pine. The vessel is quite equal in dimensions to anything trading between Northwich and Liverpool, and is considered to be of very pretty design, having neat lines fore and aft. Mr Yarwood has carried out and made everything belonging to the vessel, including the transhipping machinery and plant.

At the conclusion of the launch, Mr Seddon entertained a party of friends at the Angel Hotel, Mrs and the Misses Edwards catering in their well known style. Mr Seddon presided, and those seated round the festive board were Mrs Seddon, the Misses Seddon, Mr Rowland Seddon, Mr J Williams, chairman of the Middlewich Urban Council, Mr Henshall, Mr and Mrs Platt, (Middlewich), Mr and Mrs Burrows, Mr Burrows jun and Miss Burrows, (Urmston), Mr Starmer, Mr W J Yarwood, Mr Lambert, Mr and Mrs Worrall and Mr Capper (Barnton).

The repast over, Mr Seddon proposed "Success to the *Weaver Belle*", which was heartily drunk.

Mr Yarwood next submitted the health of "The able host, Mr Seddon", which was drunk with musical honours. In doing so, he said Mr Seddon was a man of great enterprise, and was a credit to the town to which he belonged. He had on several occasions had the pleasure of transacting business with him, and in all things he had found him straightforward and honest. He felt sure that Middlewich was proud to possess a gentleman of such calibre. Any undertaking in which he might engage he was well able and competent to carry out, and anything that came in his path must be very formidable to prove a stumbling block to him.

Mr Seddon, in acknowledging the way in which the toast had been honoured, said as regarded the eulogy poured forth upon him by Mr Yarwood, he could only return the compliment. When Mr Yarwood built the last barge for him, he engaged an engineer to look over it and superintend the erection, but since then his confidence in Mr Yarwood had become so great that he felt that he could safely leave the construction of the *Weaver Belle* entirely to him. (Hear, hear). If she only turned

out as well as the other vessel he had built for him, he would be highly satisfied.

Mr Williams gave "The builder of the vessel, Mr Yarwood", and in so doing said his mind went back to between 40 and 50 years ago. At that time, Northwich was very busy in the construction of vessels for the carrying of salt, but at that period they were wholly constructed of wood. There were then about seven dockyards, but that number he thought had now given way to one, and that was Mr Yarwood's. He took it that the reason for that was because of the construction of modern vessels, which now navigated the Weaver. Iron had now taken the place of wood. They could now be built with a greater carrying capacity, and consequently it was less expense to get the salt to Liverpool. He (the speaker) served his apprenticeship in the town, and he was pleased to say that, wherever Northwich ships' carpenters had gone, they had always been able to hold their own. Although there had been a great improvement in the mode of construction of vessels, Northwich, to keep abreast of the times, had not had to seek outside assistance. (Hear, hear). He thought Mr Yarwood was a Northwich man bred and born, and he had shown himself well able to meet the requirements of modern water carriage.

The toast was enthusiastically honoured.

Mr Yarwood thanked Mr Williams for his flattering remarks, and said his aim in business had always been to succeed in turning out nothing but the best of workmanship, whatever the cost. The last craft he constructed for Mr Seddon had borne good results, and he only hoped and trusted the present vessel would do the same. His great ambition had been from his start in business to turn out a vessel fully equipped from stem to stern, and without egotism he was proud to say that could now be done at the Castle Docks.

**Mr Capper** said he had known Mr Seddon and also Mr Yarwood for a considerable number of years, and he hardly knew which was the keenest business man. He (the speaker) was an old waterman, and as such was very proud to see such vessels as the *Weaver Belle* being launched. He had travelled on the Thames and the Liffey, and nearly all the other rivers in England, and he could say as a practical man that there was not one that could come anywhere near them in their mode of transit. When they came to the Weaver, they found intelligence and brain had been used by such men as Mr Yarwood, and the utility of the same was found in gentlemen like Mr Seddon. (Hear, hear). The *Weaver Belle* was, in his opinion, well moulded and well put together.

Songs were rendered at intervals by Mrs Seddon and Mr Yarwood, whilst musical selections were contributed by Mrs Worrall.

## **6** 11 July 1900

### THE PROTECTION OF WILD BIRDS

**PLOVER SHOOTING AT DUNHAM MASSEY** At the Altrincham Petty Sessions on Monday, **Joseph Blackshaw** of 7 Wilkinson's Buildings, Salford, boatman, was summoned before Mr R H Joynson (in the chair) and other magistrates for the alleged shooting of a plover during the close season. The prosecution was instituted by the RSPCA under the Wild Birds Protection Act of 1880. Defendant pleaded not guilty.

The evidence adduced was to the effect that on the afternoon of June 20<sup>th</sup> defendant was seen by David Lakin, gamekeeper, to shoot a plover which was in a field occupied by Mr John Priestner. Defendant at the time was proceeding along the Bridgewater Canal on his flat, and Lakin said he distinctly saw him fire from the deck of the boat and afterwards put the gun down. Lakin picked up the dead plover.

In answer to a question by defendant, the witness Lakin said it was true defendant some half an hour afterwards requested that his boat should be searched, but as was remarked by the police sergeant to whom the request was put, a number of canal boats had passed in the meantime, and it was not likely that any trace of the gun would be found.

Thomas Burke, cowkeeper at Oldfield Farm, Altrincham, said on the afternoon in question he was bringing the cows up, when himself, defendant and the witness Lakin came up with one another in the field in question. When defendant denied he shot the bird, witness told him that he was not speaking the truth as they were the only persons about at the time.

Inspector Robinson of the RSPCA said he met defendant, who had not given a right address, in a street in Salford. Defendant, in answer to a question, said he went into the field at Dunham Massey to borrow twopence from a man. Witness informed defendant that his mate had said that defendant shot at a peewit. He asked defendant where his mate was, but defendant said he did not know. Defendant said the reason he had not given a right address was due to a mistake. His wife had not given him the right directions in regard to a new house to which they were removing. He certainly did not shoot any bird on the date in question, and had not handled a gun for many years. He had travelled as a boatman up and down the canal for 34 years, and had never previously been before a court. He simply left his boat at the time referred to by Lakin for the purpose of borrowing a few coppers.

A fine of 10s was imposed.

## **7 14 July 1900**

### MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

JUST TO SAVE TIME **Albert Eyres**, boatman, was summoned for driving a horse on the footpath in Sandbach Road, Middlewich, on June 19<sup>th</sup>. PC Williams stated that at 3.30 pm on June 19<sup>th</sup>, he was in Sandbach Road, Middlewich, when he saw the defendant driving a horse on the footpath, the animal drawing a boat out of King's Lock. He used the footpath for 20 or 30 yards, and as a result, two persons had to walk on the roadway. It was a shorter route than going along the towing path. Superintendent Large said this kind of thing was becoming a very great nuisance. The Chairman said it was an offence which must certainly be stopped, and the defendant would have to pay a fine of 2s 6d.

## **8 18 July 1900**

### NANTWICH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

THE EDUCATION OF BOAT CHILDREN **Daniel Vernon**, Wettenhall Green, was summoned for not sending his child **Nellie** regularly to school. Mr Woodward, school attendance officer, said it was an adjourned case to see if the child would attend regularly. From the 18<sup>th</sup> June to the 16<sup>th</sup> July the school was opened 50 times, and the child only attended 4. Previous to that, the girl was absent twelve times out of 40. There was another summons against the defendant for his son **Frank**. Mr Woodward said in this case the defendant had to produce a certificate that the child had been ill. He had received information from the doctor at Tarporley that this certificate was issued in January. Defendant was fined 5s including costs in the first case, and the second was dismissed. **Edward Richards** was similarly summoned for his child **Edith**. Mr Woodward stated that the school was opened 40 times, and not one attendance had been made. Fined 5s. **John Parry**, boatman, was likewise summoned for the irregular attendance of his child. Mr Woodward deposed that the child had not attended once, and also that previous to the last six or nine months, had never made an attendance. Defendant said he had been with his boat, and he could not get anybody else to go with him. In another case against the defendant, his excuse was that he sent the child to school at Chester. Fined 5s in each case. **Aaron Thomas**, boatman of Barbridge, was also summoned under the Education Act. The child had not made one attendance from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> July, and previous to that had not been to school for three months. The mother said the child went to school every time the boat reached its destination. Mr Woodward : They frequently bring these excuses but they can never produce anything to support them.

UNLICENSED AND UNMUZZLED **John Powell**, boatman, was charged with keeping his dog without a licence, and also with allowing it to be at large without a muzzle or collar, on the 19<sup>th</sup> June in Chester Road, Stoke. Sergeant Royle proved the case. Defendant said he told the sergeant that he was going to part with the dog, so he did not take out a licence. He got rid of it the next day. Fined 2s 6d and costs in the first case, and the costs in the other, 16s 6d in all.

## 9 21 July 1900

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

TRoublesome BOATMEN **Peter Brough**, a boatman, was fined £1 including costs for wasting canal water at Lawton on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. The defendant's plea was that he could not get through one lock on account of insufficiency of water. **Enoch Minshull** was likewise penalised for a similar offence on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. The same defendant was further summoned for assaulting John Egerton. The complainant stated that he was a night watchman at Lawton yard locks. On the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of June he was watching Minshull work the boat through the locks, when the defendant came up and asked him what he was standing there for. Witness inquired what that had to do with him, and Minshull struck him in the face. He struck at him several times after, but witness parried the blows. He told Minshull he should report him, and the latter thereupon threatened to throw him into the lock. Minshull did not offer any extenuation, and was fined 10s and costs.

## 10 21 July 1900

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A BARBRIDGE BOATMAN At the Nantwich Police Court on Thursday, before Mr C S (????) in the chair and Mr H Hinde, **John Parry**, a boatman of Barbridge, was charged on remand with feloniously, unlawfully and maliciously wounding a mare at (????) on the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

Mr H J Williams prosecuted on behalf of the police, and Mr J P Whittingham defended.

Mary Royle, wife of Sergeant Royle, Barbridge, stated that on Monday, between six and seven in the evening, she was at the back of her own house, when she heard some children screaming in the direction of the canal bank. She went to the back of the premises of Mr Geoffrey Royle, a neighbour, where there was a stable. She there saw the prisoner and a mare. He was kicking the mare under the belly as violently as he was able several times. While he was doing this, the mare was plunging. She went into the house and told her husband what she had seen. Her husband went to the stable, and she followed him a short time afterwards. When she returned the prisoner had left the stable and was in his boat on the canal, about half a dozen yards away. The prisoner's brother, **Edward Parry**, was bathing the mare, and when witness examined the animal, she saw three wounds on its left side, from which blood was flowing. While this was being done, the prisoner got off his boat, went in the direction of the stable, and said he would kill the mare. The prisoner's brother came out of the stable, and getting hold of him said, "You'll do no more now ; you've done enough". Edward Parry then turned his brother back to his boat. He had had a lot of drink. Her husband afterwards took the accused into custody. When the prisoner was in the stable, she noticed blood on his trousers.

Cross-examined : The stables were for the use of the boatmen, and there were always a lot of them about the place. She did not hear the prisoner falling out with his wife.

Edward Parry, boatman residing at Barbridge, said the prisoner was his brother. On the 16<sup>th</sup> July, about seven o'clock in the evening, in consequence of what his wife told him, he went into Mr Geoffrey Royle's stable, where he saw the accused. He was going up to the mare, but was not doing anything to it at the time. Witness noticed blood on the prisoner's trousers, and seeing that he was "in beer", he took him on the boat and then went back to the stable. On examining the animal, he found three wounds on the left side. One of the wounds was bleeding a little. Witness bathed the injuries. The mare belonged to his brother.

Cross-examined : He had known the animal for about two months, and had found her to be very rough in the stable when they were harnessing her. There were always plenty of people about the stables, which were left unlocked. He did not see the prisoner with a knife.

