

1 14 July 1826

COVENTRY MIDSUMMER SESSIONS **James Randle** pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with stealing, on the 25th of June last, in the parish of the Holy Trinity, a great coat, a jacket, a shirt a pair of stockings, a silk handkerchief and other articles, the property of his employer, **Charles Bannister**. The prisoner had been in the employ of the prosecutor but a short period, as a boatman ; and on the day mentioned, he was left in charge of a boat on the canal, from which he absconded, taking with him the articles specified in the indictment. Three calendar months in gaol, and once privately whipped.

2 8 August 1828

INSOLVENT DEBTORS' COURT On Wednesday last, a Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors was held at the County Hall, before Mr Commissioner Reynolds, when the following insolvents were examined :-

Joseph Lowe, a boatman, was opposed by Mr Dewes, on behalf of Francis Lowe, his brother, one of the detaining creditors, but as nothing fraudulent appeared in the course of the examination, the Court ordered him to be discharged. A question arose in the course of the examination of this insolvent as to the payment of a debt, and the Commissioner said he would take that opportunity of correcting what he found to be a very common mistake. Anyone had a right to pay what debts he pleased, even if he was insolvent at the time, as the word "discharged" did not mean the discharging of a debt by payment of it, but discharging a debt fraudulently from his books.

3 3 December 1830

DEATH BY DROWNING On Saturday evening, a boatman of the name of **Cotterill** accidentally fell into one of the locks between Warwick and Hatton and was unfortunately drowned.

4 10 January 1834

William Black, a boatman, was indicted for stealing about three quarters of a hundredweight of coal at Long Itchington, the property of George and Charles Witherington.

By the evidence of one of the prosecutor's servants, the prisoner, on the night of the 7th December, took a piece of coal from the prosecutor's stock and put it into his boat. The witness desired him to put the coal back, which he did ; he was then taken into custody, and afterwards committed. The coal was valued at 9d.

One week in gaol. The court refused to allow the prosecutors their expenses.

5 4 August 1837

TWO GUINEAS REWARD **William Ledbrooke** of Long Itchington in the County of Warwick, boatman, having absconded from his wife and family, leaving them chargeable to the said parish, a reward of two guineas will be paid by Mr P P Sanders, Clerk to the Board of Guardians of the Southam Union, at his offices, Southam or Leamington Priors, to any person giving such information as will lead to the apprehension of the said William Ledbrooke, who is between 30 and 40 years of age, of a dark complexion, 5 feet 3 inches high, goes by the name of "Soldier Billy", and is supposed to be at work on the line of the Leicester or Coventry Canal.

6 1 March 1839

DEATH FROM INTOXICATION On Saturday week, an inquest was held at Husband's Bosworth, before J Gregory jun, Esq, on the body of **John Williams**, a boatman, who was found dead on the bank of the canal, without his coat, waistcoat and hat, on the Thursday morning previous. The deceased had been hard at work on the previous day, and had had some gin in the evening. Verdict, "Died from exposure to cold when in a state of intoxication".

7 15 May 1840

Anstey Petty Sessions

SINGULAR CASE OF ROOK SHOOTING Charles Brook, a young lad, servant to Mr Orton of

10 3 May 1844

HORRID OCCURRENCE On Saturday night last, the parish of Sowe, near this city, and the neighbourhood, were thrown into a state of excitement and consternation in consequence of a man named Henry Cluley being murdered within two fields of his own house, at Sowe Common. He was a ribbon weaver by trade, and had been to Coventry that day with his work. He was returning home about eight o'clock in the evening, and when he arrived at Ebborn's Bridge, which crosses the Oxford Canal, he went on to the towing-path where, at the distance of about 50 or 60 yards from the Bridge, is a stile leading into a field, through which there is a path, common to all the persons residing on the Common, and which led immediately to Cluley's dwelling. He was followed to the above named stile by a man named **Skelsey**, a boatman (between whom and Cluley it appears an ill feeling had existed for some time), who immediately fell upon him and beat him most unmercifully ; during the time he lay on the ground, Skelsey repeatedly kicked him over the head, and under the right ear, and left him for dead. After a short time, he (Cluley) with great exertion, got upon his legs, and staggered over the two fields to his own home, and had scarcely been a minute there when he dropped dead upon the floor. One of the kicks had been given with such force that the windpipe was broken by it ; and on the *post mortem* examination, it was found that there was a hole in the windpipe sufficiently large to admit a man's little finger. The wretched perpetrator of the murder instantly absconded, and has not yet been apprehended. An inquest was held upon the body on Monday evening last, at Mr Barnett's of Sowe, and adjourned to Saturday next in the hope that Skelsey may be apprehended in the meantime ; he would then have an opportunity of cross-examining the witnesses against him, and making the best defence he could.

11 10 May 1844

CHARGE OF MURDER AT SOWE The painful interest excited in the parish of Sowe and its neighbourhood in consequence of the murder of Henry Cluley on Saturday the 27th of April last, still continues unabated. On the following Monday, an Inquest was held at the house of Mrs Barnett, the Red Lion, in Sowe, before W H Seymour Esq and a respectable Jury, composed of the following gentlemen, residing in the vicinity of the horrid catastrophe, viz :-

W Wale Brown, Esq, Foreman

Mr John Watson

Mr Thomas Wale

Mr W F Pridmore

Mr W Jackson

Mr Joseph Barnett

Mr William Wright

Mr William Sergeant

Mr John Aldridge

Mr Thomas Moore

Mr Job Pickard

After swearing in the Jury and other preliminary arrangements had been made, a view of the body was taken, and further proceedings were adjourned until the following Saturday, in the expectation that the person supposed to have committed the murder would, in the interim, be taken into custody, as he would then have the opportunity of hearing the evidence adduced against him, and of cross-examining the witnesses, either by himself or his attorney. Many anxious enquiries have been made of us from all quarters, as to whether the suspected murderer had been taken ; but up to ten o'clock on Saturday night, we had received no account of his apprehension.

The Jury, according to appointment, assembled at two o'clock on the 4th inst, and immediately proceeded with the examination of the witnesses.

William Eaves, an intelligent elderly man, being sworn, said :- I live in Lenton's Lane, Sowe Waste ; I have known deceased 23 years, who was a weaver by trade, and about 47 years of age. Witness overtook him at Courthouse Green, in the parish of Foleshill ; he was then on his road towards home. I was going to Eburn's at the Boat Inn, to my Club ; I told him so, and he said he should be glad of my company ; I accompanied him to Eburn's Bridge, which is near to the public house ; it was about eight o'clock at night when we got there. Cluley went on to the towing-path, which was his direct way home, and I went over the bridge which leads to Eburn's house ; we bade each other good night. I saw **George Skelsey** on the bridge ; he called to someone who was in a boat on the canal, with a shaft in his hand, and I believe was preparing to tie up his boat, and said,

“Have you not heard me talk to you about that b---r who owes me a sovereign?” He answered, “Yes, I have, George”. Cluley must have heard him, as at this time he was nearer to the man in the boat than I was. Cluley kept walking on at a slow pace along the towing-path, perfectly sober. When Skelsey had finished talking with the boatman, I heard him say (but whether speaking to himself or anyone else I could not tell), “Now I'll go and pay the b---r”, and immediately ran after him. I heard no conversation pass between them, but saw Skelsey knock Cluley down. I had stopped on the bridge in consequence of what I heard Skelsey say. The first time he struck deceased was at the second stile from the bridge, going into Eburn's field, which is 44 yards from the first stile ; while I was on the bridge, and when he was knocked down, he called to me and said, “Bill, you won't see me murdered, will you?” I answered, “No”, and immediately went to his assistance ; he lay quite still till I got to him ; when I came up, Skelsey said to me, “Now, you old b---r, if you interfere, or say one word, I'll serve you the same, and throw you into the canal and drown you”. I began to talk mildly to him, and got him away about 4 or 5 yards from where Cluley was lying ; he called to me and said he durst not go home ; I asked him to go back with me ; he took up a reticule, a stick, and a can, which had fallen from him when knocked down, and walked behind me and Skelsey till we came to the first stile nearest the bridge, I was talking to Skelsey all the while, with a view of drawing his attention from Cluley, who, when he came up, got over the first stile, and Skelsey immediately jumped over after him, and instantly knocked him down, and kicked him as he lay on his right side ; he (Skelsey) drew himself back, and took a running kick at him. Thomas Winterberry, Daniel Budd and Francis Deeming came up at this time. Cluley never spoke at all during the time he lay on the ground. We kept Skelsey in conversation, and while doing so, Cluley got up and went over the stile into the towing-path, which was his nearest way home ; he left all his things behind him on the spot where he was knocked down. Winterberry, Deeming and myself kept talking with Skelsey, in the hope that Cluley would get safe home out of his way. Skelsey very shortly, indeed in a moment, left us and said, “he would follow the old b---r and give him another putting up”. He ran along the towing-path, in the direction which Cluley had taken. I then requested the other two to go with me down to Cluley's home, and when we got there, we saw Skelsey at the door, throwing his arms about, and saying to Cluley's sister, “I've done your b---r of a brother, and I'll do the same for you before I sleep”. Cluley was then lying upon his back on the floor ; a great deal of froth was issuing both from his nose and mouth. Skelsey, immediately after this, left the premises, and I left also. I did not observe the clothes of the deceased to be torn in any way, nor any marks of blood about him. I did not notice whether there were any nails in the boot which Skelsey had on when he kicked him. I believe Skelsey to be about 27 years old.

Francis Deeming said :- I am a farmer's servant, and was going to my master's on the night the murder was committed. He saw Skelsey and Cluley together near the first stile ; when Cluley got over, he asked Skelsey whether he meant to let him go about his business. Skelsey in reply said, “Do you mean to give me the sovereign you owe me?” and immediately knocked him down with his fist. I was about 15 or 16 yards from them at the time, and saw Skelsey draw back as much as three or four yards, and then run at him and kick him with great force on the right side. Eaves then said, “For God's sake, George, don't kid the man”; to which Skelsey replied, “You old b---r, if you say anything to me, I'll serve you the same, or anyone else that takes his part”. Skelsey, when leaving Cluley, at this period, said, “Now every time I meet the old b---r, I'll serve him the same”. He then left, and followed in the direction which Cluley had taken, and in about two minutes after, I heard a strange noise in the Church close, over which is a footpath leading to Cluley's house ; we then went to where the noise was proceeding from, and saw Cluley getting over the stile into Steane's Close. When we got to Cluley's house, we met Skelsey, who asked us if we wanted to fight, and said he would not be taken by any of us, or any of the b---y Police in the force. We went into the house, and Skelsey followed us. Cluley was then lying dead on the floor, and Skelsey was threatening to serve his (Cluley's) sister the same. I thought Cluley was fainting, and asked his sister to give him some water to bathe his face : while doing this, Skelsey was swearing at the sister, and telling her to find and give him the things which he had brought, or he would serve her the same in the morning ; he then left the house, and I saw no more of him. He had strong nailed shoes

on when he kicked Cluley ; I observed them as he was getting over the stile by the side of the gate. I had no idea that Cluley was dead ; I thought he was fainting, and was otherwise so much distracted by the cries of the sister, that I scarcely knew what I was doing. If I had known Cluley had been dead, I would not have lost sight of Skelsey.

Daniel Budd, a respectable young man, gave his evidence in a very satisfactory manner, and corroborated in every point the testimony of other witnesses.

Elizabeth Farn, a young girl about 16, said she was niece to Henry Cluley, and lived in the house with the family. On the night the murder was committed, there was no one in the house but her aunt and herself, when Skelsey came in. He said, "I'm come ; I have done for your b---y brother, and now I'll do for you". She said, "I hope not, but what have you done?" He said, "I've given him a b---y good hiding, and I'll give you one". He then went to hit my aunt, and at that moment my uncle came in at the door ; he staggered very much, and I laid hold of him, and prevailed upon him to sit down in the armchair ; he gave a sigh, and slid from my arms upon the floor. I cried out that my uncle was dead, and my aunt told me to go instantly and fetch the police, and Skelsey said, "Aye, go and fetch the police, and when he comes, I'll serve him the same". I was going to fetch the constable, and he (Skelsey) went out at the door with me. He knew my uncle was dead. He had not been in the house more than two or three minutes when my uncle came in.

Mr Charles Henry Parsons of Anstey, surgeon, said he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body on the previous Monday ; he had seen deceased the day before ; he was then lying dead at his own house at Sowe Waste. He had attended him professionally several times, for diseased liver. There was great discolouration on the body in different parts, caused, as he apprehended, from the position in which he lay, and which discolouration is generally seen on the body of a person who dies suddenly. On examination of the throat, he found a fracture in front of the windpipe of an inch in length, with great depression ; and also, one on the right side, through the wind pipe. These injuries would cause suffocation and death, and could have been done by nothing but external violence. A kick from a person with a shoe on would have done it. He did not think a blow from a fist would. The liver was diseased and enlarged, and the lungs on the right side adhered. All the symptoms of suffocation were present.

The Coroner pointed out the law as it bore upon the case in question, and the Jury, after a consultation of not more than a minute, returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against George Skelsey".

The Coroner immediately issued a warrant for his apprehension.

12 24 May 1844

THE MURDER AT SOWE In consequence of the apprehension of **George Skelsey**, the alleged murderer of Henry Cluley, and it being understood that he would be brought before the Court at Ansty today, a great concourse of persons attended to obtain a sight of the wretched man. Mr Superintendent Isaac arrived with the prisoner from Wolston, about a quarter before eleven o'clock, and he was immediately taken into the Justice Room and accommodated with an armchair, while the other business of the day was being proceeded with. The prisoner is a good looking man, rather stout made, about five feet six inches high, and apparently thirty years of age ; he was decently and respectably dressed as a boatman, and over his other clothing, he had on a brown coloured smock frock. His conduct while the other cases were going on was quiet and becoming ; he seemed at times to pay great attention to the evidence in the last case, and at times he appeared wholly absorbed in contemplation of his own awful situation ; but upon the whole, his manner was calm and collected. He was served with bread and cheese and a small glass of ale during the day ; and Mr Isaac, in whose custody he was, paid him every considerate attention. About four o'clock, he was placed at a table before the Magistrates, and the evidence adduced was a mere repetition of that which we published on the 10th inst, excepting that of a man named John Sidwell, who stated that he was at a public house kept by the prisoner's aunt, called the Spotted Dog, about eight o'clock at night on the 27th of April last, when prisoner came in ; he appeared flushed with drink, and called for a pint of ale ; he sat down in the kitchen, and when Mrs Hayes, his aunt, brought in the beer, he

was swearing very much, and she said, "George, what is the matter ; have you been down to Harry's?" He answered, "Yes, I have, and I've titivated him off to a nicety". Then, throwing out his right leg, as though kicking at someone, said, "D—n my eyes, aunt, if my hindfoot isn't as good as a forefoot to me". He then held up both his arms, threw himself back, and made a noise like a person in a fit or dying. His aunt said, "George, if you have done anything to Harry, you had better be off, for the Police will be here directly". To which he replied, "I don't care a d—n for any Policeman in England, for no one man shall take me ; I'm now off to Halifax in Yorkshire, and then I'll leave the country ; another country is as good to me as this". Witness knew no more ; he drank up his ale, and left the prisoner and his aunt talking together.

James Isaac, Superintendent of Police, stated that from information he received on Friday, he proceeded to Manchester, and from further information received there, he went on to Huddersfield in Yorkshire, where he found that the prisoner and his brother in law had booked themselves for Dewsbury; he immediately followed them to Ottenshaw station at Wakefield, and saw prisoner and his brother in law standing at the door ; he went up to them, and his brother said, "I put this man in your charge"; he then secured him, and booked by train for Derby. While in the train he told prisoner he had apprehended him under the Coroner's Warrant for the murder of Cluley ; he answered, "I know that". From Derby he brought him to Rugby. When there, prisoner enquired of Mr Isaac who it was that gave him the first information ; to which he replied, "as it would come out in evidence, he would tell him", and did so. Skelsey then said, "I am now satisfied". He told him he should leave him in custody at Rugby, and cautioned him that if he said anything it would be taken down, and if it was calculated to prove him guilty, it would be used as evidence against himself. To which he replied, "Surely they won't try a man and hang him at once, without hearing what he has to say ; for Cluley was as bad as himself, or worse".

During the examination of the girl Farn (who gave her evidence in a very clear and distinct manner), prisoner contradicted her in most she said, and enquired where her aunt was, and why she did not come there and speak for herself ; but she had not cheek enough for that, he said, but she had taken pretty good care to teach her niece a pretty good tale ; and the other witnesses, although they were bad enough, she (Farn) was worse than any of them. He denied ever having threatened Cluley's sister ; he had only asked her for his things.

Many persons at this time were looking through the windows of the Justice Room, several of whom he knew, and nodded to.

At the conclusion of the examination of the witnesses, he was fully committed to the Gaol at Coventry, to take his trial at the assizes for wilful murder. He showed but few symptoms of distress during the day ; but after his commitment, on being taken to the other end of the room and again placed in the armchair, he wept bitterly. In almost a quarter of an hour after, Mr Isaac secured the prisoner to his gig, and proceeded with him to Coventry.

13 9 August 1844

Warwickshire Assizes

CHARGE OF MURDER AT SOWE The Court proceeded to try **George Skelsey**, aged 30, committed 20th of May, charged with the wilful murder of Henry Cluley at Sowe, on the 27th of April last. Cluley was a weaver, nearly 50 years of age. Prisoner is a boatman.

Mr Mellor and Mr Macauley appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Humphrey and Mr Heyes defended the prisoner.

Mr Mellor shortly stated the nature of the case to the Jury.

The following is a fair abstract of the evidence, which has already appeared more minutely in our report of the Coroner's Inquest :-

Mr Macauley called as the first witness William Eaves, who deposed to having seen the prisoner meet with the deceased, Cluley, near Eburne's Bridge at Sowe, whom, with a foul epithet, he accused of owing him a sovereign, afterwards giving him a severe blow, which knocked him down. Deceased appealed to witness for protection, which led prisoner to use further threats ; but deceased at length returned from the direction in which he was at first going, and went another way. Witness endeavoured to keep prisoner in company while Cluley went on ; but as soon as he got over a stile,

prisoner went over after him, placed himself before deceased, knocked him down, then stepped a distance back, and made a running kick at deceased somewhere about the body ; and Francis Deeming and --- Windleborough had come up at this time. After lying a short time on the ground, deceased got up, leaving his stick and other things behind him ; got over the stile back again, and went in the direction towards home. I stood with prisoner on the bridge, having picked up deceased's things. As Cluley had gone on, prisoner said he would follow him and give him another tucking up, or something of that kind, and he followed him accordingly. I subsequently went to deceased's house and found him lying on the floor ; and I believe he was dead. Prisoner was there, and said to deceased's sister, he had done for her bloody b----r of a brother, and he would serve her the same if she did not give him some things he spoke about.

In cross-examination, witness said he did not think prisoner at first meant to kill deceased.

Francis Deeming said that after deceased got over the stile, prisoner followed him and asked him for the sovereign he owed him. Deceased made no reply, and prisoner immediately knocked him down, and then went back two or three yards, and made a running kick at him, on the right side, as he lay on the ground. The witness then went on to corroborate the testimony of Eaves, as to the threat of prisoner to repeat the attack on deceased, and his following him along the Church Close for the purpose ; and also to finding the deceased at home, just fetching his last breath, prisoner having already got there. Prisoner had nailed quarter shoes on.

Daniel Budd lives near Eburne's Bridge, and on the 27th of April saw a man run, and afterwards heard a rustling in the hedge; also heard deceased call to someone for protection. Witness further corroborated the previous evidence.

Elizabeth Farn, niece of deceased, stated that she lived with him and his sister ; remembered that on the 27th of April, prisoner came in and said that he had done for my uncle, and he threatened to do for my aunt, and lifted up his fists to her. My uncle afterwards came staggering in ; I laid hold of him in my arms ; he made a deep sigh, and slid from me into the floor. My aunt spoke to him, but he made no reply. Prisoner said she might fetch the bloody Police, and he would serve them the same.

John Sidwell saw prisoner at the Spotted Dog Public House, Sowe, when he called for some ale, and said he had been down to Harry's and titivated him up to a nicety. He said no one man should take him ; one country was as good as another to him, that he would be off to Halifax in Yorkshire, and then leave the country.

W F Barton, surgeon, made a *post mortem* examination of the body on the 29th of April. There was nothing indicating external violence or beating, but there was a fracture of the cartilage of the upper part of the windpipe downwards and laterally, and it was depressed and almost flattened. It would require great force to reduce it to this state. A kick with a heavy shoe might do it, but not a pressure with the hands. I should say suffocation from the fracture and depression of the cartilage was the cause of death. Never knew or read of such a cause of death before.

C H Parsons, surgeon of Ansty, agreed with Mr Barton's evidence.

James Isaac, Superintendent of Police, apprehended prisoner at Openshaw on the 18th of May. I told him I apprehended him on the Coroner's Warrant, for the murder of Henry Cluley. A reward had been offered, and in consequence of information I received, I proceeded.

Mr Humfry addressed the Jury for the defence, and held that the case must certainly be treated as one of manslaughter.

The Court summed up in a very unbiased manner, and the Jury, in ten minutes, returned a verdict of manslaughter. Sentence ten years transportation.

14 25 October 1844

Ansty Petty Sessions

THE QUEEN V SKELSEY FOR MURDER - £100 REWARD This day was appointed to hear and determine upon the claims of Mr James Isaacs, Superintendent of the Rural Police in the county of Warwick, **W Richardson** and **John Tuckey**, boatmen, residing in the parish of Sowe, for the hundred pounds offered by Government for the apprehension of **George Skelsey**, charged with the murder of Henry Cluley at Sowe, on the 27th of April last. The claim of Richardson and Tuckey was

walked across some of the fields ; but a short distance before they came to the Fox public house, one of them seized him, and the other came from behind the hedge and forced him into a ditch, and Wilson held his head under water for some time, while Thompson searched his pockets, one of which they cut off and took the money, and during this time they jumped on him, and Wilson said, "Come on, he'll do", after laying some time ; on the prosecutor recovering himself he made the remainder of the distance as well as he could, and at length, swollen, bruised, and plundered of a £10 note, a £5 note, two sovereigns and a few shillings, he reached the dwelling of his friend, who promptly put him to bed, and under the apprehension that he could not survive, sat by and watched him. Information of the outrage was immediately given to Inspector Meakin, who proceeded to the suffering man, but who was unable to give any information who the perpetrators were, any further than it was two men who were walking on the road with him, and whom he had treated. Meakin went directly to these houses, where he learnt the names of the parties, and with the assistance of Police-constable Willey, apprehended them both and brought them to Coventry, so that only a few hours elapsed from the time of the robbery to the apprehension and committal of both, a circumstance which drew forth the commendations of the Bench.

20 31 July 1846

Attleborough

MELANCHOLY DEATH An inquest was held at the house of John Wright, the sign of the Bull Inn, Attleborough, on Wednesday the 29th inst, before W H Seymour Esq, on view of the body of **William Pritchard**. Sarah Leader of Marston Jabet (a place situate between Attleborough and Bulkington), the wife of Joseph Leader, labourer, deposed that on Monday night last, at twenty minutes past seven, she was going along the towing-path of the canal, and saw what she thought to be a man standing against the side of a tree. Witness added that when she got up to it, she found his face disfigured, and a rope round his neck which was fastened to the bough of a tree ; she could not say how far his feet were from the ground ; gave the alarm, and screamed out, and then saw a man belonging to a boat that was going on, who brought a horse along the towing-path towards her, supposing it was a man, upon which she pointed out the deceased, who was hanging, and said, "Don't you see the man dead?" There was a collar on the horse, and a bag with some hay in it, but no saddle on it ; she could not say whether the flat part of the halter was on the horse or not ; there was a boatline to the horse ; she did not know the man belonging to the boat. **George Baker** of Attleborough deposed that he heard an alarm from a woman ; he went in company with two other persons ; there was no life in the man – he was quite stiff. Witness continued – I had seen the horse, with a bag on his back, for some time on the towing-path ; I did not cut him (deceased) down, but got up the bank ; my brother and cousin caught him and raised him up, and I untied the cord and let him down. John Hopkins of Abbey Street, Nuneaton, deposed that he knew the deceased ; his name was William Pritchard, and he lived at Banbury ; he was a boatman, and should say he was about 45 years of age ; had known him for 20 years. Joseph Haddon, Constable of Nuneaton, deposed that he found 17s in silver in a purse in his (deceased's) pocket ; and 8 1/2d in copper, a pocket knife, some papers of tobacco, two short pipes, a gold ring in his purse, with the silver wrapped up in a bit of paper, and a tobacco box. The Jury returned a verdict, "That the deceased was found hanging, and that he came by his death by such hanging, but whether by his own act or otherwise, there was no evidence to show". It was not given in evidence, nevertheless on undoubted testimony, our reporter was informed that within the short space of 14 days, the unfortunate man had been deprived of his wife and three children, and a boat horse.

21 2 October 1846

Atherstone Petty Sessions

Thomas Jones, a boatman, summoned a man named **James Thompson** of Wilnecote for wages due, 8s. The evidence was so very confused that the Magistrates could not satisfactorily adjudicate. Upon their recommendation, however, plaintiff paid the wages ; sufficient having appeared upon the surface of the case to show that the men had not been sufficiently supplied with food, although they had evidently obtained goods in an unfair or irregular way, which was, however, indirectly if not directly countenanced by the defendant Thompson.

22 30 October 1846**Atherstone**

AN INQUEST was held at Atherstone on the 23rd inst, on the body of **Edward Hakesley**, aged 19, before W F Seymour Esq, coroner. The deceased was in the employ of **Thomas Thompson**, a canal boatman. It appeared that on the evening of the 22nd October, the deceased was observed to make a step from the side of the lock at the Atherstone lock, as if to get into the boat, but immediately disappeared. Drags were procured, and the body of the deceased recovered from the lock in about ten minutes, but life was quite extinct. Verdict, "Accidentally drowned".

23 4 December 1846

William Barston of Sowe, boatman, was charged with assaulting Thomas Williams of the same parish, miner, on the 9th of November. As this was considered to be an unprovoked assault, the defendant was fined 10s and expenses £1 14s 6d.

24 6 August 1847**Warwickshire Assizes**

WILLIAM HARRIS aged 21 and THOMAS WOOTTON, aged 20, committed the 3rd of May, charged with having, in the night of Sunday the 25th of April at Atherstone, broken into a warehouse in the occupation of John Gilbert Munroe, and stolen 16 pieces of mousseline de laine, 59 cashmere shawls and scarfs, 4 pieces of gambroom, 781 yards of silk, 18 satin and silk handkerchiefs, 5 empty sacks and two gallons of brandy, value £160, the property of John Gilbert Minion.

Mr Heyes opened the proceedings by stating the case to the Jury, and called.

John Gilbert Minnion, who, on being sworn, said : I am a wharfinger ; my father, Gilbert Minnion, has a warehouse at Atherstone ; late on Sunday night, one of Pickford's boats arrived ; I assisted in the unloading of the goods ; amongst other things was a box and a package directed to Messrs Sawbridge of Atherstone ; I closed and secured the warehouse that night, and was called up at three o'clock the next morning, when I found the door broken open. The box I have spoken of was broken open, and the contents of the package or truss were taken away, except the outside wrapper ; there was a cask of brandy in the warehouse, which I saw on the Saturday, that was "upended" and about two gallons taken away ; there was a quantity of it spilt on the ground.

Cross-examined by Mr Adams : I saw the cask of brandy on the Saturday afternoon ; there are other persons in our service who enter our warehouse at times, but it is always kept locked day and night ; the boat contained a bundle of empty bags, one truss, one box, and three packs ; I am not a partner with my father ; Messrs Pickford do not rent any part of the premises.

Re-examined by Mr Hayes : There were other packages, which were not directed to Messrs Sawbridge ; they were cut open, but the contents not removed ; they were of little value, being calicoes.

William K Minnion, brother of the last witness : I was present when the goods were taken in at eleven o'clock ; the cask of brandy was then lying long ways ; I went to the warehouse about twenty minutes before three on Monday morning ; I saw a crowbar lying one yard from the door ; the lock of one door was broken, and the bolt of the other drawn out ; I went and fetched Biddle and another Constable ; I found the cask of brandy upended, and part of the top was taken off ; it wanted about two gallons to fill ; there was a hamper of empty bottles, some of which were taken away.

Cross-examined : If the goods had come from Manchester, they would have come by Hopwas and Alrewas.

John Biddle : I was sent for, and went to Mr Minion's warehouse with one of his sons a little before three ; I found two crowbars, one outside and the other near the brandy cask.

Joseph Norwood : I am a woodman in the service of Sir R Peel ; I live at Hopwas ; it is ten miles from Atherstone ; I recollect Monday morning the 25th of April, I was standing on Tamhorn Bridge, I saw the prisoners sitting on the towing-path, under the bridge ; it was raining ; I was there for half an hour ; the prisoners had some things tied up in handkerchiefs ; Harris had a dark coloured glass bottle standing by the bundle which he was sitting on ; and while we stood talking, Wootten pulled a glass bottle resembling Harris's out of his pocket, and drank, and put it in again ; Harris asked me if

I would drink with him, but as there was a piece of brown paper stuck in for a cork, I did not like the looks of it, and I did not drink ; Harris showed me a silk handkerchief, which he took from his pocket, and asked me what it was worth ; I said, "I do not know. I have a very good one, and do not want it" ; we walked away together for a quarter of a mile ; they had a bundle each with them.

Cross-examined : I did not know it was brandy that was offered to me ; if I had known that, I might perhaps have drank.

William Bond : I am a brickmaker, living at Streethay ; I saw Harris and Wootton near my house at eight o'clock on the morning of Monday the 2nd of May ; I saw them turn into my brickyard ; they each had a large bundle ; I went down to them ; Harris asked me to give him something to drink ; he said, "Give me the best you have in the house" ; Harris took a bottle of brandy from his pocket ; I tasted it with my finger, and gave them some beer ; they each opened the bundle he had in a lane near my house ; one was tied in a blue and the other in a light coloured shawl, which was torn ; they contained silks, gambroon, &c ; Harris said, "You may as well have a piece off this to make you a pair of trousers ; it is black cloth". I said, "It is not black cloth". He said, "It is ; and d---d good too". Wootton said he should think the goods were worth £20 ; Harris said he should be glad of £10 for them ; they had galloped the b---y horse four hours with the goods ; I received two handkerchiefs, but before I received them, I sent information to Oldham and another policeman of the circumstance, who desired me to detain them, and when they arrived, I informed them which road the prisoners had taken.

Cross-examined : It was respecting some malt I was desired to detain them ; the bundle in the blue handkerchief was a small one, and the prisoners alternately carried the bundles.

Joseph Oldham, Police Officer on the Trent and Mersey Canal : On Monday the 26th of April, I pursued the prisoners to a place near Handsacre, by the Canal side ; in going along, I saw a white shawl lying at the back of some gorse ; three quarters of a mile from there, I saw the prisoners lying down asleep, at the back of some gorse ; W Whittingham and E Swindle were with me ; I saw two large bundles lying within a yard or two ; I apprehended Harris ; Wootton ran away, and Whittingham stopped him ; Harris was lying down, and I handcuffed him before he got up ; I found some lucifer matches, a piece of candle, a knife and some handkerchiefs upon him ; whilst I was searching Harris, Wootton took a bottle from his pocket and threw it down, and broke it ; the towing-path smelt of brandy ; Yearl searched Wootton ; I took possession of the bundles, and I have them here ; I said to Wootton, "What did you throw that away for, you might have let us have a sup?" ; he said, "Oh, you would not have had sense to drink it".

Cross-examined : It is 18 miles from Handsacre to Atherstone ; by Canal it would be 22 or 23 ; I found the first shawl by the side of the Trent and Mersey Canal, and three quarters of a mile further, I found the two prisoners ; it was beyond the Fradley Junction, and a boat travelling from Manchester to Atherstone must have passed the prisoners.

John Yearl, Policeman of Staffordshire, examined : I came up just as the prisoners were brought on to the towing-path by Oldham ; I searched Wootton, and found this handkerchief in his pocket ; I also took a handkerchief from Harris's neck.

William Sawbridge, draper, examined : I had been at the warehouse of Messrs Carlton, Walker and Lewis, Manchester, on the 22nd of April ; I bought 14 pieces of mousseline de laine and a number of shawls, several hundred yards of black silk, four pieces of gambroon, and 18 silk handkerchiefs ; I placed my private mark on most of the things I purchased ; I have seen the goods in the possession of the Officers ; they bear my private mark ; I could not discover it upon the handkerchiefs ; I bought some of the same pattern ; I gave directions that they should be sent by Pickford and Co, and thence per Minion ; there is not a single thing amongst the goods produced that does not resemble things which I bought.

Richard Johnson : I am assistant to Messrs Walker and Co of Manchester ; on the 23rd of April, I assisted in packing the goods purchased by Mr Sawbridge. Witness produced the ticket of the goods as signed by the packer as the receipt of the goods.

Samuel Hewitt : I am a packer in the employ of Carlton, Walker and Lewis ; I delivered the goods, after I had packed them, to a person named Duffy.

Henry Duffy : I am clerk to Messrs Carlton, Walker and Lewis ; I received some goods, purchased by Mr Sawbridge of Atherstone, which I delivered to Messrs Pickford and Co for delivery ; there was a wooden case and a truss.

James Williamson, boatman in the employ of Messrs Pickford : On the 24th of April, I received three packs, a truss, a bundle of bags, and a wooden box for Mr Sawbridge of Atherstone ; I took them to the boat, and arrived at Atherstone at half past eleven on Sunday night ; I put them out of the boat, and delivered them to Mr John Minion ; I have seen the case ; it is similar to the one I delivered ; the goods were received by me at Stoke, in the Potteries.

Mr Adams, addressing his Lordship, said he must submit that there was a defect in proof ; the boatman had informed them that he did not convey the goods from Manchester, but only from Stoke in the Potteries, so that there was no proof of the goods purchased by Mr Sawbridge at Manchester being the same as were delivered to him at Stoke.

His Lordship said that would be a question for the Jury.

Mr Adams then addressed the jury for Wootten, strongly insisting upon the point to which he had called his Lordship's attention. He then called Mr William Roberts of Shardlow, who gave Wootten an excellent character.

His Lordship then recapitulated the evidence to the Jury, who immediately returned a verdict of Guilty against each of them. His Lordship said he should take care that for some years to come they should not repeat such an offence, and if they were not transported, they would be kept in separate confinement for a number of years, where there would be a chance that by the instruction they would receive, they might become useful members of society. As to the character Wootten had received, he thought it was likely that the person who had described Wootten as a man of quiet and peaceable habits might have been imposed upon, for he could not suppose for one moment that a person of such habits could perpetrate acts of violence such as he was charged with. The sentence he should pass was that they, each of them, be transported for seven years.

25 18 August 1848

John Alcock and William Marston were charged by **Thomas Edwards**, a boatman from Banbury, with having on the 9th of July last, between one and two o'clock in the morning, while he was asleep in his cabin, thrown a quantity of large stones at his boat, and damaged the same to the amount of 15s, which he proved by the repairer's bill. The facts were proved by the evidence of Mrs Drake, the landlady of the Punch Bowl Inn, near which the boat was then lying, who, on hearing the noise, looked out of her bedroom window, and it being quite clear moonlight, she could distinguish the features of the two defendants, and calling to them, asked if they meant to murder the man. The defendants attempted to set up an alibi ; but in a severe cross-examination were caught in their own trap, by admitting they saw Mrs Drake at her window. They were adjudged to pay £3 11s, including damages and costs, or committed for a month to the House of Correction, with hard labour.

26 29 December 1848

OFFCHURCH – A FAMILY POISONED A report was current in Warwick, on Tuesday, that four persons were lying dead of cholera at Offchurch, near Leamington ; but, on enquiry, our correspondent has been enabled to collect the following particulars. It appears that the father, a native of Warwick, whose name was **Freeman**, and whose parents are still living at Emscote, is a boatman connected with the fly boats, and on Thursday week, on leaving the docks in London, took in the dock water for cooking purposes. He relates that a jam pudding was mixed with the water and also boiled in the same ; after reaching home at Offchurch, three of the children first sickened, and then the wife, all of whom are now dead, notwithstanding the best medical aid was procured from Leamington and the neighbourhood ; a fourth child has also fallen ill. As far as medical skill can at present detect, the opinion is, that the water had been poisoned by the copper bottoms of the vessels in the docks. Report says the father did not partake of the pudding, as he came to his dinner before it was ready, and partook of what there was and returned to his work. One of the stomachs was brought to Leamington for analyzation ; we hope, therefore, for the satisfaction of the public

mind, that the true cause will be ascertained.

27 8 June 1849

CAUTION A Northamptonshire boatman named **Hillyer** was last week brought before the local magistrates, charged with having wilfully damaged one of the carriages of the London and North Western Railway Company, in the Stockport District. He was convicted in 20s, the amount of the damage, and fined 33s including costs.

28 29 June 1849

Ansty Petty Sessions

Joseph Woodhouse, a boatman, was found guilty of wilfully damaging a door belonging to Mr William Barston, a publican, at Exhall, to the amount of 10s. It appeared there had been a dancing party at this house the previous Monday night, and defendant having misconducted himself, was put out, and being refused entrance again, he kicked at the door till he forced one of the panels out of it. The charge was satisfactorily proved, and he was mulcted in the penalty of £1 15s for damages and costs.

29 7 June 1850

Ansty Petty Sessions

John Jenners and Richard Owen were fined 2s 6d each, and costs 19s 3d each, for assaulting a boatman named **Bird**, and pushing him into the Coventry Canal at Ansty Bridge. The money was paid, and they were discharged.

30 8 August 1851

Warwickshire Assizes

John Clarke, charged with stealing at the parish of Preston Bagot on the 23rd of June, one pair of trousers, value 4s, the property of Henry Brown. The prisoner was at the house of prosecutor, who keeps a public house, was a boatman, and from the evidence of a lad he was seen to take them off the hedge, but did not say anything about it till the next morning, when he told the prosecutor's wife. The trousers were not found on prisoner. The Jury acquitted the prisoner.

31 15 October 1852

Coventry County Court

MANASSEH HEYES V GEORGE ROBERTS Mr C Woodcock appeared for the plaintiff, Mr Smith of Birmingham for the defendant. The plaintiff is a boatman on the Coventry and Oxford Canal. On the 28th of June, he returned with a load of coals from Harecastle, part of which he carried to Ansty. The defendant keeps a wharf at Ansty, and as the plaintiff passed the wharf on the day in question, he asked Roberts if he would buy his coals. Roberts said he did not want so many, but he would take what he had left, after he (the plaintiff) had sold all he could in Ansty. Plaintiff went into Ansty and sold some coals and brought back the remainder, 9 tons 8 cwt, and pitched them on Roberts's wharf. **John Tuckey**, the boatman employed to assist Heyes swore positively that Roberts agreed to give 18s a ton for the coals, and to pay for them at the beginning of the next month. Mrs Heyes, the plaintiff's wife, swore that she called for the money, and that Roberts said he had not been able to get any in on account of the wet weather, but he would send the money to the plaintiff by Mr Riley at night. The defence was that Roberts had agreed to take only two or three tons of coals, and that he allowed Heyes to pitch the rest there till they were sold, as he (Heyes) wanted to go on a journey to London, and to take back a load of timber from Coventry. Roberts, the defendant, swore that he agreed to take only one or two tons of coals. Mr James Hurst, ironmonger, living at Longford, deposed that Heyes had called upon him in July, and agreed to serve him with a load of Harecastle coals, but as he feared he could not get them so soon as Mr Hurst wanted them, he directed him to get some coals at Mr Roberts's wharf. The Judge said it was clear that perjury must have been committed by one side in this case, and as it was entirely a question of evidence, he would go over his notes. The Jury then retired, and shortly afterwards returned a verdict for the plaintiff for the whole amount claimed. Costs allowed.

