

BIRMINGHAM POST 1891 TO 1900

1 January 9 1891

Birmingham Quarter Sessions

“WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOUR” Margaret McKay (36), of no occupation, was indicted for stealing £3 in gold, the moneys of **Henry Drakeford** of Oldbury on October 18. Mr Craycroft prosecuted. Prosecutor, who is a boatman, met the prisoner in the Tindal Arms, and as she expressed a wish to look over the cabin of a boat, he took her to his boat at the Crescent Wharf. The next morning he missed the money, and accused the prisoner of stealing it. A policeman was fetched, and on the way to the station the prisoner offered 30s to settle the case. A boy who slept in the boat that night stated that he heard the clink of money during the night. He saw a woman, but could not say whether it was the prisoner or not. Police-constable John Johnson (70E), who was to have given evidence in this case, did not answer to the call. Mr Soden said that the officer's recognisances would be estreated, and his expenses disallowed just the same as those of any other witness. Prisoner denied that she took the money. The prosecutor invited her to his cabin, and it was a case of “the spider and the fly”. [Laughter] At the conclusion of the Assistant Barrister's summing up, Police-constable Johnson appeared. Mr Soden : I can't allow him to give evidence, unless the jury wish it. It is most unfair to both sides. He should have been here. At the request of the jury, Johnson gave evidence. He said that no gold was found upon the prisoner. The prisoner was acquitted. In reply to the Assistant Barrister, Police-constable Johnson said that he had not received notice to attend, and he did not know the sessions were being held. Being on leave on the previous day he did not hear the orders which were read out on the evening parade. The Assistant Barrister said that, under the circumstances, he should take the estreat off the recognisances, and also allow the constable his expenses. Inspector Jeffries afterwards attended, and explained that, as the other witnesses in the case lived out of Birmingham, the notices to them were sent by post. In ordinary circumstances Johnson would have known that his attendance was required because, as constable in charge of the case, he would have to give the witnesses notice. The Assistant Barrister hoped that nothing of the kind would happen again.

2 January 21 1891

Birmingham Police Court

FOND OF A SMOKE Joseph Howell (17), labourer, court, Icknield Port Road; Charles Queeney (19), labourer, Icknield Port Road; **William Henry Hall** (18), boatman, Dugdale Street; and Henry Jones (17), brasscaster, Rea Street, were charged with stealing cigars. Early on the morning of the 15th inst, the tobacco shop of John Porter Maynard, 51 Foundry Road, was broken into and two boxes of cigars, value 10s were taken. The thieves smashed the window to get at the boxes, and were seen to run away. Howell was captured by Police-constable Tye, and admitted that when they got the cigars they all adjourned to a hut at Merry Hill, and managed to smoke them. The other youths were then arrested, and all pleaded guilty. Howell was sent to gaol for one month, Queeney and Jones for twenty one days and Hall for a fortnight.

3 January 27 1891

King's Heath Police Court

WIFE ASSAULT WITH A CHOPPER **Joseph Bennett** (55), a boatman of Forehill, near King's Norton, was charged with violently assaulting his wife, Harriet Bennett. On Sunday morning last, at about eleven o'clock, prisoner, who was sitting in his kitchen with his wife, sprang up, and seizing a chopper, hit her twice on the head. Her screams attracted her daughter, who entered the room in time to arrest the third blow. Police-constable Hazlehurst removed prisoner to the police station, and Dr Tyler attended prisoner's wife. The injuries, though somewhat serious, are not thought dangerous. Accused was, until a few months ago, confined in a lunatic asylum, and on his discharge from the institution returned home to his wife and two daughters. The prisoner has frequently shown signs of returning insanity, and has repeatedly threatened to kill his wife. He has even sent his daughters invitations to come to the house and see him murder her. No notice was taken of these menaces, and no one thought he would attempt violence to his wife. The prisoner

was remanded until next Friday. In the meantime he will be medically examined as to the state of his mind.

4 January 29 1891 Balsall Heath Police Court

AN INSANE PRISONER Joseph Bennett (55), Forehill, Alvechurch, boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding his wife, Harriet Bennett, on January 25. Harriet Bennett, daughter of the prisoner, stated that on Sunday morning her father, who had frequently seemed strange in his manner and who had previously been confined in the Winson Green Lunatic Asylum for two months, assaulted her mother with a hatchet. He hit her twice on the head with the implement, although absolutely no provocation was given. He had previously declared his intention of murdering his wife, and at the time the assault was committed expressed the satisfaction he felt at having been able to attempt to carry his project into execution while all the members of his family were at home. Dr S E Johnson stated that he had examined the prisoner very carefully, and had come to the conclusion that he was of unsound mind. He was evidently subject to sudden impulses, and at such times was not responsible for his actions. While witness was in the cell he banged his head violently against the wall, and he (Dr Johnson) had no hesitation in declaring him to be a fit and proper person to be detained in an asylum. The prisoner was remanded until Friday next.

5 January 31 1891 Balsall Heath Petty Sessions

A MADMAN WITH AN AXE Joseph Bennett (55) of the Foxhill, Alvechurch, boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding his wife, Harriet Bennett, with an axe on January 25. Mrs Bennett, on the day in question, was sitting with the prisoner and their two daughters. Prisoner went out to fetch some coal. He came back with an axe in one hand and some coal in the other, and without any warning rushed at his wife and struck her twice on the head with the axe. One of the daughters rushed at prisoner and held him against the wall, the axe dropping on the floor. The son shortly afterwards came in, and a policeman was fetched. Mrs Bennett had sustained two severe scalp wounds, and last week was not able to attend the court. Mr Tyler, surgeon of King's Norton, stated that one of the wounds was two inches long and an inch deep, and the other was about an inch long and skin deep. A great quantity of blood had been lost. The wounds were very severe, but not dangerous unless some complication should intervene. Police-constable Hazelhurst stated that prisoner when arrested said, "I have had that on my mind for some time. I did it, and I meant to do it". Mr Johnson, surgeon of Sparkbrook, stated that prisoner was a lunatic and ought to be in an asylum. Prisoner was committed to the assizes. After his removal to the charge room prisoner sat quiet for some time. Suddenly, however, he got up from his chair and began battering his head against the stone mantelpiece. The constable who was in the room with him seized him, but not before prisoner had sustained two scalp wounds, which were dressed by Mr Tyler.

6 February 9 1891 Oldbury

SUDDEN DEATH OF AN OLDBURY BOATMAN On Saturday afternoon, an inquest was held at Swarkestone, Derbyshire, on the body of **William Henry James**, boatman, of Langley Green, Oldbury. The deceased was the steerer of a tar boat, which left Oldbury for Derby on the 3rd inst. On Thursday night he had a fit while asleep in the boat, and died before assistance could be obtained. The jury came to the conclusion that he "Died from natural causes".

7 February 10 1891 Birmingham Police Court

A DANGEROUS BAND Henry Murphy (23), labourer, of no fixed abode, and **Frank Coley** (19), boatman, 72 Richard Street, were charged on a warrant with assaulting William Horton, 5 Court 19 house, Coleman Street. Prosecutor stated that on the 1st inst he was walking down Richard Street when he encountered the prisoners, who assaulted him without any provocation. Murphy hit him on the head with a poker, and Coley hit him with the buckle end of a belt. He received two severe scalp wounds. Prisoners, who were arrested by Police-constables Oldham and Long, stated that prosecutor was a member of a gang who had followed them about for weeks with belts and

choppers. The police-constables said that the story was true, and that the prisoners had had to leave their work by a back way in order to escape from the gang. Mr Jacobs asked why the police allowed such a state of things, and Police-constable Oldham said that some of the members of the gang were always in gaol. Coley called a witness, who stated that on the evening before the assault occurred she heard prosecutor say "that he would knock Coley's brains out". Prosecutor, in answer to Mr King (Magistrate's Clerk) admitted that he had been three times convicted of assault, the last occasion being five months ago, when he received three months. Coley's witnesses also stated that the prisoner was in the house when the assault was committed. The magistrates said there was some doubt in Coley's case and discharged him; but they fined Murphy 10s and costs. They also told Horton to be careful in future or he would get locked up, and advised the police to look after the district. Police-constable Davis said that he would convey the magistrates' expression to his superintendent, and also informed the Bench that he had himself locked up fourteen of the gang in three days.