James Gibson, member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, assistant to Mr Wilson, deposed that at 10.20 pm on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, he examined the mare now referred to. He found the animal to be wounded in three places on the left side. Each of the wounds was in the middle of the body, and under half an inch in depth, penetrating to the ribs. One over the sixth rib was an inch in length, and the other two were each an inch and a half in length. They were (.....) as incised wounds, and the knife produced was a very likely instrument to have caused them. In addition to

these (...) was a slight swelling below and behind the last of the three wounds. This could have been caused by a heavy kick from a boot. He found that before he went, the wounds had been properly treated by another veterinary assistant. The animal would have suffered pain, but he did not think it would have been excessive.

Sergeant Royle stated that on the 16<sup>th</sup> inst, about 4 pm, from information received from his wife, he went to Mr Geoffrey Royle's yard and saw the prisoner on his boat with his brother close by. Witness said to the accused, "What have you been doing, Jack?" but he could not understand what was said in reply, as the prisoner was so drunk, and appeared to be very excited. Witness went to the stable and found a bay mare tied up. He saw three distinct wounds on the left side, from which blood was coming. The prisoner's brother came up with a bucket and commenced to bathe the wounds. Witness then obtained a conveyance to put the prisoner in, and came back to the yard. The accused had gone into his cabin. Witness went there and asked him to get up, as he intended arresting him for the wounding of the mare. The accused said he should not go for him, and the witness took hold of him. He, however, continued to struggle violently and kicked. With the assistance of the prisoner's brother, he was got into the conveyance and brought to the Nantwich Police Station. The prisoner was not then in a condition to be charged. When searched, the knife produced was found on him. On the following day, witness charged him, and he replied, "I never remember nothing about it". When the prisoner was in the cabin, he noticed blood on his trousers. Prisoner's nose was not bleeding then. Cross-examined : He did not see any row between the accused and his wife.

Prisoner was then charged, but made no reply.

Mr Whittingham submitted that no case had been made out by the prosecution under the section of the Act under which the prisoner had been charged, and that they had not proved the prisoner to have been guilty of a felonious, malicious or unlawful act, according to the legally defined meaning of these words. He submitted that if a man killed his own horse, he would not be guilty of felony.

The Chairman said that depended on how. If a man wished to kill his horse and meant to put it out of pain, that was one thing ; but this was quite a different matter. Surely it was unlawfully and maliciously wounding in that case.

The Magistrates' Clerk (Mr C E Speakman) said it depended on the intent.

The Chairman said that if Mr Whittingham's contention was right, then the Act of Parliament would not be worth the paper it was printed on.

Mr Whittingham : Yes ; if I kill somebody's horse, then the Act of Parliament applies.

The Chairman : This is not killing but wounding. You have to show whether you are entitled to wound your own horse.

Mr Williams : Perhaps my friend would suggest that he would be justified in killing his own wife.

Mr Whittingham : That is altogether a different thing ; the common law presides for that. I submit that a man cannot unlawfully kill his own horse.

The Chairman : Is it lawful for a man to stab his own horse? If he does so, is there not a legal use of the word malicious?

Mr Whittingham : If he stabs his own horse it is cruelty, which is provided for in the Act.

The Chairman : The point is, has he unlawfully and maliciously wounded his own horse? I am afraid we must be against you on that point. You have put it very ingeniously and very well for your client.

Mr Whittingham said he would deal with the evidence, and said there were no facts to prove that his client had wounded the animal. Anybody might have gone in the stable and have done it.

The Chairman said there was the evidence of Mrs Royle.

Mr Whittingham suggested that the man had gone into the stable and there found his horse wounded by someone ; and that, in consequence of these injuries, it had jumped about, and that his client had to kick it to keep it quiet.

Mr E A Sexton, MRCVS, said he examined the prisoner's horse on the 17<sup>th</sup> July at 11 am. He found three wounds on the left side, about half an inch deep and an inch and a quarter in length. They were not in a particularly sensitive part of the body. The mare was not suffering any pain apart

from the newness of the wounds. He thought the swelling found on the body arose from the wounds and not from any blows.

The prisoner was committed for trial at the Assizes, bail being allowed in the sum of £10.

The Chairman asked how it was that the prisoner was not charged with being drunk and assaulting the police.

Superintendent Meredith replied that it was because of the seriousness of the other indictment.

The Chairman said the man ought to have been charged with the other offences for the sake of the Inebriates' Act, which if cases of that kind were not gone into, would become a nullity. The Bench would assuredly have sent the prisoner to gaol if he had been charged for being drunk and assaulting the police.

### **11 28 July 1900**

SANDBACH POLICE COURT, TUESDAY **William Wood**, a canal boatman, who should have appeared at the last Petty Sessions, was brought up on a warrant and charged with wasting canal water at Lawton on May 18<sup>th</sup>. The offence was proved, and the defendant fined 30s including costs.

### **12 28 July 1900**

NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

NO LIGHT **John Hough**, waterman, 4 Huxley Street, was summoned for driving a horse and trap along Chester Road, Hartford, on the night of July 12<sup>th</sup>, without having a light attached to the same. Evidence was tendered by PC Bell, and a fine of 1s was inflicted.

MAINTENANCE ORDERS Superintendent Pearson made application for an order against **Jabez Appleton**, Tunnel Road, Barnton, to contribute towards the maintenance of his son **Aaron**, detained in the Stockport Industrial School until the age of 16 years. The applicant said the case was before the Court on February 27<sup>th</sup>, when the boy was committed to an Industrial school. The defendant was a boatman, and, from inquiries he had made, was earning from £2 to 50s per week. He had eight children dependent on him. He had not made a voluntary offer at all. He (witness) asked for 1s 6d per week. Defendant said he worked for the Salt Union occasionally, and when in work could earn £3 a week. He had to keep two ponies out of it. The Bench made an order for 1s per week.

### **13 18 August 1900**

ALLEGED CRUELTY TO A DOG AT CONGLETON At the Congleton County Petty Sessions on Wednesday, before Mr C W Hogg, Sir Walter Shakerley and Messrs A Solly and C D Bradwell, **John Cotton**, boatman of Hall Green, was summoned by Inspector Lucas on behalf of the RSPCA for cruelty to a dog on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr A Andrews defended. Ellen Harrop, a married woman of Hall Green, said she saw the defendant on the day referred to, when he was drunk, come out of the house and kick the dog, which was barking. She could not say how many times he kicked it, but she saw him throw a hammer and a hatchet at it, injuring its foreleg. In answer to Mr Andrew, witness denied that the dog was a savage one. She would not swear that the dog was hit by the hammer or the hatchet, and she did not see what happened before the man kicked the animal. The Bench intimated that they had decided to dismiss the case.

### **14 7 November 1900**

A PLUCKY FLATMAN AT CHESTER

JUMPS INTO CANAL TO SAVE A "MATE" On Friday morning about 11.30 am, a middle aged man named **Thomas Thurby**, captain of the flat *Pearl*, and residing in Union Street, Chester, had a very narrow escape from drowning in the Shropshire Union Canal at Tower Wharf. Thurby was engaged in turning his flat round, and for this purpose he was using a boat hook, which he had fixed against the side of the canal. The hook slipped and the captain was immediately thrown into the water, which just at that spot was over six feet deep. Not being able to swim, he endeavoured to grasp the side of the flat, but failed. Captain **Jas King** of the boat *Bee* fortunately witnessed the

incident, and ran along the towing path to the spot where, accompanied by a youth named **W Evans**, he plunged in. The two rescuers managed to reach Thurby as he was disappearing, and brought him to the side in an unconscious condition. Captain King applied artificial respiration, and succeeded in bringing the unfortunate man round. He was afterwards taken home. Such commendable pluck on the part of King and the youth Evans, who is employed by the Shropshire Union and Canal Company, certainly deserves special praise. In the case of King, this makes the fourth or fifth person he has rescued from drowning.

#### **15 14 November 1900**

**A RUNCORN BOATMAN IN TROUBLE AT WIGAN** At the Wigan Borough Police Court on Thursday, **Samuel Jones**, boat captain, 44 Cordon Street, Runcorn, was charged with wilfully damaging a lock gate, the property of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company, on the 19<sup>th</sup> October. Mr J Wilson prosecuted on behalf of the company, and said that the defendant had run his boat into the lock gates, and after committing the offence he went to Mr Moss, inspector of the company, and said he was willing to pay the damage, as he was anxious that the matter should not go into court, because he had done the very same thing before and had been fined £5. Mr Wilson said he was instructed under the circumstances to press for the full penalty, £5. **William Clayton**, foreman carpenter of the Canal Company, stated that on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult he was standing near No 21 lock, and the defendant came up with two boats, the *Lark* and the *Linnet*. Defendant was in the steerage of the first boat and his mate was on the towing path. Witness shouted to defendant's mate that the boat must be "strapped" to prevent it running into the gates, and the captain shouted out, "Never mind the gates ; I can pay for them". The consequence was that the first boat ran into the lock and strained the gate, besides doing other damage. If the defendant had done as he had been directed, nothing would have happened. Mr Moss stated that the defendant had offered him £3 to make good the damage. Defendant was fined £1 and costs, and ordered to pay for the damage.

#### **16 15 December 1900**

**SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY** **John Hollinshead**, a boatman on the North Staffordshire Canal, was fined £1 for wasting canal water at Lawton on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

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#### **17 January 2 1914**

##### **DOMESTIC TROUBLE**

**WIDNES FLATMAN'S CONDUCT** A sad domestic story was disclosed on Monday morning at the Widnes Police Court in a case in which a Widnes woman, **Emily Norcott**, applied for a separation order from her husband, **William Norcott**, a flat captain of 8 West Street, Widnes, on the grounds of desertion.

Mr William Knowles, who appeared for the complainant, stated that the parties had been married 31 years, and there were five children living. For some years, however, they had not lived happily together, the principal reason for this being the husband's drunken habits and the extraordinary insinuations he had made from time to time against his wife.

It was in November 1911 that the break in their union came about. For some time previously, the defendant had been disgusting in his behaviour towards his wife, and on the last occasion she lived in the same house as him, defendant made an extraordinary allegation against his wife's integrity. The insinuation was made in the presence of the children, and so insulted were the sons that they straight away took their mother away and provided a home for her elsewhere.

During the intervening two years, the defendant had not contributed a penny towards the upkeep of his wife and family, and on her behalf he would ask the Bench to grant a separation order with alimony of 15s per week.

In reply to the Clerk, Mr Knowles stated that defendant was a flat captain in a good position, and earning anything from £2 10s to £3 per week.

Complainant gave evidence corroborating her solicitor's statement.

In cross-examination, Mr Knowles elicited from Mrs Norcott that during their married life, defendant always refused to take her out, and used to remark that "the house was best for cats and women". Since they had lived away from one another, however, his opinion on that subject had apparently changed, for he was frequently seen walking his housekeeper out.

Mrs Norcott also added that on many occasions his conduct was so disgraceful that she had to sleep in an outhouse in the yard. He often called her "a beast".

Corroborative evidence was given by complainant's oldest son, **Ernest Norcott**, a flat captain.

Defendant denied the allegations, and said he had always been willing to provide a home for his wife and family, and had never been guilty of desertion. His present home was open to her.

Major Wareing : You are not fit to live with her according to the story.

The Bench granted a separation order with 10s per week alimony.

## **18 2 January 1914**

### BOATMAN'S STARTLING EXPERIENCE

#### FALLS INTO THE RIVER AT ANDERTON

**A TIMELY RESCUE** A canal boatman named **Thomas Morris**, who belongs to the Potteries and is employed by the Salt Union, had a marvellous escape on Monday morning from being drowned in the river Weaver at Anderton. He was "shafting" his boat along the river, when he slipped off the plank, fell into the water, and immediately sank.