32 29 October 1852

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

William Jackson of Coventry, a boatman in the employ of Mr Simpson, coal dealer, charged **Joseph Drakeley** and **John Riley** of Nuneaton, boatmen, with having on the 9th inst, about one o'clock in the morning, assaulted him near the Griff Canal. It appeared that as they were passing each other, complainant's brother said to the defendants that one of them ought to have been on the towing-path to mind their asses who were drawing their boat ; upon which they came onto the towing-path and knocked him down ; and William Jackson, on going to defend his brother, was also knocked down, and his head severely cut. They had no defence to make, and Riley was fined 20s and costs 16s 6d and Drakeley 20s and 18s 6d costs, and in default, they were committed to the House of Correction for six weeks.

33 10 June 1853

Mary Fritter charged **Thomas Bland**, a boatman of Long Buckley, with refusing to support her child. Defendant did not appear, and an order was made for the payment of 1s 6d per week.

34 30 December 1853

Another inquest was held on Wednesday last, before E H Jackson Esq and a respectable Jury, at the Hop Pole Inn in this City, touching the death of Mr Charles Aris Noah Rollason, whose body was found in the Coventry Canal on Tuesday morning. Mr George German Pegg stated that he was shopman to deceased, and had been so for some considerable time past. Mr Rollason had been in the shop during most of the day on the previous Monday, assisting in taking stock and making arrangements preparatory to giving up the business to him. Witness left about a quarter after nine o'clock that evening, and the last thing that took place between them was deceased giving him a letter which he wished him to convey to Mr Pearman, the attorney, of which the following is a copy :-

Dear Sir – I wish to see you tomorrow morning, at nine o'clock, to make arrangements for the future between myself and Mr Pegg.

Yours truly,

E T A Pearman Esq

C A N Rollason

He delivered it, and then went to his own home. He went to the office about eight o'clock on the following morning, but Mr Rollason was not there, and his absence (not having been at home all night) created much surprise, as he had never been in the habit of leaving home for more than a short walk occasionally for recreation. Mr Rollason had let him (witness) out shortly after nine o'clock on the Monday night, and he never saw him alive after that time. He had a very severe fit of illness about fifteen months ago, from which he never perfectly recovered. About two months ago, he had a relapse, and the death of his sister, who died at Naples some short time since, appeared to affect him very much. Mr John Overton, surgeon, stated that he was sent for yesterday morning to see deceased, and he had no doubt, from appearances, that he had been dead some hours. He had since examined the body externally, but found no marks or bruises or anything to indicate violence to his person ; his gloves were on, and no portion of his dress had been disturbed, nor was there the slightest appearance of any struggle having taken place. His decided opinion was that he died from drowning. **Charles Parker**, a boatman, was walking by the canal yesterday morning, and on coming opposite to Booth and Earle's timber wharf, saw a hat in the middle of the canal, and got into an empty boat for the purpose of reaching it, but could not get it away till he had broken the ice around it, and when he at length got it, he saw the body of deceased sink into the water, which at that part is 6 feet deep, but no portion of the body was out of the water. He went and got help, and took him out. Frederick Payne, Police-constable, met last witness in Bishop Street, who gave him information of a person being found drowned in the canal, and he went and assisted in getting him out; he searched him, and found upon him a small penknife, a pencil case, a latch key, three sixpences, a seven shilling gold piece, and some silver coins ; he had eight gloves in his pockets, besides those on his hands. There was no evidence whatever to show that deceased had thrown himself into the canal, or that he had fallen in accidentally. Verdict, "Found drowned with no marks of violence whatever upon his person".

35 13 January 1854 Atherstone Petty Sessions

James Haddon, a boatman, was charged by John Shilliton, Night Watch, with being drunk and creating a disturbance. The mother of Haddon said her son was up at London with the boat, which was frozen up in the Canal, and she could not tell when he would be down, but wished to settle the affair for him. The Magistrates recommended her to lay the case before the Watch and Lighting Committee, and if they were willing to settle it, they (the Magistrates) should not stand in the way.

36 3 February 1854 Rugby

MAGISTERIAL On Saturday last, before J Campbell Esq, **Thomas Howe**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of India rubber galoshes, the property of James Priest of Newbold-on-Avon. Committed to the ensuing Coventry assizes.

37 7 April 1854 General Quarter Sessions

Charles Hudson, aged 22, a boatman, was charged with stealing three bushels of gathered swede turnips, value 5s, the property of Thomas Swinnerton, at Caldecote, on the 12th of January last.

Thomas Wood, a farmer at Weddington, stated that he was in Weddington Lane about twelve o'clock on the night of the day in question, and saw the prisoner and another man named Parsons carrying a bag ; he asked them what they had got, and Parsons told him it was a few turnips ; Hudson said, they have been given to us; he then, being a constable, took the two men to his own house ; and on examining the bag, found the turnips now produced ; they are of a peculiar kind, and he had never seen any like them before ; Parsons admitted they took them from under some straw, where they had been camped ; he begged to be forgiven ; witness went next day, accompanied by a Policeman, and found the stolen turnips corresponded with those in the camp ; and on the prisoners promising to meet him, before the Magistrates at Nuneaton, on the following Saturday, he let them go, but neither of them kept their promise. This statement was fully corroborated by other witnesses, and the Jury having found the prisoner Guilty, he was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour, in Coventry Gaol.

Parsons has not been apprehended.

38 4 August 1854 Warwickshire Assizes

UTTERING COUNTERFEIT NOTES William Jervis, aged 48, was indicted for uttering two £5 notes at Birmingham in March, knowing them to be forged.

Mr Boden and Mr W H Adams appeared for the prosecution, on behalf of the Bank of England.

The case, as stated by Mr Boden, was that in the month of March, several forged notes had found their way into Warwick, when it was discovered that two persons of the name of Harkill, and another, had passed these notes. They had been placed in the dock on the charge of passing, pleaded guilty, and were admitted evidence. When the prisoners Harkill were apprehended, from some communication they made to the Governor of the Prison, prisoner Jervis was taken into custody at Birmingham.

The prisoner was defended by Mr O'Brien.

Robert Harkill, one of the men who had pleaded guilty to the charge, said he was a boatman employed on the canal. In the month of February, he went to Birmingham ; his brother Thomas went with him, and a man of the name of Ball. They went to a public house called the Pitts ; it was at night, about a quarter past ten ; there were several people there ; saw prisoner, who came in and said, "How are you, boatman?" Witness said "middling". He asked him if he could do with a £5 note or two? Witness looked up and laughed, and said that was just the thing he wanted. Prisoner then said he had one or two in his pocket, and if he would come outside, he would show them to him. They then went outside, and he pulled five out of his pocket and said, "Come on the other side, here is a "Bobby" coming". He then had three, and gave him a sovereign for each. He then went in and beckoned his brother out, and prisoner, who gave him a shilling for drink. Jervis then left. He then came to Warwick, when he gave a note to Holback, and passed one to Mr Mottram who keeps the Dolphin Inn at Warwick.

Cross-examined by Mr O'Brien : He was apprehended in April. He did not know the landlord Pitts ; knew they called it Pitts. He had never spoken to the prisoner before this evening. There might be a dozen people in the house when he asked him if he could do with a £5 note. He whispered in his ear, he thought it a good thing to get a £5 note cheap. He paid a sovereign for it. When he was brought up, he pleaded guilty. He wished the next morning he had not had them ; but when he passed them to Mottram, he did not know they were forged. There were not many who could tell they were forged.

The Judge said he could retract his plea. The witness said he was guilty of passing it, but not knowing it to be forged. If he still persisted in that plea, he was not guilty. The witness said he was guilty. The Judge said he should transport him for life if he still persisted in that plea. If he supposed he was going to get anything by it, he was mistaken.

Witness : He had seen his lawyer that morning, who had told him to plead not guilty ; his name was Nicks.

The Judge : If he still persisted in his plea, he would transport him ; he knew better about what his sentence would be than his lawyer ; and he would assure him that he would be transported ; and he would have quite as much by his pleading guilty as if he were found guilty. Thus he had heard how it was, and he would probably have a longer sentence if he pleaded guilty than if he pleaded not guilty.

Prisoner : Then I will plead Not Guilty if that is the case.

Another witness, named Harkill, brother of the last witness, came up and was asked if he still pleaded Guilty. He said he knew it was forged.

The Judge said then if he persisted in that plea, he should have a more severe sentence than if he pleaded Not Guilty.

Prisoner said he was advised by his attorney.

The Judge said he would have him remember that he should get nothing by that plea. There were people present who would record what was said, and it would be remembered against him.

The Counsel for the prosecution then said he would withdraw these men as witnesses.

The Jury were directed to acquit the prisoner, as the Judge told them the witnesses were prepared to swear anything, if they might get anything by it. The prisoner was therefore acquitted on this charge.

39 11 August 1854 Warwickshire Assizes

UTTERING FORGED NOTES Robert Harkill, a boatman, was charged with having uttered a forged note for the payment of £5, knowing the same to have been forged. The facts of the case were similar to that of his brother, Thomas Harkill, who was found guilty on the preceding day for the same offence. Verdict Guilty. Sentence deferred.

40 22 September 1854 Petty Sessions

FOUL (FOWL) TREATMENT Mr Spencer, farmer of Flecknoe, charged Arthur Thomas Justice, a boatman, with stealing three fowls of the value of 6s from a henhouse near his dwelling. Prosecutor deposed that on the 14th inst, soon after one o'clock, before the sun rose, he was wakened by the fowls making a noise. He got out of bed immediately, and went to his son's bedroom, and said to him, "Bobby, get up, there is somebody stealing the fowls ; don't stop to dress yourself, but be slippy". They each then took a gun and left the house, dressed in their boots, night caps and shirts. Thus they turned into the yard, across the garden, and over the home close, following the sound of the missing fowls. The father over-ran the men, and his son shouted, "Here they are, dad". There was the prisoner and another man. The father tackled one and the son the other. They had several ups and downs, and the man who fought the son used what was supposed to be a windlass handle, and struck the son on the head, partially stunning him. The father, who at this time was on the ground with the prisoner, now picked up his gun and shot at the other man as he was running away. The prisoner was conveyed between them to their house, and afterwards handed over to a policeman. Robert Spencer, the son, corroborated his father's statement. Police-constable Landon

produced one of the fowls alive, and the skin of the other two. The prisoner was committed to the sessions.

41 6 July 1855

Warwickshire Sessions

Thomas Martin, aged 21, was indicted for stealing at Aston a quantity of scrap iron, the property of Samuel Smith of Derby. From the evidence, it appeared that the iron was put on board a boat at Derby, to go to Wednesbury Oak. **Charles Warton** and the prisoner Martin were engaged to go with the boat. There were 23 tons 2 qrs 3 lbs of iron, and among it was a pair of steelyards, which prosecutor noticed. When the iron was received by Mr Williams, it was 22 tons 11 cwt, being more than 9 cwt short. Prisoner and the other boatman had sold the iron to Mr Milward. Prisoner, in his defence, said he knew nothing of the robbery ; a man asked him to go with him to Tamworth. The Jury found him guilty. Twelve months hard labour in gaol.

42 21 September 1855

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

Hannah Webb of Chilvers Coton applied for an order of affiliation against **Thomas Morris**, a boatman of Coventry, but the evidence produced was not deemed sufficiently corroborative, and the charge was dismissed.

43 4 January 1856

Hillmorton

A MOTHER AND HER INFANT DROWNED An inquest was held on Monday last at the Bird In Hand Inn, Hillmorton, before J Poole Esq and a highly respectable Jury, of whom Mr Fall was the Foreman, to enquire touching the death of Elizabeth, wife of **John Malin**, and Arthur, his infant son, who were drowned in the second rising lock between Newbold and Hillmorton, on the morning of Saturday last. After examining the place where the sad catastrophe happened, the Jury viewed the bodies as they lay side by side, the sight of which was truly appalling, the more so as it was known that the mother, in endeavouring to rescue her child from a watery grave, perished in the attempt. John Malin, being examined, said he was a boatman for Mr Eydon of Napton Old Wharf. Left Napton about a fortnight since for the Hartshill stone quarries near Nuneaton, where they generally stopped ; about the Punch Bowl was pinched by the late frosts. Started from the quarries on Friday last. The boat was an old one, and had leaked the two previous journeys ; had told his master so when the boat was empty, but who, upon looking at it, said he did not see much the matter. The boat leaked during the last down journey ; did not stop the leaking when at Nuneaton, but perceiving that a good deal of water came through the boat between Nuneaton and Newbold, he baled out the water twice, and, as is the custom when a boat takes in water through her seams, he ran her several times into the mud, which, by stopping up the crevices, checked the entrance of the water. He baled out the water once between Newbold and Hillmorton. Had been a boatman 35 years, and never had an accident before ; believed the boat did not leak when he left Napton. A Juror remarked, "If all the leaky boats were to be stopped, there would be very few on the canal". Witness was sure that the load in the boat would not cause it to sink. When they entered the lock, his wife was steering, and three of his children were in the cabin. His son, 13 years of age, was assisting to close the gates of the lock. Will swear the moment the boat entered the lock, my son said, "Drop the paddles; the boat is sinking". I looked and saw the cabin going down ; the lock was now half full of water. My wife rushed into the cabin, which was filling rapidly. I saved two of my children by pulling them one in each hand out of the cabin by their hair ; the water was up to my middle. The boat now went down, and my wife and little one perished. T J Smallwood examined. Is a servant in the employ of the Oxford Canal Company ; his duty is to gauge the boats. On Saturday morning last, about daybreak, I saw a boat in the act of entering the lock ; I was making out an invoice at the time. I heard an alarm, and upon running out of the office, I saw the last witness holding two of his children by their hair, and I had the greatest difficulty to land them. The locks are constructed upon an improved principle, and admit the water by side tunnels. The woman was in the water about ten minutes, and when taken out she was quite dead. I have examined every mark, and cannot find the least dent which will lead me to account for the accident. Great care is

required in passing a leaky boat through the locks. It is usual with boatmen to run a leaky boat into the mud to keep out the water. The locks are in excellent condition. The boat had 28 tons 15 cwt of Hartshill stone in it. Mr Gilliott, the Engineer of the Company, here said there was no restriction as to what a boat should carry as regarded the weight. Witness said it is the case with an old boat as with an old horse – it was used for rough work. The child was washed out of the lock through the paddle. A witness named Hewell said he had examined the boat, and found a plank sprung under the bulkhead. Could not say, unless the boat was out of the water, if the plank was rotten or not. Believed the boat had a deal of water in her when she came into the lock ; and if the boat was struck on the nose, it would cause the water at the bottom to run to the stern, and cause it to sink first. The Coroner here said it was of importance that the boat should be properly examined, and he also thought the owner of the boat should be present. The Jury were asked their opinion individually as to adjourning the inquest, when seven were for the adjournment and five against it. The Jury, after once more examining the lock, returned, and it was agreed to adjourn the case till Thursday, and in the meantime to thoroughly examine the planking of the boat, and summons Mr Eydon to be present at the next investigation. The result of the adjourned inquest has not come to hand.

44 25 April 1856 Coventry Police Office

Joseph Wootten, a boatman, was brought up by P C Salmons, charged with being disorderly and singing in Leicester Row. Ordered to put 1s in the poor box.

45 28 November 1856 Nuneaton

A MAN FOUND HANGED Early on Saturday morning the 22nd inst, the inhabitants of Abbey Street were thrown into consternation by the report of a man being found hanging at his lodgings, suspended by a hook in the ceiling to which he had fastened his garter (a common weavers' thrum) and then made a running noose which he placed around his neck, under which noose he had adjusted his stocking, so as to prevent its cutting his neck. The deceased's name was William Townsend. An inquest was held at the Ram public house, Abbey Street, on Monday the 24th inst, before E H Jackson Esq, deputy coroner, on view of the body, when **James Jephcoat** junior was examined : he said he had known the deceased almost all his lifetime ; he had lodged at their house for the last fifteen years ; he was a collier, and got 3s 6d a day when he worked ; he (Jephcote (*sic*)) was a boatman, and he was at his father and mother's house on Friday last ; he was cheerful and evinced no symptoms of derangement ; he went to bed soon after 11 o'clock, and he (witness) went to his boat, and between five and six o'clock next morning, he came down home again for two corn bags ; the house door was open, and he struck a light with a match, when he saw deceased in an ill posture ; he knew he was William Townsend, and he said to him, "If you think of frightening me, you are deceived", and he made no reply, and his light being out he made an alarm ; he went upstairs and procured another light, and called his brother to his assistance, as he had felt in deceased's face and found it cold, but of a clammy sweat, and he saw that he was hanging suspended as above in the house, and near to the fireplace, his toes touching the ground, and his knees nearly so ; he immediately cut him down, and found he was quite dead ; he sent straightway for Abel Vernon, the constable, and Mr Nason, surgeon ; he knew no reason for his having done so, without it was from giddiness in his head which might have affected him, as he was in a poor low way sometimes ; he had been short of work some time ago, and was very bad off then, but latterly he had been better off. After the examination of another witness, the jury were of opinion that the deceased hung himself while labouring under a fit of temporary insanity, and returned a verdict accordingly.

46 26 December 1856 Warwick Winter Assizes

ROBBERY John Jeffries, 23, butcher, and Mary Ann Smith, polisher, were indicted for having, at the borough of Birmingham, on the 8th of September, feloniously assaulted and robbed one **Charles Barrington** of a purse, containing the sum of £2 3s. The prosecutor, a boatman, between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning, was walking along Smallbrook Street, when he was accosted by the

woman prisoner, who desired him to go home with her. He declined, and thereupon Jeffries came up, seized the prosecutor, hurled him to the ground and, with the assistance of Smith, robbed him of his purse. Two police officers, hearing cries of "Murder" and "Police" hastened toward the scene of the outrage. The prisoners ran away when they saw the constables, but were pursued and taken into custody forthwith. On the road they had run along was found the prosecutor's purse, which the robbers had thrown away from them. Both were found guilty. His Lordship, in passing sentence, observed that he noticed when these cases came to trial, the man always deserted the woman, and employed counsel to defend himself only. He sentenced Smith to four years penal servitude and Jeffries to eight years.

47 26 December 1856

Warwickshire Winter Assizes

HIGHWAY ROBBERY **William Smith**, a boatman, was charged with stealing from Samuel Hemming a tobacco box and regimental pass. Mr Wills appeared for the prosecution. Hemming, who is a soldier in the Rifle Brigade, was in Birmingham on furlough, and had occasion to go along the canal side leading from Summer Row about eleven o'clock at night, when four men approached him and asked for some tobacco, which he gave them. Immediately afterwards, Smith put his arm around the prosecutor's neck and threw him down. While on the ground, the men kicked and struck him, and took the tobacco box from his pocket. Police Officer Jephcott, hearing cries from the canal side, went to the spot, and found the prosecutor on the ground, with two men standing near him. Smith was taken into custody a few yards from the spot where the prosecutor was lying. The Jury returned a verdict of Guilty, and Smith was sentenced to eight years penal servitude.

48 1 May 1857

Petty Sessions

Joseph Proctor, a boatman, summoned Abel Vernon, Constable of Nuneaton, for an assault. On Friday last, Proctor met a poor man named Wadcock by the canal side, and fastening him by the collar, demanded his license, pulling him about in a scandalous manner. The man's entreaties to be let alone, and to be allowed to go home about his business, attracted the attention of Vernon (who was in the adjoining field planting potatoes), and he went and requested Proctor to let the man alone, but he refused, whereon Vernon interfered, and after resistance succeeded in liberating Wadcock from his assailant's grasp. Proctor then fell on Vernon, who in self defence fought him several rounds, and although an "old un" came off victorious, giving his adversary a good drubbing, whereon Proctor obtained a summons for an assault. The Bench considered Proctor got his desert in the first instance, and for the second, ordered him to pay 10s 6d costs for his folly.

49 22 May 1857

Rugby Petty Sessions

H Woodward, a boatman, charged W Rose and James Wright, two tramps, with stealing a cap from the cabin of a boat near Willoughby. Rose was seen coming out of the boat with the cap on his head. Both prisoners ran away, and after a chase of three miles, they were captured. Wright was discharged, and Rose, who pleaded guilty, was sentenced to six weeks hard labour.

50 12 June 1857

Coventry Petty Sessions

William Magson and John Phillips were charged with breaking into the cabin of a boat at the Canal Wharf and stealing a quantity of bread, butter and bacon, the property of **James Jackson**. Mr Smallbone appeared for the prosecution. The facts of the case may be briefly stated. The prosecutor, a boatman, left the boat he had in charge outside the Coventry Stop on Monday night at 8 o'clock. He returned at 20 minutes to eleven o'clock and found the cabin door broken open. The prisoners were getting over a gate, and the prosecutor followed them and saw Phillips with a loaf of bread under his arm. He gave information to Police-constable Frost, and they together went in search of the prisoners, and apprehended them on Tuesday morning in a manure boat near the Red House Bridge. The prisoners elected to be tried by the Magistrates, but pleaded not guilty. The prisoners having been previously convicted, the Court ordered them to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour in the House of Correction for three calendar months.

51 7 August 1857**Warwickshire Assizes**

STEALING COAL AT NAPTON **John Grantham** was charged with stealing nine hundred weight of coal, the property of Richard Coggins. Mr Adams was for the prosecution, and Mr O'Brien defended. It appeared that the prisoner was a boatman employed by the prosecutor to convey a boat load of coals from the Moira Colliery, and on the way to Napton, he took the coal from the boat and appropriated it to his own use. He was found Guilty and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

52 1 January 1858

CORONER'S INQUEST An Inquest was held at the Dog and Gun, Much Park Street, on Tuesday last, before W H Seymour Esq, Coroner, on the body of Edward Lynes, aged 36, who was found drowned in the canal on Sunday last. The first witness examined was Police-constable Collis, who said that on Sunday morning he was sent for to the Coventry Canal, and he saw the body of the deceased lying in the water near the Pudding Pits. He took the body out of the water, and removed it to the Workhouse. It was in a very advanced state of decomposition. A silk handkerchief was fastened round the wrists by means of a knot on the one side and a running noose on the other. A razor, a pocket comb and a clasp knife were found in the pockets of the deceased's trousers. There were no marks of violence on the body, and the clothes were not disturbed. A hat was found on the banks of the canal about three weeks since. Mary Ann Lynes, the wife of the deceased, identified the hat produced by Collis as her husband's. She said that he left home on Monday the 7th of December at about half past five o'clock in the morning. He was very restless during the whole of the previous night, and for some weeks before that time, he had been in a low, desponding way. He frequently complained that his head was very bad, and that he felt as though bells were ringing in it. He had lately gone into partnership with another person and started in business as a dyer, but matters went wrong, and trade being depressed, the deceased's mind became affected. **Thomas Wootton**, a boatman, proved that he found the hat produced about two o'clock in the afternoon of, he thought, Monday the 7th of December, on the banks of the Canal near the Pudding Pits. He told two or three persons that he had found the hat. As soon as he heard of a man having been drowned, he gave the hat to the Constable. The brother of the deceased proved that he was labouring under strange mental delusions for a week before he left home, and on the Saturday night, he seemed altogether overcome, and spoke and acted wildly. This being the whole of the evidence, the Jury returned a verdict "That the deceased destroyed himself while in a state of temporary insanity".

53 22 January 1858**Coventry Petty Sessions**

Joseph Meakin was charged with stealing, on the 4th inst, at Foleshill, 2 cwt of coal, value 1s, the property of Mr T R Troughton. Mr Royle prosecuted. The prisoner is a boatman, and was passing along the canal on the night in question when Richard Ford, a person who was set to watch for the purpose of detecting thieves, saw him take the coal away. The prisoner said it was his first offence, and expressed sorrow for his conduct. Inspector Austin proved that he apprehended the prisoner. Mr Hartopp, the colliery agent, said that the prisoner came to him and admitted that he took the coal. He pleaded guilty. Mr G W Craddock briefly addressed the Bench on behalf of Meakin, and called witnesses to his character, which was proved to have been irreproachable up to the present time. Mr T Worthy, his employer, said he had worked for him for nine years past. The Court having commented on the serious nature of the offence, sentenced the prisoner to 21 days hard labour.

54 10 March 1858**Crown Court**

STEALING POULTRY AT OLD STRATFORD **William Branston**, aged 21, boatman, and **Charles Morris**, aged 23, boatman, were found guilty of stealing at Old Stratford, on the 10th of January, one drake, two ducks, and five fowls, the property of Timothy Sodin. They were sentenced to four months hard labour.

55 24 March 1858

Warwickshire Lent Assizes

PLEADED GUILTY **John Wills**, boatman, to having in his possession five half crowns and two shillings, all counterfeit, at Napton-on-the-Hill, on the 9th of March. Twelve months hard labour.

56 28 May 1858

Atherstone Petty Sessions

Charles Weetman, farmer, charged **Thomas Nock** with stealing a pony, value £15, from a field at Mancetter. The prisoner is a boatman from Staffordshire, and after stealing the pony, bartered it to a man for his horse and £3 to boot, and he sold this horse to another party. Committed for trial at the ensuing Warwick Assizes.

57 9 March 1859

PETTY SESSIONS **Henry Herbert** of Wyken was charged with stealing, on the 28th February, two waistcoats, a slop, a knife and various other articles, the property of **William Crompton**. Mr Royle conducted the case. The prosecutor said he was a boatman, and lived at Bulkington ; he engaged the prisoner at Wyken Colliery to go with him a-boating, On Monday evening, the two waistcoats and the other articles were in the boat ; he saw them at seven o'clock ; he went to sleep and awoke about two o'clock the next morning ; the things were missing and the prisoner was gone ; he went in search of him, but could not find him. Police-constable Knight said in consequence of information which he received, he went to the Weavers' Arms at Foleshill on Tuesday morning the 1st inst ; he apprehended the prisoner with the stolen articles in his possession. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to four months imprisonment with hard labour.

58 30 March 1859

Warwickshire Spring Assizes

LEAD STEALING AT KNOWLE **William Cox**, aged 28, boatman, pleaded not guilty to stealing about 70lbs of lead, value 14s, the property of Mark Sturley, on the 16th of October 1857. Mr Elers prosecuted. The lead was stolen from an uninhabited house. The Jury found a verdict of guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to six months hard labour.

59 1 July 1859

STEALING DUCKS AT EASENHALL **Alfred Eadon**, aged 25, boatman, and **John Mills**, aged 21, boatman, both described as imperfectly educated, were charged with stealing at Easenhall on the 20th of May two fowls, the property of William Johnson.

Mr Adams prosecuted, and the prisoners were defended by Mr Spencer.

It appeared that on the day in question, the prosecutor, who keeps a public house by the canal side at Easenhall, missed two fowls. His son went to look for them, and proceeded by the canal in the direction of Newbold. He found the skin of a fowl on the bank, and after going some little distance, he came up with a boat which was in charge of the prisoner Eadon. He went on board and found a pot on the fire. He looked into the pot and saw that it contained a fowl. He then told Eadon of his father's loss, and said he suspected the fowl in the pot to be one of those stolen, and he should therefore take it away with him. As he was leaving the boat, Mills came on board, and Johnson said, "You've got them then", and Mills replied, "Yes, and you'll have to bring that back". He then went away and tried one of the skins on the fowl and found it fitted exactly.

In cross-examination, the witness said that the pot was boiling when he took the fowl out of the pot. Subsequently, one of the County Constabulary found a few black feathers at the bottom of the boat. Mr Spooner addressed the Jury on behalf of the prisoners, urging that, on the evidence adduced, it would be very dangerous to convict them. It was absurd to suppose that a fowl after it had been boiling some time would fit into the skin it had when alive. He then called several witnesses who gave the prisoners very good characters.

The Deputy Chairman having summed up, the Jury acquitted the prisoners.

60 17 August 1859

PETTY SESSIONS Prudence Randle of Exhall charged **John Smart**, a boatman, with assaulting

February, two half crowns, a shilling, and sixpence, the property of **Alfred Labroum**.

Mr Adams was counsel for the prosecution, and Mr Elers for the defence.

The prosecutor, a boatman, went to sleep in his boat on the night in question, and placed his trousers in a corner of the boat. A man named Hoare and the prisoner were in the boat after he was undressed. When he awoke, they were both gone and the money taken out of his pocket. The prisoner was acquitted.

66 11 May 1860

Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS MAY 5 Samuel Allen charged **Joseph Proctor**, boatman, Was Lane Bridge, with an assault. Allowed to settle on payment of 7s costs and satisfying complainant.

67 19 May 1860

BRUTAL MURDER Another of those disgraceful outrages for which South Staffordshire has of late become notorious occurred in the outskirts of Wolverhampton late on Saturday night last, resulting in the death of a woman named **Elizabeth Evans** by the hand of **Edward Humphreys**, a boatman with whom the unhappy woman lived as his wife, assisting him in the management of his boat. As is general among their class, Humphreys and Evans lived in the boat, which was moored against Sheldon's timber yard at the bottom of Canal Street, and not far from the stations of the Great Western and London and North Western Railways. About ten o'clock, Evans left the boat in company with some female acquaintances, and Humphreys, suspecting with truth that they were gone to get drink, regarding which he had had, it appears, a quarrel with Evans earlier in the night, followed them. He overtook them near the railway bridge on the Cannock Road and, accosting the unfortunate woman, asked her with an imprecation how she would like his fists. She replied that she was not aware she had done anything to induce him to strike her, to which he rejoined by beating her savagely (he is a very powerful fellow, about six feet high and stout in proportion) until she reeled and fell against the fence. A companion of the deceased's expostulated with him, on which he, looking at his victim, cursed her and, declaring that if she were not yet dead, he should kill her, dealt the half conscious wretch a violent kick on the side. She gave a faint scream, and apparently ceased to exist, for she showed no signs of life afterwards. The body was conveyed to the Fountain Inn hard by to await an inquest. The murderer was taken into custody about two hours afterwards, and lodged in the lock up.

68 1 June 1860

Coventry Police Office

Samuel Sankey, a boatman, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon.

He expressed sorrow for his offence, and was released with a caution on placing 1s in the poor box.

69 9 June 1860

Coventry Police Office

Amos Chaplin and Wm Stokes, two ragged little urchins, were charged with loitering about in Cross-cheaping.

Chaplin said he came from Keresley ; he had no mother, and his father had gone to Birmingham to look after work, after locking him out of doors. Stokes said he came from Wolverhampton ; he had neither father nor mother, and had been living with a boatman.

By direction of the worthy Magistrates, the poor little fellows were sent to the House of Industry.

70 21 December 1860

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

SATURDAY **John Mills**, a boatman, charged with severely assaulting a Police Constable while in the execution of his duty, was fined £10 and costs, and in default was committed to the House of Correction with hard labour for two months.

71 18 January 1861

Coventry Petty Sessions

BURGLARY AT BEDWORTH John Twigger and James Cashmore, with their wives, were

charged with breaking into the dwelling house of **Joseph Woodhouse**, and stealing therefrom a quantity of sheets, counterpanes, blankets and other articles.

Mr Seymour appeared for the prosecution.

Ann, wife of Joseph Woodhouse, boatman, of Spitalfields, was called and examined. About three weeks ago, her husband went into Staffordshire, and his boat was frozen in there. He came for her on Christmas Day. On the day following, she went with him to Staffordshire. When she went away, she left her house all safe, and left the key with Mary Neale. She returned to her house on the 2nd inst, and found all her things gone. The whole of the things lost were worth about £5.

Mary Neale stated that she lived next door but one to the last witness. On the day following Christmas Day, Mrs Woodhouse came to her house and gave her the key of her door. She saw that the house was securely locked at that time. On the 2nd of January, she was surprised to see the upstairs window open and two panes of glass broken. She unlocked the door, and on entering the house, she found all in confusion, and the bed clothes gone. She sent to Mrs Woodhouse's daughter, **Martha Hazeldine**, to acquaint her with what had taken place. It was just at daybreak when she saw the window open.

Martha Hazeldine confirmed the account of Mary Neale, and identified the articles produced as her mother's property.

Richard Wallington, pawnbroker, carrying on business at Bedworth, deposed as follows :- He remembered Mrs Cashmore coming to his shop on the 2nd instant, and offering in pledge two sheets. He advanced upon them 1s 6d. He subsequently handed them over to Police-sergeant Jeffs.

Rosina Smith, widow, said she lodged at James Cashmore's in the early part of this month. She lodged there five weeks. She was there on the 2nd inst. She recollected Jane Twigger coming to Cashmore's house about the 2nd. She asked witness to let her look at her foot. After going away, she did not come again. In the evening, witness went to Twigger's house, and Jane asked her to buy a pair of boots which she thought would fit her. The boots produced were the same she purchased. She was to pay 4s for them. She paid her 6d on account for them, and was to give her 6d every week till the money was paid. On the Friday, Mrs Twigger returned her the 6d. The day before, the house was searched in her absence by someone, and the boots had been taken away.

Police-sergeant Jeffs stated that from information he received, he went to search Cashmore's house on Thursday the 3rd, and found a pair of boots. He then apprehended the prisoner Cashmore upon the present charge, and handed him over to Police-constable Mills. He also produced a pair of sheets which he received from the pawnbroker. He had since apprehended Mrs Cashmore. On being taken to the Station House, Mrs Cashmore said the sheets were given to her husband, and she pawned them.

Police-constable Mills proved receiving Cashmore from the last witness, and conveying him to the Station. He also apprehended the prisoner Twigger and his wife. The prisoner Cashmore, as he took him to the Station, said, "I do not mean to suffer for what other people have done". He then asked witness if he knew at what time the robbery was committed, and on receiving an answer in the negative, prisoner said it was done about eight o'clock at night, and the man who came to his house was the man who did it. Witness asked him, "Do you mean Twigger?" and he said, "I do, for I saw all the things down at his house that night". Twigger said, when he was apprehended, "I did not break into the house, but I found the sheets in Coalpit Lane, and the boots were wrapped in them. It was as I was going to work at five o'clock in the morning, and I gave them to Jem (meaning Cashmore) because he was bad off". Mrs Twigger, when she was apprehended, said, "I did not know the boots were stolen".

The females were discharged. The male prisoners pleaded not guilty, and were committed for trial at the next Assizes.

72 13 February 1861

CHILVERS COTON On Sunday last, **Mrs Ann Stew**, wife of **Mr Thomas Stew**, boatman, who resides opposite Cotton wharf near the Boat Inn, was afflicted with the arrival of the body of her son, **John Thompson**, in a boat from Buckby, at which place he had been drowned in a lock on the

previous Thursday evening. Deceased was 22 years of age.

73 15 February 1861

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **W Duckett**, boatman, was charged with committing a larceny. Superintendent Austin stated that several canal boats were staying near the Punch Bowl Bridge during the frost, and a chain of the value of 7s was taken from a boat belonging to Mr Haydon of Napton, by the prisoner. Committed for trial at the ensuing Assizes at Warwick.

74 30 March 1861

Warwickshire Assizes

ALLEGED ROBBERY AT NUNEATON **William Duckett**, 27, boatman, was charged with having, on the 24th of January last, at Nuneaton, stolen an iron chain, value 7s, the property of Charles Endon, the owner of the boat which the prisoner had worked. The evidence was slight, and the prisoner was acquitted.

75 27 April 1861

Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS **John Mills** was charged with being drunk and riotous, and also with breaking ten panes of glass in the Lock up, value 5s.

It appears that he was drunk on the 17th inst, and a crowd of people following him. On Mr Austin requesting him to go home, he became very violent, and was taken to the Lock up, when he broke the ten panes of glass.

Fined 40s and costs 13s 6d on the first charge, or seven days imprisonment ; on the second charge, ordered to pay the damages 5s and 10s 6d costs. He paid the 15s 6d on the latter charge, and said he would go to Gaol for the first charge. Mills is a boatman, more than 6ft 3in in height, but is supposed to be of weak intellect.

76 22 May 1861

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS John Wells Smith of Foleshill, Clerk to the Coventry Canal Company, charged **Henry Woodward**, boatman, with attempting to evade the toll. Mr G Woodcock appeared on behalf of the Company. He said the Company, according to their rules, let boats loaded with stone pass free of toll. This had been taken advantage of by persons concealing in their boats other goods liable to tonnage. They had reason to believe that the practice had been going on for years, and to a large amount. In the present case, it was but trifling, and the Company did not wish to press the charge against defendant further than as a warning to others that they could not attempt to pass anything besides stone with impunity. There was a special Act for the Canal Company, and it provided a penalty of five pounds. Mr Woodcock said they should be satisfied with a nominal penalty in this case. The defendant was fined 1s and costs £1 0s 6d.

77 2 August 1861

Warwickshire Assizes

GAROTTE ROBBERY AT BIRMINGHAM **Robert Riley**, 24, boatman and John Gorton, 25, iron roller, were charged with having, at Birmingham on the 2nd April, robbed William Millard, and with having at the time of the robbery used personal violence to him, In summing up, his Lordship directed the Jury to find Gorton not guilty, as the evidence was not sufficiently clear against him. Riley was found guilty, and it was proved that he had been three times preciously convicted of felonies since 1852, and had served a term of four years penal servitude. He was now sentenced to ten years penal servitude.

[\[note name in next article\]](#)

78 6 August 1861

Warwickshire Summer Assizes

ROBBERY AT BIRMINGHAM **Robert Riley**, 24, and John Garotte, 25. were indicted for having, on the 2nd of April, robbed William Millard, a pensioner living at Warwick, of 7s 6d, and also with using personal violence. Mr Cockle prosecuted. Millard had been to a public house called "The Nelson", and as he was going home, two persons whom he believed to be the prisoners, overtook

where he supposed his son had fallen, but unfortunately, to meet the same fate as his child, for it appears that after he jumped into the water, he stood upright, and his hands were seen struggling at the top, but either not being able to swim or, as some suppose, stuck in the mud, he could not recover himself from his dangerous position, and in a few minutes he sank. The screams of the poor woman who witnessed these terrible disasters soon brought several people to the spot, and one man jumped in to tender assistance or rescue the unfortunate sufferers, but he narrowly escaped being drowned also. Assistance was soon afterwards obtained, and the bodies recovered, but life was extinct. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death". The unfortunate man came from Braunston in Northamptonshire. The bodies have been buried by the parishioners of Anstey, who have been extremely kind to the poor widow, and have also subscribed handsomely for her.

84 11 October 1861

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS All persons having any claim or demand upon the Estate and Effects of **Stephen Thrasher**, late of Exhall in the County of Warwick, boatman, deceased, are requested to send particulars thereof to us within 14 days from the date thereof, and those holding securities are required to give particulars of the same ; and all Persons who stand indebted to his Estate are required to pay the amounts to us within the same period. Dated this day of October 1861,
WOODCOCK, TWIST AND WOODCOCK, Solicitors to the Administratrix.

85 8 November 1861

DEATHS On the 4th inst, aged 70, **Mr Thomas Ward**, boatman, Chilvers Coton.

86 20 December 1861

Warwickshire Winter Assizes

BURGLARY AT BIRMINGHAM **Henry Higgins**, 21, boatman ; Caroline Connolly, 18, pen maker ; Eliza Skelding 25, button maker ; and Harriett Evans, 18, no trade ; were charged with having, at Birmingham, on the 27th of August last, burglariously broken into the dwelling house of George Dee, and stolen a frock shirt and other articles, his property. The Jury found Higgins and Connolly Guilty of burglary, and Evans Guilty of receiving the property, knowing it to have been stolen, while they acquitted Skelding. Higgins was sentenced to seven years penal servitude ; Connolly to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour ; and Evans to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

87 21 December 1861

Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS John Passam, gamekeeper to C M Newdegate Esq, MP, charged **Joseph Thompson**, boatman of Chilvers Coton, with shooting game without a certificate. The particulars of this case were given at the previous sessions. The defendant not appearing at that time, a special warrant was issued for his apprehension. He now appeared and pleaded guilty. Fined 10s and costs £1 ; in default, six weeks hard labour in the House of Correction at Warwick. Allowed 14 days to get the money.

