

**BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**  
**BOATMAN ARTICLES 1881 TO 1890**

**1      January 5 1881                      Worcester Quarter Sessions**

STEALING WHISKY AT STOKE PRIOR **William Allen** (23), boatman, and George Goodwin (21), labourer, pleaded guilty to stealing eight bottles of whisky, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, the property of James Webb. Two months hard labour each.

**2      January 5 1881**

NEWS OF THE DAY At the Stafford Assizes, yesterday. Mr Commissioner Wills Q C, had before him for sentence a number of prisoners charged with passing counterfeit coin in the vicinity of Wolverhampton, Walsall and West Bromwich, who were convicted on Wednesday. In all these cases the smashers went to small shopkeepers, and, purchasing a trifling article, tendered a counterfeit florin in payment. The learned Commissioner sentenced George Brown, a locksmith, who had been previously convicted of a like offence, to five years penal servitude; John Dean and Henry Eveson, horsedealers, to twelve months imprisonment each; William Godfrey, labourer, to six months; George Fuel, slater, to twelve months; **John Farley**, boatman, to six months; and Harriet Davies to six months imprisonment.

**3      April 11 1881                      Birmingham Police Court**

ALLEGED PERJURY **Thomas James Cooper**, boatman, of Ingleby Street, was committed to the Assizes for trial on the charge of committing perjury in a case against Thomas Jones, tried at the Birmingham Police Court, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March.

A WARNING TO BOATMEN The following persons were summoned at the instance of Mr Thomas Hastings Dale, inspector under the Canal Boats Act, for using canal boats as dwellings without having them duly registered :- **Richard Dayus**, St John's, Worcester; **Shadrach Speak**, Factory Street, Darlaston; and **Henry Griffin**, Birmingham, were each fined 5s and costs. The inspector stated that he had decided to deal with every contravention of the Act which came under his notice.

**4      April 15 1881                      Birmingham Police Court**

LEAVING CANAL BOATS For leaving two boats adrift and unattended in the canal of the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company with intent to evade payment of toll, **William Wilson** (24), boatman, of Cross Street, Smethwick, was fined 40s and costs, or a month in default.

**5      May 4 1881                      Wolverhampton**

RESCUED FROM DROWNING **Joseph Price**, a boatman, employed by the Shropshire Union Company, saw, on Sunday night, a woman who appeared to be in a respectable position floating in the canal, near to his boat, which was lying in Canal Street. He got her out with a boat hook, and found that she was insensible. Soon, however, she recovered consciousness, and walked away without giving her name.

**6      May 4 1881**

NEWS OF THE DAY At the Kidderminster Police Court, on Saturday, **James Blunt**, a boatman, was remanded on a charge of attempting to drown Elizabeth Yarnold. The prosecutrix went with the prisoner to his boat, and as she refused to stay all night he pushed her into the water; but she was rescued by a man and a woman who were in the same boat.

**7      May 9 1881**

CHARGE OF ATTEMPTING TO DROWN A WOMAN At the Kidderminster Police Court, on Saturday, before Messrs H R Willis (the Mayor) and T Banks, **James Blunt**, boatman, was charged with attempting to drown Elizabeth Yarnold. The prosecutrix said she was a married woman, and

lodged in Worcester Street. On Friday night she had been at the Fleece, and left it at eleven o'clock, in company with the prisoner, Jane Pagett and a young man. They all went to the Old Wharf together. The two men asked them to go into the cabin of a boat to have some drink, and prisoner wanted her to stay all night in the boat. She refused, and he said she would have to stay all night, and put out the candle. She asked him to light the candle, and said she would go out of the boat. She got out of the cabin. Prisoner caught hold of her as she got up to go out, but she got out. Pagett had got out of the cabin before her. Witness had got just outside the cabin, and prisoner pushed her into the canal. She cried out, "Save me, for the sake of my children". The water was not over her head. Jane Pagett and the man with her helped her out. She was in the water five minutes before she was rescued. The Clerk suggested that as it was a serious charge made against the prisoner, he should have the opportunity of getting legal advice. It was a very serious charge if substantiated. The Bench then remanded the prisoner until today.

### **8 May 4 1881**

**THE ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER AT KIDDERMINSTER** At the Kidderminster Police Court, yesterday, before Mr H R Willis (the Mayor), T Banks, W Green, W Boycot and S Stretton, **James Blunt**, boatman, was brought up on remand charged with attempting to murder Elizabeth Yarnold. Mr Thursfield prosecuted, and Mr Bagster appeared for the prisoner. Prosecutrix said she was the wife of a labourer and lived in lodgings. On Friday night she was at the Fleece Inn, and at eleven o'clock left the house in company with the prisoner and another man and a young woman named Patchett. Prisoner asked her to go to Patchett's to have something to drink but instead of this they went to the cabin of a boat on the canal. The men brought half a pint of rum, and they all drank tea with the rum in it. Witness then said she would go home to her husband, but prisoner said she should stay all night, and he put the candle out and began to pull her about. She got out of the cabin, and the prisoner followed and pushed her with his hand. She fell into the canal, and cried out for help. Patchett caught hold of her hand, but the men did nothing to help till after she had been in the water about five minutes, when prisoner's companion at last helped her out. The water was up to her neck in the canal. Cross-examined: She denied that there was beer as well as rum in the boat. Pressed as to why she went to the boat, witness said she merely went to have some of the rum. She thought she was in the boat half an hour. Jane Patchett corroborated prosecutrix's statement in part, but said she did not see prisoner push prosecutrix into the canal. She heard prisoner say, "If you are going home, go, you ----," and she then heard a splash. Prosecutrix cried out for help, but neither of the men offered to help her. Prisoner was laughing. Witness pulled off her hat and shawl, and said if no one would save the woman she would. She stooped down and caught her by the hand, but she could not pull her out. At last prisoner's companion helped witness to get her out.

The Bench said they did not think there was sufficient evidence for them to send the case for trial. They should discharge the prisoner.

### **9 May 24 1881 Hanley**

**CRUELTY TO HORSES** At the Stipendiary Court, yesterday, **William Grimes**, boatman, was charged with working a horse which was diseased in the foot, and had sores on the shoulders, and was ordered to pay £2 2s 6d.

### **10 June 28 1881**

**ASSAULTS BY MILITIAMEN** Yesterday, at the Warwick Police Court, before Mr F W Arkwright (mayor), Alderman Nelson, and Mr J Yeoman Robins, Herbert Johnson, a private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwickshire Militia, whose residence is in George Street, Birmingham, was brought up on remand, charged with having committed a violent assault on **John Elkins**, a boatman living in the Saltisford. Prosecutor said he was sitting in his house on Whit Sunday night, when his window was broken with a stone. He went out, and saw the defendant and several other militiamen, who began to use "smut" as soon as he spoke to them. He then caught hold of defendant by his belt which he

would leave in his possession. Prosecutor agreed to this, but when defendant got it off he began striking prosecutor about the head with the buckles. Several other militiamen came up and took part in the fight. Prosecutor's wife came to his assistance, and both he and she were badly assaulted. Defendant denied the charge, and said the prosecutor attacked him, and he only stood in his own defence. Inspector Hall said that when the prosecutor called at the station for police assistance, his head was covered in blood. The Bench said a soldier's belt was a most dangerous weapon to use, and as it was always handy there was a great temptation to use it in a fight. This was a bad case, and it was the duty of the Court to make an example of the defendant, who would be committed to gaol for two months, with hard labour.

### **11 July 1 1881 Worcester City Quarter Sessions**

APPEAL At the City Police Court, on May 28<sup>th</sup>, **John Jones**, boatman, Hylton Road, was fined £1 for cruelly ill-treating two donkeys, and **John Coombes**, boatman, St Clements Square, was sentenced to a months hard labour for causing them to be worked in an unfit condition. Coombes now appealed against the decision, Mr Godson and Mr Stallard appearing on his behalf. The witnesses having been examined, the Recorder said he did not think there was evidence of intentional cruelty, therefore the conviction must be quashed. At the same time it was a proper one to bring before the magistrates.

### **12 July 16 1881**

ASTON POLICE COURT At this court, yesterday, before Messrs Hill and Rylands, **Frank Capner**, boatman, Wainwright Road, Aston was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in Lichfield Road, on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. The case having been proved, Mr Superintendent Gallaway said that the prisoner was one of the greatest ruffians in the manor, and had been convicted of almost every kind of offence, and suffered almost every class of punishment except penal servitude. The Bench sentenced prisoner to one months imprisonment, with hard labour.

### **13 July 18 1881 Staffordshire Summer Assizes**

SENTENCES **Joseph Williams** (33), boatman, who was found guilty on Wednesday of an assault on Patrick Lynch, at Harborne, and stealing 5s 6d from him, was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour.

### **14 August 27 1881**

THE DROWNING CASE AT DOUGLAS An inquest was held in Douglas, on Friday, touching the death of the two young men drowned in Douglas, under the circumstances already published. A number of eye witnesses were examined. Thomas Wright, of Wolverhampton, said he was walking along the promenade, and saw the two men and the woman standing at the steps. He turned to warn them of their danger; the two men at once disappeared as he turned, and the woman was knocked against the pillar. Witness was also struck with the wave. A boatman named **David Kewley**, a native of Douglas was also examined. It appeared that he had saved from drowning during his life 23 persons. His opinion was that any person going into the water to rescue the two deceased would have been dashed to pieces when trying to get back, even if he could have got a rope around him. Mr Quaine, chief harbour-master of Douglas, said he would, if he had seen anyone preparing to go into the water have considered it his duty to have stopped them. Life buoys would have been no use, as the suction was so great. He had seldom seen a heavier sea. The jury returned a verdict that Ebenezer Hargreaves and James Mason met their deaths by accidental drowning, and recommended that life buoys should be placed on the Promenade.

### **15 September 22 1881**

GLEANINGS Early on Tuesday morning a boatman, named **John Harris**, was found in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Wigan, in a drowning state. He died shortly after being rescued. It is supposed deceased was drunk and fell off his boat into the canal.

**16 November 3 1881 Leamington**

CHARGE OF TRESPASS AGAINST BIRMINGHAM MEN At the Milverton Sessions, yesterday, **Thomas George**, a boatman residing at Birmingham, was charged with trespassing, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult., on lands occupied by Mr John Staite, at Radford Semele. Mr Cheston, solicitor, Birmingham, defended. Eli Bates, employed at the Fosse Farm, stated that on Sunday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, he saw the defendant and another man and a boy get over a fence into a field occupied by Mr Staite. They had a dog with them, which they "hied" on into the hedge several times. It was admitted there were rats in the hedge, and the defence was that the dog was sent after them. It was further stated that the defendant went into the field for the purpose of getting water from a spring which was commonly used by boatmen. The Bench decided that there was no case, and dismissed the summons. A similar summons against **Joseph Knight**, a fellow boatman, also of Birmingham, was dismissed.

**17 November 8 1881 Oldbury**

ALLEGED ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON At the Oldbury Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs W Bassano and M B Phillips, Frances Heath, Emma Britton, and Caroline Gould, of Canal Side, were charged with stealing £3 from **William Hanley**, boatman, on the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. A witness named Frank Williams said he saw Heath and Gould take £3 out of prosecutor's waistcoat pocket while he lay asleep in Britton's house. The prisoners afterwards parted the money amongst them. They were all committed for trial at the Sessions.

**18 November 15 1881 Birmingham Police Court**

SAVAGE ATTACK ON THE POLICE Thomas Davis (25), labourer, 22 Speaking Stile Walk, was charged with being drunk and using obscene language, and **Thomas Rooney** (21), boatman, 5 Court, 8 house, William Street, was charged with being drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police. About half past nine on Saturday night defendants were turned out of the Red Lion, Suffolk Street, and both of them used bad language in the street. On being removed to the lock-up, Rooney became very violent and assaulted two of the officers there, kicking one of them and biting the other on the hand. He was continuing the attack, when Davis interfered. In consideration of his interference on behalf of the police, Davis was discharged. Rooney, who had been many times convicted, chiefly for assaults, was sent to gaol for three months.

**19 November 22 1881 Stourbridge**

CRUELTY BY A BOATMAN At the Petty Sessions, yesterday, **John Blunt**, a boatman, was convicted of gross cruelty to a horse. Evidence was given that the defendant beat the horse in question in a most unmerciful manner, and kicked it four or five times in the stomach. Defendant said the horse was a jibber, and had kicked him. He was fined 10s and costs.

**20 November 30 1881**

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY At the Wednesbury Police Court, yesterday, **William Bryan**, boatman, Birmingham, was, on the evidence of Inspector Dawson, of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, convicted of cruelty to a donkey, by using it to draw a boat whilst it was lame and suffering from severe and extensive wounds on the shoulder. He was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment.

**21 December 17 1881 Wolverhampton**

ASSAULTING A BOATMAN At the Police Court, yesterday, before the Stipendiary, **Henry Sillwood, James Green and Edward Sillwood**, all boatmen, of West Bromwich, were charged with assaulting **Aaron Owen**, a boatman, employed by the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company. Mr H Langman prosecuted on behalf of the company. It appeared that during the fog on Friday night the defendants had moored their boat on one side of the canal between Cannock Road and Canal Street, and that the complainant was in charge of a fly-boat belonging to his employers.

On observing the boat coming along the defendants stopped it, saying that if they could not work he should not, and upon complainant remonstrating the defendants knocked him down, and severely kicked him. Henry Sillwood was sentenced to one months imprisonment, with hard labour, without the optional fine; and Edward Sillwood and Green were fined 40s and costs each, or in default fourteen days imprisonment.

**22 December 28 1881 Wolverhampton**

**THEFTS Thomas Rowland** (39), boatman, in the employ of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, who had previously been convicted, was sentenced to three months hard labour for stealing a fowl, the property of Joshua Edwards, the landlord of The Squirrel Inn, Canal Street.

**December 28 1881 Walsall**

**THE DROWNING OF A BOY** The body of the boy, John Parkes (16), Walhouse Street, who disappeared on Friday evening last, was found in the canal in Marsh Lane, yesterday afternoon, by a boatman named **David Till**. The deceased, it will be remembered, was employed at Mr J N Lester's ironworks, Bridgeman Street, and on Friday evening, when the fog was very dense, he was sent into Stafford Street to fetch tea for a workman named William Diggitts.

**23 January 9 1882 West Bromwich**

**SHOP ROBBERIES** At the West Bromwich Police Court, on Saturday, before Messrs R Farley and J Williams, Harry Brown (15), Broad Street, Birmingham, roller; **John Harper** (17), boatman, Selly Oak; Robert Brookes (16), Broad Street, Birmingham, brass caster; and Charles Smith (16), Broad Street, filer, were charged with stealing a pair of boots, value 9s, from the shop of William Halford, boot manufacturer, High Street, West Bromwich, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Prisoners were also charged with stealing an overcoat belonging to Thomas Harper, clothier, High Street. The coat was being worn by one of the prisoners when arrested. Brookes and Harper, having been convicted several times previously, were sentenced to three months hard labour each, and Brown and Smith were sent to gaol for six weeks.

**24 February 28 1882 Wolverhampton**

**ASSAULTS** Yesterday, at the Police Court, **Henry Lonie** (16), boatman, was sentenced to a months hard labour for assaulting Sarah Emily Cadman, of Bushbury Lane, while she and her husband were walking together on the Cannock Road. **William Goode** (22) also a boatman, was fined 20s and costs for assaulting, at the same time, the husband of Mrs Cadman.

**25 March 6 1882**

**FELO DE SE** On Saturday night an inquest was held at Carmarthen on **Benjamin Evans**, boatman, who threw himself into the Towey. Police-constable Morgan said he saw deceased walk into the river, and heard him say he would drown himself because of his wife. Harry Evans, with whose mother the wife lodged, remonstrated with him, and attempted to grasp him; but deceased purposely went further into the water, and was swept by a heavy flood under Carmarthen Bridge, where he sank. Deceased did not seem quite sober, but did not slip into deep water. The jury returned a verdict of felo de se. It is twenty five years since a similar verdict was returned in Carmarthen.

**26 March 28 1882 Wolverhampton**

**POULTRY STEALING** At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, **Richard Cope** (60), boatman, late of Polesworth, near Tamworth, who had been previously convicted, was committed for trial at the Sessions on a charge of stealing a fowl, the value of 2s 6d, belonging to Charles Marlow, landlord of the Union Inn, Canal Street.

**March 28 1882 Oldbury**

**ROBBERY OF LEAD** At the Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Adkins and Phillips, magistrates, George Mathews of Oldbury, **Richard Mayo**, boatman, of Gloucester, and Emma

Mayo, his wife, were charged with stealing 36lb of lead, of the value of 4s, from the premises of Mr Alfred Asbury, chemical manufacturer. The magistrates discharged the female prisoner, believing that she acted under the influence of her husband. Mayo, having been previously convicted, was sent to gaol for three months, with hard labour, and Mathews was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days.

**27 April 6 1882**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

THEFT OF RUM Thomas Baines, on bail, **John Baines** (32), boatman, and **Thomas Vaughan** (62), boatman, were charged with stealing a bottle of rum, the property of Thomas Hampton, on the 15<sup>th</sup> February last. John Baines pleaded guilty. Mr Neville prosecuted, and Mr Corser defended. Vaughan and T Baines were acquitted, and John Baines was sentenced to one months imprisonment, with hard labour. It was stated that Vaughan had suffered penal servitude and several other terms of imprisonment, amounting in the aggregate to twenty years, and the Chairman expressed the opinion that Baines had allowed the charge to fall upon him to save Vaughan being sent to penal servitude again.

**28 May 13 1882**

**Birmingham Police Court**

ILL TREATING A HORSE **James Walker**, a boatman, in the employ of a person named Jones, a haulier, of Owen Street, was charged with cruelty to a horse. At ten minutes to six that (Friday) morning the prisoner was seen near the Monument Lane Railway Station on the canal bank driving a horse attached to a boat heavily laden with coal. The animal stopped every five or six minutes and rested itself against a wall. The prisoner moved it on again by beating it with a whip. A witness named Edwin Thomas asked if the horse's shoulders were gone. Prisoner said they were not, but on witness raising the collar he found two deep wounds, five inches in diameter. Directly the straw of which the stuffing of the collar was composed was seen by the horse it commenced to eat it ravenously. The prisoner admitted that the animal had been working continuously for forty eight hours. On the way to the station the horse fell down. It was subsequently destroyed. The prisoner was sent to gaol for a month. A summons was granted against the owner of the horse.

**29 May 15 1882**

**Bilston**

CHARGE OF STEALING IRON At the Police Court, on Friday, **John Wildman**, boatman, was charged with stealing twenty seven pigs of iron, the property of John Thompson, boiler maker of Ettingshall; and Henry Jones, marine store dealer, Can Lane, Ettingshall, was charged with receiving the same knowing them to have been stolen. After the pigs had been missed from a stack in prosecutor's yard they were seen in a canal boat of which Wildman was in charge. On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> ult Jones bought the iron of Wildman. The prisoners were remanded for a week.

**30 May 16 1882**

**Wolverhampton**

ALLEGED CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the County Police Court, yesterday, **Eli Wilkes**, boatman, Ward Street, Priestfield, was remanded for a week, charged with working a horse whilst it was suffering from a wound 8 in long and 2 1/2 in wide on the near shoulder.

**31 May 23 1882**

**Birmingham Police Court**

DRUNK AND VIOLENT **Thomas Murphy** (19), a boatman, living in Bath Row, who had six previous convictions recorded against him, was sent to prison for one month for being drunk, disorderly, and assaulting Police-constables Hawes and Webb. The constables apprehended the prisoner for creating a disturbance, and on the way to the station he kicked them and made several attempts to bite their hands.

**32 May 24 1882**

**Birmingham Police Court**

LEAVING RELATIVES CHARGEABLE TO THE PARISH **David Dudley**, boatman, was charged with neglecting to maintain his child, aged eight years. Warrant-officer Daniels said that the child

was admitted into the workhouse on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March. Prisoner was traced by witness to Brownhills, and he was apprehended yesterday morning at Snow Hill, where he was working. The magistrates sent the prisoner to gaol for one months hard labour.

**33 May 26 1882 Birmingham Police Court**

A BRUTAL FELLOW **John Tonlin**, a boatman, of no fixed residence, was charged with drunkenness. About five o'clock on Wednesday night the prisoner was in Great Charles Street, very drunk. He had a dog with him, and was beating it in a cruel manner. Occasionally he took it up by the hind legs, and kicked it brutally. The animal was considerably cut about the eyes. The prisoner was ordered to pay 40s and costs, in default a months imprisonment.

**34 May 31 1882**

INFANTILE MORTALITY The third enquiry was on the body of **Mary Ann Cooper**, three months old, the child of a boatman living in No 4 Court, Fleet Street. The mother stated that her husband was absent from home in the pursuit of his employment on Sunday night, and she had sleeping with her in the bed the deceased and two elder children. When she awoke on Monday morning she found the infant dead, with the arms of her elder brother laid over her mouth. The jury returned a verdict that death resulted from suffocation, and recommended that the mother should be more careful in the future.

**35 June 1 1882 Perry Barr**

ASSAULTING THE POLICE Yesterday, at the Smethwick Police Court, **Charles Smith** (22), boatman, of no fixed place of abode, was charged with assaulting the police on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. Police-constable Harris said he was called by Mr Williams, of the Boar's Head Inn, Perry Barr, into his house on Monday night to quell a disturbance. Upon going into the taproom he found that the prisoner had been breaking the glasses, and immediately he saw witness he rushed at him and struck him on the side of the face with a short stick. There were from fifty to one hundred persons in the house of the same class. Prisoner fought, kicked him, and used every imaginable violence, and called upon his companions to assist him. Bricks and stones were thrown in all directions, and the windows were broken. Police-constable Robinson said prisoner struck him on the face and breast, and broke his watch. Prisoner was sentenced to two months hard labour.

**36 June 7 1882**

CHARGE OF KIDNAPPING A BOY IN DERBY At the Derby Borough Police Court, **Joseph Thay**, a boatman, was charged on remand with having on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1851, feloniously and unlawfully, and by force, enticed away and detained a boy named James Howe, aged ten years. James Howe said he lived with his mother in Cambridge Street, Derby, his father being a soldier, who was in Ireland. One day in December last he went on the canal side with three boys. A barge came along the canal, and in it the prisoner lay asleep. There was a boy driving the horse. One of the boys who was with him named Stafford, asked the boy driving the horse if they could have a ride. He said they could, and he and a boy named Rowe got onto the boat when the boat got near the iron bridge, near Allenstown. Rowe and Stafford jumped off it on to the towing-path, but he could not do so. The prisoner was asleep then. He began to cry, and the prisoner awoke. Prisoner said, "What are you crying for?" He said he wanted to go home to his mother. Prisoner said, "I want a boy to drive my horse." That night prisoner told him to get off the barge and to go home again, and put him off the barge. It was dark, and so he did not start to come back to Derby. He lay down all night under a hedge. It rained, and he got "wringing wet". Next morning prisoner asked him to drive the horse and he did so. The first day the boy boiled some turnips, and gave him one to eat. That was all he had to eat that day. The second night he slept in a shed where the horse was put. The boy dipped his head in the canal, and said he would throw him in if he did not stop with them. The prisoner lifted him into the barge and drove the horse himself. They took him as far as Wolverhampton. The boy made him steal a hammer, saying he would throw him into the canal if he

did not do so. The barge was laden with pig iron. The prisoner heard the boy tell him to help unload the barge, and he did so. The food consisted of bread and butter on Sundays, and dry bread and turnips on other days. Prisoner said he should not go to Derby any more. The barge was taken in another direction, and they went to prisoner's mother's. He ran away, and walked back to Derby. He was walking the better part of two days and two nights. A man who was also walking to Derby gave him something to eat, but he had to sleep under hedges, as the man had not enough money to pay for lodgings for two people. He never asked the prisoner to let him go home, but he asked the boy, who said, "No". He was away from home about a fortnight. In reply to prisoner, the witness said the boy gave him some bread and meat the first day. He denied that he ever slept in the cabin, because the prisoner slept there with his boy and another boy, and said there was not room for him. Detective Clamp deposed to having received the prisoner into custody from the Birmingham Police on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Prisoner made a long statement. He said that when the barge got near Swarkstone he told the boy to go home, but he would not do so, saying that his father was a soldier and his mother had too many children. They went to Birmingham, and he and his wife took Howe to New Street Station. He bought the boy a ticket, gave him a bun and a penny, and put him in charge of the guard of a train to go to Derby. Prisoner was committed for trial at the next Borough Quarter Sessions.

**37 June 8 1882**

**Moxley**

**STEALING COAL FROM A BOAT** At the Wednesbury Police Court, on Tuesday, **John Wright**, a boatman, was charged with stealing coal, the property of Messrs J Bagnall and Co, from a boat of which he had charge; and Phoebe Bough was charged with receiving the same knowing it to have been stolen. The male prisoner said he gave a lump of coal to the woman because she asked for it, and because he thought she was in needy circumstances. Wright, against whom the charge was not pressed, was fined 10s and costs, or seven days imprisonment; and Bough was sentenced to twenty one days imprisonment.

**38 June 14 1882**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**WELL-MERITED PUNISHMENT** **George Giles** (27), a boatman, living in Ford Street, Aston Road, a tall powerful-looking man, who appeared in court with his head bandaged in several places, and his clothes covered in blood and dirt, was charged with assaulting a married woman named Anne Vicacaly, in the Royal Elephant public house, corner of Bagot Street and Aston Road, on Monday evening. The man went into the house very drunk, and was trying to pick a quarrel with another man, when the complainant remonstrated with him, and tried to pacify him. He replied by giving her a blow on the head, which knocked her on the floor insensible. The landlord, hearing the disturbance, went into the room, and afterwards called the woman's husband, who was on the premises. The husband then fought with prisoner, and punished him severely. The prisoner was sent to gaol for four months with hard labour.

**39 June 26 1882**

**WASTING CANAL WATER AT PERRY BARR** At West Bromwich Police Court, on Saturday, **John Compton** (22), boatman was summoned for opening the locks at Perry Barr, thereby wasting a quantity of water, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company. Mr Godlee, of Birmingham, appeared to prosecute. It appeared that on the day in question defendant, through his negligence, wasted sufficient to fill three locks. It was stated that defendant had been fined previously for a similar offence. He was fined 32s 6d, including costs, or in default fourteen days hard labour.

**40 June 27 1882**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

**PLEADED GUILTY** **Thomas Thacker** (63), boatman, pleaded guilty to false pretences at Ogley Hay, in April last, and was sentenced to four months imprisonment.

**41 June 28 1882**

**SINGULAR CHARGE OF KIDNAPPING A BOY** A singular story was related at the Derby



very far before she was overtaken by two youths, who stopped her, and presently the defendant came up, and said to her, "You have been in our shop and stolen two brass weights." She replied that she had not, and called her father, who enquired what was the matter, and defendant said his daughter had been in his shop, and had stolen two brass weights. She again denied the charge, but defendant insisted on her going back to the shop to be searched. She was taken back, followed by a crowd of people, and conducted into the kitchen, where she was ordered to undress, and took off all her clothes, in the presence of the defendant and his wife. The defendant examined each article of dress as it was handed to him by his wife, but without discovering the weights. He also sent for a policeman, but did not give the girl into custody. He said he was satisfied she had not got the weights and allowed her to go. The defence was that the defendant was in the back premises when the girl went into the shop, and when he returned she appeared confused, and asked for several things before she selected biscuits. Directly she had gone he missed the weights, which he had seen just before she came in. He followed her as soon as he had locked some doors, and saw her running along the towing path, and it was contended that if she had gone to the woman she spoke of, and who, according to her own account, was 200 yards away from the bridge, in another direction, she could not have been on the canal side so soon. He called to some young men, who were playing cricket in a field near the canal, and told one of them to go after her. Two of them did so, and her father came up as defendant joined them, and hearing his complaint he said, "Take her back and have her searched and sent to prison". He also said the girl had been a great trouble to him. The defendant denied he accused the girl of stealing the weights, and said he only stated he missed them. He also denied being present when she was searched, and said she undressed herself voluntarily. He further denied that he required her to be searched, and that he examined any of her clothes. Her father ordered her to return and to submit to a search, and was present while it was being made. On leaving he asked defendant if he was satisfied, and defendant replied that he was. Both the father and the girl went away apparently satisfied. It came out that the father had commenced proceedings before the magistrates for assault, but had withdrawn them. The jury found for the plaintiff, damages £20.

#### **47 September 14 1882**

**CHILD DROWNED** On Tuesday, a little fellow named **Thomas Grainger** (4), son of a boatman belonging to Gloucester, was playing near his father's boat, at Diglis Basin, when he fell into the water and was drowned. His father had only left him for a few moments whilst he went to a stable. The body was subsequently recovered.

#### **48 September 30 1882**

**WOLVERHAMPTON QUARTER SESSIONS** **Mary Hodson** (30), boatwoman, pleaded guilty to using abusive language to and striking with a knife **Edward Biddle**, boatman, and was sentenced to two months hard labour.

#### **49 October 7 1882**

##### **Wolverhampton**

**GROSS CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Police Court, yesterday, **William Maddox**, a boatman, employed by Messrs Ward and Sons, ironmasters, Priestfield, was charged with cruelty to a horse belonging to his employers. Mr J East deposed that on September 26<sup>th</sup> he saw the defendant thrash the horse, which was in a very poor condition, with a thick rope, in order that the animal should reach a lock of the canal before another boat coming in the opposite direction. Owing to the treatment it received the animal fell down dead. The Bench imposed a fine of 20s and costs, or one month's hard labour.

#### **50 October 12 1882**

##### **Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

**STEALING BRICKS** **William Meek** (26), boatman, was indicted for stealing 2,000 bricks, the property of James Parker and another. Mr Hazeldine prosecuted. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, the prisoner employed a man named Jeffs to take the bricks from a wharf at Brookfields to the house of Mr



animal was £10. The purchaser, a man named Hunt, on finding the name of the canal company on the collar, informed them of the transaction.

#### **56 December 21 1882**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** Yesterday Mr Hawkes, coroner, held an inquest at his court, in Moor Street, upon the body of John Ward (30), 3 Court, 1 House, Cardigan Street, who was found drowned in the canal, near Fazeley Street Bridge, on Sunday morning. The deceased was injured about the head some twelve months ago, and since then his wife stated that he had been very peculiar in his manner. He had many times expressed his intention of walking naked to Scotland; and on Thursday he went to the Rev J Sherlock for some "holy water" which was sprinkled by the wife of deceased on his head. On Saturday night he went to bed as usual; but about half past one o'clock he got up and said that he was going to walk to Manchester, and should go without any shirt, as the one he was wearing, he asserted, did not belong to him. Deceased was persuaded to go to bed again, and did so, but before daylight he got up again, as he stated with the intention of going into the yard. As he did not return, a search was made and his body was found in the canal by a boatman named **John Foster**. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned, the jury suggesting that something should be done by the canal company to improve the embankment near the canal side, which was very dangerous.

#### **57 December 23 1882**

**BALSALL HEATH POLICE COURT** **William Godfrey**, boat-steerer, back of 31 Icknield Square, Birmingham, **Wm Field**, boatman, and **John Thomas Rogers** of the same address, were charged with stealing 5cwt of hay, the property of Henry Hobbis, hay dealer, King's Norton, on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. On the application of Superintendent Tyler, Rogers was discharged. Prosecutor purchased a rick of hay from Mr J B Smith, of the College Farm, King's Norton, in November last. The hay was standing in one of Mr Smith's fields, and prosecutor had two men engaged in cutting it on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant. On the following day he missed ten trusses. The boy Rogers said he was employed by the prisoner Godfrey as driver of the boat. They were going along the Stratford Canal, and when they got to the field where the prosecutor's hay was, on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> instant, they stopped, and Godfrey fetched ten trusses, which the prisoner Field put into the boat. Superintendent Tyler, on receiving information of the robbery, followed the boat to Birmingham, and traced it to the Gas Street Wharf. The hay he afterwards found in the garden of a house occupied by the prisoners. The prisoners were sentenced to three months hard labour each.

#### **58 December 25 1882**

#### **General News**

**CHARGE OF WIFE MURDER** At Gainsborough, on Saturday, **James Anderson**, an elderly man, a boatman, was committed for trial on the charge of wilfully murdering his wife, from whom he had been long apart, by stabbing her with a penknife, on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. Prisoner afterwards cut his own throat, and has only just recovered from his self-inflicted injuries.

#### **59 January 30 1883**

#### **Oldbury**

**FAMILY DESERTION** **Isaac Whetton**, boatman, was charged with deserting his family, and leaving them chargeable to the funds of the West Bromwich Union. Mr W Wattis, relieving officer, said on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1881, prisoner deserted his five children, leaving them destitute, and it was found necessary to remove them to the workhouse, where they remained nine months. They were subsequently removed from West Bromwich to Kings Norton. Prisoner was sentenced to one month imprisonment with hard labour.

#### **60 January 31 1883**

**THE STORM AND FLOODS** At Pelsall, on Monday morning, **Henry Biddle**, a Warwickshire boatman, was blown out of his boat into the canal and drowned. His body was recovered by Police-constable Newman, after several hours dragging.

**61 March 6 1883**

**Tipton**

ALLEGED THEFT OF TUBES At the Police Court, yesterday, before Mr J H Pearson and Mr J Solly, **John Cross** (25), boatman, and **Edward Cross** (22), boatman, Eagle Lane, were charged with stealing several copper tubes, the property of the Midland Railway Company. Mr J C Lane (Messrs Beale, Marigold and Co, Birmingham) prosecuted, and Mr Sheldon defended. It was alleged that the defendants carried away the tubes whilst acting as boatmen. The tubes were at the time in the charge of the London and North-Western Railway Company. The prisoners were committed for trial.

**62 March 16 1883**

**Wolverhampton**

SUDDEN DEATH Yesterday **Edward Ward** (56), boatman, of Bilston Road, whilst engaged in towing a boat, belonging to Messrs Wright and Sons, along the canal near Horseley Fields, fell down and expired.

**63 March 28 1883**

**Willenhall**

THEFT OF COAL Yesterday, at the Police Court, David Eaton, labourer, Parkbrook, Walsall, and **Richard Dyke**, boatman, Bradley, Bilston, were each fined 20s and costs, or one months hard labour, for stealing at Bentley 186lb of coal belonging to the Chillington Iron Company.

**64 March 29 1883**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

PLEADED GUILTY **John Harper** (18), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing nine bradawls, the property of Frederick Coburn, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, and, having been eight times previously convicted, was sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

**65 May 8 1883**

**Warwick**

CHARGE OF CRUELTY TO A MULE At the County Petty Sessions, on Saturday, before Lord Leigh, Major Mason and Mr J Yeomans Robins, **John Fletcher**, boatman, of West Bromwich, was charged with having cruelly treated a mule on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. On the day in question the defendant was working a boat belonging to Mr Whitehouse, of West Bromwich, down the locks at Hatton, and was seen by Police-constable Lynes to strike the mule with an iron windlass. Altogether he inflicted twelve blows upon the animal. Witness expostulated with him for beating the animal with an iron windlass, upon which he retorted, "I never carry anything else with me." Defendant denied the statement, but the Bench considered the charge proved, and ordered him to pay £1 1s 6d, including costs and fine, Lord Leigh remarking that he ought to be ashamed of himself for such brutality, and deserved severe punishment.

**66 May 17 1883**

ASTON POLICE COURT At this court, yesterday, before Messrs J Motteram Q C, A Hill and A Baker, **Walter Jennings**, boatman, Sycamore Road, and **Henry Anthony**, alias "Hackey Rabone", boatman, Lichfield Road, were charged with being drunk and disorderly in the Lichfield Road on Saturday last, and with assaulting Police-constables King and Maclarty. At about half past nine in the evening prisoners were kicking a milk can about and interfering with passers by. The officers remonstrated with the prisoners, who used a great deal of bad language, and kicked them and knocked them about. Jennings, who was described as a member of the "Ten-arch gang" and had been previously convicted, was sentenced to two months hard labour, and Anthony was fined 20s and costs.

**67 May 26 1883**

**Aston Police Court**

THROWING REFUSE INTO THE CANAL **John Mortiboy**, a boatman in the employ of the Birmingham Corporation, was summoned for throwing night-soil into the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. Mr Godlee, who appeared for the canal company, said great complaints had been made of

the conduct of boatmen in this respect. The Corporation authorities did all they could to prevent the offence complained of, and several men had been dismissed for it. Defendant admitted throwing a portion of his cargo into the canal, and had no explanation to give. Mr Hill said it was a serious offence. The defendant was paid for doing his work, and he should have done it properly instead of creating a great nuisance in the canal. The defendant was fined 40s and costs.

**68 June 7 1883**

**Walsall**

“A FOOL AND HIS MONEY” At the Guildhall, yesterday, Mary Ann Ross (21) was brought up on a warrant from Leamington, charged with having stolen £28 10s from **George Jones**, boatman, Gloucester, whilst in a house of ill-fame. A previous conviction was proved against her, and she was sentenced to four months imprisonment, with hard labour.

