

ROCHDALE OBSERVER

1 1 March 1856

Rochdale Petty Sessions

ASSAULT AND ATTEMPTED HIGHWAY ROBBERY **James Burn**, a boatman, was charged with the above offence, and also with attempting to take other liberties. Mrs Fitton stated that about ten o'clock on Tuesday night, she was going down Thornham Lane, having with her a lighted lanthorn. A man wearing a hairy cap, and something red like a comforter round his neck (and whom she believed to be the prisoner) met her and knocked her down. The man then covered her mouth and felt about her pockets. She called out, however, and some friends came to her aid, when he ran away. Her husband and brother then went on board a boat, where they found the prisoner in bed about eleven o'clock, and had him apprehended. Mrs Fitton was confident as to his identity, and knew his voice. It was attempted to prove an alibi for the defence. Mrs Cheetham, who was called for this purpose, gave evidence which led to another conclusion. **John Brooks**, the captain of the boat, said the prisoner went to put the horse in the stable and get a quart of milk. The prisoner was not out of his sight many minutes, and when he returned, he did not appear to be under any excitement, nor did he leave the boat again until apprehended. The place where Mrs Fitton was knocked down was about 400 yards from the boat. He could not say what sort of waistcoat Burn wore on that day. The prisoner was then told to put on a checked smock frock which he wore on Tuesday, when the portion of his red waistcoat visible agreed with the description given by Mrs Fitton and Mrs Cheetham. He admitted when apprehended that the sludge had been washed from his trousers. The prisoner was committed for trial, but it was agreed to accept bail.

2 21 May 1859

On Tuesday, **Allan Brook**, son of the captain of a boat, was drowned in the Warland Lock, near Todmorden.

3 21 May 1859

DIED On the 14th inst, **Mr Benjamin Parker**, boatman, Black Lane End, near Rochdale.

4 19 October 1859

DIABOLICAL OUTRAGE ON A FEMALE A most barbarous outrage was perpetrated on a young female a few days ago, the particulars of which were stated to the magistrates at Halifax on Saturday. Five "roughs" were placed in the dock, charged with being concerned in the commission of a felonious assault upon a respectable young woman named Sarah Ann Burrows, residing in Lee Bank, Halifax. Their names were : George Chappel, mason, Samuel Earnshaw, miner, William Stott, moulder, Charles Cookson, mason and **John Marsden**, boatman. A remand was desired by Superintendent Wardle, when Mr Mitchell asked that the prisoners might be released on substantial bail. Mr A C Foster, engaged for the prosecution, in opposing their release, made a statement of the case. The above named Sarah Ann Burrows, her cousin Martha, a sweetheart of one of them and his friend, went to Brighouse on Sunday the 6th Inst. They remained too late for the train, and decided to walk home by Elland. They left Brighouse about ten o'clock. When they had got a little way from Brighouse, the girls were hustled by some men they met, but their two male companions got them away. They then proceeded on the road about two or three hundred yards, when ten or twelve men came along the footpath in the field they were walking in. The men seized the girls, and at that time performed a gross indecency on Martha. Martha and one of the young men then ran off to Mr Pitchforth's house (Boothroyd Hall) which was not far distant. Meanwhile, the enormities perpetrated on the other girl were of the vilest and most outrageous character. The merciless brutes dragged her into the field, and while five of them held her, three of them in succession perpetrated the worst of crimes. These successive outrages were accompanied by the foulest language. The poor girl screamed so long as strength was left ; and at length believed, and said, that she was dying. The leader of the gang, seized with compunction, then tried to lift her up ; upon which his companions dragged her to the earth again, declaring their determination to perpetrate further

information to the police. She heard nothing further until she was informed that her sister had been found drowned. **John Lord**, boatman, said he knew the deceased very well, and at half past twelve on Monday, he found her in the canal drowned near to Clegg Hall. Her crinoline was on the towing-path. Ann Duxbury said that on Monday morning at a quarter to twelve, she saw the deceased near to Clegg Hall Bridge, walking very slowly. She asked her if the way she was going was the road to Clegg Hall. She replied that it was. In a few hours after, she heard that the deceased was drowned. A verdict to the effect "That the deceased committed suicide while in an unsound state of mind" was returned.