88 27 December 1861

NUNEATON COUNTY COURT FRIDAY DECEMBER 20 **Elijah Moore**, Attleborough, boatman v **Joseph Proctor**, boatman, Nuneaton, for £19 18s damage and costs to his boat. Mr Smallbone for plaintiff and Mr Overell for defendant. Case dismissed.

89 31 May 1862

Coventry Petty Sessions

DESERTING A WIFE AND FAMILY **William Kimberley**, boatman of Foleshill, was again brought up on remand, charged with having, on the 12th of December last, deserted his wife and family, in consequence of which they became, and still remain, chargeable to the parish. A previous conviction for three months as a rogue and vagabond having been proved against him by Mr Dewes, who appeared to prosecute, prisoner was committed to take his trial for the offence at

the ensuing Quarter Sessions.

90 21 June 1872

ARSON AT ACOCK'S GREEN. — *George Price*, 36, boatman, was charged with basing at Acock's Green, in the parish of Yardley, on the 2nd of June last, maliciously and feloniously set fire to certain straw, in the farm buildings of Charles Rabone.

Mr. Adams prosecuted.

The evidence went to show that on the night in question James Page saw a light in the prosecutor's barn, and he, on going towards it, saw the prisoner, who is lame, coming away from it. He was stopped and searched by a Police Constable, and some matches were found upon him. He said he had no home to go to, and if they did not take him into custody he would set the whole place on fire.

He was found *Guilty*, but recommended to mercy. Sentence deferred.

91 28 June 1862

Coventry Petty Sessions

AFFILIATION Maria Warner, single woman of Collycroft near Bedworth, charged **Henry Brown**, boatman of Chilvers Coton, with being the father of her illegitimate female child, born August 15 1861. Defendant, who did not appear, was adjudged to be the father of the child, and ordered to pay 2s per week towards its maintenance, and the usual expenses of the confinement.

92 4 July 1862

DESERTING A WIFE AND FAMILY **William Kimberley**, 35, boatman was brought up charged with having run away from the parish of Foleshill, on the 11th of December last, leaving his wife and family chargeable to this parish.

Mr Spooner appeared to prosecute, and said the prosecution had been instituted by the parish authorities because the offence with which the prisoner stood charged was one that was very much on the increase, and the man himself had before suffered imprisonment for running away under similar circumstances.

Ordered to be committed to prison for two months, with hard labour.

93 26 July 1862

NUNEATON PETTY SESSIONS **Chat Driver**, boatman, was charged with assaulting William Bray, labourer, at Nuneaton on the 20th of March last. Driver had been out of the way, but on Tuesday last, he was apprehended by Police-constable Bosworth at the Boot Inn, Chilvers Coton, under a warrant. Fined 2s 6d and £1 5s costs. In default, to be committed for 21 days hard labour in the House of Correction, Warwick.



Robert Longden, a professional photographer took a number of photographs of canal families on the Coventry Canal in the 1940s and 1950s.

The picture opposite is one of his photographs, and there are a number more reproduced online.

The Bankruptcy Act, 1861.

JOHAN HAYES the Elder, late of the Windmill Inn, Henley Green, Foleshill, in the County of Warwick, Licensed Victualler, Dealer in Tobacco, and a Boatman, and now Lodging at Number 19, New-Street, Coventry, in the said County of Warwick, out of Business; having been adjudged BANKRUPT under a Petition for Adjudication of Bankruptcy, filed in the COUNTY COURT of Warwickshire, holden at Coventry, on the 20th day of May, 1862, a Public Sitting for the said Bankrupt to pass his Last Examination, and make application for his Discharge, will be held before the Judge of the said Court, on the 7th day of JULY, 1862, at the COUNTY HALL, Coventry, at Three o'Clock in the Afternoon precisely, the day last aforesaid being the day limited for the said Bankrupt to surrender.

THOMAS BALL TROUGHTON, Esquire, of Coventry, is the Official Assignee; and Mr. JOHN KILBY, of Banbury, is the Solicitor acting in the Bankruptcy.

The First Meeting of Creditors has been duly held in the said Bankruptcy, and at the Public Sitting above-mentioned Proofs of Debts of Creditors who have not proved will be received; and the said Bankrupt will be required to surrender himself to the said Court, and to submit himself to be examined, and to make a full disclosure and discovery of all his Estate and Effects, and to finish his Examination.

ISAAC NIND WHITWELL, High Bailiff.

Coventry County Court

KILLING A HORSE – COLEMAN V HOUGHTON This was an action brought by John Coleman, butcher of Foleshill, against Edward Houghton, to recover the sum of £15, being the price and value of a colt, the property of plaintiff which, in consequence of the wrongful act of defendant in forcibly driving the same, on the 10th of June last, over a fence dividing land occupied by defendant and Mr W Gill, caused it to be so injured that it was afterwards obliged to be killed.

Mr H I Davis appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Griffin for the defendant.

Mr Davis, after opening the case, called,

John Coleman, who in being sworn said: I am a butcher, living at Foleshill. In June last, I had a colt in a field near the Red House Bridge, Stony Stanton Road. The field belonged to Mr W Gill, butcher of Hill Fields, and adjoined one belonging to defendant. The fence dividing the two fields is partly a live and partly a dead one. The gaps are stopped up with a wire fence. On the 10th of June last, at about eight o'clock in the evening, I was sent for into Mr Gill's field to see my horse. When I got there, it had just been dragged out of the ditch, and was lying on the ground. I assisted in trying to get it upon its feet, but it could not stand. I wanted to take it to the stable, but could not. It was therefore left in the field all night, covered with straw. I sent for Mr Packwood, veterinary surgeon, the same night. On the following morning he came, and when he saw the horse he advised me to kill it, which I did. A day or two before, I had seen the horse in Mr Gill's field all right. It was worth from £15 to £20.

Cross-examined by Mr Griffin: I gave between £11 and £12 for the pony two or three years ago. It was five years old. I dare say the horse has been out of the field before. Mr Houghton might have told me that he had been out. I never heard of it having been in Mr Houghton's wheat.

William Warren deposed: I am in the employ of Mr W Gill, butcher of Hill Fields. My master has

two fields near the Red House Bridge. I know Mr Coleman had a horse on one of them on the 10th of June last. On that day, I went up to the fields with two boys at about seven o'clock in the evening. My master had a horse there, and when I got up to the place, I saw they were both in Mr Houghton's field. Mr Houghton was in the field, and said he had been after the horses some time. They had been in his field ten times, and he would not go after them any longer. I and the other two boys went after the horses with the intention of driving them out. They ran down towards a manure heap. Houghton stayed near the manure heap. He had a garden hoe in his hand, which he kept beating to frighten the horse over the fence at the place where he was standing. My master's horse turned and went back up the field. I followed it, and left Coleman's horse near the manure heap. At that time, Coleman's horse was working against the fence and seemed very frightened. The manure heap is only about a yard from the fence. A horse could not stand with his breast to the fence unless his hind legs were on the manure. Houghton would not let it go by to get over at another place. I did not see the horse take the leap over the fence. While I was after my master's horse, I turned round and saw Coleman's horse lying in the ditch with one of its feet entangled in the wire fence. I was about 40 yards from the horse then. I had been within 16 or 17 yards of the place. Mr Houghton and the two boys who went with me were all very near the horse. After it fell into the ditch, Houghton and all of them tried to get the horse out, but could not do it. I sent one of the boys to fetch Mr Coleman. When Houghton was trying to force the horse over the fence in that place, I told him to let it go lower down the field, where there was no wire ; but he said they had got in at that place and they should go back the same way.

James Calcott said he remembered going with Warren and another boy named Lester to Mr Gill's field on the 10th of June last. When they got there, they found the two horses in Mr Houghton's field. Warren asked Mr Houghton to help him to get them out, but he refused to do so, and stood still near the manure heap. Warren then went and drove the horses down towards the manure. One of them turned back when it got to the bottom. The other tried to jump over, caught its feet in the wire, and fell into the ditch. Mr Houghton had a hoe in his hand. He did not beat it on the manure ; he stood quite still. The brown horse went straight down to the manure, and tried to jump over the fence directly.

David Savery, boatman deposed : I know Houghton, and I recollect the 10th of June last. I saw him in one of his fields in the evening of that day. He had a hoe in his hand. He was following two horses up the field. There was no one in the field besides Houghton when I saw him first. I then went to the Three Horse Shoes public house near the Red House Bridge, and had some beer. I had not been there long when some boys came running in, saying a horse was in the ditch at Gill's field. I went down and saw Houghton and three boys, and Coleman's horse was lying in the ditch with his legs entangled in a wire that was part of the fence. The horse was lying on his side, with the wire under his legs in such a manner that we could not get it out. After trying for some time, Mr Priestly, the landlord of the Three Horse Shoes public house, sent for one of his horses to drag Coleman's out. Houghton said the horse was a poor "dummel" or he would get up, for he (Houghton) had been trying to get him up, but he would not stir. When the horse was got out, we tried to make him stand, but he could not get his hind legs up. We got some planks under him and lifted him up, but he could not stand.

Mr Packwood, veterinary surgeon, proved going on the 11th of June last to see a colt belonging to Mr Coleman. He found it with its extremities paralysed so that it could not set its hind legs to the ground. He believed it arose from injuries which had been done to its spine. It would have been impossible for it to recover, and he therefore advised that it be killed. A fall in the manner described by the witnesses would be very likely to cause such injuries.

That completed the case for the prosecution.

Mr Griffin then spoke for the defence, and contended that the evidence even of plaintiff's own witnesses was sufficient to prove that the injuries arose from an accident caused by the witness Warren himself. He then called the boy,

Samuel Lester, who said he went with Warren and Calcott to Mr Gill's field, on the 10th of June last. Saw Mr Houghton after they had been there some time. Warren asked him to help him to get the

horse out of the field, and he said he would not. The witness then went on to corroborate the evidence of the witness Calcott in all the important points, more especially denying that Houghton took any part in forcing the horse over the fence.

Mr Houghton himself was also called, and he denied having driven the horse over the fence ; also complained of the great damage done by the horses from Mr Gill's field getting into his crops.

Mr Davis addressed the jury for the plaintiff, after which,

His Honour summed up. He said the plaintiff, John Coleman, claimed £15 as damage for loss which he had sustained in consequence of the defendant having driven his horse over a fence, and so causing the death of the animal. The plaintiff's case rested mainly, if not altogether, upon the evidence of the second witness, the boy Warren, and his evidence was given in a very clear, intelligent and straightforward manner. To be sure, it was somewhat qualified, and in some parts contradicted by the evidence of the next witness, Calcott. It would appear that the three boys went together in quest of Mr Gill's horse. The fence dividing the two fields seemingly belonged to Mr Houghton, and was a dead fence, made up of wire. When they got there, they found the horse, as well as Coleman's, in Houghton's field. It was not very clear whether Houghton was there or not at first. At any rate, if not present at first, he must have been soon after, for all the witnesses related a conversation which took place between Houghton and Warren with respect to assisting the latter to get the horses out of the field. Houghton refused. Warren then got the horses round into a corner. He said he only helped, and was very particular in not admitting more than he helped defendant ; but as defendant had told witness previously that he had been running the horses, and would not go another yard, it was probable that Warren took the most active part in going after them. The horses were driven into a corner ; the witness Warren helped to drive them both, but Gill's got away, and Warren went after it, being more particularly his duty as it was his master's horse, and the one he was sent to look after. The Jury must look at the relative positions of the parties while they were standing round the horse. Warren said he had been within 16 yards of the horse, but at the time the accident happened he was about 40 yards. He turned round momentarily, and in that brief time, the horse went over. Then the Jury had heard what was said about the defendant by both the other boys. He stood near the manure heap about ten yards from the fence. If that was so, it was not very clear that at the time the leap was taken by the horse, Warren was doing anything to make it take the leap, unless it might have been from what he had done previously. The two younger boys said that Houghton did nothing, only he was near the manure heap with a hoe in his hand. Warren spoke of what defendant did as being really what caused the animal to take the leap. Both the other boys said he did not beat the manure with the hoe ; Warren said he did, so that it point of number, Warren was in the minority. The younger boys gave their evidence very fairly. It might be said that, supposing defendant to have acted in the manner stated by Warren, the two younger boys would not be as likely to notice it as he would. Suppose then, the Jury balanced the evidence of the two boys upon that point as being about equal to the evidence of Warren. There was another little circumstance which should be pointed out, and one which defendant should have been examined upon, although it was too late then. Warren said he called the attention of the defendant to another place in the hedge where the horses might have been got through without risk. If it was really true that he (Warren) expressed such an opinion, it was inconsistent with his being active in getting the horse over the dangerous place. He (the Judge) could not see any reason for believing Warren to be any other than a disinterested witness. Defendant was an interested witness, and he denied the fact. Then again, he (the Judge) could not see any reason for believing Warren should fabricate such a statement as that of defendant beating the manure with the hoe. Supposing the man to be standing there with he hoe in his hand, and the horse to come galloping up, it was very natural for him to beat the manure in the manner described – what most people would do in similar circumstances. Defendant had reason to complain to Coleman before of the horse having broken into his fields. He had been trying to get the horse out himself but could not, and no doubt he was excited and annoyed at the inconvenience of having the horse breaking into his field. Mr Davis, in opening the case, had very properly stated what defendant ought to have done, namely to have impounded, or to have brought an action for damages against the owner of the horse at the County Court. If there had been

an open gateway or a gap level with the field, he (the Judge) would not undertake to say but the defendant might have driven the horses back, but if there was the slightest risk in doing so, he clearly rendered himself liable for whatever damages might be the consequence. Supposing the Jury should think the defendant was the cause of the death of the animal, it would be for them to consider what the horse was worth. It had been stated in evidence that the horse was bought for between £11 and £12 two years earlier. No one had been called as to value. Mr Packwood saw the animal *in extremis*, and of course could not give an opinion as to its value under such circumstances. If there was some discrepancy between the evidence of Warren and that of the two younger boys on other points, all agreed as to the relative positions of the parties at the time the horse took the leap.

After consulting together for some time in the box, the Jury retired, but were unable to come to an agreement, and were ultimately dismissed.

96 13 September 1862 Coventry Petty Sessions

DRUNK AND A FOOL **John Layton**, boatman of Foleshill, was charged with being drunk and riotous at Bedworth on the 10th inst. The man pleaded guilty, and was about to be let off with paying the expenses, when he laughed at the Bench and said he would not pay a farthing; upon which he was ordered to pay a fine of 5s and the expenses 16s 6d; in default, to be committed to the House of Correction for 28 days. The man was removed in custody.

97 5 December 1862

THE NEWCASTLE MURDER At the Newcastle Assizes on Tuesday (before Mr Justice Keating), **John Dixon** (21), boatman and **Thomas Miller** (22), boatman, were indicted for having feloniously killed and slain one Patrick Rogers, on the 16th of August last. The circumstances of the case, which were reported at the time the offence was committed are that the prisoners pushed the poor fellow Rogers through one of the holes of a privy into the river, where he was drowned. The jury, after a short deliberation, found the prisoners guilty of manslaughter. The learned Judge, after commenting upon the wanton and cruel nature of the offence, sentenced the prisoners each to ten years penal servitude.

98 13 December 1862 Chilvers Coton

TWO BOYS DROWNED An inquest was held on Tuesday last, before A Carter Esq, coroner, on the bodies of Thomas Moore aged 15 and Thomas Harris aged 11 years, who were drowned in the Canal on Monday night last. It appears the boys came from Red Lane, near Coventry, and were with a boat belonging to Mr Matthews, coal dealer of Red Lane.

Thomas Harris, weaver of Red Lane, said : One of the deceased boys was my son. I last saw him alive on Sunday night. The boy Moore was engaged to go with a man named **John Wilcox**, to drive the horse for him, and he (Moore) came on Sunday afternoon last to my house and coaxed my boy to go a journey with him. They left about half past eleven on Sunday night, and I saw him no more alive.

Joseph Lee deposed : I live at Marston Stop. I was going from my house to Coton, along the canal side, on Monday night about seven o'clock, when I met a boat – the horse had no driver. The man who was steering shouted to me. I asked what was the matter, when the man, who proved to be John Wilcox, said, “I have got two boys drowned”. I asked him what business he had there if two boys were drowned – why did he not stop the boat? He said he could not get off. The place where I met him was about half a mile from where the boys were drowned. I ran to the place where he said the boys were but could see nothing. I went and told the policeman at Coton.

Elijah Moore, boatman, said : I was coming from Coventry with my boat, on Monday night about seven o'clock. I was in the cabin, and heard someone shouting. I went out, and Wilcox said, “My two boys are drowned”. I asked him where, and he said at Griff Bridge. I asked him how it was he left them, and he said he could not stop the horse. I went to the place, and tried to find them with my boat hook. Joseph Lee came with a drag, and after about ten minutes we got the bodies out.

The younger boy had hold of the other by the collar.

In reply to a Juror, Moore said the horse not stopping need not have prevented the man from getting off the boat. He might have steered near enough to the side to get off at any time. In reply to another Juror, he said he should think Wilcox might easily have forded the water where the boys were drowned.

The Coroner said he thought it was necessary to have the bodies examined by a medical man, and he should adjourn the inquest until Wednesday next.

99 4 February 1863

ASSAULT AT SOWE Frederick Davis of Sowe, miner, was charged with assaulting Robert Hill of the same place, miner, on the 27th of December. Mr Smallbone appeared for the complainant, and Mr Griffin for the defence. The complainant stated that having a married daughter whose husband was absent, and fearing that she was not behaving properly, he went to her house late on the night in question, and found two boatmen there. He sent them away, and on coming out himself, saw the defendant at the top of the yard. Asked him what he did there. The defendant made use of a coarse expression, and stripped to fight. Complainant refused to fight, and defendant went into his house and fetched out a pair of tongs, with which he felled the complainant, rendering him senseless. Cross-examined : There was no one there but the witness's married daughter, and a son. Witness had a staff and struck a boatman with it. Did not strike at the defendant. The son of the complainant was then called and corroborated the evidence already given. Mr Griffin then spoke for the defence, and contended that the parties ought to change places. He called **James Cooper**, who said he was a boatman living at Brinklow. On the night in question, he went to Mrs Eler's (the daughter of the complainant) with another young man and a girl named Selina Phipps. They were sitting quietly by the fire, when Robert Hill sen rushed in, and hit him with a staff he had in his hand. Afterwards, he called his son, who held him while the old man beat him. He (witness) called out murder. When Frederick Davis came up, Mr Hill called out, "Frank". Davis said, "It's not Frank". Hill then said he would give him Frank, and rushed at him with a staff. Davis snatched the staff out of his hand, and knocked him down with it, upon which he (witness) ran away. Mrs Elers was called, but as she declared she did not see anything of the affray, she was not examined. The Court considered the assault fully proved, and ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 5s and the costs £1 8s, in default to be committed to the House of Correction for 28 days.

100 18 February 1863

Coventry Police Office

STEALING FROM A BOAT **Frederick Mills** was charged with stealing a velveteen jacket from a boat on the canal, the property of **Samuel Daffern**. Police-constable Wormald stated that he received information of a coat being stolen on Monday week, from a canal boat, and that it had been taken over to Foleshill, and there sold by the prisoner. He consequently took the prisoner into custody. It appeared from the statement of prosecutor that the prisoner was set to work by him, but instead of doing the work, he took the prosecutor's jacket and bolted with it. The article was worth 4s, but the prisoner sold it for 1s to another boatman. The man was apprehended at the Coventry Workhouse. The prisoner pleaded not guilty, and was then sentenced to six weeks imprisonment with hard labour.

101 9 May 1863

Coventry Police

ROBBERY **Joseph Jackson**, boatman, and **Frances Yardley** were charged with stealing a watch, the property of **Richard Taylor**, boatman, of Attleborough.

Mr Holt appeared to prosecute.

It appeared that the prosecutor was unloading a boat of coals yesterday at the Canal Wharf, Coventry, and had occasion to leave his assistant at a particular place. His watch, which he had brought with him to Coventry to be repaired, was in his pocket. The male prisoner was working with him at unloading the boat. When he put his clothes on again, he missed the watch. Information was given to the police, and the watch was found pledged at Mr Mattocks's,

pawnbroker. The female prisoner, who cohabits with the male prisoner, was identified as the person who pawned the watch.

Evidence was given proving the facts as stated by Mr Holt.

Mr Mattocks proved taking the watch in pledge from the female prisoner.

Police-constable Gregory proved apprehending the prisoners upon the charge of stealing the watch.

Neither of the prisoners said anything when taken into custody.

The male prisoner was discharged, the female being committed to take her trial upon the charge at the ensuing Quarter Sessions.

102 3 July 1863

Adjourned to Coventry

DISCHARGED Frances Yardley, a young girl, was charged with stealing, on the 6th of May last, a silver watch of the value of 10s, the property of **Richard Taylor**, boatman. The Jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

103 31 July 1863

STEALING A SHAWL An old woman named **Martha Lowke** was charged with stealing, at Bedworth on the 18th instant, a shawl, value 5s, the property of **Thomas Smith**, a boatman.

Mrs Smith said she lived in Bedworth. On Friday last, the prisoner came to her house. The shawl was safe in her box then. Soon after the woman was gone, she missed the shawl. She went round to the pawnbrokers at Bedworth the next morning, and searched for it, but could not find it. Soon after, she saw the shawl at Mr Gardner's.

Mr Gardner proved that the prisoner brought the shawl to pledge at his shop on Saturday last ; but as Mrs Smith had just been inquiring about such an article, he detained it, and sent for a Police-constable.

The prisoner was a boatman's wife, and declared that the complainant on the day in question was "so drunk she could not see a hole through a ladder" and, after having spent all her money, she asked prisoner to take the shawl to pledge to get more money. She then called as a witness,

Mrs Prescott, who said they were all drinking together the whole of the Friday, and as loving together as two turtle doves.

The Magistrates considered the charge had been proved, and ordered prisoner to be committed to Prison for 21 days.

104 21 August 1863

Coventry Petty Sessions

STEALING COAL George Watts, boatman, was charged with stealing 1 cwt of coal, the property of Bicknall Mullings, from a boat on the Oxford Canal near Ansty, on the 5th inst ; and Jane, wife of Philip House, and Philip House, her son, were charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen.

The case was dismissed.

105 4 September 1863

Coventry Petty Sessions

William Proctor, boatman of Nuneaton, was charged with releasing three donkeys as they were on their way to the pound at Bedworth, on the 13th instant. Ordered to pay 12s expenses in a week.

106 28 October 1863

Warwickshire Michaelmas Quarter Sessions

STEALING OATS AT ASTON William Godfrey was charged with stealing thirty three bushels of oats at Aston on the 11th ult, the property of Francis Waghorn. Mr Balgey prosecuted ; Mr Elers defended. The prosecutor missed a quantity of oats from his granary, and on the following morning prisoner's house was searched, and about thirty three bushels of similar oats were found in the cellar. A bag was also discovered, which prosecutor identified as his property. The defence was that prisoner, who is a boatman, had purchased the oats and bag from another boatman. The jury returned a verdict of guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

107 18 March 1864

County Petty Sessions

CANAL BYE LAWS **Henry Woodward**, boatman, was charged that he did, on the 10th of February, navigate a boat on the Coventry Canal, loaded with road stone, such boat being loaded above or higher than the gunwale of the boat, and such boat being unprovided with side cloths, pursuant to the regulation and bye law No 30 of the said Company, made on the 30th of September 1862, in conformity with the Coventry Canal Navigation Act, whereby he had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £5. Mr C Woodcock appeared to prosecute on behalf of the Company and, in explaining the case, said there was great competition in carrying Hartshill stone along the Coventry Canal, and it was customary only to load two thirds of the boat, and to make up for the unoccupied space by stacking stone higher than the gunwale. The consequence was, that when the boat passed any bridge, it sometimes ran against the guards of the bridge, and the shock caused the stone to fall into the canal, which seriously injured boats, and caused great trouble and expense to the Canal Company in getting it out, to remove the obstruction occasioned. Another evil consequence was, that when boats passed, they generally struck each other, thereby knocking stone into the canal ; and when horses stopped temporarily, the boats still kept moving, and in going forward again, the line knocked stone off the boat into the canal. These facts were reported by the engineer to the company and they, in September 1862, made a bye law, pursuant to the powers given by their Act of Parliament, prohibiting any boats from being loaded higher than the gunwale, unless provided with cloths, as specified in the bye law, to prevent the stone, coal &c from falling off. The case having been proved, Mr Estlin, for the defence, contended that if the bye law was strictly carried out, it would be very expensive, in consequence of the frequent injury which would be done to cloths. Mr Cooper, manager to Mr Judkins of Nuneaton, proved that it was usual to stack up stone against the cabin, and that to have side cloths for Hartshill stone would involve a serious expense. The defendant was fined 5s and expenses £1 3s. **William Hewins** and **James Ison** pleaded guilty to similar offences, and were dealt with in the same way. The Bench cautioned the defendants that they had power to inflict a fine of £5 in each case, and if any further charges were brought before them, the penalty would be more severe.

108 4 June 1864

An inquest was held on Wednesday last at the White Lion Inn, Fazeley, before E Hooper Esq, touching the death of **Timothy Law**, a boatman aged 77 years, who died on Saturday last at Fazeley. Several witnesses were examined, and it appeared from the evidence that the deceased and his wife, whose age was 76, and a lad who was with them, were travelling from Tipton to Bedworth with the empty boat. The deceased, who had been ill several days, was taken worse when starting from Tipton, and when they arrived at Fazeley, Mr Buxton, surgeon, was called in to see him, and pronounced him to be dying. The Coroner briefly addressed the jury, and a verdict of "Died from natural causes" was returned.

109 6 January 1865

Hartshill

FOUND DROWNED On Wednesday morning last, **William Parsons** of Hartshill was found drowned in the canal near the Anchor Bridge. Deceased was a boatman, and the boat he was with was tied up for the night. Deceased, who slept in the boat, left the Anchor public house about ten o'clock on Tuesday night, and nothing more was heard of him till he was found in the water near to the boat next morning.

110 28 April 1865

Nuneaton

BANKRUPT **Nathan Buckler**, boatman, supported by Mr Craddock, came up for last examination and discharge. The bankrupt's accounts had not been properly filed, and the examination was adjourned for a month.

111 26 May 1865

Nuneaton

COUNTY COURT The list contained 89 new plaints, and 10 judgement summonses. There was no

case of public interest, except one from Bedworth, an action for damages, **William Compton v John Hackett**, to recover £6 damages for false imprisonment. Mr Smallbone for plaintiff and Mr Overell for defendant. The facts of the case as they appeared from the evidence are as follows :- In August last, plaintiff took a house of defendant as weekly tenant, and he also hired some furniture of defendant, for which he was to pay so much a week. Plaintiff is a boatman, and in February last, it appears his wife went on a voyage with him, and they took the bed which they hired of defendant in the boat with them, for their use on the journey. At this time it appears, two or three weeks rent were due, and defendant finding that the house was locked up and the key left at a neighbour's house, obtained possession of the key, and on searching the house, missed the bed. On plaintiff's return from the voyage, defendant gave him into custody on a charge of stealing the bed. He was kept in durance vile for four days, and then taken before the County Magistrates at Coventry, who dismissed the case. The damages sought for now was for the four days imprisonment and four weeks loss of work consequent thereon. His Honour, in summing up, said the thing to be considered was whether there was sufficient ground for giving the man into custody upon a charge of felony. Mr Hackett might be a very respectable man, but it appeared to him in this case he had let passion guide him instead of reason. He (the Judge) thought it must be evident to any man who calmly considered it, that though the man had done wrong in taking the bed with him without the consent of defendant, still, there was no intention of stealing it, and to charge a man as a felon upon insufficient ground was to do him a very serious injury. The question, "Have you not been charged with felony before the Magistrates?" carried with it a stigma, and therefore there should be very good ground for suspicion before a man is given in charge. He should find a verdict for plaintiff for £5 and costs. The verdict was received with evident satisfaction by those in Court.

112 26 May 1865

Tamworth

CHILD DROWNED An inquest was held at the Three Tuns Inn, Fazeley, on the 20th inst, before Edwin Hooper Esq, Coroner, on the body of **Edward Brain**, aged six years, who was drowned in the canal on the 17th. One of the jurymen summoned was fined 10s for non attendance at the proper time. From the evidence of the man who found the body, and the father, a very respectable man, a clerk to the Coventry Canal Company, it appeared that the deceased was missed by his parents about four o'clock on the day named ; a search was instituted, and the body was eventually found about four yards from a boat lying in the canal at Fazeley. It was supposed that the deceased was attempting to get into the cabin of the boat, which lay by the wharf side, and fell in. After hearing the evidence of the two parties named, the Jury at once returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

113 18 August 1865

Sowe

FOUND DROWNED On Tuesday week, an inquest was held at the Old Crown, Sowe, before Thomas Dewes Esq, Coroner, on the body of **William Phipps**, who met with his death under the circumstances detailed in the following evidence. **Thomas Phipps**, boatman, deposed : The deceased was my father. I worked with him in the boat, which plied between the Wyken Colliery and Northampton. I last saw him about seven o'clock yesterday. He was then well. He left the boat to go with others to Simpson's, the Bird In Hand public house. I did not see him again alive. **William Linsell** deposed : I am a boatman. Last night, about ten o'clock, I was at the Bird In Hand public house in Foleshill parish. Deceased was there. There were five of us, all boatmen. We had a good deal of beer to drink. We left after 12 – it might be one. Deceased was not sober, but could walk pretty well. We all walked up to the new basin of the Wyken Colliery, where deceased's boat was. We saw him into the boat. I then waited with my mate, and about a quarter of an hour afterwards we passed the deceased's boat. He was sitting on the side, easing himself. I bid him goodnight, and he did the same to me. I passed on and did not again see him alive. I saw him pulled out of the water about half past eleven this morning. He was pulled out of the arm of the basin, near to where I had seen him last night. He was then dead. John Cluly deposed : I am carpenter at the Wyken Colliery. This morning, about eleven or twelve o'clock, I , by the direction

of Mr Arlidge of the Wyken Colliery, dragged the arm of the basin of the colliery in which deceased's boat was. After dragging for a quarter of an hour, I brought up the body of deceased. He was quite dead, and appeared to have been dead a long time. He is the person the jury have seen. **Enoch Wood** deposed : I am a boatman. I was last night in the company of the deceased at the Bird In Hand. From twelve to one we all left, and we all saw the deceased home to his boat. My boat was near to deceased's. Deceased was not drunk, but had had beer and some rum. There had not been any quarrelling. We all parted good friends. The Jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

114 1 December 1865 County Petty Sessions

STEALING MONEY BY A BOATMAN **William Newton**, a boatman in the employ of Mr J E Wootten of Blisworth, was charged with stealing £2, the property of his master. It appeared from a statement made by Mr Dewes, the prosecuting attorney, that the prisoner had been sent out with a boat load of coals, and that some money had been sent him by P O O to Bedworth to be used in paying the tollage dues on the boat. The prisoner obtained the money from the Post Office, but instead of directing it to its proper purpose, he got into company, came to Coventry, and there either lost it or spent it. The further hearing of the case was remanded for a week in order to obtain the presence of the Postmaster at Bedworth.

115 4 May 1866 Petty Sessions, Rugby

W Wolf of Hillmorton, a boatman, was summoned by J Highman of the same place, for assaulting him. Edward Wolf, a brother of the defendant, was also summoned for taking part in the affray, but he did not appear. The assault was proved, and the defendants ordered to pay £1 8s each, including costs, or one months imprisonment. Committed.

116 18 May 1866 Bedworth

CORONER'S INQUEST – VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER AGAINST A BOATMAN On Friday evening last, an inquest was opened at the Venison Inn, before Mr M Dewes, coroner, on the body of Charles Barlow, aged 9 years, who had died from a wound on the head caused by a stone thrown by a boatman named **Joseph Louke**. Mr W R Horniblow, surgeon of Bedworth, said he considered it necessary that a *post mortem* examination should be made. The inquest was accordingly adjourned until Wednesday evening, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of Louke. At the adjourned enquiry on Wednesday evening, the first witness called was Thomas Tedds, 12 years of age, who said : On Sunday the 22nd April, I was with Barlow on the towing-path of the canal, near the Charity Wharf. We were minding Louke's donkies by the side of the canal, and Louke was in his boat on the other side of the canal. Louke called to us to fetch the donkies back. We did not do so. We were throwing one another's caps into the canal. I saw Louke go into the cabin and fetch a stone to throw at us. I ran away through a gap, and Barlow followed me, and just as he was going through the gap a stone struck him on the head and knocked him down. Louke then pushed the boat across the canal and took Barlow into it. Police-constable Harwood produced a stone which witness recognised as one that he had seen in Louke's boat and which was used as a scouring stone. The stone was a sandstone, about four inches long and from 2 to 3 inches broad, and in the form of a wedge – sharp at one end. The prisoner said : The stone produced was not the one I threw. Tedds further said : I thought Louke was throwing at the donkies but, on being closely examined, admitted that the donkies were about 20 yards from Barlow and himself at the time the stone was thrown, and also that he ran away because Louke was going to throw at him. Thomas Barlow, 12 years of age, brother of the deceased, said : I was in the boat with Louke at the time he threw the stone. I saw it strike my brother on the head. Louke then pushed the boat across the canal and fetched him into it ; and Louke and his wife washed his head and put something on to stop the bleeding. I am sure that the stone now produced is the one that was thrown. I saw it in the boat before it was thrown, and I hid it in the bottom of the hedge after. On Saturday last, I went with the policeman to the place, and gave him the stone. **George Shears**, boatman, said : I saw Louke throw the stone at the boys. From the distance there was between the donkies and the boys,

the stone could not have been thrown at the donkies. George Kenny, farm bailiff, said : I saw Louke throw the stone, and heard him say after that he did not mean to hit that boy, it was the other little devil he meant to hit. Mr W Horniblow, surgeon, said : I attended deceased up to his death, which took place on Friday morning last. I had, in conjunction with Mr Orton, surgeon of Foleshill, made a *post mortem* examination and found that death resulted from injury done to the brain by the wound on the head. Mr Orton corroborated Mr Horniblow's testimony, and both gentlemen gave it as their opinion that the wound would have been fatal even if medical assistance been procured immediately after the occurrence which, it appeared, had not been the case. After a short consultation, the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against Joseph Louke, and he was committed on the coroner's warrant to take his trial at the next assizes at Warwick.

117 3 April 1866 County Petty Sessions

George Butler, boatman, was convicted of stealing 5 cwt of coal, on the 21st of July, the property of Messrs Nock, Tame Valley Colliery. Committed to gaol for 21 days.

118 15 February 1867 Tamworth

MAGISTERIAL On Friday, before Messrs C Garnett, G Skey and Captain Stewart, **Robert Hargill**, boatman, was charged by George Wise, under-gamekeeper to Sir R Peel, with trespassing in pursuit of game upon land belonging to Sir Robert, at Drayton, on the 1st instant. From the evidence of the keeper, it appeared he was on his watch, when he saw the defendant put a dog out of his boat, and send it into the field adjoining the canal, where a number of hares were feeding. The dog pursued several, and the defendant went to help to catch them, but was unsuccessful ; and the keeper then made his appearance, and put an end to the pursuit. He refused to give his name, and the police were sent after him. Fined £2 and £1 5s costs, or two months. The money was paid.

119 3 May 1867 County Petty Sessions

Job Clifton, boatman, pleaded guilty to a charge of being drunk and riotous at Foleshill on the 13th of April. The Bench ordered him to pay a fine of 10s and the costs, 18s.

120 10 May 1867 Warwick

RESCUE FROM DROWNING On Saturday a married woman named Barnwell, living at Packmores, was rescued from one of the canal locks by **John Berry**, a boatman. There is no proof as to how the woman got into the water. A child, one month old, which the woman had with her at the time, was drowned.

121 24 May 1867 Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS **George Spires**, boatman of Bedworth, was charged by Mr Superintendent Austin with cruelty to an ass by working it while in an unfit state, it having sores on its shoulders. Defendant pleaded guilty, but said that he was ill at the time ; and he borrowed the ass of another man, and sent his boy with it, not being aware at the time that the ass was not fit for work. Let off on paying costs, 5s.

122 7 June 1867 Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS Edwin Blick charged **John Harris**, boatman, with assaulting him and refusing to quit the Anchor Inn, Hartshill, when requested to do so. It was arranged to withdraw the charge on defendant being bound over to keep the peace and paying costs.

123 26 July 1867 Tamworth

POLICE COURT **John Lloyd Draycote**, boatman of Derby, and **George Purcell** of Fenny Stratford, Bucks, both in the employ of the Grand Trunk Canal Company, were brought up charged with defrauding the Midland Railway Company, by travelling from Derby to Tamworth by the 1.10 am mail. One had no ticket, and the other only booked to Burton. The porter on duty asked them to

remain at the station until the arrival of the station master, which they refused to do. He then communicated with the police, and Sergeant Longdon and PC Gilbride went in pursuit, and caught them at Fazeley, where they intended to join their boats. They were discharged on payment of the additional railway fare and expenses.

124 13 December 1867 Foleshill

DEATH OF AN OLD BOATMAN At the Navigation Inn, Foleshill, on the 10th, Mr Dewes held an inquest on the body of **Thomas Cox**. Sarah, the wife of John Grimley of Trinity Parish, Coventry, said the deceased was her father, and was 72 years of age ; he was a boatman. Mr John Orton, surgeon, said he was called to see the deceased at the Navigation Bridge, between one and two on the previous day ; deceased was in the cabin of a boat, and was seriously ill ; witness's impression was that deceased died from disease of the lungs consequent upon pneumonia. Verdict, "Death from inflammation of the lungs".

125 29 May 1868 Atherstone

DAMAGE **Geo Bott**, boatman, Nuneaton, was charged with wilful damage by breaking the windows of Thomas Clarke of Nuneaton, and doing damage to the amount of 15s, on the 25th inst. It appeared from the evidence that the wife of defendant was the daughter of the complainant, and was ill, living with her parents. The defendant refused to pay anything towards her support, but said when applied to that he would buy her a coffin. Defendant said he was sorry he broke the windows, but he was drunk at the time. Ordered to pay damage and costs £1 15s 6d, in default to be committed for 14 days with hard labour.

126 11 September 1868 Sowe

FOUND DROWNED A man whose name is unknown was drowned at Sowe. Mr Dewes held an inquest on the body at the Old Crown Inn on Wednesday. **George Birt**, boatman of Nuneaton, said the deceased had been in his employ, but he did not know his name. Henry Baron of Foleshill, miner, was the last person who saw the deceased alive. He was then pushing off the boat at Wyken, and a moment afterwards disappeared. The body was searched for, and found, but life was extinct. Verdict, "Death by accidental drowning".

127 20 November 1868 Newbold on Avon

INQUEST On Monday last, an inquest was held at the Boat Inn before T Dewes Esq, coroner, touching the decease of **Sarah Reynolds**, seven years of age, daughter of **John Reynolds**, boatman, **Elizabeth Reynolds** said she had five children, the eldest sixteen years of age, and they all lived in the cabin of the boat with herself and her husband. On Tuesday morning, between eleven and twelve o'clock, deceased was putting a piece of coal on a fire which had been made on the canal bank, when her clothes caught fire and she was burnt. Witness sent to the village for some stuff to dress the wounds with, and on Wednesday sent to Rugby for some more dressing ; deceased became worse, and on Tuesday Dr Bucknill was sent for, but she died on Friday evening. Corroborative evidence having been taken, the Coroner expressed great surprise that seven persons could exist in such a place as the cabin of a boat, and asked the mother of deceased why they did not take a cottage. She said they had intended to take one, but when there was one to let, they were away from Newbold, and so missed it. A gentleman who came with the Coroner said he had known many larger families than this living in the cabins of boats. A verdict of accidental death was returned by the jury.

128 26 February 1869 Warwickshire Spring Assizes

Thomas Parker (21), boatman, was charged with stealing an overcoat, jacket and other articles, the property of George Wolfe, at Stretton-under-Fosse on December 23. Eighteen calendar months.