**69 June 20 1883**

**THEFT BY A BOATMAN** At the Rushall Police Court, yesterday, **Thomas Morgan**, boatman, Judge Street, Birmingham, was charged with having stolen 3 1/2 cwt of coal from a boat of which he had charge. Mr Tyler (of the firm of Messrs Tyler and Tanner, Birmingham) appeared to prosecute on behalf of the Birmingham Coal Merchants' and Coalowners' Association, and said he was instructed to press for a heavy conviction in this case, on account of the numerous robberies which took place from boats as they were passing through that district. The facts which would be proved in evidence were that the accused drew up his boat near to the house of Samuel Woolley, a bricklayer, at Walsall Wood, and began to remove coal on to the premises. Police-constables Alldritt and Gibbs, who were watching, made their appearance as he was carrying the third lot, and he ran away, but was pursued and captured. Witnesses in support of this statement were called, and the accused was fined 20s and costs, or one months imprisonment. Woolley was charged with receiving the coal knowing it to have been stolen; but he got the benefit of a doubt, and was discharged.

**70 June 29 1883**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

**ROBBING THE LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY** Richard Farndon (23), carter, was indicted for having stolen 60lbs of rope, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company. Mr Brookes appeared for the prosecution. Farndon was in the employ of Mr Busby, agent for the Northampton Brewery Company. On the 8<sup>th</sup> May, Mr Busby borrowed the rope from the storekeeper at Curzon Street Station. Two days afterwards it was sold by the prisoner to a marine store dealer, named Walter Jones. Prisoner not being able to give any satisfactory account as to how he obtained possession of the rope, he was found guilty, and sentenced to one months imprisonment. Walter Jones (21), caster and marine store dealer, was then charged with receiving the rope from Farndon, well knowing it to have been stolen. At the same time he was indicted for having received seven bags and six cwt of broken glass, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company, knowing it to have been stolen. Frank Smith (18), rope spinner, **Joseph Smith** (19), boatman, and Thomas Smith (17), rope spinner, were charged with stealing the glass. Mr Brookes prosecuted, and Mr Fitzgerald defended Jones. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, Police-constables Tubb and Frederick Smith, having received information that seven bags of broken glass were missing from Curzon Street station, went to the prisoner Jones's house. They found Frank and Joseph Smith in a stable at the back with some harness which it was afterwards discovered had been stolen. The officers took the two prisoners to the police station, Jones and a brother officer accompanying them. On the way to Moor Street a brother of Jones said to him, “You had better tell the truth about that glass or you will get yourself in a hole”. On arriving at the station Police-constable Smith asked Jones where the glass was. He said he had sold it to a man at Aston. The officers went to this man's shop and found that the glass had been resold to someone else. The same afternoon they returned to Jones's house and found the seven bags which had contained the glass, and one bag containing a quantity of rope. Two of the bags and the rope were identified the same day. About six o'clock in the evening Police-constable Smith went a third time to Jones's house, and

charged him with receiving the goods. He rushed upstairs, jumped out of a first floor window, and had to be chased for a quarter of a mile. Police-constable Smith saw one bag of glass in the stable some days before prisoners were arrested. The Smiths said they did not steal the glass: they found it in a boat on the canal, and sold it for 16s 6d. They asked for more money, but the purchaser said he would put the police on them, and then they ran away. Mr Fitzgerald, on behalf of Jones, contended there was no evidence of guilty knowledge. The prisoner received the things in the ordinary course of his business. All the prisoners were found guilty. A previous conviction for horse stealing was proved against Jones. There was also a previous conviction for larceny proved against Frank Smith. In reply to the Assistant-Barrister, Police-constable Smith said he and Tubb had watched Jones's premises for some time before the arrests took place. A good many complaints had been received of goods being taken to the shop at night. Frank Smith was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment; Joseph and Thomas Smith to six months each; and Jones to five years penal servitude.

**71 July 11 1883 Leamington**

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the Town Hall, on Monday, before Mr W Harding (Mayor), Dr Thursfield, and Messrs Ford, Muddeman and Wackrill, **Charles Court**, boatman, of Stratford-on-Avon, was charged with having cruelly treated a horse by working it in an unfit state. Defendant consented to have the horse destroyed, and the case was dismissed on his paying expenses £1 0s 6d.

**72 July 17 1883**

HOUSEBREAKING Yesterday, at the West Bromwich Police Court, before Mr W F F Boughey (stipendiary), **William Haynes** (30), of Brewery Street, Newtown Row, Birmingham, boatman, was charged with breaking into the premises of John Howle, of High Park, Smethwick, during Saturday night. Mrs Howle said the family retired to bed about twelve o'clock on Saturday night, and about half past one on Sunday morning she was awoke by hearing the window sash moved. Witness and her husband then went downstairs, and found prisoner in the house. Upon being asked what he was doing there, prisoner replied that he had lost half a sovereign, and that he was looking for it. Prisoner was sent to gaol for six weeks, with hard labour.

**73 July 21 1883 Aston Police Court**

THEFT OF INDIA-RUBBER PIPING **William Gosling**, boatman, of Old Cross Street, Birmingham, was charged with stealing 14 ft of india-rubber piping, value 7s 6d, the property of George Knight, Gashouse Tavern, Mill Lane, Saltley. On the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, shortly after seven o'clock at night, the piping was safe in the prosecutor's brewhouse. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards the prisoner was seen walking from the direction of the brewhouse with something bulky under his coat, and in a few minutes subsequently the piping was missed. The same night prisoner offered for sale to a man at the Adderley Arms, Saltley, a quantity of piping, which, from the description given of it, was similar to that which had been stolen from the brewhouse. The man, however, declined to purchase the piping, and since then it had not been discovered. Prisoner, who had been previously convicted, was committed to the Assizes for trial. Mr Buller appeared for the prosecution.

**74 July 28 1883**

GLEANINGS On Thursday night, **Edward Swain**, a boatman, employed at Stubb's pleasure boat establishment on the river Dee, Chester, was fastening the boats up for the night, when he overbalanced himself and fell into deep water. He was drowned before a rescue could be effected.

**75 August 2 1883 Wolverhampton**

FATAL BOAT ACCIDENT Yesterday, Mr W H Phillips, Coroner, held an inquest at the New Market Inn, Cleveland Road, touching the death of **John Hamphlett** (40), boatman, of Priestfield, which occurred in the hospital on Monday. The deceased, who was employed by Mr Alfred Hickman, of the Spring Vale Ironworks, was walking across a plank on a barge at Bradley, when the

horse started, pulling down the mast, which struck the deceased heavily on the left side. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**76 August 3 1883**

**Warwickshire Summer Assizes**

**ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE AT ASTON** **Frank Capner** (30), boatman, was indicted for having, at Aston, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March last, assaulted James Stevens, and robbed him of his watch and chain. The trial was postponed from the Spring Assizes in consequence of the prisoner's ill-health. Mr Natban appeared for the prosecutor, who is a gun barrel filer, living in New John Street, Birmingham. On Easter Monday, prosecutor visited the Duke of York public house, Aston Road, and when leaving for his home, between ten and eleven o'clock, the prisoner and another man, as alleged, assaulted and robbed him. The prisoner was said to have struck prosecutor in the chest, and knocked him down. While he was on the ground prisoner snatched the watch and ran away. When apprehended by Police-constable Garfield, prisoner said, "I was there but did not do it". The prisoner begged the jury "to recommend him to mercy". A verdict of guilty was found, and prisoner admitted a previous conviction, when, it appears, he was convicted of robbery with violence, and imprisoned and flogged. Considering that his health was not good, the learned judge said he would not order him to be flogged, but he should treat him as a habitual criminal, and sentenced him to ten years penal servitude. The prosecutor complained that he had been threatened by the prisoner's friend; upon which the learned judge remarked that it was most important that the police should give him adequate protection, and if anyone interfered with him they would be most seriously punished.

**77 August 16 1883**

**DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS AT SELLY OAK** A discovery which gave rise to much comment in the neighbourhood was made on Tuesday, at Selly Oak, and although the suspicion of foul play which it at first occasioned has been allayed, there yet remains considerable mystery surrounding it. It appears that **James Etherington**, a boatman, in the course of his duties was walking along the embankment of the canal, which runs parallel to the West Suburban Railway, when his attention was attracted by a large broken pickle jar lying by the side of the water, at a point close to where the railway bridge crosses the canal, and to which in all probability it had been thrown from a passing train. On examining the broken pieces and the ground around, to his astonishment he discovered several portions of human flesh, in a form of artificial preservation. He gave information to the police at once, and Sergeant Holmes, in company with Police-constable Stephens, proceeded to the spot. The officers gathered together all the pieces that could be found after a careful search, and had them removed for a surgical examination. It was then found that they consisted of the foot of an adult, with the heart and other interior portions of a female body. There was a distinct smell of spirits, and this, with the fact that the remains had evidently been scientifically cut, leads to the belief that they were parts of a body which had been dissected for purposes of scientific observation, and preserved in spirits in the jar. The vessel in all probability was thrown from a train as it passed over the bridge, with the intention that it should fall into the canal. Strict enquiries will, of course, be made into the matter.

**78 August 21 1883**

**SINGULAR DROWNING CASE AT WEST BROMWICH** An inquest was held yesterday, before Mr E Hooper, coroner, at the Eight Locks Inn, Greet's Green, respecting the death of **Joseph Whitehouse** (40), boatman, who was drowned in the canal near Bromford Ironworks on Friday last. Sarah Whitehouse, mother of the deceased, said he had been under medical treatment for five or six weeks for a liver complaint. On Monday, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., he returned to work after being away about six weeks. Deceased left home about five o'clock on Friday morning, for the purpose of taking a loaded boat from Greet's Green to the Sandwell Ironworks, Smethwick, in company with a man named Tolley. Edward Shaw, watchman at the Bromford Ironworks, deposed that he was sitting on a wall on the side of the canal on Friday morning, about 7.30, when he saw the deceased sitting on

the side of a boat which was approaching from Greet's Green. Soon afterwards he saw deceased fall backwards into the canal, and some men got him out immediately, but deceased expired in about ten minutes afterwards. Joseph Moore, furnaceman at the Bromford Ironworks, said he observed the deceased fall into the water when near Bromford Bridge, and he ran and pulled him out. **Jabez Tolley** said he and the deceased started from Greet's Green at five o'clock on Friday morning, when he (deceased) complained of feeling ill. Witness asked him to go home, when deceased replied that he would not if he died by it. As they went along deceased grew worse, and he called and got some whisky. When near Bromford Works he heard some men shouting, and on turning round he saw deceased in the water. In reply to the Coroner, witness stated that deceased was a very good swimmer. The Jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased "Died from natural causes; but in their opinion, death was accelerated by falling into the water."

**79 September 14 1883**

GLEANINGS At the Central Criminal Court on Wednesday, **Richard Pierce**, boatman, was acquitted on the charge of attempting to drown his wife by throwing her off a boat into the Grand Junction Canal.

**80 September 19 1883**

**Wolverhampton**

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN Yesterday, Mr W H Phillips, coroner, held an inquest at the Horseley Fields Tavern, on the body of **Richard Kirk** (63), boatman, Horseley Fields. It was stated that the deceased went with two boats to Norton Canes, near Cannock, on Saturday morning last, and whilst acting as helmsman became unconscious. He did not recover, and died at night. The enquiry was adjourned for a *post mortem* examination.

**81 October 3 1883**

**Wolverhampton**

UNPROVOKED ASSAULT Yesterday, **Richard Higgins** (37), boatman, was sentenced to two months hard labour for violently kicking Police-constable Purchase, and ordered to find sureties to keep the peace for six months, or in default to undergo a further one months hard labour.

**82 October 23 1883**

FOUND DROWNED : A BOATMAN CENSURED Yesterday afternoon, Mr Hawkes held an inquest at his Court, Moor Street, touching the death of **John Hodgetts** (20), a boatman. **William Kibbles**, captain of the boat, said that on Friday night his boat was moored at Worcester Wharf. He went to bed, as did the deceased, who was in his employ, about ten o'clock. About two o'clock on Saturday morning he missed Hodgetts from bed, and upon making enquiries he was told by a woman who was in an adjoining boat that she had heard a splash in the water. - The Coroner : Who else was there in the boat? Witness : Only a dog, sir. [Laughter]. Witness, continuing, said his boat lay between two others in the basin. Upon searching for the deceased at daylight he found him in the water underneath his boat. Deceased was a good swimmer, and was quite sober when he went to bed. He could not account for his getting into the water. The witness added : it is not long since we pulled a man out of the water asleep, and he did not know he had been in. [Laughter.] Mrs Allen said she was in a boat which lay alongside Kibble's on Friday night. She heard a splash in the water and got up. Kibbles was also in the front of the cabin of his boat, and he felt in the water with the shaft, but could not find the deceased. Nothing was done in the way of finding the body until five o'clock in the morning, although it was suggested to the captain that he should acquaint the police with a view to having the canal dragged. The Jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned", and added that Kibbles should be censured for not having taken prompt action towards finding the deceased after he missed him. The Coroner called Kibbles before him, and told him that he had not acted as a brother boatman or a captain should have done. He had not shown the least anxiety to find the deceased. Had there been any marks of violence upon the body he would have rendered himself liable to very grave suspicion.

### 83      **October 24 1883**

NEWS OF THE DAY    At the Wednesbury Police Court, yesterday, Enoch Grice, scrap dealer, Hill Top, and **Martin Hartill**, boatman, Greet's Green, were committed for trial at the Assizes on a charge of stealing brasses and lead of the value of £50, the property of Messrs Partridge and Son, Hill Top. They were also charged with being concerned, with others, in the robbery of brasses, of the value of £10, from the premises of Messrs J Wilson and Co., Hill Top, and 4cwt of scrap, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company, but the hearing of these charges was postponed.

### 84      **October 24 1883**

EXTENSIVE ROBBERIES OF BRASSES    At the Wednesbury Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs S Harding and E T Holding, Enoch Grice, scrap dealer, Golds Hill; John Grice, puddler, The Barracks, Hill Top; and **Martin Harthill alias "Jagger"**, boatman, Greet's Green, were charged with having, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, stolen 15cwt of brasses and lead, the property of Messrs J E Partridge and Son, Hill Top. There was also a second charge of stealing brasses of the value of £10 from the works of Messrs Willson and Co, Hill Top; and Harthill and William Westwood, miner, were charged with stealing 4cwt of scrap, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company, from a train between Albion and Dudley Port. Mr J Slater prosecuted; and Mr J E Sheldon defended the brothers Grice. The evidence in support of the first-named charge was to the effect that during the 3<sup>rd</sup> August the prosecutor's premises were forcibly entered, and large quantities of brasses and lead conveyed away through a garden and field at the back to the canal side, some of the stolen property being left in the field. The same night a boat was taken from Cole's Farm Wharf, and from this boat, at about five o'clock the next morning, Enoch Grice, Harthill, and two men not in custody, were seen removing something heavy in bags on to Grice's premises, where his horse and cart stood ready for use. At 6 o'clock Grice was seen driving from Gold's Hill towards Wolverhampton with bags in his cart similar to those seen in the boat, and at about twelve o'clock he, Harthill, and two other men not in custody were seen at the Sampson and Lion Inn, Gospel Oak, "sharing" money. The money went through Harthill's hands to the unknown men, who complained that they had not been fairly dealt with, the one stating that he was 30s short of his proper allowance, and the other that he was 15s short. They accordingly attempted to detain Grice, who whipped his horse, and got away from them. On the same day the boat was found floating loose on the canal, and Sergeant Given visited Grice's premises, but found no trace of the stolen property. When he apprehended Enoch Grice and Harthill, on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst, they denied that they had ever seen each other before. John Grice was discharged, and Enoch Grice and Harthill were committed for trial at the Assizes. The hearing of the other two cases were adjourned.

### 85      **October 27 1883**

#### **Wednesbury**

THE BRASS STEALING GANG    At the Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs S Harding and E T Holden, **Martin Hartill** (39), boatman, Greet's Green, and William Westwood (41), Greet's Green, miner (the former of whom was committed to the Assizes on Tuesday on a charge of having, with Enoch Grice, stolen a quantity of brasses from the premises of Messrs Partridge and Son) were brought up on remand charged with having stolen 4cwt of soap, of the value of £6, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company. Detective-inspector Atkins was present on behalf of the company. The evidence showed that on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst five boxes of soap were despatched by Mr J P Harvey, Smethwick to Messrs Joseland and Co, grocers, Worcester, but only one of the boxes arrived at Worcester the next day, the others having been stolen in transit. On the 14<sup>th</sup> Westwood went to Herbert Brandrick, cow-keeper, Greet's Green, and asked him if he would buy some soap, and Brandrick asked him to bring it for him to see. Subsequently Sergeant Given was told of the offer, and he and Brandrick drove from Greet's Green to Tividale, and there saw the two prisoners engaged with a spade upon a pit mound. The prisoners ran away upon seeing Brandrick; and Given, who had previously left the trap, having ascertained that something was concealed, went in pursuit of Harthill, whom he arrested on another charge, and having brought him





years, and that her husband was continually assaulting her. She was desirous of being judicially separated from him. A fine of 5s and costs was imposed, and an order for separation was granted, the defendant to pay 5s a week towards the maintenance of the youngest child.

**96      January 12 1884**

**SMART CAPTURE OF A COINER** At the Birmingham Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Marris, Deykin and Cheashire (magistrates), **John Smith** (50), boatman, 17 Forge Street, Aston Road, was charged with having in his possession a quantity of base coin. On Thursday evening Detective Garfield went into the New Inn public house, Great Lister Street, to look for a person who was wanted at Stourbridge for passing base coin. As he walked up to the counter the prisoner, who was sitting drinking, got up and crept out stealthily. Garfield's suspicions were aroused, and he went out and followed the prisoner, who turned into Windsor Street. Garfield noticed him put his hand into his pocket, and just as he was taking it out grasped the arm and tried to see what was in the hand. The prisoner struggled most violently, and as they fought together, a great crowd collected. Suddenly the prisoner wrenched his hand away from Garfield's grasp, and as he passed it quickly behind his back a shower of shillings rattled on the windows near. The crowd began to pick up the money, and the prisoner scattered a second handful among them. He then took an iron tobacco box out of his pocket, and that flew out of his hand on to a window ledge close by. Another officer then came up and took the prisoner from Garfield, who proceeded to collect the money. The crowd had gathered up and appropriated all the coins thrown on the ground except three, but on the window ledge, Garfield found seventeen which had come out of the box when it flew open on striking the ledge. Prisoner complained of Garfield being rough to him. Such dangerous people, he said, should not be allowed to go about taking honest people into custody. [Laughter.] Prisoner was committed to the Sessions.

**97      January 26 1884**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**AN ALLEGED COINER CAUGHT** **Joseph Smith** (50), described as a boatman, living in Mill Street, was charged on remand with having in his possession a number of base shillings. Prisoner has been on remand for a fortnight for enquiries to be made regarding his antecedents. It will be remembered his capture was effected in a very clever manner by Detective Garfield, who seized him in the street. His pocket was full of base shillings, and in the struggle which ensued he threw away two handfuls of the base coins, and a tobacco box, which was also full. Chief-warder Webb, of Worcester prison, now deposed to prisoner being convicted at Worcester, at the Midsummer Assizes in 1882, for passing base coin, and being sentenced to one years imprisonment. He then went under the name of Joseph Widdows. Prisoner was committed to the Assizes.

**98      January 30 1884**

**Oldbury**

**OBSTRUCTING THE CANAL** **John Farley** (26), boatman, of West Bromwich Street, was charged with obstructing the canal, at the Jim Crow Locks, on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Godley, of Birmingham, appeared to prosecute. On the day named defendant pulled his boat into the mouth of the lock, and refused to move it when requested to do so by the officer in charge of the locks. He obstructed the canal for three hours, and prevented ten other boats from passing through. Defendant, who pleaded that another boatman had been allowed to take his turn, was fined 10s and costs, or in default fourteen days hard labour.

**99      January 31 1884**

**Staffordshire Assizes**

**BOATMEN'S QUARRELS** **John Bayliss** (17) and **Samuel Simpson** (17), both boatmen, were indicted for inflicting grievous bodily harm on **Samuel Sadler**, on the 27<sup>th</sup> November last, at Wordsley, near Stourbridge. Mr R E C Kettle prosecuted; and Mr Alfred Young defended Simpson, and Mr James Bayliss. Prosecutor is a boatman and publican, living at Brockmoor, and on the day named he, with his son, was working his boat along the canal from Netherton to Stourbridge. At a place called the High-level Bridge they caught up the boat which prisoners had charge of, and the

prosecutor asked the prisoners to allow his boat to pass theirs, as his was empty and theirs loaded. They refused to do so, but eventually Saddler did pass the prisoners' boat. Some distance higher up the canal the prisoners' boat overtook the prosecutor's, and after some words between them Simpson struck him with a strap, on the end of which was a buckle. Prosecutor, after some further quarrelling, went on, but later on the same day they met again. Another altercation took place, and Bayliss fetched a tiller out of the boat and dealt Saddler a severe blow on the head, knocking him down. Simpson almost immediately afterwards came up with another tiller, and the two, it was alleged, belaboured the prosecutor to such an extent that he had to remain in bed for twenty four days afterwards. It was admitted by Saddler that he struck Simpson in self-defence. In the cross-examination, prosecutor said he had had "some beer" when the row took place. The jury found Simpson not guilty, and Bayliss guilty of unlawfully wounding, under great provocation, and he was sentenced to one calendar months imprisonment, with hard labour.

**100 February 7 1884 Aston Police Court**

STEALING ZINC Henry Dodson, labourer, High Street, Aston; **Alfred Davies**, boatman, Lichfield Road, Aston; and Joseph Hall, striker, Lichfield Road, were charged with stealing zinc piping from Butler's Buildings, Holborn Hill, Aston, on the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. Dodson, who has been previously convicted, was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment, with hard labour; and the other prisoners were each sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment.

**101 March 15 1884 Aston Police Court**

A FRAUDULENT BOATMAN **James Berry**, boatman, was brought up on remand, charged with stealing 24s, of which he was the bailee, on November 14<sup>th</sup> last. The money was given to the prisoner by Mr Thomas Knight, foreman to Mr W H Hancox, to pay the tonnage of a load of bricks, but he absconded with it. He pleaded that Mr Hancox owed him some money, but this was denied, and he was sent to gaol for a month.

**102 March 18 1884 Hanley**

THROWING A BOY INTO THE CANAL At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, before the Mayor and Mr Warner, **John Beech**, boatman, was charged with attempting to drown Herbert Grocott, a boy of thirteen, on Sunday afternoon. The child, whose parents live in Etruria, was sitting on a wall by the canal towing-path, near Etruria, when the prisoner came up, pushed him off the wall, picked him up, and threw him into the canal. The boy was rescued before any harm had come to him, and a doctor was called in to attend him. Mr Richardson, for the prisoner, said his client had been frequently annoyed, and his horse frightened by boys jerking, snatching and breaking the towing rope, and he admitted having thrown the complainant into the water, being under the impression that he had caused his horse to plunge. The Bench ordered the prisoner to pay the complainant's father 5s towards the doctor's fee of 10s 6d, and the costs of the case.

**103 April 8 1884 Oldbury**

A CHILD DROWNED Yesterday, a child named Laura Tandy (6), daughter of **Noah Tandy**, boatman, of Gloucester, was drowned in the Birmingham Canal, near the Alkali Works.

**104 April 8 1884 Tipton**

ROBBERY FROM A RAILWAY GOODS YARD Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Messrs J Solly and T Underhill, **Arthur Cope**, a boatman, Toll End, was charged with stealing a bundle of copper tubes, of the value of 36s, from the yard of the London and North-Western Railway Company. Mr C W Croke prosecuted for the company. A watchman named Harvey saw the defendant with the property, and tried to arrest him. Cope resisted, and bit Harvey on the hand. The Bench sent the prisoner to gaol for two months for the robbery, and one month for the assault.

**105 April 11 1884**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

SENTENCES **Alfred Whitehouse** (32), boatman, stealing tools on the 21<sup>st</sup> February at Sedgley, the property of Alfred Hickman, six months imprisonment with hard labour.

**106 April 12 1884**

**Oldbury**

A CHILD DROWNED Mr R Docker, coroner, held an inquest yesterday afternoon, at the Locomotion Inn, Tat Bank, relative to the death of Laura Tandy (6), daughter of **Noah Tandy**, boatman of Gloucester, who was drowned on Monday in the Birmingham Canal near the Alkali Works. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned by the jury.

**107 April 17 1884**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

AN IMPUDENT ROBBERY **Arthur Price** (33), boatman, was indicted for stealing a coat, the property of William Lewis. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January prosecutor offered to sell the prisoner the coat, and the latter said that he would purchase it. He took the coat away, apparently with the intention of getting money to pay prosecutor for the coat, but returned without either the money or the coat. He then laughed and jeered at the prosecutor when he asked for the money. He had been previously convicted, and was sentenced to eight months imprisonment, and one years police supervision.

**108 April 18 1884**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

COUNTERFEIT COINERS **Thomas Bishop** (44), boatman, was charged with uttering a counterfeit florin, on the 14<sup>th</sup> ult. The prisoner first attempted to pass the coin at the public house of Mr Richards, Broad Street, but it was refused, and he then went to a tobacconist's shop near, and again tried to pass it. The shopkeeper, Frank Watson, gave him into custody. Prisoner was sent to gaol for six months. Mr Smith prosecuted.

**109 April 19 1884**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

WHOLESALE WHEAT STEALING **James Hawker** (32), boatman; **John Allen** (57), boatman, Henry Jelf (66), porter: and Edward Wainwright (71), labourer, were charged with stealing 1210lb of wheat, the property of the New Union Mill Company. Mr Hugo Young appeared on behalf of the prosecutors. Mr Daly defended Jelf, and Mr Dorsett defended the other prisoners. From the evidence given on behalf of the prosecution, it appeared that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January Mr P Smith, the director of the company, purchased 148,000lb of Nicolaieff wheat from a ship in port at Sharpness Point. The cargo was conveyed in two boats by canal, under the care of Hawker and Allen, each boat having a load of 299 sacks, the weight of each of which was about 252lb. On arriving at the bar-lock in the Worcester Canal, the boats were lightened so as to run up the shallow arm of the canal leading to the New Union Mill. At this lock there was a wharf, which was under the charge of Jelf. At the time the boats were lightened, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, there was no wheat on the wharf besides that which was taken from the boats in question. Finally, Hawker unloaded his boat at the mills and returned to receive the sacks taken from both of the boats when lightened and conveyed it to the mill. Allen subsequently discharged his cargo. On the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> of January Hawker went to a Mr Wheatley and asked him to go the next morning to Jelf's wharf with a horse and cart. This Mr Wheatley did, and found Wainwright and Jelf on the wharf. From them he received six sacks of wheat and took them to a Mr Fawdry in Deritend, where they were disposed of. The sacks delivered at the mill were found to be short of their proper weight, and it was contended that the six sacks taken to Fawdry's consisted of the missing quantity. Detective-superintendent Black proved receiving information of the affair from Wheatley, on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, and, in company with other officers, Black watched the persons removing the wheat, and Wainwright was shortly afterwards arrested. He implicated the other prisoners, who were subsequently apprehended, and from their statements it appeared that Allen sold the wheat, which was brought from the mill to Jelf's wharf by Hawker. Witnesses were called who gave evidence in accordance with this statement, and the jury without hesitation found the prisoners guilty. Detective-sergeant Black said the prisoners, he believed, had been in the habit of carrying on this pilfering for some

time. During the last three months, to his knowledge, 130 sacks of wheat had been taken to Fawdry's, and there disposed of. The jury expressed the opinion that Fawdry should have been present to give an account of his transactions. The Recorder said he was afraid that he could express no opinion on the subject. He considered the cases of Wainwright and Jelf were the worst, for they were evidently the instigators of the theft. It was a very bad case, and they would be sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. - Jelf: I have done three months already. - The Recorder: If you were not an old man I should have sent you to penal servitude. - Jelf: I shall not live it out. - The other prisoners were sentenced to nine months imprisonment each.

**110 April 19 1884 Wolverhampton**

**SERIOUS WIFE ASSAULT** At the Police Court, yesterday, **Edward Nickson**, a boatman, was charged with savagely assaulting his wife. A little while ago Nickson, who is in the habit of assaulting his wife, heated the poker and threatened to strike her with it. She had a child in her arms at the time, and held it up before her, thinking that would deter her husband from assaulting her. He, however, struck her a severe blow on the head, causing a serious wound. Five years ago the prisoner served six months imprisonment for assaulting his wife, and a separation order was at that time granted. They had since, however, consented to live together again. Prisoner was now again sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**111 May 13 1884 Walsall**

**WASTING THE CANAL COMPANY'S WATER** At the Police Court, yesterday, **Joseph Green**, boatman, was summoned for having wasted water, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company. **Samuel Whitehouse**, lock-keeper at the Walsall Locks, deposed that on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst he saw the defendant take a boat into one of the locks, but instead of drawing the boat into the lock he opened the bottom paddle before he closed the top one, the consequence of which was that the boat was sucked into the lock, and a great quantity of water was wasted. Witness opened the second lock himself, and complained to the defendant, who promised that he would not offend again, but on reaching the third lock he wasted the water again in the same manner as before, and on being spoken to became insolent, and said he would pass through the locks in that way as often as he liked. The Bench imposed a fine of 20s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment.

**112 May 26 1884 West Bromwich**

**CAUTION TO BOATMEN** **Richard Sharman** (17), boatman, of Greet Street, Greet's Green, was summoned by the Birmingham Canal Company for wilfully opening a lock gate at Ryder's Green Locks, and wasting water, the property of the company, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Godlee prosecuted. The lock-keeper proved the case, and defendant was fined 21s 6d, including costs, with the alternative of twenty one days hard labour.

**113 May 28 1884 Wolverhampton**

**INQUEST** Yesterday, Mr W H Phillips, coroner, held an inquest at the Crown Inn, New Cross, Heath Town, concerning the death of an unknown female child. A boatman named **John Matthews**, of Pelsall, stated that he found the child in the canal at New Cross on Sunday. It was undressed, but there were no bruises on the body. The enquiry was adjourned until the 6<sup>th</sup> June, for a *post mortem* examination.

**114 June 3 1884 Birmingham Police Court**

**ASSAULTS** **John Gosling**, boatman, Mill Street, was charged with assaulting Rose Aldridge and Emma Pargett. Prisoner went up to the first-named complainant and kicked her. She accounted for his behaviour by supposing that he took her for his wife, but she did not know him at all. Her companion asked prisoner what he meant by his conduct, when he turned and struck her in the mouth. He was sentenced to a months hard labour. **Thomas Thursfield**, boatman, Water Street, was charged with assaulting Patrick Cannon on May

17<sup>th</sup>. The parties had been drinking in a public house. A quarrel took place, and when they got outside prisoner struck prosecutor on the head with a stick and challenged him to fight. Prosecutor put one hand behind him because of the prisoner having only one arm. The fight had hardly commenced when the prisoner kicked him, fracturing his ankle. Prisoner, who pleaded provocation, was sentenced to a months hard labour.

**115 June 4 1884**

**Birmingham Police Court**

BRUTAL ASSAULTS ON WOMEN **Henry Taverner** (32), boatman, Legge Street, and **Thomas White** (28), boatman, Court, Aston Road, were charged with violently assaulting Elizabeth Hands. Prosecutrix said she was in the King's Arms public house, Bagot Street, on Monday evening, with her husband, having a pint of beer. The prisoners were there, and shortly after prosecutrix and her husband went in they violently assaulted the latter. Prosecutrix attempted to protect her husband from the prisoners' violence, when Taverner struck her on the head with a pint cup, felling her to the ground, and inflicting a severe injury. After prosecutrix rose from the floor, White struck her on the nose, and knocked her child from her arms. Mr Goodman said it was a most brutal assault, and prisoners were sent to prison for two months each.

**116 June 18 1884**

NEWS OF THE DAY At the Wednesbury Police Court, yesterday, William Tustin, alias "Wolf", and Joseph Eades, both of Birmingham, were charged with fighting a prize fight at the Delves, in the parish of Wednesbury, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant; and **Henry Cooper**, boatman, Smethwick, was charged with aiding and abetting. They were all bound over to keep the peace for six months.

**117 July 19 1884**

**Stoke-on-Trent**

HOW SMALLPOX IS SPREAD Yesterday, at the Stipendiary's Court at Fenton, **Edward Bannister**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was charged with an offence against the Canal Boats Act. The defendant's boat was registered and licensed to carry three persons, but on the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant the Sanitary Inspector (Mr Howell) found it lying at Stoke with the defendant, his wife, and three children on board. One child was suffering from smallpox, and a second was just recovering from the disease, but defendant had given no notice of the fact that he had infectious disease on board to the Sanitary Authority. He was reprimanded for his reckless conduct, and fined 5s and 12s costs.

**118 July 22 1884**

FATAL DROWNING ACCIDENTS Dr Iliffe, the district coroner, held an inquest at the Punch Bowl Inn, Nuneaton, yesterday, on the body of **Fanny Elizabeth Humphries**, the daughter of a boatman living at Eynsham, near Oxford. The evidence showed that the father of the deceased was in charge of two empty boats, which stayed at Nuneaton for the night. The deceased who was nine years of age, was playing with a kitten, and while in the act of stepping from one boat to the other, she accidentally fell between them, and was not found until some time afterwards, life being quite extinct when the body was pulled from the water. A verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded.

**119 August 15 1884**

**Hanley**

CRUELTY **Thomas Ayre**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a pony, which he violently kicked and beat. He was fined 10s and costs.

**120 September 19 1884**

SERIOUS ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN Yesterday morning, **John Simpson** (50), boatman, of Six Ways, Smethwick, was admitted into the District Hospital suffering from severe injuries. It appears the unfortunate man, who is in the employ of Mr Johnson, was leading a horse along the canal side, when the line became entangled with another boat, and, whilst trying to save the horse, the latter fell upon him twice.





**133 November 18 1884**

**Birmingham Police Court**

ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN **Thomas Pickering** (25), boatman, Sheepcote Street, was charged with assaulting George Thomas, steel roller, 47 Washington Street. On Saturday night the complainant heard a disturbance outside his house, and on going outside his house saw two men struggling on the ground, and the prisoner on the top in the act of kicking them. Complainant pulled the prisoner off the two men, whereupon the prisoner knocked him down and kicked him on the head, inflicting a very severe scalp wound. Mr Cheston, for the defence, argued that the complainant was the aggressor. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days hard labour.

**134 November 18 1884**

**Wolverhampton**

THE ALLEGED STABBING CASE At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, **William Hyde** (18), boatman, Blue Street, Brookfields, Birmingham, was charged, on remand, with wounding **William Patrick** (19), Bagnall Street, Springfields. Prosecutor stated that on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult he was standing in a bar at the Union Inn, Canal Street, when the prisoner, without any warning, struck him on the shoulder with his fist and stabbed him with a knife on the left arm. He was taken to the hospital, and was still under medical treatment. **Albert Crump**, boatman, stated that previous to assaulting Patrick, prisoner had knocked down a man named Guest. Mr C E Ashton jun stated that if the prisoner's knife had been clean the wound would have healed up in a few days. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

**135 December 2 1884**

**Birmingham Police Court**

ALLEGED THEFT FROM A RAILWAY COMPANY **Thomas Smith**, a boatman living in Oxford Street, was charged with stealing a quantity of timber from Banbury Street Wharf, the property of the London and North-Western Railway Company. A police officer in the employ of the Railway Company saw the prisoner and another man not in custody carrying a quantity of wood from a wharf at Curzon Street Station to a boat on the canal. The prisoner was captured directly afterwards. In defence he attempted to prove an *alibi*, and called a young woman named Harriet Highland, who lodged at the prisoner's house, and who said he was at home all the evening when the alleged robbery took place. When asked how she knew what time he came in, she said she knew well enough, as she was watching his little games. [Laughter.] He was committed to the Sessions.

**136 December 4 1884**

**West Bromwich**

SERIOUS ACCIDENTS Yesterday afternoon, **William Merchant** (64), boatman, residing in Ryder's Green Road, was thrown out of a cart in which he was riding, and sustained serious injuries, which necessitated his removal to the District Hospital, where he was detained. In addition to being badly shaken by the fall the unfortunate man was kicked by the horse, and the wheel of the cart also passed over him.

**137 December 15 1884**

**Wolverhampton**

CONTRAVENING THE CANAL BOATS ACT On Saturday, at the Police Court, **John Stokes**, boatman, of the boat Dublin, belonging to the Severn Canal Carrying Company, was fined 10s and costs for disregarding the regulations of the Canal Boats Act. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Inspector Blanton examined the boat, and found that the defendant, his wife, and three children were living in it. **Edward Bannister**, of the boat Margaret, belonging to Messrs Fanshaw and Pinson, was also fined 10s and costs for a like offence.

**138 December 16 1884**

**Wolverhampton**

KILLING A HARE At the County Police Court, yesterday, **George Meek**, boatman, Kingswinford, was charged with killing game without a license. Mr E H Thorne prosecuted. The defendant was conducting a boat along the canal, near Hinksford, Wombourn, when a hare ran on to the tow-path. His son frightened it, and the animal attempted to swim the canal. Defendant,

however, picked up his boat hook and killed it. A keeper employed by Lord Dudley, who witnessed the occurrence, asked him for the hare, but without success. The magistrates imposed a fine of 20s and costs.

**139 December 24 1884**

**WOLVERHAMPTON QUARTER SESSIONS** **William Hyde** (18), boatman, pleaded guilty to maliciously wounding William Patrick with a knife, in a public house in Canal Street, on October 25<sup>th</sup>. In answer to the Recorder, prisoner stated that he had been drinking when the assault was committed. In sentencing the prisoner to three months hard labour, the learned Recorder hoped that he would in future abstain from drink, which was the cause of half the evils in the country.