8 13 August 1864 Rochdale Petty Sessions

BOAT RACING ON THE CANAL **Northern Buckley**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Veevers, was charged with a breach of the bye laws of the Canal Company, committed at Gauxholme higher lock, in Walsden. Mr T W Whitehead appeared for the company, and stated that on the 30th ult, defendant, who was in charge of a boat named the *Oak*, was racing and attempting to pass another boat on the canal, and in doing so opened the lower gates before closing the upper ones, thus causing them to come together with considerable force, and had the masonry not been firm, serious consequences might have resulted. The company had only just finished repairs at these locks. **George Slater**, wharfinger at Walsden, corroborated Mr Whitehead's statement. Defendant, who did not appear, was fined 40s and costs.

9 27 August 1864

DEATH BY DROWNING On Wednesday, the body of **Catherine Harrison**, aged 47, a boatman's wife, was found in the canal near Lockbridge. When last seen, the deceased was returning to her boat with her husband, in a state of intoxication, and it is supposed that she accidentally fell into the water.

10 15 October 1864

CAUTION TO BOATMEN **James Jackson**, a captain of a canal boat, was charged with damaging the gates of the lock at Laneside to the extent of £10. Mr J Lomax appeared for the canal company and, in opening the case, said this was one only of the many offences that was committed of late on the canal. The defendant had been summoned before them for an offence which came under a section of an act of parliament, which was passed in the reign of George the 3rd, but he was sorry to say that the highest penalty it directed to be inflicted was £5, which would not cover the damage done to the gates. On the 23^{rs} instant, the defendant brought his boat at a furious speed against the gates of the lock, and damaged them very considerably, as he would be able to prove in evidence. Thomas Dawson, Edward Bridge and Simeon Campyret gave evidence to the above facts, and the bench inflicted a fine of £3.

11 21 April 1866

A MAN KILLED BY A HORSE On Monday, **Robert Stansfield**, aged 60 years, a boatman residing in Regent Street, School Lane, met with his death under the following circumstances. On that morning, at about seven o'clock. A carter in the employ of Mr Tatham went to the stables in Milnrow Road belonging to Moss Lane Works, and took out a horse which his master had bought only on the previous Thursday. After putting on its gears, he took it in the direction of Mr Lucas's shop, saddler, with the view of having the gears examined. When he got opposite to Mr Mark Isherwood's shop, he stopped the horse to alter the harness, and was in the act of putting it right, when the horse suddenly gave a jump and ran away. Mr Lucas's shop is at the junction of the Milnrow and Oldham Roads, and just at the Milnrow Road corner of the shop is the shutter box. The deceased, who had been lame for many years, was leaning against the shutter box when the horse came down Milnrow Road, and having gone halfway across the junction of the two roads, it made towards where the deceased was standing. He threw up his hands to the horse, but it ran against him with its head, and struck him on the face. After the blow, both horse and deceased fell,

the latter being undermost. The horse then got up and stamped upon him with all its feet, keeping its head towards him all the time, after which it ran off down Drake Street, and was not secured by the driver until it had got half way down. James Beal, a house painter, who had witnessed the occurrence, then went to the deceased and found him lying partly on his left side with his head in the direction of School Lane. He was quite insensible, and was removed to the Grapes Inn beerhouse and afterwards to his residence. He died the same evening. On Wednesday, an inquest was held at the Bowling Green Inn, and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

12 30 June 1866

Police Proceedings

ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON Jos Elliott, Henry Simpson and Margaret Simpson having been placed in the dock, the male prisoners were charged with stealing a purse containing a sum of money from a boatman named **Ellis**, and the female prisoner with having received the same, knowing it to have been stolen. It appears that Ellis came into the town with another man on the 27th inst, and went from one public house to another, followed by the male prisoners. The last place they visited was the Drake Inn. On leaving, he was set upon by Elliott and Simpson, the former holding Ellis down whilst the latter rifled his pockets and took therefrom his purse. Remanded in custody until Monday.