8 March 26 1891 Wolverhampton

A CRUEL BOATMAN At the Police Court yesterday, **Thomas Lowe**, canal boatman, was summoned for cruelty to a pony. Inspector Luckings spoke to finding a pony on the canal side in an emaciated condition. There were a number of people standing around it, but no one admitted the ownership. A little later, however, he found the animal attached to a boat laden with nineteen tons of coal, and the defendant was urging it along. When served with the summons the defendant said the pony died a few days after witness had seen it. The Stipendiary pointed out that if the defendant had been previously convicted for such an offence he would have been committed to prison. A fine of 40s and the costs was imposed.

9 April 2 1891 Smethwick

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the Police Court yesterday, **John Downing**, boatman, Wellington Street, Winson Green, for allowing a horse to be worked whilst in an unfit state on the 1st ult, was fined 30s, including costs; and **Charles Hackett**, of Crocketts Lane, was fined 13s 6d, including expenses, for working the horse.

10 May 2 1891 King's Heath Police Court

A VIOLENT PASSENGER **Thomas Davenport** (25), Pugh Road, Aston, boatman, was charged with travelling on the Midland Railway without having paid his fare, with intent to defraud the company; and also with assaulting George William Moseley, a railway police officer, and Ralph Knight, foreman ticket collector, on the 25th ult. On Saturday last prisoner travelled from New Street to Camp Hill, and at the latter station he passed the ticket collector, saying it was "All right". He was brought back and asked to produce his ticket, but instead of doing so kicked both the officers. Prisoner was fined 20s and costs for the assaults.

11 May 8 1891

ACCIDENTS **John Barnes** (47), boatman, living at Bartley Green, was taken to the Queen's Hospital last night suffering from a scalp wound. He was walking along Holliday Street, when someone threw a stone which struck him on the head. Barnes was unable to say who threw the stone. The injuries were not sufficient to cause his detention.

12 May 25 1891

ARRESTS FOR SHOPBREAKING Yesterday the Smethwick police arrested **John Matthews** (17) of Lewisham Road Smethwick, boatman; Walter John Purnell (14), St George Street Smethwick; and Thomas Greaves (15), Great Arthur Street, on charges of being concerned in breaking into the shops of Eliza Osbourne of Watteville Street, Handsworth; Henry Smith, Middlemore Road, Smethwick; and Joseph Greenhill of Bridge Street Smethwick, during Saturday night. Prisoners will be brought up at the Tipton Police Court today.

13 May 26 1891

Birmingham Police Court

AN IMPUDENT THIEF **Frank Coley**, boatman, was charged with stealing 8 1/2d from the person of Frederick Morris, a youth. On Wednesday last, prosecutor and some companions were on the canal side near Avenue Road Bridge. It was raining heavily, and prosecutor and his friends got into the cabin of a boat. A few minutes after the prisoner and another man came to the boat and demanded twopence from prosecutor and each of his friends. Witness gave prisoner twopence, but his friends had no money. The man who was with the prisoner struck one of prosecutor's comrades on the face. Prisoner then caught hold of prosecutor and forcibly took 8 1/2d from his pocket. Prisoner and his companion left the boat, and pushed it into the middle of the canal. Detective Hefferman said that he arrested prisoner shortly after twelve on Saturday. Prisoner was taken to the lock up and put with three other persons, and prosecutor picked him out. Prisoner's defence was that the boys were playing "bank it" and he demanded the money because they were gambling. Sentenced to six weeks imprisonment with hard labour.

14 May 26 1891

Penkridge

KILLING A PHEASANT IN CLOSE TIME At Penkridge Petty Sessions **Thomas Ball**, boatman, was charged with taking and killing a pheasant during close time, and **John Smallwood**, also a boatman, was charged with aiding and abetting him. The charge was proved by two constables, and the Bench imposed a fine of 15s, including costs.

15 May 27 1891

Walsall

FOUND DROWNED On Monday a man named George Perrins (55), who had been an inmate of the workhouse for some time, left to seek for work, and yesterday morning his lifeless body was found in the canal, near Bridgeman Street, by a boatman named **James**, who was passing in his boat.

16 May 27 1891

Rugby

PETTY SESSIONS A boatman named **Samuel Gibbons**, for refusing to allow the inspector to the Rugby Rural Sanitary Authority to inspect his boat on April 14 was fined £1 and costs 17s 6d.

17 June 10 1891

Oldbury

ASSAULTING POLICEMEN **Charles Jones** (29), Sherlock Street, Birmingham, boatman, was fined £1 1s, including expenses, for assaulting Police-constable Bibb, on Saturday night, the alternative being fourteen days imprisonment.

18 June 25 1891

DROWNING CASES On Tuesday night Oliver Trewell (2), son of a boatman named **Samuel Trewell**, fell from his father's boat into the canal near Primrose Hill, Netherton, and was drowned.

19 June 26 1891

Birmingham Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **George Bennett** (20), boatman, pleaded guilty to breaking into the warehouse of Joseph Davies, on the 10th May, and stealing 1/2cwt of scrap German silver and other metal. Sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

20 June 26 1891

Burslem

A MANIA FOR STEALING CHAIRS At the Stipendiary's court, at Tunstall, yesterday, John Wright, chairmender, Burslem, was charged with stealing a chair belonging to John Bowers, potter, Brownhills; and also with stealing two chairs belonging respectively to **William Stokes**, boatman, Longport, and Richard Leigh, carter, Burslem. It was stated that the prisoner had been entrusted with the chairs to repair, and also paid money on account to enable him to purchase materials. He never returned the chairs, and upon enquiry it was found he had disposed of them and appropriated

the proceeds to his own use. The police, after arresting the prisoner, returned four chairs to their owners, found that ten others had been sold by the accused, and were making enquiries after fifteen others that were missing. This was said to be the third time that defendant had been charged with the same kind of offence. The Stipendiary said the prisoner seemed to have a mania for chair stealing, which he carried on systematically, and he committed him to gaol for three months with hard labour.

21 June 30 1891

Aston Police Court

ASSAULT ON A POLICEMAN **Luke Dovey**, boatman, Wharf Street, Aston, was charged with drunkenness and assaulting Police-constable Charles Wright in Wharf Street on Saturday morning. The constable saw the prisoner fighting with another man on the canal side near Wharf Street, and followed them into a public house for the purpose of obtaining their names and addresses. Prisoner offered to go with the constable to the lock-up, but on getting outside the house he struck Wright two violent blows in the mouth. He was remanded.

22 June 30 1891

INQUEST Another enquiry took place concerning the death of Henry George Gammage (5), 23 Mile Street. Maria Welsh, a neighbour, stated that on Friday her attention was called to the fact that the deceased had fallen into the canal in Sandy Lane. She ran to the canal, and saw deceased in the water. She asked a man who was on the towing path to rescue the boy, but he said, "I am not going to get in", and walked away. She did not know the man. Witness afterwards saw a boatman named **Thomas Benton**, 4 Court 3 House Blews Street, and he took the lad from the water, but he was quite dead. Mr Weekes said the police and the neighbours had tried to find the man who refused to go to the boy's assistance, but they had failed. He hoped at any rate that he was not an Englishman. A boy who was with the deceased said Gammage took one of his boots off, saying that he was going to bathe, but that he overbalanced himself and fell into the water. A verdict of "Accidental drowning" was returned and the Deputy Coroner awarded Benton 2s 6d in addition to the usual fees.

23 July 1 1891

Aston Police Court

ASSAULTS ON POLICEMEN **Luke Dovey**, boatman, Wharf Street, Aston, was charged with being drunk and with assaulting Police-constable Charles Wright in Wharf Street on Saturday. The charge of drunkenness was dismissed, but for the assault on the constable the defendant was fined 10s and costs.

24 July 7 1891

MEETING OF BOATMEN AT WEST BROMWICH Last night a meeting of boatmen was held at the Eight Locks Inn, Greet's Green, West Bromwich, for the purpose of considering the advisability of forming a branch of the Birmingham and District Boatmen's Union for West Bromwich, and also to discuss the wages and other questions. Mr A H Flavel (secretary to the association) addressed the meeting, and explained the object of the union. He pointed out that it was not their intention to try to injure any steerer who was in sympathy with the men and paid them the recognised rate of wages, but the union strongly protested against men coming from other trades to take up the position of steerer and grow wealthy out of the hard working boatman. It was well known that many of them had to work all day in the rain, and then lie under a piece of cloth during the night. All boats that were taken out for more than one day's journey should be provided with a cabin, and a proper stove to dry the men's clothes, and the members of the union would not be satisfied until they had secured these privileges, in addition to receiving a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. After some discussion, it was unanimously decided to form a branch of the association at the Eight Locks, West Bromwich, and a large number of members joined the society.