**140 December 25 1884** **Wolverhampton**

**SUDDEN DEATH IN A CANAL BOAT** Yesterday evening, whilst **James Shelton**, a boatman in the employ of the Great Western Railway Company, and living at 10 Mary Ann Street, was sitting in a boat, opposite the Gasworks, Stafford Road, he was seen to fall forward by George Willcox, of 33 Junction Street, who at the time was walking along the canal bank. **Thomas Bradbury**, the lock-keeper, got into the boat, and found that Shelton was dead.

**141 December 26 1884** **Walsall**

**THEFT BY A BOATMAN** At the Guildhall, on Wednesday, **George Hill**, Blue Lane West, a boatman, was charged with having stolen coal, the property of Messrs J Russell and Co, the Pleck. **Thomas Sutton** deposed that on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, while in a boat at the second lock, he saw the accused take two lumps of coal from one of Messrs Russell's boats, and remove them to his own boat. The defendant said he took the coal for the purpose of making a fire on his boat, he being a steerer. He was sentenced to ten days imprisonment with hard labour.

**142 December 29 1884** **Wolverhampton**

**DEATHS IN CANAL BOATS** On Saturday an inquest was held in the Sessions Court at the Town Hall, by Mr W H Phillips (coroner), upon the body of **James Shelton** (35), late of Mary Ann Street, boatman, employed by the Shropshire Union Canal Company, and who died in his boat when stationed near the bottom lock, Stafford Road, on Christmas eve. The wife of the deceased deposed that about two years ago he had a severe fit, and that since that time he had been suffering from pains in the head. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned.

Today an inquest will be held in the Sessions Court upon the body of **Daniel Stein** (66), late of Dudley Port, boatman employed by the Shropshire Union Company, who died in the cabin of his boat the day after Christmas day, when stationed at Wolverhampton. Deceased had been ill for some considerable time, suffering from an injury to the leg; but he had refused to have medical advice. On Friday his wife insisted on his seeing someone, and while she was absent summoning a surgeon the man died. Mr Blanche, surgeon, who attended after death, gave it as his opinion that mortification had set up in the limb.

**143 December 30 1884** **Wolverhampton**

**THE DEATH IN A CANAL BOAT** The adjourned enquiry relative to the death of **Daniel Stein**, boatman, who died suddenly on Friday last, was held yesterday, by the Coroner (Mr W H Phillips), at the Town Hall. The medical evidence showed that death had resulted from mortification of the leg. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes".

**144 January 1 1885** **Hanley**

**AGGRAVATED ASSAULT** At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, **Joseph Wild**, boatman, was charged with having committed an aggravated assault upon a married woman named **Emma Wood**. The complainant lived at Knutton, and had been deserted by her husband. Hearing that he was working on the canal, near Tunstall, the woman wandered about in search of him during the whole

of Tuesday, and at night she arrived at Etruria weary and unable to proceed further. The captain of a boat lying at Etruria, who knew her husband, offered to accommodate the complainant in his cabin for the night, and she accordingly retired to rest. During the night the prisoner, who was employed on the boat, entered the cabin and committed an indecent assault on the woman. Prisoner denied the charge, but the magistrates, who considered that it had been proved – while censuring the woman for her imprudent conduct – committed him to prison for a month, with hard labour.

**145 January 14 1885**

**Oldbury**

ASSAULTING THE POLICE At the Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs J E Wilson, W E Chance and H Heaton, **Levi Cook** (29), boatman, of Tat Bank, was charged with assaulting Police-constable Peart on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult ; also with being drunk and disorderly on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of December. Police-constable Peart stated that on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult, he found prisoner in Stow Street creating a disturbance, and using bad language. He requested him to go away, whereupon the prisoner struck him several times, and afterwards threw stones at him, one of which struck him on the nose, inflicting a severe wound. Witness found it necessary to take prisoner's companion into custody, and he then endeavoured to rescue the man from him. Prisoner ultimately got away, and was apprehended on Sunday last. A fine of £2 12s 6d, including costs was imposed, with the alternative of six weeks hard labour.

**146 January 28 1885**

**Oldbury**

SUDDEN DEATH An inquest was held yesterday, before Mr R Docker, at the Whimsey Inn, respecting the death of **Samuel Cooksey** (28), boatman, of Canal Side, Hales Owen Street, who died suddenly on Saturday. The evidence was to the effect that on Saturday evening deceased, while in conversation with some companions, exclaimed, "Oh strike," and fell down and expired immediately. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned by the jury.

**147 February 5 1885**

ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF DYNAMITE A canal boatman named **Henry Allen** was apprehended at Bath, yesterday afternoon, by direction of the Home Office, for having a quantity of dynamite in his possession unlawfully. A few days ago an alarm was created near Freshford by an explosion on the banks of the Kennet and Avon. It was afterwards ascertained that a boatman in the employ of a local firm of canal carriers had possession of explosives, and was heard to state that he had secured them from the Severn Tunnel Engineering Works. Allen was arrested in pursuance of enquiries, and will be charged before the Bradford-on-Avon magistrates today with the illegal possession of dynamite.

**148 February 10 1885**

**Rugeley**

POLICE COURT At this court, yesterday, **Frederick Crutchley**, boatman, was fined 20s and costs for cruelly ill treating an ass by causing it to draw coals between Rugeley, Brereton and Mossley, on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, whilst it was suffering from wounds on the shoulders.

**149 February 11 1885**

**Oldbury**

ASSAULTING THE POLICE Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Messrs J E Wilson and W E Chance, **Richard Pickerill**, boatman, of Tat Bank, was charged with assaulting Police-constable Rivers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, and with being drunk and disorderly on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> ult. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, Police-constable Rivers arrested prisoner whilst in a public house on a warrant, and on the way to the station the assault was committed. Prisoner was ordered to pay £2 4s 6d fines and costs, or go to gaol for twenty one days.

**150 February 24 1885**

**Birmingham Police Court**

BRUTAL ASSAULT IN MOLAND STREET **James Moss** (26), boatman. 36 Love Lane, was charged with violently assaulting Thomas Crowe, stamper, New John Street, on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult ; and

also with assaulting James King, labourer, Moland Street, on the same occasion. The prisoner had been remanded four times in order that Crowe, who has been in the hospital since the assault, might be able to attend. He now appeared with his head bandaged up. He said that just after ten o'clock on the night in question, in company with his brother, he went to the Malt Shovel, Moland Street. The prisoner was there, and he and witness's brother began to quarrel, and ultimately went into the passage to fight. Prosecutor followed them, and saw the men fighting. He tried to get his brother away, whereupon prisoner struck him on the jaw, and witness, in trying to get away, fell on his hands and knees. Prisoner then kicked him on the eye, which bled very much, and necessitated his being taken to the General Hospital, of which institution he had since been an inmate. When cross-examined by Mr Benbow Hebbert, who appeared for the prisoner, witness admitted having had a drop of beer, but denied that his brother said, "Here's Beaky Moss, I can take him down". Prosecutor had previously been kicked by other persons. Mary King, single woman, living in Moland Street, said that on the night in question she saw Moss kick Crowe in the face while he was lying on the ground. On witness remonstrating with the prisoner, he assaulted her. Cross-examined: Witness did not see anyone but Moss kick the prosecutor, but she saw two men – whose names she afterwards learnt were Dugard and Wheeler – strike him with their buckles. James King, one of the prosecutors, said that some time afterwards he saw Moss and Dugard kicking a man in the entry. Moss came up to him, and saying, "This is one of the ----:" hit him on the head, knocked him down, and kicked him. Witness had his hand badly injured, but he could not say whether it was done by a blow from a belt or a kick, or who did it. Witness was then taken into the house by the neighbours, and was followed by prisoner and his gang. Other evidence of a corroborative nature was given. Mr Morrison, house surgeon at the General Hospital, said that the prosecutor was admitted to the hospital suffering from bruises on the face and a wound an inch long on the outer side of the left orbit. Prosecutor remained under treatment till the 21<sup>st</sup> inst. The prosecutor's eyeball had become permanently impaired, he being only able to distinguish light from darkness. Witness had since examined the witness King, and found that he was suffering from injury to the small bone of the forearm, which, in witness's opinion, would permanently affect the use of that member. The injury to Crowe's eye might have been caused by a fall or by a kick. In cross-examination witness said that Crowe's injury might have been done by the buckle of a belt, in fact it was more likely to have been done with a buckle. The prisoner, who reserved his defence, was committed to the Assizes, but was admitted to bail, himself in £20, and one surety in £20.

### **151 February 27 1885**

### **Birmingham Police Court**

THE ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER IN 1878 **Henry Cleaver** (21), boatman, was charged with the manslaughter of Thomas Chamberlain, on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1878. Prisoner and prosecutor, who at that time were about fifteen years of age, were gambling on the side of the canal near Vincent Street Bridge, when an altercation took place and a fight ensued. Prisoner, it is alleged, was getting the worse of the encounter when he pulled a knife from his pocket and thrust it into the groin of Chamberlain, inflicting a wound three inches deep. The injured youth was taken to the Queen's Hospital, where death ensued three months afterwards. An inquest was subsequently held, and a verdict of "manslaughter" against the accused returned. After the affray prisoner absconded and only recently returned to Birmingham, where he was arrested. He was remanded till today for the attendance of a surgeon to describe the cause of death.

### **152 March 9 1885**

MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN A CANAL TUNNEL An extraordinary circumstance occurred early on Saturday morning in the Bilsworth Tunnel, near Northampton, through which passes the Grand Junction Canal. A man named **Smith** was working a boat for Mr W E Clark, a wharfinger, of Fenny Stratford, and it was as usual being drawn through the tunnel by a steam tug. When near the end the man in charge of the tug noticed an unaccountable jerking of the boat, and on returning along the path to ascertain the cause found that the man Smith was dead. Death was caused, it is supposed, by suffocation, the atmosphere in the tunnel being exceedingly dense, particularly during the early

morning, and this density is intensified by the smoke from the tug.

**153 April 1 1885**

**Aston Police Court**

**A MODERN HERCULES Samuel Flewitt**, boatman, Vyse Street, Aston, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Lichfield Road, on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult, and further with assaulting Police-constables Rogers, Barratt and Grubb, at the same time and place. On Saturday evening Police-constables Rogers and Grubb were in the Lichfield Road, when in consequence of prisoner's disorderly conduct they attempted to take him into custody. He became exceedingly violent, and struck and kicked the two constables in a most brutal manner. Police-constable Barratt, who came to the assistance of Rogers and Grubb, was severely kicked on the left side of his thigh, while Detective-sergeant Winkless, who was passing at the time, and rendered what assistance he could, stated that so violent was Flewitt that three pairs of handcuffs were forced upon the prisoner, all of which he sprung. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting prisoner to the police station, in consequence of his rough behaviour. In reply to Mr Rowlands (magistrate's clerk), one of the witnesses stated that prisoner must have been exceedingly strong to spring the handcuffs, as no ordinary man could do such a thing. Mr Ledsam said prisoner, who had been no less than eighteen times before the Court on serious charges, was a very violent fellow, and must go to prison for three months with hard labour.

**154 April 15 1885**

**Oldbury**

**CHARGE OF ATTEMPTING TO COMMIT SUICIDE** Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Messrs H Chance and H Heaton, **Samuel Hill**, boatman, of Albert Street was brought up on remand, charged with attempting to commit suicide on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. Police-sergeant Stanton stated that on the day in question the police were sent for to the prisoner's residence, where they were told that he had attempted to cut his throat with a knife. He understood that the prisoner had been drinking heavily at the time, and as he had been in custody since, they did not propose to call any evidence against him. The prisoner, after being cautioned by the Bench, and promising not to repeat the offence, was discharged.

**155 April 15 1885**

**Hanley**

**ROBBERY AND ASSAULT BY A FEMALE** At yesterday's Borough Police Court, Hannah Birchall, a woman of bad character was charged with stealing 3s 6d from the person of **William Smith**, boatman, and also with assaulting him with a poker. It was stated that the previous night the prosecutor was at the King's Head Vaults. He there saw a woman whom he accompanied to a house in Marsh Street, where he met with the prisoner. While he was with the prisoner, she put her hand in his pocket and took therefrom 3s 6d, and when he charged her with robbing him, she took up a poker and struck him with it. Prosecutor called in a police officer and had the prisoner arrested. The magistrates sentenced the prisoner, who had been previously convicted, to three months imprisonment.

**156 April 24 1885**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**EXTENSIVE THEFT OF METAL** Six men, who have been arrested at different times, some of them having been previously remanded, were charged with being concerned in an extensive theft of nickel, belonging to the Erdington Nickel Company. The names of the prisoners are **John Lee** (39), canal lock-keeper, Ashted Lock, Holt Street ; **George William Hipkiss** (19), boatman, Ashted ; **Thomas Wright** (27), boatman, Fazeley Street ; and **Thomas Lewin** (29), boatman, Edward Street Parade ; William Marklow (68), brassfounder, Holt Street ; and William Homer (60), general dealer. The first four were charged with stealing 120lb of metal, and the others with receiving the same knowing it to have been stolen. Mr Bickley (Buller, Bickley and Cross) appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Fallows, Mr Edward Rowlands, Mr Cheston and Mr Hooper appeared for different prisoners. Mr Bickley said the metal was stolen while in transit by canal from London to Birmingham, Lewin being the captain of the boat it was stolen from. The men charged with

stealing the metal were found dealing with it soon after it was stolen. The metal had come from the Nickel Co's mines in New Caledonia. An adjournment was required for an analysis to be made of the metal which had been recovered, and for the attendance of a witness. No objection was offered to the remand, but bail was applied for on behalf of the prisoners. The case was adjourned till next Thursday, bail being admitted in the case of Homer and Marklow.

**157 April 29 1885**

**ROBBERY BY A BOY** Yesterday, at the Oldbury Police Court, Benjamin Ashcroft Liddell (12), whose parents reside in Payton Road, Handsworth, was brought up on remand charged with stealing a watch and chain on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst, the property of **Alfred Heath**, boatman, of Saltley. The lad pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to receive twelve strokes with a birch rod.

**158 May 1 1885**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**ALLEGED EXTENSIVE THEFT OF METAL** George Holtom (18), Stella Street, Nechells; **Thomas Lewin** (29), boatman, Edward Street, Parade; **John Lee** (39), lock-keeper, Holt Street, Ashted; **George William Hipkiss** (19), boatman, Holt Street, Ashted; William Homer (60), general dealer, Ashted Row; **Thomas Wright** (27), boatman, Fazeley Street; and William Marklow (68), brassfounder, Holt Street, were charged, on remand, with being concerned in the theft of 120lb of nickel, the property of the Nickel Company, Erdington. Mr Shakespeare, of Oldbury, prosecuted; Mr Cheston defended Lee, Mr Fallows Homer, Mr Hooper Lewin, Mr Edward Rowlands Marklow, and Mr Sheldon of Wednesbury, Wright. Marklow and Homer were charged with receiving the metal, and the other prisoners with stealing it. Evidence was given for the prosecution to the effect that 924 bags of nickel were forwarded from the Nickel Company's mines, New Caledonia, to their manufactory at Erdington. The metal was brought from London to Erdington by canal, in two boats, which were under charge of the prisoner Lewin. Mr Robert Heale Batty, manager for the prosecutors said that the nickel ore was smelted in New Caledonia, into what was known as nickel regulus, and it was sent to Erdington to be refined. The metal in its present state was utterly useless for manufacturing purposes, and was always refined before being sold to the trade. There were peculiar properties about the metal which enabled him to distinguish it from any other nickel in the world. On the arrival of the 924 bags at Erdington, six of them appeared to be scarcely so full as they should be. The pig of metal produced which he saw at a manufactory at Mary Ann Street, contained, he believed, some of the peculiar elements of the regulus mixed with spelter and copper. The parcel of the same metal shown him by the police weighed 120lb. The regulus was worth 1s 6d a lb. In cross-examination, Mr Batty admitted that but for the fact of the regulus being before him he could not prove that the company had been robbed. By the actual weight delivered the theft could not be proved. After hearing the evidence of Detective Dobbs, who, with Detective Ashby, took the prisoners into custody, the Deputy Stipendiary decided that the evidence of stealing was not sufficient, and therefore the case must be dismissed. The case occupied several hours. The prisoners were accordingly liberated.

**159 May 11 1885**

**WEST BROMWICH POLICE COURT** At this Court, on Saturday, before Messrs Kenrick and Harding, **Joseph Kempson** (28), boatman, of Tasker Street, was charged with stealing coal from a boat on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, the property of **John Webb**, boat steerer and contractor. Mr T G Tyler prosecuted on behalf of the Birmingham Coal Merchants' Association. John Webb deposed that he was a boat-steerer for Councillor Dixon, of Birmingham. On Monday last he moored a boat laden with coal at Greet's Green, and in the evening of the Sunday he saw prisoner leave the wharf with a lump of coal on his head. Prisoner, who has already been convicted thirteen times for various offences, was committed to the Sessions for trial.

**BIRMINGHAM POLICE COURT** **Edwin Butler**, a boatman in the employ of Joseph Pearson, of the Golden Fleece, Edgbaston Street, was sentenced to a months imprisonment for stealing 1s 6d from his employer's till.

**160 May 27 1885**

**Burslem**

ALLEGED THEFT **Thomas Newton**, boatman, was charged at yesterday's Stipendiary's Police Court with having stolen a silver watch and chain, a steel watch chain, a petticoat, and 1s 0 1/2d., the property of **William Lowe**, also a boatman, on the 17<sup>th</sup> instant ; and **Richard Cartwright**, **Joseph Potts** and **Benjamin Wynne**, boatmen, were charged with receiving the watch, chain and petticoat, which were of the value of £6 6s, well knowing them to be stolen. On the night of the 16<sup>th</sup>, the prosecutor moored his boat in the Tunstall basin of the North Staffordshire Canal. During the night he was awoken by a noise, and on looking round he saw the prisoner Newton in the cabin, he having gained admission by opening a slide in the roof. As soon as Newton saw that he was perceived he ran away, and the articles named were subsequently missed. On the following day Cartwright, Potts and Wynne induced persons to pledge the things for them. All the prisoners were committed for trial.

**161 June 20 1885**

**Aston Police Court**

LOITERING WITH INTENT **Henry Hill**, boatman, Brearley Street, Birmingham, was charged with loitering with intent to commit a felony at Erdington on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. Police-constable Marks saw the prisoner behaving in a very suspicious manner at Erdington on the day named, and as he failed to give a satisfactory explanation of his conduct witness took him into custody. Prisoner, who had been previously convicted, was sentenced to six weeks, with hard labour.

**162 July 10 1885**

**Nuneaton**

ROWDYISM AT ATTLEBOROUGH WAKE At the Petty Sessions, yesterday, **Thomas Lapworth**, boatman, was charged with being drunk and assaulting Police-constable Evans, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Bland prosecuted, and Mr Marshall defended. The alleged assault took place on Wake Monday. According to Evans's statement, he was sent for to quell a disturbance, which arose outside the Royal Oak Inn. Lapworth was standing on the causeway in a drunken state, and as he refused to move, witness pushed him off the pavement. Defendant then ran at him, and struck him in the mouth. Witness closed with the defendant, and they both fell. The crowd closed round, and witness was kicked a good deal; but he managed to maintain his hold upon the prisoner, and with assistance, conveyed him to the police station. The defence was that the constable was drunk, and not in a fit state to take a man into custody; and it was further contended that it was the constable who caused the disturbance, so far as the prisoner was concerned. Several witnesses gave evidence in support of this view, but the Bench convicted the defendant, sending him to prison for six weeks upon the two charges. Joseph Proctor was also charged with assaulting the constable at the same time and place. It was alleged that while the prisoner Lapworth was being conveyed to Nuneaton station, Proctor kicked the constable in the ribs. He was sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment.

**163 July 29 1885**

**Staffordshire Summer Assizes**

BURGLARY AT TUNSTALL **Thomas Newton** (52), boatman, was indicted for burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house of Wm Lowe, on 17<sup>th</sup> May, at Tunstall, and stealing a watch, two chains, a petticoat and 1s 6 1/2d : and **Richard Cartwright** (44), labourer, **Joseph Potts** (30), miner, and **Benjamin Wynne** (42), labourer, were indicted for receiving the articles named from Newton. Mr Bodden prosecuted. Newton pleaded guilty. The prosecutor's house was broken into, and the property mentioned stolen. On the following day the chains were pledged in Tunstall on behalf of the prisoners, and the watch was found hidden in the chimney at Cartwright's house. The petticoat had not been found. When arrested Newton stated that the other prisoners knew nothing about the robbery, although it was proved that on the night of the robbery and the following day the three men stayed at Cartwright's house. The prisoners were found guilty, and the four were sent to gaol for six weeks hard labour each.

**164 July 30 1885**

COLESHILL PETTY SESSIONS At these Sessions, yesterday, before Mr R F T Croxall (chairman), the Hon Arden Adderley, and Mr Pemberton, **George Goulding**, boatman, Sandy Lane, Birmingham, and **Thomas Wright**, boatman, Tamworth, were summoned by **George Humphries**, canal constable, in the employ of the Birmingham Canal Company, for wantonly and wilfully wasting water at the Minworth locks on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. The case was proved by the canal lock-keeper, who saw defendants open the sluices of the upper lock gate before the lower one was closed, thereby causing a considerable waste of water. Wright contended that he was under the instructions of his captain, Goulding, and was fined 1s and costs. Goulding, who did not appear, was fined £1 and costs,

**165 August 7 1885**

**Hanley**

FOUND DROWNED Early yesterday morning the dead body of a youth, named **James Wilkinson**, son of a boatman living in Tinkersclough, was taken out of the canal at Etruria Vale. It is supposed that the lad had been fishing, and had accidentally fallen into the water and been drowned.

**166 August 17 1885**

**Wolverhampton**

ILL-TREATING A DONKEY **William Matthews**, boatman, of Lower Westgate Street, Gloucester, was fined 10s and costs, at the Police Court, on Saturday, for having worked a donkey whilst in an unfit condition.

**167 August 20 1885**

**Birmingham Police Court**

KNOCKING A CONSTABLE INTO THE CANAL **Henry Murphy** (20), boatman, no fixed residence, was charged with breaking windows in the Corporation premises, Shadwell Street, and also assaulting Police-constable Lennard on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. About half past five in the afternoon a man named George Phillips saw the prisoner throwing stones and bricks across the canal at the windows in the Corporation premises, Shadwell Street Wharf. Several panes of glass were broken, as well as the framework of the windows. Phillips called the attention of Police-constable Lennard to the prisoner, and the officer procured a boat and rowed to the other side of the canal. On getting on to the towing-path he found that the prisoner had cut the rope which attached the Corporation horse to a boat, and was walking off with the animal. The policeman went after the prisoner, and told him he should take him into custody, when he struck the officer on the ear and knocked him into the canal. He was rescued by two men, and the prisoner ran away, but was eventually apprehended. It transpired that earlier in the afternoon the prisoner attacked a man in a cart and thrashed him with the buckle end of a strap, and shortly before breaking the windows at Shadwell Street Wharf he struck and kicked a boatman in the employ of the Corporation, injuring him so badly that he will be unable to work for some days. The prisoner who pleaded that he was drunk, was sentenced to two months hard labour.

**168 September 7 1885**

STEALING FISH AT A RAILWAY STATION **John Lyndon** (25), boatman, Middle Row, Charles Street, was charged at the Police Court, on Saturday, with stealing three plaice from the railway station, which had been consigned to Mr Smith, fishmonger, of Horseley Fields. Evidence was given that prisoner had been seen to take the three plaice from behind a notice board where they had been concealed. He was committed to the Borough Sessions.

**169 September 30 1885**

A MAN DROWNED Shortly before midnight, on Monday, a man named Sheldrake, living in Cambridge Street, heard a noise proceeding from the canal near Broad Street, and went in search of a police officer. He found Police-constable Legg, of the B Division, and informed him of what he had heard. The officer went to the canal side and, with the assistance of two men named Brazier

and Tinsley, dragged the water, with the result that they recovered the body of a man, who was subsequently identified as **Charles Cox** (60), a boatman belonging to Chalford, near Stroud. There is nothing to show how the man got into the water, and his body was removed to the mortuary at the Central Police Station.

### **170    October 8 1885**

**EXTRAORDINARY AFFRAY BETWEEN BOATMEN** At the Birmingham Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Hill and Lowe, **Frederick Firkins**, boatman, was charged with violently assaulting another boatman named **William Kibler**, yesterday morning. It appears that until recently Firkins was employed by his father, Joseph Firkins, who keeps the Bridge Inn, Sherborne Street, as a boatman; but he was discharged in consequence of neglect of work, and Kibler was engaged in his place. This fact has caused ill feeling on the part of Firkins towards Kibler. On Tuesday night both were drinking in the Bridge Inn, and Firkins in the course of the evening challenged Kibler to fight, but he declined to do so. It was known to Firkins that Kibler would start about eight o'clock yesterday morning upon a journey to Cannock, and soon after that hour, when Kibler was upon the towing-path near St Vincent Street, he met Firkins, who dealt him a terrible blow upon the head with a lockkey, knocking him into the canal. While Kibler was in the water Firkins took hold of the tiller of the boat and thrust it several times at Kibler's head and body, forcing him against the boat. Firkins then ran away, and Kibler, in an exhausted condition, attempted to get out of the canal, but fell in again. Subsequently he got out and went to his assailant's father's house, and from there to the Queen's Hospital, where he was found to be suffering from severe bruises to the body, a serious scalp wound 1 1/2 in long on the back of the head, and another 1 3/4 in long on the front of the head. Prisoner was remanded for the attendance of the injured man.

[ Note: [this and the following article clearly relate to the same event. So Firkins/Perkins and Kibler/Kebble](#)]

### **171    October 16 1885**

#### **Birmingham Police Court**

**AN ASSAULT** **Frederick Perkins**, a canal boatman, was charged with assaulting a fellow boatman named **William Kebble**. The two men worked on the same boat, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant they quarrelled. Perkins struck Kebble with his fists, and the latter retaliated by striking at Perkins with the boat tiller. Perkins thereupon struck complainant with another piece of boat furniture, beat him about the head, and knocked him into the canal. The injuries received were not serious, though complainant had to be treated at the hospital. The case was settled by prisoner paying £1 as compensation.

### **172    October 16 1885**

**MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN** **Benjamin Millward**, aged fifty five, boatman, who lived at 12 Court, 2 house, Fordrough Street, died on Wednesday morning, at 2 o'clock, from injuries which it is supposed were the result of foul play. It seems that about five o'clock on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, deceased left his home in Fordrough Street to take his boat into the Black Country, being at that time in good health. Nothing more was heard of him until the following Monday, when he returned home with his eyes blackened. He also complained of having pains in his right side. His daughter, surprised at seeing her father return in such a state, asked him how he came by his injuries, and he then said that he had been drinking with a number of other men on the Friday, and that they had had a row. He did not, however, inform his daughter where the affair took place. As the deceased appeared to suffer great pain in his side, a doctor was sent for; but deceased wanted another, so Mr Wilson, surgeon, was called in on Saturday. Mr Wilson examined the deceased, and asked him how he came by the injuries to his side, and deceased repeated the statement that he had first made – namely that he had been in a drunken row with some other men, and had received them then. The doctor asked deceased if he had been kicked, but the latter stated that he did not know whether he had been kicked or whether his injuries were caused by his being

knocked down. Deceased was then asked whether he knew the man who had inflicted the injuries upon him, but he stated that he did not, because it had happened in the dark. According to the statements of deceased's daughter, he never stated where the affair took place. Mr Wilson ordered poultices to be applied to the deceased's side, and gave other instructions which were carried out; but notwithstanding this Millward continued in great pain until Wednesday morning, when he died, as is supposed from the result of his injuries. An inquest will be held.

**173 December 1 1885**

**NIGHT-POACHING AT WATER ORTON** At the Town Hall, Coleshill, on Monday, before Captain Digby and Major Dilke, **Edward Taylor** (26), 23 Cuckoo Road, Aston, boatman, was charged by George Williams, gamekeeper to the Earl of Bradford, Castle Bromwich, with being on enclosed land by night for the purpose of taking and destroying game on land in the occupation of Mr George Tomlinson, Water Orton, on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. It appeared from the evidence of the gamekeepers, Williams and Wall, that about 11 p m on the above date, while on their ordinary rounds, they came across several men, of which the prisoner was one. Upon the keepers approaching them they commenced to throw stones, several of which struck Williams, fortunately not causing any serious injury. Upon this the prisoner was secured. The other men, four in number, escaped, leaving behind them two or three hundred yards of netting, pegs &c, which were taken possession of by the keepers, and produced in court. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and the Bench sentenced him to three calendar months hard labour, and at the expiration of that term to find sureties for his good behaviour, or to be further imprisoned for six calendar months, with hard labour.

**174 December 2 1885**

**Walsall**

**FOUND DROWNED** Yesterday morning the lifeless body of Joseph Little (51), moulder, Long Street, was found in the canal, near Bridgeman Street, by **Enoch Astley**, a boatman. The deceased had been missing since Saturday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, when he was seen in a drunken condition near the canal side.

**175 January 9 1886**

**A BOY DROWNED AT BORDESLEY** Yesterday afternoon Police-constable G Barnes, of the E Division was called to the canal near Sandy Lane, and found that a boy named **Charles Pittaway** (11), son of a boatman living at 4, back of 6 Edward Street, Parade, had been drowned. It appears that the lad was sent by his mother from a barge to fetch a can of fresh water, and as he did not return she went to look for him, and then discovered his hat floating on the water. The canal was dragged, and the boy's body was brought to the surface. As life was extinct, the body was removed to the Moseley Street Police Station, to await an inquest.

**176 February 12 1886**

**A BOATMAN DROWNED** Yesterday an inquest was held before Mr E Hooper, at the Town Hall, West Bromwich, relative to the death of **Charles Webb** (18), of Halford Street, Smethwick, who was drowned in the canal near Greet's Green, on Tuesday last. The evidence was to the effect that deceased, in company with another boatman, was bringing a boat laden with coal from Cannock to Smethwick. On approaching Greet's Green, his companion went into the cabin to prepare his dinner, and upon coming up again, missed deceased. His hat was floating upon the water, which was immediately dragged, and the body found. It is supposed he slipped into the water when crossing one of the locks. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**177 February 12 1886**

**Warwickshire Assizes**

**OUTRAGEOUS ASSAULT AT MINWORTH** Thomas Lydon (22), James Lydon (58), Catherine Lydon (53), and Maria Lydon (19), members of one family, living at Minworth, were indicted for having maliciously assaulted George Day, labourer, at Minworth, on the 28<sup>th</sup> December last. Mr

Nathan prosecuted. On the evening of the day named a supper had been given at the New Inn, Minworth, and was attended by the prosecutor. After prosecutor left the public house he was set upon by several persons, and beaten about the head with sticks and a belt. The night was dark, but he recognised the whole of the prisoners, and a man named McNicholas as being among those who assaulted him. The following morning a cap and belt belonging to Thomas Lydon were found near the spot where the *melee* was alleged to have taken place. Prisoner denied assaulting Day. The jury found Thomas Lydon guilty of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and the other prisoners guilty of unlawfully wounding. James McNicholas (22), soldier, was charged with the other prisoners with having unlawfully and maliciously assaulted **William Carter** at Minworth on the 26<sup>th</sup> December last. Mr Nathan also prosecuted in this case. Prosecutor, who is a boatman, living at Minworth, stated that he left the New Inn on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> December, about eleven o'clock. He was standing under a tree when McNicholas came up and struck him across the head with a stick or a poker, inflicting a serious injury. He had been under medical treatment ever since. After McNicholas struck him the other prisoners came up and also assaulted him whilst he was on the ground. Subsequent to the assault, McNicholas absconded, and enlisted in the Artillery. McNicholas was found guilty of wounding with intent. His Lordship said the outrage was disgraceful and atrocious. Thomas Lydon, who had been in gaol some time, was sentenced to eleven months imprisonment : McNicholas to twelve months imprisonment ; James Lydon to three months imprisonment; and the female prisoners to one months imprisonment each.

**178 February 19 1886**

**Birmingham Police Court**

PARISH PROSECUTION **Henry Bond**, a boatman, living at Cannock Chase, was summoned for neglecting to support his wife, who was chargeable to the Guardians of the parish of Birmingham. Warrant-officer Daniels gave evidence of the woman being maintained by the parish. Mr Cheston, who appeared for the defence, said that the parties had been living apart for fifteen years, and the defendant said he could prove adultery, but he had not brought the witnesses he proposed to call. An order was made for 3s 6d a week.

**179 March 4 1886**

**Birmingham Police Court**

CRUELTY TO A SON **George James** (45), boatman, Sherborne Street, was charged on a warrant with cruelly ill-treating his son. **George Henry James**, eleven years of age, stated that his father beat him with a belt with the buckle attached to it, on the afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. Witness was asleep when his father returned home on the evening of the same day. Witness was brought downstairs, whereupon he was beaten again. Police-constable Piggott stated that the boy was beaten unmercifully, and, although five days had elapsed from the date of the assault, the boy's back and arms were terribly bruised. Prisoner stated that his son had been in the habit of borrowing money from different people by representing that he had been sent by his parents, and that was why he thrashed him. Mr Kynnersley examined the marks on the lad's back and arms, and then sentenced prisoner to one months imprisonment with hard labour, adding that if the boy had been guilty of the offence with which his father had charged him it was no reason why he should be subjected to such cruelty.

**180 March 12 1886**

THE DROWNING OF A WOLVERHAMPTON WOMAN At the Town Hall, yesterday, an adjourned inquest was held by the Borough Coroner (Mr W H Phillips) touching the death of Theresa Collins (23), married, whose body was at eight o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 7<sup>th</sup> ult, found in the Birmingham Canal, near Norton's Mill, in Old Mill Street. From previous evidence it seems that deceased for about twelve months had been separated from her husband, George Collins, by trade an edge-tool striker, but who has of late been earning his living as an out-porter or by doing jobbing work, and who lodges in Bilston Street. Deceased has been supporting herself by prostitution, and the evidence of four persons goes to show that she was seen alive about eleven o'clock on Saturday night; but beyond this no evidence was forthcoming which would enable the

police to follow up the subsequent movements of the woman. When, on the following day, the body was recovered from the water by the police, marks and bruises were discernible which led to the belief that there had been foul play. On a *post mortem* examination being made, Mr Vincent Jackson, surgeon, discovered that in addition to bruises over the eye and behind the ear, four of the ribs were broken, but this he believed to have been caused subsequent to immersion. The other injuries he considered the woman sustained before death, and that she died from drowning.

**John Eddowes**, a boatman of Albion Street, Wolverhampton, deposed yesterday that at about a quarter to one on Sunday morning, the 7<sup>th</sup> ult, he moored his boat near to Norton's Mill, having just arrived from Great Bridge. While waiting there he saw a young man come on to the towpath from the direction of Mill Street, and shortly afterwards a young woman followed him. The woman addressed him as "Harry", and he responded. A little later an elderly man, wearing light clothes, came from the same direction as the other persons, and stood near to witness's boat. He remarked to himself, "She is a long time coming," and when witness spoke to him he made no reply.

Presently the young man and woman whom witness had first seen walked along the towing-path, and passing the elderly man, went on towards the mill. Subsequently the elderly man repeated his former remark, and after lighting his pipe he went away. Owing to the steam and fog issuing from the water witness was unable to identify any of the persons he saw, but the young woman wore a long jacket, and was wrapped up. The Coroner, having summed up, read, at the request of the jury, the evidence given at the previous enquiry by Clara Pritchard, a married woman, 8 Court, Dudley Road, and of Arthur Jurance, tin-plate worker, Bath Street, Bilston Street. Pritchard deposed that at about a quarter past eleven she saw the deceased at the corner of Berry Street, in company with Arthur Jurance. Deceased showed her half a crown in a purse, and after wishing her good night, went down Horseley Fields with Jurance. Jurance had deposed that he had known the deceased for four months, and last saw her on the night of Tuesday previous to her body being found, in the Bush Inn, Walsall Street. He described his movements on the Saturday night, and stated that he had not been at the spot where the body was found for a period of six months.

After a short deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown", and the Coroner concurred in the verdict. The witnesses were bound over to appear at the Assizes, if called upon.

### **181    March 15 1886**

**THE FENNY COMPTON MURDER – ARREST AT DUDLEY** Shortly before midnight on Friday Police-sergeant Staines, acting under the directions of Chief Superintendent Burton, of the Dudley Police Force, arrested **Samuel Mountford**, boatman, on a charge of assisting in "killing and slaying Police-constable Hine at Fenny Compton." In making the capture the police authorities were acting upon information given to them by a woman to whom it is alleged that Mountford had made a confession incriminating himself. Mountford had resided for some time in the neighbourhood of Buck Pool, between Dudley and Wordsley, and it was here that he was arrested ; but he occasionally went to Dudley and stopped at a lodging house in Birmingham Street. At this house he met Alice Corbett, the woman alluded to, and in conversation she avers that he said, "Good bye, Alice ; I shan't be here much longer in this country. I shall have to do a scamper, for I am mixed up in that Warwickshire job – that policeman's murder – and there is one more in it, so it's sure to come out". Mountford then went off, and Mrs Corbett related to her husband what had happened. It was agreed to communicate with the police, and the arrest followed. At the police station the woman repeated in prisoner's presence the words said to have been used by him. He replied that he said he was going out of the country, or he should lose his job. The woman denied this, and repeated her story. Chief Superintendent Burton had Mountford locked up, and communicated with the Warwickshire police. The prisoner will be brought before the Dudley magistrates this morning. He is 23 years of age, 5ft 1in high, dark-complexioned, with black hair and grey eyes, and is a native of Kinver. He has a cut on each wrist, and states that he received the injuries there by a fall. It is not thought that Mountford is connected with the murder, but he is to be kept in custody until his movements on the day of the murder are thoroughly known.