129 2 April 1869

Nuneaton

A DISHONEST BOATMAN At the Petty Sessions on Thursday, **Samuel Allen**, a boatman, was charged with fraudulently converting to his own use, and stealing, the sum of £8, which had been entrusted to him by **Elijah Moore**, boatman of Attleborough. On the 16th of November last, prosecutor gave the prisoner £11 3s with which to pay the expenses of working a boat to Oxford. However, when the prisoner got as far as Braunston, he absconded, having then paid £3 3s for tonnage out of the amount given him. The magistrates committed the prisoner for trial at the ensuing Quarter Sessions at Warwick.

130 30 April 1869

Nuneaton

John Lewis Aldridge, wine merchant, assignee of Keeling Spencer, wine merchant and butcher of Chilvers Coton v **Thomas West**, boatman. Claim £1 8s 1d. To pay 4s a month.

131 28 May 1869

County Petty Sessions

WORRYING A SHEEP The charge against a youth named **Joseph Harris**, a boatman, for permitting his dog to worry a sheep, the property of a farmer named Grant, of Foleshill, and which was dismissed last week on the ground that the proof of the ownership of the dog was defective, and a summons granted against the youth's father ; the evidence given last week was read over, and the defendant pleaded not guilty. Mr Griffin conducted the defence. **Henry Sutton**, a manager of the canal at Longford said : The youth charged last week is the son of the present defendant, and always has charge of the boat ; the present defendant's wife also travels with the boat. **Thomas Lowke**, a boatman, said : Last Sunday week, I was on the boat belonging to the defendant ; I saw two youths there, and a dog ; I saw the dog worrying Mr Grant's sheep, but I do not know the youth's names ; I went with the boat to Bedworth Hill, and the dog followed it. Mr Griffin contended that there was no evidence to connect his client with those who were in charge of the boat. The Bench said it had been shown by the witness Sutton, that the youths and the woman who travelled with the boat passed as the wife and sons of the present defendant, and went in his name. Mr Griffin said further that the damages to the sheep had been laid at 5s, but any amount of damage had not been proved by the evidence. Inspector Palmer said he had seen the sheep, one ear had been pulled out of socket, and it was otherwise uninjured. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay the damage, 5s, and costs £1 10s.

132 20 August 1869

Nuneaton

Alfred Taylor, master boatman of Banbury, was charged with stealing 4lbs of beef, the property of Samuel Winter of Atherstone, on the 7th inst at Polesworth, value 2s 8d. Mr Tippetts appeared for the prisoner. It appeared from the evidence that the prosecutor is in the habit of sending meat to Tamworth market, and that on the above day, his assistant, Alfred Williams, went with some in a cart, calling on his way, as was customary, at the Bull's Head, Polesworth, to sell there out of the cart. There were several persons around the cart, the prisoner among them, who bought half a leg of mutton, and then went into the Bull's Head, where he laid the mutton he had bought upon the table, and was then seen by the landlady to go out by the back door and up the garden, and in two or three minutes return to the house. In the meantime, Williams had missed the beef, and followed the prisoner into the house and charged him with taking it ; he threatened to give Williams a punch on the mouth if he said he had it ; Williams told him he must have it as it was in the cart when he was there, and when he went it was gone ; Williams then went for a policeman but could not find one, and while he was gone, the landlord found the meat at the bottom of the garden hedge ; the prisoner was taken into custody the same evening, by PC Pooley, on the charge of stealing it ; the next morning after being locked up, he wished to see the prosecutor, and told the police sergeant that if Mr Winter had asked him for the money, he would have paid him. It was shown for the defence that there were two other roads to the place where the meat was found without going through the house, and that other parties might have placed the meat there, and a witness was called who said he saw the prisoner come into the house with the mutton in his hand, and throw it on the

table, and that he did not see that he had any other meat with him. A gentleman from Banbury showed a paper with a large number of signatures testifying to the prisoner's previous good character. The Bench consulted a long time with closed doors, and then convicted the prisoner, but in consequence of his previous good character, they committed him for only seven days.

133 27 August 1869

Chilvers Coton

Charles Driver, boatman of Nuneaton, who had been locked up, was taken before Mr Harper on Monday last by Superintendent Austin, charged with being drunk at Attleborough the previous Saturday night. Fined 5s and 15s 6d costs.

134 1 October 1869

Nuneaton

SUDDEN DEATH An inquest was held on Monday evening last at the Ram Inn, before T Dewes jun, deputy coroner, touching the death of **Charles Hudson**. Mary Ann, wife of deceased, said : Last night, my husband ate his supper, but before going to bed, he went to the night closet. About ten o'clock, I went to bed, and he came as soon as he came in. After he got into bed, he said he did not feel right, and wished he had had his old diet for supper – a cup of tea. He had mushroom pudding. He lay down, but could not lie, and said he would go to the closet again. After that, he lay down again, but could not lie. He then had some tobacco, and began to heave and belch, and said, "Lord have mercy on me. I can't stand this". He tumbled out of bed while heaving and died. I jumped out and caught hold of him, and sent out for assistance. Mr Coton was sent for, and he immediately came. Deceased was 41 years of age, and has been a boatman. Frederick Bond Coton, surgeon, said : I was called to see deceased about three o'clock in the morning. I found him dead. I have made a *post mortem* examination of the body, on which there were no marks of violence, except a slight bruise on the forehead, caused by tumbling out of bed. There was blood issuing from the mouth, with a livid appearance of the face and neck. The body was well nourished. On opening the chest, I found the heart unusually large and in a state of fatty degeneration. The stomach contained a large quantity of mushrooms, meat and potatoes, in an undigested state. The extension this would cause to the stomach would press up against the heart and induce death. Verdict that deceased died from a diseased heart.

135 11 February 1870

Nuneaton

SHOCKING SUICIDE On Friday evening, the 4th inst, an inquest was held at the Cock and Bear before T Dewes Esq, coroner, on view of the body of **Mr Frederick Taberner**, boatman of Wash Lane, who was found dead in his bed with his throat cut that morning. Frederick Taberner said : I am the son of the deceased, who was a boatman, and is 47 years of age ; the last time I saw him alive was about 9 o'clock last night ; he then kept going up and down stairs, and said he wanted some pills to ease the pain in his bowels ; I came out of my room about 8 o'clock this morning, and on passing through my father's chamber, I saw the bed all over blood ; I went down and gave an alarm. William Harrison, wheelwright said : I was called in this morning by the daughter of the deceased. I went upstairs and found him lying on the bed quite dead with his throat cut. He had not been undressed ; only his shoes and cap were off. I assisted in moving the body when Mr Nason came. I have seen him every day this week. I don't think he had been drinking the last few days. He has had very middling health the last few years. I noticed him to be low and strange in his manner the last few days ; and it occurred to me to go and talk to him, but I did not do so. Police-constable Bosworth said : I knew the deceased. I was on duty this morning, when about ten o'clock I found deceased standing on the steps of Police-sergeant Yardley's door. He said he was in custody, and asked me how long they were going to keep him there. He said two policemen had fetched him, but he did not know what for. I told him that there were no policemen there. He said, "There is, for look there is five of them around me now". He had been drinking the last week. I talked to him and persuaded him to go home, and I went part of the way up Wash Lane with him. When we parted, we bade each other good night. I have every reason to believe he was not responsible for his actions. Police-sergeant Yardley produced a pocket knife all over blood, which he received from Dr

Nason, and which the son now identified as belonging to his deceased father. Dr Nason said he was called in to see the deceased, who had died from the separation of the main artery of the neck, and loss of blood. The knife produced would cause such a wound. He had attended deceased about a month before for rheumatism. Having heard the evidence of Police-constable Bosworth, he had no doubt he was suffering from delirium tremens. The jury returned a verdict that deceased destroyed himself while in an unsound state of mind.

136 18 March 1870

Nuneaton

PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Herbert**, a boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 1st of March at Polesworth, a silver watch, a key and chain, and a felt cap, the property of **Alfred Taylor**, boatman of Banbury. Prosecutor said : On the 24th of February, I went with my father's boat from Banbury to Polesworth for a load of coal ; a youth named Cooper was with me ; we tied the boat up, and about three hours afterwards, prisoner arrived at the same wharf with his boat ; on Tuesday the 1st inst, I had my boat loaded, and the prisoner came on board while I was clothing it, preparatory to starting home ; he said he would help Cooper tie the cloths, while I laded the water out ; he walked along the planks to the cabin, and said all was straight ; I then went down into the hold to lade out the water, and saw no more of him ; this was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon ; the watch was safe in the cabin at 11 o'clock, on a shelf ; the one now produced is mine ; it is numbered 9981, with "W.D." engraved inside the case ; we started home about half past 4 ; I asked Cooper to see what time it was, when he told me the watch was gone ; he said no one had been on board but the prisoner ; I went on to Banbury, and then returned and gave information to Inspector Hursher ; I also missed my cap, now produced, which I placed in the cupboard of the cabin the day before ; attached to my watch there was a steel chain and key, with other appendages, which are still missing ; I saw my cap again yesterday in the possession of PS Howard of Banbury, and the watch today in the possession of Inspector Hursher. **William Cooper**, boatman, corroborated part of the above, and also stated that when the prosecutor went down into the hold to lade out the water, the prisoner went into the cabin and remained there several minutes. Robert Wilson, watchmaker, Nuneaton, said : The prisoner came to my shop on Wednesday the 2nd inst, and offered the watch now produced for sale ; I gave him £1 for it ; he pleaded distress, which caused me to buy it ; he said it was his own, and that he gave about £2 for it. Daniel Howard, police-sergeant stationed at Banbury, said : From information received, I met the prisoner with his boat, near Banbury, on Sunday morning last. I told him there had been a watch and cap stolen from a boat in Warwickshire, and I suspected he knew something about it. He said he did not. I searched the boat and found the cap now produced inside a hat in the cupboard of the cabin. I asked him how he came in possession of it, and he said he bought it in a shop at Banbury, but he could not tell which. I took him into custody on the charge of stealing it. Inspector Hursher said : I received the watch produced from Mr Wilson on Monday last. I received the prisoner into my custody on Tuesday last at Banbury on the charge of stealing the watch. The prisoner had nothing to say, and was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

Thomas Bird of Pelsall, Staffordshire, boatman, was charged that he being entrusted with a mare as bailee, did sell the same and convert the money to his own use, on the 15th June 1866. **Thomas Holder** of Pelsall deposed : I am a boatman, and in June 1866, the prisoner was in my employment as boatman. He started from Pelsall on the 9th of June with a mare and boat to Bedworth for a load of ironstone. He ought to have been back in a week, but I have not seen him since till today. I came to Nuneaton and saw Superintendent Austin, who took me to the stable of Mr Joseph Proctor, where I found my mare, and took possession of it as my property. **Joseph Proctor**, Nuneaton, boatman and coal dealer, said : On the 15th June 1866, the prisoner came to my house and asked me to buy a mare he brought with him ; I bought it for 35s ; I know prisoner by sight ; he told me he was hard up and wanted food ; he said he came from Pelsall and worked for Davis and Blewmen ; I gave it up to Mr Austin a few days after, Mr Holder having claimed it as his property. Superintendent Austin said : From information received on the 16th of June 1866, I went with Mr Holder to Proctor's stable, and found a mare which he claimed as his, and Proctor gave it up to me ; a warrant

was then taken out, and placed in my hands for the apprehension of the prisoner who absconded, and was not heard of by me till Monday last, when I went to Rushall, near Walsall, and there took him into custody on the charge of stealing the mare ; he told me he sold it to a man at Nuneaton, and the reason he sold it was because he was in want of food. Committed for trial at the next quarter sessions.

137 22 July 1870

Warwickshire Assizes

PLEADED GUILTY **John Lakin** (40), boatman, stealing 15 fowls, the property of Francis Whitworth, at Wishaw, on the 1st of July. Four months imprisonment.

Thomas Shaw (19), boatman and **William Jones** (19), ditto, burglary at Birmingham, on the 17th of May, the former to fifteen and the latter to nine months imprisonment.

138 30 September 1870

Nuneaton

DRUNK **Isaac Lapworth**, boatman of Stockingford, was charged, on the information of Superintendent Austin, with being drunk on the 10th inst at Harthill. Police-constable Edges proved the case, and defendant was let off with paying the costs, 8s.

139 21 October 1870

Coventry Adjourned Sessions

ATTEMPTED RAPE **William Higgeson** (20), boatman, was indicted for attempting to commit a rape upon Mary Hall, a girl 16 years of age, at Sowe on the 7th ult. The Jury found him guilty of a common assault, and he was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

140 4 November 1870

County Petty Sessions

DRUNK AND RIOTOUS **Eli Hubbard**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Foleshill on Sunday the 23rd a little before eight o'clock at night. The defendant pleaded guilty. It appeared from the evidence the defendant had been drinking at the Canteen at the Coventry barracks, and that he was going home, and when he had got to Foleshill, he became very disorderly and made use of bad language. The police said the Canteen was kept open on Sundays, and the men were frequently about the street drunk and disorderly after they had been drinking there. As it was the defendant's first offence, he was discharged on payment of the expenses, 8s 6d. The Magistrates instructed Superintendent Austin to wait on the commanding officer at the Coventry barracks, and report the matter, after which probably there would be no further cause of complaint.

141 17 February 1871

Atherstone

James Redman, boatman of Oxford, was charged at Mr Bramall's office, Tamworth, on the 13th inst, by PC Pooley, with being drunk at Polesworth on the 12th inst. Discharged on paying costs, 7s 6d.

142 12 May 1871

Atherstone

Police-constable Thomas Sturges charged **George Thompson**, boatman, with assaulting him on the 8th inst, at Polesworth, while in the execution of his duty. Defendant pleaded guilty, and said he was very drunk at the time. The Bench fined him £1 and £1 2s costs, or one months imprisonment.

143 21 July 1871

County Petty Sessions

DRUNK **William Hudson**, boatman of Foleshill, was summoned for being drunk at Foleshill on the 8th inst. The defendant pleaded guilty, and was discharged on payment of the expenses, 8s 6d.

144 15 December 1871

Tamworth

Enoch Sparkes of 20 High Street, Hill Fields, Coventry, boatman, was charged by Robert Penman, agent to Messrs Morris and Shaw, coalmasters, Polesworth, with stealing one ton of coals, value 11s, the property of that firm, on the 22nd ult. From the evidence, it appeared defendant was captain of a boat which had been loaded for Coventry with slack at the Birch Coppice Coal Wharf. His

boat was gauged on the evening of the 22nd ult by Joseph Blower, ready for him to start next morning. Soon afterwards, he carried about one ton of best coals from some loaded trucks standing on the wharf, and placed them on the top of the slack. A young man named **James Lees**, who was at work in a barge adjoining defendant's, saw him commit the theft and gave information. On being charged by Mr Penman, defendant wished to compromise the matter, and told him to charge his master, Mr John Walker of Coventry, with the coals. This was refused, and the present proceedings taken. Defendant pleaded not guilty, and electing the case to go before a jury, he was committed to Warwick Sessions for trial. Bail for his appearance, himself in £20 and one surety of £20, was accepted.

145 22 December 1871

Warwickshire Winter Assizes

INDECENT ASSAULT ON A GIRL **Thomas Bromwich** (18), boatman, was indicted for committing a felonious assault on Harriet Bland, then being of the age of nine years, at Long Itchington on the 30th September. Mr Chamberlayne was counsel for the prosecution, and the Hon Chandos Leigh for the defence. The prisoner was acquitted.

146 1 March 1872

Nuneaton

SHOCKING SUICIDE A woman named **Mary Sidwell**, sixty four years of age, committed suicide on Monday night by hanging. Deceased lived in a cottage at Tuttle Hill, in the outskirts of the town, and her husband is a boatman, and left home on the previous day to attend to his boat, leaving his wife in her usual state of health. The poor woman was last seen alive at her own house at 7.30 pm on Monday, when she was visited by a neighbour, who had some conversation with her, and then left. This woman had occasion to call a second time at deceased's house in about an hour afterwards, and was horrified to find her suspended by a rope from the bannisters of the stairs. The body was immediately cut down, and a surgeon was quickly in attendance, but life was found to be extinct. An inquest was held on Wednesday evening, before Mr Dewes, coroner, when a verdict was returned that the deceased was found hanging by a rope from the bannisters of the stairs, but there was no evidence to show how she came in that position.

147 31 May 1872

County Petty Sessions

ASSAULT **Thomas Ingram**, boatman, was charged with assaulting **William Parker** of Foleshill. The defendant pleaded guilty to striking the complainant, but said that Parker, who was in his employ, had given him great provocation. The defendant was fined 1s, and the costs 17s 6d.

148 7 June 1872

County Petty Sessions

WILFUL DAMAGE John Gibbs, coach wheel maker of Foleshill, was charged with breaking a hedge and damaging a gate, the property of **Thomas Gibbs**, boatman of Foleshill, on the 22nd, thereby doing damage to the amount of £3. Mr O Minster appeared for the complainant, and after briefly opening the case, he called Charles Gibbs, the complainant's grandson, who said that on the day in question, he went to his grandfather's garden at Hanley Green. While he was there, he saw the defendant hammer the lock and staples off the garden gate. The defendant then lifted the gate off and threw it down. He considered £3 a reasonable sum for the damage done. The complainant corroborates the evidence of the last witness, He also stated that some time ago, the defendant was summoned for damaging his (complainant's) garden gate. He was then ordered to pay the damage and expenses. On this occasion, the defendant not only did the damage to the gate and fence, but threatened to strike the complainant with the axe. Witness said he had been the owner of the land for about fifty years. Charles Carey gave corroborative evidence, and said he had tilled the land for the complainant for about twenty nine years. The defendant said that the land in question belonged to his father for about 40 years. The complainant was a tenant of his (defendant's) father for 35 years. When his father died, the land came into defendant's possession, and he had belonged to it ever since. He only lifted the gate off to go onto his own land. He then called witnesses who said that the defendant told complainant before he put the gate up, not to do so, as it would only give

him the trouble to remove it. They saw the defendant lift the gate off, but he did not damage it. The Bench said they had nothing to do with the question of title. They had only to deal with the damage. It was agreed to reduce the damage to 30s. The defendant was fined 1s, the damage 30s and costs £1 10s 6d. Allowed a fortnight to pay.

149 26 July 1972

County Petty Sessions

FIGHTING Thomas Wheatley, engineer of Foleshill, and **Joseph Woodhouse**, boatman, were charged, by the information of Superintendent Austin, with committing a breach of the peace by fighting together at Exhall on the 10th inst. The defendants pleaded guilty, and were bound over in their own recognisances of £10 each to keep the peace for six months, and ordered to pay the costs.

150 23 August 1872

Southam

PETTY SESSIONS **James Hall**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of shoes, value 13s, from another boatman by whom he was employed. Prisoner complained that his master never paid him his wages, and had found fault with his work, so he took the shoes from the boat cabin and left. He elected to be at once dealt with, and was committed for fourteen days hard labour.

151 11 October 1872

County Petty Sessions

DRUNK A boatman named **William Hodson** was charged with being drunk on the Coventry and Hinckley turnpike road on the 16th ult. He pleaded guilty and was fined 3s and the costs 10s.

152 27 December 1872

Warwickshire Winter Assizes

NOT GUILTY **Joseph Holden** (37), boatman, indicted for uttering, on the 6th November, at the borough of Birmingham, unlawfully and knowingly, a counterfeit shilling; and on the 7th November with uttering, also at the borough of Birmingham, one counterfeit florin, was acquitted.

153 8 August 1873

County Petty Sessions

EMBEZZLEMENT **John Whadcoat**, labourer of Junction Street, was brought up on remand charged with embezzling £1 10s, the moneys of his master, **Mr James Parker** of Union Street. The prosecutor said he was a boatman and lived in Union Street, The prisoner was in his employ on the 9th of July last as a boatman, and they were at Polesworth. The prisoner was about to return to Coventry with a boatload of coal. He told the prisoner when he arrived at Coventry to see his (prosecutor's) wife and tell her to get 30s from Mr Hassall to buy a bag of corn, and send the remainder of the money to him (prosecutor). When prosecutor returned to Coventry, he found the prisoner had absconded. On Tuesday last, prosecutor saw the prisoner, took him in custody, and handed him over to the police. Prosecutor had not received any money from the prisoner. The prisoner was not authorised to get the money himself. Mrs Parker, the wife of the last witness, said she did not authorise the prisoner to get the money from Mr Hassall. She had not received any money from the prisoner, and she had not seen him since the 9th of July. Hannah, the wife of Joseph Hassall, coal dealer of Howard Street, said that on the 10th of July, the prisoner brought a note to her, and said it was from Mrs Parker. She thought it was not right, and would not pay him. She sent him to Mr Hassall, and he returned and said Mr Hassall told him to tell her (witness) to pay him the money. She did so, but would not have given him the money if he had not used Mr Hassall's name. PC Davies proved receiving the prisoner into his custody on the previous Tuesday. He charged him with embezzling 30s, the monies of his master. Prisoner replied, "Yes, I had it". The prisoner now said he bought a bag of corn out of the money. Prosecutor : He paid 6s 6d for the bag of corn. The prisoner was committed to take his trial at the Quarter Sessions.

154 22 August 1873

County Petty Sessions

THREATS **John Barson**, boatman of Exhall, was charged with threatening to punch the head of Harry Hilton, miner of Bedworth, on Sunday the 3rd inst. Mr Bland of Nuneaton appeared for the complainant. The case was proved, and the defendant was ordered to enter into his own

recognizances in £5 to keep the peace for three months, and pay the expenses, 19s.

155 3 July 1874

City Police

DRUNK John Weaver, boatman of Wolverhampton, was brought up charged by Police-constable Perkins with being drunk and incapable of taking care of himself in Cross-cheaping on the previous night. As nothing was known against him previously, and he now promised to conduct himself properly in future, he was let off on putting 1s in the poor box.

156 10 July 1874

Southam Petty Sessions

Joseph Beauchamp, a boatman, was charged with having stolen a plank, the property of Mr R G Brown of Fenny Compton wharf. It appeared from the evidence that the plank was taken out of the water by defendant while passing along the Oxford Canal, near Mr Brown's wharf, but was given up by him on his being sent after. Mr Brown stated that defendant used very bad language when he spoke to him about it. Mr Wood of Southam appeared for the defendant, and urged the absence of any felonious intent on the part of his client who, he said, picked up the plank without knowing where it came from. The bench dismissed the charge.

157 10 July 1874

County Petty Sessions

USING OBSCENE LANGUAGE John Millerchip, boatman, was charged on the information of Police sergeant Harris with using indecent language in Bishop Street on the night of the 22nd June. The defendant pleaded guilty and expressed regret for his conduct. He was fined 5s and expenses 13s 6d ; in default he was committed to gaol for 14 days.

158 17 July 1874

Atherstone Petty Sessions

STRAY CATTLE Thomas Gent, miner, **William Shillcock**, boatman, **William Cooper**, boatman, and **William Preedy**, boatman, were summoned for having at Polesworth on the 26th ult unlawfully permitted nine asses, of which they were the owners, to stray. The last mentioned defendant did not put in an appearance, and the service of the summons was proved. The charge was proved, and the magistrates ordered defendants to pay the expenses, 9s each.

159 21 August 1874

Nuneaton County Court

William Arthur Judkins, stone merchant v **John Twigger**, boatman, Hillmorton. Claim £9 13s 9d for stone sold. To pay 30s a month.

160 28 August 1874

DRUNK William Baggott, boatman, and **Thos Simpson**, boatman, were charged with being drunk and disorderly at Foleshill on the 15th inst. They pleaded guilty, and were fined 5s and the expenses, 15s each.

161 18 September 1874

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE James Ashton, boatman, was on Friday committed for trial at the Salford Sessions on a charge of inflicting serious injury on his wife by kicking. The woman was reported to be suffering from "a broken rib, two scalp wounds (one an inch long and penetrating to the bone, and the other half an inch long) and bruises on the left cheek, right arm and right shoulder", all produced by her husband's heavy hob nailed boots.

162 2 October 1874

A fine of £15 and costs was on Monday imposed by the Rotherham (Sheffield) magistrates on a boatman named **Goodacre**, for driving along the public highway a cow badly affected with pleuro-pneumonia.

163 2 October 1874**Atherstone Petty Sessions**

John Hemsley, boatman, pleaded guilty to being drunk at Polesworth on the 8th September. Police-sergeant Poultney stated the case, and the accused, after being suitably cautioned by the Bench, was let off on payment of a fine of 2s 6d and the expenses 13s 6d.

164 9 October 1874

TERRIFIC GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION A terrific explosion of gunpowder took place in London on Friday. At about 3am, a train of six light barges left the city wharf of the Grand Junction Canal Company in the City Road. Next after the steamer, the *Ready*, was the fly boat *Jane*, whose steerer or captain was named **Boswell**. Next to her was the *Dee*, the steerer **Edwards**; and next the *Tilbury*, whose steerer was **Charles Baxter** of Loughborough in the county of Leicester. The *Tilbury* was followed by the *Limehouse*, steerer **Edward Hall**, and by the *Hawkesbury*, steerer **Blewer**. The *Jane* "had a little gunpowder on board"; the *Tilbury's* lading is thus described :- "The cargo consisted chiefly of sugar and other miscellaneous articles, such as nuts, straw boards, coffee and some two or three barrels of petroleum, and about five tons of gunpowder". Most of the gunpowder was in barrels, but there was one box which was probably filled either with powder in canister or in flasks. The powder was consigned by Messrs Pigou and Wilkes to Chesterfield for Codnor Park, near Nottingham. When the *Tilbury* with her inflammable freight was under the North Gate Bridge which spans the Regent's Canal, making a way from the Outer Circle in Regent's Park to the Regent's Park Road, she blew up. A few minutes before five in the morning, most people in town heard, between sleeping and waking, the sound of an explosion. It was heard and felt at Chislehurst, Bermondsey and Peckham Rye, as well as in the central districts. At Enfield it was thought to be an explosion of the rifle factory or at the Waltham Abbey Mills. At Woolwich, where they are used to these occurrences, people supposed that a magazine in the marshes had exploded. The shock was felt as far as Gravesend, and at Aveley in Essex. In the north west, for a radius of two miles, it was accompanied with the shivering of glass in the windows or on the walls. The glass of the refreshment room at the St Pancras Station was destroyed. In the closer neighbourhood of the explosion, beds rocked to and fro, doors and shutters were burst open, plaster fell from ceilings, furniture was shaken, broken, and piled together in the middle of the room, and at a distance of a mile from the Regent's Park, people rushed as they were into the streets, lest what they took to be an earthquake should make of their houses their graves.

In a house quite near, an ailing lady and her children ran for more than 200 yards to a friend's in their panic. It is no wonder, for this house is completely gutted as if by fire. In the garden of it, a great piece of torn and twisted iron from the bridge has been cast, the stable has been stripped of its roof, and the coachman sleeping in the upper storey narrowly escaped with his life. The great kerb stones which fringe the towing-path of the canal were thrown up into the road. Pieces of clay were hurled by the force of the concussion out of the canal bed over the three storied house, against the ivy clad wall of the outbuilding behind, and into the room where the coachman was sleeping. Far down Albany Street, the houses were pitted with broken windows; in streets like John Street, close by, sashes and all were blown out, shop fronts destroyed with the shutters or in spite of them. Doors and furniture are turned into torn and shattered planks. Clocks, ornaments and looking glasses have of course suffered. Heavy coachhouse doors, firmly secured with large iron bolts and locks, have been burst open. A wall with iron railings on it was blown down for about sixty yards. Trees on the canal bank were uprooted, and their branches blown to long distances. In the Zoological Gardens, the glass is broken in the elephant house, the monkey house and the giraffe house. The monkeys appear to have successfully avoided the falling glass. The giraffes were found huddled together in terrible fear. Fortunately, the plate glass before the reptiles was not injured. But about a score of the society's birds escaped, their cages broken, and £300 is the glazier's bill which the society anticipates. The cages of the beasts were fortunately unimpaired in efficiency. Mr Bartlett, superintendent of the gardens, lives on the spot, and he heard the concussion. He tried to light his gas, but there was no gas in the pipes. It was at first dark, but in a few minutes the sky was lit up by a great blaze, and other persons also were directed to the spot by the blaze of fire. The petroleum

and sugar must be held responsible for this great radiance. Men going to work at Fulham saw a different sight – a great ball of smoke rising in the air and bursting, they said, into a flame. At the bridge, the smoke was at first too dense for anything to be seen, but when it cleared, the bridge was observed to be entirely destroyed. It was a substantially built composite structure, supported upon two strong Ionic pillars of iron. It had a roadway of about 25 ft in width, and pathways for pedestrians. The suddenly expanded gases then rushed in two directions from each side of the bridge. Close by stood a cottage, the new North Lodge, in which the aged gate keeper, Mr Edwards, a man aged 75, lived with his family. The house was completely ruined. One son jumped out of the window. Another heard nothing of the concussion, but awoke to find one wall of his room entirely gone. Of six people in the house, the father alone is seriously injured, and the account current throughout the neighbourhood is a series of wonderful escapes. Some houses escaped altogether, while their neighbour's windows have been all blown out. In a house in Portland Terrace, Regent's Park, there had been left on a table overnight a bottle of water and a silver jug. The water bottle stood unhurt, but the handle of the jug was twisted, and looked as if it had been violently wrenched. At the Farringdon Street railway station, all the lamps were blown out by the concussion of air, and the place was left in total darkness. Mr and Mrs Bell, living in St John's Terrace, Primrose Hill, found the window before their bed thrown in upon them. The wall at their back was forced into an adjoining room, and their bed covered with rubbish. One of the most pitiable results of the explosion was at the Hospital for the Cure of Nervous Diseases at Portland Terrace. At the time the terrifying crash came the hospital contained, besides those of the nurses and superintendents, thirty beds, occupied by poor creatures who of all people in the world would be most likely to be crazed with fright at sight and sound of such an appalling calamity. In common with the majority of the residences in Portland Terrace, the front windows, glass, sashes and frames, were blown in, and with such terrific force that there is not a bed that is not strewn more or less with splintered wood and jagged bits of glass. Facing the windows of one of the wards are two doors at the other end of the room, at a distance of at least twenty feet, and in these doors may be seen spears of glass as firmly buried in the woodwork as would be the blade of a knife thrown by a strong hand. No one was however seriously hurt. One poor patient indeed has sustained so serious a shock of fright that her condition is very precarious ; but it is almost incredible that the remaining nine and twenty – one and all of whom were under treatment for the cure of a disease which the late explosion would be the most likely thing in the world to produce – should have sustained no harm at all.

The inhabitants residing nearest to the scene of the catastrophe speak in warm terms of gratitude of the kindness of friends, and even of entire strangers, in offering them assistance and shelter. In one case, a gentleman had no less than twenty proposals to remove his family to the houses of acquaintances, his own being rendered quite uninhabitable. Offers, too, of private carriages for the removal of valuable effects were freely made, and comparatively early in the day, huge vans were seen on the terraces facing the park, loaded with the furniture of those who were obliged to leave their homes. No one can yet tell how many persons have been injured. Large numbers of people have sustained unimportant wounds. Three deaths were caused by the explosion, **William Taylor** and **Charles Baxter**, both of whom were on board the *Tilbury*, and one man not identified.

On Saturday morning, Mr Hardwicke, the coroner, opened an inquest on their bodies.

Edward Hall : I live at Branceton (?), Northamptonshire. I am a boatman. I know the deceased man, Taylor, who was a hand on the boats. I saw him last yesterday morning at Camden Town top lock, about 4.30am. He was not a married man, and was about 25 or 26 years of age. He was on a boat then lying above the lock, waiting for our boat, the *Limehouse*, to be pulled through the top lock. He was in tow by the *Ready*, the steam tug. I did not speak to him. He had a general cargo on board his boat, the *Tilbury*, and went through the lock before us. I was in the cabin of the *Limehouse*, and had undressed to go to bed, as the explosion occurred. I felt a tremendous concussion, which I thought was lightning. My boat was knocked all to pieces, and sank. I was thrown out of bed against the stove. I was stunned, and was in the water when I came to.

John Hill : I live in Brunswick Road, Upper Holloway, and work in the brickfields as labourer. I

have known Baxter the last six or seven years. He was captain of the *Tilbury*. I don't know his age, about thirty five or thirty six. He was married with three or four children, and lived at Loughborough. I saw him last alive on Thursday night, about eight pm, at the City Road Grand Junction Wharf, loading his boat. I saw some of the goods – there were a few nuts, some sugar, bags and casks and goods of all kinds. I next saw him pulled out of the canal. I went up there at twelve o'clock yesterday, having heard of his death. I was told he had been drowned. I have heard of the explosion. I went to unship some of the goods. I saw the ruins of his boat. I was the first one who found his body. I left him in shifting the goods from the boat. I was just under the cabin of the Limehouse, aft, in the water. I have seen the body in this deadhouse, and it is that of Charles Baxter, that I am sure of. I don't know the other body.

The inquiry was then adjourned.

During the day, Mr Hardwicke held another inquiry into the death of Mrs Lawrence, the widow of a solicitor, residing within a quarter of a mile of the North Bridge, and who was found dead in bed on Friday morning, in consequence, it was supposed, of the shock. A verdict was returned, however, of death from natural causes, the jury adding that they did not think the explosion had anything to do with the lady's decease.

Mr Forsyth MP presided on Monday night at a meeting held at the Eyre Arms, St John's Wood, to raise funds for the poorer sufferers by the explosion. Mr C E Lewis MP, Mr John Leighton RA, the Rev Llewelyan Davies, Mr Gerstenburg, Mr S Gurney, and other gentlemen took part in the proceedings. A committee was appointed to receive subscriptions and superintend the distribution of the fund, and a deputation was appointed to wait upon the Government, to ask for any assistance that might be given under the circumstances, and to press upon the attention of her Majesty's Ministers the necessity for immediate legislation on the subject of the transit of explosive substances. The committee were requested to ask the Lord Mayor to call a public meeting in the city in aid of the fund.

The *Daily News* asserts that, considering the losses sustained by the explosion on Friday from a business point of view, it becomes a serious question whether a liability far higher than that of any individuals who may be regarded as the more immediate authors of the explosion does not arise. It appears that the *Tilbury* was not carrying more gunpowder than a barge owner is permitted to take on board. But can it be supposed that the Legislature really intended to let monkey-boats carrying gunpowder enough to blow up a suburb pass through thickly inhabited populations, and that when at length an explosion takes place, shattering houses to their foundations and leaving them uninhabitable, the sufferers shall have no remedy but by action at law against the owners or carriers of the powder. It is impossible to entertain such a supposition, or to doubt that we have here a case which Parliament has overlooked, and for which, therefore, it has failed to provide. There has been a failure of due care on the part of the Legislature to protect life and property from the perils attending the conveyance of explosive substances. It is a question whether the public authority ought not to compensate, or at least to come to the aid, of those who have suffered heavily in consequence of its default, and whether this is not one of those cases which the ordinary course of law is too defective to reach, and for which the help of the Government is the only resource remaining,

The *Daily Telegraph* remarks that in the case of the Clerkenwell explosion, money was granted by the Treasury in aid of the survivors ; and, although the Regent's Park catastrophe differs from the other in the essential respects that it was a Government establishment which was assailed, and that it was only fair to do something for innocent persons who had been ruined by their proximity to it, the distinction is not such as to abolish the claims of charity.

165 23 October 1874

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE At the Hanley Police Court on Monday, **John Hall**, boatman, was sent to prison for two months for having brutally assaulted his wife by striking her with the tiller of the boat, a most formidable weapon. The blow rendered the woman speechless, and a copious quantity of blood flowed from the wound, which was of a fearful nature. In extenuation, the prisoner's

advocate pleaded drunkenness, and the fact of prisoner being generally a good father and husband.

166 25 December 1874

Southam Petty Sessions

Mary Ann Mushing of Napton sought to obtain an order upon **Joseph Humphriss**, a boatman, to contribute towards the maintenance of an illegitimate child of which she alleged him to be the father. Mr Homer of Coventry appeared for the defence, and in cross-examination elicited from the complainant admissions somewhat damaging to her case, and her evidence was almost entirely unsupported. The Bench therefore dismissed the case.

167 8 January 1875

MURDERS AND CRIMES OF VIOLENCE On Monday morning, three criminals were hanged within the precincts of Kirkdale Gaol, Liverpool. The culprits were John McCrave, aged 20, a labourer, Michael Mullen, 17, a carter, both sentenced to death for the murder of Richard Morgan, in Tithebarn Street, Liverpool, on the night of the 3rd of August, and **William Worthington**, 33 years of age, a boatman, condemned for the murder of his wife on the 29th of August, also in Liverpool. Another young man named Peter Campbell had been sentenced to death along with McCrave and Mullen for Morgan's murder, but he was respited on Saturday. The crime for which McCrave and Mullen were hanged created an intense feeling of indignation, not only in Liverpool, but throughout the country. Morgan was returning home between 10 and 11 o'clock at night with his wife and brother-in-law, when McCrave met him at a street corner, demanded 6d for liquor, and on being refused, struck the deceased man and felled him. Mullen and Campbell, according to the evidence, assisted in kicking Morgan from one side of the street to the other. His brother-in-law and wife were likewise kicked when they endeavoured to save the deceased. One of the witnesses in the first case failed to identify Campbell, and the jury recommended him to mercy, without, however, assigning any reason for doing so. Worthington lived, with his wife, on board a flat, and on the night of the 29th of August was seen to kick her savagely in a yard off the Vauxhall Road, adjoining the place where several flats are moored in the canal. A policeman came up after the outrage, but instead of taking Worthington into custody, he advised them both to go on board the flat and "make matters up". They went on board the flat, and Worthington kicked his wife violently. She died from the injuries about a week afterwards. The culprits were all said to be penitent, but Worthington, who was described as very ignorant and unimpressionable, seemed to think that he ought not to be hanged, as he did not intend to take life. The criminals were Roman Catholics, but had not been instructed in religion, and had not been in the habit of attending worship. They were, however, very attentive to the ministrations of the Rev Father Bonte, the Roman Catholic chaplain of the prison. The condemned men rose about half past five o'clock in the morning. Shortly before seven, the priest said mass in the chapel, and the culprits received the Communion. They afterwards breakfasted, Worthington, whose appetite had been very good during his incarceration, alone eating much food. They were then removed to a room, a door of which opens out upon the steps leading up to the scaffold. In this room, they were pinioned by the executioner, who assumes the name of Anderson, but who is generally known as Calcraft's assistant. The passing bell then began to toll, and at 8 o'clock, a procession, made up of the Governor of the gaol, Captain Gibbs, Mr Wilson, Deputy Under Sheriff, the executioner, the priest, the three condemned men, and the warders, was formed. The criminals walked firmly, but were all ghastly pale. Worthington and Mullen were particularly firm in demeanour, but McCrave showed symptoms of much fear. The steps led to a small room behind the scaffold, and here Mullen and McCrave were detained for a few minutes while Worthington was placed over the drop. A white cap was drawn over his eyes, the rope adjusted, &c. Mullen and McCrave were then brought out in turn and the same process was quickly gone through. Before Mullen and McCrave were led out, they embraced each other and shook hands with Worthington. The unhappy men prayed fervently on the scaffold, frequently exclaiming in concert, and in response to the litany and by the priest, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner", and "O, Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me". All being ready, the executioner went through the formal process of shaking hands with the three men as they stood under the beam, and then

retiring, withdrew the bolt. The victims fell about two feet and a half only, but the drop seemed to be quite sufficient to produce comparatively painless death, as the bodies appeared scarcely to move after the trapdoors fell. There was scarcely more than twilight when the sentence was carried out, and the morning was foggy and raw. The usual inquest was held, and the bodies were interred in the graveyard.