25 July 14 1891

Hanley

CRUELTY TO HORSES **Thomas Cotton**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was charged at the instance of Inspector Fresco with cruelly ill-treating a horse. It was stated that on the 19th of June the defendant was in charge of a boat on the Trent and Mersey Canal, travelling through Etruria and Longport. He was seen at both places kicking his horse violently in the stomach, and when the animal was examined by Inspector Fresco, its stomach was found to be covered with bruises. The inspector informed the magistrates that he had received numerous complaints of cruelty to horses on the towing path of the canal. The Stipendiary said he regarded this as a bad case of cruelty, and imposed the full penalty of £5 and costs.

26 July 20 1891

Birmingham Police Court

SHIRKING WORK **Richard Hobbs**, boatman in the employ of the Corporation, was charged with throwing a quantity of rubbish in the canal. The accused was engaged in taking a quantity of rubbish to Solihull Lodge, and it was proved that he threw about a ton of the freight into the canal whilst passing through the Edgbaston Tunnel. Dr Showell Rogers, who prosecuted on behalf of the Canal Navigation Company, stated that the offence was a most serious one; the company had to expend thousands of pounds in dredging the canal. A fine of 50s and costs, or in default a months imprisonment, was imposed.

27 July 27 1891

Staffordshire Summer Assizes

ALLEGED CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH AT BREWOOD In the case of Mary Jane Sumner (20), no occupation, and **George Sumner**, boatman, who were indicted with concealment of the birth of the illegitimate child of the female prisoner at Brewood on April 21, the Grand Jury ignored the bill, the foreman informing his lordship that they had examined the six additional witnesses who had been put forward by the prosecution, but they found that they knew absolutely nothing about the facts of the case. There was not, apart from these, in the opinion of the jury, any case. After having perused the evidence in question, his Lordship said it was altogether immaterial, and he should disallow the expenses of those witnesses and of the prosecution so far as they were concerned.

28 August 28 1891

SUSPICIOUS DROWNING CASE AT MANCHESTER Yesterday at Manchester a rough looking man named **James Duggan** was charged with the murder of a woman, whose name is unknown, by pushing her into the canal at Castleford, Chester Road. About half past eleven o'clock on Wednesday night a man named Frederick Wilkinson was passing over the bridge which spans the canal between the Potato Wharf and Jackson's Quay, when he heard a woman, whom he saw standing on the top of the cabin of one of the boats at the side of the quay, cry out, "Are you in?" Thinking she was the wife of a boatman he took no further notice, but after he had walked on a short distance he heard a man, whom he afterwards identified as the prisoner, shout out, "Come back mate, there's a woman in the "cut"". Wilkinson thereupon ran back and saw the prisoner standing on the boat. He asked him why he did not try to get the woman out of the water, and he said he could not reach her. The prisoner was very drunk, and when Wilkinson asked him where the boat hook was, he laughed at him. With the assistance of another man named Bushell, however, Wilkinson procured a boat hook, and in a few minutes succeeded in getting the woman out of the water, but life had become extinct. Police-constable Evans arrested the prisoner, who stated that the woman had fallen off the top of the cabin. When asked how she came to fall off, he replied, "I know nothing about it, as I was lighting a fire in the cabin at the time". Evans went in the cabin, and found no trace of any attempts having been made to light the fire. He told the prisoner so, and he replied, "I was just going to make it". He was then taken to the police station, but was not in a fit condition to be charged until yesterday, when he said he knew nothing about the woman, and did not hear her shout when she got on the boat. Prisoner was remanded pending the inquest, which will be held today.

29 September 3 1891 Wolverhampton

WASTING CANAL WATER **Jeremiah Edwards**, a boatman in the employ of the Rowley Hall Colliery Company, was fined at the Police Court yesterday 10s and costs, for wilfully wasting water belonging to the Birmingham Canal Company, by allowing it to escape out of a lock.

30 September 15 1891 Birmingham Police Court

SLOGGING WITH A VENGEANCE **Charles Bond** (18) of Wainwright Street, Aston, boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding Alfred Thompson in Love Lane at ten minutes past eleven on Saturday night. Prosecutor was followed from a public house by a gang of men, of whom prisoner was one. As he turned a corner they surrounded him and pelted him with ginger beer bottles and other things, and one of them, prosecutor believed, stabbed him. Prosecutor could not say that prisoner was the man. Police-constable Hilton arrested prisoner, who was pointed out by some women shortly after the assault. Prosecutor has a clean cut wound on the head and a deep cut on the wrist, which might have been caused by broken bottles, but which the surgeon at the hospital attributed to a knife. On the application of Superintendent McManus, prisoner was remanded till Monday next, the police having hopes of being able to arrest other members of the gang.

31 September 23 1891 Birmingham Police Court

A BRUTAL ASSAULT **Charles Bond** (21), boatman, Wainwright Street, Aston and Henry Day (18), ironcaster, 15 Court, Pritchett Street, were charged with unlawfully wounding Alfred Thompson, paliasse maker, 4 Blews Street. Mr Hammant defended Day. Prosecutor said that on Saturday night week, shortly after eleven o'clock, he was in Love Lane, when he saw the prisoner Bond and several other men. He was knocked down, but he could not say by whom, and was rendered unconscious. He recovered consciousness on the way to the General Hospital, where it was found that he had received two wounds on his head, a stab on the back of his hand, and a wound on the left leg. The injuries were dressed and he was allowed to go home. He had been unable to work since he was injured. He had no quarrel with the prisoners. Hannah Moss, court, Love Lane said she was passing down Love Lane when she saw about a dozen lads, including the prisoners, drunk and using bad language. She heard Bond say they would kill somebody, and shortly afterwards she saw Bond and another man attack the prosecutor. Bond struck him with buckles, but she could not say whether the other man had a knife or buckles. Prosecutor was knocked down, and several men struck him with umbrellas while he was on the ground. All then ran away with the exception of the prisoner and the third man, who was not arrested, and they continued to beat the prosecutor until the police arrived. Witness was threatened by the prisoner Day and others for giving information to the police. Mr Timmins said that if anyone interfered with the witness he would be severely punished. Harriet Slater stated that she saw the disturbance in Love Lane. She saw the other man referred to above, but not in custody, stooping over Thompson with an open knife in his hand. He stabbed witness in the arm and threatened her. She did not see prisoners strike any blow. Evidence of the arrest was given, and Mr Harold Mason, house surgeon at the hospital, spoke to the prosecutor attending at the institution. The wounds, he said, did not appear to have been caused by a buckled belt, but by a knife or other sharp instrument. The Bench thought the evidence was insufficient, and reduced the charge to one of common assault. Each of the prisoners was sent to gaol for one month, with hard labour.

32 October 3 1891

SAD DROWNING CASE AT WEST BROMWICH Yesterday a boatman named **Henry Mills** found in the Stour Valley Canal, near Spon Lane, the body of Henry Wright (22), bricklayer, of Bloomfield, Smethwick. Deceased, who had been missing since Monday, was about to be married, and his sweetheart left her situation in Birmingham a few days ago to prepare for the wedding. It is supposed that whilst crossing the lock gate near his sweetheart's home on Monday night, he accidentally fell into the water.

33 October 5 1891

Birmingham Police Court

ROUGHS **Henry Murphy** (33), boatman, Court, Tower Street, was charged with being drunk and violently assaulting James Flynn, bootmaker, Lister Street. Prosecutor said that he was passing the accused in Newtown Row on Friday afternoon, when he was struck on the head by Murphy. Witness had never seen the fellow before, and had done nothing to provoke him. He went for a police officer, and as soon as he gave him in charge witness was violently kicked by the accused. Earlier in the day Murphy had attacked another pedestrian. He was sent to gaol for a month with hard labour.