Our Stratford-on-Avon correspondent writes:- Unusual activity characterised the actions of the police at Fenny Compton on Saturday. Inspector Hall was in private consultation with a number of officers at the village inn, and the Chief Constable of Warwickshire, who had not been seen in the neighbourhood for several days previously, was on the spot, evidently pursuing some important clue. Some consternation was caused at the Wharf Inn, Fenny Compton, about five o'clock, by the arrival of a person from Birmingham with the intelligence that a boatman had confessed to the crime at Dudley. It appears that a large number of boatmen are engaged on the Oxford Canal, which is contiguous to the Wharf Inn, and it is the practice of many to put up for the night at the public house. It was there where the police officer was last seen, and within a short distance of the spot where his body was found. The police wholly discredit the story, which has been prevalent the last few days, as to the man who is in custody on a charge of stealing two cows being in any way connected with the murder. They state that a suspicion of that kind has never entered their minds. The accused some time back was lodging in the neighbourhood of Fenny Compton, and it was simply to enquire into his antecedents that the police visited the village.

### **182 March 16 1886**

**THE FENNY COMPTON MURDER – ARREST AT DUDLEY** Yesterday, at the Dudley Police Court, **Samuel Mountford** (23), boatman, charged with complicity in the above murder, was placed in the dock previous to the arrival of the magistrates. He is an insignificant looking man, and began to whimper and cry, but recovered his self-possession before the entrance of the magistrates – the Mayor (Alderman Walker) and Alderman Wilkinson. After some ordinary business the prisoner was put forward, and Chief Superintendent Burton detailed the circumstances under which he was apprehended, and which appeared in yesterday's Post. The prisoner had been kept back that morning because he (Mr Burton) expected the Deputy Chief Constable of Warwickshire over to take charge of the man. In case he did not presently arrive, he should ask for a remand in custody until the police came. Alice Corbett was then sworn, and said she met the prisoner at Birch Pool on Friday. He called out to her that he was going away, for he was in trouble over that Warwickshire job of killing a policeman. There were several in it, and it was sure to come out. At the time the man was in earnest, and spoke seriously. By the Magistrates : She heard distinctly. He appeared to be in earnest and was quite sober. He only stated it once, because the boat on which he was engaged moved off. She had known the prisoner some years, for he used to court her sister. The prisoner : Ah! That's it. Prisoner then denied that he said anything about a murder, and the girl repeated her statement. Mr Burton : That is the third time she has repeated the statement in your presence. Mr Barradale advised that, under the whole of the circumstances, the magistrates had no jurisdiction. So far as Dudley Court was concerned, nothing further was done with the prisoner ; but Mr Mott, the deputy chief constable of Warwickshire, had him detained in custody whilst he privately examined several friends of Mountford, who had come to Dudley to hear him tried, and wished to prove an alibi. Later in the afternoon Mr Mott went on to Stourbridge to still further pursue his investigation, the prisoner remaining in custody at Dudley. Last night, at nine o'clock, Mr Thomas Reynolds J P attended at Dudley Police Station, and heard Deputy Chief Constable Mott speak of the enquiries he had made in respect of the man Mountford. These, the officer said, tended to show that the man had nothing whatsoever to do with the murder, and Mr Reynolds at once discharged the prisoner.

### **183 March 24 1886**

#### **Tipton**

**SINGULAR DEATH OF A BOATMAN** Yesterday afternoon Mr Edwin Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Crown Inn, Toll End Road, on the body of **Thomas Jones** (17), a boatman, recently in the employ of Messrs Solly, ironmasters. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of the present month Jones returned to his home and complained to his mother of a pain in his right side. He stated that whilst attending to the windlass near Walsall it slipped and struck him violently. Mr Eddowes, surgeon, saw him after that, but found no bones broken. Jones lingered a week, **Daniel Boaz**, another boatman, said Jones was winding up a paddle which had half a tooth deficient in the cog wheel. The caused the windlass to

slip, and Jones was struck in the side. The square in the windlass was not worn. Jones blamed no one. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death" and the Coroner remarked with surprise that no one had attended on behalf of the Canal Company.

**184 March 29 1886**

**SUICIDES** Early on Saturday morning a boatman, named **John Webb**, found in the Birmingham and Warwick Canal, near Sandy Lane, the dead body of Mr John Goold, lately living in the Wellington Road, Handsworth, and carrying on business as a silk mercer in Union Passage. The deceased, who was well known in business circles in the town, became a bankrupt a few months ago, and since that time has not continued the business, not having been able to obtain his discharge. He was living at Handsworth at the time of the failure, but he then left there and went to live in Whitmore Road, Small Heath, where his family at present reside. Since the bankruptcy he has been greatly depressed in spirits, and has never seemed able to grapple with his difficulties. On Friday night, as he did not return home, Mrs Goold became anxious, and about three o'clock a neighbour communicated with the police, who made enquiries, and ascertained that Mr Goold left his club at a rather late hour, and shortly after midnight was seen walking in the direction of his home. The body, on being taken out of the water, was removed to Moseley Street mortuary, where it awaits an inquest.

**185 April 6 1886**

**Walsall**

**A PAINFUL CASE** At the Guildhall, yesterday, **John Dyson** (37), boatman, Short-Acre Street, was charged with assaulting Maria Jukes. It seemed that the parties had lived together as husband and wife for six years until the 22<sup>nd</sup> March when the accused used gross language to the complainant, kicked and struck her, and turned her out of doors. One of their children was at the time dying in the house. The prisoner was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment with hard labour, and two of the surviving children were affiliated upon the prisoner.

**186 April 16 1886**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**THEFT OF A BARREL OF BEER** **Thomas Berman Rigby** (40), boatman, of Pritchett Street, was charged with stealing a nine-gallon cask of beer, the property of Walter Showell and Sons. **Thomas Smith** stated that he was left in charge of a boat on the canal, near Camden Street, on Wednesday night. The boat was laden with barrels of beer, and at ten o'clock the prisoner and another man put in an appearance. The prisoner seized one of the barrels and gave it to his companion, who rolled it along the towing-path for some distance, and with the assistance of a third man the spoil was conveyed across the railway line. A policeman was brought, and arrested the prisoner whilst in the act of lifting the barrel over a wall about fifty yards from the boat. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and stated that he was drunk. He was sentenced to one months imprisonment.

**187 April 17 1886**

**Aston Police Court**

**BURGLARY AT SALTLEY** Patrick G Smith, Garrison Lane, Birmingham, and Joseph Sheppard, of no fixed abode, iron-bedstead maker, were sentenced to three months hard labour each for burglariously entering the dwelling house of **Richard Parker**, boatman, 14 Boland's Terrace, Lander Street, and stealing therefrom five pairs of boots, one woollen jacket, a watch, and other articles, to the value of 40s.

**188 April 23 1886**

**Willenhall**

**STEALING A COW** At a Special Court, on Wednesday, Frederick Mustchin (30), labourer, Chapel Street, Walsall, and **Thomas Henry Harvey** (18), boatman, Stafford Street, Walsall, were charged with stealing a cow from the Roughwood Colliery, Bentley, belonging to Mr Henry Thompson, lockmaker, Short Heath. The prisoners were seen to take the cow, and after being traced to Bloxwich and Pelsall, they were missed. They were eventually arrested at Stafford, and the cow, which was identified by the prosecutor, was in a distressed condition, through being over-driven.

The prisoners who pleaded guilty to the offence, were remanded until Tuesday.

**189 April 30 1886**

**WOLVERHAMPTON QUARTER SESSIONS** Elizabeth Brown, alias MacMahon, alias Evans (36), hawker; Anthony Brown (30), iron-plate worker; **Benjamin Stokes** (67), boatman, and **Catherine Stokes** (43), boatwoman, were charged with stealing or receiving £36 from the person of Samuel Walford, general dealer, Ocker Hill. Elizabeth and Anthony Brown pleaded guilty. Mr Haden Corser prosecuted. On the night of the 31<sup>st</sup> March the prosecutor met the prisoner Elizabeth Brown outside the Great Western Inn, and while conversing with her she put her hand in his pocket and drew forth a bag containing £36. On the next day prisoner was married to Anthony Brown, and on the same morning Catherine Stokes, in company with Mrs Brown, purchased a wedding ring with money supplied to her by Anthony Brown. A number of pledges were also redeemed. When the prisoners were subsequently arrested a large sum of money was found in their possession. Benjamin Stokes was acquitted, and Catherine Stokes was sentenced to six months hard labour. Elizabeth Brown, who had previously been convicted, was sentenced to nine months hard labour ; and Anthony Brown, whose career the Deputy Recorder said had been one of crime and violence, was sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

**190 May 7 1886**

**Staffordshire Adjourned Sessions**

**PLEADED GUILTY** Frederick Mustchin (30), labourer, and **Thomas H Harvey** (18), boatman, stealing a cow, the property of Henry Thompson, of Bentley, nine months hard labour.

**191 May 14 1886**

**Staffordshire and Salop Assizes**

**OUTRAGE ON A WOMAN** **David Wilson** (28), boatman, was indicted for feloniously assaulting Mary Ann Rowley on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April at Kingswinford. Mr Kettle appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Cranstoun defended the prisoner. Prosecutrix is a married woman, and was proceeding in the direction of Kingswinford when it was alleged the prisoner passed her. Shortly afterwards he returned and assaulted her. For the defence a plea of mistaken identity was set up. The jury, however, found the prisoner guilty of attempted rape, and his Lordship sentenced him to eighteen months hard labour, remarking that the case was a very bad one.

**192 May 22 1886**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** Yesterday afternoon an inquest at the Queen's Tavern, Queen's Road, Aston, by Mr D R Wynter (coroner for Central Warwickshire), touching the death of John Charles Westwood (5), who resided at 28 Queen's Road. It appears that the deceased left home about a quarter to seven on Wednesday evening, and a few minutes afterwards his father heard that the deceased had fallen into the canal. The body was recovered by a boatman named **Appleby**, and it was subsequently taken to Dr Fairley's surgery, Lichfield Road, where life was pronounced to be extinct. Mr Westwood was told that the deceased, while playing on the lock gates, had fallen into the water. **Walter Jennings**, a boatman, residing in Bright Street, Aston, stated that part of the canal where the deceased fell in was unprotected by any fence, and was largely frequented by children. In summing up, the Coroner said it seemed rather a dangerous thing that in a public road where a large number of children were generally to be found playing, the canal should be left so unprotected. A juryman (Mr Smith) agreed with the coroner that the canal near the bottom of Holborn Hill was very dangerous. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", adding a rider suggesting that a fence should be erected round the canal near the spot where the accident occurred.

**193 May 24 1886**

**Hereford**

**CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE** At the City Police Court, on Saturday, before Alderman Bosley and Mr William Stallard, Edward Richards, described as the manager of the Adegne Wine Vaults, Northgate Street, Gloucester, was charged with having attempted to commit suicide. On the previous day the accused divested himself of his overcoat, which, with an umbrella, he laid on the

bank of the Wye, and jumped into the water. Some boys who were playing by the river raised an alarm, and a boatman, named **Tom Jordan**, rowed to the spot in a small dinghy and rescued him. The accused admitted having given way to drink for the last twelve months. The magistrates remanded him in custody till next Monday.

**194 June 30 1886**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

**THEFT AT TIPTON Francis Roper** (30), boatman, was charged with stealing two bundles of steel and eighteen iron weights, the property of Wimmian (William?) and Joseph Gittings, on the 26<sup>th</sup> May. Mr Harvey prosecuted. The weights in question were missed from the Albert Works, Tipton, on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> May. The following night the works were watched, and prisoner was seen to enter the works by means of a boat. He took a bundle of steel out of a shed and put it near to the boat. He then returned to the shed and was arrested. The weights were subsequently found concealed near to the boat, where prisoner deposited the bundle of steel. Prisoner was found guilty. The learned Assistant Chairman characterised him as an incorrigible rogue, and sentenced him to nine months hard labour.

**195 July 1 1886**

**EXTRAORDINARY CASE OF SUFFOCATION – NARROW ESCAPES** Yesterday Mr John Booth, coroner for North Staffordshire, held an enquiry at the Bridge Inn, Tunstall, as to the death of **Alfred Philip Middleton** (17), boatman, Kidderminster, which occurred under circumstances of an extraordinary character, and which narrowly escaped proving fatal to two other persons. Mr W Keary watched the proceedings on behalf of the British Gaslight Company, and there were also present at the enquiry Mr J Young, manager of the company's Potteries station; and Mr S Watson, superintendent of the works at Brownhills, Tunstall. It appeared from the evidence that the deceased and a man named **John Underhill** were in charge of a boat, which from Saturday to Monday was moored alongside of the British Gaslight Company's works at Brownhills, the cabin of the boat being five or six yards from a purifier connected with certain sulphate plant. The two men slept in the cabin, and about three o'clock on Monday morning Underhill was aroused by the deceased making a choking noise. He got up and tried to awaken the deceased, but was unable to do so, and then he found that there was a suffocating smell in the cabin. On opening the cabin door Underhill perceived that the purifier grids were on fire and giving off fumes, which overcame him so that he did not know what he was doing. When he recovered consciousness he found himself on the canal bridge, and he at once returned to the boat and moved it away from the gas works. On the cabin being re-entered, it was found that Middleton was dead, and that a dog which was sleeping there had also been suffocated. Some time elapsed before the men employed at the gasworks discovered the fire, and, while they were engaged in extinguishing it, one of them – the engineman – was overcome by the fumes, and, although removed immediately, it was ten minutes before he recovered consciousness. It was stated that the grids of the purifier could not have been ignited without fire being applied in some way, either by a cinder or tobacco ashes. The nearest fire on the works was in the retort-house, 40 or 50 yards away, so that the manager of the works was totally unable to account for the fire. In reply to Mr Keary, the boatman Underhill admitted that he had no permission to moor alongside the gasworks. There was a fire in the cabin at the time of the occurrence, though not a large one, and the fumes from the burning purifier were blown towards the cabin in the wind. Both he and deceased had been smoking during the day, and the latter was smoking when he went to bed. Deceased passed the purifier about eleven o'clock in Sunday night on his way to the boat, but witness could not say if he was smoking then. Mr Watson said if lighted tobacco had been thrown down it would probably ignite the sulphur with which the purifier was impregnated, and it might smoulder for hours before firing the grids. The jury returned a verdict to the effect "That deceased was accidentally suffocated by fumes from the burning purifier, but how the latter was ignited there was no evidence to show". They also recommended that in future boats should be prohibited from being moored by the side of the gasworks.

**196 July 1 1886**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

MILLINGTON V STIPENDIARY OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Mr A Young and Mr Fisher were for the appellant; Mr Plumptre was for the respondent. The appeal was against a conviction by the stipendiary magistrate of North Staffordshire for permitting drunkenness on his licensed premises. The case was heard on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, when it was shown that on the 24<sup>th</sup> March a man named **Jarvis**, a boatman, went to appellant's house, the Lamb Inn, Kidsgrove, better known as the Glass Barrel, about half past seven in the evening, he being then sober. He was ejected by the landlord about nine o'clock, having been served with nine pints of beer, and was quite drunk. Witnesses were called who saw the man outside, and they deposed to his drunken state. It was contended before the magistrate that the man had not been in the house at all that night. After hearing the witnesses for the respondent, the Bench quashed the conviction with costs.

**197 July 21 1886**

**Bromsgrove**

ASSAULT ON THE POLICE **Richard Mayo**, boatman, was committed for a months hard labour for assaulting Police-constable Workman, whilst in the execution of his duty, at Stoke Prior, on the 15<sup>th</sup> instant. He was also fined 2s 6d, and 6s costs, for being drunk and disorderly on the same occasion.

**198 July 30 1886**

**Warwickshire Assizes**

UNLAWFUL WOUNDING AT NUNEATON **David Wiles** (18), boatman, was indicted for feloniously wounding **Harley Shilcock**, a boatman, at Nuneaton, on the 28<sup>th</sup> June. Mr Pye prosecuted and Mr Wilmot defended. Mr Pye stated that on the date named 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 prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding, and he was sent to gaol for three months.

**199 August 4 1886**

**Birmingham Assizes**

CAUGHT AGAIN Edward Pilkington (34), brassfounder, and **Thomas Cooksey** (33), boatman, were charged with breaking and entering the warehouse of Charles Thomas Wade and others, on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, and stealing 12s, one gross of files, some whisky and brandy, and other articles. Mr F Wright prosecuted. The premises were found in complete confusion after the visit of the thieves, a number of the drawers having been broken open. Information was given to the police, and the men were apprehended by Detectives Bennett and Stroud, and the robbery was clearly traced to them. They were found guilty, and a number of petty convictions were proved against them. Pilkington was sentenced to three months imprisonment, with hard labour; and Cooksey to six weeks imprisonment, with hard labour.

**200 August 11 1886**

**Wolverhampton**

DEATH FROM DROWNING Yesterday, **Edward Pemberton** (13), the son of a boatman, living in Inkerman Street, Heath Town, was drowned in a neighbouring canal. The deceased was bathing, when he was missed by his companions, and on two boys named Hughes and Watkins searching the canal the dead body of the lad was found.

**201 August 18 1886**

THE ASTON SLOGGING GANG At the Aston Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Baker and Stringer, two rough looking fellows, named **William McGuire**, boatman, Mill Street, and Peter

Foster, Aston Street, Birmingham, were charged with disorderly conduct on Sunday last. Police-constable Wale said that on Sunday afternoon he saw the two prisoners, with a gang of about two hundred roughs, throwing stones and otherwise behaving in a very disorderly fashion. Witness, who was in plain clothes, obtained the assistance of Police-constable Barratt, and succeeded in arresting the prisoners. Both men had been previously convicted, and Superintendent Walker asked the Bench to deal very severely with the prisoners, who were connected with what was known as the "slogging gang". The gang had done considerable damage to property in the neighbourhood of Rocky Lane. On Sunday last there was a severe fight between the Aston slogging gang and another gang, and the battle continued up Rocky Lane nearly to Aston Cross, and by five o'clock the numbers taking part in the affray had increased to nearly 2,000, including boys ranging from thirteen to sixteen up to men of mature age, who were armed with heavy belts, sticks, brick ends, &c, which they freely used in all directions. So great had the nuisance become that the Birmingham police force near the borough boundary had to be largely augmented, while the whole of the available force in Aston was required to put a stop to the disturbance. He (Mr Walker) had received numerous complaints as to the damage done by the gang to which the prisoners belonged. One manufacturer wrote that the whole of the windows in his factory had been broken, another stated that the caretakers had been driven off the premises, while a third complained that he dared not enter his factory on Sunday in consequence of the stones and brick ends which were showered into the premises on that day by the mob. On Sunday last he (the superintendent) was called upon by between twenty and thirty respectable persons residing in Aston, who complained of the action of the gang. He therefore hoped that the Bench would deal severely with the case, so that it might have a deterrent effect upon other members of the gang. For the benefit of the Bench, Mr Walker produced a number of heavy straps and belts as specimens of the weapons used by the slogging gang in their battles. Mr Baker said the public must be protected, and the police assisted in preventing any breach of the peace. Both prisoners must be bound over in their own recognisances of £10 each, and one surety of £5, in default of finding the sureties each prisoner to go to the house of correction for two months hard labour.

**202 August 26 1886**

**Wolverhampton**

**BRUTAL ASSAULT ON A WOMAN** At the Police Court, yesterday, **Matthew Edwards**, boatman, Herbert Street, was charged with assaulting his step-daughter, Louisa Evans and her husband, **Alfred Evans**, boatman, of Herbert Street. It was alleged that on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst defendant quarrelled with the female complainant, and afterwards struck her several times in the face. Attracted by her screams, her husband went to her assistance, when he also was assaulted. Defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs for assaulting the man, and was sentenced to one months hard labour on the other charge.

**203 October 4 1886**

**Wolverhampton**

**DRUNK AND ASSAULTING A PUBLICAN** On Saturday, at the Police Court, **Thomas John Jones** (32), boatman, of no fixed address, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and also with assaulting Josiah Edwards, landlord of the Talbot Inn, Little's Lane. On Friday night the prisoner was drunk in the Talbot Inn, and on being requested to leave he committed the assault. He was sentenced to one months hard labour.

**204 October 20 1886**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

**PLEADED GUILTY** Sent to gaol for three months. **John Beddow** (29), boatman, for stealing a pair of boots at Brewood, belonging to Thomas Fleming ; and **Edward Bewdley** (28), boatman, for stealing from the person of Mary Jane Bentley, at Wednesbury, a purse containing 1s 6d.

**205 October 30 1886**

**DETERMINED SUICIDE OF A BOATMAN** Shortly after four o'clock yesterday afternoon, a boatman, named **William Cockin** (40), who lived in Stoke Street, committed suicide by drowning

himself in the Birmingham Canal, Broad Street. Frederick Stokes (10) and George Gold (9), who both live in Suffolk Street, said that they saw the deceased walking on the canal side yesterday afternoon. They went near to him, and he told them to go and play. After they had gone some distance they turned round and saw the deceased jump into the water and begin to struggle, and they then ran and told some men. William Organ went to the spot and got the deceased from the water, but life was then extinct. Police-constable Chandler (58A) was informed of the occurrence, and he conveyed the body to the Moor Street mortuary, where it now lies.

**206 November 1 1886**

**FOUND DROWNED** About six o'clock on Saturday evening a boatman named **James Harris**, of Worcester, was proceeding along the Birmingham Canal, in Gas Street, when he saw the body of a woman floating in the water. Harris obtained the assistance of Police-constable Buttery, and the body was got out of the water and taken to Moor Street mortuary. During the evening the body was recognised as that of Harriet Tonks (28), wife of William Tonks, Smith's lodging house, Allison Street. No cause is assigned for the supposed suicide.

**207 November 4 1886 Stafford and Salop Assizes**

**PLEADED GUILTY** **William Arthur Selwood** (22), boatman, and **Samuel Devison** (22), boatman, pleaded guilty to forging and altering a certain permit on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, at West Bromwich, purporting to be a receipt for 18s 8d, with intent to defraud Daniel Lawrence, and were sentenced to a months hard labour each.

**208 November 9 1886 Walsall**

**THE GROSS LANGUAGE NUISANCE** **James Mellors**, boatman, Birchills, who was brought up on a warrant, he having failed to answer a summons, was, on the evidence of Police-sergeant Mercer, fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment, for using obscene language in Green Lane.

**209 November 9 1886**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** An enquiry was next held touching the death of Charlotte Guise, 28 Court, William Street. **Edward Guise**, boatman, said the deceased was his wife. The Coroner : They tell me here (pointing to a sheet of paper before him) that you had committed suicide a few years ago. You seem all the better for it. [Laughter] Witness (continuing) said he had not been able to get any regular work lately, but had done odd jobs at the canal wharf. He had two children, and one of them "went off its head about every change in the moon". He last saw his wife alive on Saturday afternoon when he went home. He did not take her any money. They had only been living in William Street about a week, and had to leave their former lodgings because they could not pay the rent. After telling his wife that he had no money, witness went out again to try and pick up a few coppers at the wharf. Witness had had one of his hands crippled, and it was not of much use to him. Emma Mountenay said she lived near the last witness. Deceased had been nearly broken hearted during the last two or three months on account of their poverty. On Saturday morning she said to her that she was a "broken hearted woman, and had nowhere to put herself, and that she should not be here long". She gave witness a purse containing several pawn tickets, and asked her to give it to her husband, and to tell him that she had gone to see her mistress. Within half an hour afterwards witness heard that her body had been found in the canal. When in witness's house deceased took a piece of cord from her pocket, and witness asked her for it, but she replied that she wanted it "for a purpose". The cord produced, which was found tied round deceased's legs, was similar to that which deceased took from her pocket in her house. **Henry Williams**, a boatman, and Police-constable White spoke to finding the body in the canal near Gas Street on Saturday night. The legs were tied together with the string produced. A verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane" was recorded.

**210 November 16 1886 Rushall**

**A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE** At the Police Court, yesterday, **William Griffin**, boatman, Saltley, was, on the complaint of the Birmingham Canal Company, fined 5s and costs, for having, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant at Rushall, wasted a lock-full of water, the property of the company.

**211 November 17 1886 Wolverhampton**

**THE DROWNING OF A GIRL** An inquest was held on Monday, at Cannock Road, touching the death of **Alice Battery** (7), daughter of a boatman in the employ of Messrs Round Brothers, of Tipton. The girl was on Saturday evening drowned by falling into the Birmingham Canal. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**212 November 25 1886 Worcester**

**CLAIM FOR PERSONAL INJURIES** At the County Court, yesterday, before Sir Rupert Kettle, **John Weaver**, a boatman, sought to recover from the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company the sum of £50 for negligence for not taking reasonable care to provide machinery that would not endanger the lives and property of people using their locks. Plaintiff, a boatman of fifty one year's experience, was on the 26<sup>th</sup> August bringing a boat into the lock at Diglis. He wound up the right hand paddle on the lock and put the catch in to allow the water to come into the lock, and was about to go and wind the left, when the right paddle, without warning, fell, and the windlass attached revolved with great rapidity, and broke his right arm. He had not been able to do any work since, and had lost 30s per week in wages. He had often spoken to the lock-keeper about the dangerous condition of the lock. Medical evidence was given to show the plaintiff would be another month before he could use his arm. For the defence it was urged that the immediate and proximate cause of the injury that was done to the plaintiff was the carelessness and negligence of the plaintiff in not placing the catch fully home into the cog. His Honour reserved judgement until he has seen the rack.

**213 November 26 1886 Worcester**

**WEAVER V THE SHARPNESS NEW DOCKS AND GLOUCESTER AND BIRMINGHAM CANAL COMPANY** As stated in yesterday's issue, at the County Court, on Wednesday, **John Weaver**, a boatman, sued the above company to recover £50 damages for personal injuries caused by the defendant's alleged negligence. While taking a boat through Diglis Lock plaintiff's arm was broken through a windlass striking him, it being alleged that the cogs of the windlass were rotten and defective. Sir Rupert Kettle, having viewed the windlass, gave judgement yesterday for plaintiff for the amount claimed, his Honour being of opinion that through long use the iron had become worn, and that the attention of the managing engineer should have been called to it by the lock-keeper.

**214 November 30 1886 Birmingham Police Court**

**STEALING LEAD** **Joseph Smith** (21), boatman, Railway Terrace, was convicted as a rogue and vagabond under the following circumstances. Shortly after midnight Henry Baker, of 79 Great Brook Street, was awakened by a noise proceeding from the street. Looking through one of the windows he saw a man, who was standing on another man's shoulders, attempting to wrench the lead covering from the portico. Baker walked quietly downstairs, and on opening the doors the thieves ran away. He chased one of them, and succeeded in apprehending the prisoner, whom he gave into the custody of Police-constable Richard Mills. Inspector Hall identified the prisoner as a frequently convicted thief. Mr Hobbart (clerk) said it would be advisable to put the prisoner away until the winter was passed. The Stipendiary concurred with this, and sent the prisoner to gaol for three months.

**215 December 6 1886**

**ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER AND SUICIDE** At Wolverhampton, on Saturday, Margaret

Howard (34), wife of Samuel Howard of Melbourne Street, was charged with attempting to commit suicide. On Friday evening the prisoner was in Mill Street, in the neighbourhood of the Wolverhampton and Birmingham Canal, when she was heard to say to a girl about three years of age who accompanied her, "Maggie, this is the place where you and I are to end our days. I am in deep trouble, and cannot bear it any longer". Taking up the child, who began to scream, the prisoner advanced towards the canal, but she was stopped by **Emma Baker** (wife of **Jacob Baker**, a boatman). The prisoner threatened to knock the woman's brains out if she would not let her go, as she was determined to jump into the canal and put an end to her trouble. To another woman, who took the child from her, the prisoner said, "She is my Maggie, and I will do what I like with her ;" and added "It is a fine thing for you to rob me of my baby." The prisoner was very excited, and admitted she had drunk two quarters of gin. She was remanded for a week.

**216 December 14 1886**

**Wolverhampton**

THE ILL-TREATMENT OF BOAT HORSES At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, **Thomas Hodgetts**, boatman, of Princes End, was fined 20s and costs, or a months hard labour, for cruelty to a horse. Mr R J Lawrence, who prosecuted, said the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals intended to take measures against cruelty to boat horses, of which they felt there was a great deal.

**217 December 28 1886**

CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED MURDER AT ASTON Detective Hodson, of the Aston Police, has arrested a boatman named **Enoch Horton**, of 64 Park Lane, Aston, on a warrant charging him with attempting to murder another boatman named **Joseph Pearsall**, residing at 4 Court, 6 house, Wharf Street. The case is one in which timely interference probably prevented a serious tragedy. It appears that Horton became enamoured of a young woman who subsequently became engaged to Pearsall. This enraged Horton to such an extent that he vowed he would murder his rival, and on one occasion, it is alleged, he followed Pearson to Aston Church with the intention of carrying out his threat, but informed his sister, on returning home, he could never kill anyone in a churchyard – that there were too many people about outside. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of the present month Pearsall was sitting on the sofa at home with the young woman beside him, when the accused entered, and requested her to leave Pearsall, and come and sit by him. This she declined to do, and thereupon Horton was observed by another occupant of the house to draw a knife from his trouser's pocket, and ejaculate, "I will murder them both." He then jumped up from his seat, and, rushing upon Pearsall, seized the unfortunate man by the throat, nearly strangling him, and causing him to fall to the ground partially unconscious. The screams of the girl brought the other occupants of the house upon the scene, and they succeeded in separating Horton from the prostrate form of his opponent. Prisoner will be brought before the Aston Bench today.

**218 December 29 1886**

THE ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER AT ASTON At the Aston Police Court, yesterday, before Mr J T Collins, **Enoch Horton**, of Aston Lane, boatman, was charged with attempting to strangle **Joseph Pearsall**, of Wharf Street, boatman, on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant, with intent to murder him. The allegations against the prisoner were given in yesterday's *Daily Post*. Mr Benbow Herbert appeared to prosecute. Mr Gem, who appeared for the prisoner, said that in any case he should ask for a remand till Friday, as counsel had been instructed but was unable to attend that day. Mr Hebbert said that, if possible, the case ought to be proceeded with at once, as several of the witnesses came from London, and were anxious to get back. The Magistrates Clerk (Mr Joseph Rowlands) said the charge was such a serious one that the magistrates would not care to go on with the case without giving the prisoner an opportunity of preparing his defence. Prisoner was remanded in custody till Friday.

## 219 January 1 1887

THE CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED MURDER AT ASTON At the Aston Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Smallwood, Hyland and Yates, **Enoch Horton**, boatman, Aston Lane, was charged with attempting to strangle, with intent to murder, his nephew, **Joseph Pearsall**, boatman, who lives in Wharf Lane, Aston. Mr Benbow Hebbert appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Dorsett defended. Mr Hebbert said that after he had called evidence he thought the Bench would be quite satisfied that an attempt had been made to murder Pearsall. It appeared that Pearsall kept company with Clara Horton, the niece of the defendant, and they were, in fact, engaged to be married. His (Mr Hebbert's) instructions were that the motive for the attempted murder was jealousy. Defendant seemed to have been greatly incensed by Pearsall keeping company with Clara Horton, and had frequently threatened he would murder them both if they did not break off the engagement. Mr Hebbert then called the prosecutor, Joseph Pearsall, who said that at the present time he was keeping company with Clara Horton, the niece of the defendant, who worked at the same wharf as witness. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of December witness and Clara Horton were at the house of his sister, Mrs Thompson, in Wharf Street, Aston. Between three and four o'clock, whilst they were sitting together, defendant came in. He said he wanted to speak to Clara Horton, and asked her to go outside. She told him to say what he had to say in the room. He then said he was going to sit between witness and Clara Horton, and eventually he did so. He felt for his knife a minute or two, and witness's mother tried to persuade witness to go away, but before he could do so defendant caught him by the throat and said he would murder him and his mother if he could only get his knife out. Witness's mother pulled witness away. Defendant threatened witness three days previously on the canal side at Alldridge, saying that "if he caught witness and his cousin together on the following Sunday he would set both their hearts' blood flowing in the street." Since the 19<sup>th</sup> December witness had not been to work, as he was frightened to go. Cross-examined : Witness used to live with his uncle, but left as the latter did not like his carryings on with his cousin. At the time that his uncle tried to strangle him there were Mr and Mrs Thompson, his mother, and Clara Horton in the room. Mr Dorsett : I suppose he could have attempted to murder you on the canal side? Witness : He wanted to do us both, sir. [Laughter] Witness went on to say that Mr Thompson was sitting in his chair, and did not try to prevent witness being strangled, his mother and sister being the only persons who interfered. Witness did fetch a maid used in washing out of the pantry, but only to defend himself, and then he did not use it. Clara Horton deposed that on the day in question she was at Mrs Thompson's house with the prosecutor. There were several others in the room. Witness corroborated last witness as to the defendant sitting between them. Her cousin got up to leave, when the defendant caught him by the throat, causing him to go black in the face. His mother went to his assistance and got him free. Defendant had said several times that if she and Pearsall went together he would settle them both, and witness was frightened that he would carry out his threat. Mr Hebbert was about to call additional evidence, when Mr Smallwood interposed, remarking that the Bench did not think Mr Hebbert would be able to substantiate the charge of attempted murder. Mr Hebbert suggested that the Bench could infer from the language defendant used to Pearsall and Horton prior to the 19<sup>th</sup>, and subsequently, that there was intention to kill, but of course it was in the hands of the Bench. Mr Smallwood : We don't think it is sufficient, and we don't think that any corroborative evidence will alter our view of the case at all. It would have been a proper case for sureties. After some further consultation, it was decided to drop the charge of attempted murder, and to take the evidence heard as if the case had been one of threats. Mrs Pearsall and Mrs Thompson were called, and both of them stated that they had heard the defendant threaten Pearsall. Mr Dorsett submitted that the case was not one in which the magistrates ought to bind over the defendant in sureties. Defendant was opposed to the marriage between Pearsall and Clara Horton, and although on the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> inst, defendant might have used words with the intention, if possible, to separate them, he had no intention whatever to afflict grievous bodily harm upon them. If he had had that intention, one would have thought that he would have availed himself of the opportunity when he met Pearsall on the canal side at Alldridge. Mr Dorsett then called the defendant, who denied that he had ever threatened Pearsall. When witness sat down on

the sofa in Mrs Thompson's house, Pearsall fetched a "dolly" and tried to strike witness on the head with it. Witness defended his head with his arm, which was severely bruised. Anna Price said that on the 19<sup>th</sup> she went into Mrs Thompson's house, and saw the defendant lying on the sofa, whilst Pearsall was "digging a maid into his chest". The magistrates said they could not discredit the evidence which had been given by the witnesses for the prosecution, and defendant would be bound over to keep the peace for six months – himself in £20, and two sureties in £10 each; and would also have to pay the costs, or in default go to gaol for a month.

**220 January 3 1887**

**GLEANINGS** Information has been received by the Preston Coroner of the death by drowning of a boatman named **Barrow**, at Wrightington, near Chorley. Deceased, who was sixty seven years of age, went to the house of a friend with a gallon of beer, which was drunk by three of them. Coming home Barrow fell in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, his companion being too drunk to rescue him. The body was afterwards recovered.

**221 January 8 1887**

**Aston Police Court**

**MOUCHING William Flannigan**, boatman, of Great Barr Street, Birmingham, was charged with stealing a silver verge watch, of the value of 20s, from the person of Charles Brooks, labourer, Erdington, at Aston, on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. Prosecutor stated that on the day in question he went into the Church Tavern, Lichfield Road, where he saw the prisoner in company with several other men. He asked prosecutor to drink, but the latter refused, saying that half a pint was quite enough for him. Prisoner next sat down by the witness's side, and confidently enquired whether he did any "mouthing". Witness did not understand, whereupon prisoner exclaimed, "Oh, we have done well today ; but we shall do better before we go away tonight." Prisoner's companions then went out and subsequently prosecutor missed his watch. He accused the prisoner of having stolen it, but he indignantly denied having done so. Superintendent Walker explained that one of prisoner's companions was now in custody at Tipton, and asked for a remand until Tuesday next, when he should place both men in the dock on the same charge.

**222 January 8 1887**

**Tunstall**

**SHOCKING OUTRAGE IN A CANAL BOAT** At the Stipendiary's Court, at Stoke-on-Trent, yesterday, **Thomas Forsbrook** (17), boatman, was charged with having committed a rape upon a child named Martha Ann Colclough, aged three years and eight months. The evidence showed that the prisoner was employed by **Albert Colclough**, the captain of a boat lying in the Chatterley arm of the Trent and Mersey Canal, near Tunstall. The previous afternoon, Colclough and his wife were away from their boat a short time, leaving two children, one of whom was the girl Martha Ann, in charge of the prisoner. On their return the child named made a complaint as to the conduct of the prisoner, and upon examination it was found that she had been grossly outraged. The prisoner was given into custody, and the child was taken to Mr May, surgeon, who stated that she was in a dangerous state from the violence to which she had been subjected. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Assizes.

**223 January 10 1887**

**THE WEATHER – ACCIDENTS** General Hospital. **George Lea** (39), boatman, Thimble Mill Lane, Aston, and James Bennett (13), 17 Skinner Street, Redditch, were detained through fracturing their legs.