The *Times* remarks that it is a long time since it has recorded the execution of four men in one day ; and the fact is in more than one respect significant. Three of these executions are the sequel of that "Black Assize" which was held at Liverpool before Christmas, and which must long be remembered as marking the grievous degradation which the lower classes in Liverpool had reached. We hope (the *Times* adds) this example will administer a decisive check to the violence which has lately disgraced some districts and classes of the country. Those who are liable to similar temptations may be assured that it accurately reflects the determination of the public, and that no amount of rigour which the law can exert will be spared, in order to repress the inhuman brutality of which these crimes were but the more conspicuous instances. It is a disease which can only be effectually encountered by sharp and unflinching remedies. The four executions we record this morning are a proof that these remedies will be applied, and we trust one such example will prove sufficient.

168 29 January 1875

Atherstone

DRUNK William Hodson, boatman of Longford, was summoned on the information of Inspector Husher for being drunk on the highway at Polesworth on the 22nd inst. The defendant did not appear, and the case was heard in his absence, Police-constable Dyer proving the case, and Police-sergeant Poultney stating that the defendant admitted to him that he spent £6 during Friday, Saturday and Sunday last. Fined 10s and costs.

169 29 January 1875

County Petty Sessions

ALLEGED ASSAULT George Shaw, boatman and **Sarah**, his wife, were charged with having, on the 25th inst, assaulted **Helen**, wife of **Enoch Jones**, boatman, Mr Homer appeared for the complainant and Mr Masser for the defendants, who pleaded not guilty. On behalf of complainant, it was stated that on Monday night last, the parties were at the Hop Pole public house at about eleven o'clock, when the defendants became noisy and abused the complainant and her husband. When they left the public house, the female defendant assaulted the complainant, and pulled her to the ground, fell upon her, scratched her face and tore her dress. The male defendant caught hold of her throat, and kicked her several times. The defence set up on behalf of the defendants was that the complainant and her husband were the originators of the assault, that Mrs Jones struck the first blow, and that what the defendants did was purely in self defence. The evidence was very contradictory, and the magistrates dismissed the case and ordered the expenses, 15s, to be divided.

170 5 February 1875

In the current number of the Fortnightly Review, Mr George Smith (of Coalville, Leicester), whose successful labours on behalf of brickfield children are well known, contributes an important paper in the interests of another much neglected class - "Our Canal Population". This is a subject which (we need hardly say) has a special application in Warwickshire and neighbouring counties, and a brief summary of the weighty case presented by Mr Smith will not be out of place in these columns. The writer's description of the canal boatmen and their families is certainly startling. In early life he tells us he lived close to the canal in Tunstall, Staffordshire, and the scenes he there witnessed he will never forget. "Drunkennes, filthiness, cruelty, selfish idleness at the cost of children and animals, thieving, fighting, and almost every other abomination prevailed among them". He often saw the boat women strip and fight like men, and sometimes bite and kick each other - to say nothing of the peculiarly female accomplishment of pulling the hair out of their adversaries' heads. His subsequent experience he paints in colours equally black. "The boatmen", says Mr Smith, "are great drinkers and, almost as a natural consequence, a large number of their wives can do as much

in that way as their husbands". But this is not all – parents will give their children liquor, and as much of it as they like to drink. A case of this kind came under the writer's notice a short time since at Nuneaton. The father and mother of a child four years old got drunk, and made the child drunk also. "When I saw the child," says Mr Smith, "it could not stand, and the parents, as the poor little thing fell, picked it up again, in order to see it fall forward time after time. While the child was tumbling about, the father and mother enjoyed the scene with boisterous shouts and laughter". The freedom with which boatmen indulge their own idleness at the cost of their offspring is not less remarkable. The illustration given of a boat on the canal near Atherstone, with the boatman propped up against the helm smoking, while a wretched looking, ill clad, badly shod girl of seven or eight trotted painfully along the tow path driving the donkeys, may be verified almost every day. An extract from a letter written by a gentleman practically acquainted with boatmen and their families, possesses a special local interest :-

"I have", says Mr Smith's correspondent, "made some observations and enquiries, which all tend to confirm the opinion that I expressed to you that, next to the poor creatures employed in the brickyards, no class seems less cared for than the poor wretched children in the Staffordshire boats. My remarks, however, apply mainly to Coventry and the district. You are aware that on this canal, there are three distinct classes of boatmen. First the "flymen", who work in crews of three men, with their well fitted, well painted, and well cleaned cabins, so clean that no one may scruple to enter them. Next, there are the boats employed in the coal trade, well built and arranged, but sadly deficient in the size of cabin, when that place contains father, mother, three or four children, and generally a strong youth of fifteen or sixteen ; and which constitutes dining room, bedroom, nursery and all. The cabins of these boats contain in gross measurement about 202 cubic feet, of which about 50 or in some cases 60 feet are taken up by the beds, cupboards and fittings, leaving only, say, 150 cubic feet, badly ventilated, for the sleeping apartment of (very often) three adult people and three children. In the city of Coventry no habitable room is allowed to be of less than 900 cubic feet, so that if occupied by two people, there are 450 feet for each person. In the cabin I have described, there are only 25 feet for each person, with no ventilation but the chimney pipe. When I contrast this state of things with the stringent requirements of the Local Government Board in the casual wards of the workhouses, where adequate means for warming the wards in cold weather, and proper ventilation at all times, whether in winter or summer, is insisted upon, one is forced to the conclusion that the health and mortality of the lower class of boating people has been sadly ignored. But to return to the lowest class on the canals, viz, those employed in conveying ironstone from Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Here I am puzzled to decide which point to touch upon first. However, as to the boats themselves, which are in very many instances scarcely fit to be used ; old and worn out, leaky and therefore very damp, never painted or well cleaned for years (beyond an occasional fumigation) and consequently filthy beyond description. Bad as they are, they generally contain the boatman, his wife, and five or six children, and in several instances even seven. How they are packed to sleep is a mystery, and one I have no anxiety to investigate. But I am credibly informed that some of the smaller ones actually sleep in a cupboard. As a class, these boatmen are the lowest in the social scale of any I have ever met ; profligate, and brutal to a degree you can scarcely believe ; too idle to get off and drive the donkey, their ingenuity is displayed by suspending an old tin "nose basket" or tin kettle, or even an old frying pan, behind the poor animal, on the same principle, one can only suppose, and in order to obtain the same result, as tying a kettle to a dog's tail. This is called a "lazy driver" and is seen daily and many times a day in summer time. Even this does not always succeed, and the man (or rather the brute) is compelled to get off his boat and drive, which he performs not with a whip, but with a tough bludgeon some two or three feet long and an inch and a half thick. I have seen one of these men strike his donkey with such a weapon some dozen times as hard as he could, and without a halt between the blows. Indeed, I have repeatedly counted the blows inflicted on the poor animals while in my bed at night, and the actual distance from the towing path to my house is over a hundred yards. With such brutes as parents, reared in such a demoralising atmosphere, accustomed to cruelty in every form, the poor boat

children's is a hard and sad lot.”

The sanitary condition of the cabins, the same writer vouches, is sometimes fearful. Vermin muster in such strength that the legitimate inmates can only hold, or rather regain their own, by retiring with their bedding and cooking utensils, and burning brimstone inside until the unwelcome intruders are reduced by suffocation. This interesting process is known as “bug driving”, and it may be seen any day along the canals. Domestic comfort under the conditions of canal life is of course impossible. Mr Smith gives several illustrations of the wretched sights which may be witnessed, and he adds an illustration of another kind. A boating woman with whom he was recently in conversation stated she had not slept in a dwelling house for twenty four years, had scarcely ever seen a flower bed, and never went to a place of worship. She had reared eight children in the cabin, and on being asked how she and her family slept, she replied – herself and her husband in the largest bed, one child across the pillow, one at their feet, one in the large cupboard, and the remainder distributed as best they could – the ordinary size of the cabins, it should be observed, being about that of a second class compartment of a railway carriage. The effect of living in such a polluted atmosphere, together with exposure to all kinds of weather, and the want of cleanliness, intemperance, deficiency of clothing and food that characterise canal life, may be seen in the appearance of the men, many of whom look ten years older than they really are. “It is superfluous”, continues Mr Smith, “to say that there is little semblance of religious feeling among such people. Sunday, indeed, seems to them as any other day”, - and indeed, there is no reason why it should not, for Sunday labour on canals is the general rule. On two canals, however – the Grand Junction and Shropshire Union – orders have been issued prohibiting the running of boats on Sunday, except in special cases ; and there appears to be a feeling, both among the owners of boats as well as the men and women employed, that something general should be done to stop Sunday labour. As to the wages earned by the boaters, Mr Smith, premising that in other districts there may be some difference, says that from Moira and the Leicester district, Polesworth and a few other places, to Oxford, the sum paid for conveying a load of coal is £5 10s. It takes sixteen days to perform this journey, and to earn the money there must be employed two men and a horse or two donkeys. Deducting all expenses, the amount earned by each man is about 2s 7 1/2d each day, from which food, clothing and *drink* have to be provided. The number of persons included in our “Floating population” is not easy to ascertain, but Mr Smith puts it down at 96,000. This estimate includes 40,000 children, and the question at once suggests itself, “Should these children be allowed to grow up uneducated, and subject to all the unenviable conditions of the sphere in which they are born?” They belong to no particular district – no School Board has any responsibility for them, and except in very rare instances they grow up as ignorant as their parents. A considerable number of the boaters, Mr Smith tells us, wish that their children should be educated, and he quotes from a memorial signed by some of them, in which it is affirmed that “our children ought to be educated and protected as children on other work are, “ and that “no child under 13, and no female under 18 years of age, should be employed on, or allowed to sleep in, canal boats”. Coming to the remedy for the frightful social sore thus described, Mr Smith urges the application of (1) the Elementary Education Act ; (2) the Factory and Workshops Acts ; and (3) the Sanitary Act. There is, he says, such elasticity in all these Acts, that if any of them were put in force, improvements would soon follow. He is, however, convinced that to grapple with the evil, special legislation will be required, and in this opinion most people will agree. He adds that he has reason to believe the Government intended to deal with the question, and it is an obvious remark that this is the kind of reform upon which the Conservatives have been accustomed to pride themselves. Under any circumstances, the subject is too pressing to be long postponed, and Mr Smith has done good service in the cause of humanity by the disinterested zeal with which he has pleaded for a class that seems without the pale of civilising influences.

for grocery. To pay 4s a month.

172 5 March 1875

Crown Court

CHARGE OF ASSAULT AND ROBBERY AT BIRMINGHAM **George Edmonds** (32), boatman and **James Hill** (22), boatman, were indicted for having stolen 3s from William Wood, and committed personal violence, on the 13th ult, at Birmingham. Mr Lloyd prosecuted; Mr Fitzgerald appeared for Edmonds and Mr F Williams defended Hill. The jury acquitted the prisoners.

173 23 April 1875

At the Hanley Police Court, on Monday, a boatman named **Chandler** was charged with the manslaughter, at Milton, of a widow named Eliza Mellor, to whom he had been paying his addresses, but with whom he had recently quarrelled. Death resulted apparently from injuries inflicted by a violent blow to the face. Prisoner, who admitted giving the deceased a slight smack, was remanded for a week.

174 8 October 1875

Nuneaton

A YOUNG WOMAN COMMITTED FOR MANSLAUGHTER The adjourned inquest touching the death of a child recently found drowned in the canal at the Griff Colliery, near Nuneaton, was held on Monday afternoon, at the Newgate Arms Hotel, before Thomas Dewes Esq, coroner, and a jury of which Mr Thomas Hardy was foreman. **Phoebe Pearsall**, eighteen years of age, who had been apprehended on the charge of being the mother, was present during the inquiry, being represented by Mr W W Slingsby, solicitor of Nuneaton.

Prior to taking evidence,

The Coroner said he found it would be necessary, before proceeding with the enquiry, to order an exhumation of the body of deceased, to enable the medical man to make a further examination of it. **Nathan Buckler** of Chilvers Coton, boatman, said : On the 18th of last month, I was in the basin of the canal connected with the Griff Colliery. On taking my boat out of the basin, I saw something in the water which attracted my attention. I saw that it was the body of a child, and called the attention of a man named John Wright to it, and he pulled it out. I gave information to Superintendent Austin.

By Mr Slingsby : The body was close to where the boats are loaded.

John Wright of Chilvers Coton, labourer, said : On my attention being called to the body of a child in the canal, I took it out, wrapped it up in some sheeting, and placed it on the bank. I afterwards saw Police-sergeant Yardley, and the body was handed to him. Dr Nason came and saw the body before it was given into the charge of Police-sergeant Yardley.

By Mr Slingsby : The child was naked, there being no clothing whatever on it. It was found between two boats.

Police-sergeant Yardley of Nuneaton deposed : I was present when the jury viewed the body, which was the same as the last witness has spoken of.

Mary Ann Arnold, single woman of Sutton Courtney, said : Yesterday week, I heard there was some "bother" about a child having been found in the canal at the Griff Colliery. Some time previous to yesterday week, I was at the Griff Colliery. I am not sure how long it was. At that time, the prisoner was in the same arm of the canal, in another boat, which belonged to a different person. The two boats were alongside each other. Nothing unusual happened while I was there. I did not hear anything unusual before 12 o'clock at night. A little before twelve, I heard someone call me, but I did not know who it was. A faint voice seemed to hulloa, which awoke me. I got up, and went into the boat in which the prisoner was. I found prisoner in bed, in the cabin of her boat. She said she was in great pain, and was rolling over to ease the pain. Prisoner's brother was asleep on the side of the cabin. There were no appearances to excite my suspicion. I saw no blood about. After staying a quarter of an hour, I returned to my own boat. Before doing so, I asked the prisoner if I should fetch her mother, and she replied, "How can my mother come, with all those little children?" All else that the prisoner said to me was that she was in great pain. I stayed in my own boat until

eight the next morning, and I then went again to her boat and asked how she was. She was still in bed, and said the pains were rather easier. I asked her if I should get her a cup of tea, and she replied, "No ; my brother Sam will do it".

The Coroner : Did you observe anything unusual?

Witness : I saw one spot of blood upon the sheet, about the size of the middle of my hand, but I did not make any observation upon it. Her father was there, and had his breakfast with her. I left the arm of the canal the same morning (the 14th). We went on to Hinckley Cutting. Prisoner and her boat had started before us. Her father came and took the boat, and we followed them. Prisoner's mother was in another boat (belonging to the prisoner's father) at the Hinckley Cutting, and when I got there, she (the mother) asked me if I would go with her to fetch a doctor for the accused. I went accordingly to Bedworth, to a doctor there, who did not, however, attend while I stayed. I then returned to my boat and went on, leaving the boat containing the accused behind. Before leaving, I saw the accused in bed and said, "Goodbye" to her.

By a Juror : When I went in at 12 o'clock, her brother did not speak to me. He appeared to be asleep.

By Mr Slingsby : The spot of blood was on the edge of the sheet, outside.

John Arnold, of Sutton Courtney, Berks, brother of the last witness, said : On the night of the 13th ult, I was lying on the side bed of my sister's cabin, and at about twelve o'clock, I heard someone call out for assistance. I called my sister, who got up and went into another boat close by. I knew that the accused was in a boat which was lying alongside my boat. It was into that boat that my sister went. When she came back, I was asleep. At about three o'clock, I had occasion, for purposes of my own, to get up and go to the side of my boat. I heard something fall into the water, but what it was, I could not tell. Whatever it was, it went from the boat in which the prisoner was. I could not tell whether it was a solid matter that was thrown in. I saw prisoner's brother, Samuel Pearsall, who was in the same boat as the accused. I saw him at the hatches. He said, "Oh, dear, Phoebe has fainted away ; come and assist me". I accordingly went over, and assisted in putting the prisoner in bed. I saw nothing at all in the cabin, but in the hatches, which adjoins the cabin, I saw a spot of blood, about the size of a sixpence. I told the brother to mop it up, but I cannot say whether the accused heard me. She was very bad when I assisted in getting her into bed. She spoke to me, saying she was very bad.

By a Juror : I had no idea where the blood had come from.

By the Coroner : When I heard the "splash" in the water, I saw a hand bowl over the hatches of the prisoner's boat, which was held by the prisoner's brother.

By Mr Slingsby : The night was dark. When my sister returned from prisoner's boat, I saw nothing unusual except the one spot of blood.

Police-sergeant Yardley spoke to having apprehended the prisoner at Tring, where he found her, very ill, in the cabin of her boat. On being charged with the offence, she denied all knowledge of it. Dr Nason gave evidence to the effect that in his opinion the child had breathed, and also that the prisoner had recently been confined.

The Coroner, in summing up, said there were various points which the jury must seriously consider. First, the connection between the deceased child and the person in custody who was charged with being the murderer of it. The second point was whether the child was what the law called born alive. Then came the next question, whether, if born alive, it was destroyed, and if so, by whom. Having commented on each of these points, and shown the bearings of the evidence in relation thereto, he said that the law used to say that in a case of this description, they must return a verdict of murder. It seemed to him that this case came uncommonly close to one of murder, but of late the judges had seemed to take a milder view of such cases, and had made considerable allowance for women placed in such circumstances. Therefore, if the jury were satisfied as to the three points he had named, the question was, whether they would not also be satisfied to return the milder verdict of the two, viz, that of manslaughter, for non attention to the child at the time of birth. If the jury were satisfied that the prisoner was guilty, they must return a verdict either of murder or manslaughter. So far as he was concerned, he could not help thinking the ends of justice would be

satisfied by their adopting the milder verdict of the two, and not attaching to this wretched girl of only eighteen years of age the stigma of wilful murder.

The Jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against the prisoner, who was committed for trial at the ensuing Warwick Assizes.

On Tuesday last, at the Atherstone Petty Sessions, the prisoner was brought up in custody of Superintendent Austin, and after a long consultation by the Bench in private, **Samuel Pearsall**, her brother, was arrested by Superintendent Austin and charged, with his sister, with the crime of slaying and killing this child. Mr W W Slingsby of Nuneaton said he appeared on behalf of the female prisoner to defend, but added that he had at present received no instructions as to the defence of the male prisoner. Superintendent Austin applied to the Bench for the prisoners to be remanded for a few days, which was granted. The prisoners were then removed and taken to the Nuneaton police station. Yesterday, they were brought up before the Magistrates at Nuneaton, where the Bench, after consulting for a short time, decided to commit both the prisoners on the minor charge of concealment of the birth of the child. The prisoners were both admitted to bail, themselves in £100 each and two sureties of £50 each, to appear and take their trial at the next Warwick Assizes.

175 29 October 1875 County Petty Sessions

ASSAULT **Francis Woodhouse**, boatman, Longford, was summoned for having on the 18th instant unlawfully assaulted Jemima, wife of William Wyles. He pleaded guilty and the Bench, remarking that the complainant still bore the marks of his savage violence, fined him £1 and the costs 15s.

176 17 December 1875 Warwickshire Winter Assizes

ALLEGED MURDER IN BIRMINGHAM **John McVee**, a boatman, was charged with the murder of Annie Buckley at Birmingham. It was alleged that the prisoner pushed the woman into the canal and left her to drown, but after the counsel's opening statement, the Judge stopped the case, and the jury found a verdict of acquittal.

177 7 April 1876 Warwickshire Spring Assizes

ANOTHER CASE OF CONCEALMENT **Phoebe Pearsall** and **Samuel Pearsall**, a mere boy and girl, whose ages were not stated in the calendar, but who appeared to be about fifteen and thirteen years of age respectively, were next indicted for having, at Chilvers Coton on the 13th September, endeavoured to conceal the body of a child for the purpose of concealing the birth of a female child of the female prisoner. Mr Sills prosecuted ; Mr Buzzard defended. The prisoners belong to "our floating population", and on the day named in the indictment, they were engaged on a canal boat in a basin of the Griff Colliery at Chilvers Coton. On that morning, **Nathan Parker**, another boatman, was going along with his boat, when he discovered the body of an infant floating about in the canal. When got out, it was partially warm, and appeared to have been only just born and thrown into the canal. This was in close contiguity to the boat on which the prisoners were engaged, and a subsequent examination of the female led to the discovery that she had then been recently delivered. No one else was in the cabin of the prisoners' boat but themselves, and it seems that at about midnight previous to the morning when the body was found, a girl named **Arnold**, from another boat, was called by the male prisoner to come to his sister's assistance. She was then very ill, and apparently in great pain. A second witness, brother of the former, also spoke to assisting the girl into bed when she was in a fainting condition, and to hearing a "slump" in the water on the night in question, close to their boat, the something, whatever it was, being thrown into the water by the male prisoner. Mr R B Nason, surgeon, Nuneaton, gave medical evidence as to the female prisoner's condition, and the condition of the body of the child, according to the facts already stated. He said, however, his impression then was that the body had been in the water for three or four days. Had examined the female prisoner, and found her condition consistent with having been previously confined. Mr Pope, a surgeon of Tring in Hertfordshire, where the prisoners were arrested, gave similar evidence. The jury found the prisoners "Not Guilty" and they were at once

discharged from custody.

STEALING A WATCH **John Beddows** (16), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a watch, at Hatton, on the 16th February, the property of **Edward Gardner**, a boatman. It was alleged by the prisoner that he took the watch because prosecutor owed him money, but it was proved to be untrue, and he was sentenced to three months hard labour.

178 5 May 1876

Atherstone Petty Sessions

ALLOWING ASSES TO STRAY **James Parker**, late of Polesworth, but now of Coventry, boatman, was summoned for having allowed three asses, of which he was the owner, to stray upon the highway in the parish of Polesworth on the 27th ult. Defendant not appearing, the case was heard in his absence. Police-sergeant Poultney proved the service of the summons, and afterwards gave evidence in support of the charge. The defendant, who had been previously cautioned, was fined 7s 6d and costs 14s 6d, or in default 21 days imprisonment with hard labour.

179 11 August 1876

Coventry Police

DISORDERLY CONDUCT **Benjamin Parker**, boatman, Cox Street, was brought up in custody and charged with disorderly conduct and using obscene language in Grey Friars Lane, on the 7th inst. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and expressed his sorrow. He was fined 2s 6d and the expenses 8s 6d ; in default, 14 days imprisonment.

180 20 October 1876

Crown Court

STEALING A WAISTCOAT AT ASTON William Johnson (24) was charged with stealing a red plush sleeved waistcoat at Aston on the 1st August, the property of **Hugh Glover**. Mr Griffiths prosecuted. The prosecutor is a boatman, and on the date mentioned was at the Aston Locks with his boat. While he was absent from the boat for a short time, several young fellows got upon the boat, and pushed a boy in the water who was in charge of the boat. They then entered the cabin, and some one of them stole the waistcoat. The next day, the prisoner was seen wearing a waistcoat corresponding with the one which had been stolen. When pursued by the policeman, he took to the water, and was captured with some difficulty. The jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour.

181 27 October 1876

Nuneaton Petty Sessions

DRUNK ON LICENSED PREMISES **John Boyard**, boatman, was charged with being drunk on licensed premises at the Anchor Inn, Hartshill, on the 30th ult. He was further charged with being there at an unlawful hour, that is, after eleven o'clock at night. The defendant pleaded guilty.

182 26 January 1877

Coventry City Police

DRUNK **Manasseh Hayes**, boatman, Foleshill, was charged by Police-sergeant Wyatt with being drunk and disorderly in Silver Street on Saturday night. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and said he was very sorry. Fined 5s and costs, 8s 6d.

183 6 June 1877

Atherstone Petty Sessions

Charles Eaton, boatman, was charged with being drunk at Polesworth on the 23rd inst. The defendant pleaded guilty, and was fined 10s and costs 13s 6d.

184 6 June 1877

ASSAULT **William Bromwich**, boatman, was charged with assaulting and beating **Wm Bradford**, boat ganger, on the 18th inst at Polesworth. Complainant said he did not wish to press the case, but the Bench, after hearing the evidence, fined the defendant 2s 6d and costs 20s ; in default to be committed for 21 days.

185 8 August 1877

Southam Petty Sessions

George Bayliss, boatman, was summoned by the police for allowing a horse to stray upon the highway leading from Long Itchington to Stockton on the 1st of June last. Defendant's daughter appeared and asked for an adjournment in consequence of her father being unavoidably in London. He had left home before receiving the summons. The Bench adjourned the case until Monday the 23rd inst.

186 15 August 1877

Atherstone Petty Sessions

REFUSING TO QUIT Joseph Wright, miner, and **William Poulton**, boatman, were charged with refusing to quit the Anchor Inn, Hartshill, on the 30th ult, when requested to do so by Ann, wife of Henry Burdett, the landlord. The defendants pleaded guilty. Mrs Burdett said the defendants were quarrelling and began to fight, and when she ordered them out, they refused for some time to leave. Superintendent Walker said Poulton was a short time ago committed for two months for assaulting Police-sergeant Poultney, and one month for refusing to quit licensed premises. He was now fined 20s and costs 13s 6d ; and Wright was fined 10s and costs 12s 6d. They both paid.

187 22 August 1877

Southam Petty Sessions

George Bayliss, boatman, was summoned for allowing a horse to stray upon the highway. This was an adjourned case from last sessions. Defendant did not appear, but sent his niece, he being from home. The daughter now said that her father had not returned, but she wished to plead guilty to the charge. Her father was willing to pay the expenses. Inspector Welch said this was simply a case of straying. He should be satisfied if defendant paid the expenses. Case dismissed on payment of costs.

188 7 November 1877

Leamington County Police

THEFT OF WINDLASSES **S Beechey**, boatman, was charged with having stolen two windlasses, value 1s, the property of John Horley of Offchurch. John Horley of Offchurch identified the windlasses as his property. It appeared that the defendant was passing up the canal side with a boat, and he took the windlasses out of a hut where he had to pass. Defendant was found guilty, and committed to the next quarter sessions.

189 5 December 1877

Atherstone Police Intelligence

FOWL STEALING **Alfred James Clarke**, boatman, was charged with stealing one fowl, the property of Thomas Congrave of the Royal Oak, Polesworth, on the 21st inst. Mr Bland appeared for the defendant. Superintendent Walker intimated that there would be no evidence given against the defendant, and he was discharged.

190 12 December 1877

County Petty Sessions, Coventry

DRUNK **Daniel Wildsmith**, boatman, pleaded guilty to being drunk on the 1st inst at Longford. He was ordered to pay 5s fine and 12s 6d costs.

191 16 April 1879

Coventry City Police

NON REGISTRATION OF A CANAL BOAT **William Howell**, coal merchant, Braunston Wharf, Rugby, was charged by William Wright, inspector of canal boats that he, being the owner of a certain boat did, in contravention of the Canal Boats Act, cause or permit the said boat to be used as a dwelling place, without having previously had it registered in conformity with the provisions of the said Act. The defendant pleaded that he had applied to have the boat registered at Daventry, but was told it could not be registered there, and he did not know where to apply. The boat was an old one, and was seldom used. This was the first time that his business had caused him to send a boat to Coventry. Mr Browett, Town Clerk, prosecuted, and in opening the case said, in reply to Mr Howell's remarks, that it was not for the authorities to go to him, but for him to come to the authorities, and see for himself that his boat was properly registered. And the duty was

emphatically that of the owner of the boat and not of the boatmen. All owners of boats had had abundant time allowed them to get their boats registered. The Act was passed in August of the year 1877, and the commencement of its operation was postponed until the 1st January of this year, to allow owners of boats to put them into a proper state and get them registered. And now three months had elapsed since the commencement of the operation of the Act, making well nigh two years since the passing of the Act, and still Mr Howell, the owner of the boat in question, allowed the boat to be in a disgraceful condition, as an inspector would satisfy the Bench, and had allowed it to be used as a dwelling place while in an unregistered state. By doing this, he had treated the authorities with perfect contempt, and to favour the object of the Act – to secure fitting and proper dwellings for people on canals – he (Mr Browett) thought a case like this should certainly be visited with a penalty. The defendant's plea was taken as “not guilty”. The first witness examined was **William Wright**, inspector of canal boats for the City of Coventry, who said that about two o'clock on Wednesday the 2nd April, he was examining boats on the canal within the city of Coventry. He saw an unregistered boat with the name “*Perseverance*” upon it, and also bearing the defendant's name. He asked the man in charge to allow him to go into the cabin. He did so. The cabin was in a very dirty state, the cupboards and locker were broken, and a sack of chaff appeared to have been used for a bed. The boatman acknowledged that the boat had been slept in, but said that it would not be used much longer. The boat was not fit for a dwelling, and he (witness) could not have passed it for registration on any account. On the afternoon of the same day, witness received an envelope having upon it the name of “William Howell, Braunston Wharf, Rugby” and containing a message that the boat should not be used after the following Monday. In answer to the Bench, witness said he would have objected to register the boat because it was in such a dirty state. The cabin wanted thoroughly cleansing. In some boats, which travelled only for short distances, he would not expect to find a bed at all. It was on account of its dilapidated, broken and dirty conditions that he should have objected to the registration of the boat. The Bench said this was the first case of this nature that had come before them, and they would like to know the special sanitary arrangements which were required for the registration of boats. The substance of the charge was that the boat was not registered. The defendant again said that he did not know where to go to register the boat, and Mr Browett informed him that he might go to any registering authority upon the canal upon which his boats plied. The defendant called William White, Inspector of Nuisances for the Daventry Sanitary Authority, who said that the defendant had called upon him to ask him to register the boat, but he told him that he could not do it. Ultimately, the magistrates said that there appeared to have been some ignorance of the law on the part of the defendant, and they were quite willing to give him the benefit of any doubt that they might have of his want of knowledge as to where to get his boat registered. A nominal fine of 2s 6d would be imposed, with costs, or in default 14 days imprisonment.

192 7 May 1879

MELANCHOLY AND FATAL ACCIDENT TO A BOY On Wednesday afternoon last, an inquest was held at the Hop Pole Tavern, Old Foleshill Road, before T Dewes Esq, coroner, on the body of **Thomas Flinn**, which had been taken from the Coventry Canal on the previous evening.

Harriet Flinn, widow of Thomas Flinn, said the deceased was her son, and was nearly 14 years of age. He was accustomed to go with boats on the canal.

Mary Ann Shilcock, wife of **William Shilcock**, Coventry, boatman, said that on Sunday afternoon at about four o'clock, she was on the towing-path near the New Wharf, at the top of Bishop Street. The deceased was on Mr Band's wharf, on the opposite side of the canal. A boat was there belonging to Mr E Jones. There was a balk over the canal, to stop the traffic into the wharf. When witness saw the deceased, the balk was across the canal, and he was about 100 yards from it. People had passed across the canal by the balk. Witness was present when the body of the deceased was pulled out of the water. It was found about 1 1/2 yards from the balk, and witness's impression at the time was that, in attempting to cross the canal on the balk, deceased had slipped into the water. The balk consisted of a plank, about 15 inches wide, with a chain attached, loosely floating

on the water.

James Ingram, Leicester Street, boatman, said the deceased was in his employ, and had been for about six months. His duty was to either drive or steer boats. About two o'clock on Sunday, the boat that deceased was with came in, and was left within 100 yards of the wharf. The boat was on the opposite side of the canal to the towing-path, and to get to the boat, deceased might either get over it or cross by the balk. He partook of dinner with witness, and afterwards was told that he might either go home or to the boat. He said, "All right, I'll go to the boat", and he then left. At night, about six o'clock, when he did not return as he was expected to do, witness went to look for him, but could not find him. Nothing could be made out respecting him, and the next day, witness got some people to drag the canal. Between six and seven o'clock on Tuesday night, witness heard that deceased's body had been found in the canal, and he went up and identified him.

Matthew Slyde, labourer on the Coventry wharf, said he heard on Sunday night last that the deceased was missing. On Tuesday night, by direction of the last witness, he dragged the canal. After dragging for about an hour, he found the body within one yard of the balk, on the side nearest his master's boat. Witness had crossed the balk many times when he was a boy; and it would not be at all unlikely that deceased might have attempted to cross by the balk. The water was 5ft 5in in depth, and the channel was about eight feet wide. It was all one depth, and a stone wall was on either side, so that any efforts to get out of the water would be ineffective.

Dr Edgar Overton said he was called to see the deceased at half past six on Tuesday night. He was then lying where the jury had seen him, at the back of the Hop Pole, and he was dead. He made a superficial examination of the body, and the appearances were in favour of the supposition that death was caused by drowning.

A verdict was returned to the effect that the deceased was accidentally drowned in the Coventry Canal.

193 14 May 1879

Warwickshire Assizes

ATTEMPTED UNNATURAL OFFENCE **Richard Thomas** (65), boatman, was found guilty of having attempted to commit an unnatural offence at Birdingbury on the 9th of April, and was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour.

194 30 July 1879

Atherstone Petty Sessions

William Wilday, boatman, was charged with allowing two of his asses to stray at Polesworth on the 16th inst. Defendant had previously been warned by Police-sergeant Hawkes, but he was let off with paying the costs.

195 8 August 1879

Warwickshire Summer Assizes

A CANDID CONFESSION **William Harkell** (59), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing three fowls and a duck, value 10s, the property of Mr Edward Colley of Aston, near Birmingham. The Clerk of Arraignment: And you are further charged with having been previously convicted. Prisoner: Yes sir, twice – [laughter] – Sentence deferred.

196 27 August 1879

SERIOUS ASSAULT CASE **Thomas Combes**, labourer, was charged with having unlawfully assaulted **Samuel Barlow** at Bedworth on the 17th inst. Mr Wilks appeared for the prosecutor and Mr Homer defended the prisoner. Samuel Barlow, Bulkington Lane, Bedworth, boatman, said the prisoner came to his house between 11 and 12 o'clock on the previous Saturday night. After some conversation had taken place, prisoner left the house. He stood outside, challenged witness to fight, and broke five panes of glass. Witness fetched Sergt Poultney, and returned with him. The prisoner had then gone away, but witness heard his voice. They went and found the prisoner in a boat on the canal, and when witness pointed him out to Poultney, he pushed him into the canal, and he was compelled to swim to the side. In company with the sergeant, witness went away home, and prisoner followed them, and struck witness, and took up a knife from the table in the house.

Poultney then took him into custody, and put the handcuffs on him. Prisoner said he would go with Poultney if he had his hat and jacket, and witness went and fetched them. When he returned, the prisoner was on the floor and Poultney was standing over him. With the assistance of witness and a man named Wood, the prisoner was taken to the lock up. The prisoner had had some beer, and was half mad. In answer to Mr Homer, witness said he fetched the policeman because prisoner had smashed the windows. The police sergeant and he went to the boat and found the prisoner on the bed. He (witness) was sober. The sergeant asked prisoner to come and see the damage he had done, and pay for it. Prisoner came out of the cabin, and knocked him into the canal. Prisoner followed him (witness) home and there struck him, and picked the knife up, this led to his being handcuffed. Police-sergeant Poultney, stationed at Bedworth, said he went with the last witness, on Sunday morning, to his house. The windows which had been broken by the prisoner were pointed out. They went to the boat and asked prisoner his name, and he said he had no name. He came out of the cabin, used bad language, and knocked Barlow into the water. Afterwards, at Barlow's house, prisoner struck him with a knife, and he threw him down and took him into custody. The Bench reserved their decision until the next case was heard, in which the same prisoner was charged with assaulting Police-sergeant Poultney. The same evidence was given, Barlow adding that Poultney, on prisoner striking at Barlow, took hold of the prisoner, pushed him down to a bench, and put the handcuffs on. Police-sergeant Poultney spoke to his seeing the prisoner assaulting Barlow in his own house, and to taking prisoner into custody, and putting on the handcuffs. He sent Barlow to the boat to fetch the prisoner's coat and cap. The prisoner then became violent, bit at the handcuffs and the officer's hands, and kicked him in several parts of the person. Once he (the officer) fell on the grate, and prisoner had a running kick and inflicted a severe blow in the stomach. Barlow came in, and another man, named Wood, who assisted to take prisoner to the station. In consequence of these kicks, he suffered great pains, and was confined in bed for three days. He was suffering still, and was under the care of Dr Orton. Mrs Barlow was next called, and corroborated the testimony of her husband and Police-sergeant Poultney, adding that prisoner said to the sergeant, "Kill me, or I'll kill you", and kicked at him high and low. He had heavy nailed boots on. The officer did not strike the prisoner with a stick, or at all. Dr E Orton stated that he had been called in to see Sergeant Poultney. He found him suffering very severely. There were a number of bruises. The kicks in the bowels were most dangerous. He feared the most serious consequences. There had been cases where such bruises had terminated fatally. The Bench determined to adjudicate, and Mr Homer addressed their worships on behalf of the prisoner, endeavouring to prove that he was so drunk as not to know what he did. The Bench decided to convict in both cases, and for the assault on the police officer, they sentenced the prisoner to six months imprisonment with hard labour, and for the common assault on Barlow to seven days additional imprisonment.

197 5 September 1879

County Petty Sessions

DESERTING HIS WIFE AND FAMILY **John Dalton**, boatman, Red Lane, Foleshill, was charged, on the information of Mr William Henry Bicknell, master of the Coventry Union, with running away and leaving his wife Mary and four children chargeable to the common fund of the said union. The prisoner's wife and children were admitted to the Union on the previous Monday, destitute. Prisoner said nothing in answer to the charge, and was committed to gaol for 28 days, with hard labour.

198 15 October 1879

Henley in Arden Petty Sessions

William College, boat master, appeared to a summons for refusing to pay 7s, balance of wages due to a boatman named **Robert Branston**, Hockley Heath. Ordered to pay the amount claimed and costs, 12s 6d.

199 28 November 1879

A BARGE BOY DROWNED On Wednesday afternoon, the district coroner, Mr T Dewes, held an enquiry at the King's Head Inn, Grendon, as to the death of a lad named **Samuel Wheatcroft**.

Deceased was thirteen years of age, and in the employ of a boatman named **John Barton**. At ten o'clock on Monday morning last, deceased and Barton started from Bedworth in a boat for Amington Colliery. They were delayed three hours at Hartshill, and did not arrive at the locks at Merevale till 6.22 pm. It was deceased's duty to manage the windlass, and when the boat arrived at the locks, Barton could not see nothing of him. On looking round, he saw the windlass laid on the balance pole, about a yard from the locks. He then noticed deceased's hat in the water, and raised an alarm. Assistance was obtained, and the lad's body was soon afterwards found in the water. Dr Hales of Atherstone was sent for, and did his best to restore animation, but without success. The medical gentleman found an abrasion over the right eye, but that was doubtless produced by coming in contact with the wall of the lock. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

200 17 December 1879

County Petty Sessions

CROSS SUMMONS DISMISSED James Wildsmith, boatman, was summoned by **James Sefton**, boat builder, for having assaulted him on the 29th November. There was a cross-summons charging Sefton with assaulting Wildsmith at the same time. Mr Homer appeared for Wildsmith, and Mr Wilks for Sefton. Sefton stated that on the 29th November, he and Wildsmith, in company with another man named Worthington, left the Fox Inn, Foleshill, together. When they had gone some distance, Wildsmith accused Sefton of taking a cart from the house of a woman named North, and upon Sefton denying it, Wildsmith took off his coat, and struck him a violent blow on the face, knocked him down, jumped upon him, and hit him several times. Sefton got up from the ground, struck Wildsmith in self defence, and prepared to fight. Worthington then went between them and parted them, and Wildsmith ran away, leaving his coat behind him. James Worthington, collier, corroborated this testimony. Wildsmith's evidence was to the effect that when they left the Fox Inn, Sefton proposed that they should take Hannah North's cart and break it up. Wildsmith refused to have anything to do with it, and Sefton then accused him of tale bearing. This Wildsmith denied and Sefton abused him, and took off his coat to fight. Wildsmith also took off his coat, and they fought, and in the third round Sefton kicked him in the eye when he was on the ground. After that, Wildsmith would not have anything more to do with Sefton, who would not allow him to take up his coat, and he went away and left it on the ground. Agnes Gelby said she saw the two men fighting. Sefton was punching Wildsmith. She heard Wildsmith say, "I won't fight again, you have kicked me", and as soon as he could get away, he ran up the lane. Mrs Wildsmith also gave evidence on behalf of her son. The Bench dismissed both summonses, each defendant to pay his own costs.