13 7 July 1866

Police Proceedings

"WHEN THE BOATMAN COMES ON SHORE" Joseph Elliott, Henry Simpson and Margaret Pearson were brought up – the two former charged with having stolen, with violence, 15s from the person of **Samuel Ellis**, and the latter with having received the same, well knowing it to have been stolen. The prosecutor was a boatman on the Bridgewater Canal, and on the previous Wednesday evening, along with two companions, one of whom was named John Wright, he went to the Weavers' Arms in Church Lane. They met Elliott there, and he was sitting on a form in the tap room. He threw twopence on the floor, saying that was all the money he had ; and the prosecutor asked him to give it to him, and he would pay for a quart of ale. Of course he did so. The quart of ale came in, and then the prosecutor and his companions went to the Drake Inn, being followed by the two prisoners and another man. They had some more ale there, and presently Elliott, without the least provocation, struck prosecutor on the head, knocked him down, and kicked him while on the floor. Thereupon, Wright, fearing that they were going to have a row, suggested that they should leave, and accordingly they came out. He had no sooner got into the street than Simpson knocked him down, held him, and robbed him of the 15s. Elliott also assisted to hold him down while Simpson robbed him. Simpson was wearing a white jacket, and he went home and changed it for a brown one. In the meantime, Elliott was taken into custody by PC Lund, and Simpson afterwards went to the office, and was apprehended. They were searched, and nothing but a tobacco box was found on Elliott, and a purse containing half a crown on Simpson. The latter, however, cohabited with Pearson in Church Lane, and it was suggested that when he went to change his jacket, he had handed over to her the proceeds of the robbery. Inspector Stead and PC Lund went to her house, and when in conversation with her, they saw her pull a purse out of her breast. The inspector took possession of it, and handed it over to PC Lund and the officer, on opening it, found it contained 15s 8d. She was therefore taken into custody. In accounting for the money to the officers, she at first stated that Simpson had given her 7s 6d of it, which he had won by gambling in Newgate. The prisoners were very positively identified both by the prosecutor, by Wright, and by a witness named Bridget Tattersall, residing at the end of Nelson Street, as being the men who committed the robbery. The witness Tattersall deposed to the fact that when she went into the Drake Inn for a pint of beer for supper, she saw all the men there, and she heard Elliott say to the prosecutor, "Pull the b----y halfcrown out and let us have some drink". Wright added that when he got outside, one of the prisoners struck him in the ribs so violently that they were painful yet, and he ran away as fast as he could. The prosecutor appeared to have been badly used, for when at the police station he bled profusely from several wounds, and on the next morning when Wright saw him, he was very much marked about the face. Wright added that he heard the prosecutor when first attacked call

out, "Oh dear, they are going to murder me". Mr Hartley appeared for Elliott, and submitted that there was no case against him. Mr Chadwick : He was there when the act of violence was committed. Mr Hartley said they were not dealing with the assault, but even that was disproved by the prosecutor himself, as he had stated on the previous Friday that Elliott never touched him. Pearson strongly asserted her innocence, and said that the reason why she had the money was that Simpson had pawned her clothes on that day, and had given her some of the money. She was discharged, and was afterwards called as a witness. The other prisoners were both committed for trial.

14 25 August 1866

Police News

ASSAULTING A WIFE **Eli Dyson**, a boatman, was summoned for having assaulted Eliza, his wife. She stated that on Sunday he had given her a black eye. It was not the first time and she had made herself almost blind with putting stuff to her eyes. He did not appear. The magistrates said it seemed a very bad case, and they would fine him 21s and costs, or in default one month.