**224 January 11 1887**

**Stoke Prior**

**SUDDEN DEATH Philip Langford**, boatman, aged about sixty years, was taken ill at the Navigation Inn, Stoke Prior, yesterday morning, soon after entering the house at 8.30. As he did not recover, Dr Carey was sent for from Bromsgrove, but but did not arrive till after the death of deceased, which took place at 11.10.

**225 January 12 1887**

**Aston Police Court**

ROBBERY BY BOATMEN **William Flannagan**, boatman, of Great Bridge, Tipton, and **John Wassell**, boatman, Horseley Neath, Tipton, were charged with stealing from the person of Charles Brookes, labourer, of Sindo Lane, Erdington, a silver verge watch and chain, of the value of 20s. On the 6<sup>th</sup> instant prosecutor was in the Church Inn, Lichfield Road, Aston, where he saw the two prisoners and another man. Flannagan asked him to drink, but he refused to do so. The men went away, but subsequently returned, and sat down by his side, when Flannagan again pressed him to drink, at the same time asking prosecutor whether he had done any "mouching" - cadging. He replied in the negative, and reminded the men that he did not wish to have anything to do with them. Wassell then left the room, and some time afterwards his companion disappeared. When they had left prosecutor missed his watch and chain. He went out, and on finding Flannagan gave him into the custody of a constable. He then walked on to Great Bridge, and finding Wassell in a public house also gave him into custody. Both prisoners, who denied the theft, were sentenced to one months imprisonment, with hard labour.

**226 January 26 1887**

**Wednesbury**

THEFT OF WOOD At the Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs R Williams (Mayor) and H Williams, Benjamin Bayley (22), ironworker, was convicted of having on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May last stolen two boards, value 8s, the property of Messrs Trow, timber merchants, Meeting Street, and was sentenced to two months imprisonment, with hard labour. The principal witness against him was **Thomas Gadd**, a boatman, who saw him take the boards from the prosecutors' yard into Meeting Street, and stopped him, but was unable to prevent his escape.

**227 February 16 1887**

GLEANINGS **Henry Cheetham**, aged 42, boatman, of Parbold, died on Sunday from the effects of a strange accident that happened to him on Wednesday last. He was driving his horse on the towing-path, having the slack rope in his hand, when the animal suddenly started, and he was entangled in the rope, which got round his neck. He was dragged some distance along the towing-path and afterwards through the canal. The rope had to be cut to release him.

**228 February 17 1887**

**Staffordshire Winter Assizes**

PLEADED GUILTY **Thomas Forsbrook** (17), boatman, pleaded guilty to feloniously assaulting Martha Ann Colclough, aged three years, on January 16<sup>th</sup>, at Chatterley. His Lordship said he would not sentence prisoner to penal servitude, in the hope that, as he was young, the sentence he should pass would have as much effect on him as penal servitude would have on a more hardened criminal. He then sentenced him to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour.

**229 February 23 1887**

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN A boatman named **John Parkes** (69), of Great Bridge, died suddenly on the canal bank at that place yesterday. It appears that deceased had brought a boat load of coal from Hednesford, and was attempting to push his boat towards the mouth of one of the locks, when he fell down. Other boatmen went to his assistance, and found that he was dead.

**230 February 24 1887**

**Brownhills**

POLICE NEWS **Orlando Mycock**, boatman, of Aston, was fined 10s and costs for cruelly ill-treating a horse, at Brownhills, on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst.

**231 February 25 1887**

**Hanley**

FATAL ACCIDENTS Mr Booth held an inquest on the body of **John Bradbury** (57), boatman, who died in the Infirmary yesterday. Mr Ashmall watched the proceedings on behalf of the relatives of the deceased. On the 5<sup>th</sup> inst deceased was working a boat on the canal at Bucknall, and,

while holding up a drawbridge to allow his boat to pass under, a horse, which was being driven down the lane towards the canal, stepped on to the bridge, and caused it to descend upon the deceased's foot. He was conveyed home, and received medical attention. Gangrene, however, set in, and he was then removed to the Infirmary, where his leg was amputated, but too late to save his life. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**232 February 26 1887**

**Birmingham Police Court**

CRUELTY CASE **Samuel Gosling**, boatman, living in a court in Gosta Green, was summoned for cruelty to a horse. Inspector Smith, who represented the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, produced witnesses showing that on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January the defendant kicked a horse very cruelly whilst leading it along Steelhouse Lane. A fine of 10s and costs was imposed.

**233 March 5 1887**

A BOATMAN DROWNED Early yesterday morning the body of a boatman named **Thomas Hadley** (66), of Engine Street, Tat Bank, was found in the Birmingham Canal, near the locks. Deceased started late on Thursday night from the Whimsey Bridge, intending to return home along the canal side, and it is supposed that owing to the darkness and fog he walked into the water.

**234 March 7 1887**

**Birmingham Assizes**

ACTION AGAINST BIRMINGHAM BREWERS *Seabrook v Showell and Sons*

An action was brought by **Daniel Seabrook**, boatman, Birmingham, against Walter Showell and Sons, brewers, Birmingham, to recover damages for personal injuries caused by the negligent conduct of one of the defendant's servants, in unloading a barge at London, in January 1886. The defendants in their statement of defence denied any negligence on the part of their servant, and alleged contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff. Mr Hugo Young (instructed by Messrs Berman and Rigbey) appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Alfred Young and Mr Cartland (instructed by Mr J M Bayley) for the defendants. In opening the case Mr Hugo Young said plaintiff sought to recover damages for a very serious injury, which necessitated the amputation of the centre finger of his right hand. The injury was caused through one of the defendants' servants having thrown a cask at him whilst he was loading a canal barge at the defendants' wharf in London. Plaintiff was a boatman in the employ of Messrs Fellows and Morton, canal carriers, Birmingham, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1886, he arrived in London with a cargo of barrels of ale. Whilst he was engaged in unloading the barge a number of the defendants' workmen brought two or three hundred barrels to the wharf, for the purpose of sending them by the plaintiff's boat to the brewery in Langley Green. Plaintiff's son assisted in loading the boat, and whilst plaintiff was scotching up some barrels which had been placed sideways on the top of two tiers arranged endwise, one of the defendants' men, Thomas Hallam, threw an empty cask on to two barrels the plaintiff was steadying, and jammed the centre finger of his right hand between two barrels. Plaintiff's finger was so badly crushed that on his arrival in Birmingham he went to the hospital where he was detained ten weeks. His finger was then amputated. He remained in the institution two weeks longer, and was an out-patient until the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Previous to the accident the plaintiff's earnings averaged £2 2s 6d a week. From the time of the accident up to the present time – sixty weeks – he had been unable to follow his employment, and he claimed £127 10s for loss of wages, and in addition he asked for compensation for personal suffering and incapacity to follow his employment. Evidence was given by the plaintiff in support of Mr Young's statement, and in cross-examination he said that when he was scotching the casks he held the rim of one end with one hand while he placed the scotch under the cask with the other. Some people while scotching placed one hand upon the belly of the cask. His Lordship : It was a pure accident, I suppose? Plaintiff : It was done carelessly. His Lordship : If you had held the cask in the way most people do by the belly the accident would not have happened? Plaintiff replied it could not very well. It was Hallam's duty to give him the barrels, and he had given him a good many that day. Hallam ought to have handed him the barrel, and not have thrown it. For the defence Mr Alfred Young argued that the accident was due to the negligence of

the plaintiff, who was holding the cask improperly. If he had put his hand on the belly of the cask, as he should have done, instead of on the rim, he would not have been injured. As regarded liability, Mr Young contended that the defendants could not be held liable for the action of Hallam in such a matter. If the plaintiff was entitled to a verdict in such a case as this, then no employer of labour could possibly be safe. Thomas Hallam was called, and said he put the barrel into the boat in the usual way. If the plaintiff's hand had not been on the rim of the cask the accident would not have occurred. The jury retired to consider their verdict, and after an absence of half an hour a letter was sent to his lordship announcing that they could not agree. The Judge asked counsel if they could do anything, and then had a private consultation with them. No arrangement was arrived at, however, and the jury returned into court shortly afterwards saying that there was no possibility of their agreeing on a verdict. There were seven on one side and five on the other. His Lordship then discharged the jury, and ordered the case to stand over until the next Assizes.

### **235 March 28 1887**

**THE SHOCKING DISCOVERY NEAR BIRMINGHAM** An inquest was held on Saturday, at Tyburn House, Castle Bromwich, by Dr Iliffe, coroner for North Warwickshire, upon the mutilated remains of a male infant, which were found in the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal at Tyburn on Wednesday last. **Frank Fellows**, toll-collector on the canal, said that about 4.40 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst, he saw the body of a male child on the towing-path of the canal. The body was in a nude state, with a piece of flannel and some loose string near it. It was headless, armless, and the legs were cut off about an inch and a half below the thigh joint. Witness took the remains to the toll office, and sent **John Harris**, the lock-keeper, for a policeman, to whom the body was given in charge. At about 3.30, **William Latham**, boatman, of Richard Street, Birmingham, had apprised witness that the body was on the towing-path. He told witness that he had pulled a bundle out of the canal, and he had left it on the towing-path, as a barge in charge of a boatman named **Joseph Marriott**, living at Sutton Bannington, Nottinghamshire, was following up close. Marriott too had seen the bundle in the water. The boatmen were not present at the enquiry, and the Coroner, commenting on their absence, said the evidence before the jury seemed rather meagre, though this would probably not prevent their coming to a decision. He understood that the doctor would say that the child had had a separate existence; and presenting such a mutilated appearance as it did it must have been cut and hacked about by some person anxious to get rid of it. If the jury thought, after hearing the evidence, that it was a clear case of murder against some person or persons unknown, then the matter would remain in the hands of the police ; and if they should succeed in bringing anyone to justice then the two boatmen could be called as witnesses before the magistrates. When this matter first came to his knowledge he looked upon it as one of those cases where the remains of children had been brought in debris from Birmingham. They had never been able to trace how the bodies got there, and he was afraid that the difficulties would be very great in unravelling the present case. However, it was an old saying that "murder will out". The examination of the witness Fellows was then proceeded with. He said he was of opinion that the body had floated down the canal from Birmingham, as there was a strong wind blowing from that direction. A juryman asked which boatman opened the parcel, and was informed that Marriott did. Police-constable Malins, of Water Orton, deposed that a toll-collector named **Pickering** had seen the parcel floating in the canal near Bearwood on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. On the 25<sup>th</sup> witness and Police-sergeant Walker examined the canal for about two miles in the hope of finding some of the missing limbs, but they were unsuccessful. The foreman of the jury informed the witness that he thought the two boatmen should have been present at the enquiry, and witness in answer stated that he had not had an opportunity of seeing either of them, as they had been on voyages with their boats. Dr Jones, of Coleshill, who had made a *post mortem* examination of the remains, said the trunk measured 11 inches, and was about 4lb in weight. It was part of the body of a child about a month old, and the lungs gave evidence that it had had a separate existence. The remains had probably been in the water a few days. In consequence of the mutilated state of the child it was impossible to say what was the exact mode of death, but the natural conclusion was that it had died from mutilation, although it was possible that the mutilation might have been done

after death with the view of hiding the real cause. The Coroner, in summing up, hoped the police would leave no stone unturned to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice, for a more horrible and inhuman case had never before come under his notion. The jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown".

**236 March 29 1887 Brierley Hill**

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN Yesterday, at the Police Court, **Robert Swayne** (28), a boatman, was charged with stealing a top coat and a pair of trousers, the property of **William Chattan**, his employer. The prisoner was engaged to go to London on the boat, and at Knowle yesterday he was missing. The prosecutor, who worked on the boat, being suspicious, rode to Brierley Hill by train, and arrived there an hour or so before the prisoner, who had the coat on his back. Swayne, who has recently been married, was sent to gaol for a month.

**237 March 30 1887 Aston Police Court**

THEFT OF WEARING APPAREL Henry Meeham, filer, of no fixed residence, and **William Flatily**, boatman, Lichfield Road, were each sentenced to three months hard labour for stealing two shirts of the value of 10s. The property of Ann Moulton, Lichfield Road, Aston.

**238 April 8 1887**

WOLVERHAMPTON QUARTER SESSIONS **John Lyndon** (27), boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of boots, valued at 7s 6d, the property of John Armstrong, bootseller, Carrick Street and Bilston Street. Mr Haden Corser prosecuted. It was alleged that on the 31<sup>st</sup> December the boots were missed from the shop, and subsequently it was found they had been sold by the prisoner to Mr Caile, landlord of the White Lion Inn, for 5s. The prisoner, whose career was said to be one long record of crime, was sentenced to penal servitude for five years.

**239 April 29 1887 Birmingham Police Court**

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **James Kegan** (25), boatman, 3 Court, 3 house, Palmer Street, was charged with assaulting the police. Police-constable Holden said the accused was fighting with a man in Palmer Street on Wednesday night. Witness attempted to get the other man away, and was struck on the face with a stick by the prisoner. The accused said the blow was intended for the assailant, and not the officer. Prisoner was sent to gaol for one month, with hard labour.

**240 May 2 1887 Warwick**

SUPPOSED ATTEMPTED SUICIDE Between six and seven o'clock on Friday morning, as a boatman named **William Berry** was proceeding with his barge along the canal near Myton, he observed a young woman in the water just underneath Myton Bridge. After some difficulty he brought her to shore. She was in an exhausted condition, and unable to speak. Having conveyed her to a neighbouring cottage, Berry went to Leamington and reported the matter to the police. It has transpired that the unfortunate woman, named Emma Goode, has lately been a domestic servant at Dormer House, Leamington, and that she has been in delicate health for some time past. Dr Marriott, under whose treatment she has recently been has certified that the poor girl is suffering from delirium, and consequently unaccountable for her actions. It is probable that she will be removed to a lunatic asylum.

**241 May 5 1887 Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions**

THEFT OF IRON FROM A BOAT John Cross (29), contractor; Benjamin Wilcox (28), labourer, and Joseph Chadwick (28), labourer, were charged with stealing 1 ton 2cwt of iron, the property of the Kettering Iron and Coal Company. Mr Bachelor prosecuted. On the 25<sup>th</sup> March, **Charles Shingler**, a boatman took 24 tons of iron marked "Kettering" from Hockley, to the Cape Works, Smethwick. He moored the boat there until the 30<sup>th</sup> March when he took it to the District Iron and Steel Works. Next morning he missed a "row of pig" as he described it, from the boat.

Subsequently he saw a quantity of pig iron at Oldbury Police Station, and identified about a ton of Kettering iron. **John Cooksey**, boatman, stated that on the 13th March he was going from Oldbury to Birmingham, when he met Cross and Wilcox, with a boat, coming from the direction of the District Works. Elijah Hunt, ironfounder, Oldbury, deposed to prisoner Cross offering some iron for sale on March 31<sup>st</sup>, but he declined to buy any. Subsequently Cross obtained a carter named Bib to assist him to move the iron. While doing this Police-sergeant Stanton came up, and not being satisfied with prisoner's account of how the iron came into his possession he took him into custody on suspicion of stealing it. The other prisoners were arrested subsequently. Prisoners were found guilty and were sentenced. Cross, who had been previously convicted, to twelve months hard labour ; and Chadwick and Wilcox to six months imprisonment. PLEADED GUILTY Thomas Roper (30), boatman, stealing money at West Bromwich, twelve months imprisonment.

**242 May 7 1887**

**Stoke-on-Trent**

VIOLENT ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN At the Stipendiary's Court at Fenton yesterday, **Thomas Hinett**, boatman, was charged with having assaulted another boatman named **Joseph Bullock**. It was stated that on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst the boats of those two men were lying at Stoke. About eleven o'clock the defendant went to the complainant's boat, and finding the latter asleep aroused him and commenced to quarrel about some previous dispute. Defendant threatened to murder the complainant, and in the course of an altercation knocked him down and kicked him about the head and face. The defendant, who admitted the offence and pleaded drunkenness as an extenuating circumstance, was fined £2 and costs, and also bound over to keep the peace for six months.

**243 May 7 1887**

FOUND DROWNED AT GRAVELLY HILL Yesterday afternoon, Mr D R Wynter (coroner for Central Warwickshire) held an inquest at the Erdington Arms, Gravelly Hill, touching the death of John William Lawrence (59), a patten and boot cutter, living at 11 Heneage Street, Birmingham, whose dead body was found in the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, on Wednesday. Esther Lawrence, widow of deceased, stated that she last saw her husband alive in Windsor Street, about ten o'clock on Wednesday morning last, when he said he was going to see the man for whom he worked. Deceased had not been well for several days, and had complained of a great pain at the top of his head. Two or three years ago deceased had a fit in Gem Street, and fell to the ground. Witness was not aware that deceased was in any trouble, and although he was short of work he was never in want. Police-constable Noah Batchelor stated that he saw the body, which appeared not to have been in the water very long. On searching the body he found a penny and some bread and meat, but nothing to lend to identification. There were no marks of violence on the body. **Charles Parsonage**, a boatman, said he found the deceased in about 2 1/2 ft of water, on his hands and knees. The jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

**244 May 10 1887**

**Tipton**

ASSAULTING THE POLICE Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Mr Solly and Alderman Williams (Mayor of Wednesbury), **James Rowley**, boatman, of Tipton Green, was charged with assaulting Police-constables Cartwright and Southall. Rowley's brother was taken into custody on a charge of misbehaviour, and the defendant rushed at Southall and struck him with a glass bottle. Whilst Cartwright was endeavouring to arrest the defendant, the latter assaulted the officer. The defendant was fined 20s and costs, or in default one months imprisonment.

**245 May 11 1887**

THE TIVIDALE DROWNING CASE Yesterday afternoon Mr E Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Boat Inn, Tividale, relative to the death of Samuel Millership (39), of Birchfield Lane, Oldbury, whose body was found in the canal, near the Dudley Road Bridge, Tividale, on Monday. It appeared that on Saturday night, the 30<sup>th</sup> ult, deceased went to Dudley in company with two other

men – Samuel Woodhall and Thomas Bishop – for the purpose of redeeming his watch. The three men visited two public houses, and had two quarts and three glasses of ale among them. They all returned to the tram together late at night ; but when Woodhall and Bishop arrived at Oldbury, deceased, who was supposed to be riding in the car, was missing. **Richard Bates**, boatman, stated that he found the body of deceased early on Monday morning floating in the water in an upright posture. There being no evidence to show how deceased got into the water, a verdict of “Found drowned” was returned.

#### **246 May 16 1887**

**MYSTERIOUS DEATH AT OLD HILL** On Saturday afternoon, Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Sportsman Inn, Gosty Hill, respecting the death of a single woman named Eliza Danks (25), daughter of Samuel Danks, blacksmith, of Netherton, who was found dead in a water “shoot” at the side of the Birmingham Canal, near to Gosty Hill Tunnel, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Inspector Smith appeared on behalf of the Great Western Railway Company. Eliza Danks, grandmother, said that she last saw the deceased alive on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. Her granddaughter was in the habit of sleeping at her residence in St Thomas Street. Deceased was subject to fits and frequently used to have three or four violent turns in a week. She had distant relatives at Old Hill, but was not in the habit of visiting them. Sarah Ann Cooper, landlady of the Three Furnaces Inn, Old Hill, said that the deceased visited their house on three separate occasions and requested to have some beer supplied to her ; but she was refused, witness seeing that she had had enough. Before she would leave witness had to threaten to send for the police. Deceased proceeded down Waterfall Lane, and she did not see her again. **Samuel Taylor**, boatman, said that on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst about 5.30 a m, he was proceeding to the Gosty Hill Tunnel, for the purpose of going out with a boat, when he saw the deceased lying in the water “shoot” on her back. A short distance up the embankment he found her skirt. At the time there was very little water running down the stream. Police-sergeant Salt stated that he had examined the place, and had traced the deceased's footprints along the railway line, and to the spot where she was found. He was present when Dr Standish examined the body, and said that the marks on the body might have been caused by falling and were not sufficient to cause death. The jury returned an open verdict of “Found dead”.

#### **247 May 18 1887**

##### **Oldbury**

**THEFT FROM A BOAT** At the Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs B T Sadler and M E Chance, **Thomas Smith** (46), boatman, of Smethwick, was sentenced to four months imprisonment for stealing a silver watch and chain, value £3, the property of **John Firkins**, from a cabin boat at Oldbury, on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst.

#### **248 May 25 1887**

##### **Birmingham County Court**

**EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACTION AGAINST A RAILWAY COMPANY** **John Astley**, of West Bromwich, boatman, sued the Midland Railway Company under the Employers' Liability Act to recover £192 damages for personal injuries sustained while in the service of the defendant company. Mr Jackson, of West Bromwich, appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Alfred Young (instructed by Beale and Co) for the company. The plaintiff was employed as a boatman by the company, and it was part of his duty to convey goods to Lifford Station. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September last plaintiff was at the Lifford Wharf, and the shunting engine not being at hand, he was asked by a shipper named Harbridge to take his boat horse and drag some trucks a few yards. The plaintiff complied, and as soon as the horse started with the trucks the tackle broke and the animal plunged forward, knocking plaintiff down, and causing him such injuries that he had to remain in hospital some weeks. It was alleged that for several years the plaintiff will not be able to follow his occupation. It was contended for the plaintiff that the accident was due to negligence, for which the company were responsible ; also that in doing the work in question plaintiff was acting as a servant of the company. In his evidence, plaintiff said that he warned Harbridge that if the horse were employed to drag trucks somebody would be either killed or lamed. Cross-examined : The horse

had never been restive before. He considered that it was as much as his place was worth to refuse to help with the trucks. For the defence, Mr Young argued that the work did not form part of plaintiff's proper duties, that Harbridge was not a person to whose orders – in the words of the Act – plaintiff was bound to conform, and that therefore the company were not responsible for what happened while plaintiff was complying with his request. Plaintiff was simply lending a helping hand, as was often done by one workman for another. As to the negligence, the tackle that broke was in plaintiff's own keeping, and he had made no complaint as to its strength. Harbridge was put into the box, and denied that plaintiff had given him any warning as to the character of the horse. Judgement was given for the defendant company, and Mr Jackson intimated that he should appeal. Mr Young did not ask for costs.

**249 May 27 1887**

**Tipton**

SAD END OF AN OLD BOATMAN Yesterday morning Mr Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Swan Inn, Eagle Lane, Great Bridge, on the body of **Thomas Johnson** (66), a boatman, with no settled abode, but well known in the district. It was shown by the evidence given that the man was a confirmed drunkard, and that on Sunday night he was almost helpless from intoxication. He asked to be put on the right way for Messrs Barrows brickworks, and he was shown the way. On Monday his body was found in the canal near the works. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. During the inquest the Coroner complimented Police-constable Heaney on his drawing of a plan showing the works and the canal.

**250 May 28 1887**

**Bilston**

STEALING PIG IRON At the Police Court, yesterday, **Thomas Lucas** (61), boatman, Factory Road, Tipton and **John Brooks** (45), boatman, Simon's passage, Tipton, were charged with stealing 205lb of pig iron, the property of the Great Western Railway Company. It was alleged that the prisoners while unloading a boat on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst, appropriated the pig iron, and sold it to a marine store dealer for 1s 8d. They were each sentenced to three months hard labour.

**251 May 30 1887**

SUPPOSED SUICIDE AT GRAVELLY HILL Early yesterday morning the tow-rope of a barge on the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal at Gravelly Hill brought to the surface the body of an aged man, which the boatman, **William Hallwood**, took out of the water. Police-constables Hickinbottom and Oughton took the body to the Erdington Arms, Gravelly Hill, where an inquest will be held today by Dr Winter, coroner for North Warwickshire. The dead man proved to be Thomas Haddock, sixty nine years of age, a fruiterer, who has a stall in the Birmingham market, and who lives with one of his sons in Allison Street. He was at his stall on Saturday till late in the evening. It is suspected that he committed suicide, for he had been in very low spirits since his wife died twelve months ago, and had repeatedly threatened, though without causing anyone to fear a fulfilment of the threat, that he would make away with his life.

**252 June 25 1887**

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING About a quarter to one yesterday afternoon, Louisa Merrick, a servant in the employ of Mrs Scott, the Parade, was shaking carpets by the side of the canal, when she fell into the water between the locks, and was nearly drowned. A boatman named **George Clement**, of Tat Bank, Oldbury, was passing at the time, and he rescued her with some difficulty.

**253 July 6 1887**

**Wolverhampton**

CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE Yesterday at the Police Court, Michael Leonard, Princes Alley, Princes Street, was charged with attempting to drown himself in the Birmingham Canal, near Canal Street. Evidence was given that on Monday night prisoner, who was very drunk, threw himself into the canal. He was rescued by **John Green**, boatman, of Faulkland Street. The prisoner

was remanded till Tuesday next.

**254 July 11 1887**

**Walsall**

**THE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE** At the Guildhall, on Friday, Jessie Andrews (31), Wismore, an unfortunate, was charged with attempting to commit suicide on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. A boatman named **Joseph Till** saw her deliberately throw herself into the canal in Navigation Street, at a point where it was very deep, and he ran and sprang in after her, and with assistance got her out. Incidentally he mentioned that this was not the first, second, or third time that he had rescued people from the water ; and, in answer to a question, he said he did not possess the Humane Society's medal. The Magistrates Clerk said he ought to have it, and the magistrates complimented him on the admirable way in which he had acted for the preservation of the woman's life, and expressed a hope that in due course he would get the society's medal. The prisoner asked to be sent to a home, stating that she was sick of the life she was leading, and of being beaten and knocked about ; and the Bench remanded her for a week, with the object of finding an institution to which to send her.

**255 July 16 1887**

**WORK AND WAGES** At the Walsall Guildhall, yesterday, Walter James Chaplain (25), labourer, Little Bloxwich ; **Joseph Turner** (22), Spon Lane, boatman ; and **William Hall** (21), boatman, Smethwick, were charged with assaulting **Joseph Edwards**, boatman, and intimidating him. Mr H H Stanley (from Mr T H Stanley's office) appeared for the prosecution, and called evidence which showed that owing to a strike of boatmen in the employ of Messrs Lones, Vernon and Co, Smethwick, Edwards, who had remained at work, was molested by a crowd of persons at Smethwick, on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, and his starting delayed for several hours. When he did start, he was followed to Hednesford, where there was a great disturbance, and back to Little Bloxwich, where Chaplain and Turner threw large pieces of stone at him, compelling him to screen himself. Chaplain attempted to cut the boat line, and also detached the mule from the boat. Hall was discharged ; Chaplain was fined 10s and costs for each offence, or twenty one days imprisonment ; and Turner was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment, for the assault.

**256 July 20 1887**

**Wolverhampton**

**THE DROWNING OF CHILDREN** Mr R B Thorneycroft (deputy coroner) held two inquests at the Town Hall yesterday, as to the death of **Annie Booth Micoock** (3), whose parents live on the canal boat Carrie ; and of **Edward Poultney** (14) late of the boat London. In the first case it was proved that on Sunday afternoon the deceased and a younger child were playing together on the boat while the parents were sleeping in the cabin. The father was aroused by the younger child, but did not succeed in rescuing the deceased. In the second case the lad was missed by the boatman while they were passing through the sixteenth lock on the Birmingham Canal, and after dragging for some time his body was found. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned in each case.

**257 July 21 1887**

**DROWNING CASES** Yesterday afternoon, as Ernest and Bertie Deeley, the children of parents living in Hawkins Street, Hill Top, West Bromwich, were engaged with a third child in endeavouring to fish corks out of the canal, near to their home, the little fellow Bertie, who was only five years of age, fell into the water, and his brother, who was his senior by less than a couple of years, in trying to save him fell in too. The third child raised an alarm, and in a short time the bodies, life being then extinct, were got out by a boatman named **Robinson**.

**258 July 28 1887**

**VIOLENT ASSAULT AT MINWORTH** At the Coleshill Police Court, yesterday, before Major Dilke, the Hon A Adderley, and Mr H Fisher, **Alfred Davis** (19), boatman, Cromwell Street, Birmingham, and Joseph Baxter (21), Cuckoo Road, Nechells, were charged with assaulting Police-

constable Pearson at Minworth on the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. On the morning in question, about a quarter past three, the two prisoners were observed by Police-sergeants Walker and Pearson proceeding in the direction of Birmingham. The officers had five men in custody on a charge of garden robberies at Coleshill and the district, and seeing that the two men had something bulky in their possession, Walker sent Pearson after them. Baxter declined to say what was in the bundle, and immediately struck the officer a violent blow in the mouth. They closed, and Baxter threw the bundle he was carrying towards Davis. Police-constable Malins, who was some distance away, noticed Davis throw something from the bundle into the hedge, and then strike Pearson two violent blows. They eventually secured the prisoners, and conveyed them to the lock up. Davis, who is well known to the Aston police, was sentenced to four months hard labour, and Baxter to two months.

**259 July 30 1887**

**Staffordshire Summer Assizes**

FELONIOUSLY WOUNDING **Edward Thomas Anslow** (38), boatman, was charged with feloniously wounding Alfred James Clarke, on July 18<sup>th</sup> at Penkridge. Mr Spearman prosecuted. The jury convicted the prisoner, and he was sentenced to six months imprisonment, with hard labour.

**260 August 2 1887**

**Staffordshire Summer Assizes**

BREAKING AND ENTERING **James Hill** (36), boatman, was charged with breaking and entering the dwelling house of Leonard Dainty, at Leacroft, on June 29<sup>th</sup>, and stealing a gold watch. Mr Jesse Herbert prosecuted ; prisoner was undefended. The house was locked up on the day named, and the prisoner was seen by the prosecutor's son, first going in the direction of the house and afterwards leaving it hurriedly. Prisoner was arrested, and some marks upon the floor of the room from which the watch was stolen corresponded with the nails in Hill's boots. Prisoner, who had been previously convicted, was sentenced to six years penal servitude.

**261 August 6 1887**

**Birmingham Police Court**

THEFT BY A BOATMAN **Thomas Roberts** (38), boatman, 35 Mill Street, was sentenced to a months imprisonment, with hard labour, for stealing a piece of iron, used in steering, from a canal boat belonging to Mr F Hill, coal merchant, of Wolverhampton. The case was proved by Police-constable J Brown.

**262 August 8 1887**

SOLIHULL POLICE COURT At this court, on Saturday, before Messrs Chattock, Lane and Beard, **Henry Webb**, a boatman living at Brierley Hill, was charged with stealing 60lb of coal, valued at 6d, the property of William Taylor, publican and coal dealer, Hornfield. Early on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> ult, the prosecutor saw the prisoner take the coal from the back of his premises, and put it upon his boat. Prosecutor dressed himself, and went out to prisoner, and accused him of stealing the coal. The prisoner then took the coal back, and proceeded along the canal with his boat. Prosecutor, however, fetched a policeman, who followed prisoner, and arrested him. Prisoner's wife offered the prosecutor 5s to settle the matter, but he refused it. She then offered him half a sovereign, remarking that he could have half, and the policeman half. This being the prisoner's first offence, he was let off with a fine of £2, including costs.

**263 August 16 1887**

**Tipton**

WASTING CANAL WATER Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Messrs James Solly, W L Underhill and H P Parkes, a boatman named **William Bradney** was fined 1s and costs for wasting the water of the Birmingham Canal Company.

**264 August 24 1887**

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM An enquiry was then held touching the death of Benjamin Riley (61), who lived at the back of 28 Berners Street. The deceased, who was a coal carter by trade, had

been out of work for about ten weeks, and had in consequence been very much troubled. About a fortnight ago he told his wife that he wished he was dead. Shortly before dinner time last Sunday the deceased left his house, telling his wife he was going to see whether there would be any work for him next day. He did not return home, and at about twenty minutes past four o'clock on Monday morning, a boatman named **Thomas Benton** found deceased in the canal near Lancaster Street Bridge. There was no evidence to show how the deceased got into the water, and the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned",

**265 September 8 1887**

**A BOATMAN DROWNED** A boatman, named **Robert Jones**, was drowned at Margate, yesterday afternoon, by the capsizing of his boat in heavy sea.

**266 September 27 1887** **Wolverhampton**

**ILL TREATING HORSES** **Frederick Wall** was fined 5s and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment, for working a horse while in an unfit condition, and **William Coley**, a boatman, who owned the animal, was fined 20s and costs, or one months imprisonment, for allowing it to be so worked.

**267 October 1 1887** **Stoke Prior**

**A WOMAN DROWNED** The body of **Georgina Westwood**, wife of **Thomas Westwood**, boatman, was found in the canal at Stoke Prior, yesterday morning. Deceased had been living apart from her husband for a week, but went to him on Thursday for some money, and he gave her 4s 6d and some beer. He saw her again in the evening, when they quarrelled, and he struck her and left her. She was last seen about 7.30 at night going in the direction of the canal, where she was found. An inquest will be held.

**268 October 3 1887** **Stoke Prior**

**INQUEST** Mr E Docker (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, on Saturday, on the body of **Georgina Westwood** (44), wife of **Thomas Westwood**, boatman, who was found drowned in the canal on Friday last, as reported in Saturday's *Post*. Thomas Maion deposed to finding the body in the water, and the husband of the deceased gave evidence as to a quarrel he had with her on Thursday, when she tried to stab him with a pair of scissors. There were bruises on the cheek and neck of the deceased, but there was no doubt death was the result of drowning. The jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

**269 October 5 1887**

**GLEANINGS** **Thomas Lowry**, jobbing boatman, with several aliases, was yesterday committed for trial by the Manchester City magistrates on a charge of manslaughter. Prisoner had for some time lived with a married woman, named Jane Jones, in a low part of the city, and on Sunday evening, the 18<sup>th</sup> ult, she was found in a dying condition, suffering from terrible injuries to the head, her skull being fractured to such an extent that the brain protruded. Prisoner absconded at the time.

**270 October 6 1887**

**GLEANINGS** Shortly before midnight on Monday, **William France**, boatman, Hull, was found lying on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, near Mirfield, with his arms and legs across the metals. Fortunately he was removed before a train came along. He had been drinking, and when sober knew nothing about the affair. He was brought before the magistrates at Huddersfield, on Tuesday, and after being reprimanded was allowed to go.

**271 October 11 1887** **Bloxwich**

**PECULIAR CONTRADICTORY EVIDENCE** At the Walsall Guildhall, Walsall, yesterday, **Thomas Hickson**, boatman, Tipton, and Rosannah Bull, married woman, were charged with being drunk and disorderly on Sunday night. The evidence of Police-constables Curtis, Wiltshire and



and in this the Birmingham Corporation were interested, as they had spent about £2,000 in dredging the canal. The defence was that one shovelful only went into the canal, and that was accidentally. Defendant was fined £1 and costs (10s), or a months imprisonment.

**276 November 8 1887 Worcester**

**DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE SEVERN** Yesterday morning the body of a man was found floating in the Severn, near the railway bridge. The body had evidently been in the water a long time, as it was very much decomposed. It is supposed to be the body of **James Cheston** (60), boatman, who lived at Droitwich, and who just before last Christmas was knocked overboard by the tiller of a barge at Camp Weir, but, notwithstanding careful search, was never found.

**277 November 12 1887 Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions**

**PLEADED GUILTY Edward Bowdler** (23), boatman, obtaining 15s 6d, by false pretences, at Ocker Hill, from Samuel Kendrick, on February 19<sup>th</sup>, six months imprisonment.

**278 November 16 1887 Bromsgrove**

**A CAUTION TO BOATMEN** At the Petty Sessions, yesterday, before Messrs R Smallwood and T White, **John Hopkins**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged with infringing the byelaws of the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Canal Company, on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, by passing a boat through a tunnel in the canal which was not in tow of the steam tug. Mr F Holyoake appeared for the prosecution, and spoke of the danger of collision, and the risk to life and property incurred by the conduct of defendant. Mr Hobrough, the agent of the company, said they did not ask for a heavy penalty, but only to caution boatmen. Defendant was let off on paying costs, 9s.

**279 November 22 1887**

**DROWNING CASES** Early yesterday morning a man named **James Parrott** (40), a boatman of Spring Hill, Birmingham, was drowned in a lock at Greet's Green, West Bromwich, under distressing circumstances. It appeared that deceased and a boy named **Joseph Law**, also of Birmingham, were taking a boat belonging to Mr George Cooper, of Peel Street, Birmingham, through the Greet's Green locks. About two o'clock, they reached No 6 lock, and it is supposed that deceased, who was driving the horse, went forward to open the lock gates, when he fell into the water. Law, hearing the splash and the cries of Parrott, hastened to the spot to render assistance, but, owing to the dense fog, he could not discover his whereabouts, and he sank and was drowned. The body was recovered afterwards from the pound near the lock, and conveyed to the West Bromwich mortuary.

**280 November 25 1887 Birmingham Police Court**

**CANAL THIEVES Thomas White** (35), boatman, Moland Street, and **Thomas Cooksey** (33), boatman, no fixed address, were charged with breaking into the offices of the Birmingham Town Brewery Company, Dartmouth Street, and stealing a gallon of bitter beer, and two boxes containing samples of spirits. Early on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> October Police-constable Herbert Davis (90D) was walking along the canal side, near Miller Street, Aston, in company with another officer, when he met White, who said he was going to do something to the stop locks on the canal. The other officer directly afterwards encountered Cooksey and another man named Pilkington. Prisoners were each carrying two boxes of samples, while Pilkington had possessed himself of a bucket full of beer. Police-constable Edwards took hold of White and told him that he would have to go to the police station. The accused struggled violently and got away. In the meantime, Police-constable Davis had tackled Pilkington, who tried to persuade the officer that the bucket contained water for the horse, and vigorously endeavoured to get away from the constable with whom he struggled for nearly quarter of an hour. They were close to a canal bridge, and Davis very cleverly took his opponent by surprise by lifting him on to the parapet of the bridge. As Pilkington sat with his legs dangling over the dark water beneath, the constable held him tightly by the collar of his coat, and

occasionally pushed him slightly forward in order to convince his prisoner of his utter helplessness. At length the latter saw that there was no chance of escape, and consented to go quietly to the lock up. He had been tried at the Sessions and sentenced to eight months imprisonment and one years police supervision. Detective Clifton apprehended White on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, and Cooksey as he was leaving gaol yesterday morning. Access was gained to the prosecutor's premises on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> by making a hole in the wall adjoining one of the cellars. On that occasion port wine to the value of £12 10s was stolen, but it was not thought worthwhile to make the place secure again, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> prisoners got into the premises through the same hole. After seizing the samples and filling the bucket with beer, they went away, leaving a large barrel of bitter beer running to waste. White pleaded guilty, but Cooksey denied his guilt. They were both committed to the Sessions.