201 23 July 1880

County Petty Sessions

STEALING A WATCH AND CHAIN William Smith, juvenile, Foleshill, was charged with stealing a watch and chain, of the value of 30s, the property of **William Grantham**. The prosecutor is a boatman residing in Oxfordshire. On the 7th July, he met the prisoner at Banbury, and the latter asked to be allowed to accompany him to Hinckley. Permission was granted, and Hawkesbury Stop was reached on the following night. Prosecutor noticed his watch and chain safe in a drawer in the cabin at half past five on the morning of the 9th, but a short time after the articles were missing, and prisoner had also disappeared. Subsequently, the prisoner called on a woman named Edwards, of Bedworth, and asked her to pawn the watch for him for 6s, alleging that it was his father's watch, and that he was lame and could not go to the pawnshop himself. The woman proceeded to Mr Cleverley's shop with the intention of pawning the watch, but that gentleman not feeling satisfied, sent for a police officer, and prisoner was taken into custody. When locked up, he admitted having stolen the watch, and on being searched, the chain was found upon him by Police-sergeant Poultney. Prisoner chose to be dealt with summarily, and pleaded guilty. Prisoner's character was very bad, and the Bench sentenced him to fourteen days imprisonment, and ordered that at the expiration of that time, he should be sent to a Reformatory for five years.

202 2 September 1881

Newbold-on-Avon

SAD DEATH OF A CHILD An inquest was held on Monday at the Barley Mow Inn, Newbold-on-Avon, before Mr Coroner Dewes, on the body of **Philip Mellor**, who had been drowned in the Oxford Canal on the previous day. The deceased was the son of Philip Mellor, boatman, Oakthorpe, Derbyshire, and was 9 years of age. He assisted his father in his business. On Sunday, the father had charge of two boats connected by a rope. He and his wife were in the first boat, and the deceased was steering the second. They passed through the Newbold tunnel, and on coming out, the second boat grounded in consequence of the steering being unattended to. Mellor and his wife called to the lad, and receiving no reply, they looked for him, but he was not to be found. Information was given to the police, the canal was dragged, and in about two hours the dead body of the deceased was discovered. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased was accidentally drowned.

203 25 November 1881

Coventry City Police

THREATS **Jonathan Boden**, boatman, Well Street, was summoned by William Garratt, metal dealer of Well Street, for threatening to “knock his ----- head off” on the 20th November. Mr Masser appeared for defendant, who pleaded not guilty. The Bench, after hearing the evidence, said they did not consider it strong enough to warrant a conviction, and dismissed the case.

204 25 August 1882

Coventry City Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Charles Scanlan**, no settled abode, boatman, was charged by Police-constable Raven with having been drunk and disorderly in Broomfield Place, Spon End, on the 19th inst. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was fined 2s 6d and expenses 9s 6d, or in default fourteen days imprisonment.

205 5 January 1883

Atherstone Petty Sessions

ALLEGED LARCENY Joseph Starkey, a lad, was remanded on a charge of stealing four brasses from the harness of a horse, the property of **Joseph Hansen**, boatman of Warwick.

206 9 February 1883

Coventry Police

CHARGE OF ATTEMPTING SUICIDE Henry Cooke, watchmaker, Upper Well Street, was charged by Police-sergeant Ross with attempting to commit suicide by throwing himself into the canal on the previous day. **Henry Hircus**, Leicester Street, a boatman, said that he saw the prisoner come from Leicester Row on to the towing-path and “pitch straight into the water as if he was going to bathe”. With assistance, witness got him out by using a boat hook, and laid him on top of the boat house. When he recovered, prisoner attempted to slip down the side of the boat and get into the water again, but witness caught him by the legs and prevented him. He sent for a police officer, who took him into custody. The prisoner, who said he attempted suicide by his wife's conduct, was remanded for a week.

207 6 April 1883

County Petty Sessions

OBSTRUCTING THE FOOTPATH Henry Morton, labourer, Coventry; William Cook, dyer, Coventry; Frank Cockrell, labourer, Foleshill; Frank Hackett, miner; Ebenezer Grimley, miner; and **William Rayson**, boatman, Longford, were summoned for obstructing the free passage of the footway at Longford on Good Friday. Defendants pleaded not guilty. On the day named, defendants were at Longford pigeon flying. They were requested to move on by the officer, but they refused and became very abusive. The Bench ordered each of the defendants to pay the expenses, and told them that if ever they came up again, a fine would be inflicted.

208 20 July 1883

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Richard Shackleton**, boatman of Stoke on Trent, was charged at the Petty Sessions on Tuesday with cruelty to a horse. Police-constable Lings proved the case, and

defendant was fined £2.

209 28 September 1883

ACCIDENTS Yesterday, a boatman named **James Bailey**, of Derby, met with an accident at the canal wharf. It appears that he was in an elevated position unloading grain from a boat by means of a crane, and was knocked down by the handle of the crane a distance of about twelve feet. Falling on the back of his head, two severe wounds were inflicted on the skull in that region. He was taken to the Hospital, where his injuries were treated.

210 26 October 1883 County Petty Sessions

NON ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL William Phillips, miner, Henley Green, Foleshill; James Jackson, miner, and **William Hodson**, boatman, Longford, were summoned by the Foleshill School Board for neglecting to send their children to school. Mr Jones, the attendance officer, stated the circumstances, and each of the cases were adjourned for a month, to allow of the children being sent regularly to school, or to produce a medical certificate of inability to do so.

211 23 November 1883 Rugby

CAPTURE OF A GANG OF ALLEGED HORSE STEALERS On the 8th inst, a black cob belonging to Mr George Taylor, Hillmorton, near Rugby, was stolen. It was seen in possession of two men, who were traced to Kettlebrook, near Tamworth, at which place one of them, a boatman named **David Allen**, was apprehended whilst trying to escape by the back door of his house. The other man, who proved to be William Draper, a convicted cattle thief, was further traced to Birmingham, where in a house off Summer Lane, he was arrested by Superintendent Palmer of Rugby, who afterwards found the stolen cob at the Sportsman's Inn, Aston Road, kept by prisoner Allen's father, in whose care it had been placed by Draper. Information obtained in this case enabled Superintendent Palmer, after a week's search and enquiry, to arrest on Monday, at Manchester, John Lindon alias Johnson, a horse dealer of that city, on the charge of stealing a horse, the property of Joseph Wood, at Nuneaton in 1873. At the same time, two other horses which had been stolen – one from Yardley and the other from Southam – within the last six weeks, were found and handed over to their owners ; and Superintendent Palmer also ascertained the whereabouts of about a dozen more horses which had been stolen from various parts of the country, and owners for which are now wanted. Draper and Allen (who said he had been drawn into it) were on Tuesday committed for trial, and Lindon was remanded by Rugby Bench.

212 22 February 1884

A canal boatman named **Trowell** has been sentenced to three months imprisonment at Derby for beating a donkey to death.

213 23 May 1884 County Petty Sessions

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Hudson**, boatman, Longford, was fined 5s and 12s 6d costs, for being drunk and disorderly on the Foleshill Road on the 9th inst.

214 1 August 1884 County Petty Sessions

ASSAULT **Hannah**, wife of **John Kent**, boatman, Sowe, was summoned by **Mary**, wife of **James Chater**, boatman, Tosses' Bridge, Foleshill, for assaulting her on the 9th of July. The evidence was very conflicting, and the Bench dismissed the case.

215 6 August 1885

Joseph Elley, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Gerrish and Company, was brought up yesterday before the Mayor and ex Mayor, charged with stealing about 5lbs of moist sugar from a boat on the Kennet and Avon Canal, whilst in transit from Bristol to Devizes. Mr T C Hopkins appeared for the prosecution, and the evidence of the boy Richens, taken last week, having been read, he further

stated, in reply to questions, that whilst waiting in a stable at Bradford for the prisoner to come out of a public house, he threw a stone at him, and on him threatening to tell Mr Baxter about the sugar, he kicked him. Inspector Tyler's evidence was also read, supplemented by the remark that it was possible to take sugar from the bags without untying them. William Thomas, delivery clerk to Shute and Company, wholesale grocers, Bristol, proved that the bags left their warehouse secure and in good condition, and that they weighed 2 cwt 2 lbs each. On comparing the sugar in the bags with the large quantity of sugar found in the jar, he found that it corresponded. The jar contained three sorts of sugar, but it was mixed in a way no tradesman would mix it, and was apparently put in a little at a time. He should fancy the jar contained four or five pounds of similar sugar to that in the bags. Mr Hopkins, addressing the Bench, pointed out that the prosecutors were large carriers employing about seventy men, and that they were more or less at the mercy of them, it being difficult to detect thefts of this description, and that in the present case nothing would probably have been heard of the theft of the sugar had it not been that the boy had been ill-used. He was not instructed to ask for severe punishment, but Messrs Gerrish and Co wished him to say that they were bound to make an example when a charge of this sort was brought home. The prisoner on being formally charged pleaded guilty, and on Mr Easter being asked as to his character, he said he had had complaints and charges of pilfering made against him before, although they had not been brought home. He had himself suspected him and others of pilfering on board the boats. The Mayor then, addressing the prisoner, said the Bench had come to the conclusion that justice would not be met without a sentence of a months imprisonment with hard labour, including the time he had already been confined, and they hoped it would be a warning to his fellow workmen.

216 6 August 1886

Warwickshire Assizes

UNLAWFUL WOUNDING AT NUNEATON **David Wiles** (18), boatman, was indicted for feloniously wounding **Harley Shilcock**, a boatman, at Nuneaton on the 28th June. Mr Pye prosecuted and Mr Wilmot defended. Mr Pye stated that on the date mentioned the parties met on the canal side near Nuneaton, and after some words with reference to a woman whom prisoner taxed prosecutor with having on his boat, they quarrelled and struggled together. In the course of the struggle prisoner, who was getting the worst of it, pulled out a knife, and was alleged to have cut prosecutor somewhat severely about the wrist. In cross-examination, prosecutor admitted that he had a knife, which he pulled out of his pocket and opened shortly before he was wounded by the prisoner, but denied that he was cut with that weapon. He opened his own knife to cut a belt with which prisoner was striking him. For the defence, Mr Wilmot suggested that the wound was inflicted in the course of the struggle, and without malicious intention on the part of the prisoner. The jury found the prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding, and he was sent to gaol for three months.

217 17 September 1886

A CHILD DROWNED IN THE CANAL An inquest was held on Monday afternoon at the Hop Pole, Leicester Row, before Dr C W Iliffe, coroner, touching the death of Mary Theresa Compton, six years of age, who was drowned in the Coventry Canal on Saturday. Mary Elizabeth Compton, wife of Harry Compton, 7c 8a Chantry Place, mother of the deceased, said that on Saturday morning at about half past nine, she sent her four children out for a walk. Their ages were nine, six and four years, and eighteen months respectively, the three younger children being in charge of the eldest. They all walked, the youngest being led between the eldest and a girl named Yardley. She told them to go on to the Stoney Stanton Road, near the Hospital. From what she had since gathered, she believed that they went on to the Stoney Stanton Road, along Howard Street, up Harnall Lane, on to the old Foleshill Road. At the top of Harnall Lane, they sat on the grass, and saw some other children looking at the boats on the canal. At first they said they did not go on the towing-path, but afterwards admitted that they did. They came home with so many tales that she did not know what to believe. All the children except the deceased returned home in the afternoon, and the eldest asked first of all where Polly was – whether she had not come home? She (the

mother) replied, "No, where did you leave her?" The eldest child responded that they missed her at the top of Harnall Lane. She (the mother) immediately sent them back to look for her. She did not know then, nor had she the remotest idea, that they had been near the water. A lad named Gough afterwards told her that he had seen the children at the top of Harnall Lane, and that they had been to the towing-path of the canal – he had been there with them looking at the boats. As soon as she heard that, she ran off. Near the canal, she saw a woman belonging to one of the boats, and made enquiries, but found no trace of the child. She went to the canal twice, and back home again, and it was on the second visit home that she asked the boy Gough where he had seen Polly ; he replied that he saw her on a plank, and as soon as he said that, she felt sure that the child was in the canal. In reply to the Coroner, witness said the eldest child had often been out with the children before, and she had strict orders to keep on the Stoney Stanton Road. The Coroner said he wanted to ask the witness whether she thought it a safe proceeding to allow children of such tender years to go out in charge of a girl who was scarcely old enough to take care of herself. Witness said she thought the children would be safe near the hospital. The Coroner : It's a wonder some of them have never got under the horses' feet instead of finding a watery grave. Witness said she should never do such a thing again. The Coroner added that he could not help thinking that there was a serious responsibility resting on mothers in the proper care of their children ; children had such a tendency to stray away, and it was just as likely that they might have strayed to Swanswell Pond, and have met with the same fate there. He did not wish to add to her trouble, but he could not help saying that it was exceedingly risky to trust young children away from home. **Joseph Compton**, boatman in the employ of Messrs Robbins and Powers, said that on Saturday he was outside the basin of the Coventry Canal Wharf, and at two o'clock, having finished his dinner, his little boy came out of the cabin and picked a child's hat out of the water. His wife at the same time remarked that it was to be hoped that the child to whom it belonged was not drowned. Shortly before four o'clock, the mother of the deceased came up to the canal, and was talking to another boatman's wife. He went near them, and overheard that the conversation was about a missing child which was supposed to have been drowned, but little did he think at that moment that the hat which his little boy had found had anything to do with it. The hat lay on his cabin all the time, and a few minutes afterwards he said, "There's a hat here which my little boy has found". This took place at about five o'clock, and he straightaway asked the stopman's wife to lend him the rake, and he would see whether the child was in the canal. The first time he put the rake down, he caught the child's body, which was not many yards from his boat. He was about the place all afternoon, but he did not see any children playing on the boats, and he thought the child must have fallen in from the towing-path. The body lay close to and parallel with the side near the plank which crosses the canal at the stop, and in about three feet nine inches of water. The Coroner, in summing up, again commented on the carelessness and negligence on the part of the mother, and expressed a hope that this would be a warning to other mothers. He could not help thinking that the other children knew something of the fate of deceased when they went home, but were afraid to tell. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and the foreman concurred with the Coroner that the mother was to blame for negligence.

218 10 December 1886

Longford

SUDDEN DEATH An inquest was held at the Saracen's Head on Saturday last, before Dr C W Illiffe, coroner, touching the death of **Mary Elizabeth Simpson**, wife of **Thomas Simpson**, a boatman, who died on the previous Friday. The evidence showed that on Thursday night, the deceased retired to bed apparently as well as usual, having partaken of black pudding for supper. **Arthur Simpson**, son of the deceased, found, on waking in the morning, that his mother had fallen out of bed, and he at once procured assistance. A neighbour named Lole stated that she was fetched about eight o'clock on Friday morning by the boy Simpson, who informed her that his mother was dying. She went at once, and found deceased on the floor. She was alive, and in appearance much as usual, but breathed very hard. Dr Masser stated that he was called to see deceased. She was cold and insensible, could not swallow, and her pulse was feeble. She rallied for a short time and seemed as though she would recover, but she died about twelve o'clock. He thought the cause of

death was congestion of the lungs, brought about by exposure to cold. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

219 31 December 1886 County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY **John Knight**, boatman of Banbury, was summoned by Police-constable G Lee for having worked a pony while in an unfit condition at Anstey on the 13th inst. The defendant pleaded guilty. The constable stated that there was a running wound under the collar, and the Bench fined the defendant 5s and costs 18s 6d.

220 27 May 1887 County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **James Chater**, boatman, was summoned for ill treating a horse by working it whilst in an unfit condition, at Ansty on the 18th May. Police-constable Lea saw the defendant's horse drawing a boat along the canal at Anstey, and on examining it, he found several wounds on each shoulder, the largest being about the size of the palm of his hand, and bleeding. Superintendent Yardley gave corroborative evidence, and said the case was as bad a one as he had seen. Defendant said he was not aware of the condition of the animal, and the wounds must have been caused in consequence of the smallness of the collar, which was put on in a hurry. The Bench imposed a fine of 30s and 12s 6d costs, in default one months imprisonment with hard labour.

221 26 August 1887 Coventry City Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Shilcock**, boatman, Leicester Street, was summoned by Police-constable Jordan for being drunk and disorderly in Leicester Street on the 20th inst. The defendant pleaded guilty, and expressed sorrow, and was fined 2s 6s and costs, in default 14 days imprisonment with hard labour.

222 30 December 1887 County Petty Sessions

CANAL SIDE CRUELTY **Samuel Cox**, boatman of Brinklow, was summoned on the information of Police-constable Lee for cruelly ill treating a mule on the canal side at Bulkington by working it in an unfit state on the 17th inst. Defendant pleaded guilty. The constable stated that there was a large wound on its shoulder, which was pinched by a collar much too small for the animal. Defendant said he knew of a slight wound on the mule, and he was merely taking the animal home along the canal side to Stretton, where his master lived. Superintendent Yardley said there were a great many complaints as to the cruelty practised upon animals along the canal side. Defendant was fined 5s and costs 12s 6d, and was informed that if any more similar cases were brought into court, they would be much more severely dealt with.

223 3 February 1888 County Petty Sessions

REFUSING TO SHOW A BOAT CERTIFICATE **Thomas Hewitt**, boatman, Leicester Street, Coventry, was summoned by the Foleshill Inspector under the Canal Boats Act (Mr W E Thomas) for refusing to produce to him the certificate of registration of a canal boat named "*Alfred*" on December 15th last. Defendant pleaded guilty. The Inspector stated the case, and said that the defendant, when asked for the certificate, became very abusive, and refused to give any information respecting it. He (the Inspector) then went to the owner, who said the certificate was in the boat. The Chairman said if the defendant had been civil, he probably would not have been summoned. He was fined 2s 6d and costs 12s 6d.

224 6 April 1888 County Petty Sessions

CANAL SIDE CRUELTY **Edward Evans**, boatman of Ansty, was summoned for cruelty to a horse at Anstey by working it in an unfit state on the 2nd inst. Mr Masser appeared for the defendant, who pleaded not guilty. Police-constable Churn said he and Police-constable Rose saw the defendant with the horse drawing two boat loads of coal along the canal. Seeing a large raw wound on the right hip of the horse, they stopped it and examined it. On the right shoulder, they

found another wound, and the skin was also off the left hip. The horse was in a very low condition and altogether unfit for work. The wounds also interfered with its movements. He asked the defendant what weight of coal he had in the boats, and defendant said 59 tons. Colonel Woollcombe (who did not adjudicate in this case) said he saw the horse, which was brought to him at Anstey Hall by Police-constable Rose. He examined the animal, and was clearly of opinion from long experience of horses that it was totally unfit to draw a heavy load. He had made a calculation, and found that the horse was exerting a force sufficient to draw a load of two tons along a hard road. The practice of cutting a hole in a horse's collar, which was resorted to in this case to relieve the pressure upon a sore, was not of the slightest use, and was the result of ignorance. He suggested that a better method was to pad the collar round the sore. He thought from what the defendant told him that the proper party to proceed against was the defendant's employer, who had permitted the horse to be worked. Mr Masser said he had very little to say, since the evidence of Colonel Woollcombe showed that there had been a certain amount of cruelty. He asked leave, however, to put in a certificate of a veterinary surgeon as to the condition of the horse before starting on the journey, and said that when the horse started out, the wounds were not sore. This was not a deliberate case of cruelty, but was the case of a man who was obliged by his master ordering him to get home, to work the horse for a short time. Mr Masser was about to show evidence as to defendant's character in the treatment of horses, but the Magistrates said they would grant him the best of characters in that respect. The Magistrates said they considered the case proved, and inflicted a fine of 5s and costs 13s 6d. They intimated, however, that the defendant's employer ought to be made to pay the money. Mr Masser : But I am afraid there are no legal means of getting it from him.

William Montgomery, boatman of Coventry, was summoned for cruelty to two donkeys, by working them when they were in an unfit condition on the 25th March. **Harley Shillcock**, the owner of the donkeys, was also summoned for permitting the animals to be worked. Defendants pleaded guilty. Police-constable Claridge stated that he saw the defendants on the canal at Longford with five donkeys drawing two loads of coal. Montgomery was driving, and Shillcock was steering. Two of the donkeys had sores under their collars, and appeared to be in great pain. Defendants were fined 5s and costs – in Shillcock's case £1 1s, including 7s 6d, the keep of the donkeys ; and in Montgomery's case 14s 6d.

225 3 August 1888

Nuneaton

DROWNED IN THE CANAL Dr C W Iliffe (coroner) held an inquest at Hartshill on Wednesday night touching the death of **Ellen Goode** (40), which resulted from her falling into the Coventry Canal on the previous night. The deceased lived with a Banbury boatman, and on Monday the boat arrived at Hartshill for the purpose of being loaded with stone. In the evening, the deceased accompanied the boatman into the village, where they went to a public house and stayed till eleven o'clock. The deceased left first, but when the man came back to the boat, the woman was nowhere to be seen. Her bonnet was found floating in the water, and the body was soon brought to the surface. He alleged that they were both quite sober on leaving the inn, and that they had not quarrelled. He had lived with deceased three years, and also previously for a period of two years. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

226 24 August 1888

Walsgrave on Sowe

DROWNED IN THE CANAL On Saturday night, a man named **Newton**, of Hillmorton near Rugby, was found drowned in the Wyken Colliery basin, a sheet of water into which boats are towed from an arm of the canal for the purpose of being loaded. The deceased, a middle aged man, was employed by **Thomas Simpson**, a boat proprietor. On Saturday, he was engaged in haymaking, and later in the day was at the Bird in Hand public house, Alderman's Green. Nothing more was seen of him until Sunday morning, when his body was found as mentioned by a boatman named **John Bennett**. It is supposed that after leaving the public house the previous night, he attempted to reach his boat in the basin and, missing his footing, fell into the water and was

drowned. On Tuesday afternoon, Dr Iliffe, coroner, held an inquest on the body at the Boat Inn, Sowe Common, and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

227 11 January 1889 Rugby Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Thomas Rayson**, boatman, Bedworth, was charged with cruelly working a horse while in an unfit state on the canal side at Newbold, on January 5th, and **Thomas Simpson**, publican, Sowe, was charged with causing the same to be worked. Defendants pleaded guilty. The defendant Simpson was fined £1 and costs, and the defendant Rayson 5s.

228 8 March 1889 County Petty Sessions

LARCENY **William Grantham**, boatman, Birdingbury, was charged with larceny. On February 22, prisoner was sent by his employer, Thomas Neal, farmer, Birdingbury, to Hartshill for a boat load of stone. He gave him £8 10s to pay for it, and to pay three canal tolls. He started back on the following Monday, and should have arrived at Birdingbury by Tuesday night. The boat, a day or two afterwards, was found at Hawkesbury Stop unattended, and the prisoner was, on the information of the prosecutor, apprehended the following Friday at Nuneaton. He was then without any of the money. He had in his possession bills amounting to just over £6 – the balance between that amount and the sum he was supplied with when starting was the subject of the charge. The Bench fined prisoner £1 and ordered him to refund the £2 which he had appropriated to his own use.

229 7 June 1889

A CHILD DROWNED IN THE CANAL An inquest was held on Wednesday afternoon at the Hospital before the coroner (Dr C W Iliffe) touching the death of **Walter James**, a boy of five. **Helen James**, wife of **Philip James**, a boatman on the Coventry Canal, and mother of the deceased, said they lived in the boat *Godiva*, belonging to Messrs Robbins and Powers. The boat entered the Coventry dock on Monday with a cargo of salt, and on Tuesday afternoon, while she (witness) had gone into the town, her daughter, a young woman of 23, who was left in charge, missed the deceased. She last saw him at play in the street, and as he did not return they searched for him, and eventually found his dead body at about half past nine in the canal near the boat. Her husband was away, but she had telegraphed to him. Inspector Golby stated that the loss of the child was reported at the Police Station before the body was found. Dr Miller, the house surgeon, spoke to receiving the body into the Hospital, and said there were no marks of violence, and that death resulted from asphyxia caused by drowning. The jury returned a verdict to that effect, adding that they believed the occurrence was accidental, although there was no evidence to show how the child got into the water.

230 21 June 1889 County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **George Beaufoy**, boatman, Longford, was summoned for working a donkey while in an unfit state. Superintendent Prosser said that on 30th May he met the defendant on the Coventry Canal in charge of a boat and two donkeys. One of the animals was in a poor emaciated condition, and under the collar on the off shoulder, he found a wound three inches by two inches, from which blood and matter was oozing. The collar was saturated with blood. The other donkey was scarcely in a fit condition for work. Defendant was not driving the animals, but was in charge of the boat. Fined £1 and costs, in default 14 days.

231 28 June 1889 County Petty Sessions

OVERLOADING CANAL DONKEYS **James Ingram**, boatman, was summoned for ill-treating three donkeys by overloading them at Foleshill. Superintendent Prosser said that on Monday afternoon last on the towing-path of the canal, he met defendant in charge of three donkeys and two loaded boats with over 30 tons of coal in each. The donkeys seemed thoroughly exhausted, and he made him unfasten one of the boats. He asked defendant whether he did not think the donkeys were

overloaded, and he replied that he thought they could “do it”, as they were going at their own pace. One of the donkeys had a sore on the shoulder. Mr Goate, who represented the defendant, cross-examined to show that it was not unusual for two boats to be drawn by even two donkeys; but Superintendent Prosser said two boats could not be drawn by such donkeys as these. Mr Goate said the donkeys had not been worked since Easter, and were only going about a mile in two hours. For the defence, he called Mr R Croydon, coal merchant, Smithford Street, who, speaking as to the custom, said it was not infrequent for one donkey to draw a boat load of coal, as very little force was necessary after the boat was started. The Magistrates said they considered the loads too heavy, but as it was not a very bad case, they inflicted a fine of 10s only, and 14s 6d costs.

232 28 July 1889

County Petty Sessions

OVERCROWDING CANAL BOATS **George Smith**, boatman, Beckamstead, was summoned by the Foleshill Inspector of Nuisances (Mr W E Thomas) for allowing his canal boat “*Elizabeth*” to be overcrowded. Defendant did not appear. The boat was registered for occupation by a man, wife and two children. On June 26, Mr Thomas found, after some difficulty, that the defendant, his wife, and four children slept in the boat. The Magistrates' Clerk read a letter from defendant in which he denied that the boat was overcrowded. A fine of 10s, costs remitted, was inflicted. **Isaac Moore**, master of the canal boat “*Shamrock*” was summoned for a similar offence, the occupants being two adults and three children instead of two adults and two children. Defendant did not appear. Mr Thomas said defendant refused to accept the summons, and he laid it upon the cabin. Fined 10s, costs being remitted.

233 26 July 1889

Bedworth

UNLAWFUL FISHING At the Rugby Police Court on Tuesday, **William Wilkinson**, boatman, Bedworth, was charged with unlawfully using a fishing net in the canal at Brownsover on July 6th. Defendant pleaded guilty. Mr Seabroke explained that the summons had not been served, but the defendant, hearing that one was out against him, appeared voluntarily for the case to be disposed of. Inspector Welch stated that the summons had been served at the defendant's house, but as he was away from home the service did not come to his knowledge. Police-constable Bracebridge said that on the day named he saw the defendant using a net catching fish, which he put in a bucket. Witness told him that he was doing wrong, and he replied that other people did it, and he thought he might. In answer to a question as to what he did with the fish, the defendant said he used them for putting on night lines when his boat was tied up at night. Defendant now said he did not think he was doing wrong, as he was allowed to fish in some places. The Bench considered the defendant was acting in ignorance, but the Chairman said that was no excuse, as the law excused none. Defendant was convicted and ordered to pay the costs, 12s 6d.

234 11 October 1889

Foleshill

The Inspector to the Rugby Rural Sanitary Authority has been authorised to prosecute a boatman of Foleshill named **George Simpson** for not stopping his boat when requested.

235 11 October 1889

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY A GIRL On Wednesday evening, a girl aged 13 named Ellen Shirley, of Warwick Court, Gosford Street, attempted to commit suicide in the Coventry Canal near Leicester Street. Between five and six o'clock, a boatman named **Wildsmith** of Bishopgate Green, saw something floating in the water, and on dragging it out with a boat hook found it to be a girl in a semi conscious condition. She was taken to the house of a man named Osborne in Leicester Street, where restoratives were administered. Dr Pickup was sent for, and the girl in a short time sufficiently recovered to be taken to the hospital. At the conclusion of the City Police Court business yesterday, the girl was brought into the court accompanied by her parents. It appeared from Inspector Wyatt and the father, who is a weaver working at Messrs Pizzie and Cramp's factory in Earl Street, that on Monday his daughter, who was also employed at the factory, was censured by

the foreman, Mr Jackson, for misconduct in respect to the singing of a song alleged to have been written by a fellow worker. This appears to have greatly annoyed Mr Shirley, and when he returned home, he corrected her by "striking her with his belt across her frock". The blows were not severe, and do not seem to have caused much pain. The following morning, he called her up at the usual hour, and told her that he hoped when she returned to work she would behave herself properly. She did not go to her employment either in the morning or in the afternoon, and in the evening she was found in the canal, as stated. Mr Shirley told the Bench that the girl was always well behaved and respectful, and in fact in his eyes had only one fault – she was at times stubborn and self willed. He had no idea she would attempt her life in consequence of what had been said and done to her. The punishment he inflicted was very light. Mrs Shirley confirmed this latter statement. The Mayor asked the girl, who sobbed violently, what induced her to take the rash step, but after refusing to reply for some time, she stated that she was ashamed after what had occurred to return to the factory. The Mayor pointed out to her the wickedness of her act, and said her father did quite right in correcting her. The girl promised not to attempt her life again, and the Bench suggested that she should be spoken to by the Rev A T Prout, the pastor of Gosford Street Chapel, which she was in the habit of attending.

236 21 March 1890

Rugby

STARVING A DONKEY TO DEATH : THE BODY EXHUMED At the Rugby Police Court on Tuesday, **John Renshaw**, boatman, Stretton-under-Fosse, was charged with cruelty to a donkey by starving it. The defendant tied the animal to the hedge upon his allotment, and left it without food till it died of starvation, having eaten up everything within its reach, including the bark of the shoots in the hedge. The carcass had been buried before the circumstances came to the knowledge of the police and, when exhumed, it was found to be in an extremely emaciated condition. Defendant urged that having nowhere else to put the donkey, he tethered it upon his allotment, and then falling ill he was unable to attend to it. When he went to take it to a field, he found it dead. The Bench considered it a horrible case of brutality and fined defendant £3 and £1 14s 6d costs, and in default committed him for one month with hard labour.

237 13 June 1890

County Petty Sessions

AN UNSANITARY BOAT **John Thompson**, boatman, Buckby, Northampton, was summoned by Mr W E Thomas, Inspector of Nuisances to the Foleshill Sanitary Authority, for an infringement of the regulations made under the Canal Boats Acts, at Wyken, on May 29th. Defendant did not appear, but wrote, admitting the offence. The inspector said he visited the boat on May 29th and found that the after cabin was occupied as a sleeping compartment by a girl aged 16, and by Thompson and his wife. Defendant had been previously cautioned in 1887. The inspector did not press for a fine, and defendant was ordered to pay the expenses, 14s.

238 12 December 1890

County Petty Sessions

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Shilcock**, boatman, Bishopgate Green, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly. On Wednesday, Police-constable Rollins saw the defendant in the Leicester Road behaving very disorderly. He pleaded guilty, and was fined 2s 6d and costs.

239 12 December 1890

DROWNING FATALITY AT SOWE On Tuesday the Coroner (Dr C W Iliffe) held an inquest at the Jolly Collier, Sowe Waste, touching the death of David Read (47), watch finisher of 6 Waterloo Street, Coventry, whose body was found in the canal on Monday morning last. Thomas Read, son of the deceased, said his father left home on Sunday afternoon last at about a quarter to three, as well as usual, to visit his uncle Reuben at Foleshill, but he did not go there. The other evidence showed that deceased went to the Jolly Collier where he remained until eight in the evening. On leaving, he was seen to walk in a sober condition along the road towards the iron bridge which spans the canal. On Monday morning at eight o'clock, **Alfred Simpson**, a boatman, saw the body

floating in the water, and with assistance got it out. In the pockets were found 6s 6d in money, a pair of nippers, a small screwdriver and a handkerchief, but there was no evidence of a struggle on the towing-path. The jury examined the spot where the body was found, and added to their verdict of "Accidental death" a rider that the canal at Sowe Waste was dangerous, and a request that the canal company would make good a fence that originally protected the water at this point.

240 22 May 1891

Sowe

DEATH BY DROWNING **Arthur Oldham**, 10 years of age, son of **Joseph Oldham**, boatman, Boxmoor, Herefordshire, was found drowned in the canal near Evans Bridge, Sowe Common, on Friday last. Deceased, who was working on the boat of his uncle (**Alfred Simpson**) is supposed to have fallen into the water whilst trying to step from that boat to another which was being towed alongside it. An inquest was held at the Boot Inn, Sowe, on Saturday, before Mr C W Iliffe, coroner, when the jury returned a verdict that deceased died from asphyxia, caused by drowning.

241 31 July 1891

GIVING HIS LIFE FOR HIS CHILD Last week, an inquest was held at Acton Bridge on the body of a canal boatman named **Arthur Fellows**. While turning round on the boat, Fellows's little boy fell overboard. Without a moment's hesitation, and knowing he could not swim, Fellows sprang after him. He made one endeavour to grasp the child, and sank immediately. The child floated and was rescued, but the father was drowned. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned while attempting to save the life of his child" was returned.

242 11 September 1891

County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A PONY **John Hone**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned for cruelty to a horse. Police-constable Price said he was in Anstey on Sunday last when he saw defendant's pony on the canal side towing an empty boat. It was very lame and in poor condition. Under the collar on the off shoulder he found a raw wound. He spoke to defendant, who said he was unaware of the horse's condition. Superintendent Prosser said he did not think he ever saw a more miserable looking animal – it could scarcely walk. The Bench thought the case a bad one, and ordered defendant to pay 10s and costs.

243 2 October 1891

CRUELTY TO A LONGFORD BOY On Friday, at a special sitting of the Bicester Petty Sessions, **Henry Hodson** (20), a powerful looking young fellow described as a boatman, of Longford near Coventry, was charged with cruelly ill-treating and beating John Brown, aged six years, by striking him, and also by throwing him into the canal on several occasions between August 16 and September 1. Mr Hope Kyd, barrister, appeared to prosecute on behalf of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ; and Mr F W R Lindsey, solicitor, defended. Thomas Brown, aged thirteen, stated that his mother was a widow, and lived in Longford. For about five weeks, witness had been working for the prisoner on a canal boat running between Longford and Somerton. The prosecutor was witness's brother, and on August 16, Hodson said he would take the lad for a trip to Oxford, if his mother would allow him to go. As it was the holiday at the school their mother gave her consent, and they all left Longford early the following morning. The first day, they went as far as Atherstone Quarries, where the boat was loaded with stone, and they then proceeded down the canal. Hodson made witness's brother drive the horse, and because he did not drive quick enough, he beat him with a hand brush, and then ducked him in the canal. Witness said, "Don't beat Jack, beat me", and Hodson then turned upon witness, and gave him a good thrashing. On the 20th ult, they were at Fazeley, and witness was sent on ahead to pay the canal tolls, and on his return to the boat, his brother was crying bitterly. Witness asked him what was the matter, and he said that Hodson had been thrashing him. His hand was bleeding. A few days later, they were at Somerton, and while there, Hodson beat the boy very severely, striking him over the head and body with a whipstock, and blacking one of his eyes. The eye swelled very much, and Hodson wanted witness

to cut the swelling with a pocket knife to reduce the swelling, but the witness refused to do so. On Sunday August 25, while still in the vicinity of Somerton, Hodson tied a rope round his brother's waist, and threw him into the canal. The boy kept sinking under the water, but every time he did so, Hodson pulled him up again with the rope. This treatment was continued for some time, and on being pulled out of the water, the lad could hardly stand, so Hodson took him to a stable on the bank till he came round. The lad was a day or two in recovering from this treatment. They returned to Longford on September 1st, and the boy was again ill-used because he lost a farthing which Hodson had given him. The prisoner beat him over the head and body with a handbrush, and bruised him very much. The lad was then put in a cabin, and stayed there all night till witness went home and told their mother, and she went down to the boat and took his brother away. Dr Orton of Bedworth, stated that about midday on Wednesday September 2nd, the boy was brought to his surgery and, at the request of the mother, he examined him. He found a contused wound on the back of the head, and there was also a wound on the side of the face. One eye was covered with contused wounds. The lad's shoulders, arms, legs, hips, ribs and almost the whole surface of the body was covered with severe bruises. There was a small wound at the bottom of the spine, and several wounds on the back of the left hand. Unusual and excessive violence must have been used to produce the bruises, which appeared to have been caused at different times, but within a week or ten days. The Magistrates retired, and on returning into Court, the Chairman said the sentence of the Court was that defendant would go to prison for twenty one days.

244 15th January 1892

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN On Monday morning, Dr Iliffe held an inquest at the Anchor Inn, Hartshill, touching the death of **William Shilcock** (50), boatman, Bishopgate Green, who was found dead in bed on Saturday morning. **Charles Bromwich**, boatman, Canal Bank Side, Coventry, identified the body of deceased, and said he was with him throughout Friday. He heard deceased complaining of feeling ill and "starved", and his brother told him he ought to see a doctor. **George Shilcock**, boatman, 22 Leicester Street, Coventry, the brother of the deceased, said he came from Polesworth to Hartshill with deceased on the day previous to his death. On arrival at Hartshill, he got much worse than he was earlier in the day, but he had complained of shortness of breath and cold. Witness got deceased to bed at the Anchor, but he died at 5.45 on Saturday morning. At 10pm, the landlady called witness to him, and he got up from the boat and gave him some tea. Deceased said he felt warmer and more comfortable, and witness then left him. At six o'clock, witness again went to deceased, and found he had just died. The Coroner told the jury that pneumonia was the probable cause of death, and they returned a verdict accordingly, adding that they believed deceased's brother and the landlady did all they could for his comfort.

245 25 March 1892

SUDDEN DEATH ON THE CANAL AT HAWKESBURY The sudden death of **Sophia Brooks**, wife of **John Brooks**, a boatman of Long Itchington, was the subject of an enquiry by Dr C W Iliffe, coroner, at the Greyhound Inn, Hawkesbury, on Saturday. The deceased, who was fifty years of age, left her home about a fortnight ago, accompanying her husband on the boat, and assisting in the working of it. On Tuesday night, she seemed in her usual health, and assisted in steering the boat round the bend in the canal and through the lock at Hawkesbury Stop. The next morning, between five and six o'clock, she complained of pains in her side, and her husband fetched sixpennyworth of ginger brandy, and subsequently a smaller quantity of pale brandy from a public house close by. She drank this, and it seemed to ease her, and at breakfast time she drank some tea, and thought she should soon be better. She, however, again complained of the pain in her side about eleven o'clock, and her husband sent for medical aid to Longford, and afterwards went to Bedworth for the same purpose, but before his return, his wife had died. Dr John Orton, who had made a superficial examination of the deceased, attributed death to syncope, and a verdict to this effect was returned.

246 8 April 1892 County Petty Sessions

UNLICENSED DOGS John Chester, Ryton on Dunsmore, was summoned for keeping a dog without a license. Defendant had two shepherd dogs but one exemption license, and he alleged that the youngest had not reached the required age. Evidence was given showing that the animal in respect of which exemption had not been obtained was born on March 9, and therefore was not six months old when the summons was taken out on March 27. The Bench dismissed the case. **Joseph Shiers**, boatman, Exhall, was summoned for a similar offence. He did not appear. Superintendent Prosser said defendant had been proceeded against at Daventry for not having a license, and the Bench now ordered him to pay a fine of 2s 6d and costs.

247 2 December 1892 Coventry Petty Sessions

ADJOURNED **Thomas Lapworth**, boatman, Sowe, was summoned for using a canal boat as a dwelling without it having been registered for such purpose. The Inspector of Nuisances to the Foleshill Union (Mr Pitchforth) said that on October 26, he visited the canal at Wyken Colliery and found a bed in defendant's boat. The Bench adjourned the case for a fortnight to give defendant an opportunity of having the boat registered.