34 October 17 1891

Aston Police Court

STEALING FOWLS **Frederick Hadley**, boatman, (45), Railway Terrace, Nechells, was charged with stealing four fowls from a coalyard at 309 Lichfield Road, Aston, the property of Charles Walters. While Police-constables King and Tew were on duty on the canal side about two o'clock on Sunday morning, they found the prisoner in charge of the four fowls, the ownership of which was traced to Walters. Prisoner, who had been convicted three times previously, was sentenced to three months hard labour.

35 October 17 1891

DETERMINED SUICIDE OF A POLICEMAN Police-constable Frederick Cave yesterday committed suicide in a very determined manner, and under what at first appeared to be somewhat extraordinary circumstances. As a boatman named **William Merrill** of Stoke Prior was passing along the towing-path of the canal in Gas Street, Broad Street, at about five o'clock in the morning, he noticed lying on the pathway a police-constable's coat, overcoat and cape heaped together, with a helmet and belt not far away. As the owner of the uniform was not to be seen, and as no assistance was at hand, Merrill went in search of an officer, and found Police-constable Hickman, who returned with him to the canal bank, when a more systematic but equally fruitless endeavour was made to ascertain the direction in which the missing constable had disappeared. Unable to find any clue, Hickman and Merrill went to the B Division headquarters, Ladywood, where it had just been found that Police-constable Cave, whose spell of night duty had expired, had not reported himself. When Hickman and Merrill appeared at the station with Cave's uniform, the first thought of the officers there assembled was that their comrade had met with foul play, for many of them stated that they had seen Cave in apparently good spirits when he went on duty. He was also seen assisting to extinguish a small fire in Bishopgate Street at three o'clock in the morning, and Sergeant Jones saw him on his beat in Broad Street about an hour later. Police-constable Sidwell and other officers immediately proceeded to the canal in Gas Street with grappling irons, and began to drag the various branches leading from the basin. At nine o'clock, after about an hour and a half's work, the body was found in the water at a distance of forty yards from the spot where the uniform lay on the bank. The suspicion of foul play seemed confirmed by the singular fact that the deceased's wrists were bound together with a piece of rope. This bore double significance, for it was doubtful whether the man could have tied the rope himself, and had he wished to fasten his wrists he might have done so much more easily by using his handcuffs. The body was conveyed to the mortuary, Ladywood, where Detective Painter took the case in hand. Deceased's ankles were found to be bound with his bootlaces, but one of the officers explained that he did that to facilitate lifting the body on to the ambulance. And as deceased's watch, money, pocket book, handcuffs, keys and other articles were in his pockets, it was seen that no attack with intent to rob had been made upon him. The wife of deceased went to the station to enquire why he had not been home, and when she was told of deceased's mysterious death, she explained that since the death of one of his children he had been depressed in spirits, had threatened to commit suicide, and had tried to purchase poison. It was then apparent that he had committed suicide, and from the fact that deceased's uniform was soaked in water, it is thought that, being a swimmer and finding he could not sink, he got out of the water and, after throwing off his uniform and tying his wrists together, again jumped into the water. He was about thirty years of age, and has left a widow and three children. Cave had been in the

Birmingham force for six years.

36 October 20 1891

Tamworth

ALLEGED FALSE SWEARING At the County Court yesterday, Frederick Sefton, boat builder, Polesworth, was sued by **George Henry Dennis**, boatman of Burton, for £17, in respect of a boat hired by the plaintiff who, according to the terms of the agreement, was to pay £3 in instalments, after which the boat would become his property, he having paid £5 on the signing of the agreement. The instalments were not paid, and the boat had been detained by Sefton. Dennis now swore that the agreement produced, which had been written by Mrs Sefton, and subsequently forwarded to him, was not the one he signed, and the signature was not his. Thomas Wright, the father in law of Dennis, gave similar testimony, and said Mrs Sefton wrote both his and the plaintiff's name on the agreement. The defendant Sefton swore that Dennis wrote both the names, and that the signature on the agreement produced was his own. The judge requested Dennis to sign his name, and after examining the signature, said he had no doubt as to the handwriting being the same as that on the agreement. The evidence and the legal terms of the agreement also favoured the statement of Sefton, and he considered both Dennis and Wright had come here with the intention of committing perjury. He gave a verdict for the defendant, with costs.

37 October 29 1891

Birmingham Police Court

ALLEGED VIOLENT ASSAULT **William Lodge** (18), boatman, no fixed residence, and George Priest (19), stamper, New Bartholomew Street, were charged with violently assaulting a man named Thomas John Magennis, house painter, Rea Street. Prosecutor and another man were having an altercation in Rea Street on Tuesday night, when Priest interposed. He hit Magennis in the face, and knocked him down. Priest kicked him, while Lodge beat him with a stick. Police-constables Watt and Farrington apprehended the prisoners, and afterwards ascertained at the hospital that prosecutor's lip had been cut through, and that there was a scalp wound and slight fracture at the base of the skull. Prisoners were remanded.

38 November 3 1891

Hanley

CRUELTY TO BOAT HORSES At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **James Bayliss**, boatman, Penkridge, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state. It was stated that on the 14th ult, the defendant worked his horse while it was suffering from lameness of the off hind foot to such an extent as to render it unfit to travel. The defendant said the animal had been overfed, causing a humour of the leg, which had been lanced by a blacksmith at Stockton Brook. The horse was travelled from the latter place to Stoke, where it was put up. Defendant was fined 5s and 10s costs. **Alfred Davis**, boatman, Stoke, was also charged with cruelty to a horse. On the 18th ult the defendant was in charge of a horse attached to a boat at Middleport. The animal was in such poor condition as to be little more than a mere frame, and it was suffering from five wounds on the shoulders, which were being chafed by the collar. Defendant had since sold the horse to a slaughterer for a sovereign. He was fined 20s and 10s 6d costs.

39 November 24 1891

Wolverhampton

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the county petty sessions yesterday, **James Statham**, a boatman of no fixed address, in the employ of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, was charged with cruelty to a horse. It was stated that he struck the animal with an iron windlass and kicked it several times. He was fined 10s and the costs.

40 November 24 1891

Tipton

ASSAULTING THE POLICE At the Police Court, **Thomas Cooper**, boatman, no settled abode, was charged with being drunk, committing wilful damage and assaulting the police. Defendant, who was drunk, began breaking the night lamps belonging to Mr Dixon, the contractor for some public works. Police-constable Myatt attempted to arrest him, and was assaulted for his trouble.

Defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs for being drunk, 5s and costs for the assault, and 10s for the wilful damage, together with the cost of the lamps. In default, he was ordered to be imprisoned for eight weeks.

41 December 1 1891 Tipton

SERIOUS ASSAULT ON A BOATMAN At the Police Court yesterday, before the Rev A Cory and Mr Macpherson, **James Hope**, Charles Street, West Bromwich, boatman, was charged with assaulting **Frank Jones**, a boat-steerer of Smethwick, in the employ of Mr Radcliffe. The men were on the canal, and there was a quarrel about the steering of the boat. Hope knocked Jones down and kicked him more than once. The Bench thought the assault was a serious one, and fined the defendant £2 and costs, or a month's imprisonment.

42 December 5 1891 Handsworth Police Court

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Durden**, boatman of Greet's Lane, was charged with assaulting Samuel Hands, of Lewisham Road. At midday on the 30th of last month prosecutor met prisoner on the towpath, near Top Locks, Smethwick. Prisoner was drunk, and hit prosecutor a violent blow on the eye. Prisoner was also charged with being drunk and disorderly, on which charge he was locked up by Police-constable Westren. For the assault the Bench sent prisoner to gaol for one month, and for the drunkenness he was fined 2s 6d and costs, or fourteen days imprisonment.

43 December 10 1891 Dudley

YOUNG WOMEN CHARGED WITH THEFT Yesterday at the Police Court, before Alderman Garratt and Alderman J H Smith, Margaret Moore (20), charwoman, Birmingham Street, and Elizabeth Richards (18), charwoman, Guest's Fold, were charged with stealing a silver watch, the property of **Benjamin Jackson**, boatman, 13 Bell Street, Tipton, on October 11. It was alleged that prosecutor, who was intoxicated, was proceeding down the Tipton Road at midnight, when the young women knocked him down and robbed him of his watch, which they subsequently offered for sale. Their defence was that they found the watch broken on the road. The Bench remanded them until tomorrow for the attendance of the watchmaker who was said to have repaired the watch.