The incident was witnessed by a number of the employees of Messrs Brunner, Mond and Co, who raised an alarm. Messrs **W Mills** and **A Barker**, the crew of the *Triumph*, which belongs to Brunner Mond's, at once launched a boat and proceeded to the scene of the accident, where they were joined by **Mr Riding**, captain of the Northwich Carrying Company's boat *Jarver*, and **Mr H Musker**, mate of the Carrying Company's boat *Harold*. They succeeded in finding the man with the aid of a boat hook, but experienced great difficulty in lifting him out of the water. Meanwhile a number of ambulance men from the works of Brunner Mond and Co had arrived on the river bank, and when Morris was removed from the water in an unconscious condition, they at once resorted to Schafer's method of artificial respiration.

The ambulance men were Messrs P Halpin, J Wickens, J W Lamb, J Harrison and S Hough, and they took with them a tube of oxygen, which was also used. Dr Stowell was sent for, and nearly half an hour elapsed before the man showed signs of reviving. He then gradually regained consciousness, and after being attended to by the doctor he was placed in bed on his boat.

Great credit is due to the watermen who effected such a timely rescue, and also to those members of the ambulance corps at Winnington works, who rendered first aid in such a prompt and efficient manner.

## **19 9 January 1914**

### EDDISBURY PETTY SESSIONS

**BOATMAN'S THEFT OF COAL** **Henry Morris**, canal boatman, was charged with having stolen 67 lb of coal, valued at 8d, the property of the L and NW Railway Company. Moses Jones, stationmaster at Calverley Station, said that on the afternoon of Saturday December 13<sup>th</sup>, he went to the canal wharf which adjoined the station. A goods train had been shunted into the siding, and a number of canal boats were alongside. He walked about and kept a look out, and eventually saw the prisoner beside a stationary train. He came to a stand beside a coal truck and climbed on to it, picking up a lump of coal and throwing it down. He got off the truck and walked away with the coal. Witness intercepted him and asked him where he was taking the coal. He replied, "To the cabin". Witness told him he had no business to take it, and prisoner admitted that it was stolen property. PC Gregory spoke to arresting prisoner, who admitted the offence, saying he was short of coal and intended taking it to the boat. The next day, he visited the boat on which prisoner was employed and found 28 lb of coal on the forward part of the boat. Prisoner pleaded guilty and said he was very sorry. He had been in Knutsford eight days on remand. The Chairman said that in

view of prisoner having already been in gaol, he would be sentenced to one day's imprisonment.

## **20 23 January 1914**

### FORMER NORTHWICH RESIDENT'S FUNERAL

THE LATE MRS T CLARE There were many manifestations of sympathy when the remains of the late Mrs Ruth Clare of Seacombe were laid to rest in Witton Churchyard. Mrs Clare, who was 73 years of age, came of an old and much respected Northwich family, her father, **Mr Tarbuck**, being a waterman on the river Weaver for many years. Her husband, **Mr Thomas Clare**, also belonged to an old Northwich family, and for many years followed the occupation of a flatman. Both he and his wife took up their residence at Liverpool 33 years ago, but her husband predeceased her twelve years ago. On his death, she went to reside with her eldest daughter, a Mrs Ellison, at Seacombe.

Her remains were brought by rail to Northwich station, where they were conveyed to the place of interment. There were two mourning carriages. In the first were Mrs James Ellison and Mrs Harrison (daughters), Mrs John Clare and Mrs William Clare (daughters in law), Mrs Barrett (granddaughter) and Master Jack Clare (grandson). In the second were the Misses Florrie Ellison, Emma Clare, Eva Clare, Nora Clare and Fanny Harrison (granddaughters) and Mrs James Clare Jun (daughter in law). Walking were Messrs James Clare, John Clare and Thomas Clare (sons), James Clare jun, William Clare, Norman Clare, Archie Parkes and George Parkes (grandsons) and James Ellison and Bert Barrett (sons in law).

## **21 27 March 1914**

### DEAD IN BED

RUNCORN WOMAN'S SAD END On Saturday morning, **Mrs Jane Bolton**, wife of a lock tender living in Cawdor Street, was found dead in bed. Her husband had left the house at 5.30 in the morning to go to his work, and had noticed nothing unusual about her appearance.

On Monday Coroner Ridgway held an inquest at the Court House.

**William Bolton**, 64 Cawdor Street, Runcorn, a waterman, said his wife was 65 years of age. He got up at 5.30 on Saturday morning to go to work. His wife was then lying on her right side as usual. She had asked him, at 3 o'clock, what time it was, and remarked that she had had a poor night. He thought he would not disturb her when he got up. About a year ago, she had a stroke that affected her speech. On Friday night she had complained of a pain in her heart, and she sat in a chair till bedtime.

In reply to the Coroner, witness said that she appeared to have got over the stroke all right. Dr Murphy had occasionally attended her, but she had not thought she was ill enough to require the doctor lately.

Mrs Smitham, wife of Frank Smitham of Cawdor Street, said that about 9.15 on Saturday morning, the deceased's niece – Mrs Lydiate – asked her to go with her to look at her aunt. She went to the house, and found the deceased lying on her right side with her arm out of bed. She found she was quite cold. Dr Murphy was sent for, and she must have been dead for several hours. Witness had known the deceased for two years. She had been poorly, but had not complained of anything "special" except a pain in the legs.

The Coroner : She must have found it difficult to get up those stairs. It's a wonder she did not fall down. I thought they were rather dangerous.

Dr Murphy said he had attended Mrs Bolton three or four times within the last eighteen months. She suffered from breathlessness and stomach trouble. He had not seen her recently – the last occasion would be about six months ago. She complained of wind in the stomach and breathlessness. She was an obese woman. Her sudden death was no surprise under the circumstances. Her heart must have been affected. The cause of death was probably syncope, brought about by fatty degeneration of the heart.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

## 22 1 May 1914

### TIMELY RESCUE AT WINNINGTON

**GOOD WORK BY AMBULANCE MEN** A timely rescue from drowning was effected in the river Weaver at Winnington on Friday afternoon. It appears that about five o'clock, a boatman named **Thomas Jackson**, aged 18, was sculling across the river in a small boat when, losing his oar, he fell into the water. A young man named Philip Anderson (brother of Mr G Anderson, the treasurer of the Witton Albion FC) who is employed by the Mersey, Weaver and Ship Canal Carrying Company, on hearing the cry, "A man in the water", at once rushed to the scene and, without divesting himself of any of his clothing, plunged in the water and swam to the man. Just as he got to him, he sank for the third time.

The barge *Africa* was lying a short distance away, and the hand, **Joseph Johnson** of Falcon Street, Salford, seeing what had occurred, put away from his vessel in a small boat. **George Capper** of Barnton, the captain of the barge *Harold*, did the same thing, and getting to the spot where the man was last seen, they plunged their boat hooks in the water and succeeded in securing the man at the first stroke. On being brought to the surface he was unconscious, but several of Messrs Brunner Mond and Company's ambulance men – Patrick Halpin, J W Lamb, John Harrison, John Wickins and Edward Stubbs – were in readiness on the river bank to render first aid, and their prompt actions undoubtedly had much to do with saving the man's life.

The plucky action on the part of Anderson is also worthy of commendation, and his discomfiture after his gallant act can be imagined when it is known that he had to walk home to Lostock in his drenched clothes.

Mr Anderson has already saved two persons from drowning.

## 23 19 June 1914

### BOATMAN'S FATAL RIDE

### FALLS UNDER MOTOR TRAILER

**INQUEST AT NANTWICH** Mr J C Bate, coroner, conducted an inquest at the Nantwich Police Station on Saturday on the body of **Albert Wood**, aged 37 years, boatman, who died in the Nantwich Cottage Hospital on Friday morning from injuries sustained through falling under the wheels of a trailer attached to a traction engine. Mr T Chesworth was foreman of the jury.

The father of the deceased, **John Wood**, canal boatman, Burland, identified the body, and said that his son had been lately employed at the Chirk coalpits. Witness saw him at Barbridge on Thursday as he was going through with the boat. He told him that he was going back to his work next day, and witness asked him to go and see his mother. He was sober. Later the same afternoon, he was informed of the accident to his son in Barbridge.

**A WITNESS OF THE ACCIDENT** James Latham of Barbridge stated that he knew the deceased, and on Thursday afternoon saw him following a traction engine and trailer in the direction of Nantwich. At first he tried to climb on the back of the trailer, but did not succeed. Then he went between the locomotive and trailer and seated himself on the draw bar, which was triangular in shape. The locomotive had not travelled forty yards when he noticed the deceased lying in the road. Apparently the rear wheels of the trailer had passed over his body. A cripple who had seen the accident had gone to his assistance before witness got to him.

In reply to the Coroner, witness said the traction engine did not stop, but the driver was evidently not aware of the accident. There was a high load at the back of the engine, and there was no one on the trailer. Wood was quite sober.

**THE ENGINE DRIVER'S STATEMENT** Albert (?Skilt?) of Beeston stated that on Thursday afternoon he was driving a heavy motor lorry from Beeston to Nantwich. He passed through Barbridge about three o'clock. The first intimation he got of the accident was from a boatman, who came galloping up on a horse and told him that he had run over a man. He did not know that the man attempted to get on the engine.

In reply to the Coroner, witness said that whenever he found anyone on the engine, he stopped and ordered them off. When going through towns, that sort of thing often happened, but he had never

seen anyone ride on the draw bar. A distance of a yard and a half separated the motor from the trailer. At the time of the accident, he was travelling about four miles an hour. The trailer weighed 18 cwt, and there were two tons on it.

**DYING MAN'S REMARK** Acting-Sergeant Webberley of Barbridge stated that, on being informed of the accident, he went to the place where it occurred, and found the man lying on his side.

He was apparently seriously injured, and he got the driver of a passing motor car to take him to the Nantwich Cottage Hospital. On the way to the hospital, witness asked how the accident happened, and Wood replied, "I jumped on for a ride and fell off".

Elizabeth Cotterill, matron of the Nantwich Cottage Hospital, stated that Wood was admitted about 3.30 o'clock on Thursday afternoon. He was seen at once by Dr Jack Munro. It was seen that the man was suffering from severe internal injuries, and there were marks across the front of the body, consistent with having been run over with a heavy vehicle. He died on Friday morning at 2.30 o'clock.

**THE CORONER'S COMMENTS** The Coroner, in commenting on the evidence, said that the man, in attempting to balance himself on a narrow bar of a vehicle in motion, was doing a difficult, dangerous and foolish thing. The result was that he fell under the vehicle, and the two wheels, upon each of which there were 14 cwt, passed over him. A man of his years ought to have known better than to have attempted it, but he was evidently a person deficient in the sense of danger.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

## **24 30 June 1914**

**RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS** At these Sessions on Monday, William Peck, Regent Street, was fined 7s 6d for not sending his child to school regularly. **William Twigg**, a canal boatman, and William Reid of Wivern Place, were each fined 5s for similar neglect. Attendance officer Howard proved the case.

## **25 10 July 1914**

**CANAL BOATMAN'S CRUELTY**

**A NURSE'S COMMENDABLE ACT** A case of cruelty to a horse by a canal boatman named **James Frost** was investigated by the magistrates at the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Tuesday.

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The magistrates fined defendant £1 and 13s costs.

## **26 24 July 1914**

**BOATMAN'S SAGACIOUS DOG**

**SAVED THE FAMILY** A canal boat, bearing the name of *Dorothy*, foundered under extraordinary circumstances about midnight on Saturday at Wheelock. The family had been asleep in the cabin for some considerable time, when the man in charge of the boat, **John Meredith**, was wakened by his dog springing on the bed and barking. Meredith, still in a somnolent state, knocked the animal off, but in doing so he made an alarming discovery. There was a big rush of water, and the boat was sinking.

The terrified man roused his wife and child, and the three had only just managed to scramble on to the embankment when the boat disappeared. Indeed, Meredith had to wade through the water up to his waist with his child in his arms. Fortunately the boat had been towed near the side.

It is believed that the foundering of the boat was due to a heavy load of iron bars, which caused a portion of the hold to give way.

On Sunday, hundreds of persons visited the spot, and found bedclothes, pots, pans and other domestic articles floating on the water.

Later in the day the boat was raised, but this could not be accomplished until the cargo was removed.