248 9 December 1892 Coventry City Police

A VIOLENT BEGGAR **Thomas Beresford**, boatman, Lodge Street, Oldbury, was charged with begging ; also with wilfully breaking three plate glass windows. Prisoner was under the influence of drink on Saturday night, when he came to the shop of Sarah Ann Buckingham, confectioner, 40 Spon Street, and begged alms. He was refused, and he then went out and smashed the windows. Evidence was given by Ernest Morris and Lizzie Charlton. The extent of the damage was estimated at £12, but the amount was reduced in order that the prisoner might be summarily dealt with. The Bench committed him for two months.

249 1 September 1893 Rugby Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Storer**, boatman, Hartshill, was summoned for working a horse while in an unfit state, at Easenhall on August 21st. Defendant pleaded guilty. The case was adjourned from the last court, and defendant undertook to leave the horse at Easenhall, but Sergeant Porter said he took it on to Foleshill. The sergeant stated that on the day named, he saw the defendant's horse drawing an empty boat along the canal. The animal was pinched on both shoulders, on the withers and on the hip. It was an old horse, and was in a dreadful state. Mr Wood said the magistrates saw the horse last week, and a more disgraceful state of things could not be. The horse was badly pinched, and was nothing but skin and bone. He never remembered seeing a more wretched animal, and it must have been working in intense pain. It was a shocking thing to treat an animal in the way defendant had, and he would have to pay a fine of £1 and costs 11s 6d.

250 15 September 1893 County Petty Sessions

A PENITENT THIEF **Thomas George Parker**, labourer, no fixed abode, was summoned for stealing a suit of clothes, value 10s, belonging to **Thomas Beasley**, boatman, Brentford. Beasley said that in October last year, he was with his boat at Longford. Prisoner was working with him on the boat, and when he left, the clothes were missing from the cabin. When leaving the witness box, complainant said, "I am very sorry for him, he is an old mate". The police stated that prisoner surrendered to the Walsall police this week. When charged, he said, "Yes, I did steal them ; I took the clothes and left mine behind in the cabin". Prisoner had been previously convicted, and he was committed for six weeks.

251 15 September 1893 Southam Police Court

CRUELTY TO HORSES **Joseph Garrett**, Factory Street, Banbury, boatman, for working two horses with sore shoulders at Napton on the 1st, was fined £2 and 9s 6d costs. The horses were in a wretched condition.

252 27 April 1894

Coventry City Police

SLEEPING IN A CANAL BOAT **William Blower**, boatman, Atherstone, was summoned for using a canal boat as a dwelling without having it registered. The Inspector of Canal Boats (Mr W H Clarke) said he visited the Coventry Canal at about five o'clock on the morning of the 12th and found two men sleeping in the canal boat *Nancy*, belonging to defendant. There was no ventilation for sleeping, and the boat was not registered as a dwelling. Defendant was fined 20s and costs.

253 4 May 1894

Rugby Petty Sessions

THEFTS ON THE RAILWAY William John Whitman, of no fixed abode, was charged on remand with stealing a small timepiece, value £7, the property of the London and North Western Railway Company, from a signal box at New Bilton on April 14th. There was a further charge against prisoner of stealing an overcoat, value 25s, from a brake van at Rugby on April 12th. Mr Lambert, having opened the case, called Alfred Jiggles, a signalman in the employ of the Railway Company, and living at 12 Warwick Street, who said he had charge of the New Bilton signal box, in which the timepiece, portions of which were produced, was hanging on the 14th April. On the 16th ult, he went to the signal box and found that the timepiece had been stolen. Charles Austen, wagon examiner, 12 Avon Street, said, on the 18th April, he saw the prisoner enter a brake van, and going to him asked what he was doing there. He replied that he wanted to see "Bill Lloyd, the brakesman". Witness told him that was not Lloyd's brake. He took prisoner to the brakesman's lodging house, and sent for Detective Birch. Harry Birch deposed that when he arrived at the lodging house and asked prisoner his name, he replied that it was William Webster, and that he lived at 46 Queen's Crescent, Camden Town, London. Witness, however, knew prisoner, and while he was searching him, prisoner pulled out of his pocket the works of the timepiece with the key, and admitted that he broke into the New Bilton box on the previous Sunday afternoon, and took the timepiece. He said he destroyed the other parts and threw them into the canal. With regard to the second charge, John Chapman, brakesman, 36 Osmond Street, Birmingham, deposed that he was at Rugby station on the 12th April, in charge of a train from London. At 9.30 pm, he placed his coat with other articles in his van, and about ten o'clock, just as the train had started, he missed his coat, together with his basket, food and other things. **Walter Mallard**, a boatman living near Wolverton, said he was with his boat at Brinklow on the 13th April last. He saw prisoner on the canal bank, and was asked by him if he wanted to buy an overcoat. He asked to be allowed to look at the garment, and prisoner, who was wearing it, took it off. Having inspected it, witness gave prisoner 5s for it, and subsequently handed it to a detective. Prisoner was committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions at Warwick.

254 7 December 1894

County Petty Sessions

A NEGLECTFUL BOATMAN **James Chater**, boatman, Tipton, Staffordshire, was charged with neglecting his wife and family, who reside at Alderman's Green, Foleshill. Defendant did not appear. Mrs Chater said it was 22 weeks ago since she last saw her husband. He then went away in his boat, saying he would send money to her in the course of a few days, but she had heard nothing of him since. She had been informed her husband was at Wolverhampton. There were 8 children in the family, two of whom were at work. The Magistrates made an order of 10s a week.

255 22 February 1895

ACCIDENTS On Saturday last, as **James Buckley**, boatman, was riding a horse along the road from Easenhall, the animal stumbled owing to the slippery state of the ground and fell, throwing Buckley off and breaking his right leg. He was taken to the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital and detained.

256 26 April 1895

CHARGE OF LARCENY At a special sitting of the County Petty Sessional Court, before John Rotherham Esq, **Albert Sanders**, a youth, was remanded until today (Friday) on a charge of having stolen from the cabin of a canal boat in which he was engaged, the sum of 9s, the property of

another boatman named **Bennett**.

257 3 May 1895

County Petty Sessions

CHARGE OF LARCENY **Albert Sanders**, a youth, was charged with having stolen from the cabin of a canal boat the sum of 9s, the property of a boatman named Bennett. **George Bennett**, boatman, Sowe, said that on April 16 he was with his boat at Exhall Colliery. He kept a sum of money amounting to 9s in a wooden box in the cabin cupboard. The coins were a five and a four shilling piece. There was in the box also a watch and chain, earrings and brooch. The articles had not been disturbed on Easter Monday, but the following Friday, he found the cupboard had been broken open and the money stolen. Prisoner was employed on another boat at Exhall Colliery at the time of the disappearance of the money. Thomas Mountfield, publican, Bedworth, said that on Wednesday week, prisoner bought some bread and cheese at his house, and the change was taken out of a five shilling piece which he offered. Police-constable Smith said that on Sunday morning last, he arrested prisoner on a canal boat at Anstey. In reply to the charge, he said he was very sorry, and that he had intended paying the money back again ; at the time, he had no pocket money. Superintendent Prosser said the theft led to other boatmen in the basin at Sowe being suspected, and several were brought to the police office before prisoner was identified as having changed the crown piece. The Bench cautioned prisoner, and discharged him under the First Offenders' Act.

258 10 May 1895

County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Kemp**, boatman, Sowe, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state. Defendant did not appear, and Superintendent Prosser, who asked that the case might be taken in his absence, said he had been obliged to go to London with a load. The case was stated by Police-constable Smith, and defendant was fined 5s and costs.

259 31 May 1895

Coventry City Police

EDUCATION OF BOAT CHILDREN **John Lapworth**, boatman, Nuneaton, was summoned for not sending two children regularly to school. The Clerk to the School Board said the children did not attend school at all. For the purposes of education, the place where the children of boat people were required to attend school was that at which the boat was registered. In this case, the defendant's boat was registered at Coventry. There was a great deal of difficulty in dealing with these cases, because the children were migratory, they were here today and gone tomorrow. Defendant said it was impossible to send the children to school regularly because they went with the boat, but they attended a Sunday school. Mr Kirkby pointed out that he must send them to school like other boatmen did, and the Bench inflicted a fine of 1s and costs in one case, and adjourned the other.

260 17 April 1896

Coventry City Police

EDUCATION OF CANAL BOAT CHILDREN **George Daniels**, canal boatman, was summoned for not sending two children regularly to school. Mr Kirkby (clerk to the School Board) said the children had practically received no education. Canal boats came into Coventry in the way of trade, and it was extremely difficult to find whether the children of the owners or occupiers went to school at all. He asked for a penalty in each case. Defendant : We send the children to school when we have a day to spare, when we are tied up. Alderman Banks : You will have to make provision for the children to stop with someone and be sent to school. Defendant : We cannot do it ; we have trouble enough to keep one table, let alone two. He was fined 1s and 4s costs in each case. Defendant : We send them to school at Bedworth, and we send them to school at London when we have a day to spare. Mr Wyley : You will have to make some arrangement to leave them behind. Defendant : Can't do that.

261 12 June 1896

IMPORTANT CAPTURE OF A RAILWAY THIEF Wm John Whitman, joiner, no settled abode,

was charged with stealing a timepiece and a jacket from a signal box at Bedworth, a mackintosh from a signal box at Bulkington, and an overcoat from a signal box at Brinklow, all on February 2nd. Mr Frank L Lambert, solicitor to the London and North Western Railway Company, who prosecuted, said prisoner was arrested on a warrant issued by this Court on Wednesday as he was leaving Liverpool Gaol. He seemed to have a desperate mania for breaking into cabins along the railway, particularly the railway of the London and North Western Company. Although only three charges were preferred, 40 charges might be brought against him, 38 or 39 of the offences having occurred within a period ending February last. He had habitually been travelling along the London and North Western Company's line and breaking into the signal cabins at the time they were unoccupied. So far, they had not been able to trace the timepieces. Prisoner had served 12 months at Warwick Gaol for similar robberies on the same line. This succeeded a sentence of three months for like offences committed lower down the line towards London. He was the son of respectable parents, his father being in the employ of the Railway Co at Leighton Buzzard, and he was naturally distressed at his conduct. After leaving Warwick Gaol, he set him up in business with a sum of money, to enable him to retrieve his conduct. Prisoner had formerly been in the employ of the company, and it was the knowledge that he then obtained which enabled him to break into the cabins at a time when they were unoccupied. A number of witnesses were called to prove the cases, including the owners of the stolen goods. It was shown prisoner entered the cabins without being observed on Sunday February 2, and that he had been at considerable trouble to destroy the identity of the overcoat, which was of the official pattern. **William Verey**, boatman, Stretton-under-Fosse, said he met prisoner at Anstey on February 2, and he asked for a lift to Tamworth. He said he wanted to go to Sheffield. He bought the overcoat for 3s and the mackintosh for 2s 6d. Prisoner only asked 2s for the mackintosh, but would not give him the change of the half crown he tendered. "I thought I was crafty," said witness, "But he was more crafty than I was, and bested me". Prisoner also showed him the clock. He left him at Atherstone. **George Simmons**, boatman, Coventry, who worked with the last witness, gave evidence in corroboration. Prisoner offered him the overcoat first ; he purchased the jacket from him for 1s. William Hobbey, plate layer, said that on February 2, he saw prisoner on the line coming from the direction of Bulkington. He told him he wanted to get to Rugby. Inspector Alcott deposed to receiving prisoner from the Liverpool police on Wednesday last, on completing a term of imprisonment. He told witness he thought he had "got the wrong one this time". Railway detective Birch, who accompanied Allcott, said prisoner told him he sold the clock to a boatman at Lichfield, and that he would give him any information he could, as he had done at other times. Prisoner was committed to the Sessions.

262 6 November 1896

CHARGES OF HOUSEBREAKING William Wainwright, caster, Walsall ; **Nehemiah Moore**, boatman, Walsall ; and John Arnold, Caldmore near Walsall, were charged with housebreaking at Wolvey, and stealing two pocket handkerchiefs and a knife belonging to Thomas Rowley. Mr Masser appeared to prosecute. Mrs Rowley said her house was in a field some distance from the road, and there were no other houses near. About 3.45 pm on October 23, she left her house, which she locked up. When crossing the field into the Heath Lane, she saw two of the prisoners go into it towards her house. On returning some time afterwards, she found one of the doors open, and a chest of drawers downstairs ransacked, and the contents strewn on the floor. She identified the handkerchiefs and knife. Bennett Parkinson, an Atherstone boy, said he saw the prisoners coming from the direction of the house, and Police-constable Mumford stated that he found entrance had been effected by breaking a pane of glass. There were marks of nailed boots underneath the window sill, which corresponded with those made by prisoners' boots. He arrested prisoners at Narborough near Leicester the following morning. One of the handkerchiefs was afterwards found in an outhouse at the "Axe and Compass", Wolvey, where he stopped with prisoners. The other handkerchief was found on Wainwright, and the knife on Moore. There was a second charge of housebreaking at Over Whitacre, and stealing 2s 6d and wearing apparel from the house of John Davies, Pegg's Hill. Entrance seems to have been effected in the same manner as in the other case.

The clothes were in possession of prisoners when arrested by Police-constable Mumford. When charged by Police-sergeant Parker of Coleshill, they said they had had the clothes some time. Wainwright said there were only two shillings in the house. This prisoner told the Bench he did not know Moore, having met him on the road, but Superintendent Prosser said they were brothers-in-law. Prisoners were committed to the Assizes.

263 26 January 1900

CURIOUS DEATH Peter Bibby, a canal boatman at Chorley, has met his death in a remarkable manner. A horse which he was driving along a towing-path bolted, and the tow rope, having snapped, became entangled in Bibby's legs. Held by this means, he was dragged by the horse at a gallop a quarter of a mile, then dashed against the buttress of a bridge, swung into the water, and drowned. His wife was a witness of this terrible occurrence.

264 13 July 1900

County Petty Sessions

CRUELTY TO AN ASS Edwin Mitchell, boatman, Warnecote, was summoned for cruelty to an ass by working it while in an unfit state. Colonel Woollcombe Adams said the donkey was struggling to draw a boat loaded with 25 tons of stone. The animal had a very sore wound on one shoulder. The Bench said it was impossible for one donkey to draw such a load even if it were a sound animal, and imposed a fine of 10s, including costs.

265 19 October 1900

FOLESHILL CHILD SHOT DEAD A Foleshill child named **Emma Simpson** was last Thursday week shot dead by a gun in a canal boat at Soulbury, near Leighton Buzzard, and the following evidence was called at the inquest on Saturday last.

Arthur Simpson, father of deceased, stated that he lived at Tusse's Bridge near Coventry, and was a boatman. On Thursday afternoon last week, he was driving a horse attached to two boats coming into the middle lock of the Three Locks. Deceased was standing in the hatchway of the first boat. A gun loaded with powder and shot stood in the corner of the cabin in its usual place, behind the coal box, which supported it, and his second boat bumped the first one coming into the lock. Immediately after, he heard the report of a gun. His man then came up and told him what had occurred, and he at once went to the boat cabin. The girl was in the hatchway, hanging on the tiller by her hair, and he saw it was all over with her. The gun belonged to his brother-in-law, and was always kept in the cabin. He used it for amusement, and had often shot rats with it. Deceased lived with witness on the second boat, and she often went on the other.

James Mambridge said he saw the paper from the gun fly into the air, and some smoke, and he also saw the girl turn round. He was so dazed he could not remember hearing the gun go off. The gun did not go off when it first fell.

Dr Harris of Linslade, who examined the body, described the injuries. Death must have been instantaneous. He looked into the cabin from the hatchway, and saw the gun on the floor, with the muzzle pointing upwards. The gun was not more than a couple of feet from deceased.

The jury returned a verdict that death was caused by a gun shot wound accidentally inflicted.

266 19 April 1901

Coventry City Police

AN ADJOURNMENT William Tolley, boatman of Brierley Hill, was summoned at the instance of William Henry Clarke, Canal Boat Inspector, for a breach of the Canal Boats Act. Mr G Sutton, Assistant Town Clerk, stated that a wire had been received from defendant that morning asking for an adjournment of the case till that day week. The case was adjourned accordingly.

267 14 June 1901

Walsgrave on Sowe

BOATMAN DROWNED David Simpson, a canal boatman of Sowe, has been drowned in the Grand Junction Canal, near Long Buckby. At the inquest on Monday, his father said they were taking two empty boats from Watford to Wyken Colliery. David had to cross the gates of the locks

at Long Buckby Wharf, and while doing so, lost his footing and fell into the water, which was rushing into the locks in great volumes. His body was drawn under the boats, and it was a long time before it was recovered. W J Porter, postman of Kilsby, said he jumped into the water and rescued the body after much difficulty. Witness, who stated that he was a member of the St John Ambulance Association, added that every effort was made to restore animation. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

268 26 July 1901 Bedworth

CHILD DROWNED An inquest was held at Hartshill on Saturday by Dr Iliffe concerning the death of a four year old child named **Mary Ann How**, who was drowned in the canal at Hartshill. The father said he was a boatman. On Thursday morning, his wife washed and dressed deceased, and put her in the hatchway whilst she washed a younger child. A minute or two after, she missed her, and called to witness, asking him if he had seen her. Directly afterwards, she shouted, "Here she is in the water". He rushed to the place, but a man named Jackson got her out. She was then dead. William Jackson said that the child was only a short distance from the side, and he was able to reach her with his hand. Richard Norwood Trye, manager at the Hartshill Quarry, spoke to trying artificial respiration, but without effect. A verdict of "Death from asphyxia, caused by drowning" was returned.

269 15 November 1901 City Police

A POLICEMAN'S SUSPICIONS **Thos Lawrence**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing a pair of boots from Messrs Cash and Co's shop in Market Street ; and also a cap from Mr Roberts' shop in Market Street. Police-constable Woods found prisoner with the boots in Cross Cheaping, and suspecting him, asked him to account for them, and he said he bought them. Finding later that Messrs Cash and Co had lost a pair of boots, he went after the man, arrested him in the White Bear public house, Leicester Street, brought him to the police station, and charged him, prisoner replying, "I am not guilty".

Prisoner now admitted the charges, and said he was drunk. He was committed for fourteen days.

270 13 December 1901 Coventry City Police

A STRANGE VISITOR William Cotton, machinist, 17 Station Street, was charged with being found in a canal boat for an unlawful purpose. It appeared from the evidence of **William Jackson**, boatman, that he was awakened by his wife, and on looking round saw prisoner lying fast asleep at his feet. The man was a perfect stranger to him, and had no right to be there. Prisoner's explanation was that he had had 14 or 15 glasses of rum to keep the cold out. He wandered on to the canal side, got into the cabin, and fell asleep. He denied any felonious intent. The Bench discharged him with a caution.

271 24 January 1902 Nuneaton

CORONER CENSURES BIRMINGHAM PARENTS At Nuneaton on Wednesday, the Coroner inquired into the death of **Mary Ann Pretty**, aged nine months, daughter of a Birmingham boatman. The father stated that the child became ill on Monday morning. His wife took her from the cabin of the boat, lying in a wharf near Nuneaton, to the local doctor. He was not at home, and she made a second journey in the afternoon. Dr Tomlinson said the woman brought the child to his surgery at 5.30 pm, and she was then dead. Life must have been extinct an hour or two, as the body was quite cold. He found a large sore on the right groin and a smaller one on the left groin. The immediate cause of death was pneumonia, brought about by the sores. The mother, who seemed very unintelligent, was questioned very closely as to the cause of the sores. She denied that the infant had been burnt or scalded. She was the mother of ten children, eight of whom had died young. The Coroner said this was clearly a case which should be taken further by an officer of the NSPCC. The verdict of the jury was that the child died from septic pneumonia. The Coroner, at the jury's request, censured the parents.

272 11 April 1902

At a special Petty Sessional Court held Wednesday morning, **Charles Roberts**, a canal boatman of Wyken, was charged with stealing a duck from the canal at Anstey, the property of William Veasey. He was remanded until today.

273 18 April 1902

County Petty Sessions

BAD FOR THE DUCK **Charles Roberts**, boatman, Napton-on-the-Hill, was charged with stealing a duck belonging to William Feasey, labourer, Anstey, on April 8th. Prosecutor missed the duck, which was afterwards found in the cabin of a boat. The head was nearly off, and the body of the duck was in some boiling water. Prisoner confessed to having killed the duck. Police-constable Jakeman said prisoner admitted striking the duck with a shaft. Prisoner, who pleaded guilty, was fined 10s.

274 2 May 1902

Hillmorton

DRUNK OR TIRED? John Wolfe, Royal Oak Inn, Hillmorton, was summoned at Rugby on Tuesday for being drunk on his own licensed premises on April 17th. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Police-constable Long stated that on the afternoon named, he saw defendant sitting drunk and asleep on a seat in the porch of his house. Witness woke him, and went into the tap room, where defendant followed. The officer asked defendant what was the matter with him, and he replied, "I'm drunk". Witness said, "I know you are, and I shall report you". Defendant denied that he was drunk. He said he was up all the previous night with a horse, and was tired. **James Ison**, a boatman, said he was present when the police officer went to defendant, who "sat asleep, but not drunk". Witness had been unloading his boat at defendant's wharf, and had been in defendant's company some hours. During that time, defendant had nothing to drink. He had been up all the previous night with a horse, and witness remained up with him the following night. The case was dismissed.

275 16 May 1902

Coventry County Court

LONGFORD BOATMAN FROZEN UP **Matthew Lunn**, boatman, brought an action against James Mason, landlord of the Saracen's Head, Longford, to recover damages sustained by him by reason of the defendant unlawfully breaking open the dwelling house of plaintiff, removing goods, and converting them to his own use. The value of the goods was estimated at £16, in addition to which plaintiff claimed a further sum of £10 for the annoyance and inconvenience suffered by him owing to the wrongful act of the defendant. Mr Maddocks for plaintiff and Mr Masser for defendant. The case was tried before his Honour and a jury. Mr Maddocks said the question for the jury to decide was an extremely simple one, as it was admitted by the defendant that what he did in reference to plaintiff's goods was wrongful, and it would be simply for the jury to say what damages plaintiff had suffered, and how much he ought to be paid for the value of the goods and for the inconvenience to which he was put. Defendant was the landlord of plaintiff's house. Mr Lunn being a boatman was necessarily absent from home, sometimes for a month, six weeks or two months at a stretch, during which time he left his wife and children at home. On the 8th of last November, plaintiff left Longford for London, but got frozen up, and was away for a considerable time. Eventually, plaintiff's wife joined him, having locked up the house, and leaving the goods behind. The rent of the house was in arrears, and during her absence, defendant forced an entry to the house, and sold the furniture. Plaintiff had received no notice from defendant, although it was admitted that the rent was in arrears. There was a counter claim for £4, half of which was for rent due and the other half for some pailings that were removed. With regard to the latter, plaintiff put up the railings, and was told by the landlord that he could take them down. Plaintiff gave evidence to the effect that he was frozen up for three months, his wife joining him at Sutton Stop with the children. Plaintiff's wife said she left everything at home, and all was sold, even the children's clothes that were in a box. The goods were valued at £16. In cross-examination by Mr Masser, witness admitted that the officer of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

had paid visits, respecting the condition of the house and the children, though it was not true that the house and children were dirty. Mr Masser, for the defence, admitted that his client had been badly advised in what he had done, but he had made every inquiry as to the whereabouts of plaintiff and his wife and children, but without success. The goods were sold amongst the neighbours, but they only realised £2 8s. He submitted that the only damage plaintiff had sustained was the actual value of the goods, and any small sum that might be allowed for inconvenience though, as plaintiff had admitted, it was the wife who had suffered annoyance. Defendant gave evidence bearing out Mr Masser's statement, and added that the house was in a very dirty condition, the paper being off its walls, and there was mildew upon everything. The goods, he considered, sold well. Plaintiff had asked him to settle the matter for 5s. Defendant, in reply to Mr Maddocks, admitted that he acted as his own auctioneer, and that the goods were sold among the neighbours. They were not worth advertising. He asserted that the plaintiff used bad language when he came to see him about the disposal of the goods. Mr Maddocks suggested that it was calculated to make a man use bad language when he discovered that his furniture had been sold, and that defendant had in his possession 6s more than the amount actually due for rent. It was rather like adding insult to injury. Did you call all the old women who live in the adjoining homes to appraise the things? No, I did not. I simply told them the things were for sale. He did not put a notice on the door. Witnesses were called to speak as to the dirty condition of the house and the poor quality of the furniture. A witness named Herbert, a miner, was subjected to an amusing examination by Mr Maddocks, who suggested that defendant might have invited some of the dealers from Birmingham and London to come over and bid for the goods. Mr Maddocks : What are you? Witness : A collier. - And you are called here as a furniture expert, are you? Did you buy anything? - No. - Who was the auctioneer? - Not me - Who was the auctioneer at the sale? - They never had one. - And yet you call it a sale? - Well it was a case of bid as you go by [Laughter]. - A kind of help yourself and pay what you like ; is that it? - I should have had some at that price [Renewed laughter]. - Was any article put up by anybody? - No. - Never put up? - No, he simply "ax'd". [Laughter] - How could he put up when he hadn't got an auctioneer with him? [Laughter] And yet he wants to say it fetched a good price. Now are you sure that it was not put up? - I was on the sick list - I was on the box [Renewed laughter]. - Are you still on the box ; making a little bit honestly by coming here to give expert evidence? - Mr Maddocks asked the jury to award plaintiff what they considered a cottager's furniture was worth. The jury found for plaintiff for (£10??) 10s, and for defendant £2 10s. Judgement was entered accordingly.

276 4 July 1902

Coventry City Police

LOOKING AFTER CANAL BOATS **John Griffiths**, boatman, Bedworth and **Geo Daniels**, no fixed address, were summoned by William Henry Clarke, canal boats inspector, for a breach of the Canal Boats Act. Mr Masser for both defendants, pleaded guilty. The Town Clerk, who appeared in support of the summons, said that the boat owned by Griffiths and occupied by Daniels, his wife and family, was unsuitable for occupation. Previous neglect to have this done was a pure oversight. Griffiths was fined 10s and costs, and Daniels 5s and costs, the Bench remarking that it was very important that canal boats should be duly registered.

277 8 August 1902

Frederick Lowe, a Blisworth boatman, was a few days ago found with his neck broken near Willoughby, Rugby. He was seen riding on the back of his horse a few minutes before. At an inquest on Wednesday, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

278 10 October 1902

Newbold

CRUELTY **Joseph Rice**, boatman, was summoned at Rugby on Tuesday for cruelty to a horse at Newbold on September 29th. Inspector Hopkins of the Warwickshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said he saw the horse, which had raw wounds on the chest and shoulder, causing it considerable pain when working. William Rice, the father of the defendant, said the

horse had only one wound, which was now getting well. That was caused by barbed wire. The Bench inflicted a fine of £2 including costs.

279 7 November 1902

Brinklow

BOATMEN AT LOGGERHEADS At Rugby on Tuesday, **William Daniels**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned by **James Ison**, boatman, Hartshill, for assaulting him at Brinklow on October 24th. Defendant said he struck the blow in self defence. Complainant said he caught defendant up along the canal. He would not allow him to pass, and stopped his mare and struck him a blow in the face. Defendant had two boats, and complainant one, and defendant kept him behind for 23 miles. Defendant said complainant ran him from Willoughby Bridge, and looked like running him down at Brinklow. He had to run back to stop complainant's mare so as to prevent his daughter being pulled into the water, but he had to strike complainant before he would stop. **Arthur Kilbourn**, a boatman called by defendant, said complainant ran them from Willoughby, and when he caught them, he got his line round the two ladies' heads, and nearly pulled them into the water. Daniels went back and asked complainant to stop his horse and allow him to pass, but he did not. **Annie Potter** said she was on defendant's second boat. Complainant drove furiously after them in order to get to the quarries first, and when he caught them, he endeavoured to pass on the wrong side. His line caught her head, and she had to seize the cabin door to prevent herself being pulled into the water. Defendant said both he and complainant worked for the same master, and complainant desired to get back to the quarries first. He could not pass them, and so tried to do all the damage he could. Defendant was fined 2s 6d and half the costs, amounting to 6s 3d. The magistrates thought defendant was subjected to considerable provocation, and ordered complainant to pay the other half of the costs, 6s 3d.

280 28 November 1902

Coventry City Police

ARRESTED ON THE CANAL SIDE **Thomas Maskill**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing from the cabin of a canal boat, a horse cloth, value 5s, the property of **Raynor Perkins**, Exhall. Prisoner absconded from prosecutor's employ, and the rug was missed. It was afterwards shown to prosecutor by the landlady of the Bull's Head Inn, Bishop Street, who had purchased it from another man for 1s 6d and a pint of beer. Detective Hurt said he arrested the prisoner at Rugby on the canal side. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and admitted a previous conviction for felony. He was sent to prison for two months.

281 12 December 1902

Warwickshire Assizes

ERDINGTON MURDER CASE Mary Jane Worsley (29) was indicted for the wilful murder by drowning of her child, Florence Ada Worsley, otherwise Askew, at Erdington on March 18. The prosecuting counsel said that the prisoner was a very ill used woman, and whatever the result of the trial might be, deserved the deepest sympathy. Harriet Worsley said the prisoner, her sister, was supposed to be married to a man named Askew, and she had three children. About February last, her father took the accused away from Askew, but she left her home on March 8 to go to Mrs Holder's. On March 12, her father committed suicide at Askew's house, and her sister was very much upset. The same day, the accused was summoned to appear as a witness at the inquest. She took the summons to her sister the next morning, and found she had been writing. The accused told her she might see it later on. Cross-examined : My sister was a very hard working woman, and assisted Askew to get a living. He knocked her about a great deal. Her father did not know till February that Askew was a married man when he went through the form of marriage with the accused. The father was very much attached to his daughter. It was the deception practised by Askew which caused her father to commit suicide. **Edward Hunt**, boatman, said that on the side of the canal where prisoner drowned her child, her hat was found, and it contained a letter of a pathetic character, and speaking of the sufferings she had undergone through the brutality of Askew. Detective Inspector Drakeley said, when charged, the accused told him she had lost her reason through her father's death. She added, "I had no place to take the children. What could I do? It

was done through grief". The coroner's summons was found in her possession. The Lord Chief Justice said that in any other tribunal but a court of law, it was not this woman that would be standing in the dock. She had proved herself a good mother, and the only question to consider was whether she was in her right mind when she drowned her child. The jury found that the prisoner was insane at the time. His Lordship, in ordering the woman to be detained during his Majesty's pleasure, said she must not think that this cast any censure upon her. No doubt her case would be fully considered. Prisoner, who was deeply affected, was then removed from the dock.

282 13 February 1903

Coventry City Police

THEFT OF WHEAT **Edwin Knibbs**, boatman, of the canal boat *Ouse*, was charged with stealing on the 6th inst, from the Canal Wharf, Foleshill Road, a bag and a half of wheat, value 20s, the property of Messrs Robbins and Powers. Mr Paul gave evidence that the wheat was missed, and afterwards found in the boat *Ouse*. Knibbs said he did not know how it got there. Detective Hutt arrested prisoner, who when charged said, "We haven't stolen them ; the boat hasn't gone away". Accused, for whom Mr Reddish (Mr Maddocks) appeared, pleaded not guilty. He gave evidence to the effect that he was employed by **Mr Griffiths**, carrier, Bedworth, and had brought corn into Coventry for Messrs Robbins and Powers, at intervals, for five years. When there were sweepings of wheat in the boat, those who consigned the wheat did not always have these. The half sack in question consisted of sweepings. He knew nothing about the full sack. The Bench found prisoner guilty. The prosecution did not press the case, intending it as a warning, and in consideration of his previous good character, he was bound over in his own recognisances under the First Offenders' Act.

283 1 March 1903

Foleshill

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN A boatman named **George Quelch** of Hawkesbury was found dead in bed on board his boat at Hillmorton on Sunday morning. He had been in the village with his mate on Saturday evening, and on returning to the boat, he fell against the side, but did not appear to have sustained much injury. He and his mate went into the cabin and got to bed, and on Sunday morning, the mate, waking about 9.30, found Quelch was dead. The inquest was held on Tuesday morning, before Mr J J Willington Wilmshurst, at the Navigation Inn, Hillmorton, when it was stated that deceased met with an accident the night before, and after hearing the evidence, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

284 10 April 1903

County Petty Sessions

FOOTBALL IN A PUBLIC THOROUGHFARE Albert Faulconbridge, miner, **Francis Baldwin**, boatman, and Walter Bolton, miner, youths, all of Sowe, were summoned for playing football at Hawkesbury Lane to the annoyance of passengers on March 28th. Baldwin did not appear. The other defendants pleaded guilty. Complaints had been made during the last three months about lads playing football in the thoroughfare, and the defendants had been cautioned. They were further cautioned by the Bench and ordered to pay costs.

285 8 May 1903

County Petty Sessions

FOOTBALL **Francis Baldwin**, a boatman, was summoned for playing football on the highway at Hawkesbury on March 28th. Defendant did not appear, and it was stated that the summons had not been served upon him. A letter was read to the court that he was on service with a boat, and that the penalty which was imposed would be paid. To pay costs.

286 22 May 1903

Newbold on Avon

SUPPOSED SUICIDE On Monday, a boatman found the body of a man in the canal at Brownsover, near Rugby, and with assistance removed it from the water. The body was warm, but efforts to restore animation were futile. Enquiries showed the name of the man to be Edward Brett, a coachman of Newmarket Street, Old Knighton, Leicester. He had been to works in the town in

search of employment, and being unsuccessful, it is assumed he went to the canal and threw himself in. He had recently suffered from influenza, and had been depressed. On Tuesday, Dr C W Iliffe held an inquest at Newbold-on-Avon, touching the death of deceased, who was forty years of age, and lived at Old Knighton, Leicester. The evidence of relatives showed that deceased had been an inmate of the Leicester Asylum, and that since his discharge he had been staying with friends in Rugby and endeavouring to obtain employment. He left home about seven o'clock on Monday morning in search of work. A boatman named **William Walton** of Hillmorton said he saw the deceased's body in the water about 8.20, and as he could not reach it with his boat hook, he went for assistance. It was half an hour later when the body was taken from the water, and then efforts to restore animation failed. In reply to the Coroner, he said he could not swim, and had no means of getting at the body. A verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" was recorded, and Walton was censured for not making greater efforts to take the body from the water directly he saw it.

287 19 June 1903

Coventry City Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY James Flowers, labourer, no fixed abode, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in the Birmingham Road on the 11th inst. Prisoner said he was a boatman, and could get no work. He was discharged on promising to leave the city.

288 2 July 1903

COVENTRY WOMAN'S SUICIDE – HABITUAL DRUNKARD'S END – NEIGHBOUR'S HISSES AND JEERS An inquest was held at the Board Room of the Coventry Workhouse on Monday afternoon, concerning the death of Mary Ann Hinton, married, 5 Sherbourne Street, who was found drowned in the canal on Sunday.

John Hinton, watch jeweller, said deceased, his wife, was 43 years of age. There were six children of the marriage. On Saturday night, he went to bed at eleven o'clock. Deceased retired between nine and ten. She was drunk, and had been so from half past eight in the morning. He had had considerable trouble with her on this account. He slept in an adjoining room with two of the family. Deceased fell out with some of the neighbours on Saturday in consequence of her being intoxicated. He believed the neighbours hissed and jeered her, and that they threw some water over her. Deceased had been drinking with another man, to whose house she went. Her daughter put her to bed on Saturday night. When witness got up next morning, he missed his wife, who had taken some clothes out of the house, including his jacket. He prepared the children's breakfast on Sunday, and made enquiries everywhere concerning deceased, but could not find her until half past eight on Sunday night, when he identified her at the Workhouse Mortuary.

By a Juryman : He did not go out till night to seek his wife, as he thought she might have been in a neighbour's house.

By the Coroner : Witness had tried all he could to alter her mode of life, but without success.

The Coroner : Is it a fact that several members of her family have committed suicide? - Three to my knowledge.

George Morris, boatman, said that while unloading petrol on the canal wharf at Coventry on Sunday morning, he saw the body of a woman in the water. She had a black skirt and bodice, but not a hat or bonnet. She was dead, and he dragged her body out with his hook.

Police-constable Ellis said on going to the canal, he found deceased lying on the towing-path. She was dead and stiff. After examining the body to see if there were any marks of violence, he assisted in removing the corpse to the Workhouse Mortuary. No letter or document of any kind was found upon the clothing.

Mrs Dodd, superintendent nurse at the Workhouse, said the body was received at the Workhouse at 9.45 am on Sunday. She had examined the body, and found that the right thigh, arm and eye were very much bruised. These injuries, she thought, had been caused by the body coming into contact with a boat. Death had apparently taken place five or six hours.

The Coroner, in summing up, said the case would give the jury very little trouble in finding a verdict. It was the history very often told in a coroner's court, of persons going from public house

to public house drinking to excess. She had, no doubt, been a considerable trouble to her husband, who had tried to bear it like a philosopher, and had done the best he could for her, instead of ill-treating her. He believed that was the case from what he had heard privately, and therefore he thought the man was to be commiserated with on that account. The probability was that the jeers of the people in the street, which she thoroughly deserved, had caused some unhingement of the mind, and that when she got a little more conscious she walked to the canal and ended her life.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased committed suicide whilst temporarily insane, brought about by a complication of matters as described.

289 24 July 1903

DROWNED IN THE CANAL A second inquest was held on the body of a child, who was found drowned in the Coventry Canal near Stoney Stanton Road Bridge. The deceased was Sidney William Townsend, 7 years old, son of Dick Townsend of 341 Stoney Stanton Road, shoemaker.

The father stated that the deceased was one of three children. He would have been at school on Tuesday, but had been kept at home for about a fortnight on account of measles being in the house. Witness lived about one hundred yards from the canal, and the deceased in getting there would have to pass the shop where he worked. He saw him going towards the canal on Tuesday with another of his children, aged 3, but he sent him back. He seemed to have passed afterwards unobserved. He did not see him again until he heard he was found dead in the canal, and went there and saw him dead by the canal side.

George Shilcock, boatman, Bishopgate Green, said he was on the canal travelling in a boat, and near the Stoney Stanton Road, his attention was called to a lad in the water. He recovered the body, but the child was dead. Artificial respiration was attempted, but without success.

The jury returned a verdict of death from asphyxia, and expressed their sympathy with the parents.

290 27 November 1903

Southam

PETTY SESSIONS **Henry Monk jun**, Stockton, boatman, was fined £1 1s 6d including costs, for assaulting a fellow boatman named **George Barnett**.

291 4 December 1903

SUDDEN DEATH AT FOLESHILL Mr William Jephcott of Paradise, Foleshill, a well known resident in that district, has died under sudden circumstances. His son on Sunday night returned home between ten and eleven o'clock, and having retired to his bed, was dozing, when he was aroused by the sound of a heavy thud in the adjoining room occupied by his father. Proceeding to the apartment, he found the door locked, it being the custom of Mr Jephcott to lock the door on retiring to rest. On the room being entered, Mr Jephcott was found unconscious on the floor. Dr Orton was sent for, but could only pronounce life extinct. It is thought that deceased had tried to rise from his bed and, collapsing, had fallen to the floor. Deceased was eighty years of age. He had been barber at the Foleshill Workhouse for the last 40 years. Mr Jephcott appeared to be in his usual health on Sunday. In fact, he went for a walk a short time previous to partaking of dinner.

An inquest was held at the Police Court on Wednesday afternoon, before Dr C W Iliffe.