### **281 December 12 1887**

**FIRES IN BIRMINGHAM** A fire broke out at the Scotland Street Works, Scotland Street, shortly after five o'clock on Saturday morning. The alarm was given by a boatman named **Born**, who discovered the fire as he was passing along the canal at the back of the works. The fire brigade were summoned, and the superintendent, with tender, steamer, and all the available men attended.

### **282 December 20 1887**

**A BOY DROWNED** Yesterday evening a boy, named **Charles Stokes** (8), was drowned in the canal, near Walker Street. It appears that the boy, who is the son of a Gloucester boatman, was in his father's boat, playing, and it is surmised that he fell over the side. He was taken from the water and conveyed to the General Hospital, but on arrival there life was found to be extinct.

### **283 January 5 1888**

#### **Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

**SENTENCES** **Martin Billing** (21), boatman, and William Johnson (21), labourer, fowl stealing at Harborne, in November last, Johnson to twelve months and Billing to two months hard labour.

### **284 January 10 1888**

#### **Brierley Hill**

**INTERFERING WITH A CANAL LOCK** At the same (Police) court, **Josiah Worrall**, boatman, was charged with opening a valve or slide of the bottom gate of a lock on the Birmingham Canal at Wordsley, before the top gate had been properly closed. Mr Harrison remarked that it was a serious offence, and the defendant was fined £1 2s 6d, including the costs.

### **285 January 11 1888**

**ACCIDENTS IN THE FOG** During the dense fog which prevailed on Monday night, a woman named **Sarah Minshall**, wife of a boatman, was accidentally drowned in the canal at Tunstall, It seems that the boat, of which the deceased's husband is the captain, was lying at the Chatterley Basin of the Trent and Mersey Canal. Shortly after eight o'clock a man named Joseph Brough, who was walking in the neighbourhood of the basin, heard screams from the direction of the canal, and at once proceeded there, but was unable to see anyone. Shortly afterwards, however, Mrs Minshall, who had previously left her boat on some domestic errand, was found dead in the water, while by the side of the canal a bucket and candle, which she had carried with her, were discovered. It is supposed that the deceased walked into the canal in consequence of the fog, and was accidentally drowned.

### **286 January 11 1888**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** An inquest was also held upon the body of **Elizabeth Sumners** (54). The deceased was the wife of a boatman and on Saturday last she came with her husband in the boat from Wilmcote to the Worcester Wharf, The deceased's husband left her alone in the cabin at night, and on returning found her dead. The medical evidence showed that death was due to apoplexy, and a verdict of "Natural death" was returned.

**287 February 6 1888**

**ATTEMPTED SUICIDE OF A YOUNG WOMAN** About 6.30 yesterday morning Annie Amelia Collins (19), who had been in service in Trafalgar Road, Moseley, and whose mother resides at Balsall Heath, attempted to drown herself in the canal in the neighbourhood of St Peter's, Worcester. She was seen in the water by a boatman named **(William) Kebble** and a railway official named Graham. They immediately rescued her, and Police-constable Pugh arrived, and they used means to restore consciousness, and were successful. She was taken to the workhouse. She states that a railway porter in Birmingham had been paying his addresses to her, and she discovered he was a married man. This preyed on her mind, and she left Birmingham on Friday, and took lodgings in Worcester that night. On Saturday night she was wandering about, and yesterday morning she attempted suicide. She will be brought before the magistrates today.

**288 February 14 1888**

**Kidderminster**

**A WOMAN SEVERELY BURNT** On Sunday morning **Mrs Whitmarsh**, wife of a boatman, residing near St James Church, was admitted to the Infirmary suffering from very severe burns upon the legs and back. It appears that the woman was dressing a child near to the fire when she suddenly found her dress was in flames. She immediately rushed out of doors, and before two men who were attracted by her cries could extinguish the flames by means of wrapping bags around the woman she had received terrible burns. As she is in a delicate state of health the case is considered very serious.

**289 February 14 1888**

**DEATH FROM STARVATION AT ENVILLE** Yesterday, Mr W H Phillips, coroner, held an inquest at the Trysull Workhouse, upon the body of **Benjamin Meredith** (55) of Wolverhampton. On Saturday morning, Police-constable Wood found the deceased lying in the Stourbridge Road, near Enville Hall. He was unable to stand, and, after restoratives had been administered, was removed to Trysull Workhouse. Although promptly attended by a surgeon, he died the same night. From a communication found on the deceased it appeared that the man's name was Benjamin Meredith, and that he had recently been discharged from Gloucester Gaol. The gaol authorities were communicated with, and they replied that Benjamin Meredith of Wolverhampton was discharged on February 4<sup>th</sup>, and that his body was singularly marked. These same marks of identification were found on deceased's person. Dr Fraser deposed that deceased died from exposure and want. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with this evidence. It is believed that the deceased was walking from Gloucester to Wolverhampton, after his liberation from gaol, to see his friends, when he was overcome by the severe weather and by starvation. The body lies in Trysull Workhouse to allow of identification. The Wolverhampton police report that the man is a boatman, of no fixed residence, who some time back was in the service of Mr John Yates, hay and straw dealer, Raglan Street. Meredith has a married daughter living in Wolverhampton, and sometimes he lived in Wolverhampton and sometimes in Gloucester. In July last he was sentenced to six months imprisonment, at Gloucester, for horse stealing, and he had just been discharged.

**290 February 22 1888**

**Aston Police Court**

**SHOP ROBBERY** **Ralph Higgins**, boatman, Legge Street, Birmingham, was charged with stealing 3lb of bacon, of the value of 1s 4d. Prisoner was seen to enter the shop of Mr Mark Mills, grocer, Lichfield Road, take the bacon, and run away. Prisoner, who was subsequently arrested by Detective Hodson, was sentenced to six weeks hard labour.

**291 February 29 1888**

**Aston Police Court**

**A CASE OF SUSPICION** William Davis, labourer, Alma Street, Aston ; George Smith, labourer, Long Acre, Birmingham ; and **John Graham**, boatman, Grosvenor Road, Aston, were charged with stealing a pair of boots, of the value of 6s 3d, the property of William Vickers, labourer, Hutton Street, Birmingham on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. On Saturday evening last, prosecutor, with the boots under his



ago arrested him in Wolverhampton for desertion. Part of his service has been in China, and there he is stated to have stabbed a man. Since his discharge from the navy he has been living with his father, but has taken very little interest in the business, and could be got to do hardly anything. His father states that he seemed thoroughly disheartened, as though crushed by his severe experience of naval rule, and so listless has he been that he has lately earned for himself among the neighbours the nickname of "Dafto". On Sunday night it was arranged that the father and his sons should rise early to remove some furniture ; Mr Harper, besides being a publican, being also a furniture remover and a coal dealer. Ernest consented to accompany them. About a quarter to five o'clock yesterday morning Ernest, fully dressed, entered his parents' bedroom, but was told that it was not yet time to get up, and he went downstairs. In about twenty minutes he returned to the room where he had slept, and where his four brothers were also sleeping, carrying with him a butcher's cutting-up knife, which the family used for carving purposes, and which he had obtained out of the kitchen drawer. He went up to the bed where his brothers John, aged 19, and Thomas, aged 17, were sleeping, and with whom he had also himself been sleeping, and commenced a fearful attack on Thomas, who lay nearest to him. Placing his left hand upon his head, with his right he inflicted two terrible gashes, apparently with all his force, upon Thomas's throat underneath the ear, severing the jugular vein. The other brother, John, was awakened by the struggles of Thomas, and as he jumped up the murderer ran round the bed and struck at him also with the terrible weapon. John, however, eluded the blow and sprang at Ernest, when a severe struggle ensued, and John obtained the mastery, wrenching the knife out of his brother's hand. John's cries brought in the father, and with a view to elude arrest, the murderer, after uttering a yell, dived head first through the closed window, which is eighteen feet above the ground. Had not his father to some extent lessened the shock of the fall by seizing hold of his son's foot, and detaining him for an instant, he must certainly have been killed. As it was he lay on the ground for a few instants bleeding from the injuries sustained in his fall, and then re-entered the house by the side entry. Here he was met by his father, and, in reply to the challenge "What he had killed his brother for", said, "I don't know". He went into the house and attempted to wash the blood from his hands at the tap, but fainted and fell insensible. Meanwhile it had been ascertained that his brother Thomas was dead, he having rolled from the bed on to the floor. A policeman was passing at the time, and the murderer was removed in an unconscious state to the hospital.

Apart from the supposition which is generally held in the locality that Harper's depression and moroseness suddenly developed into an attack of homicidal mania, the only explanation that can be given for the murder is that on Saturday it is said that the deceased called Ernest "a daft fool", and that Ernest, who was a hot-tempered man, though not naturally quarrelsome, replied that "he should not forget it – he would remember him before long". The weapon which Harper used is a terrible one. It has a blade 12in long and 1 1/2in to 2in broad, thickening toward the point. It has a heavy copper handle, and together with other knives in the house, had only been reground a week ago. It possessed almost a razor edge, and is nearly as large as a small naval cutlass.

The inquest was opened yesterday at the Ring of Bells Inn, Dudley Road, by Mr W H Phillips, borough coroner. Captain Barnett and Mr T Dallow represented the police authorities. John Harper (19), carter, brother of the deceased, deposed that on Sunday night he went to bed in a room in which prisoner and his three other brothers, Albert, Oliver and Thomas, all slept. Ernest, Thomas and witness slept in one bed ; the others slept in another. Witness was awakened at five o'clock by the pressure of Thomas's hand. Thomas was lying on the bed, and as witness got up Ernest drew a knife from his neck, which was cut open terribly. It was the knife now produced – a carving knife, and kept in the kitchen. The deceased was bleeding profusely. Ernest was fully dressed. As soon as witness rose in the bed the prisoner ran at him. He struck at him with the knife as he jumped out of bed to escape. Witness caught hold of prisoner and shouted, and a severe struggle ensued. He, however, overmastered the prisoner and threw him on the floor and wrested the knife out of his hand. His father then entered the room. Ernest jumped head first out of the window of the room through the glass : Thomas rolled out of the bed on to the floor, and died in that position in four or five minutes. As Ernest was jumping through the window his father caught hold of his shoe, but he

had to release his hold. Witness did not see prisoner again until he saw him in custody. He had seen no quarrel between the deceased and Ernest, and had never heard the latter threaten his brother. Ernest had been a man-of-war's man, and had been discharged for misconduct. He had been at home four or five months. He did no work. His manner had been strange, and he had kept very much in the house. He had only been out about three times since he came home. In answer to Mr Dallow, witness said he went out on Sunday at five o'clock. He came home at half past twelve o'clock and was locked out. He was let out of the scullery, into which he had got, by Ernest at two o'clock. **Albert Harper** (21), boatman, another brother, deposed that he saw John and Ernest struggling. His father came in and Ernest sprang through the window. The knife was on the floor. Thomas was in bed bleeding. Ernest had been very strange in his manner during the past month. Thomas was the stronger of the two. Last week Ernest complained of his head. William Harper, the father, said that he kept the Victoria Inn, and was also a coal dealer and furniture remover. Deceased had always been brought up at home. His son Ernest had been a sailor on the Flying Fish. He had been imprisoned for desertion. All day on Sunday witness, deceased and Ernest were together. There was no quarrel or disturbance. At a quarter to five that morning witness heard Ernest in his room. Mrs Harper told him to go back to bed. Witness had told prisoner to start work at seven o'clock on the Monday morning in the removing of some goods. Witness heard his son John call out in alarm, and he went into the boys' bedroom and saw the deceased lying with his throat cut. Ernest and John had just been struggling. He asked Ernest what he was doing. The prisoner then made a dreadful noise "like a wild beast" and jumped through the window. Witness saw him afterwards in the back yard, the wall of which he had scaled. He asked him what he had killed his brother for. He said, "I don't know", and fainted. There was a slight quarrel between deceased and Ernest some two months back. Since then they had been on the best of terms. In answer to Mr Dallow, the witness said in Hong Kong, two years ago, prisoner was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for striking his superior officer. He would never converse with his friends, and said nothing about his life while at sea. Witness was told of his conviction by a shipmate on furlough. Ann Harper, deceased's mother, repeated much of the former evidence, making, however, the additional statement that she heard somebody downstairs before Ernest came into the bedroom. Police-constable Pountney deposed that he was on duty in Bell Place, Pountney Street, at 5.15 that morning, when he heard shouts of "Murder" from outside the Victoria Inn. He went to that building, and saw the body of Thomas Harper in an upstairs room. There were cuts on the arm, throat and neck. Ernest Harper witness afterwards saw. He was bleeding from his temples and hands. Witness took him to the hospital. Oliver Harper (9), another brother of the deceased lad, was also called. He said the struggle between Ernest and John lasted a minute or two. Capt Burnett, deputy chief constable, deposed as to the blood stained condition of one of the beds in the room. He also stated that he had charged Ernest Harper with the murder of his brother. The prisoner did not reply, and witness could not say that he had understood the charge. The inquest was adjourned for a fortnight. The Coroner directed that a *post mortem* examination of the body should be made.

The murderer lies at the hospital under police surveillance. He has sustained a slight fracture of the skull from the effects of his mad leap, and is unconscious. It is expected that he may lie in this state eight or nine days, a crisis being reached in about a fortnight. The chief constable attended at the hospital yesterday, with Mr J Lees and the magistrates' clerk ; but as the wounded man was unconscious, they could not take his depositions.

## **296**    **May 16 1888**

**BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS** *Re: Henry John Webb*, master boatman, the Delph, Brierley Hill. The debtor came up for his public examination yesterday at the Stourbridge Court House, before Mr Registrar Collis. His liabilities were £153 1s 9d, and his assets £59 8s 9d. Debtor said he had been in the boating trade thirty years, and had got into his present position through bad luck and bad trade. He liquidated seven years ago. He did not know what his estate then realised, or what had been done with the money. He had received no account of it. He bought boats afterwards

to go on boating, and Mr Humphries eventually served him with a writ, and he was sold up again. Mr Chappell (the Registrar's clerk), referring to the file of the liquidation seven years ago, said the figures it contained showed liabilities £645 and assets £618. The debtor, in reply to the Official Receiver (Mr Jobson), said he did not know any of the creditors had anything. The Registrar said the Official Receiver had better enquire if there had been a return made by the trustee to the estate, and also call upon the mortgagees of some property the debtor had when he went into liquidation to render an account. The examination was closed.

**297 May 29 1888**

**Brierley Hill**

**ALLEGED ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN** Yesterday, at the Police Court, before Mr King Harrison and Mr Hall, **Thomas Pettifer** (29), boatman, was charged with stealing a coat, blanket and bed-quilt, the property of **Thomas Kent**, another boatman, of Roch's Hill. In the previous month the prosecutor engaged the defendant as an assistant boatman, and a few days afterwards missed the goods from the cabin of the boat, and the prisoner was nowhere to be found until the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. Prisoner ought to have been on the boat all the time. In cross-examination, Pettifer sought to learn from the prosecutor that no agreement as to wages had been come to because the engagement was on a Friday, and it would have been bad luck to do so. A witness was called, and swore that the defendant came to Messrs Wilkinson's works about the time of the robbery wearing a coat similar to the one lost by the prosecutor. Pettifer was ultimately apprehended by the Liverpool police. The defendant cross-examined to show that he was at work on an independent job on the evening the clothes were missed, and that the boat was so closely moored to the towing-path that anyone could have stepped into the cabin and taken the clothes. He was discharged.

**298 June 9 1888**

**SUICIDE OF A TRAM CONDUCTOR** Mr E Docker held an inquest at the Bournbrook Hotel, yesterday, on the body of Stephen Harry Foreman, aged about thirty eight, who was found drowned in the Worcester Canal, at Selly Oak, on Wednesday morning. William John Greavett, inspector of the Central Tramway Company, said that about a fortnight back he put the deceased, who represented himself to have been an inspector on the North London Tramway Company, to work as conductor on the Bristol Road route. On Saturday last deceased came to witness and said there would soon be a man short, as he did not like the terms. That same day he ceased work. At half past three last Tuesday afternoon witness accompanied deceased to the office in the Old Square to ascertain what wages were due to him. It appeared that he was £1 5s 10d short in the traffic receipts, and that being deducted left him 2s due for wages. He received this, and afterwards went on by tram to Bournbrook. Robert Hall, licensed victualler, said that on Tuesday night deceased came into the Bournbrook Hotel and asked for an envelope. Witness had not an envelope, but he gave deceased a piece of paper, which he shaped into an envelope, and placed therein a piece of paper on which he had been writing. He had half a pint of ale and a cigar in company with another man, and went off in the direction of the Post Office. He came back to the hotel again, and left at 10.30, apparently perfectly sober and in good spirits. It subsequently transpired that the note written by the deceased read : "For my dearly beloved wife. God bless her and the dear children, and may the Lord always look on them, and I am pleased to say my Lord has called me from the wicked world. God bless her and all the little ones for my sake". **Thomas Walker**, a boatman, gave evidence as to the finding of the deceased in the canal early on Wednesday morning. A verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane" was returned.

**299 June 14 1888**

**Brownhills**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **William Connor**, boatman, Adam Street, Birmingham, was fined £1 and costs for stealing coal from a boat, the property of Edwin Sheldon, Birmingham, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May. John Ghilks and Jane Ghilks were fined £2 1s 6d for receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. The prosecution was conducted by Mr Tyler on behalf of the Birmingham Coal Merchants' Association.

**300 June 26 1888**

**Hanley**

CRUELTY TO A MULE At the Stipendiary's Court, yesterday, **Thomas Goodwin**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was charged at the instance of Inspector Lewis with cruelty to a mule, by working it while in an unfit state. It was stated that on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant Police-constable Clarke saw the defendant at Stockton Brook in charge of a mule which was attached to a boat laden with limestone. The animal appeared to be in pain, and on examining it the officer found that it was suffering from a large wound on the shoulder, in such a position as to be galled by the collar. It was quite unfit for work. The defendant was fined 10s and 10s 6d costs.

**301 July 2 1888**

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM The last inquest was on the body of William Ball (7), Sampson Road North. On Friday evening the deceased was playing on the canal side with a lad named Harman, and subsequently was found drowned. **Harman**, who was the son of a boatman, had since left town with his parents, and as there was no evidence to show how the deceased got into the water, a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

**302 July 4 1888**

**Staffordshire Quarter Sessions**

COUNTERFEIT COIN CASE **Thomas Wright** (46), boatman, was indicted for unlawfully and knowingly uttering to Elizabeth Whitehouse, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, at West Bromwich, a counterfeit florin ; and also with passing another counterfeit coin to Martha Reed, on the same day. Mr Buddam prosecuted, and prisoner was sentenced to one months imprisonment.

**303 July 6 1888**

**Hanley Quarter Sessions**

HORSE DEALING AND FRAUD **John Clowes** (27), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a horse and bridle, value £16, the property of Samuel Tomkinson, contractor, Stockton Brook, and also to obtaining a boatline, value 3s 6d, by false pretences from James Johnson, general dealer, Etruria Vale. Mr Udall, for the prosecution, stated that the prisoner was formerly employed by Tomkinson, but was discharged for irregularities. On failing to obtain money from the prosecutor he threatened that it would be worse for him, and the following night he broke into the prosecutor's yard and stable at Cauldon Place and stole the horse and bridle. Subsequently, when riding away on the horse, prisoner called at Johnson's shop and obtained the boatline by falsely representing that it was for Tomkinson. When the police got upon his track, the prisoner abandoned the horse in a field near Macclesfield. Clowes was sentenced to six months imprisonment for stealing the horse, and a further term of two months for the fraud.

**304 July 10 1888**

**Birmingham Police Court**

AN IDLE TRAMP **Samuel Abbott**, a boatman, for wilfully damaging oakum which had been given him to pick at the oasthouse, was sentenced to a months hard labour.

**305 July 10 1888**

**Rugeley**

PETTY SESSIONS **Joseph Crompton**, boatman, was summoned at the instance of Inspector Lewis for ill treating a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state, and was fined 5s and costs.

**306 July 14 1888**

PAINFUL SUICIDE AT ASTON Last evening, Mr J Ansell (deputy coroner for Central Warwickshire) held an inquest at the Yew Tree Inn, Witton, on the body of Eliza Lee (38), wife of Thomas Lee, nailcutter, of 38 Denmark Street, Aston, whose body was found in the Tame Valley Canal on Tuesday evening last. In opening the proceedings, the Coroner explained that the deceased on Tuesday last appeared as the prosecutrix in a charge of attempting to procure abortion which was preferred against a woman named Eliza Brown, of Dorchester Street, Birmingham, who was subsequently committed to take her trial at the Birmingham Assizes. It was his intention, in the

course of the inquest, to exclude anything referring to the Police Court proceedings which was irrelevant to the enquiry inasmuch as the jury were not dealing with Mrs Brown, but had met to consider how, and under what circumstances deceased had met her death. The husband of the deceased was the first witness called, and identified the body as that of his wife, whom he last saw alive on Tuesday morning, about nine o'clock, prior to her departure to the Aston Police Court to give evidence against Brown. She had attended at the court on the same errand on the previous Friday, but the case was not gone into in consequence of the non-attendance of a medical witness. Last Tuesday Brown was brought before the court and committed for trial at the assizes. The Coroner : Did she say anything before she left the house? *She said she wished she had not to go. Why? Because of the way she was served on the Friday before. How was she served? Oh, the mob jeered at her, and she had to run into a place for protection in order to get out of them. She said she was afraid to go, but I told her she must go. Did she tell you whom she was seeking protection from? The mob and the people. Did she say a mob of people? Yes. Had anybody been threatening her? Yes, they said that if she went down to the Police Court again they would mob her to death. She also added, "What a thing it would be if they were to come and mob the house tonight". Has she sought the protection of the police? She told me the police were going to escort her to and from her home. Did they? No, sir. Did you believe in the threats yourself? I did not think much about it. You say that the reason why you did not accompany her was that you did not believe in the threats, and that the police had promised to escort her? I believed that the threats were made in the first instance, but certainly thought the police would escort her. Did she return on Tuesday night? No, sir, she did not. She never returned home again? Never. Had there been any demonstration against her in your sight or hearing? No, sir. Do you think that these threats weighed heavily on her mind? Yes, sir, I do very much. What was her mental condition? She was a very excitable woman, but not nervous. Did she say anything as to what she would do if the prosecution went on? She said two or three times that she would drown herself. Why did she say she would drown herself? She said, "Look at the disgrace it would bring upon yourself and your family". I replied, "Oh, don't think of that : you have done it and are bound to go through it". Is it your belief that the threats, with the possibility of the disgrace of exposure, so preyed upon her mind as to induce her to drown herself? Yes, and one or two things which the magistrates said to her. Has your wife's mind been peculiar since she organised these proceedings? Was she in fact a woman of weak mind? I have no reason to think she was. Having regard to the threats which were made towards your wife, have you claimed police protection for her? I asked her if I should, but she said, "Oh no, it will be all right". I went down to the police station on Monday night myself. By a jurymen : When you knew your wife had been threatened, why did you not accompany her to the police station? Why should I accompany her when she told me she would have police protection? Mary Lee, a little girl aged about ten years, daughter of the deceased, stated that when her mother was at the court on the previous Friday, a crowd of about a dozen persons who were waiting outside that station said very naughty words to her mother, and ran her down Victoria Road, along Clifton Street and Thomas Street, into Park Lane, where she took refuge in the house of a neighbour named Shaw. On Tuesday last witness accompanied her mother to the Police Court, and after the case was over they were let out of the station by the back way into Portland Street. They then went into Lichfield Road, where her mother, after giving her a halfpenny, kissed her, and told her to go home and take care of the baby. That was the last witness saw of the deceased. **John Higgins**, a boatman, stated that he was travelling with his boat along the canal about half past five on Tuesday afternoon, when the deceased accosted him, and asked if he would give her a drink of tea. He proffered her both food and drink, but she only accepted the tea, and asked him to give her a lift as far as the Ten Arches. She entered the boat, and left it at the bridge which carries the railway over the canal. While on the boat, she asked, "How deep is this water?" And on witness replying, "About seven feet", she enquired, "How long would a person be in sinking?" Witness answered, "Oh, they would go to the bottom at once : but I hope you are not going to do that kind of thing". Deceased replied, "Oh, no". During the time she was on the boat, deceased complained of her head, and said how poorly she felt. **Harry Haden**, toll clerk, said he recovered the body from*

the water near the top of Deakin's Avenue. Life was not extinct, but all efforts to restore animation were without avail. Inspector Hawkes, of the Aston constabulary, stated that the deceased came to the police station on Monday last, saying she had called to see if the case could not be withdrawn, as she was afraid it would get into the newspapers. Witness said all of it would probably not be in the papers. She said, "I shan't come", but witness informed her that Brown was in custody, and it was absolutely necessary that she should be present. She said, "Do you think they will put it in the papers? I will pay anything to keep it out". Witness was present in court on Tuesday and heard the deceased give her evidence. Coroner : How did she give her evidence? Witness : Very reluctantly. Proceeding, the officer denied that Lee claimed police protection, neither did she complain of having been threatened. In consequence of the crowd waiting outside to see Jones, the Sutherland Street murderer, deceased and her daughter left the police station by Portland Street. Witness heard of no hostile demonstration against the woman. Police-constable Harwell spoke to conveying the remains to the Yew Tree Inn. There was nothing on the body to lead to its identification. Mr E Buck, surgeon, of Aston Road, said he had made a *post mortem* examination of the remains and deceased was not *enceinte*. In summing up, the Coroner remarked that no doubt the poor woman, after having laid the information which resulted in the prosecution, wished to withdraw from the case, fearing the hostile demonstration of some persons and the probable publicity which the case would receive by means of the newspapers. This no doubt preyed upon her mind and caused her to commit the rash act which brought them there that day. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane".

**307 July 28 1888**

**Wolverhampton**

RECOGNITION OF BRAVERY On Thursday at the Police Court, the Mayor (Alderman Jos Jones) presented **William Booth Mycock**, a boatman on the Shropshire Union Canal, with a testimonial of the Royal Humane Society for having rescued a boy from drowning in the canal at Autherley Junction. In order that Mycock should not lose by his absence from work his worship also gave him a sovereign.

**308 July 31 1888**

**Tipton**

A DANGEROUS JOKE At the same (Police) Court, **Walter Arthur Selwood**, Lewis Street, a boatman, was charged with stealing a watch and chain, value £1, the property of Mrs Sarah Ann Cooper, of Horseley Heath. The prisoner had been lodging with the prosecutrix, and on 21<sup>st</sup> inst, the watch was on the chain in the bedroom. It was missed later in the day, and a man named Devison said prisoner offered the articles to him for 6s. When arrested Selwood denied the charge, but on being confronted with the articles he admitted the theft. He pleaded, however, that the articles were taken in fun, and that he intended to bring them back. He was committed for trial.

**309 August 3 1888**

**Birmingham Summer Assizes**

ACQUITTED **Edward Adams** (18), boatman, was indicted for stealing two shirts and a pair of boots from Patrick Needham, a labourer, with violence, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. Mr Bittlestone prosecuted. After hearing the evidence for the prosecution and a witness called for the defence, the jury acquitted prisoner, and he was discharged.

PLEADED GUILTY **Thomas Phillips** (17), boatman, and William Attwood (17), labourer, pleaded guilty to burglary. His Lordship said that he did not like to send boys to long terms of imprisonment. It was a very bad beginning to break into houses in the middle of the night, and could not be treated as a slight thing, or passed over without severe imprisonment. Attwood was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, with hard labour, and Phillips to eight months, with hard labour.

**310 August 15 1888**

**Oldbury**

CHARGE OF STEALING A HORSE Yesterday, at the Police Court, John Aston (33) alias Scambler, of Black Heath, labourer, and **Samuel Whitehouse** (19), of Hunt Street, boatman, were

charged with stealing a mare of the value of £4 belonging to Mary Hampton, of Whimsey Bridge, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. Herbert Hadley said on the day named he engaged Aston to take the mare to Wolverhampton market for the purpose of selling it. Witness met prisoner there, but as he could not dispose of the animal he told Aston to take it back to Oldbury, and Aston started with the horse in the direction of that place. He denied that he gave prisoner instructions to sell the horse. Joseph Sheldon stated that he heard prosecutor tell the prisoner Aston to take the horse back to Oldbury and put it in the field. John Beckett, of Wolverhampton, deposed that a man named Wilkinson bought the horse off the two prisoners for 27s, and he (witness) paid for it. They said they had been boating with it. Witness paid the money to Aston. Police-constable Cooper said when he arrested Aston he said he did not steal the mare, but it was given to him to sell. Police-sergeant Stanton also said the prisoner Aston said he was sent to sell the horse, but he admitted that he was guilty of sticking to the money. Whitehouse, who pleaded that the other prisoner asked him to accompany him when he sold the horse, and denied any guilty knowledge of the affair, was discharged. Aston was committed to the quarter sessions for trial.

**311 August 16 1888 Worcester**

**SUPPOSED SUICIDE BY DROWNING** About six o'clock yesterday morning a fisherman, named George Spires, while walking along the banks of the Severn, near the Distillery, found a bundle of clothes, a walking stick, and a hat, in which there was a note, reading as follows :- "The owner is in water. Could not live any longer. Aged 54. Forty years of great suffering". On the back of the note was the name, "William Shaw, Bradford". Information was given to the police, and the river was dragged by a boatman named **Fredk Smith**, who found the body within a short distance of the spot where the clothes were found. Deceased was a stranger to Worcester, no one knowing anything about him. He is about 5ft 7in, and has long brown hair, whiskers and moustache. He was dressed in a dark brown tweed suit, linen shirt (with turn down collar), a broad necktie, and black stockings. The body was removed to a mortuary.

**312 August 18 1888**

**ALLEGED MURDERS** At Whitchurch, yesterday, John Gallagher was committed for trial in a charge of attempting to murder **Aaron Thomas**, a boatman. Without the slightest provocation, prisoner, it is alleged, struck Thomas a fearful blow on the head with the handle of a windlass, causing an extensive wound, and was about to deal him another blow as he lay unconscious on the ground when the murderous instrument was wrested from him. The police subsequently found him in a field naked. Dr George said he could not tell whether prisoner was suffering from homicidal mania or alcoholic insanity. Prisoner, in answer to the charge, said he had killed Thomas for disobeying his orders.

**313 August 30 1888 Walsall**

**DEATH FROM THE KICK OF A HORSE** On Tuesday night **Thomas Dugmore** (50), boatman, Daisy Bank, Bilston, died at the Cottage Hospital from internal injuries caused by a horse having kicked him on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst.

**314 September 7 1888**

**GLEANINGS** Mr Clarke Aspinall held an inquest on Wednesday touching the death of **Wm Stephen Connolly**, a boatman, of 72 Leadenhall Street, Everton, who on Tuesday morning committed suicide by cutting open a vein in his leg, and afterwards hanging himself to the bedpost/ A verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane" was returned.

**315 October 13 1888 Wolverhampton**

**ALLEGED LARCENY** Yesterday, at the Police Court, **John Adams**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Harris Brothers, canal carriers, Brierley Hill, was committed to the sessions on a charge of larceny as bailee. It was alleged that the prisoner had exchanged a horsecloth belonging to his

employers for a boatline.

**316 November 17 1888**

WEST BROMWICH POLICE COURT **Francis Roper**, boatman, was sent to gaol for three months, with hard labour, for stealing 2s 9d, the money of William Lawrence, Whitehall Road. Prisoner was entrusted with the money to make some purchases, but he appropriated it to his own use.

**317 November 29 1888**

**Birmingham Police Court**

CHARGE OF ROBBING A TILL **Thomas Findon** (40), boatman, 22 Court, William Street, was charged with stealing a bag containing £2 3s 6d, the property of Henry Hobson, beerhouse-keeper, 80 Bath Row. On Tuesday afternoon prosecutor's wife saw the prisoner lying full length on the bar. He had in his hand the bag of money, which he had taken from a drawer. Police-constable Hinton was called in, and he arrested the prisoner, who on the way to the station remarked, "I suppose I shall have to go to the assizes, and I haven't had any of the brass". [Laughter] The prisoner had previously appeared before the magistrates, and he was committed for trial at the sessions.

**318 December 7 1888**

**Tunstall**

THEFT BY BOATMEN At the Stipendiary's Court, yesterday, **Benjamin Mincher**, boatman, and **George Roberts**, boat captain, in the employ of the Shropshire Union Company, were charged respectively with stealing and receiving a quantity of coal, the property of Messrs R Heath and Sons, coal and iron masters. The evidence showed that the previous night Police-constables Johnson and Whitehouse were on duty near the prosecutors' ironworks, at Ravensdale, when they saw a boat approach in charge of the prisoners, Mincher driving the horse and Roberts steering. As this boat came up to a number of laden coal boats at Messrs Heath's wharf Roberts steered alongside them, and Mincher getting on the coal boats handed four or five lumps of coal to Roberts, who took them on board his own craft. It was represented by an agent of the prosecutors that considerable loss was sustained by thefts of coal from boats during the night time. The Stipendiary said that so far as was known this was the first offence by the accused, otherwise he should certainly have sent them to prison. He imposed a fine of 20s upon each. **Arthur Grimes**, boatman, Middlewich, was also charged with stealing coal belonging to Messrs Heath and Sons. In this case the theft was committed the previous night, and the scene and circumstances were the same as in the previous case. A fine of 20s was also imposed on this defendant.

**319 December 21 1888**

**Birmingham Police Court**

A TROUBLESOME MENDICANT The cripple, **Ada Thay**, was placed in the dock charged with begging. It may be remembered that Police-constable Charles Price brought the girl before the court last Thursday, having found her asking alms on the previous night in Edmund Street. The girl has been arrested times out of number for mendicancy, but liberated on each occasion because her affliction prevented the magistrates sending her to a reformatory. A constable found her in the street early on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. She explained to him that her father insisted on her getting 3s a day, and, as she had only begged half that amount, she could not go home. A summons was issued against the father, who is a boatman. He attended the court yesterday, and the girl was discharged in order that she might tell her own story. She would not repeat what she had stated to the officer, but informed the Bench that she went out voluntarily to get sufficient to buy clothes. In the face of this the Bench were forced to dismiss the summons, there being no evidence to warrant a conviction.

**320 December 25 1888**

**Stoke-on-Trent**

DISTRESSING SUICIDE The police have reported to the coroner a distressing case of suicide. It appears that shortly after midnight on Saturday Annie Howell, wife of Mr E W Howell, sanitary inspector to the Stoke Town Council, who resides at the Sanitary Depot at the back of the Town Hall, left the house under the pretence of going into the back yard. As she remained an unusual

length of time, Mr Howell went to see what had become of her, but could not find her about the premises. The Newcastle branch of the Trent and Mersey canal runs at the back of the depot, and, hearing a noise as of someone struggling in the water, Mr Howell went there, and found his wife in the canal. He raised an alarm, and with the assistance of a boatman named **George Grainger**, the unfortunate woman was taken from the water, and carried to her house, where she was speedily attended by Dr McAldowie. Efforts to restore Mrs Howell proved unavailing, and, as she is said to have been strange in her habits of late, there is but little doubt that she committed suicide.

**321 January 7 1889**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**DRINK AGAIN John Murphy** (32), boatman, 4 Coventry Street, was charged on a warrant with stealing £1 13s, the moneys of Thomas King, coal dealer, Heneage Street. On the 16<sup>th</sup> September last the money was given to the accused by the prosecutor, his employer, to pay canal dues. The money was not paid, and he absconded next day, and was not arrested until Friday night, when Detective Clifton saw him in New Canal Street. On being charged he replied, "It is all right ; I did it for a drop of drink". He was sent to prison for six weeks, with hard labour.

**322 January 8 1889**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

**STEALING MONEY Thomas Findon** (41), boatman, and William Horton (42), slater, were indicted for stealing two bags containing £2 3s 6d, the money of Henry Hobson, on the 27<sup>th</sup> November. Mr Harter prosecuted. The prosecutor lives at the Queen Stores, Bath Row, and on the morning named the two prisoners went to the public house. They waited for about an hour, when the landlady was temporarily called from the bar. Hearing a noise the landlady returned, and saw Findon on the private side of the bar with the money-bags in his possession. The other prisoner was on the other side of the bar watching. Police-constable Hinton arrested Findon, who said that he and the other man had a quart or two after which in a joke he was pushed over the counter. When the other prisoner was arrested, he said he " had none of the brass, but supposed he would have to go to the assizes". Both prisoners were found guilty. Findon was sentenced to ten months imprisonment, with hard labour, and two years police supervision ; and Horton to six months and one years police supervision.