44 December 11 1891

GLEANINGS At Leeds Assizes yesterday, a Doncaster boatman named **Routledge** was indicted before Justice Wright for an assault upon his paramour, Elizabeth Holmes. The accused went home drunk and, pulling the woman out of bed, inflicted a series of terrible wounds with a red hot poker. Routledge, who wept bitterly, pleaded drunkenness as an excuse for the crime. The judge said the case was fortunately almost unheard of in the annals of crime. He sentenced the prisoner to penal servitude for life.

45 December 12 1891 Dudley

THE CHARGE OF STEALING A WATCH Yesterday at the Police Court, before Mr H G Walker (ex mayor) and Mr Tilley, Margaret Moore (20), charwoman, Birmingham Street, and Elizabeth Richards (18), charwoman, Guest's Fold, were charged with stealing a silver watch, the property of **Benjamin Jackson**, boatman, Bell Street, Tipton. Jackson now failed to identify the girls, and they were discharged.

46 December 15 1891 Birmingham Police Court

POSSESSED OF SKELETON KEYS **William Fisher** (48), a boatman living at 4 Frederick Place, Grosvenor Street, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and also with having certain housebreaking implements – namely a bunch of skeleton keys – in his possession. Late on Saturday night prisoner was found by Police-constable Vaughan lying on his back drunk, in Broad Street. He was remanded.

47 December 15 1891

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM An enquiry was then held into the circumstances attending the death of Francis Beesley, aged thirty seven, who lived at No 67 Garrison Street, Bordesley. George Beesley, father of the deceased, stated that deceased was a bachelor, and lived with him. He was by trade an irondriller, and formerly worked at the Midland Works. Of late, however, he had been out of work. On Saturday week last he went out to look for employment, but did not return. On Friday last he heard that deceased's body was at the Duke Street Mortuary. He had never heard deceased say that he would kill himself, and believed he had gone to Leicester, where his brother was living. **Elijah Capewell**, lock-keeper on the Birmingham and Warwick Canal at Lander Street, Saltley, stated that on Friday morning last he found the body of the deceased floating in the lock. **Joseph Cook**, a boatman, said that on Sunday week last he was passing the Lander Street Lock, when he pulled a hat out of the water. He waited to see if anything else would come to the surface, but he saw nothing. The hat had been identified as belonging to deceased. In answer to the Coroner, he said that there was a very dangerous opening at the Lander Street bridge. There was no wall to prevent persons going down the incline from walking into the water. It was a very dangerous place, especially at night. The Coroner said that there was no evidence to show that the deceased intended to drown himself. Indeed, if he were going to tramp to Leicester the route along the canal would be a very natural one. Going down the bank, he might easily fall into the water, as no doubt was the case. His body was not found for some days afterwards, but when found it showed no sign of violence. He himself had inspected the Lander Street bridge, and was sure it was a very dangerous place. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

48 December 17 1891

Staffordshire Assizes

NIGHT POACHING AT KINVER George Parker (63), weaver; John Brookes (52), labourer; Thomas Wilkins (28), labourer; and **Robert Harris** (22), boatman, were indicted for night poaching at Kinver, on the 22nd October, and unlawfully and maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm upon William Matthews. Mr Boddam prosecuted, and Mr Owen defended Brookes and Wilkins. The case for the prosecution was that on the night of the 21st October, William Matthews, a keeper, was watching on land in the occupation of Messrs James E Swindell and George King Harrison at Kinver, Stourbridge. About half past eleven he arrived at Bunker's Hill, and saw signs that poachers were about. Shortly afterwards he saw two men, one of whom he identified as Brookes, and heard the footsteps of other men. He got the assistance of a man named Hughes and they went back to the field, where they saw six men, four of whom were carrying bulky bags on their shoulders. The men saw them and attacked them, Matthews being badly injured. Matthews said that when the six men saw him and Hughes, one of them shouted, "Down with it lads", and the bags were thrown down. Parker remained near the bags and all the others ran after witness and Hughes and pelted them with stones which they took from their pockets. Witness was struck on the face with a stone and knocked down, and when he tried to get up he was struck on the back of the head. He also received blows on the left side and shoulder, but he could not say whether he was kicked or stoned. While he was being assaulted someone shouted out, "Kill the -----", and another voice advised that a pitchfork should be used. Witness produced his coat, waistcoat and shirt, which were saturated with blood about the neck and shoulders. His injuries were dressed by a doctor, and he was incapacitated for duty for a month. William Hughes corroborated the evidence of Matthews and said that he also was assaulted. William Toye, a gardener, said that he saw the four prisoners, whom he knew well, walking in the direction of Bunker's Hill from Kidderminster on the night of the 21st October. They had two dogs with them, and Wilkins spoke to him. Police-sergeant Aldridge and Police-constable O'Leary spoke to hearing of the assault and arresting the prisoners. At Parker's house were found a number of rabbits, and his clothes and boots were wet and dirty. He admitted he had been poaching, but said he went out alone. At the houses of the other prisoners their boots and clothing were found to be wet, and some rabbits were found in Wilkins's house. Each prisoner admitted being out poaching, but they all denied being in company. Police-

sergeant Aldridge said he examined the footprints in the fields, and compared them with the boots of three of the prisoners, and they corresponded. Police-constable O'Leary repeated conversations he heard between the prisoners in the cells, in which admissions were made tending to incriminate themselves. For the defence Parker called a witness named Mole, who said that on the night of the 21st he was out poaching with Parker, and he had eighteen rabbits. No one else was with them. He had been poaching with Parker five or six times. In reply to Mr Boddam, he said he believed it was the night of the 21st that he was out with Parker. Harris called a witness to prove he was not out poaching on the night of the 21st. The defence of the other prisoners by Mr Owen was that they were not present when Matthews was injured. The prisoners were found guilty, and the Judge, in passing sentence, said he considered it his duty to inflict heavy punishment on people who committed such brutal assaults as those for which the prisoners had been convicted. Parker, who did not throw stones, was sentenced to six months hard labour. Brookes was sentenced to five years penal servitude, Wilkins to three years penal servitude and Harris to twenty one months hard labour.

49 December 25 1891

THE SEVERE WEATHER A telegram from Leeds states that the fog in Leeds and district has grown more dense. Trains yesterday were late, tramcars and buses ceased running, and in many parts of the town there was little or no gas. The name of the Goole boatman who was drowned on Wednesday night is **Theophite Thompson** (44).

50 December 31 1891 Dudley

STRANGE CONDUCT OF A BOATMAN Yesterday at the Police Court, **John Cooper** and **William Hall**, boatmen, were charged with wilfully damaging 2 1/2 tons of slack, the property of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company. Mr Tyler (Birmingham) prosecuted and Mr S Ward defended. It was alleged that the defendants, as they passed through the Netherton Tunnel, threw out the slack on to the towing-path and into the canal to save themselves the trouble of unloading it at Rowley Gasworks. The different gaugings showed 30 1/2 tons when leaving Walsall and 28 tons at Rowley. The canal company's servants saw the slack on the footpath, and one man saw the defendants throwing the slack into the water. When spoken to, one of them said it was water he was throwing out of the boat. Cooper was fined 20s and costs, and ordered to pay the value of the slack, 16s. Hall, who was leading the horse at the time, was discharged.

51 December 31 1891

SINGULAR DEATH AT WEST BROMWICH Yesterday afternoon Mr F W Topham (deputy coroner) held an inquest at West Bromwich respecting the death of Joseph Gething (27) of no fixed abode, who died suddenly on the 28th instant. Richard Gething, brother of deceased, identified the body, and stated that about three o'clock on Saturday afternoon he was called to the London and North Western Hotel, Spon Lane, where he found his brother lying very ill. He at once procured some brandy, which brought him round. Deceased was a very heavy drinker. **William Key**, boatman, stated that on the 28th inst he saw the deceased fighting with a man named George Blount on the canal side at Spon Lane. He heard deceased say, "We will have three rounds of friendship", and he and Blount then fought two rounds. Deceased, who was intoxicated, reeled about, and catching his head against a boat, fell into the canal. Witness got deceased out, and he seemed a bit dazed. William Pye, lodging house keeper, deposed that on Saturday deceased went to his house and stayed all night. He grew worse, and expired on Monday morning about nine o'clock. Dr Cloth, assistant to Dr Pitt, stated that the deceased visited his surgery on Sunday evening, and he was then suffering from inflammation of the lungs, brought on by immersion in the water and shock to the system. In his opinion death was due to the immersion. Police-constable Parker having given evidence, George Blount stated that the deceased offered to fight any man in Spon Lane, and having seen witness he wanted to fight him. They struggled together, but no blows were struck. The jury returned a verdict that deceased died from "Shock and inflammation of the lungs".