William Jephcott, boatman, and son of the deceased, said that at his advanced age – 79 – his father was able to get a living, and there was no necessity for witness to contribute to his support. The Coroner : That was very commendable of your father. Witness was a simple lodger in his father's house – he did not pay any rent, but kept himself. On Sunday morning last, his father got up as usual and shaved his customers, but he was not well then ; he complained of giddiness and feeling sick. He ate a good dinner, and then put his head on the table and dozed, and when he tried to get up, he staggered and fell back in his chair. At his request, he made him some marsh mallow tea, of which he drank quite a quart, and later he had some meat and potatoes. At seven o'clock, he went to bed ; he did not then seem to be able to walk steadily. Witness retired about eleven o'clock, and soon afterwards was disturbed by a noise in his father's bedroom, and on forcing the door found him ill, with his head on the floor and his feet on the bed. He thought he would rally in a few minutes,

and that was the reason why he did not call in a medical man. His father was partly dressed and was choking, and he loosened his things and made him as comfortable as possible. He could not get him on the bed, and he made him a bed on the floor. His father died at 7.25 the next morning.

The Coroner commented upon the fact of the witness not calling in a doctor or neighbour, though he was with his parent for over seven hours.

The witness said he was confused and did not know what to do.

Dr J O Orton said he was called in after death, arriving at 8.30 am on Monday ; the deceased had then been dead half an hour or an hour. He thought that death was due to apoplexy caused by the bursting of a blood vessel on the brain. He would be dying from the time he fell out of bed.

The Coroner, in summing up, thought the son had been guilty of neglect in not obtaining assistance for his father.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony, and at their request, the Coroner censured the son, whose witness fee he also disallowed.

292 22 January 1904

ILLEGALLY EMPLOYING A BOY **William Bromwich**, boatman, living on the canal side, was summoned for wrongfully employing his son. Mrs Bromwich attended. The lad is of school age, and Attendance Officer Black stated that he had several times seen him at work on his father's boat, and that there had been proceedings for irregular attendance. Defendant had been cautioned for employing his son. A fine of 5s and costs was imposed.

293 11 March 1904

A VIOLENT DEFENDANT **William Job**, boatman, Foleshill, was summoned by Henry Eaton, landlord of the New Inn, Exhall, for refusing to quit his premises when requested on February 27th, also for doing wilful damage to a door and window at the same time and place. There was an old charge against defendant for refusing to quit the Saracen's Head at Foleshill on June 17th 1903, and also for doing wilful damage by breaking a pane of glass. Defendant was also charged with being drunk on the first mentioned date. Police-constable Veasey said he was sent for to the New Inn on Saturday, and found defendant using bad language. He charged him with being drunk and refusing to quit, and also with doing damage. Complainant said his attention was called to defendant, whose hat was off. He demanded to be served with beer, and refused to leave on being asked. Witness put him out, and he broke in again, forcing the bolt off the door and breaking a pane of glass. Defendant said he was sorry for the offence, but he had had a drop of drink. He had twice been sent to gaol in 1903, and Superintendent Prosser said he was a very violent character. He was ordered to pay £2 in all for the offences and damage ; in default 28 days.

294 29 July 1904

BOATMAN'S CURIOUS DEATH **James Parkes**, a boatman employed on a Coventry barge, lying in the canal basin at Diglis, Worcester, late at night slipped into the water between the quay and the boat. He was dragged out by the captain of the boat, **William Kibbles**. As Parkes said he was all right, Kibbles left him, but next morning found him dead. At the inquest by the Worcester City Coroner on Monday afternoon. Dr Mabyn Read said that on making a *post mortem* examination, he found the liver, spleen and kidneys congested due, as he thought, to the mode of death. The lungs were waterlogged, and the condition of the heart pointed to death from the water in the lungs causing suffocation. Parkes ought to have been treated after the immersion, and the water removed from the lungs. As Parkes had declined these attentions, the Coroner exonerated Kibbles and others from blame, and the jury returned a verdict of "Death from water on the lungs, caused by an accidental fall into the canal".

295 7 October 1904

Hillmorton

WASTING CANAL WATER At Rugby Court on Tuesday, **Charles Bromwich**, boatman, giving his address as Rugby Wharf, was charged with an offence against the bye laws of the Oxford Canal

Company, at Hillmorton Locks, on the 17th September, whereby he wasted the water of the company. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Mr M E T Wratishaw appeared for the Canal Company, and read the bye law under which the summons was taken out. He also produced a sketch showing how Bromwich should have passed through the locks. Defendant should have waited until another boat had passed through the lock, but he refused to wait, and pulled up the paddle, wasting the water in consequence. **Thomas Astell**, lock-keeper, Hillmorton, said on the day named, a Saturday, defendant came into the top lock from Braunston, going in the direction of Clifton. He was the captain of a pair of empty boats. His first boat was put into the top lock, and he was told to wait there for a full boat coming in the opposite direction. Defendant said he should not wait, and used bad language. There was a centre paddle between the lock he was in, and one at the side. Defendant drew this up, and witness turned it back, returning it to the position. Whilst so doing, defendant drew the bottom paddle and wasted three quarters of a lock full of water, and letting his boat out. **Frederick Chamberlain**, engineer for the Canal Company, said he prepared the sketch produced. By defendant's action, 27,000 gallons of water were wasted. The bye laws were exhibited at the toll offices and defendant knew their provisions perfectly well. Defendant, who had worked on the canal all his life, had nothing to say. He had never been summoned before. The Chairman said defendant would be fined £2, which was the minimum fine for an offence of this kind, but the Canal Company had generously agreed to pay £1 back to defendant, so that he would have to pay £1 including costs.

296 21 October 1904

Warwickshire Quarter Sessions

George Flateley (21), boatman, pleaded guilty to breaking into the house of Verna Green at Aston, and stealing a watch, two chains, five brooches, a gold ring and other jewellery. He was sentenced to six months hard labour.

297 9 December 1904

Coventry City Police

THEFT OF A BAG OF MAIZE **George Daniels**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing on the 6th inst from a store at the Canal Wharf, Bishop Street, one bag of maize, value 4s, the property of Messrs Robbins and Powers. George Taylor of the City Mills, mill manager for Messrs Robbins and Powers, said he saw the bag of maize about ten past two on Tuesday. It was then on a boat of which prisoner had charge. He made enquiries and interrogated prisoner, who said he took the bag to put sweepings in. There were two empty bags in the boat, along with a bag containing some other grain. The bag containing maize was half full. John Hafford, Leicester Street, a miller in the employ of the prosecuting firm, spoke to the bag of maize being in their warehouse on the canal wharf up to about 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning. Police-constable Norris took prisoner into custody, and he admitted putting the bag of maize on his boat. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and was fined 20s or seven days.

298 3 March 1905

PECULIAR CASE OF DROWNING At the Parish Offices on Monday afternoon, Dr C W Iliffe, Coroner, conducted an enquiry as to the death of **William Wilkinson** (58), boatman of Bedworth, who was drowned in the Coventry Canal on Saturday night last. Samuel Johnson, miner, Exhall, said that at 9.30 pm on Saturday, he saw Wilkinson on the canal side at Bedworth Hill. As he was near sighted, he conducted him across a plank which connected the towing-path with his barge, moored near the bridge. When about a hundred yards from the boat, he heard a splash and returning saw someone rise to the surface of the water. With a boat hook, he pulled the object to the side, and found it to be Wilkinson. Artificial respiration was tried without effect. The man was quite sober when witness left him a few minutes before. He had on several occasions helped Wilkinson from the canal into which he had fallen in the darkness. Wilkinson could not swim. The Coroner : All boatmen should be able to swim. George Henry Starkey, hatter, Bedworth Hill, said he saw deceased' at 6 pm on Saturday, when he was sober. He was in the habit of taking a "sup" to drink. Sergeant Booton said he had ascertained that deceased was in the habit of taking more to drink than

was good for him, but he could not get to know how much he had on Saturday night. **Ann Wilkinson**, the widow, said in consequence of his injured eyesight – caused by a pistol accident some years ago – her husband had often to crawl on his hands and knees across the plank connecting the tow path and the boat. She had on several occasions rescued him from the water. On Saturday night, he was wearing a very heavy jacket, which probably weighted him down in the water. On the way to Bedworth, earlier in the day, he had remarked that the heavy jacket would some day be the cause of his being drowned. This witness caused some amusement by saying that during her married life she had had a hard time, and if she had another husband, she would take care to select one that was able to keep her without work. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally drowned”.

299 17 March 1905 County Petty Sessions

GONE HOME William Job, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Foleshill on March 4th. He was also charged with wilfully breaking a window, the property of William Lombard, licensed victualler. He pleaded guilty to both charges, and Superintendent Prosser gave him a bad character. He was before the court five times last year, and had been to gaol eleven times in all. The Bench fined his 20s and costs, or one month, on the first charge, and ordered him to pay the damage and the costs for breaking the window. Prisoner : I will go home for another month.

300 3 November 1905 Easenhall

CRUELTY TO A BOAT HORSE At Rugby, on Tuesday, **James Stokes**, boatman, Braunston, was summoned for cruelty to a horse by working it while unfit at Easenhall on October 10th. He pleaded not guilty. Inspector Hooker said he was on the towing-path at Easenhall, and saw the horse drawing two empty boats. Defendant stopped at the Boat Inn, and as he did not resume his journey in twenty minutes, he went to him and asked him where the horse was. He at first declined to tell him, but he said he should go and find it, and he then pointed to a stable on the other side of the canal. Witness and Sergeant Sharpe examined the animal, which they found had a large wound on each shoulder. Some greasy substance had been smeared over the wounds. Both shoulders were much inflamed. On examining the breast strap, he found blood adhering to the inside of it. When the harness was put on, it was found that the strap covered both wounds, and defendant said he knew it rubbed the horse a bit. Defendant said the sores were made by an ordinary collar and he substituted the breast collar. This did not rub the wounds. He had been tied up at Braunston three days because of the wounds, and they were healing when the Inspector saw the horse. Inspector Hooker added that defendant had been told that he (witness) was examining boat horses, and he tied up very early that day, perhaps thinking that he had not been seen. Fined £2 including costs.

301 22 December 1905 County Petty Sessions

John Coley, boatman of Foleshill, was summoned at the instance of the London and North Western Railway Company for stealing 30lbs of coal, value 6d, at Hawkesbury Stop on the 9th inst. Police-constable O'Connor spoke to surprising defendant and his two children in a siding at Hawkesbury Station. They were dodging about between the trucks picking up coal, and he said he had received permission. Defendant said he understood from neighbours that they were entitled to pick up waste coal. This was the first time he had been in trouble. Defendant was severely admonished for teaching his children to steal ; but as this was his first offence, he was bound over.

302 29 December 1905 Foleshill

DRUNK For being drunk at Foleshill on Christmas Day, **William Job**, boatman, no fixed abode, was ordered to pay 5s and costs ; in default, seven days.

303 4 January 1907 County Petty Sessions

William Henry Deverson, boatman, charged by Inspector Mayhew of the NSPCC with neglecting

his twelve year old son at Foleshill, was fined 10s and costs, and the child was ordered to be sent to an industrial school until 16 years old.

304 17 May 1907 County Petty Sessions

A SERIOUS CHARGE Percival William Walker, canal boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with indecent exposure at Wyken on the 19th ult.

Mr West (headmaster of Wyken School) said that in consequence of complaints, he stopped the prisoner, who denied having done anything disrespectful. Prisoner asked him not to get him into any more trouble, as he had had enough already. It was enough to make a man drown himself.

Prisoner was sentenced to six weeks hard labour.

305 31 May 1907 Elmdon

DROWNING CASE An inquest was held on Tuesday at Solihull by Mr Christopher as to the death of John O'Rourke (47), whose body was found in the Birmingham and Warwick Canal at Solihull on Monday. Deceased's widow said she had not seen her husband for seven years, the last occasion being when he had just come out of gaol after serving three months imprisonment for neglecting to support her and the children. She did not know where he had been living or what he had been doing since.

John Raven, retired constable, and now proprietor of the Anchor Inn, Elmdon Heath, said that on Sunday evening about six o'clock, the deceased and another man, a stranger, came to the house. He had known deceased for many years, but had not seen him lately. He had forbidden him to come inside the house because of his bad language. He gave deceased a pint of beer, however, and told him to drink it outside. Witness was then called away for half an hour, and when he came back about eight o'clock, deceased and his companion were in the house. He told deceased to get out of the house as quickly as he could, or he would have to be put out. Deceased and his companion then went, and witness watched them across the fields in the direction of the canal bridge, near which deceased's body was found.

Fred George Hewins, the boatman who found the body at five o'clock on Monday morning, said that it was in the middle of the canal. At the bank side were footmarks, as though someone had slipped or climbed up the bank.

Several jurymen expressed the opinion that the evidence of the deceased's companion ought to be obtained, and the enquiry was eventually adjourned till Saturday, to give the police an opportunity of finding the missing witness.

306 16 August 1907 Monks Kirby

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At Rugby on Tuesday, **George Alford**, boatman, New Brentford, was summoned by Inspector Hooker, RSPCA, for working a horse while in an unfit condition at Monks Kirby on June 24th, and **Joseph Taylor**, boatman, New Brentford, was summoned for causing the animal to be worked. Defendants pleaded guilty. Sergeant Sharp stated that at 10.15 on the morning named, he was on duty near the canal, and saw Alford driving the horse, which was attached to two empty canal boats. Under the collar on the off side, witness found two raw wounds and a large lump of the size of an egg, and on the near side, he found a wound of the size of a shilling. The wounds were covered with a black substance, and matter was oozing from them. Defendants admitted that they knew the horse was pinched, but said they were frightened to dress the wounds. The Inspector, he said, had to tie the animal's mouth before he could examine the wounds. Defendants were each fined 5s and the costs 5s.

307 22 November 1907

SUFFOCATED ON A BOAT The first inquest related to the death of **John Henry Whitehouse**, 36, a boatman of no settled abode.

John Frank Whitehouse, caster, 156 High Street, Smethwick, said that deceased was his brother, Up to a few days ago, he regarded him as in good health. He last saw him on the 14th inst. He did not

speak to him, as he was with another man. He did not know that it was his intention to come to Coventry.

William Neale, boatman, of the “*Erewash*”, said he had known deceased for some time, but only by name a few days ago. On Thursday last week, he saw him at Smethwick, and he asked him if he could go with him on his boat as he was out of work, and might get employment elsewhere. He started with him in his boat, and worked on the Friday, and on the following day morning, when he went to call him, he was dead. He did not know that he was suffocated in the place where he slept – the forehold – which was nine feet by seven feet. He had himself slept in the same place, which had a stove pipe, and there was a lid on the top of the hold which was open two inches when he found deceased.

Police-constable Norton said he was called to the boat, which was moored at Leicester Row. He thought deceased died from suffocation on account of not receiving sufficient fresh air.

Dr Phillips, who examined the body, said the evidences he found on the body were consistent with suffocation. Not sufficient air came into the room, and the fire in the hold tended to produce noxious gases.

Verdict accordingly.

308 27 December 1907

COVENTRY BOATMAN DROWNED Dr Iliffe held an enquiry on Friday respecting the death of a Coventry boatman, named **Matthew Lunn** (36?), who was drowned in the Coventry and Avon Canal at Atherstone. Deceased was in charge of an empty canal boat, which he was working through one of the locks. In jumping from one gate to the other, he slipped and fell into the water, a distance of about seven feet. His wife, who had gone on to the next lock, was ignorant of what had happened. His body was seen in the water shortly afterwards by another boatwoman, who procured a boat hook and held him until assistance arrived. He was quite dead when got out. On the back of his head was a wound caused by falling against the wall of the lock. One of the witnesses, a boatman, called attention to the dangerous condition of the lock gates at Atherstone, and suggested that permanent platforms should be fixed to them, so that boatmen might step from one to another in safety. The jury returned a verdict of “Asphyxia caused by drowning” and recommended that the suggestion made by the witness should be forwarded to the Coventry Canal Company.

309 25 March 1910

County Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S THEFT **William Lunn**, canal boatman, Hill Street, Coventry, was charged with stealing £5 12s 3d of which he was bailee, the money of his employer, Rayner Perkins, coal merchant, Longford on March 7th.

310 29 April 1910

County Petty Sessions

BOATMAN'S THEFT **William Taylor**, canal boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing a tunic, a pair of trousers, three shirts, two undershirts, two pairs of stockings, two razors and cases, and a pocket knife, value £1, the property of **John Wilson**, canal boatman, Bedworth, on March 11th.

Prosecutor said he worked with his father on a steam canal boat, and prisoner had been with them six weeks. On Thursday March 10th, they stopped at Bedworth Hill, and it was while they were there that the articles were missed.

Police-sergeant Skidmore said that when prisoner was first told he was suspected of the theft, he denied any knowledge of it. Witness pointed out that he was wearing the trousers and the tunic, and then he admitted the offence. He made a statement, in which he said that on the morning of the 11th, he got up about five, leaving John Wilson and his father in bed. He put on the trousers and tunic and one of the shirts, and wrapped the other things up into a bundle. He walked along the canal path to Braunston and there he got onto a boat and went to London and then to Birmingham. When passing Camp Hill, he threw the bundle over the hedge. The knife he gave to a man at Snow Hill near Birmingham

When prisoner was charged, he said, "I am very sorry. It was a silly trick and I will see it don't occur again".

Prisoner, who had been previously convicted of a similar offence, was sentenced to two months hard labour.

311 9 February 1911

TIMBER STOLEN BY A CANAL BARGEMAN Samuel Wise, Irongate Wharf, Paddington, was charged with stealing a quantity of wood, value 14s, the property of Messrs Adams, Cartwright and Co.

Mr S R Masser (Messrs Hughes and Masser) appeared to prosecute.

Lawrence Cartwright, Rosemont, Holyhead Road, Coventry, a member of the prosecuting firm, said they employed Mr John Griffiths of Bedworth, to carry timber from London to Coventry. On January 17th, prisoner brought a load of white wood boards, and while delivering these, he would have access to the whole of the yard. On Monday January 23rd, witness went, with Detective Sergeant Cox, to the Jolly Colliers at Sowe, and the licensee showed him about 70 feet of timber in his loft. This was the property of the firm.

Prisoner : Was that timber ever on your wharf? I can only presume that it was, inasmuch as it was exactly the same as that on our wharf.

John Griffiths, canal carrier, Bedworth, who employed prisoner, stated that such wood as that produced would not be used for packing ; in fact, such a cargo of wood would not require packing. Even if it were used for this purpose, the wood would be the property of the prosecutors.

Alfred Wm Lansdon, licensee of the Jolly Colliers, Sowe Common, stated that at 11.30 am on January 18th, he was in the Boat Inn, Walsgrave, when prisoner asked him if he could do with a bit of wood. This was the first time he had seen him, and he asked him if it were "straight". Prisoner replied that it was, and witness then told him that he could do with a bit for firewood. He only saw the wood in the distance. Prisoner asked him 3s for the wood, and this he paid. The wood was placed in the coal hole at his house, and he afterwards removed it to the loft.

Detective Sergeant Cox stated that when the warrant was issued, he telephoned to the Boxmoor Police and prisoner was arrested at Tring. When the warrant was read over to him, he made a statement, which he signed, and in which he said that if the wood were anybody's, it was Mr Griffiths'. It was used for packing, and Mr Griffiths' man put it in his boat at Brentford.

Prisoner pleaded guilty, and said he would have taken the wood back to Brentford, but it was in his way for loading.

He was given a good character, and the Chairman said they were unwilling to send him to prison, as this was his first offence. He would be fined 40s and costs, 28 days in default.

The witness Lansdon was called, and the Chairman, addressing him, said : The Bench are not at all satisfied with the way you have connected with the matter or the way in which you have given your evidence. It is most unsatisfactory. You had no right to have bought the wood as firewood, when you knew it was not firewood. The Bench are so dissatisfied that your expenses will be disallowed.

312 14 April 1911

County Petty Sessions

CANAL BOAT THEFT Joseph Clarke, canal boatman, no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to stealing from the cabin of **Jesse Moore**, another canal boatman, a gent's metal watch, steel watch chain, pocket knife, muffler and mouth organ, value 7s 6d.

Prosecutor said that on April 5th, he saw prisoner on the boat at Bedworth. When later he returned to the boat, he found that he was gone, and a number of articles, which had been in his son's cabin in the boat, were missing. Prisoner had access to the cabin.

PC Riley said he received prisoner from the Birmingham Police on April 18th, and charged him with the theft. He replied, "Yes, I had them. I sold the watch for 2s on the road between Coventry and Leamington. I took 2d for the handkerchief and 1d for the knife.

Superintendent Draker described the prisoner as a thorough young waster. There were many previous convictions against him.

Prisoner was sentenced to two months hard labour.

313 21 April 1911

Rugby Petty Sessions

DOG LICENCE CASES Summons for keeping a dog without a licence : **Andrew Lunn**, boatman, Stretton-under-Fosse. Fined 10s including costs.

314 1 July 1911

Coventry City Police

BROTHERS IN THE DOCK **Geo Bromage**, boatman, 35 Drapers Fields, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Drapers Fields on June 22nd, and his brother, **Thomas Bromage**, boatman, of no fixed abode, was charged with assaulting PC Haine, and both pleaded guilty.

PC Raine said that at 6.15 pm, he advised Geo Bromage to go home, as he was behaving violently, and tried to kick everyone near him. He refused to go away, and his language was something abominable. People tried to carry him away, but he kicked and hit everybody near him. He then said he would have a go at witness, and he took a running kick at him. Witness closed with him and they fell down. He handcuffed prisoner, who was behaving very violently. In Leicester Row, Thomas Bromage caught hold of him round the neck and nearly strangled him. After freeing himself, he was struck on the back of the head. A man came to his assistance, and held Thomas Bromage until the arrival of another constable.

Geo Bromage said he was sorry. He did not know anything about it until they told him next morning. He wondered why he was there when he woke.

The Chairman : Then you must have been very drunk.

Prisoner : I must have been. I have never been in that condition before.

Thos Bromage said he got excited. He did not remember saying anything to the police or interfering with them.

The Chairman : You remember assaulting the policeman?

Prisoner : No I don't remember anything about that, no more than that the policeman caught hold of me.

The Chairman said that at times of public rejoicing, it was no excuse for men to get drunk. George would be fined 5s and costs, 7 days in default, and Thomas would be fined 10s and costs, 14 days in default.

[Note : It was Coronation Day]

315 6 October 1911

BODY FOUND IN THE CANAL The body of a baby was found in the canal basin at Exhall last week by a boatman named **William Tonks**, and an enquiry into the circumstances was held by the Coroner (Dr C W Iliffe) at Foleshill Workhouse on Friday afternoon.

Dr Webster said he was of opinion that the child had not had a separate existence. The body had been in the water about ten days.

P C Williams said he had been unable to obtain any information as to the parentage of the child.

The Jury returned an open verdict, stating that there was no evidence to show how the body got into the canal.

316 3 November 1911

BOATMAN AND HIS HORSE **John Kent**, boatman, Bedworth Hill, Coventry, was summoned for working a horse in an unfit state at Clifton-on-Dunsmore, on October 11th. Defendant said the horse was in good condition. P C Anderton said the horse was going from side to side, and had a wound under the collar. A fine of 5s and costs was imposed.

317 1 March 1912

Coventry City Police

BOATMAN AND HIS HORSE – HEAVY FINE FOR CRUELTY **Fredk Rawlings**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with cruelty to a horse at Little Heath on February 22, by working it while in an unfit state.

Samuel Davenport stated that he saw the horse lying on the canal side near Little Heath Bridge at 11 o'clock in the morning. Defendant and two others were trying to get the animal up, and one of them was beating it with a piece of cord. The horse was in such a state that it could not stand. They got it on to its front legs, but it fell over again.

PC Heaven stated that in consequence of a telephone message from the Rev W Dore Rudgard, he went along the canal side, and met defendant with the horse, which was stumbling every few yards and could scarcely stand. Defendant said he had to knock it about to get it up. The horse was subsequently destroyed.

Francis Charles Golden, veterinary surgeon, said the horse was quite unfit for work, and he advised its destruction.

A fine of £5 and costs (£6 15s in all), 28 days in default, was imposed.

The Chairman said they considered it a very bad case. He had worked the horse until he squeezed the last drop of life out of it.

318 22 March 1912 County Petty Sessions

BOATMAN INJURED BY STONE THROWING William Jones, Thomas Faulks and William Jacques, miners, Foleshill, were summoned by **Frederick Rawlings**, canal boatman, for throwing stones at Foleshill on March 7.

Rawlings said he was going by the New Inn with a boat load of stones, and while he was having his tea, stones were thrown at the boat. He looked up to see where they were coming from, and one hit him on the eye, causing a wound. He chased the lads, but could not overtake them.

Defendants said that the boy with the horse shot at them with a catapult, but complainant denied that he had a catapult.

Supt Drakeley said the wound was about an inch wide and went to the bone. He had to dress it. Stone throwing was a grave danger in the district. These and other lads were always at it.

Fined 2s 6d and costs.

319 31 May 1912 Coventry City Police

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY AT THE FAIR **Arthur Bromage**, boatman, 35 Drapers Fields, charged with being drunk and disorderly in Pool Meadow on Whit Monday, pleaded guilty.

PC Damm said that at 1.30 pm, he was on duty in Pool Meadow and saw prisoner behaving in a disorderly manner by shouting.

Fined 2s 6d and costs.

320 14 June 1912 County Petty Sessions

William Randle, miner, Bedworth and **Alfred Hone**, boatman, Bedworth Hill, summoned for allowing a dog to be at large and not under proper control at Bedworth on June 3 at midnight, were each fined 5s and costs.

321 26 July 1912 County Petty Sessions

COMMITTED FOR TRIAL **Reuben Lewis Allington**, labourer, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing £30 and a cheque for £2 10s, the property of **John Grantham**, boatman, Stragglers Inn, Banbury, in October 1910.

The evidence for the prosecution was that on September 23 1910, prisoner was engaged by prosecutor, who was then with his boat at Hawkesbury Stop. On October 2 they both went to bed in the cabin of the boat, and the money and cheque were in the pocket of prosecutor's trousers. In the morning, he found that the prisoner had gone and the money and cheque had disappeared. A warrant was issued for prisoner's arrest, and he was traced by Inspector Yardley to Hinckley and Burton, but no further. Details were circulated, but prisoner was not arrested until July 9, when he was apprehended at Kineton. He said he knew nothing about the money.

Prosecutor said that the reason he had so much money in his possession was that he had been paid about £15. Prisoner knew he had received the money. He denied the suggestion that he was drunk

on this night.

Prisoner gave evidence, and said that on the night of October 2 1910, prosecutor was helplessly drunk. He took him to the boat and put him to bed. He came away about a quarter to four in the morning, because he saw that he would have to do all the work and not get much for it. He made his way to Moira, Leicestershire. He denied taking the money. Since that time, he made four trips in the liner *Dover Castle* as trimmer, and then as Seaman. He would have made a fifth trip but for a drop of beer.

Prisoner was committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

322 13 September 1912 County Petty Sessions

Thomas Andrews jun, boatman, Long Buckby Lochs, near Daventry, and **Charles Woodhouse**, boatman, Kilworth Wharf, near Lutterworth, were summoned for day poaching on land, the property of the Oxford Canal Co. The case against Woodhouse was taken first.

Mr W Maddocks prosecuted, and read an extract from the Company's Act forbidding any boatman from carrying a gun while on the boats.

Harry Marchant, gamekeeper, said he saw the defendant shoot a rabbit from the boat at Nettle Hill, Coombe Fields.

Fined 5s and costs.

The case against Andrews was a similar one.

Harry Aldridge, Bell Green, said he saw defendant shoot from a boat, and a number of rabbits ran away.

Fined 5s and costs.

323 4 October 1912 County Petty Sessions

“POP” AND WHISKEY **Herbert Billingham**, canal boatman, Nuneaton, and his wife, were summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Foleshill on September 21.

PS Lake said defendants could be heard half a mile away, and two or three people had to get up.

Mrs Billingham said she only had two bottles of “pop” with threepenny worth of whiskey in each.

Fined 2s 6d and costs.

324 18 October 1912 Adjourned Quarter Sessions

ROBBING HIS EMPLOYER **Reuben Lewis Allington** (39), labourer, was indicted on a charge of stealing the sum of £30, the money of **John Grantham**, at Foleshill, on October 2 1910.

Mr J F Eales (instructed by Messrs Kirby and Sons) appeared to prosecute, and Mr R A Willes (instructed by Messrs Hughes and Masser) defended prisoner.

Mr Eales said prosecutor was a canal boatman, and on September 23 1910, he engaged prisoner to work for him. On Saturday October 1, prosecutor, with his canal boat and the prisoner, arrived at Hawkesbury Stop, Foleshill. They were together that evening, and to the knowledge of the prisoner, the prosecutor was paid a certain sum in gold, and when he went to bed he had in his trousers pocket a bag containing something like £30 in gold, and a cheque for £2 10s. They slept in the same bed in the boat. Prosecutor put his trousers, in which was the bag of money, on the floor, and prisoner slept on the near side, thus being able to get out of bed without having to pass over or disturb prisoner. At 4 o'clock next morning, prosecutor woke and found prisoner had disappeared, that his trousers had been moved, and that the bag of gold and the cheque had disappeared. From that day until the prisoner was brought before the magistrates in September this year, he never saw prisoner again. Later on, prisoner turned up in Leicestershire. He called at the Boat Inn, Measham, and tendered half a sovereign in payment. Subsequently, he was seen at Moira, there went into a public house and bought some beer and bread and cheese, besides “standing treat” to another man in the house, saying he was not short of money.

After the case for the prosecution, Mr Willes put prisoner in the witness box. In his evidence, he said he was a native of Fenny Compton. He alleged that on the night of October 1, prosecutor was under the influence of drink (which had been denied by witnesses for the prosecution). He did not

take the money, and did not know that prosecutor had the money. The reason he did not tell him he was going to leave was because he was under the influence of drink. Had he been sober, he should certainly have told him. When he left prosecutor, he had 4s 6d. He subsequently went to sea as a stoker. He did not know anything about this affair until a month before last Easter. It was a shilling he changed, not half a sovereign, and he denied treating anybody in a public house.

Mr Pollard, grocer at Fenny Compton, said he had known prisoner from his youth. He had borne a very good character, and witness had trusted him with considerable sums. Some hundreds of pounds had passed through his hands.

A letter was also read from a clergyman, giving him a good character.

The Jury found prisoner guilty. The fact that he had been in prison for three months, and that it was his first offence, was taken into consideration, and sentence of two months hard labour was passed.

325 17 February 1914

A WARNING **David Neale**, a boatman of Grange Road, Foleshill, was summoned for permitting a child under eleven years of age to sell newspapers in Longford Road, Foleshill. The defendant did not appear, his wife saying that he was "away with the boat". P S Lake stated that on the 28th ult at 7.30 pm, he saw the defendant's son, aged 10 years, selling papers. Witness asked him if his father knew he was selling papers, and he replied, "Yes". Witness told him to tell his father that he was too young to trade, and the boy promised he would. A few days later, when witness saw the defendant, he said that the lad was still selling papers – he might as well do that to keep him out of mischief. Superintendent Drakeley said that as the case was the first of its kind which had been brought at that court, he did not press for a penalty – he trusted it would act as a warning. The magistrates therefore dismissed the case on payment of the costs.

326 7 April 1914

Quarter Sessions

TRIALS OF PRISONERS **William Holloway** (19), boatman, pleaded guilty to having stolen at Napton on March 20th a silver watch and metal chain, the property of **James Sanders**.

Mr Chamberlayne prosecuted, and stated that Sanders gave the prisoner a job, and that night they slept in the same boat. Next morning, prosecutor went out to light a fire, leaving his watch and chain on a peg; and on returning, he found that his property was gone, and with it Holloway.

The accused, who had been previously convicted, was sent to a Borstal Institute for three years.

327 6 May 1914

WOMAN RESCUED FROM CANAL A woman was rescued from the Coventry Canal on Tuesday morning. It appears that about 6.00, as a boat was proceeding near the Navigation Bridge, a son of the boatman noticed the woman in the water. The attention of the boatman, **Arthur Jinks**, and a passer by named Allen, being called, a boat hook was utilised, and the woman was taken from the water. Suffering from shock, and apparently not having been long in the canal, the woman was conveyed in the horsed ambulance to the Hospital. Inquiries show her name is Annie Whittaker, of 41 Highfield Road, and that her condition is not serious.

328 13 May 1914

BREACH OF CANAL BYE LAWS- BOATMAN FINED AT ATHERSTONE **Frank Woodhouse**, boatman in the employ of Messrs C Nelson and Co, was convicted and fined 23s, including costs, at the Atherstone Police Court on the 12th instant for working his boat in the Atherstone Locks in a manner contrary to the byelaws of the canal company.

Mr W Maddocks, who appeared on behalf of the Canal Company, informed the Bench that it was not desired to press the case but for it to be known that boatmen and others must adhere to the rules and regulations, Mr Maddocks explained the nature of the offence in question, which was that defendant, whilst in charge of a boat plying on the Canal Company navigations, turned into the entire gate of lock No 10.

Evidence was given to the effect that the barge, when in the lock, must have been forcibly brought

into contact with the gate by means of the horse pulling it to such an extent that defendant was able to push in his windlass which he had unshipped for the purpose, thereby allowing the water to enter the lock otherwise than through the proper sluices.

329

23 July 1914

63 YEARS CANAL SERVICE

MR A ATKINS OF HAWKESBURY

As reported yesterday, Mr Arthur Atkins of Canal House, Hawkesbury, who will retire on October 1 next from the staff of the Oxford and Coventry Canal Companies with 63 years service to his credit, remembers well a visit paid to Braunston by Charles Dickens and Leigh Hunt some 32 years ago. Dickens in an article on inland canals mentioned a canal boatman's water can, which had been painted by Mr Atkins with landscapes and flowers, and during his visit, the famous novelist entrusted young Atkins with several letters to post, among which was one to George Eliot.



330 5 February 1915

County Police Cases

BAD LANGUAGE Charged with using bad language at Wyken, **Joseph Brittain**, canal boatman, Wyken, did not appear, but wrote pleading guilty. P C Pink said defendant made use of very indecent language to his wife. A fine of 5s and costs was imposed.

331 5 March 1915

County Police Court

PONY ILL-TREATED **John Carter**, boatman, 34 Draper's Fields, Coventry, was summoned for ill-treating a pony on the canal side at Longford, Foleshill, on March 1st. Sergeant Lake saw defendant thrashing the animal, which was attached to an empty barge. The horse was in a lean

condition. Defendant denied the charge, but the Bench found the charge proved and fined him 20s and costs, or in default 14 days.

332 4 June 1915

BAD LANGUAGE **Edward Selwood**, boatman, 3 Taskers Green, West Bromwich, was summoned for using bad language, the canal side at Longford being the place where the offence was stated to have been committed. He was ordered to pay a fine of 5s.

333 18 June 1915

BOATMAN IN TROUBLE Summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Hawkesbury Stop, Foleshill, on June 12th, **Frank French**, boatman, no fixed abode, pleaded not guilty. P C Kielling found defendant drunk and shouting, and he was taken home by other boat people. Fined 9s 6d.

334 2 July 1915

County Police Cases

TRESPASSING ON RAILWAY GROUND John Hirons, miner, Black Horse Road, Foleshill ; Annie Marie Bennett, married, Hawkesbury Stop ; Thomas Twigger, miner, Parkstone Road, Foleshill ; Albert Dunham, miner, Lenton's Lane, Sowe ; **Joseph Ward**, boatman, Hawkesbury Stop, were each summoned for trespassing on the L and NW Railway between Black Horse Road and Trusses Bridge, Foleshill. The cases were proved by Sergeant Lake and Detective McFall. The latter stated that the railway company looked upon these offences as very serious. A number of people had been knocked down, and injured or killed, and it was thought necessary to take some steps to stop them trespassing. It was a short cut, and people made great use of it, although there were notice boards warning trespassers. Ward, who did not appear, was fined 27s, and the other defendants were fined 17s.

335 20 September 1915

DIED IN CANAL BOAT – SAD CASE FROM HAWKESBURY The sudden death of a child living on the canal boat *Cygnets*, at present moored at Hawkesbury Stop, Foleshill, was investigated by the coroner (Dr C W Iliffe) and a jury, at the Board Room of the Foleshill Workhouse this morning, the deceased being **Ruth Badley**, the eleven month old daughter of **John Badley**, a canal boatman.

Evidence of identification was given by the mother, **Catherine Badley**, who stated that the boat arrived at Hawkesbury Stop on Friday evening. There were five aboard – mother, father and three children. The baby was quite well on Saturday morning, and witness went to Coventry on business. Returning about noon, the mother found the child seriously ill, death taking place quarter of an hour later. The baby, witness later stated, had suffered from a sickness for two or three days prior to her death. Whilst witness was away, a girl of twelve was left in charge of the boat. Sergeant Atkinson spoke to visiting the *Cygnets*, and finding the cabin clean and well ventilated. Dr Webster said the child was well nourished, but died from exhaustion following an attack of diarrhoea set up by taking unsuitable food, probably fruit.

A verdict to this effect was recorded, the jury expressing the opinion that the parents should have sought earlier medical advice.

336 19 November 1915

Joseph Persall, boatman, no fixed abode, was ordered to pay 7s 6d for being drunk and disorderly in High Street, Bedworth on November 18th.

337 29 December 1916

Coventry Police Court

DRUNKENNESS Drunk in charge of a horse on the Longford Road, Foleshill, was the information against **William Jones**, boatman of Bedworth. The man pleaded guilty, and it was stated that he was very drunk, in charge of a boat horse. There was a previous conviction, and Jones was now fined 7s 6d, in default seven days.

338 24 April 1917

County Police Cases

CRUELTY TO A MULE **Alfred Hone**, boatman, Old Wharf, Banbury, summoned for cruelty to a mule by working it while lame at Ansty on April 14th, pleaded not guilty. P C Walker stated that the animal, which was assisting in the drawing of two canal boats, was very lame, and the defendant was urging it along. Hone said the mule was thrown over by another animal running away, and the accident happened only a short time before the constable appeared. A fine of 60s was imposed.

339 13 July 1917

A DOUBLE ATTESTATION A canal boatman named **Harold Screen** was charged at Nuneaton on Thursday with obtaining by false pretences 2s 9d, the monies of H M Government. It appeared that the prisoner attested at Coventry, and drew 2s 9d, and on July 9th, he went through a similar proceeding at Nuneaton, and received another 2s 9d. The case was dismissed on the man undertaking to return 2s 9d.

340 31 August 1917

MINOR OFFENCES **Joseph Bricknell**, boatman, 326 Grange Road, Foleshill, pleaded guilty to cycling without a front white light and a rear red light at Foleshill. He was fined 7s 6d in one case and ordered to pay the expenses in the other.

341 31 May 1918

CYCLISTS' OFFENCES **Harry Moore**, boatman, Nuneaton, for riding a bicycle without a rear light. Fined 7s 6d.

342 30 July 1918

CHILD FALLS INTO THE CANAL – SAD FATALITY IN COVENTRY An inquest was held at the Coventry Police Court this afternoon by the coroner, Dr C W Iliffe, concerning the death of **Joseph Mellor**, aged 3 years, son of **Ernest Mellor**, boatman, employed by **John Griffiths**, canal carrier, Bedworth. The evidence of **Jemima Mellor**, the mother of deceased, was to the effect that at noon on July 29th, the child was with her, near the boat. They were stationary opposite the Cartwright wharf, and witness was in conversation with another boatwoman. The child walked along the bank of the canal on the wharf side. She missed him in a few minutes and went in search of him, but he was not to be seen on the bank or in the street. She then looked in the canal and saw him lying in the bottom.

343 20 December 1918

THREE DEATHS FROM MUSTARD GAS An inquest at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, on Thursday, on Richard Knowles, a Liverpool engineer and **John Shaw**, a canal boatman, who died after inhaling mustard gas, was adjourned for a fortnight so that doctors' evidence may be sent to the War Office.

At an inquest last week on the 10 year old son of a canal boatman, a doctor said he was in the boat lying ill with double pneumonia, and his death was accelerated by gas poisoning.

It was stated that the gas escaped accidentally from a Government factory and passed in a wave over the town.