**323 February 1 1889**

**West Bromwich**

**ACTION TO RECOVER A DEPOSIT** At the Oldbury County Court yesterday, before his Honour Judge Griffiths, an action was brought by **Benjamin Stevens**, boatman, of Claypit Lane, West Bromwich, to recover £41 from Cornelius New, of Cross Street, West Bromwich, collector's carrier, the balance of a sum of money placed in the hands of the defendant's wife for safe custody. Mr W Shakespeare appeared for the plaintiff and Mr F W Topham defended. Mr Shakespeare explained that the defendant was the son-in-law of the plaintiff's first wife. Some time ago plaintiff sold a boat and horse for £50, of which money he deposited £45 with the defendant and his wife to take care of, but he could only get £4 of the money back again. For the defence, Mr Topham denied the liability of the husband; but the judge decided against him at that point. He then argued that all the money had been repaid with the exception of £6 15s 9d, and produced receipts. The Judge gave a verdict for plaintiff for that amount.

**324 February 11 1889**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** On Saturday the coroner (Mr Hawkes) held several inquests at his court, Moor Street. The first related to the death of **John Hemming** (54), boatman, whose body, as reported in the *Post*, was found in a canal boat last Thursday. According to the evidence given, deceased was an habitual drunkard, and was subject to fits. He was separated from his wife six months ago. Recently he became an inmate of the workhouse, and was sentenced to seven days imprisonment for refusing to do the task given him. He came out of gaol on Wednesday, and a fellow boatman named **Beresford** gave him 2d. The two men had some beer, but when deceased left his companion he was quite sober. The next morning Beresford, on going to his boat in the

canal near the Parade, found the deceased lying in the cabin. He was lying close to the stove, where there had been a fire, and his face was burned. There was a quantity of water in the boat. Mr Green, surgeon, of the Parade, said death was from the effects of a fit, or from drowning whilst in a fit. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**325 February 12 1889**

**Cannock**

POLICE COURT At this Court, yesterday, **James Checkley** (34), boatman, back of Granville Street, **Wm Lindon** (30), boatman, 22 Court, William Street, Birmingham, and Henry Evans were charged with stealing about 30s from the till at the Globe Inn, Hednesford, the property of Thomas Brindley, on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Prisoners called at the inn for refreshment, and were left in the room in which the till was while the landlord's daughter attended to another customer. On her return she missed the till, and the doors were kept fastened until the arrival of Police-constable Jeffreys. On searching Checkley the officer found 31s 6d in a purse, 13s 6d in loose silver, and 1s 3d in copper, and a number of checks and some keys which were identified by Mrs Brindley. The Bench discharged Evans, and the other prisoners, who reserved their defence, were committed to the sessions.

(See March 13 1889, where name is given as George Checkley)

**326 February 26 1889**

NEWS OF THE DAY Yesterday the Walsall magistrates sent **Thomas Smith**, a boatman, living at Smethwick, to prison for six weeks for the very callous brutality to a horse which was attached to his boat. The poor animal, which was in bad condition, fell on the canal towing-path on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup>, and was allowed to lie there in the snow and ice utterly uncared for, so far as the defendant was concerned, till Thursday night, when it was killed by the orders of a veterinary surgeon, who had been called in by the police. By that time it had beat out one of its eyes and gashed its legs, in its painful strugglings.

**327 February 27 1889**

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM Yesterday Mr Hawkes (coroner) held an inquest at his court, Moor Street, on the body of William Knight (59), glassblower, 32 Somerset Street. William Joseph Knight, the son, said that about twelve months ago his father left his employment at Messrs Gammon's, where he had worked for over thirty years. He left in consequence of shortness of work. About four months ago he obtained employment at Messrs Woodhall's, but he had given notice to leave. Several times deceased had complained about the hardness of the work he had to perform. He seemed to feel it very much that he should have to leave Messrs Gammon's. During the last few months deceased had seemed somewhat strange in his manner. Witness last saw his father on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant. **George Beresford**, boatman, Lander Street, said that he was at work on the canal at Nechells on Saturday morning, and saw the body of the deceased floating in the water. Police-sergeant Farmer said that he removed the body to the mortuary. He found no valuables or letters in deceased's pockets. It was stated that deceased did not return to his work after the 7<sup>th</sup> instant. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

**328 February 27 1889**

WORK AND WAGES Yesterday, at the Wednesbury Police Court, **William Wilcox**, boat-steerer, was summoned by his employer (John Wood, master boatman) for neglect of work, and damages to the amount of 18s 9d were claimed. Mr W S Smith appeared for the complainant. The evidence showed that the defendant was ordered to take a boat to the East Cannock Colliery, but instead of going he abandoned his situation, and put his master to losses to the amount claimed. His agreement with his master was for a week's notice either way. He was ordered to pay the amount claimed and costs, making a total of £1 4s 9d.

**329 March 13 1889****Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions**

STEALING A PUBLIC HOUSE TILL William Lindon (30), no occupation, and **George Checkley** (34), boatman, were charged with stealing a quantity of metal checks and 30s in money, the property of Thomas Brindley. Mr Kettle prosecuted. Prosecutor keeps the Grove Tavern, Hednesford, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> February the prisoners were in the public house. Prosecutor's wife had to leave the bar and go into a private parlour. When she returned she found that the till was gone. She had the men detained in the house, while someone went out and searched the premises, and the till was then found. Subsequently the prisoner Lindon pulled some money out of his pocket, and said, "You can't swear to this". Checkley also pulled out some money, amongst which were some of the checks, which Mrs Brindley identified as theirs. Checkley pleaded guilty. The Chairman ruled that there was no evidence to connect Lindon with the theft, and he directed the jury to acquit him. Checkley had been many times previously convicted, and he was sentenced to seven years penal servitude.

(Note February 12 1889 – name given as James Checkley)

**330 March 20 1889****Rushall**

FOUND DROWNED Yesterday, Mr Hooper (coroner) held an inquest, at the Royal Oak Inn, on the body of **Jane Hill** (24), wife of a boatman living at the Radleys, Daw End. It seemed that on Friday evening she was missed from her home, and a bucket being missed too, it was surmised that she had gone to the canal for water and had fallen in, the fact that a brick had disappeared from the coping of the canal strengthening the surmise. The neighbours accordingly dragged the canal, and soon came upon the body. The deceased's husband had not been with her for a fortnight, and he was away from Daw End at the time. Verdict, "Found drowned".

**331 March 26 1889****Walsall**

DESERTION OF FAMILY At the Guildhall yesterday, **David Street**, boatman, Pleck Road, was charged with deserting his wife and family on the 18<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Brinsley, relieving officer, proved the charge, and said that £1 6s had been expended in the maintenance of the family. The accused pleaded guilty, and offered to pay 5s per week. The Bench thought, however, that the defendant deserved exemplary punishment, and sentenced him to twenty one days imprisonment with hard labour. There was a warrant against him on another charge.

**332 April 17 1889**

AN OFFENCE WITHOUT A CRIMINAL REMEDY At the Wednesbury Police Court, yesterday, **Edward Bowdler**, a boatman, was charged with embezzling £3, the moneys of George Griffiths, licensed victualler and canal carrier, Ocker Hill. Mr W S Smith, who appeared for the prosecution, said the prisoner was engaged by the prosecutor to take a boat to London, and was paid his wages at the time, but after all he did not go. It was a most peculiar case ; the man could not be charged with a larceny, and he (Mr Smith) feared it was a case for which the law gave no criminal remedy. Under these circumstances the prisoner was discharged.

**333 May 1 1889****Oldbury**

WASTING WATER At the Police Court, yesterday, **Samuel Hackett**, boatman, Stone Street, Tat Bank, for wasting water belonging to the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company, in going through a lock, was fined 10s and costs, or in default seven days imprisonment.

**334 May 13 1889****Birmingham Police Court**

SOON PARTED Sarah Jones (40), umbrella-mender, 248 Windsor Street, and Sarah Hughes (22), of the same address, were charged with stealing £7 16s, the moneys of **Thomas Beasley**, boatman, of Richard Street. Prosecutor stated that he met the prisoners on Friday in Richard Street. He was driving a cart. The accused accepted his invitation to go with him to a bank in Colmore Row, where he cashed a cheque for £7 17s. They all three went to the prisoners' house, where he indulged freely

in beer, and went to sleep. When he awoke, about an hour afterwards, he found, to his great surprise that he had been robbed of all his money. He soon afterwards came upon the prisoners drinking in a neighbouring public house, and when accused of the theft they ran away, but were soon captured by Detective Brown. Prisoners were remanded until Wednesday, in order to get further evidence.

**335 May 16 1889**

**Birmingham Police Court**

CASES FOR THE SESSIONS Alice Jones, alias Wadhams (41), 284 Windsor Street, umbrella-mender, under police supervision, and Sarah Hughes (22) alias Craddock, of the same address, general servant were charged on remand with stealing about £7 from the person of a man named **Thomas Beasley**, boatman, of Richard Street. On the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, a “row” took place at the corner of Lawley Street. Complainant was among the crowd, and also the prisoner Alice Jones. Police-sergeant Hart stated that he saw the disturbance, and heard the prisoner Jones say that a man who appeared to be running away from the scene of the conflict had been robbing the “old man” - meaning complainant. Hart, however, did not avail himself of her information, and afterwards Beasley gave the woman Jones into custody on the suspicion that she was the guilty party. Sarah Hughes was arrested by Inspector Thomas on the morning of Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. The Stipendiary committed both prisoners to the sessions.

[\(relates to article above dated 13 March 1889, but names slightly different\)](#)

**336 May 18 1889**

**West Bromwich Police Court**

THEFT FROM SANDWELL PARK COLLIERY **John Giles** (40), boatman, of Blews Street, Spring Hill, and **Richard Owen** (17), boatman, of Clissold Street, Birmingham, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of the Sandwell Park Colliery, on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, of the value of 4d. It appeared that the coal was taken off a boat belonging to the company by the defendants whilst they were passing along the canal in another boat. They were each fined 23s, including costs, or seven days imprisonment.

WASTING CANAL WATER **Albert Whitehouse** (26), boatman, of Abergele Buildings, Wharf Lane, Soho, for wasting canal water at the Ryder's Green Locks, was fined 34s, including costs, or in default fourteen days hard labour.

**337 May 20 1889**

THE SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A GIRL AT WILLENHALL On Saturday Mr E B Thorneycroft (deputy coroner) held an adjourned inquest at the Forge Tavern, Spring Bank, Willenhall, in the case of Ann Burton (17), a servant in the employ of Mr Williams, the Manor, Willenhall, who was found dead in the canal, at Spring Bank, on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. At the previous enquiry it was deposed that on Sunday night the girl left a man named Williams, with whom she had been walking, to go to her grandmother's, and that subsequently a woman's cries were heard proceeding from near the canal in which the body was found. Evidence was given as to the discovery of the body, and Hannah Handley, a domestic servant, was then called. She deposed that the deceased had told her that she had broken a large jug and hurt her mistress's little girl and was afraid of a scolding. She also said she had been threatened with dismissal if she stayed out late again. **James Barnfield**, boatman, said that at midnight on May 5 he was in his boat near the Furnace Yard, Willenhall, and heard a woman's screams and cries of “Murder”. They seemed at first to come from the towpath. Witness took no notice, as he frequently heard screams of that kind. He heard no footstep and no splash, but whilst the woman was screaming he heard the laughter and shouting of men in another direction. John Fellows stated that at midnight on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst he was with some companions in Spring Lane and shouted to them, “Come on“. This evidence was used to explain the origin of the cry in a man's voice testified to by the policeman who heard the woman's screams. Testimony was also adduced to show that the young man Williams, with whom the girl went for a walk, was at his home more than an hour before the time of the occurrence. Mr Tonks, surgeon, described the result of a *post mortem* examination which he had made. Death, said he, was decidedly not the result of

drowning, but of shock. The shock might have been caused by sudden fright upon the girl's finding herself in the water, or she might have been stunned before she entered it. The deceased had not breathed whilst in the water. She might possibly have got into the canal without taking water into the breathing organs, have screamed, and died from the shock. Wm Brown stated that he heard a woman's screams on the canal side on the Sunday night, and the sound of someone calling "Bill". Afterwards he heard the words, "Oh Lord! Oh, Lord!" He ran to the place, but found nothing. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased was found dead in the canal, but that there was no evidence to show how she got there.

**338 May 23 1889**

**SHOCKING OUTRAGE BY ROUGHS** A brutal piece of ruffianism on the part of a large number of men and boys is the subject of investigation by the Birmingham police. Elizabeth Littlewood, a friendless woman, of about thirty seven years of age, who was for a short time in domestic service in Canal Street, was passing along the towpath of the canal between Fazeley Street and Ashted on Monday evening. She appears to have been the worse for drink. A number of loungers seized her, threw her down, and tore off nearly all her clothes, which they threw into the canal. In the presence of a crowd of about a hundred persons, her assailants treated her in a most insulting and disgraceful manner. A boatman, named **Samuel Smith**, who was endeavouring to make his way through the crowd, was also set upon, and received several blows on the head from stones and belt buckles. He managed, however, to get to the nearest lock, and the lock-keeper went to the rescue of the woman, but was driven off by the roughs. Another lock-keeper went for the police, but when he returned with an officer the roughs had fled. The woman was taken to a neighbouring house and provided with clothing, and she is now being taken care of by the police. Smith, who is forty seven years of age, and lives at Fazeley Street Wharf, was taken to the General Hospital. He is suffering from a scalp wound and several cuts and bruises about the face. A stone had struck him so heavily on the right side of the face that, till he was examined at the hospital, it was thought that his jaw was broken. No arrests have yet been made. Detective-superintendent Black has the case in hand.

**339 June 12 1889**

**GLEANINGS** The Manchester Stipendiary yesterday committed for trial **Richard Wright**, boatman, on a charge of manslaughter. The prisoner quarrelled on Saturday night with another man named Charles Russell, and whilst they were both under the influence of drink they engaged in a severe fight, which was terminated by Russell being knocked down. In falling down his head struck a step, and he sustained injuries which resulted in his death the following morning.

**340 June 25 1889**

**Wolverhampton**

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS** **Noah George**, boat owner, Eagle Street, was fined £2 and costs for allowing a horse to be worked whilst in an unfit state ; and **Henry Smith**, boatman, who had driven the animal, was fined 5s and costs.

**341 June 27 1889**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**A WARNING TO BOATMEN** **Thomas Chatwin**, boatman, of Sheepecote Street, was summoned for emptying rubbish into the canal. The defendant, who was in charge of a boat filled with nightsoil, emptied a portion into the canal near Rotton Park Street, in order to lighten the boat. The magistrates said the offence was a most serious one, and defendant was liable to a fine of £5 and costs ; but as this was his first offence, he would be let off with a fine of 5s and costs.

**342 June 29 1889**

**Aston Police Court**

**ASSAULT ON A BOATMAN** Alfred Simpson, brasscaster, Tower Street, Birmingham, was charged with assaulting **Henry Parsonage**, boatman, of 282 Lichfield Road. On Monday last, as the prosecutor was passing down Thimble Mill Lane, he was assaulted by a number of youths, including one named Pimm, and the prisoner. He was beaten about the head and body with a

buckle, and was compelled to seek refuge in a private house to avoid being further injured. Pimm was brought before the court on Tuesday last, and dealt with, and Simpson was arrested on a warrant in the city by Police-constable Jackson on the same day. There were a large number of previous convictions against the prisoner, and he was sentenced to two months imprisonment, with hard labour.

### **343 July 2 1889**

**THROWING A BOY INTO THE CANAL** Yesterday afternoon a boatman named **David Marlow**, aged twenty two, and residing at 2 Fazeley Street, was arrested on a charge of throwing **William Clifford**, aged seventeen, into the Birmingham and Warwick Canal. It is stated that on Sunday morning Clifford borrowed a shirt belonging to Marlow. This did not come to Marlow's knowledge until yesterday, when he was so annoyed that on meeting Clifford near the Fazeley Street Bridge he took hold of the youth and threw him into the canal. Clifford managed to scramble out, and several men who saw the occurrence seized Marlow and handed him over to two policemen. Marlow, who is a powerfully built man, became exceedingly violent, and a severe struggle took place before he could be lodged in Duke Street police station. Two young fellows who assisted the police were injured. Police-constable Thomas had his finger bitten, and a man named Round was so severely kicked by the prisoner that he had to have his arm dressed at the General Hospital.

### **344 July 3 1889**

**FIRE AT OLDBURY – A GALLANT BOATMAN** Early yesterday morning a fire broke out in a house occupied by a man named William Harbutt, on the canal side, near Lodge Street, Oldbury, and was only prevented from being attended with fatal consequences by the brave conduct of a boatman named **Benjamin Taylor**, in the employ of Mr Hickman of Brierley Hill. It appears that Taylor and his wife were in a boat on the opposite side of the canal, and shortly after midnight they were alarmed by hearing cries for help. Hurrying out of their boat they saw that a fire had broken out in the front bedroom of a house on the opposite side. Taylor and his wife ran over a bridge close to, and in a few seconds reached the house, which by this time was filled with smoke. Mrs Harbutt, who had two children sleeping with her, the husband being at work, was either overcome by the smoke, or so terrified that she was powerless to render any help to her children. Taylor, after some difficulty, obtained access to the house, and rushing upstairs through the smoke he, at considerable personal risk, succeeded in rescuing Mrs Harbutt and her two children, one of them a baby. Having rescued the inmates, Taylor afterwards extinguished the flames. The bedclothing and a quantity of Mrs Harbutt's clothes were destroyed. The fire, it is thought, originated through a spark from a candle falling upon a table cover. Last night, at the Parochial Offices, New Street, the vicar (Rev W T Taylor) presented Taylor with a sum of money, as a reward for his brave and prompt conduct in saving the lives of the three persons referred to above.

### **345 July 3 1889**

#### **Birmingham Police Court**

**THROWING A BOY INTO THE CANAL** **David Marlow**, boatman, was charged with throwing a boat boy, named **William Clifford**, into the canal. Prosecutor said that he was driving a horse along the canal, near Bagot Street, on Monday afternoon. Prisoner came up and made use of threats, and ultimately threw witness into the water, kicking him as he fell. The only reason witness could give for the assault was that he put prisoner's shirt on by mistake on Sunday morning. Witness could swim, but the weight of his clothes caused him to sink. A man assisted witness out of the water. Prisoner said he wanted to help witness out, but he swam away. When he spoke to witness he said he would not strike him, but would put him in the water. Police-constable Thorne said he went to the canal side with Police-sergeant Grimes, and told prisoner he would have to go to the lock up. Prisoner became very violent, and when informed he would be charged with throwing the lad into the water, said, "And a ---- good job if it had drowned him". Prisoner struck witness and bit his hand. A boy who was near stooped to pick up witness's helmet, and prisoner kicked him on the face. In defence, prisoner said he had missed his shirt, and finding that prosecutor had taken

it, he informed him that he would not “Clout him but throw him in the water”. He wanted to help prosecutor out of the water, but he would not let him. Prisoner was sent to gaol for six weeks.

**346 July 5 1889**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**METAL ROBBERIES** Richard Hall (17), printer, Fazeley Street ; Michael Malley (16), brass filer, New Canal Street ; **William Lodge** (16), boatman, Victoria Terrace, Westbury Street ; George Woodbridge (16), filer, Great Bartholomew Street ; and William Clark (16), brass filer, Bordesley Street, were charged with stealing 3 cwt of lead from the roof of the cattle shed of the London and North-Western Railway Company, Curzon Street. In consequence of information which Inspector Sturge received, he stationed several of the company's officers at the cattle shed on Wednesday night. Shortly after ten o'clock Marriott, Slattery, Michael and Porter saw the prisoners approach the shed and scramble on to the roof. They at once began to strip the lead off. Having collected about 3 cwt, and done damage to the extent of £20, they descended. Police-constable Hemming (84D) caught two, but the others took to the canal. They leaped into the water with their clothing on, but some time afterwards the others were captured. They were sent to gaol for two months.

**347 July 9 1889**

**Wolverhampton**

**ALLEGED CRUELTY TO ANIMALS** **William Peters**, boatman, Broad Lanes, was charged with working a lame horse, but this case was adjourned for a week in order that further evidence might be obtained.

**348 July 16 1889**

**Herefordshire Assizes**

**A BRAVE BOATMAN** Yesterday afternoon Mr D R Wynter (coroner for Central Warwickshire) held an inquest at the Erdington Arms, Gravelly Hill, touching the death of Samuel North (8), son of William North, 213 Park Lane, whose body was found in the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal on Saturday. The deceased, with a number of other boys, was fishing in the canal on Saturday morning, when he overbalanced himself, and fell into the water. Deceased's brother, Arthur, aged 11, was about to go to his brother's rescue, but in consequence of the depth of the water, was prevented from doing so by a boatman named **Bullock**, who bravely jumped into the canal, and but for the arrival of Police-constable Jackson would inevitably have been drowned. The constable subsequently saw the body of the lad floating in the water, and with Bullock's assistance removed it from the canal to the Erdington Arms. In summing up, the Coroner referred to the gallant conduct of the man Bullock, and felt some of the jury would join with him in saying that his attempt to rescue the lad was an act which reflected very creditably on himself. The jury concurred with the coroner's observations and returned a verdict of “Accidental death”.

**349 July 16 1889**

**Wolverhampton**

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS** At the Police Court, yesterday, George Willcocks, Walsall Street, was fined 20s and costs for beating and overdriving a horse. **William Peters**, boatman, Broad Lane, Bilston, was fined 10s for working a horse that was lame.

**350 July 16 1889**

**Tipton**

**CRUELTY TO A MULE** At the same (Police) court, **George Millward**, boatman, Hill Top, was charged with working a mule which had upon it several open sores. Police-constable Turner proved the case, and the defendant was fined 15s 6d, including costs.

**351 July 24 1889**

**Rugby**

**PETTY SESSIONS** **William Wilkinson**, boatman, Bedworth, pleaded guilty to using a net and taking fish in the canal, at Brownsover, but said he did not know he was doing wrong, as he was allowed to fish in some places. The magistrates believing the defendant had acted in ignorance only asked him to pay the costs, 12s 6d.

**352 July 25 1889**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**A CURIOUS CASE Richard Foster** (19), boatman, Pritchett Street, was charged with receiving a pair of trousers, for the theft of which another man, named Moses Chambers (20), labourer, of Oxford Street, was committed to the sessions on Saturday. On the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, a pair of trousers was stolen from the shop door of Mary Ann Shead, of Stafford Street. The prosecutrix's niece saw the theft committed, and positively identified the man Chambers as the thief. Chambers, however, denied it, and setting up an alibi, called two returned convicts to support him. The magistrates (Sir Thomas Martineau, Alderman Avery and Mr J D Goodman) decided to send the case before a jury at the sessions. During Sunday Chambers's mother pointed Foster out to Detective-sergeant Clifton, and said, "There is Dicky Clark, who stole the trousers which he is wearing now". Clifton asked, "Is that right". Foster replied, "Yes". He was wearing the stolen trousers and persisted in being held responsible for the theft. He could not tell whether he took them on the Wednesday or Thursday, but he professed to know the date exactly. The prosecutrix's niece stated that Foster was not the man she saw running away with the stolen property. Prisoner was brought before Mr A Chamberlain on Tuesday. His story was disbelieved, and after his discharge Clifton, acting under magisterial advice, apprehended him again on a charge of receiving the trousers knowing them to have been stolen. Mrs Shead's niece now said she was sure Foster was not the man. The Stipendiary remarked that it was a most unsatisfactory case, and sent Foster to the sessions.

**353 July 26 1889**

**ALLEGED EXTENSIVE ROBBERY OF IRON** At West Bromwich (Borough) Police Court yesterday, **Thomas Wilcox** (27), boatman, of Price Street, Smethwick ; Henry Walker (30), labourer, Lewisham Road, Smethwick ; and John Russell (18) of Bratt Street, West Bromwich, were charged with stealing about 50 cwt of pig iron, the property of Samuel Rabone, canal carrier, of West Bromwich, on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst ; and Samuel Hassall (35), labourer, Paradise Street, West Bromwich, scrap iron dealer, and John Russell of Bratt Street, were charged with receiving the iron, knowing it to have been stolen. Mr Plant appeared for the defence of Russell and Hassall. Police-sergeant Ainsworth stated that on Monday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst, he visited the premises of Russell, and found above two tons of pig iron concealed under some old bags. It was marked "P G Lincoln". John Russell said he had bought it from some boatmen, whose names he did not know, but who represented that they had found it. Hassall, who had also been arrested, said he went with John Russell on Saturday and fetched the iron from near the canal, near the Delves, and three boatmen loaded it for them. On the same day (Monday) Wilcox and Walker were apprehended by the Smethwick police, and were charged with stealing iron from a boat lying in the canal near Moorwood's Works, the property of the prosecutor. Prisoners said they knew nothing about it. Yesterday Isaac Russell surrendered himself to the police, and pleaded not guilty to the charge. The prisoners were remanded for a week, on the application of Superintendent Whitehurst. An application for bail made by Mr Plant was opposed by Mr Whitehurst, who considered that the ends of justice would be best served if bail was refused. Ultimately the Bench accepted bail for all the defendants.

**354 August 3 1889**

**Wolverhampton**

**ASSAULT ON A WIFE Henry Turton**, boatman, Grenville Street, was yesterday, at the Police Court, sentenced to a months hard labour for an assault on his wife. Mr Willcock, who prosecuted, said the parties had been married sixteen years. The defendant came home drunk and thrashed his wife severely.

**355 August 3 1889**

**DROWNING CASES** Last night Mr F N Topham (deputy coroner) held an inquest at Smethwick Police Court, respecting the death of Thomas Darby (26), of Chatwin Street, who was found drowned in the Birmingham Canal, near Bridge Street, Smethwick, yesterday morning. Mrs Jones, mother of the deceased, stated that he left home about two o'clock on Thursday, and she understood

that he was going to the Navigation Inn. There was no reason to suppose that deceased had committed suicide. One of his legs was amputated some years ago. Deceased was subject to fits when under the influence of beer. William Baker, landlord of the Old Navigation Inn, said deceased left his house about eleven o'clock on Thursday night, and was then sober. **Joseph Turner**, boatman, said, about four o'clock yesterday morning, he found two crutches and a hat belonging to the deceased in a lock near the Navigation Inn, Bridge Street, and shortly afterwards the body of deceased was recovered. There being no evidence to show how deceased got into the water, the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**356 September 12 1889**

**SUPPOSED INFANTICIDE AT TIVIDALE** Yesterday, Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Boat Inn, Tividale, concerning the death of a newly-born female child, whose body was found on an embankment near to the Globe Ironworks, Tividale, on Monday. **James Jones** said that on the day mentioned he was on a boat which was proceeding out of Messrs Round's basin near the Seven Stars Bridge, and when passing under the bridge a boatman called his attention to a parcel which he had found underneath a wall of the Seven Stars Bridge. Witness opened one corner of the parcel, and found that it contained the body of a child. He noticed that the paper was torn, and he believed that it was done by rats. The parcel might have been dropped over the wall on to the ground from the main road. Police-constable Winfield said that about two o'clock on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, from information he had received, he went to the Seven Stars Bridge, and saw a parcel lying about two feet from the canal. The parcel contained the body of a child, wrapped up in a piece of shirt and brown paper, tied with thick string. There were no marks of violence upon the body. There was no writing or any marks upon the paper or shirt that would give a clue to the identification of the child. The Coroner: Can you account for a piece of the foot being missing? The officer replied that he was of opinion that a piece of the left foot had been gnawed away by rats. The jury considered the inquest should be adjourned, in order to have a *post mortem* examination made. The inquest was accordingly adjourned until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October.

**357 September 20 1889**

**West Bromwich**

**THEFT OF BALL IRON** At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Lees, Field, Sutcliffe, Ryland and Blades, **Thomas Edward Booker** (18), boatman, and **Charles Reynolds** (23), boatman, both of Tipton, were charged with stealing 1 1/2 cwt of ball iron, valued at 5s, the property of Samuel Downing. Mr W Shakespeare prosecuted, and Mr A Whitehouse defended. From the evidence it appeared that the men were engaged in loading a boat at Messrs Downing's Richmond Ironworks, when some ball iron was missed. Police-sergeant Bakewell traced the boat to Messrs Roberts's works, Tipton, and upon it being unloaded the iron was discovered in the centre of a boat. The Bench fined each prisoner 20s and costs, or in default one months imprisonment.

**358 October 11 1889**

**Wolverhampton**

**CHARGE OF STABBING** At the Police Court, **Henry Riley**, canal boatman, was yesterday charged with unlawfully wounding his wife Mary. The prosecutrix said that she had been married to her husband for eleven years. On the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, she had a quarrel with him in the boat. He knocked her down, and then struck her on the cheekbone with a knife. He said he would kill her if she did not start the boat to work. Prisoner admitted that he had "set about" his wife, but denied that he had used a knife. Mr Lockwood, from the hospital, deposed that the prosecutrix had been admitted into that institution suffering from a wound below the right eye, which had been evidently caused by a sharp instrument. Police-sergeant Powell said that when he arrested the prisoner he found in the cabin of the boat a knife with which the prosecutrix said he had inflicted the wound. The prisoner was committed to the Sessions. His wife refused to be bound over to prosecute until she had been told that otherwise she would be kept in custody.



he used to kill seabirds, shot his wife in the back of the neck as she was lying in bed, causing her death. Then he went downstairs and gashed his throat with a razor in a determined manner, severing the windpipe. He then went into the garden, leaned over the wall, and called Mrs Davies, the next door neighbour. The police were called in and found the woman upstairs with a hole the size of an egg in her neck, the gun, with two empty cartridges in the barrels, being in the same room. It is believed, however, that only one charge was fired at the unfortunate woman. The man was removed to the Infirmary, where he received attention, but he expired during the afternoon. The husband is described as a quiet orderly man, and the wife as a hard working woman. A melancholy incident was that another married sister came from Cwmbran, a village seven miles distant, to see her sister and do shopping, little dreaming that a tragedy had occurred. There seems to be no doubt that jealousy was the cause of the crime, and it is asserted that the mother and elder sister had counselled the two to part, the former having invited her daughter to return home. In the same row of houses a man named Flavin kicked his wife to death two years since, and two other crimes involving death have occurred within five or six years within 100 yards of the spot.

**364 November 21 1889 Warwick**

A BOY DROWNED A boy named Higgs, son of **John Higgs**, boatman, of Whittington, was missed by his friends on Monday evening. Every enquiry was made after him, and ultimately his father, fearing that he was in the canal, began to drag the water. He found his son's body in a lock not far from his home.

**365 December 5 1889 Cannock**

PETTY SESSIONS **Richard Evans**, boatman, was fined 30s, including costs, for stealing coal, valued at 8d, from a boat belonging to T and C Wells, of Moxley, of which he had charge, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst.

**366 December 16 1889 Warwick**

A BOY DROWNED On Saturday last an inquest was held at the Cape public house on the body of **Alfred Dorsett** (13), of Havelock Road, near Southall, who was drowned in the canal on the previous night. The deceased was engaged on a barge belonging to Messrs Clayton, Fellows and Morton, of Birmingham, of which his brother-in-law (**Edward Smith**) was in charge. The lad went on ahead to open the lock gate near Ugly Bridge, and when Smith called to him he got no answer. Thinking that an accident had happened, he groped about in the water with his boathook, but did not succeed in finding the body until he was assisted by another boatman named **George Earle**. Dr Miller, the superintendent of the asylum, was sent for, but life was extinct. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**367 December 17 1889**

FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE FOG The visitation of the Potteries by a fog of extraordinary density on Saturday has, it appears from reports received by the police, been attended by several cases of drowning. A boatman named **Theobald** was returning from Runcorn to his home at Stoke, and seems to have been anxious to reach his destination. After passing through Sandyford lock he remained in charge of the horse, while his wife, aged twenty seven years, went on in advance to prepare the next lock for the reception of their boat. The fog was so dense that the horse walked into the canal, and some time elapsed before Theobald could get it on to the towing-path again. In the meantime his wife must have fallen into the water, for on arriving at the next lock he could not see or hear anything of her. The body of Mrs Theobald was subsequently recovered from the canal.

**368 December 17 1889 Staffordshire Assizes**

OBTAINING A HORSE BY A TRICK Stephen Wood, hawker (on bail), was charged with stealing a horse, value £10, the property of **Charles William Wall**, at Lichfield, on October 18. Mr Buddam prosecuted. The prosecutor, who is a boatman living at Alrewas, bought a horse at an

auction sale at Lichfield, and afterwards took it to a hotel in that city. The prisoner came there after him, and arranged to buy the horse from him. They went into the hotel, and at prisoner's request prosecutor made out a receipt for £10, the amount arranged to be paid for the animal. The receipt read, "Bought brown cob of C W Wall, at £10. Received £1". The receipt bore a stamp, but it was not cancelled. Wood paid £1, and asked prosecutor to accompany him to the Smithfield, where he said he would pay him the remaining £9. On the way to the Smithfield prisoner asked to be allowed to get on the horse's back. Prosecutor consented, but held the bridle. Suddenly, however, prisoner snatched the bridle out of his hand and then galloped away. He was followed to Birmingham, and arrested at 32 Summer Hill Street, by Detective Taylor. Prisoner then said that he had bought the horse, and was willing to pay for it as soon as he had the money. Wall could not get blood out of a stone. Mr Kettle submitted that the transaction was a bona fide one, and that the prisoner intended to pay for the horse when he had sold it. His Lordship said that the trick was a very old one, and it had been held, as long as two centuries back, that it was a theft to obtain anything by a trick. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and his lordship, in sentencing him to six months hard labour, said that if the prisoner had stolen the horse from a field in an honest way, so to speak, his offence would not have been so bad, but he had tried to defeat the law by a trick.

### 369    December 24 1889

**MURDEROUS ASSAULT WITH A HATCHET** At the Birmingham Police Court yesterday, before Mr T M Colmore (stipendiary), an old man named Henry Dunn, 1 Court, 5 house, Severn Street, was charged with assaulting **Joseph Footman**, 36, boatman. Footman, who is a native of Gloucester, is at present an in-patient at the Queen's Hospital, suffering from a fractured skull. John Footman, the brother of the injured man, and his wife have for some time lodged at the house of Dunn, and on Saturday night at about ten o'clock, Joseph paid them a visit. He had evidently been drinking during the day, and was in a rather quarrelsome mood. Matters, however, passed off pleasantly enough for about half an hour, and then it was suggested that the visitor should remain in the house and, as the accommodation upstairs was limited, that he should lie on the sofa in the living room. This course was agreed all the way round. Almost immediately afterwards, however, a quarrel arose between Dunn and Joseph Footman. What it originated about is not clear, but Dunn states that Footman became very violent, knocked some crockery-ware and the lamp off the table, and behaved in a threatening manner towards him. Dunn then went to the cupboard, took out an axe, and struck Footman with it on the forehead. At this time there were present in the room five persons, but as neither of these thought that Dunn intended to use the axe, but that he took hold of it to frighten Footman, no attempt was made to force it from him. The victim of the assault was rendered unconscious and bled profusely from the wound on the forehead. He was taken by his brother to the Queen's Hospital. At that time Police-constables Price and Harris were engaged at the hospital in getting information with respect to another assault which had been committed during the day. The officers, on learning what had occurred, at once proceeded to the house of Dunn, in Severn Street, reaching there at about a quarter to eleven. The accused was there, and they told him that they should take him into custody. He then explained that he had been first assaulted by Footman, and that he had used the axe in self defence. Price went to the cupboard and there found a small axe. The accused, seeing what he had found, said, "It was not with that; it was with the large one". He added that Footman had knocked him into the corner and assaulted him before he retaliated. He was afterwards taken to Moor Street and locked up. The weapon with which the assault was committed is used for trimming timber. It is very heavy, and Dunn evidently did not use much force or he must have smashed the skull of his antagonist. The injured man is a powerfully built fellow, whilst his assailant is a cripple and is sixty four years of age. The latter has worked for Mr Amos Roe for forty years. He is stated to be an inoffensive and quiet man. Mr Hooper, who represented the prisoner, applied for bail, and his application was supported by Mr Amos Roe, who gave the prisoner an excellent character. Mr Colmore declined to grant bail until he should receive satisfactory assurance that the victim is out of danger. Prisoner was eventually remanded for a week.

**370 January 7 1890**

**Wolverhampton**

**THROWING A BOY IN THE AIR** At the Police Court yesterday, **Evan Humphreys**, a boatman, was fined 20s and costs, or a months hard labour, for being drunk and disorderly and assaulting a little boy, seven years of age, by throwing him up into the air, letting him fall on the ground, and rolling him in the mud. The defence was that the boy had been throwing stones at him.

**371 January 8 1890**

**Aston Police Court**

**EXPENSIVE FUEL** **Job Wilkins**, boatman, Landor Street, Saltley, was fined 21s, including costs, for stealing 50lb of coal from the Birmingham Junction Canal on the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant. The coal was taken from the canal side.