## 27 31 July 1914

CHESTER ACCIDENT A little Chester boy aged six was playing near the Suspension Bridge, on Queen's Park side of the river, on Friday, when he fell into the water. A boatman named **Ashton** took a boat across and saved the lad just as he was going down for the last time. The boy was sent home little the worse for his immersion.

## 28 28 August 1914

CHESTER BOATMAN'S VIOLENCE At Chester Police Court on Wednesday, a boatman named **Walter Ashton**, of 2 White Horse Yard, was charged with having committed a breach of the peace in White Horse Yard, and also with having assaulted PC Pleavin.

It was stated that the prisoner was thrashing his wife, and his children were outside, practically naked. On the officer interfering, prisoner threw him down and nearly choked him.

Prisoner expressed sorrow, and said he had justification for his treatment of his wife.

The Mayor said they must support the police. They had plenty to do now without dealing with this sort of thing. Prisoner was fined 10s and costs, or 14 days.

## 29 28 August 1914

NORTHWICH MATRIMONIAL CASE

WATERMAN AND HIS WIFE At the Northwich Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **Kitty Williamson**, 7 Wesley Place, applied for an order or orders against her husband, **Harry Williamson** of the steam flat *Chili*, under the Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Act 1895, on the ground that he had wilfully neglected to provide reasonable maintenance for her and their two children. Mr W Clarke appeared for the complainant, whilst the defendant was represented by Mr W Bancroft.

Mr Clarke Deakin explained that the parties were married at Witton Church on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1895, and there were two children of the marriage. Complainant was the daughter of Mr J Sharps. The man had refused to contribute anything towards the maintenance of his wife or children, who had actually not received anything from him since the last week in May. He worked away from Northwich for the Liverpool Lighterage Co, and traded between Warrington and Liverpool. Formerly he was employed by the Salt Union Ltd. During the time the complainant had received nothing from the defendant, her father, who had been living with her, had had to maintain her and her two children. Owing to the state of affairs and the defendant's drunkenness and filthy habits when he came home, Mrs Williamson had been compelled to live apart from him. Another point was that he had threatened to sell the furniture and break the home up. It was a great trouble to Mr Sharps to have to come there to give evidence against his son-in-law.

Complainant bore out her solicitor's statement, and added that the defendant used to come home beastly drunk at weekends, and was not fit to live with.

Cross-examined by Mr Bancroft : She had had two letters from the defendant during the past five weeks. He said he would never contribute towards her. He threatened to take a house in Liverpool, and said she would have to come and live there. She would not go to him in Liverpool because it did not do for her, and he wanted to get rid of her. He had not complained about the rent she was paying, (?5s) per week, or the fact that her parents lived with her.

By Mr Clarke Deakin : Her father had paid the rent many times, and had also provided coal. She had gone out washing and had also kept lodgers to keep the home going.

James Sharps said he lodged with the complainant, who was his daughter. There had been no trouble between him and Williamson. Witness had been obliged to buy coal and pay the rent many times. For twelve months he had paid for all the coal which had gone on the premises. He paid his daughter £1 a week and provided her with clothes. When the defendant came home at weekends, he was invariably drunk, and his habits were filthy. He had come into the house on a Saturday night, showed his wife £2, sent for a pennyworth of chips and a penny cob, and then gone out to the public house.

THE DEFENCE Mr Bancroft contended that Mr Sharps had spoken as the father of the complainant with a certain amount of exaggeration. He did not like the way the wife had given her

evidence, there was something snappy about it altogether. It seemed like trying to drive the defendant away. With regard to Mr Sharps's language, it was tinged with exaggeration. There was no complaint until the end of May, when the defendant lost his job with the Salt Union. He then got another position, and said he wanted his wife to come and live with him. He objected to the father and mother, and also the lodger, living in the house. The parties had been married a long time. They had two children, one 14 and the other 12, and it seemed hard to believe that the man, after being married so long, should suddenly turn round and behave as had been alleged.

Defendant said he left the Salt Union on May 4<sup>th</sup> owing to the slackness of work. Before then, there was no complaint about him not providing for his wife. He had written three letters to his wife during the past fortnight, and had asked her to come and live with him.

By Mr Thompson (magistrate) : When he was with the Salt Union, he was the captain of the *Lord Stanley*. He got a guinea a week standing wages, and (?ton?) money and trip money. He wrote requesting his wife to come to live in Liverpool, but he received no reply. He was now a mate.

Proceeding, defendant said her father and mother had destroyed his peace, as he had no home comforts. There was also a lodger, and he asked her was she going to give him leave, and she said no. He was now earning 26s a week. It was a case of the lodger first, her father and mother next, and him third. (Laughter).

The Chairman said they had come to the conclusion that defendant must pay 5s a week towards the maintenance of his wife, and 3s 6d towards the child which was not working. They could say he was very lucky to have such a father-in-law as Mr Sharps.

Defendant : He is very lucky to drive me from my home.

### **30 1 January 1915**

#### ETTILEY HEATH

**KICKING A HORSE** **Thomas Mulliner**, boatman, 74 New Street, Ettiley Heath, Sandbach, was summoned at the Northwich Petty Sessions for ill-treating a horse by kicking it. PC Reece stated that at 11.55 am on December 5<sup>th</sup>, he saw the defendant leading a boat horse along New Road, Anderton. He commenced to kick it violently in the stomach, and when he asked him why he did it, he replied, "Would you not kick it if it had run away and kicked you?" The animal was in a very nervous state. Defendant, who did not appear, was ordered to pay 10s.

### **31 20 April 1915**

#### SALE WOMAN'S SUICIDE

**BODY FOUND IN CANAL AT DUNHAM MASSEY** Mr H C Yates (district coroner) conducted an inquiry at Altrincham Police Station on Friday as to the death of Mrs Eleanor Morley (52) of Egerton Street, Sale, whose body was recovered from the canal at Dunham Massey the previous day.

Thomas Morley, a teamsman, said deceased was his wife. She had been addicted to drink for some time past. On Thursday morning, witness went to his work about half past four, and left his wife in bed. Prior to him leaving the house, she said she would try to lead a better life, and she gave him a promise she would not touch drink that day. At 12.30 he went home, but she was not about the house, and had not left him any dinner. On making a search, he found his singlet and other articles of clothing missing. Later in the day he heard that she had been found drowned.

The Coroner : Had she ever threatened to take her life before?

Witness stated that a short time before Christmas he gave his wife his earnings, amounting to 23s, and she left the house. She did not return for a fortnight, and then told him that if he did not take her back she would do away with herself.

**CANAL LABOURER'S WARNING** **Samuel Bent**, canal labourer, said that at 12 o'clock on Thursday he was on a boat going in the direction of Broadheath, when he saw a woman reading what appeared to be a newspaper, and sitting on a post on the canal towing-path near School Bridge, Dunham Massey. She fell off the post, but got up and sat on it a second time. He did not think she was drunk at the time, and surmised that she was lame. When his boat got near enough, he called

out to her she would be much safer on the high road. Later he heard that a woman was in the canal, and he assisted in getting her body to the side.

The Coroner : You kept the body at the side but in the water until the police arrived? Yes, but she was quite dead.

How do you know? You know that when artificial respiration is resorted to, people have been brought round even half an hour later? There was no doubt at all, sir, about her being dead.

Did you notice when you saw her sitting on the post, if she was wearing a hat and coat. Yes.

And they were subsequently found on the towing-path? Yes.

Do you feel sure it was the woman in the water you had seen a short time before? Yes.

**Abraham Jackson**, canal banksman of Dunham Massey, said he was told by a boatman that the body of a woman was floating in the canal. When he got to her she was lying in the water face downwards, and motionless. He helped the last witness to get the body to the side.

The Coroner : Are you quite certain she was dead? Yes. I had seen her a short time before on the path. She was not walking straight then.

Do you think she was drunk? She was what I would call "neither drunk nor sober".

FIVE MILES FROM HOME PC Postles spoke to getting the body out of the water. It was quite lifeless. A hat and jacket were found on the side. The jacket had evidently been folded and placed on the post where deceased had been previously sitting, and the hat was on the pathway at the side, and appeared as though it had been placed on the jacket, but had blown off. Witness said he found a bundle of letters, a pawn ticket and a penny wrapped up in a newspaper. The pawn ticket referred to the pledging that day for two shillings of the singlet and other clothing the husband had missed from his house. It was five miles from where the deceased lived to the spot where the body was found, and although inquiries had been made, the police had been unable to find any public house she had visited.

The Coroner, in summing up the evidence, stated that whenever anyone found a body in the water they should immediately get it out, for it was a difficult thing to tell whether life was really extinct until a thorough examination had been made. In the present case, there was no doubt the woman had been drinking, and it was quite possible that the sudden immersion in cold water would stop the heart. The woman may have died from that, and not from suffocation. The presumption was that she pawned the clothing for two shillings, and spent 1s 11d of it on drink. There was ample evidence to justify the jury in bringing in a verdict of "Suicide during temporary insanity".

After a consultation, the jury returned the verdict suggested by the Coroner.

### 32 9 July 1915

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

WASTE OF CANAL WATER For wasting water of the North Staffordshire Canal, **James Roans**, boatman, was fined 10s ; **John Bentley**, £1 ; **John Bell**, 15s ; **George Cornwall** £1 and **George Morris** £1. Mr Jolly of Stoke appeared for the North Staffordshire Railway Co.

### 33 10 September 1915

WOUNDED AT YPRES AND THE DARDANELLES It has been officially reported that Private **Richards** of the Worcester Regiment, is now in hospital suffering from wounds received in action at the Dardanelles. At the beginning of the year, Richards was wounded at Ypres, and on his recovery was sent to the Dardanelles. He is a reservist, and previously to being recalled to the Colours was employed as a boatman on the Shropshire Union Canal.

### 34 1 October 1915

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

BOATMAN FINED **Charles Holland**, a canal boatman, was charged with suddenly dropping the four paddles at Kent's Locks, Church Lawton, on 6<sup>th</sup> September. He was fined £1. **John Hickson**, another canal boatman, was charged with wasting water at Wheelock on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, and was fined 30s.

### 35 22 October 1915

#### WHEELOCK

**A ROWDY SCENE** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **John Palin**, a boatman of Hardings Wood, Kidsgrove, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Wheelock on the 5<sup>th</sup> October. PC Dicks said that in consequence of a complaint he went to the front of the New Inn at Wheelock, and there found defendant drunk and using very bad language. He had his jacket and waistcoat off, and had been fighting. There were a number of other boatmen stripped, and they also appeared to have been fighting. As the fight seemed likely to break out again, he told defendant to go home. Witness was in plain clothing, but he told defendant he was a constable. Still defendant continued to use bad language. Defendant assaulted him. A struggle ensued, and defendant struck him several times all over the body. After some time, witness with assistance got defendant to his boat. Witness added that he did not think defendant realised he was a constable, for he had since apologised for striking him. Defendant was fined 10s.

### 36 5 November 1915

#### BOATMAN AND THE GOOSE

#### ALLEGED THEFT FROM SPECIAL CONSTABLE

**SUCCESSFUL PLEA** At the Nantwich Police Court on Tuesday, before Mr E R Bellyse and Mr R Wright, **Samuel Fradley** and **William Grainger**, boatmen, were charged with stealing a goose, of the value of £1, the property of Wilfred John Patton, special constable, the Bache House, Hurleston, Nantwich, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr A E Stringer of Sandbach appeared for the defence.

The prosecutor stated that he was driving from the farm in the direction of the main road, and when a short distance away from home, he heard what he thought was a whip cracking on the canal. As he passed the mill, he saw Grainger a hundred and fifty yards away, running along the side of the canal with something white under his arm. There was a boat stopped in the canal. Fradley, the other prisoner, ran to meet Grainger, and taking the object from him returned to the boat. Witness hurrying to the canal bridge, asked the boatmen to stop. They, however, whipped up the horse and hurried away.