52 January 12 1892

SUSPICIOUS DROWNING CASE AT COSELEY Yesterday Mr W H Phillips (coroner) held an inquest at the Anchor Inn, Deepfields, touching the death of John Willie Barrett (9), the son of John Barrett, a fireman, employed at the Steel Works, Spring Vale, whose body was found in the canal. The father stated that on the 6th inst his son brought his breakfast, and afterwards started for home, carrying with him two cans. At the time it was broad daylight, and the boy had on an overcoat with a tippet. Later in the day, witness's wife came to the works, and said the boy had not returned home. Witness dragged the canal for two days and nights without success. On Friday the body was discovered in the boat dock at Deepfields. The cans and the overcoat were missing. He could not think the boy took off his overcoat, for it was a cold morning, and he had not more than a half mile to walk. He, however, failed to see any marks of violence on the body. His son was a sharp, intelligent lad. Some time ago he lost a can and £1 3s 6d, and he then stated that a boatman had taken the money from him, but this man could not be found. He could not in any way account for the boy getting in the water, or the loss of the overcoat. The Coroner asked if the garment was buttoned when the boy left; and Barrett said it was. Mr Phillips : It is mysterious that the overcoat is missing. Enoch Fellows said he saw the boy returning from his father's works with his overcoat on, and he was then only a hundred yards from the place where his body was found. He saw no tramps about. The Coroner (to the father) : Did you drag for the overcoat after the body was found? Witness : No; I had been dragging for two nights and days. Continuing, Barrett said the thought the boy had got into the water by foul means. Dr Baker had seen the body. In answer to the jury, witness said he knew of no one who would interfere with his son. He had travelled the same road eight or nine months. The Coroner thought a *post mortem* examination had better be made, in order to see if there were any marks of violence on the head or elsewhere. The inquest would be adjourned for a week, and in the meantime the police would make the most diligent enquiries.

53 January 19 1892

THE MYSTERIOUS DROWNING CASE AT DEEPFIELDS Yesterday Mr W H Phillips resumed an enquiry at the Anchor Inn, Deepfields, touching the death of John Willie Barrett (9), the son of a workman at the Spring Vale Works near Bilston. It has been reported that the boy, who was well and warmly clad, took his father's breakfast to the works, and started on his return home. He never reached there, and his body was found in the canal minus the overcoat, although he was seen within 100 yards of the spot wearing the garment. He had complained previously of being molested by a boatman, and the enquiry was adjourned a week ago for enquiries. Mr Baker, surgeon, now stated that he had made a *post mortem* examination, and death was due to drowning. The father of the deceased said the canal had been dragged frequently since the last enquiry, but no overcoat had been found. The Coroner said it was certainly a mysterious circumstance that the coat was not found; and Police-sergeant Ellis stated that the fullest enquiries had been made. The jury returned an open verdict.

54 February 9 1892

THE CANAL MYSTERY AT DEEPFIELDS At Bilston yesterday, **Jeremiah Edwards** (24), labourer of Engine Street, Tat Bank, Oldbury and **Richard Williams** (27), boatman of Lower Chapel Street, Tividale, were brought up before Mr T Holcroft, charged on suspicion with causing the death of John Willie Barrett (9) and stealing a coat, cap, and breakfast can, the property of Barrett's father. Police-inspector Bishop of Old Hill stated that, in company with Police-constable Moreton, he went on Saturday to Oldbury and, with Superintendent Speke, made enquiries with regard to the charges now preferred against the prisoners. He saw Williams at Tividale, and in answer to enquiries he said he pulled the things out of the canal and put them in the boat. "Jerry" he said had the can and cap, and he had the coat. At Dudley Port, however, he put his share of the articles in the canal again. The coat was a blue one, with a cape on. Williams said he told "Jerry" he should give information to the police, but "Jerry" suggested that they should take the things home, as they might get into a bother if they left them. Witness and Moreton afterwards arrested

Edwards in a public house at Tat Bank. He was then under the influence of drink. Yesterday morning he confronted the two men, and witness read Williams's statement to Edwards, who replied that when he saw Williams take the cap, can, coat and saucers out of the canal, he told him he had better fetch a policeman. He (Edwards) hooted to some men near the Ten Score Bridge, and asked them if they had seen anyone with some breakfast things, and they said they had not; and then Williams said they would take the things home and "make a drink". Inspector Harrison said one of the prisoners was the steerer of a boat, and the other man the driver. Williams had stated that he had the coat and can, and had sunk them at Tividale, and would point out the place; and Edwards had stated that he had the cap and had given it to one of his relations. Williams here said as soon as he pulled the things out of the water he "made complaints". The prisoners were remanded for eight days.

55 February 17 1892

THE DEEPFIELDS CANAL MYSTERY The mystery surrounding the death of John Willie Barrett, aged nine years, whose parents reside in Anchor Yard, Deepfields, still remains unravelled. It may be remembered that the deceased left his home on the 6th January to take his father's breakfast to the Spring Vale Furnaces, Bilston. He did not return, and his body was afterwards found in the canal a short distance from his home, an open verdict being returned at the inquest. Subsequently, Jeremiah Edwards (24), boatman, of Engine Street, Tat Bank, Oldbury, and **Richard Williams** (27), boatman, Chapel Street, Tividale, were ascertained to have made statements with regard to clothing and breakfast tins believed to have been in the possession of the boy when he was drowned, and they were apprehended. They then made very contradictory statements on the subject. The prisoners were brought up again at the Bilston Police Court yesterday, charged with causing the death of the boy and stealing his coat, cap and a breakfast can. Mr R A Willcock (Willcock and Taylor, Wolverhampton) now appeared to conduct the proceedings on behalf of the Public Prosecutor, and asked for a further remand in order that the police might be enabled to make further enquiries. He intended to prefer a charge of murder against the prisoners. Inspector Bishop repeated the evidence which has already been published as to statements made by the prisoners, and they were again remanded for a week, bail being refused.

56 February 24 1892

THE ALLEGED MURDER OF A BOY AT DEEPFIELDS The magisterial investigation into the circumstances attending the death of John Willie Barrett (9) of Anchor Yard, Deepfields, whose body was found in the Birmingham Canal at Deepfields on the 8th January, was resumed at the Bilston Police Court yesterday, when **Richard Williams** (27), of 34 Lower Chapel Street, Tividale, and **Jeremiah Edwards** (24), Engine Street, Tat Bank, Oldbury, two boatmen, were again charged on remand with the wilful murder of the boy, and further with stealing a coat, cap and can, the property of the boy's father. Mr R A Willcock conducted the case for the Public Prosecutor, and Mr J Clark defended. Mr Willcock, in opening the case, stated that on January 6th the deceased was sent with his father's breakfast to Sir Alfred Hickman's Spring Vale Works. He was seen by a man named Fellows returning home along the canal side near the Ten Score Bridge. He was then wearing a blue pilot overcoat and cap. It was a bitterly cold day, and it was not likely that he would take the coat off himself, as it fitted very tightly and he was unable to unbutton it without assistance. It was then about nine o'clock in the morning, and from that time the lad was not seen alive. The canal was dragged, and on the 8th January his body was found within one hundred yards of the place where he was last seen by Mr Fellows. It was then minus the coat and cap, and the breakfast utensils, a can and saucer, were also missing. On the 6th January the two prisoners were in charge of a boat belonging to Messrs Chance of the Alkali Works, Oldbury, which was proceeding to Wolverhampton, and they were near the place where the deceased was last seen alive. On the evening of the same day Edwards entered the Navigation Inn at Tat Bank, Oldbury, and remarked that he and his mate had had a good day, as they had found a lad's coat and cap in the canal at Deepfields, but they had hurried on for fear of being "collared". An inquest was held on the body,