**372 January 29 1890**

**THE POLICE AND THE ROUGHS – RESPONSIBILITY OF ONLOOKERS** At the Birmingham Police Court yesterday, before Mr T M Colmore (stipendiary), **John McLoughlin** (22), boatman, Sheep Street ; **James McLoughlin** (26), labourer, court, Bagot Street ; and **Edward Taylor** (37), boatman, Adam Street, were charged with assaulting the police. On Monday night the first named prisoner, who had been drinking heavily, became quarrelsome in the Junction Inn, Dartmouth Street. Police-sergeant Leaside was called upon to interfere, and tried to persuade him to go away quickly, but he persisted in making himself aggressive. The great inducement for him to remain was a meeting of boatmen, who were discussing the wages question, and arguing upon the chances of a strike. The officer caught hold of him eventually, and he “fought like mad” for liberty. His companions aided him by assaulting and hampering the police. The prisoner was got as far as Aston Road, and the police took shelter in the Albion Ironworks. James McLoughlin and the man Taylor followed them in. The first named took up a bar of iron, and threatened to dash the sergeant's brains out. His murderous looking weapon was wrested from him, however, and he was handcuffed. Taylor intimated that he was determined the men should not be apprehended. He tried to effect their rescue, but in turn was captured, Police-sergeant Leaside was in the box referring to the violent attitude of the crowd, when the Stipendiary said, “I see in the newspapers that the riot in Digbeth was witnessed by 500 people. Are you aware that you can call on any of the bystanders in the name of the Queen, to assist you?” Witness : Yes, sir. The Stipendiary : I should certainly do so, because they can be punished if they refuse. Inspector Hall (dock keeper) : I think the police thoroughly understand that they have power to call on people for help, but there is always some difficulty in fixing a person who refuses. If they could be found and identified afterwards they would be proceeded against. Taylor was fined 20s, in default one months imprisonment, and the other two were given fourteen days as an alternative of paying 10s and costs.

**373 January 30 1890**

**Worcester**

**A DOUBLE ASSAULT** At the City Police Court yesterday, **Walter Smith**, boatman, Hylton Street, was summoned for assaulting **Robert Bryan**, boatman, on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Bentley appeared for the complainant, and Mr Tree for the defendant. On the day named defendant, who had no business there, went to complainant's boat and kicked complainant on the top of the head, inflicting a wound, for the treatment of which he had to go to the Infirmary. Defendant was also charged with assaulting Samuel Bryan, a brother of the other complainant, at the same time and place. He was fined 10s in each case, and costs, making £2 18s 6d in all.

**374 January 30 1890**

**Wolverhampton**

**A SHOOTING CASE** At the Police Court yesterday, Henry Whaplinton, Darlaston, was charged with shooting **William Peabody**, boatman, Smethwick. Prosecutor stated that as he was in a canal boat, proceeding in the direction of Herbert's Park Works, Darlaston, he met the prisoner, who was carrying a gun, and who was walking on the towing-path. He observed to prisoner in passing, “Don't have any bother, governor”. Nothing further was said, but immediately afterwards the

prosecutor, on looking round, saw the prisoner pointing the gun towards him, which he afterwards fired. Prosecutor, however, was fortunately not seriously injured, three shots lodging in his face and one in his hand. The shot in the hand was the only one which had remained in the flesh. Prisoner was remanded until Tuesday next at Bilston.

**375 February 14 1890**

**Rugby**

**DAMAGE TO A CANAL BOAT** At the County Court yesterday, before his Honour Judge Sir R Harington, Bart, **Henry Webb**, boatman Brierley Hill, sued William Ivens, timber merchant, Harborough Parva, Rugby, for £47 8s 10d for damage to a boat in loading timber, and balance of freight. Mr W Waldron, of Brierley Hill, appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Toller defended. The plaintiff's evidence was to the effect that on September 19 last his boat, the "Eliza" was at the defendant's wharf in Braunston, being loaded with elm trees which he had undertaken to convey to Woolwich. He erected an upright "skid" to prevent the timber falling into the boat, but at the order of Mr Ivens's foreman this was removed and the timber lowered by means of ropes. The result was that a rope broke and a tree fell into the boat, knocked three planks out of the bottom, and sank it. Defendant's men then got five horses and, despite his remonstrances, drew the timber out with chains, doing still more damage to the boat. For the defence three witnesses swore that the plaintiff superintended all the operations, and himself put a rope around the tree preparatory to its being lowered. His Honour said he was convinced that defendant's employees were under the command of plaintiff, and returned a verdict for the defendant.

**376 February 18 1890**

**Penkridge**

**ALLEGED THEFT OF TELEPHONE WIRE** **John Hamor**, a boatman, was charged at the Petty Sessions yesterday by the National Telephone Company with stealing copper wire, the property of the company. Mr Parfitt (of the Midland circuit) appeared for the company, and Mr Willcock for the prisoner. It seemed that in the course of the formation of the connection between the Birmingham and Manchester districts about two miles of wire were stolen in the neighbourhood of Brewood, and on an investigation being made, about 5lb of wire was found in the prisoner's house. The prisoner said he had received this wire from one of the company's foremen. The foreman denied this, and the prisoner was taken into custody. As it appeared that the foreman had given wire away in another instance, a doubt was cast upon his evidence, and the Bench dismissed the case.

**377 February 18 1890**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** The next inquest was held concerning the death of a man unknown, whose body was found in the canal. **Thomas Brannon**, a boatman, said that on Friday morning last he was in charge of a boat near the Small-arms Factory, Small Heath, and in passing under the Great Western Railway Bridge he saw a hat and coat on the towing-path. On looking into the water witness saw the body of a man, lying face downwards. Witness went to the police station at Small Heath and gave information to the police, upon which the body was got out and removed to the Moseley Street mortuary. The body was only partially dressed, the coat and hat being missing. There was 4d in coppers in deceased's pockets, but no writing of any kind. Inspector Willis (coroner's office) said that Superintendent Hervey had communicated with all the suburban stations, and a description of the body had also been published in the press. Everything had been done by the police to get the body identified, but unsuccessfully. Mr Potts, surgeon, said he had examined the body. It was that of a well nourished man about 5ft 10in in height, and about fifty five years of age. He was of opinion that death was due to drowning. The body seemed to have been in the water a day or two. There was sand in the nails and in the hair. A juror wanted to know whether there was not a lot of traffic on the canal at the point where the body was found. The boatman was recalled, and said there was a good deal of traffic on the canal, and also that the hat and coat were found in a recess in the bridge. It was very likely that a person passing along the towing-path would not see the hat and coat. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

### **378 March 3 1890**

**BURNED WHILE DRUNK** A boatman named **John McFoy**, of Harding Street, Smethwick, was admitted to the General Hospital at twenty minutes to five o'clock yesterday morning, suffering from severe burns on the legs. He showed symptoms of intoxication, and it was stated by those who brought him to the hospital that after a drinking bout with some companions he had fallen into a heavy sleep in front of his fire at home, and had only awakened when his legs were badly blistered by the burning of his trousers.

### **379 March 17 1890**

**INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM** The last inquest was concerning the death of **John Foy** (37), back of 39 Harding Street, Smethwick, canal boatman. Deceased's wife stated that deceased was in the habit of taking too much beer. He left home about half past four o'clock on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March to fetch his week's wages, but did not return that night. It appears that he went to the Wagon and Horses, and stopped there drinking with a friend named Selby until the house was shut. He then went to Selby's house, where they continued their carouse. They fell asleep near the fire, and soon afterwards Foy's clothing became ignited. He woke up and tried to rush out of the house, but the door knob was off, and he could not open the door. Some neighbours, hearing his shouts, ran to the house, burst in the door, and threw water on deceased's clothes. He was then taken to the General Hospital, where he died from exhaustion on the 12<sup>th</sup> March. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and said that deceased only was to blame for the accident.

[See article above where name is given as McFoy]

### **380 March 18 1890**

#### **Warwickshire Spring Assizes**

**BURGLARY** William Smith (21), watchman, and **Joseph Footman** (26), boatman, were indicted for burglariously entering the dwelling house of Edmund Field of Solihull and stealing seven bottles of sweets and other articles. Mr Parfitt prosecuted. The prisoners were seen in the neighbourhood of the prosecutor's house before and after the robbery, and a portion of the stolen goods was found in their boat. They were employed by the Birmingham Corporation for the conveyance of night soil. They absconded after the burglary. Prisoners had nothing to say in defence, and were each sentenced to three months hard labour.

### **381 March 19 1890**

**A DONKEY STARVED TO DEATH** At Rugby Petty Sessions yesterday, **James Benshaw**, boatman, Stretton-under-Fosse, was charged with ill-treating a donkey by keeping it without food on February 14 and several successive days. On February 13 a man named Salisbury noticed in an allotment belonging to the defendant a donkey tethered to the hedge by a rope, and without any means of subsistence. A week afterwards he saw the animal lying down, and going up to it found it was dead. Inspector Jones said the animal was a young one and had been perfectly healthy, but its stomach was quite void of any traces of food. The defence was that the owner had been confined to his bed through illness, and had been unable to attend to his donkey. Defendant was fined £3 and £1 14s 6d costs or in default a months imprisonment.

### **382 April 15 1890**

**CHARGE OF GARROTTING IN BIRMINGHAM** At the Birmingham Police Court yesterday morning before Mr C Colmore (Stipendiary), Walter Burke (21), brickmaker, Garrison Lane, and Charles Pettitt (29), twinemaker, Lawley Street, were charged with highway robbery with violence. The prisoners are notorious characters, and on Saturday night about 11.30 they met a boatman named **Charles Allridge** of Park Wharf, Saltley, in Garrison Street. The latter was a stranger to the district, and enquired from the prisoners where the canal bridge was. They directed him, and he had hardly gone half a dozen yards when it is alleged the accused drew up with him, Pettitt on his right and Burke on his left. Pettitt, without saying a word, struck prosecutor in the chest, and sent him to the ground. His assailants immediately knelt down, and Pettitt put his hand over Allridge's mouth

to prevent his raising an alarm. They threatened to "put his lights out" but confined themselves to robbery. Burke rifled prosecutor's pockets, while Pettitt still kept his hand over his mouth, and held him down with his knee. Having taken all they could get, the men decamped, and prosecutor then discovered that they had taken 17s, two pieces of beef and a couple of pounds of sausage. He communicated with the police at once, and Police-constable Sperrin went to Burke's house, where he found Burke about to retire to rest. Prosecutor identified the men at once, and on the place being searched the two pieces of meat and sausages were found under Burke's bed. Afterwards Sperrin, Green and Hewlett went to Pettitt's place and found him at home also. Some estimation of the man's physical proportions may be gathered from the fact that the handcuffs would not go on his wrists. When charged, Burke stated that he bought the meat, but afterwards added that it was a gift from Allridge. Both prisoners were committed to the Birmingham Assizes. They had been convicted over and over again for various offences, including acts of violence. Mr F Hooper defended Pettitt, for whom substantial bail was allowed.

### **383 April 17 1890**

**SUPPOSED SUICIDE OF AN OFFICER** Yesterday morning a boatman named **Kitchens** found some clothes on the bank of the Severn near the Camp House Inn, two miles from Worcester. The articles consisted of a tweed jacket and vest, a collar, flannel cap, walking stick, a set of sleeve links and two shirt studs. Subsequently the river was searched, and a fisherman named Darke discovered the body very near where the clothes were found. The body has been identified as that of a lieutenant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Prince of Wales North Staffordshire Regiment, named Roundell Wordsworth. He had been in ill health, and had been staying in Malvern for a change. It is thought that his mind was affected, and from letters found in his pocket there is no doubt he committed suicide. Deceased, who was about twenty four years of age, was a son of Bishop Wordsworth (of St Andrews), a relative of the Bishop of Lincoln and a great nephew of Wordsworth the poet.

### **384 April 23 1890**

#### **Birmingham Police Court**

**WASTING CANAL WATER** **Edward Griffin**, a boatman of Adderley Park Road, Saltley, was fined 20s and costs for wasting the water of the Birmingham Canal Company, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, by prematurely opening the gates of a lock.

### **385 April 28 1890**

**CHARGE OF INCENDIARISM** At Kidderminster County Police Court on Saturday, before Mr T Lea, MP, **Walter Slater** (19), boatman, and William Hancocks (18), labourer, were brought up on suspicion of setting fire to some ricks belonging to Mr Cooke, farmer of Bellington, Chaddesley Corbett. About four o'clock on Friday afternoon a straw rick at Mr Cooke's was seen to be on fire, and the flames soon extended to two other straw ricks, a hay rick, clover rick and implement shed. The whole of these were destroyed, and the contents of the latter included two wagons, a cart and other property. The Kidderminster Fire Brigade were sent for, and attended, under Mr A Comber, but nothing could be done. The prisoners were seen near the rick yard a short time before the fire was discovered, and they were seen running away afterwards. Sergeant Walker asked for a remand till today, which was granted.

### **386 April 29 1890**

**CHARGE OF ARSON NEAR KIDDERMINSTER** At the County Police Court, Kidderminster, before Major Hancocks and Mr J Giles, **Walter Slater** (19), boatman, and William Hancox (18), labourer, were brought up on the charge of setting fire to ricks on the farm of Mr J A Cooke, Bellington, Chaddesley Corbett, on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. Mary Bertha Cooke, a daughter of Mr Cooke, said she saw the prisoners in her father's rickyard at ten minutes to four on Friday afternoon. About a quarter of an hour afterwards someone ran into the house and said the ricks were on fire. John Harteil, a farm labourer, said he saw the prisoners running down a field near the rickyard at about four o'clock on Friday. He looked round, and saw smoke coming from a barley straw rick, and

there were soon six ricks in a blaze. Prisoners were only about thirteen yards from the smoking rick when he saw them running away. Mr Cooke said he was away from home when the fire occurred. There were six whole ricks, three remains of ricks and a shed burnt. The loss was about £265. Sergeant W Walter said he arrested Hancox on Friday evening on suspicion of setting fire to a barley straw rick of Mr Cooke. He said, "Take me to Walter Slater; he knew I did not set fire to the rick". Prisoner threw away three matches as he entered the police station. Slater was brought to the station the same evening. Sergeant Narramore said he arrested Slater, and charged him. He said, "I was there with Hancox, but did not set fire to the ricks". **Stephen Bennett**, boatman, said he was a prisoner at Kidderminster police station on Saturday, and in the cell with the prisoner Slater. Witness asked him what he was there for. He said, "Nothing". Witness said, "They would not have you for nothing". He said, "They have me on suspicion of setting fire to some ricks at Bellington". He said, "We went round that way for a walk, and Hancox took his dog to see if there was a rabbit loose". He further said they had some catapults and stones, and Hancox had some wires. They were going round and saw a rabbit going under the rick, and Hancox set his dog after it, but it would not go under the rick. Slater proceeded; Hancox said, "Let's set him on fire", but I said, "No, we shall get into trouble". Hancox said, "Well, he's got plenty of money". Hancox (the witness continued) set the one on fire and Slater the other. Then they ran across the field, and there was a woman watching them. The prisoner also said that they heard the fire engine coming, and hid themselves behind a hedge, but jumped out, and cried out to the firemen that the fire would be out before they got there. The prisoners were committed for trial on the charge.

**387 April 30 1890**

**Oldbury**

POLICE COURT At this court, yesterday, before Messrs Bennett and Albright, **Henry Pickerill** (35), boatman, of Nelson Street, Tat Bank was fined 52s 6d including costs for being drunk and assaulting Police-constables Davis and Bayliss. Pickerill was arrested on a charge of drunkenness, and behaved in a very violent manner, having to be conveyed to the lock up in a cart.

**388 May 2 1890**

WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS William Joyce (on bail) and Annie Norton (19), breeze-washer, were charged with cutting and wounding **Joseph Lowbridge**, a boatman, on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Mr Pearson (instructed by Messrs Wilkinson and Son) prosecuted. The evidence was to the effect that after leaving a public house in Wolverhampton Lane a fight took place between Joyce and Lowbridge's brother. Lowbridge intervened, and in the course of a scrimmage Joyce was seen to aim blows at the back of Lowbridge, who immediately called out that he was stabbed. Norton was seen with a knife in her hand, and was heard to say that whoever touched Joyce should have it into them. One of the witnesses said she also struck at Lowbridge. The wounded man was afterwards taken to the Cottage Hospital, and was found to be wounded twice in the back and once in the neck. The Deputy Recorder summed up in favour of the acquittal of the female prisoner, and the jury, after deliberating in private for about twenty minutes, returned into court with a verdict of "Guilty" against the female prisoner and "Not guilty" against the male prisoner. This decision occasioned great surprise in court, and the Deputy Recorder, addressing the male prisoner, said the jury, for some reason that was to him absolutely inscrutable, had acquitted him, and he must consider himself very fortunate. To mark his sense of the verdict, he would sentence the woman to one days imprisonment only.

**James Hodgkinson** (31), boatman, was postponed till next quarter sessions, the court having already sat eight hours. The accused protested against this as a great hardship upon him.

**389 May 8 1890**

**Birmingham Police Court**

A SERIOUS CHARGE **William Timbrell** (28), boatman, Lanthony Road, Gloucester, and **Thomas Pready** (22), boatman, Westgate Street, Gloucester, were charged with violently assaulting another boatman named **David Kerwin**, of Allison Street. Prisoners were arrested yesterday

morning by Inspector Moore. They admitted having assaulted Kerwin, and thrown him into the canal. Their contention was that they were first of all attacked, and retaliated. The Stipendiary pointed out that neither of the prisoners had as much as a scratch, while prosecutor was dreadfully injured. They were remanded for a week.

**390 May 13 1890**

**THE ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER AT DUDLEY** Yesterday at the Police Court, before Mr Russell, Mr W P Greenway and Dr Higgs, Thomas Maloney (18), labourer; William Carpenter (21), labourer; Alfred Bowers (18), labourer; and Joseph Williams (18), steel polisher, all of Birmingham Street, were charged with having kicked Thomas Cartwright (19), anchor smith, Boat Row, Tipton, in such a manner as to cause his death. Chief Superintendent Burton said the first three defendants were arrested on the previous Monday on a charge of assaulting Cartwright with intent to do him bodily harm. The injured man died on Wednesday, and the charge was now one of manslaughter. He (Mr Burton) had communicated with the Public Prosecutor, and Mr Barradale, the magistrates clerk, had taken the dying man's depositions. To justify a remand he would give evidence of one of deceased's companions. **James Hodgetts**, boatman, New Cross Street, said he was at the Coliseum Theatre, in the Trindle, with the deceased. The three first named defendants annoyed Cartwright, and afterwards followed him to a public house near and challenged him to fight. After the performance was over they followed witness and deceased down the road towards Tipton, and struck Cartwright on the head with a buckled belt. Witness was separated from the deceased and other Tipton young men, and when he saw them again near the hospital Cartwright said he had been badly kicked in the abdomen. Mr Burton said Williams surrendered when he found he was wanted. The defendants had all been charged, and pleaded not guilty. Bowen now applied for bail, and the others followed suit. The Bench, in remanding the defendants until Friday next, said the case was a most serious one, and they could only consent to bail in bonds of £100 each.

**391 May 27 1890**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**UNPROVOKED ASSAULT** **Charles Medlicott** (18), boatman of Talbot Street, was charged, on a warrant, with assaulting Frederick Holman, fruiterer, Soho Road, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March last. On the day named the prosecutor was on the bridge in Soho Road and prisoner passed using a disgusting expression towards him. Prisoner followed this up by striking prosecutor a violent blow on the head with a buckled belt. Shortly after the offences prisoner was arrested at West Bromwich, and received a term of imprisonment for assault and felony. Police-constable Vaughan arrested prisoner on his discharge from gaol on Friday. The assault was a serious one, and prisoner was sent to gaol for one month, with hard labour.

**392 May 29 1890**

**Birmingham Police Court**

**ASSAULTS ON POLICEMEN** **Henry Ketteridge**, boatman, was charged with assaulting several police-constables on Tuesday night. Police-constable Mills stated that he was at the corner of Cromwell Street and Saltley Road, where he saw prisoner, who was very drunk. When witness told him to go home, he assaulted him and bit him on the hand. He was behaving like a madman, and was very violent. While witness was trying to overpower him, a lady blew his whistle and two other officers came to his assistance. Prisoner assaulted all three officers, and it was some time before he could be taken to the police station. Dr Bartlett pointed out to the prisoner that when he was under the influence of drink he might one day murder someone, and would know nothing of it until he became sober. Prisoner appeared penitent and, as his master gave him a good character, the magistrates let him off with a fine of 20s and costs, or one months imprisonment.

**393 June 21 1890**

**Bilston**

**THEFT OF A CHAIN** At the Police Court, yesterday, **Joseph Fletcher**, boatman, Bradley, was sent to gaol for six weeks with hard labour for stealing an iron chain, the property of Mr G B

Thornecroft, from the Bradley Colliery.

**394 June 25 1890**

**Birmingham Quarter Sessions**

**STEALING HAIR** **Thomas Cooksey** (39), boatman, was found guilty, after a previous conviction for counting-house breaking, of stealing 30lb of horsehair, the goods of George Frederick Rowlinson, on May 26<sup>th</sup>. He was sentenced to six months hard labour and two years police supervision.

**THEFT OF FOWLS** **Thomas Findon** (42), boatman, was indicted for stealing four live fowls, the goods of Alfred Noak. The fowls were taken from the prosecutor's premises on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May by the prisoner. He was found "guilty" and, as he had been in gaol on several occasions, he was sentenced to eight months imprisonment with hard labour, and one years police supervision.

**395 July 25 1890**

**WALSALL BOROUGH QUARTER SESSIONS** **James Hodgkinson** (31), boatman, 8 Clement Street, Birmingham, on bail, came up by postponement from the previous sessions, charged with having indecently assaulted Elizabeth Salt, a servant at the Canal Tavern, Bloxwich on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Stokes (instructed by Mr Marten) prosecuted and Mr Vachell (instructed by Mr Tyler, Birmingham) defended. The evidence was to the effect that the prisoner's boat was staying for the night in the canal by the tavern, and he was in the house until eleven o'clock. The prosecutrix went to bed about that time, and about one o'clock she found a man in her bed. She recognised him by his voice, and having aroused her mistress, both she and her mistress saw and identified him as he ran down the stairs and got out of the house. They then went to his boat, and finding that he was not there, took his donkey's collar away, compelling him to come to the house to fetch it before he could leave. Then he was given into the custody of Police-constable Smith. Witnesses were called to show that the prisoner was in his cabin at the time the offence was committed. The learned Recorder summed up strongly against the prisoner, and the jury having found him guilty, he was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour, the learned Recorder declining to pledge himself to reserve a case for the consideration of the court above.

**396 July 30 1890**

**STREET RUFFIANISM AT ASTON** At Aston Police Court, yesterday, before Messrs Cooper and Weiss, Charles Hands, blacksmith, 7 Court 5 House, Phillips Street, was charged with using obscene language, and in company with **Walter Cooper**, boatman, Lovers' Walk, with assaulting Police-constable William Wale and Henry Stewart, clockmaker, 43 Victoria Road. Police-constable Wale, while in the Aston Road on Saturday evening about ten o'clock, in consequence of the disgusting language used by Hands, ordered him to go home. As he declined to do so, witness took him into custody, when he became very violent, and a crowd collected and endeavoured to get the prisoner away. Wale, however, managed to get the prisoner some distance along the road, when he renewed his violence and bit the constable on the back of the hand and then succeeded in escaping. Before departing he struck the constable three or four times in the face with a buckled belt. Wale once more managed to arrest his man, when Cooper rushed up and, shouting to the officer to loose Hands, struck him on the head with a belt, cutting through his hat. Stewart, seeing that the constable was being ill-treated, went to his assistance, and was assaulted. When Cooper attacked Wale, Hands managed to escape and ran away into Thomas Street, where he was followed by Stewart and arrested. He then knocked Stewart down and bit him in the hand. In answer to the Bench, Hands said he simply walked up to Police-constable Wale and asked him if he had seen the Shah, and he struck him on the side of the head in reply, remarking, "Yes, there he is". Mr Walker (assistant Magistrates' Clerk) : What made you ask him that question? Prisoner : Well I had been to see Bates come in, and I thought I would have a joke. Prisoners, who had been before the court on previous occasions, were sentenced, Hands to two months imprisonment with hard labour, and Cooper was fined 5s for obscene language and a months for the assault on the constable.

**397 August 2 1890****Staffordshire Summer Assizes**

INDECENT ASSAULTS ON IMBECILES **Joseph Thomas Paskill** (23), boatman, was charged with attempting to commit a rape on Emma Bevan (22) at Tipton on March 16. Mr Plumtre appeared for the prosecutrix and Mr Owen defended. The offence was committed on an imbecile woman. Prisoner was found guilty and was sent to prison for twelve months, with hard labour.

**398 August 7 1890****Birmingham Summer Assizes**

ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE Walter Burke (23), brickmaker, and Charles Pettitt (32), rope spinner, were charged with robbing **Charles Allridge** of 17s and 1lb of sausage, and also with using personal violence. Mr Symonds prosecuted and Mr Daly defended. Prosecutor is a canal boatman, and on the night of April 12 he had come to Birmingham with his boat. About half past eleven o'clock he was walking up Garrison Street when he met the prisoners, and asked them the way to the canal bridge. They told him and he walked on, but they followed him and threw him on the ground. Pettitt put his hand over his mouth, and Burke put his hand into his pocket and took the 17s from it. At the time of the assault prosecutor was carrying a parcel containing the sausage, and this was also taken from him. Information was given to the police, and the prisoners were arrested. For the defence a boy named Blick was called, and he stated that on the night in question Pettitt was in his employer's (a barber's) house from twenty minutes past eleven o'clock until twenty minutes past one o'clock. Addressing the jury, Mr Daly said the prisoners were arrested on the description of the prosecutor, who admitted having been drinking, and who was not in a fit condition to describe the men. There was nothing except the prosecutor's evidence to connect Burke with the robbery, and if the boy could be believed Pettitt could not have taken part in it. Both prisoners were found guilty, but sentence was deferred.

**399 August 9 1890****Birmingham County Court**

CHARGE OF THROWING A WIFE INTO THE CANAL At the Stoke on Trent Police Court, yesterday, **Richard Jenks**, a canal boatman, was charged with assaulting his wife, Elizabeth Jenks, on the 28<sup>th</sup> July. The parties had been married forty years, and the woman deposed to a long course of ill-treatment during that time. On the occasion in question, she stated, prisoner kicked her till she became insensible, and then threw her into the canal. This was the fifth time he had done a similar thing; and on one occasion she would have been drowned had he not pulled her out of the water. He had invariably locked up the cabin to prevent her getting any food. When she threatened to complain to the police the prisoner said he could easily do seven years, adding that he thought all magistrates and policemen ought to be shot. The Stipendiary considered the case of so serious a nature that he remanded the prisoner in custody till Thursday next.

**400 August 15 1890**

CHARGE OF THROWING A WIFE INTO THE CANAL At the Stipendiary's Court at Tunstall yesterday, **Richard Jenks**, boatman, was charged with having assaulted his wife. Mr E Hollinshead appeared for the defence. It was stated that on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, while the defendant's boat was lying at Stoke, the accused entered the cabin under the influence of drink and commenced a vicious attack upon his wife. She was beaten about the face, which was severely cut and bruised, and finally she was thrown into the canal. For the defence, evidence was called to show that the woman was drunk, and that after scratching her husband's face she fell into the canal in consequence of her intoxicated state. The Stipendiary said that if the woman's allegations had been proved he should have sent the defendant to prison, but after the evidence for the defence he simply bound him over in the sum of £10 to keep the peace for six months.

**401 August 18 1890****Tipton**

DEATH IN A BOAT CABIN On Saturday afternoon, Mr Edwin Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Golden Cup Inn, Ocker Hill, on the body of **Charlotte Griffiths**, the daughter of a boatman, whose boat is now in the canal near Toll End. The child was two months old. The mother stated

that she her husband, and three children, together with the deceased – six in all – slept in the cabin of the boat, which was a registered one, but she could not tell the number. The child was taken in a fit, and died in about ten minutes. Witness took her on her lap, but did not put her in hot water; nor did she send for a surgeon, for it was too late. Witness fed the child on biscuit boiled in water, and when she had no biscuit she gave it bread. The jury returned a verdict of “Death from natural causes”.

**402 August 23 1890**

**West Bromwich**

WASTING CANAL WATER At the County Police Court yesterday, **Thomas Weaver** (19), boatman, of Oldbury Road, West Smethwick, was charged with wasting water, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company, on the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Barrow (from the offices of Messrs Wragge and Co, Birmingham) appeared to prosecute. A witness gave evidence that the defendant drew the bottom paddle of several locks before he closed the top paddle, the result being that a lock of water was wasted. The Bench fined the defendant 16s 6d including costs, or in default fourteen days imprisonment.

**403 September 17 1890**

THEFT BY A BOATMAN Yesterday at Oldbury Police Court, **William Wakeman**, boatman of Lower Quay Street, Gloucester, was charged with stealing some straw, the property of Joseph Jeffries, hay and straw dealer of Worcester Wharf, Birmingham, on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. Police-sergeant Clarke stated that on Friday last he visited a brickyard in Portway Road, Oldbury, and saw the prisoner's boat there and the straw lying close to it on the canal side. Prosecutor identified the straw as his property, and said that it had been stolen from Worcester Wharf. Prisoner said he was not aware that the straw was in his boat until he reached Smethwick Locks, and that he intended to take it back again. The Bench imposed a fine of £1 9s, including costs, or in default seven days imprisonment.

**404 November 10 1890**

THE RECENT GALE During the heavy gale on Friday night a boatman named **John Sherlock** was blown off his boat on the Birmingham Canal at Wednesbury. A hat was found floating on the water, and the police and others commenced to drag, but his body was not found until eleven o'clock on Saturday, and then near to the Imperial Ironworks. Several other persons are reported to have been blown into canals in other districts, but they were fortunately rescued.

**405 November 20 1890**

**Worcestershire Assizes**

INDECENT ASSAULT AT OLDBURY **Henry Pickerill** (36), boatman, was charged with indecently assaulting Mercy Dooly (8) on October 14. Mr Amphlett prosecuted. The child was playing in some fields near the railway, when the prisoner committed the assault. Her screams attracted the attention of two railway employees, who saw the prisoner committing the assault. The jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

**406 November 26 1890**

**Tipton**

A JURYMAN FINED Yesterday afternoon, Mr E Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Beehive Inn, Tipton Green, on the body of Mary Wassell (18) lately a domestic servant at Tipton and Dudley. Mr William Henry Dutton, shopkeeper, High Street, said the girl was his niece, and made her home at his house when she was out of place. Three weeks ago she called from her situation, and left in order to catch a tram to Dudley. She was a lively girl, and seemed in good spirits at that time. Shortly afterwards he heard the girl had been discharged because she was not clean. Witness had no reason to believe that any foul play had happened to the girl. He always found the girl clean. Mrs Sarah Ann Johnson, Bloomfield, said the girl stopped with her one night, saying she would not go to Dutton's. The girl was dirty and asked for money. **Edward Nightingale**, boatman, proved the finding of the body, which seemed to have been in the water for a long time. There were no marks

of violence about the girl. Police-constable Brown said nothing was found in the clothes of the girl. He had heard of nothing suspicious as to the girl's death. Her uncle and aunt were good to the girl. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned". The Coroner fined an absent juryman £5.

**407 November 26 1890 Burslem**

**A DISORDERLY HOUSE** At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **Walter John Bunn**, boatman, residing in High Street, was charged with allowing his house to be used for immoral purposes. The case was proved by Inspector Oakden and Police-sergeant Burgess, the former of whom gave general evidence as to the disorderly character of the defendant's house. In default of paying a fine of £10 and costs, the defendant was committed to prison for six weeks, with hard labour.

**408 December 12 1890 Birmingham Police Court**

**ROBBING A BENEFACTOR** Richard Wise (30), shoemaker, and Annie Lavell (30), prostitute, both of Wolverhampton, were charged with stealing £17 15s from a boatman named **George Hawker**. Prosecutor came to Birmingham on the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult, and left his canal boat in the Worcester Wharf. Two days later he met the prisoner Wise, who said he was penniless, and prosecutor, taking compassion on him, treated him to a drink. He afterwards permitted him to sleep in the boat, and for a week prosecutor provided him with food. In the meantime, Hawker received some money, and Wise saw where he kept it. While drinking in a public house on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst, Wise said, "Take care of this beer; I am going across to my sister's. I shan't be many minutes before I'm back". Prosecutor waited for two hours, but he never returned, and on going to the wharf discovered that the cabin had been broken open and the whole of the money stolen. Detective-sergeant Dobbs apprehended the prisoners, who were displaying plenty of money. The woman had £10. The Stipendiary considered the robbery a contemptible one. He sentenced the man to six months imprisonment with hard labour, and the woman to three months.

**409 December 17 1890**

**LIFE ON CANAL BOATS** The report of Mr Brydone, the Local Government Board inspector under the Canal Boats Act, has just been issued. In the course of the official year 1889-90, Mr Brydone visited all the canals in England and Wales on which boats are used as dwellings, and he conferred with no fewer than 297 sanitary authorities. The result of his investigations seem on the whole to be very satisfactory. He assures us that instances of indecent herding together of men, women and children in filthy cabins are now comparatively rare; the sanitary state of the boats is steadily improving; and it is satisfactory that the boatmen recognise the fact the the inspection has for its real object, not so much the detection of accidental irregularities as the amelioration of the conditions in which a large class of persons are living. Infectious disease seems to be rare among the canal boat population; but in several cases where it has broken out measures have been adopted for the detention and disinfection of the infected boats. Altogether there is ample evidence of progressive improvement in the condition both of the boats and of their occupants, and it is satisfactory to find that though the manners and language of "bargees" are notoriously rough, the inspectors scarcely ever meet with incivility, and are generally regarded as acting in the interests of the floating population.

It is by no means easy to form an accurate estimate of the number either of the canal boats now in use or of the persons who habitually live on board. The total number of boats on registers of the various authorities at the end of 1889 was 11,358, but a large proportion of these have no doubt been broken up, and it is possible that less than two thirds, or between seven and eight thousand, are now afloat. The total number of inspections during the year by officers of local authorities was 30,545, and if these inspections had been equally distributed each boat would have been visited on an average about four times. There are, however, as might be expected, marked differences in the extent of supervision exercised by the various local authorities. Of course the conditions under which the traffic is conducted vary considerably. There are some canals which are being used less and less every year, and which may perhaps eventually be abandoned altogether. Others in the

manufacturing districts still fulfil an important function in the conveyance of merchandise, and the activity of trade in 1889 had a considerable effect in increasing the employment of boats and boatmen. In some the voyages are for the most part short, and the boat people usually live on shore. In others a trip may extend as far as from Birmingham to London, and the bargeman carries his wife and family with him for weeks or months. In proportion as trade is good and wages are high, he is likely to have a house on shore, but when times are hard, and every possible economy has to be exercised, he saves house rent by making his boat his only dwelling. In Birmingham during the year there were 765 inspections; eighty five written cautions were served, but in only two instances were legal proceedings taken.

In his report to the Committee of Council on Education on the working of the scheme for the education of children under the Canal Boats Act, Mr Brydone says that the authorities throughout the country are evincing a growing interest with regard to the education of the children of canal boat people. There is a good deal of grumbling among the boat people that fees are charged to them by every school at which any of the children may attend during the week, and where a man is anxious to do his duty in respect of sending his children to school, this certainly does seem a great hardship. The Birmingham canal boat inspector, who is an officer of the School Board also, says that there are many causes which operate to spoil the efficiency of the School Board work in connection with canal boat children; the principal one, he thinks, being a want of compulsory co-operation on the part of inspectors of other districts. He can take action only in his own district, and as soon as the boats leave the city limits he is powerless with regard to them. He thinks the work can only be done properly by making every inspector responsible for every boat that is tied up all day or half day in his district. He had no means of knowing in Birmingham what facilities a boatman may have had of sending his children to school whilst the boat may have been tied up five weeks or more and, probably, not seven miles away. The question of fees, he says, is a constant complaint. Though the number of attendances made in Birmingham in 1889 is not quite so great as in 1886, still there have been more attendances at other schools throughout the country, and the more general interest in the canal boat children elicited from Mr George Smith in the latter half of 1889 the testimony that "the 30,000 canal children and their floating homes had been brought by easy stages under healthy legislative influence with excellent and cheering effects all round". Canal boat people, and the mothers more especially, are becoming more and more interested in trying to get their children sent to school, and as the tone of their own life and surroundings is being raised so they in their turn are becoming more and more solicitous on behalf of their young ones, for whom they, as a class, evince quite as tender a regard in their own way as do parents of other classes. The Seamen and Boatmen's Friend Society have, Mr Brydone says, done much good service among the boat people and their children, and such large centres as Birmingham, Hednesford, Bristol, Manchester and Liverpool, where missionaries of the society are constantly visiting these people, the children are induced by them to attend both week day and Sunday schools.

#### **410    December 24 1890**

#### **Hanley**

**GROSS CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Borough Police Court, yesterday, **James Neale**, boatman, Malkin's Bank, Cheshire was charged with cruelty to a horse. It appeared from the evidence of William Booth, potter's fireman, that on the afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup> inst the defendant was in charge of a horse which was drawing an empty boat along the Cauldron Branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal, at Shelton. Defendant, who was under the influence of drink, took hold of the tow line just behind the horse and beat the animal with his whip until it kicked the harness off. He then took the horse by the head, and beat it about the body and kicked it on the legs in a most cruel manner. On being remonstrated with, the defendant renewed his attack on the horse, beating it with his whipstock and kicking it until he was completely exhausted and could not continue his brutality any longer. The witness Booth took the name and number of the boat, and gave information as to the defendant's conduct to the police. Defendant pleaded that the horse was a kicker, and that he had flogged it for indulging in that vice. Mr G P Bradford said this was the worst case of brutality to animals that had come before the court. People called a horse a brute, but in this case the man

was the greatest brute of the two. The magistrates were simply disgusted with his conduct, and they committed him to prison for two months with hard labour, without allowing him the option of paying a fine. The magistrates thanked Booth for his action in the matter.