Witness called to his bailiff and they drove together to Hurleston Bridge. Intercepting the two prisoners with their boat, he told them that he was a special constable and required an explanation of their suspicious conduct. "In my opinion", he added, "you have stolen a fowl". Fradley produced a cap dripping with water, and said that was the reason for the stoppage. Witness declined to accept this explanation, and inquired what they had taken. Both denied that they had taken anything. Walking along the towing-path in the direction from which they had come, witness came upon a man fishing. This man handed him a plank and a Canadian goose. The goose he identified as his property. After the Police Court proceedings on October 25<sup>th</sup>, he took the goose home and had it plucked. He then found it had been pierced through the neck by a bullet. Previously to October 23<sup>rd</sup>, he had twelve geese of that particular breed, and on the day of the alleged theft he could only count eleven. He had been unable to find the missing goose since. These geese were hatched close to his house in an artificial nest. The parents, which he had purchased, were pinioned birds. He had fed them ever since.

**A TECHNICAL TERM** Mr Stringer, cross-examining, pointed out that witness said in his evidence that the goose was wild.

Witness explained that it was merely a technical term.

Mr Stringer commented that it was only on the Superintendent's suggestion that he described it as a Canadian goose.

Witness : They are sometimes called Canadian or wild geese.

Mr Stringer remarked that Canadian geese were commonly met with in Cheshire on the pools and meres.

Witness : Yes.

When you first saw them, did you suspect them of stealing a goose? I did not know what they had stolen.

In fact, your suspicions as a special constable were aroused? As a farmer.

Commenting on prosecutor's statement in his evidence in chief that it was a wild goose, Mr Stringer said that, if in the accused's honest belief it was a wild goose, there could be no larceny. On such evidence it would be difficult to get a conviction, and he made the suggestion with the object of shortening the case.

Mr Bellyse : You had better go on, Mr Stringer.

Mr Stringer inquired of the witness why the goose had not been produced that day.

Witness : Because it would not have kept.

Mr Stringer : It would have kept for that short time.

Witness explained that it had already been produced before the magistrates, one of whom was present that day.

Mr Stringer said that was no reason. He wanted to see the goose as a good deal depended on its appearance.

The Superintendent : You could not have kept it for the assizes in six months time.

Mr Stringer : No, but you could have kept it for a week in this weather.

Fred Simcox, prosecutor's farm bailiff, gave corroborative evidence, and said that the geese were fed with the fowl in the Bache House yard.

**FISHERMAN'S STORY** Thomas Wainwright, labourer, 22 Mill Street, Nantwich, stated that he was fishing in the canal near Hurlston Bridge, when a boat coming from the direction of Bache House passed him. After the boat had passed, he noticed something floating in the water. Calling to the boatmen, he asked them if they had lost anything, and one of them answered, "Nothing that belongs to us". On examining the object, he found it to be a plank with a goose tied underneath it. The bird was in a dying condition. It expired almost immediately after he had cut the rope from its neck. A few minutes later, Mr Patton came up, and he handed him the goose and plank.

The name of a brother of Grainger was called in Court to give evidence, but he did not respond to the call.

The Superintendent said he had been warned to be present.

Mr Stringer said the proper course would have been to summon him, and pay him conduct money.

The police had no right to comment on his absence and prejudice the case against his clients.

Harry Sandland, tanner, 101 Beam Street, Nantwich, stated that on October 25<sup>th</sup>, while fishing in the canal, he recovered a rifle stock, which he saw floating in the water. It had the appearance of not having been long in the water.

Acting Sergeant Garside stated that on the day of the alleged theft he interviewed the accused at Barbridge. Fradley said they knew nothing about the goose, and Grainger said he had been in the field for his cap. Witness replied that he had reason to suspect them both. At the Police Station he charged them with the offence, and both repeated the statement they had previously given.

**THE DEFENCE** Mr Stringer submitted that the magistrates could not come to the conclusion that it was a case in which these men could be convicted. In the first place, they were charged with the simple larceny of a goose. It was a well known fact that there was a number of Canadian geese in this country in a wild state. Personally he had seen them scores of times. In that very neighbourhood, he believed there was a reservoir frequented by Canadian geese. The goose had not been brought to the Court. There was no reason why it should not have been. The appearance of the goose was an important factor in this case. If these men honestly believed that it was a wild goose they had killed, they were not liable for the offence with which they were now charged. It did not matter how many lies or stories they had told, unless there was felonious intention they could not be charged. Mr Patton, in his evidence, called it a wild goose, and somewhat unfairly the Superintendent suggested that it was a Canadian goose. He did so because he knew that he was on delicate ground. He knew perfectly well that there was no margin to lose in that case. The goose that was killed might have been one from Crewe pool, and the one that was missing might have gone in some other way. He submitted that if someone killed a hand reared wild duck, which had gone on to someone else's pit, he could not be convicted of larceny. The geese were intended to provide sport, and there was no difference between these geese and hand reared wild ducks. There

was no property in them, because they were not reclaimed. It would be a most dangerous thing to convict men of good character of an alleged offence of this nature.

The accused were discharged, the Chairman remarking that it was impossible to convict them on the evidence.

Mr Stringer : I agree with you.

### **37 5 November 1915**

#### **RUNCORN FLATMAN'S DEATH**

**THE INQUEST** At the Preston Brook Wesleyan Schoolroom on Friday, Deputy Coroner White conducted an inquiry into the circumstance attending the death of **Thomas Watton**, a flatman of Surrey Street, Runcorn, who was found dead in the cabin of his boat on Thursday morning. Mr Joseph Spruce was the foreman of the jury. **Mr Ellis Gatley** represented the Upper Mersey Watermen's Union.

**Elizabeth Watton** of 17 Surrey Street, Runcorn, said the deceased was her husband. He was 50 years of age, and a waterman. Witness last saw him alive at seven o'clock on Wednesday morning of last week when he was leaving the house to come to Preston Brook. He seemed to be in his usual health and made no complaint.

**Daniel Higgins**, 44 Cawdor Street, Runcorn, waterman, said he was employed on the flat *Lloyd* with the deceased. He had been working with him since Easter last. On an occasion about six or eight weeks ago, the deceased said he did not feel very well. He did not describe his symptoms or make any further complaint. When they were coming up the river last Wednesday morning week, he remarked that he felt "as if he had got a bit of fresh cold". Witness last saw him alive about 9.30 that morning. About 3.30 in the afternoon witness got up and found the deceased was not on deck. He concluded deceased had gone home. Witness attended to his duties on the flat until seven o'clock, when he went ashore. On Thursday morning, when the deceased did not turn up, witness thought he had better look in the deceased's cabin. He found him lying in bed dead. He summoned assistance and the matter was reported to the police.

Police-constable Collier, stationed at Preston Brook, spoke to going to the flat. He found the deceased lying in a natural position in bed, partly undressed. He appeared to have been dead some hours.

Dr Bower of Stretton spoke to having made a *post mortem* examination. The body was poorly nourished. Witness thought death had taken place about 24 hours – probably on Thursday morning. There was fatty degeneration of the heart. The lungs were extremely congested as from acute pneumonia. Witness thought the cause of death was acute pneumonia and heart failure.

In reply to the foreman, the doctor said it was quite common for people to do their work while suffering from pneumonia. Congestion of the lungs was sometimes quite painless in the case of elderly persons.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

### **38 12 November 1915**

#### **CHURCH LAWTON**

**BOATMAN FINED** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **William Hales** of the canal boat *Trent* was charged with letting down the paddles at Kent's Outside Lock, Church Lawton, in a manner likely to cause damage, on October 29<sup>th</sup>, and he was fined £1.

### **39 30 November 1915**

#### **AUDLEM**

**KICKED BY A HORSE** A boatman named **Evans**, of the SUR canal boat *Horace*, was badly kicked in the face by a horse at Moss Hall, Audlem, on Saturday. Without any warning, the animal lashed out and caught Evans in the mouth.

**40 24 December 1915**

**BOATMAN'S DAUGHTER**

**PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOUR AT NANTWICH** At the Nantwich Petty Sessions on Monday, before Mr E R Bellyse and other magistrates, **John Howard**, boatman, Poole, Nantwich, was summoned under the Education Act for the non-attendance of his child **Agnes**, aged 12 years one month, at school.

Mr A O Bevan, who appeared for the defence, said that the case had been adjourned for a month in order to see if the child was sent to school in the meantime, and to ascertain if there was any legal argument in support of the child not going to school. Mr Bevan added that the child had not been to school. The facts of the case were admitted and the only question was a question of law. The father was a canal boatman in the employ of Messrs Chesworth and Sons, coal merchants, Nantwich, and it was admitted that the child had kept away from school since June 25<sup>th</sup> to the present time, and she was in the fifth or sixth standard.

Defendant had five other children. He had had in his employ a man named **Allen**, who enlisted at the beginning of May. From May until June 25<sup>th</sup> defendant did not work, and could not work his canal boat, having no labour. From June 25<sup>th</sup> the child was employed on the boat, and it was for defendant to show that they acted with reason in keeping the child from school. Mr Bevan proceeded to explain that with no one to assist in working the boat, the family would be in the direst poverty, and that position would arise if the child were sent to school. That, he held, was a reasonable excuse.

He cited the law on the question, and put forward the statutory excuses for a child not attending school, and pointed out that while they did not claim under any of these, the magistrates had the power to accept any other excuse which they might deem to be reasonable.

The child, he said, was kept from school in order that the mother and other members of the family should not suffer physical discomfort. They would be in the direst poverty if the child was prevented from rendering such service as would enable her father to earn money. He submitted in the circumstances that they were not acting unreasonably in keeping the child from school. The father would otherwise not be able to earn a penny, and there would not be a bit of coal in Ravensmoor and Burland, as it was brought entirely by boat.

The Chairman : Why cannot anyone else go?

Mr Bevan : You cannot get the labour. Boats are laid up along the waterway from here to Tunstall.

Mr Kane (school attendance officer) said that the man was not compelled to follow that particular employment. There was other work he could do.

**DEFENDANT'S PLEA** The defendant was called, and said his youngest child was seven months old. In order to work a canal boat, it was necessary to have two persons, one to steer and the other to take charge of the horse. The child rode on the horse's back while he steered the boat. He had made every effort to get another hand to work the boat, and could get neither man nor boy. He had applied at four workhouses without success. His employers had endeavoured to assist him, but they had been unsuccessful.

In reply to Mr Kane, defendant said he had made no effort to obtain other employment. It would not do for him to leave his boat after following that employment for so many years.

Mr T Hall, one of the firm of Chesworth and Sons, said that after defendant had lost his assistant, they endeavoured to find another for him, and in spite of numerous inquiries they had not succeeded. It was not any man that could do that class of work.

Mr Brocklebank : Yet you get a child to do it.

Mr Hall : But not the work that a man would do. His work, he proceeded, was to help with the loading and unloading. If the child had not gone, defendant would have been out of work. The firm advised him to take the child to look after the horse, and they employed extra men to load and unload. It was now impossible to get a man. There were scores of boats tied up. The girl did no manual work. The boatman could not steer unless he had someone to work the horse. As soon as they could get a man or boy, the girl could be dispensed with. They were doing their best. Howard, in ordinary circumstances, was responsible for finding his own help.

Mr Kane suggested that the girl had taken a man's place, but witness said she was not doing a man's work. His firm went to considerable expense in providing the extra labour. An order was made for the child to attend school at Worleston after the Christmas holidays. Mr Bevan gave formal notice of appeal.

**41 28 December 1915**

**CANAL BOAT CHILDREN**

**RUINED EDUCATIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY** Mr W Shaw, the school attendance officer, reported that he had had an application from a canal boatman for an exemption from school attendance in respect of his son, owing to the fact that he could not get a man to assist him.

The Chairman said he knew there was a difficulty in getting men for canal work, but he was much against the employment of children, as the work not only ruined them educationally but physically. They were not the proper people to do men's work.

The application was not granted.