and when Edwards went to the Navigation Inn again he was advised to give the articles up which he had found. He then made no reply. An advertisement describing the articles was subsequently inserted in an evening paper, and Edwards, on visiting the Navigation Inn, was once more advised to give up the things he had found, but he replied, "If they want the things they must fetch them". The prisoners were afterwards questioned by the police, and they then stated that they found the things in the canal, and as they feared to attend the inquest they sank the coat in the canal near to Holcroft's works at Tividale. The coat had since been recovered at the place described by the prisoners. Witnesses were then called. John Barrett, the father of the boy, deposed to the deceased bringing his breakfast on the morning of the 6th January. He started to return home about ten minutes to nine o'clock, and was then wearing a tight fitting overcoat, which he was unable to put on or take off himself. As the boy did not return home, witness had the canal dragged, and the body was found two days later. The coat, cap and breakfast utensils were then missing. Enoch Fellows of 10 Broad Lane, Bilston, deposed that he was working on a pit bank near the Ten Score Bridge, on the morning of the 6th January, and saw the deceased returning home. He was then wearing the coat and cap and carrying the breakfast things. Evidence having been given that the prisoners went with a boat to Wolverhampton on the day the boy was lost, and returned to Oldbury the same night, **Hannah Tolley**, the wife of a boatman living by the canal side at Whimsey Bridge, Oldbury, stated that on the 6th January, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, she saw a boat passing her house. Edwards, who was steering, threw a cap to her, and said it would do for her boy Willie. The boy came up at the time, and he picked up the cap and wore it for some time, but lost it when he fell into a pool. A fortnight afterwards Edwards called to see her, and asked for the cap he had given her for Willie. Witness told him it was lost, and asked him what was the matter. In reply he said, "They are after me about an old hat". Cross-examined : He did not say where he found the cap. Eliza Lloyd, a neighbour of the last witness, deposed to seeing Edwards give her the cap, and repeated the conversation which followed. Edwards said he had found the cap, and a topcoat, handkerchief and saucer in the canal, but he did not state where. Willie Edwards the stepson of Mrs Tolley, also spoke to Edwards giving his mother the cap, on which were the letters "Play up". Thomas Croft Rogers of the Navigation Inn, Tat Bank, Oldbury, stated that on the night of the 6th January the prisoner entered the house and said he and his mate had had a good day, as they had found a boy's overcoat and cap in the canal at Deepfields. Witness asked him if he had reported the matter to the police, and he said he had not. He wished to do so, but his mate would not agree to the information being given. Edwards also said that when they found the things he shouted to some men who were working on a wharf nearby and asked them if they had heard of anyone losing an overcoat, and they said, "No". When they were returning they hurried through the "stop" for fear they might be collared. Edwards also added that his mate had given him a shilling for his share of the overcoat, and he also had the tins and cap. On the 18th January, after the inquest on the boy, witness again advised Edwards to give the articles he had found to the police. He made no reply then, but when witness spoke to him again on the subject, after the missing articles had been advertised for, Edwards said, "If they want the things they must fetch them". Benjamin Flowers said that on the 6th January he was working at a coalpit belonging to Sir Alfred Hickman, near the Ten Score Bridge. He saw a boat passing, and a boatman asked if he had seen a lad on the canal side taking "snapping" anywhere, and added that he had found a can and a cup. Sergeant Ellis of Coseley stated that on Saturday the 23rd January, in company with Police-constable Bayliss, he confronted the prisoner Edwards, and the latter, in reply to questions, denied that he had been out in the direction of Wolverhampton with a boat for two months, as he worked about the dock, and he further stated that he knew nothing about any boatman finding a coat or anything on the canal side. Subsequently he (witness) had a conversation with Mrs Tolley and her son, and in consequence of the statements they made, he again saw Edwards, when he admitted finding the cap on the canal as he was going to Wolverhampton, but denied having seen a boy on the canal side at Deepfields. He added that he had heard the newspaper account of the inquest read, but he knew nothing more of the affair. Inspector Bishop repeated the evidence he gave at a former hearing; and John James, a dredger in the employ of the Birmingham Canal Company, having spoken to fishing the boy's coat

out of the canal near to the place where Edwards said it had been sunk, the Bench intimated that the prisoners would be committed for trial. Mr Clark asked for bail, as he said there was no doubt the charge of murder would break down, but it was pointed out to him that bail was never granted in the case where a person was charged with murder.

57 February 26 1892

FOUND DEAD IN A CANAL BOAT Yesterday Mr E Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Smethwick Police Court concerning the death of **William Nicholls** (51), boatman, who was found dead in a canal boat on the Birmingham Canal at West Smethwick on Tuesday last. **William Pickerill**, who was in charge of the boat, which belonged to Mr John Sadler of Oldbury, stated that on Saturday last deceased fell off the boat into the canal when near Anchor Bridge, Oldbury. He was quickly pulled out of the water, and appeared to recover from the effects of the immersion. On Tuesday morning, about six o'clock, deceased complained of being ill, and went into the cabin to lie down. An hour later witness found him dead. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes".

58 March 25 1892 Staffordshire Assizes

Jeremiah Edwards (24), labourer, and **Richard Williams** (27), boatman, accused of the murder of John Willie Barrett, a boy, at Sedgley, on January 6th.

59 March 26 1892 Staffordshire Assizes

ALLEGED MURDERS The Grand Jury found a true bill in the cases of **Jeremiah Edwards** (24), labourer and **Richard Williams** (27), boatman, who are charged with the wilful murder of John Willie Barrett at Sedgley on the 6th January, and also with stealing clothing, the property of John Barrett.

60 April 6 1892 Staffordshire Assizes

SENTENCES **Jeremiah Edwards** (24), labourer and **Richard Williams** (27), boatman, who were indicted with the wilful murder of a boy named Barrett at Sedgley, but who were acquitted on that count, and found guilty of stealing clothing from the dead boy's body, were each sent to prison for three months with hard labour.

61 May 2 1892

TWO BIRMINGHAM MEN DROWNED IN A LONDON DOCK On Saturday Mr Wynne E Baxter, the coroner for East London, held an enquiry at the Poplar Town Hall into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of **William Fereday** (62), captain of the London and Birmingham Canal Carrying Company's barge *Honesty*, and **William Haines** (45), mate of the same boat, who were drowned in the East India Dock on the 22nd ult. Mr J J Dixon, manager of the London and Birmingham Canal Carrying Company, watched the case on behalf of the firm; and Mr Bamber, of the City Mission to Canal Boatmen, was present in the interests of deceased's relatives. Mary Jane Fereday, of 3 Vine Place, Edward Street, Birmingham, who carried a child at her breast, stated that William Fereday was her husband. He left his home on Saturday 16th ult to go with his boat to London. His hearing and sight were good, and he was a good swimmer. He had several times fallen into the water, but always saved himself by swimming. On Friday last she heard that his body had been found in the dock, though up to that time she had not been informed he was missing. She had seen the body, and identified it. Deceased was an old soldier, and had served through the Crimean War. **James Kirvin**, of 10 Wand Court, Bread Street, Birmingham, said he was a boatman employed on the *Honesty*. The deceased, William Haines, was mate of the barge. He lived at Birmingham, but witness did not know his address. His brother, Harry Haines, was at present an inmate of the Birmingham Infirmary. The boat left Birmingham on Saturday fortnight, and on the following Thursday they were in the East India Dock. Witness and deceased went ashore, and between nine and ten pm they went to the dock entrance, but were refused admission. They had all

been drinking, the captain being very drunk. Finding they could not get to their boat, they walked round to Blackwall pier, on reaching which, witness left them, and went to lie down on a barge in the river. He did not see which way the other two went, but thought they went back to the main road. On the following morning, witness went back to the *Honesty*, and found it just as they had left it when they went ashore on the previous afternoon. At five o'clock in the evening, after making enquiries and failing to trace them, he gave information to the police. Witness was present last Thursday when the bodies were recovered. They were found in the dock within twenty feet of where the barge was lying. The Coroner : I should think you occupied a dangerous position for a drunken man. It is a wonder you were not drowned. George Reynold, a dock constable, stated that on Friday 22nd ult, he was on duty at the river entrance to the East India Dock. Shortly after midnight three men applied for admission. One of them was very drunk and abusive, and was refused admission, but the other two, who said they belonged to the barge *Honesty*, and were sober, were allowed to go to their boat. Witness saw them cross the lock and go towards the island where the *Honesty* lay. Witness did not know that the men had been refused admission at the main entrance three hours earlier because they were drunk. The last witness was not the man who was drunk when the deceased were admitted. John Lewis, a lock gateman, gave evidence as to the recovery of the bodies on Thursday last. From the position of the spot where they were found, he thought that the men were descending from the quay to go on board, and that one stumbled and knocked the other in. There was a mark on Fereday's nose as if he had fallen against something. A juror said he thought that men under the influence of drink ought not to be allowed in the dock. The Coroner : It would be hard lines to send them back into the street to be locked up by the police. The juror: It's much harder to allow them to drown. The Coroner : I think they should be allowed into the docks and kept in a room or shed till they are sober. After some other evidence of an unimportant character had been given, the jury returned a verdict "That the deceased were found drowned, but how they got into the water the evidence failed to show."