**42 21 January 1916**

**SERGEANT WRIGHT KILLED** Information has been received of the death at the Front of Sergeant **Thomas Wright**, a son of Mr and Mrs John Wright of 82 Garden Lane, Chester. He was in a Lancashire Regiment, and was promoted the day before he was killed. He joined on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1914, prior to which he was employed by the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company as a waterman. He was 22 years of age, and death, which was instantaneous, was caused by his being shot in the head.

**43 18 February 1916**

**SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY**

**MAINTENANCE OF A MOTHER** At the instance of James Redfern, relieving officer for the Congleton Guardians, **John William Stubbs**, boatman, Nantwich, was summoned for the non payment of 32 weeks' contributions towards the maintenance of his mother, who is chargeable to the Guardians. The amount of the arrears was £1 14s 6d. An order was made for payment.

**44 10 March 1916**

**NANTWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY**

**BOATMAN'S CHILD** **John Howard**, boatman, Poole, was summoned for not sending his child, a girl 12 years of age, regularly to school. The circumstances of the case have been previously reported when it was adjourned to the present Court. The school attendance officer (Mr Kane) was asked by Mr A O Bevan, who defended, if he had had any rules or regulations from the Board of Education to assist him in determining what children should be released from school in order to assist temporarily in agriculture or industrial occupations. Mr Kane : None whatever. In reply to further questions, he had not heard that some thousands of boys of various ages had been released and 78 girls. He did not think girls for canal boat work would be released. Mr Bevan mentioned that this was the third time the case had been before the Bench, and it had been adjourned in order to give them an opportunity of finding someone to replace the child. Defendant, who was employed by Messrs H Chesworth and Sons, coal merchants, Nantwich, was not a boatman in the ordinary sense of the word. Since his man had left to join the Army, he had made every endeavour to get someone else. Six weeks the boat was laid up, and as no food was coming into the house and the children were absolutely starving, he took his eldest child, aged 12 years, from school to drive the boat horse. There were hundreds of thousands of children on canal boats, the only difference being that this one sometimes slept at home. He quoted the law and two cases bearing on the subject, and suggested that this was a reasonable case for exemption as the child was taken away purely for the purpose of keeping his client's home together. They undertook to get someone to replace the child as soon as they could. Mr Evans, representative of the firm employing defendant, said they would give a written undertaking that the child should attend school to make up the lost attendances. In

reply to Mr Kane, he said he employed a man at Ravensmoor Wharf, but a woman could not do his work, as he was engaged in loading the coal. If the coal were not brought to Ravensmoor by boat, it would mean an additional cost of 2s 6d a ton to the customer. He explained that the firm had made every endeavour to find a substitute, and so far without success. The Bench decided to adjourn the case for two months. Mr C E Young : The magistrates are of opinion that a man can be got by Messrs Chesworth if they will pay a full grown man's wages.

#### **45 31 March 1916**

**NORTHWICH OLD LADY'S DEATH** At the age of 91 years, there passed away at 131 Victoria Road, Northwich, Mrs Jane Penny. She was a native of Barnton, being a daughter of the late Mr John Yarwood, and was twice married. Her first husband was **Mr Thomas Gandy**, at one time captain of the steamer *Superb*. Some years after his death she married **Mr John Penny** – also a waterman – a member of a very old and much respected Northwich family. About thirty years ago she was left a widow for a second time, and for a long period she lived with Mr Peter Thomas of Witton Street, a well known Northwich tradesman. When this gentleman died, Mr and Mrs Stelfox, son-in-law and daughter of Mr Thomas, provided the old lady with a home, and although she has been invalid for six years, they have done their utmost to make the declining years of her long life as comfortable as possible. Her end was quite peaceful. The remains will be laid to rest in Witton Cemetery tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon at three o'clock.

#### **46 5 May 1916**

##### **ROBBERY FROM CANAL BOAT**

**A POLICE CONSTABLE'S CAPTURE** At Sandbach Sessions on Tuesday, Thomas Bickerton, George Guilford and Rachael Moore, Wheelock, and **James Henry Jones** and **Charles Frederick Taylor**, boatmen, were charged on remand with stealing ten cwts of coal, of the value of 13s 4d, the property of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, at Wheelock on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**POLICE EVIDENCE** PC Dick stated that he was near the canal bridge, Wheelock, at 10.15 pm, when he noticed a woman standing about the opening which led to the canal towing-path. He went towards her, but she ran away. Witness followed on to the towing-path, and near Lea's Mill he saw the five defendants. Bickerton and Guilford had two bags of coal and were about to move it away. Jones and Taylor were farther on. On seeing witness they bolted. There was a boat tied up laden with coal. He managed to catch Guilford. He said he had given the boatmen 2s for some coal, but knew he was doing wrong. He showed him the bag of coal he was going to take away. Witness took possession of the coal and found it weighed three quarters of a cwt, and seven lb. Lying on the path near the boat were large lumps of coal, which weighed four cwt and a half. Guilford was brought to the Police Station, Sandbach.

In company with Sergeant Lawson, he proceeded back to Wheelock, and found the boat had gone. They went to Bickerton's house and knocked him up and, in reply to their inquiries respecting the coal, he said, "I could not help it ; I have got into it, and shall have to get out of it". He further stated that the boatman gave him the coal. Later, witness and Acting Sergeant Mellor went in search of the missing boat, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> April they found it tied up near the lock at Kinderton Arms. On board were Jones and Taylor. Jones said he knew nothing at all about it. He arrived at Wheelock at nine o'clock, and the reason why he went away so soon was because someone had been fetching his coal whilst he had been at the pictures ; so he thought he had better go before any more was taken. Questioned further, he admitted having gone into the public house before going away. He had tied up his horse in Moore's stable, which was close to where the boat was tied up. At 9.30 am on the 28<sup>th</sup>, he saw the female defendant Moore on the canal side at Wheelock. She took them to a coal place belonging to her house and showed them the coal which she had taken. It weighed half a cwt. Witness then asked if she had any coal in the stable, and she said she did not know. On going there, they found a quantity of coal, which weighed three cwt one quarter 14 pounds. The defendant denied all knowledge of the coal, and said the boatman must have left it. At the Police Station, witness charged them with the offence. Jones had nothing to say. Taylor and

Guilford made no reply. Bickerton said they all joined together in it. Moore said she had nothing to say.

Sergeant Lawson corroborated the last witness's evidence with regard to Bickerton. Defendant showed them the stolen coal in a shed. He did not know the owner of the boat, but had met him that night in the New Inn. It was on coming out that he gave him the coal. Others were having it, so he thought he would have some too.

Acting Sergeant Mellor also gave corroborative evidence.

**Alfred Roberts**, Tunstall, agent to the Shropshire Union Canal Co, stated that he knew Jones. He was captain of the boat *Teg*. Taylor was his assistant. They left Tunstall on the 27<sup>th</sup> April laden with coal for Dobson's Bridge, Whitchurch, and they had no authority to interfere with the coal before reaching their destination. As the coal was in transit, it was the property of the Shropshire Union Canal Co. The coal weighed 19 tons.

**DEFENDANTS' EXPLANATIONS** Jones and Taylor pleaded not guilty, and the others pleaded guilty to receiving the coals.

Jones stated that he was not at the boat when the coal was taken, and he received no money. No one had any right to take it.

Taylor said he was not there when the coal was taken.

Guilford said he was standing at the door of the Commercial Hotel when Jones and Taylor came out. They said they could have some coal as they had a good weight on. Bickerton and Moore were there also, and Taylor helped to fill his bag. The captain of the boat filled a barrow and wheeled to Moore's stable. Coming back he filled the barrow again, and prisoner gave him 2s for it. He was sorry it had occurred, but was asked to have it. He did not steal the coal wilfully.

Bickerton said it was temptation. The coal was given to him.

Mr Royds (chairman) stated that the Bench had found Jones and Taylor guilty. It was a very serious offence, and they considered Jones was the most blameworthy. At the same time, they were all very much to blame. Jones would be fined £3, Bickerton, Guilford and Moore £2 each. On account of Taylor's youth, he would be bound over to be of good behaviour. The Bench wished to commend Constable Dicks. They were very pleased indeed with the way he had managed the case, and also for the clear way he had given evidence.

Superintendent Sutton thanked the Bench, and said the Chairman's remarks would be conveyed to the Chief Constable. It was certainly a great credit to Constable Dicks.

Mr Royds then recalled the witness Roberts, and he told him that the magistrates would be very glad to see Taylor separated from Jones.

Roberts : Taylor was in the employ of Jones, and the company had no authority in the matter. He would do his best. Jones had borne a very good character hitherto.

#### **47 26 May 1916**

BOATMAN (good, steady) wanted ; captain of narrow boats. Apply Thomas Brandreth, Wigan Coal and Iron Co Ltd, Runcorn.

#### **48 16 June 1916**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

WASTE OF WATER **George Archer**, a boatman, was charged with wasting water at Church Lawton on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Inspector Phillips proved the case, and said he had warned defendant on two previous occasions. A fine of 30s was imposed.

#### **49 7 July 1916**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

QUESTION OF PRECEDENCE **George Grimes**, boatman, Wheelock, was summoned for refusing to allow the North Staffordshire Canal Company's survey boat to have precedence at the Booth Lane Locks on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. Mr Jolly of Stoke appeared for the Canal Company, and said the defendant was alleged to have contravened the company's bye law, which related to the survey boat

having precedence to ordinary trade boats when passing through the locks. On the date in question, the engineer was in charge of the survey boat at the Booth Lane Locks, where there were also two trade boats waiting to pass through. When within 300 yards of the lock, the engineer sounded the horn, and made a signal by hand. It was, therefore, the duty of the people in charge of trade boats to wait until the engineer's boat had gone through. One of the men on the trade boats did wait, but the defendant refused to do so and passed into the lock. If this was tolerated, and allowed to go unpunished, there would be no end of trouble, and the duties of the surveyor would be very much increased. Evidence was given by **James Hampton**, lock-keeper, Booth Lane, and **Hugh Rowley**, engineer, Stoke. A fine of £1 was imposed.

## **50 22 September 1916**

### REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES

RUNCORN OFFENDERS **Daniel Higgins**, a boatman of Cawdor Street, was summoned at the Runcorn Sessions for failing to produce his National Registration certificate when requested by the police.

Police-constable Powis spoke to asking the defendant for his card in High Street. He said he had not been registered.

The defendant said he was in Liverpool "when the man came round with the papers". During the night, his boat was shifted from one dock to the other, and perhaps the man lost sight of him in that way. He was not able to read or write, and when he heard he should register, he visited the Police Station about it.

Police-constable Powis : I brought him. (Laughter).

Defendant explained that he was going, and met the policeman on the way. (Laughter).

The Chairman (Mr A T Smith) said he understood that the defendant lived in Runcorn.

Defendant : I stay with the boat. I never come home. (Laughter).

The Chairman : Then what's the use of having a home?

Defendant was fined 5s.

**George Evans**, a boatman, was similarly fined for the same type of offence.

## **51 28 November 1916**

### MUNITIONS COURT – CASES HEARD AT NORTHWICH

CARD TRICKS AND THE SEQUEL Patrick Thomas Regan, charge hand of a block and fall gang; **William Williams**, boatman ; and George Higgins, block and fall gang, were summoned for neglecting their work.

Mr Pendry, for the employers, said the men were caught by Mr Battersby at 3.10 pm on November 11<sup>th</sup> playing cards in a boat. On that particular afternoon, time and a half was allowed.

Regan said he went with Higgins to make a collection for a man who had lost a pound note the night before, and could not afford it. There was an old pack of cards on the boat, and they commenced to show each other a few tricks. He had already been penalised by being reduced from the position of charge hand.

Williams said he was not neglecting his work, which was to look after the boat.

The Chairman said it was a somewhat difficult case. They thought Regan had been punished, and the charge against him would be dismissed. There was a doubt in Williams's case, and he would be given the benefit of it, and the case dismissed. Higgins must pay 10s, to be deducted from his wages at 5s a week.

## **52 22 December 1916**

### THE TRIBUNALS, SANDBACH – THE URBAN DISTRICT

A BOATMAN'S ERROR A labourer at Ettiley Heath (35), married, applied for exemption on his own behalf on personal grounds. He had been a canal boatman until October, and had two brothers serving in the Army.

The Military Representative : You have left a skilled occupation and gone on an unskilled one. As

you are a Class A man, I must press for you to go. It is a pity you left the canal.

Appellant : Well, we lived on the boat, and the children could not get a proper education.

The application was refused, the Military Representative promising that the man should not be called up before the 7<sup>th</sup> January.

**53 2 March 1917**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

SMART FINE FOR ASSAULT **Harry Carter** of Hassall Green, boatman, was charged with assaulting Harry Dale of Longport at Hassall on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant. The complainant stated that he lived at 9 Station Road, Longport. He was a clerk employed by the Mersey, Weaver Co, and he was sent along the canal on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant, to instruct the boatmen, who had been ice bound, to get back to the Potteries at once, as the cargoes were urgently required. When at Hassall he had occasion to inquire for defendant's brother, William. Defendant informed him that he could not see his brother and, after some conversation, defendant became very abusive. Defendant went into the garden and, without any provocation, picked up a large jar and threw it in the direction of witness. He then ran at witness, and struck him a severe blow on the head and knocked him into the hedge. While there, he continued to punch him about the face and body. At last he got away from him. He had a black eye and had been under the doctor since. **Arthur Phillips**, canal inspector, Etruria, said that when he served the summons, defendant said, "I shan't appear. I can only plead guilty if I come. I know I hit him a time or two. I was a bit gay". Defendant was fined £3.

**54 23 March 1917**

ELWORTH

BOATMAN DROWNED A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned at the inquest, held on Wednesday last week, on the body of a boatman named **John Shaw** (38), of Eva Street, Elworth, which was recovered from the canal at Hardingswood, Kidsgrove, on Tuesday. The funeral took place at Christ Church, Wheelock, on Saturday, the Rev R J Millward officiating. The bearers were Messrs W Greenwood, D Tweats, C Jepson, W Jepson, J Heath and A Whittaker. The mourners were Mrs Greenwood, Mrs Tweats, Mrs Whittaker and Mrs C Jepson (daughters), Mr A Shaw (brother). The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs G Thornhill and Sons, Sandbach.

**55 27 April 1917**

HASSALL

BOATMAN'S SUDDEN DEATH A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned at an inquest held at the Schoolroom, Hassall Green, on Friday, by Mr Coroner Bates, on the body of **James Cresswell** (63), a canal boatman, who died on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> inst at Long Cross Lock, Betchton. **Mrs A M Cresswell**, widow, said deceased had an illness about ten years ago, which affected his head and memory, and it was some time before he recovered. **Elizabeth Cresswell**, daughter of the deceased, said that on Thursday morning she was driving the horse on the towing path, and her father went on about 50 yards ahead to get the lock ready. When she got there, a man told her what had happened. She saw her father lying down half way between the locks, apparently dead. James Farr, bricksetter, Sandbach, said that he was working at the lock on Thursday. Cresswell came along and got the lock ready, and then walked up to witness and spoke to him about his age, and then fell down dead. He had not seemed ill at all, but never moved after he fell. Dr Riddell said death was caused by the rupture of a large blood vessel in the brain, and a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned.

**56 8 June 1917**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS

WASTING CANAL WATER **Abraham Barlow**, of the boat *Gerald*, was summoned by the canal inspector, **Mr Arthur Phillips**, for wasting water on the Trent and Mersey Navigation, at Betchton on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr Marshall, Stoke, appeared to prosecute. **John Stanier**, the lock-keeper at Hassall

Green, gave evidence of the waste, and the defendant, who did not appear, was fined £1. **William Palin** of the canal boat *Pansy* was charged with a similar offence, and pleaded guilty. Mr Marshall said the boat defendant was with was 30 yards above Pierpoint's Top Lock, and there was a boat coming in the opposite direction, near Pierpoint's Bottom Lock. The boatman at the bottom lock prepared the lock for his boat to enter, with the bottom gates open. Defendant tried to claim the use of the bottom lock first, and he opened the top paddles and caused the water to run straight through the lock. Two of the boatmen were fighting over the right to use the lock, and all the time the water was running to waste. Water had to be run down from the upper reaches of the canal, and it was an hour and a half before the canal could be used. During that time, nine boats had come to a standstill and were waiting. Evidence was given by Mr and Mrs Stanier bearing out Mr Marshall's statement. Inspector Phillips said he had made inquiries, and was satisfied that defendant had no right to use the lock. If there was a dispute over the right to use a lock, the boatmen should not run water to waste, but should complain to the company. Defendant was fined £3.

## **57 15 June 1917**

### **WINNINGTON MAN'S TRAGIC END**

**BODY FOUND IN RIVER WEAVER** Mr H C Yates, coroner, and a jury of which Mr Hughes was the foreman, sat at the Police Station, Barnton, on Monday morning, to inquire into the circumstances of the death of George Stuart Ellis of 32 Bond Street, Winnington, whose body was recovered from the river Weaver on Friday morning.

**BROTHER'S EVIDENCE** Alexander Duncan Ellis, 72 Runcorn Road, Barnton, an engineer's clerk at Messrs Brunner Mond and Co's works, stated that on Friday morning he went to Saltersford Lock and identified the body.

You knew he had been ill? We knew he had been under the doctor, but did not know there was anything serious.

He had never expressed any intention of taking his life? None whatever.

When did you last see him alive? On Friday June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Had you a conversation with him? Yes, he had been to a specialist at Liverpool, and I went to see how he had gone on, and he was pleased with the report, as he said the specialist said he could cure him but it would take a little time.

Was he a man of a morose disposition? Yes, ever since he was a lad ; he had always been very reserved.

And although he was suffering from trouble, he would never divulge it? No, he would never tell.

**HOW HE LEFT HOME** Mary Jane Ellis said the deceased was her husband and was 37 years of age. He was a pattern maker on the engineering staff of Messrs Brunner Mond and Co. He had been under Doctor Mainwaring-Wright for eight months with rheumatism chiefly, and in addition he had been troubled with his nerves. On Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, he was placed on the club by Dr Mainwaring-Wright, and told he must not go to work again until he was better. All that day he complained of pains in his head. On Sunday he did not complain and had his meals as usual. About half past eight on Monday morning she took him his breakfast to bed. He afterwards got up and came downstairs, and about half past nine he said he was going for a walk. He said he would not go out the back way as the baby was playing in the yard and would want to go with him. The baby was very much attached to him. She never saw him again alive. On May 31<sup>st</sup> he went to consult a Liverpool specialist and she accompanied him. After the examination, her husband told her it was his nerves, but he would get better although it would take time. His spirits were better after he had got the specialist's decision. When he came home he told her mother, and seemed quite satisfied. He worked on Friday and Saturday, and then the doctor put him on the club. He said he felt better on Sunday, and thought he would go to work on Monday.

The Coroner : Your brother-in-law tells us he has always been a reserved man, and kept his troubles to himself, which is a misfortune. - That is so.

Did he take his walks by the river? - He liked country walks and was not fond of the town.

When he left home, did he say he would be back for dinner? - He said, "Mary, I shall only be an

hour away”.

Has his work worried him? - I don't think so.

Has he had any other worries with regard to relatives? - No.

The Coroner : I am very sorry for you.

RECOVERY OF THE BODY **Peter Bebbington**, an employee of the River Weaver Navigation Trustees at Saltersford Locks, said that on Friday he was told by **Edgar Brookes**, the captain of the barge *Vale of Clywd*, that there was something floating in the water resembling a body. He got a boat, proceeded to the spot, and recovered the body. It was fully dressed, minus the cap.

The Coroner said the deceased was apparently one of those very morose men who would not disclose his troubles to others, and they knew that class of men suffered more than those who would let their troubles be known to their nearest and dearest. Having nerve troubles, he would suffer a great deal more than others, He evidently was a fond parent, because he told his wife if he went out the back way the baby would see him and cry for him, and to avoid that he left by the front door. The question was – and it was a serious one – what verdict the jury would return. Nerves did affect the brain, and very often in the long run. They had evidence of the doctor's decision, and the brain was then normal, and it was the same on Saturday and Sunday, because there was no depression. They could return a verdict of “Suicide whilst temporarily insane” or “Found drowned in the river Weaver”.

The jury returned a verdict of “Found drowned in the River Weaver, there being no evidence to show how he got into the water”.

#### **58 24 August 1917**

PRIVATES J H AND F ESTCOURT Private **James Henry Estcourt** of the Cheshire Regiment, whose home is at Canal Side, Rookery Bridge, Sandbach, was wounded on Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, and is in hospital abroad. This is the third time he has been wounded. Prior to enlisting three years ago, he was a boatman working for the Anderton Co. His brother, Private **Frederick Estcourt** of the same regiment, and living at 15 Wharf Street, Wheelock, was wounded on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. He is in hospital at Northampton. He joined up nearly nine months ago, and has been on foreign service about four months. He was a boatman, working for the Shropshire Union Canal Co. Another brother is serving in the Army on home service.

#### **59 2 November 1917**

PRIVATE F MOSES Private **Fred Moses** of the Cheshire Regiment, whose home was formerly in Forge Fields, Wheelock, but who had until recently lived with his brother at Booth Lane, Cledford, Middlewich, was killed in action on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. Private Moses was a native of Wheelock and a scholar at the Church School. Prior to joining the Army, he was a boatman on the North Staffs Canal.

#### **60 11 January 1918**

MISSING

PRIVATE A SHAW News has been received that Private **Arthur Shaw**, South Lancs Regiment, of Taylor's Row, Wheelock, has been missing for about six weeks. Private Shaw formerly worked on the North Stafford Canal as a boatman. He joined the Army about twelve months ago.

#### **61 15 January 1918**

THE TRIBUNALS – WIDNES

FLAT OWNERS APPEAL A firm of flat owners asked for exemption of a bargeman (25). They had only a few young men to do the heavy work, and unless this man could be exempted, the barge would have to be tied up. Mr Rogers said that under the recent regulations, the firm should apply to the Port Labour Committee, who would consider the whole case. The firm's representative said that the matter was now before this committee, and the case was adjourned to await the outcome of this application.

## 62 11 June 1918

### ALLEGED BURGLARY AT LYMM

INSPECTOR'S SMART CAPTURE **William Henry Baldwin** (18), of 10 Cope Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, was charged at Altrincham on Friday, before Mr J W Sidebotham (presiding) and Mr G F Armitage, with burglariously breaking into and entering the dwelling house of Mr W H Winstanley, Dairy Farm, Lymm, between May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, and stealing money orders and goods of the value of £2 7s 2d.

Mr Winstanley said that everything was left safe on the night of May 28<sup>th</sup>. Next morning the drawers in several rooms had been ransacked. The articles now produced were his property.

Inspector Sharp said he had reason to believe that the burglary had been committed by a youth named Baldwin of Birmingham. Witness happened to be in Birmingham on other business, and made several calls at Baldwin's home, but without success. He saw the prisoner in Monument Road in Birmingham, and he eventually admitted breaking into the farmhouse at Lymm. He was wearing a cap stolen from the farmhouse. When brought to the Altrincham Police Station and charged with the offence, prisoner said, "That's right, that's true. The money order for £1 a boatman changed for me, and I gave him the other order for 3s 8d for changing the £1 order".

Mr Sidebotham : It was a very smart capture.

Prisoner said he was working on one of Horsefield's boats between Manchester and Runcorn. On returning to Runcorn, his calling up papers had arrived at the office. He asked the captain could he stay on until June 10<sup>th</sup>, but the captain would not let him. He tried to get a job, but no one would employ him for so short a time. He called at the Altrincham Police Station and asked for a railway warrant to Birmingham, but was told he could not have one. For three days he walked about without food, and then he broke into the farmhouse at Lymm and stole the money orders and goods mentioned. A boatman gave him a ride to Liverpool and changed the money order for him. At Liverpool he took train to Birmingham.

The magistrates committed Baldwin for trial at the Knutsford Quarter Sessions.

## 63 6 September 1918

### DIED OF WOUNDS

DRIVER G WALLEY News was received on Saturday morning that Driver **George Walley**, RFA, of Forge Fields, Wheelock, had died in hospital abroad of wounds received in action. Driver Walley was a native of Middlewich, and was a boatman on the North Stafford Canal when war broke out. He joined the army three years ago, and had been through some of the hottest fighting. After being out for about two years without receiving a scratch, he came home on furlough, and while there fell in the yard on some bricks and broke his arm. He was in hospital at Chester for a time, and then rejoined his battery. He leaves a widow and two children.

## 64 18 October 1918

### RODE HEATH

DROWNED IN CANAL Mr H C Yates (district coroner) conducted an inquest on Friday, touching the death of John Doyle, 101 Marsh Street, Hanley, who was found drowned in the North Staffordshire Canal, Rode Heath, on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. It appeared from the evidence that deceased had been in an asylum at Cheddleton up to two weeks ago, when he was employed by the British Aluminium Co. He left work on Tuesday dinnertime, and was not seen again until Wednesday morning, when his body was found in the canal at Rode Heath by **John Bloor**, a boatman. A verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" was returned.

## 65 25 October 1918

### BOATMEN AND "SWEEPINGS UP"

### GAOL FOR THEFT NEAR NORTHWICH

MAGISTRATES' WARNING Considerable interest was shown in a case heard at Northwich Police Court on Monday against **Joseph Goodaire**, the captain of the canal boat *Calder*, who was

charged on remand with stealing a sack of flour, the property of the Mersey, Weaver and Ship Canal Carrying Co.

Mr Chambers, from the office of Messrs Hatt Cook and Chambers, who appeared to prosecute, said the prisoner had been in their employ since July 9<sup>th</sup>. That was the first cargo of flour he had carried. His boat had been loaded in three lots, 24 bags at Stoke on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 111 bags at Etruria and 70 bags at Middleport on Friday October 4<sup>th</sup>. They were all checked, but prisoner only delivered 204 bags at his destination instead of 205.

THE EVIDENCE William Rowley, War Street, Stoke-on-Trent, foreman warehouseman for the company, said they loaded 24 bags into the *Calder* on Thursday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. They were checked on coming into the warehouse and then they were put in the boat.

Charles Lloyd gave evidence as to the loading of 111 bags of flour at Etruria, and Samuel Lewis Sutton proved loading the *Calder* with 30 bags of flour on Friday October 4<sup>th</sup>, and 40 bags the following day.

Mr Cornelius Gibson, Daisy Bank, Anderton, district manager to the Mersey, Weaver and Ship Canal Carrying Co, stated that he went to Marston Salt Works on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, and from there he took out a warrant for the arrest of Goodaire.

Samuel Glendenning of Water Street, Manchester, said he received the cargoes of boats as they put into Manchester. On October 11<sup>th</sup> the *Calder* came in with 204 bags on board.

Jonathan Spencer, assistant storekeeper to the Salt Union at Marston, stated that on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, he saw Goodaire, who said to him, "I've got a pillowslip full of black flour in the cabin ; have you any pigs?" He said, "No", and the prisoner then asked him if he had any fowl. He told him he had plenty, to which he replied, "I will give it to you".

Mr Chambers (pointing to the bag produced) : Is that the flour?

Witness : Yes, I can smell it.

Witness, proceeding, said he took the flour, put it in the storeroom, and reported the matter.

PS Brown said that at seven pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, he received the warrant for the apprehension of the prisoner. He (witness), accompanied by Detective-sergeant Miller, saw Goodaire at the boat *Calder* and read the warrant over to him. Since then he had charged him with stealing 124 lb of flour, value £1 17s 6d, to which he replied, "I didn't steal the flour ; I got it out of the warehouse at Etruria".

Detective-sergeant Miller corroborated, and said the prisoner was under the influence of drink.

Mr J Shirley, manager to the company for the North Stafford district, said the meaning of "black flour" was the phrase the boatmen used to distinguish the white imported and the standard English flour.

PLEA OF NOT GUILTY Prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, said the flour had been given to him by a man named James Barnett at Etruria for his horse. The animal had lost a cwt of flesh in three months.

In answer to a question by the Chairman, Goodaire said the flour was the "sweepings up", and had been given to his wife.

Mr Shipley : You can't get good flour like that from the brushing of the floor.

The Bench decided to convict.

SECOND CHARGE Prisoner was further charged with stealing 293 lb of wheat, the property of the Mersey, Weaver and Ship Canal Carrying Co, value £2 11s 6d, on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, and Samuel Henry Street, New Inn, Marston, was proceeded against for receiving 40 lb, value 6s 6d, knowing it to have been stolen.

Mr Chambers said the wheat was loaded at Salford for transit to Burslem. On his way down, Goodaire halted at Marston, and was there seen carrying the sack containing wheat to the New Inn, and coming out without it. Street was visited by the police, and denied any knowledge of the wheat. They went away, but on returning and demanding a search, he produced a key, and the police found a bag of wheat in a stable. Defendant asked them "if they couldn't settle it there and then".

Wilfred Stewart Eddison, a grain weigher at Salford, said on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst he loaded into the *Calder* 180 sacks of wheat, weighing 250 lb each.

Samuel Lewis Sutton declared that he checked the cargo of the *Calder* at Burslem on October 18<sup>th</sup>, and found 17 bags with short weight, varying from 128 to 214 lb.

A boatman named **George Brookes** said he was with his boat, the *Sandbach and Corona*, in Hulme locks, and passing the *Calder*; Goodaire said to him, "I have a little bit of stuff on board I want to dispose of", to which witness replied, "Keep it there".

Jonathan Spencer stated at 11 am on October 18<sup>th</sup> he saw Goodaire, who said to him, "I have a bag of wheat on board, and I want to get shut of it". Witness asked him if it was wheat or sweepings, to which prisoner replied, "It is good wheat, worth £7 10s". He also told him he had had it given to him by a man at No 9. Witness said he would get a barrow and take it, and slipped into the office and reported the matter. He was told to fetch it and send it back to No 9. He saw the prisoner again at three pm, when he came up to him and said, "How are you going on, old chummie?" He replied, "All right ; how is yourself?" and he said, "Oh, I am all right. I have just had 14 pints". Witness told him he did not know where he had put it, and he said, "I have had it at old Sammy's". He further said that he had asked Street if "he couldn't have any of those fowl that were knocking about", and that he had one in the cabin with its neck screwed round. Later he saw him take a sack into the New Inn Yard.

Evidence was also given as to his taking the sack to the New Inn by William Foxley, a foreman at Marston.

Mr J E Fletcher (who appeared on behalf of Street) : Was there any concealment about it?

Witness : No.

PS Brown said he went with Detective-sergeant Miller and questioned Street relating to the prisoner. Defendant told them he hadn't given him a fowl, but had sold him one several months ago. They entered one of the stables, and saw Goodaire's horse. There was a door leading to a loose box at the end of the stable, but the defendant told them that it was always locked up. Sergeant Miller said it was a very serious matter, but Street said the prisoner had brought nothing there. They then went to the canal boat *Calder*, and on being questioned, prisoner said, "I loaded 180 bags at Manchester, and they are on the boat now". They went back to the New Inn, and said to Street, "Do you still deny that there was anything brought into your place today?" and told him that they had information to that effect. Defendant said, "Have you got him?" Witness replied, "Yes", and after some hesitation, Street went into the house, brought out the key and entered the loose box, where he found the wheat produced. Defendant then said, "There is only us three here now ; can't we settle the matter here?" Sergeant Miller told him the matter was too serious.

Mr Fletcher said Goodaire was talking anyhow.

The Chairman : You mean it was the 14 pints that were talking? (Laughter).

Mr Fletcher : He said in the presence of his wife that he didn't know it had been pinched?

PS Brown : Yes, and he also told us it wasn't there.

Detective-sergeant Miller corroborated.

Mr Shirley said the cargo was 315 lb deficient, but crediting the wheat in the bottom of the boat it made 293 lb, value £2 11s 6d.

Goodaire, who pleaded not guilty, said a man brought the sack on the boat at Salford, and on him (the prisoner) refusing to give him £1 for it, he asked him 15s. Again he refused, and on returning to the boat later, he found it had been left there.

The Chairman : Why didn't you throw it off?

Prisoner : I wouldn't lift it.

Street, in answer to a question by Mr Fletcher, said Goodaire might have had one pint at the New Inn, but he hadn't fourteen in the place. Goodaire said to him, "I've got a few sweepings up here which will do for your fowl", and he threw them into the loose box. He hadn't seen inside of the bag, and didn't give him anything for them. He didn't know it had been wrongly come by.

Mr Fletcher : Explain what you meant by "settling the matter there".

Defendant : I didn't want to go down to Northwich that night, but I would have gone the next morning.

THE DEFENCE Mr Fletcher said it was incumbent on the prosecution to prove that Street

received the wheat, knowing at the time it had been stolen. Street had given a full explanation as to how he came by it, and it would be a cruel thing to suggest that a man like him would imperil his character by taking wheat knowing it to have been stolen. He submitted that the statement he had given was one which was true in face of the evidence for the prosecution, and it must be accepted as an explanation. He was a man of the highest respectability, and he suggested his statement should be accepted.

The Chairman : What is your client's explanation of the statement to Detective-sergeant Miller and Sergeant Brown - "Cannot we three settle it here?"

Mr Fletcher : He will explain that himself.

Defendant said he thought it might be arranged for him to come to the Police Station the following morning to give evidence against the man who was alleged to have stolen it. He did not want to have to go to Northwich that night, and leave his wife in charge of the house, as she was not well enough to be left there alone.

The Chairman : You did not wish to square it then?

Defendant : No. I would have come to the Police Station all right the next morning.

STREET "NOT GUILTY"

BOATMAN SENT TO GAOL The Bench retired, and returning into Court after a few minutes absence, the Chairman said, "Goodaire, although you have pleaded "Not Guilty", we are unanimously of the opinion you are guilty, and that you took both the flour and the wheat".

The Clerk then handed in his record.

The Chairman : I see you have been in trouble before.

Prisoner : Never in my life.

The Clerk : At Pontefract you got three months and one month.

Prisoner : Never in my life.

The Chairman : You certainly agree to all the indications of the record from Scotland Yard.

The Clerk : It was for stealing pots and a shovel.

The Chairman : We have decided you are guilty, and we want, once and for all, from this Court, to express the hope that those who are responsible for the canal traffic will take care that it is known to all boatmen and workmen that there is no such thing as "sweepings", and that no man has any right to claim anything which he is carrying. What you have stolen is not "sweepings" but good wheat, and at a time when, owing to the bad weather, we were threatened with an almost total loss of the wheat production of the north of this country. We must fit the sentence to the offence, and we commit you to gaol for four months for stealing the wheat, and two months for stealing the flour. We hope when you come out of the house of correction, if a sadder, you will be a much wiser man.

With regard to the question of feloniously receiving 40 lb of wheat, whilst there are one or two things which have been very unwise in the action of Mr Street, we have decided not to convict. We do not think he received the wheat, knowing to to have been stolen. He was very unwise in taking it in at all. We suggest to Mr Shirley that a printed notice shall be issued, intimating that no one has any right to take or buy "sweepings up".

Mr Shirley said the boatmen and others knew that perfectly well, but he would endeavour to meet the wishes of the Bench.

## **66 8 November 1918**

### **SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY**

**WASTING WATER** **Joshua Fradley**, a boatman of the canal boat *Milton*, was charged with wasting water at Kent's Lock, Church Lawton. **Mr Arthur Phillips**, canal inspector, Etruria, said defendant filled a lock without drawing up the two centre paddles, and thus wasted water. Mr Marshall (Stoke) appeared to prosecute. Defendant, who did not appear, was fined 25s.