62 June 24 1892

STREET RUFFIANISM IN BIRMINGHAM At the Birmingham Police Court yesterday, before Mr T M Colmore (stipendiary), **Chas Bond** (18), boatman, back 139 Wainwright Street; John Taroni (16), tube drawer, New John Street West; Frank Medlicott (18), netting maker, court, Richard Street; Geo Cleaver (16), watchmaker, Manchester Street; and Daniel Glynn (16), wireworker, Staniforth Street, were charged on remand with violently assaulting a lad named Albert Willock on the 8th inst. The prisoners are active members of an Aston Road slogging gang, while prosecutor has allied himself with a rowdy crew identified with Summer Lane. The accuse allege that some time ago one of their party was stabbed in an attack by the rival band. They therefore considered that it devolved upon them to "get their own back". While bent upon this mission they met Willock on the 8th inst on the Old Pleck, Aston. They attacked him most savagely, using buckled belts, and prosecutor was dreadfully maltreated. Police-constable Oldham, who was close by, caught Glynn and Cleaver in the act of assaulting the youth. Medlicott told Superintendent McManus that he stabbed prisoner, while Taroni and Bond, who had been seen to join in the affray, were also arrested. Mr Alfred Lucas, resident surgical officer at the General Hospital, said the prosecutor was suffering from concussion of the brain. He had what was evidently a stab wound in the back, and was badly bruised all over. He vomited blood, and was kept in the hospital until Wednesday. Prisoners were committed to the sessions.

63 July 14 1892

A BOATMAN DROWNED Yesterday the body of **George Brayne** (54), boatman of Tabernacle Street, Oldbury, was found in the Birmingham Canal at Tividale. Deceased was in the employ of Mr J Westwood of Worcester. It is supposed that whilst getting water for his house he accidentally fell into the canal.

64 July 23 1892

KING'S HEATH POLICE COURT At this court yesterday (before Messrs Lane, Elliott and Baldwin), **William Lloyd** (26), boatman, 36 Rea Street South, was charged with stealing two pieces of zinc lining, value 3s, the property of the Birmingham Central Tramway Company, from the disused stables at the back of the Bournbrook Hotel, on July 18. Mr A L Lowe (Johnson and Co) prosecuted. The defendant was found in the stables by the caretaker; he had cut the zinc away from a manger. When charged, he denied cutting it down with the intention of stealing it. He was sentenced to one months hard labour.

65 August 11 1892 Smethwick

ALLEGED OUTRAGE Yesterday at the Police Court, Maria Britton (15), Star Alley, West Bromwich; Harriet Hunt (16), Lyng Lane, West Bromwich and Susannah Tinsley (16), Colley Street, West Bromwich, were charged under the Vagrancy Act with sleeping in a stable belonging to Mr Walter Brookes in Rolfe Street, Smethwick, during the night of the 5th inst. They were all discharged with a caution. **Thos Hadley** (38), boatman of Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, was charged with indecently assaulting Maria Britton, at the same time and place. Mr J W Wall defended. Prosecutrix stated that she was placed in the stable by a man who brought her from Spon Lane in a boat, and he locked the door of the stable when he left. About ten o'clock at night, some man entered the stable and committed the offence complained of, but she could not swear that the prisoner was the man. Police-sergeant Gibbs stated that he met the prisoner coming out of the yard near the stable in which the three girls named above were. He was without a hat. Witness subsequently arrested the three girls for sleeping in the stable, and when at the police station, Britton informed him that she had been assaulted by some man unknown. He afterwards apprehended Hadley and charged him with the offence. It transpired that prisoner's hat was found in the stable where the girls had been asleep, and Susannah Tinsley made an allegation against Hadley. The accused, who reserved his defence, was committed for trial at the assizes, bail being allowed.

66 August 12 1892 West Bromwich

SERIOUS CHARGE At the Police Court yesterday, **Joseph Langham** (36), boatman, Watery Lane, Tipton, was charged with committing an indecent assault upon a girl aged five years, named Betsy Ann Hatfield, Grant Street, Greet's Green, on Wednesday afternoon in a field near the public recreation ground in Whitehall Road. After hearing a large number of witnesses, the Bench sent the case for trial at the assizes.

67 August 15 1892 Brierley Hill

A BOY DROWNED On Saturday Mr A B Smith (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Old Bush Inn relative to the death of Samuel Simpson (7), son of **William Simpson**, boatman, Moor Lane. The evidence showed that on Friday deceased went with a companion, the same age as himself, to bathe in the canal. After counting three, deceased jumped into the water, which was 7ft deep, and was drowned before assistance arrived. The body was afterwards recovered by a man named Chutter. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

68 August 18 1892 Birmingham Police Court

A TRIPLE PUNISHMENT **William Freeth** (28), boatman, Musgrave Road, was charged with violently assaulting Abel Guest and Mrs Guest. There had been an old quarrel between the parties, and it culminated on Tuesday in Freeth and his brother making a ferocious attack on Guest because of a refusal to treat them to beer. In the course of it, they produced knives and buckled belts. Guest was fortunate enough to get into his house and thus to save himself from severe maltreatment. The Freeths afterwards smashed his windows by throwing bricks, and kicked Mrs Guest. One got away, but the other was caught by Police-constable Evans. At five o'clock yesterday morning, in the cell, the prisoner felt his arm become painful, and it was found to have been broken. The injury is

ascribed to a fall. He was sent to gaol for three months for attacking Abel and a further three months for the assault on the woman.

69 August 19 1892

ALLEGED SHOOTING CASE On Wednesday a boatman was coming down the Birmingham and Coventry Canal in his boat, and while nearing the Bull's Head Bridge at Polesworth, a number of young men, who were standing on the bridge, began to "chaff" him. The boatman, whose name is **William Johnson** of Sandbach, Cheshire, took the banter in no good spirit and, it is alleged, seized a loaded fowling piece which he had lying on the deck of the boat, he fired into the group on the bridge, the charge entering the right arm of a young man named Harding, who resides at Pooley Hall. Harding at once went to the Polesworth police station, and Sergeant Unit proceeded along the canal bank, and coming up with Johnson about a mile from the bridge, arrested him. The constable also took charge of the fowling piece, which was found to have been reloaded.

70 August 23 1892 Tunstall

A CHILD DROWNED On Sunday night, while Mary Cunningham, aged five years, was playing with other children at Peake's Bridge on the Trent and Mersey Canal, she fell into the canal and was drowned. The body was subsequently recovered by a boatman named **Carter**.

71 August 30 1892 Birmingham Police Court

CHARGES OF RUFFIANISM **Henry Murphy** (22), boatman, was charged with having violently assaulted Police-constables Burford, John Edwards and Joseph Waters; and Joseph Woodward (20), horse keeper, was charged with having assaulted the first-named officer by throwing a stone. Police-constable Burford stated that on Saturday night he was called to a house in Bridge Street West. Prisoner had been threatening to "put a woman's light out" and was given into custody. He became violent and struck the officer, kicking him on the legs and in the stomach. He in fact made such resistance that it was necessary to use their staves. A crowd gathered as prisoner was being taken to Kenion Street Police Station, and the prisoner Woodward threw a stone which struck witness on the neck. The other officers gave evidence as to the assault by the prisoner Murphy. Prisoner, who appeared in the dock with his head bound and his shirt discoloured with blood, pleaded guilty, but said that the officers had brutally ill-treated him. They struck him across the head with their staves, and he was covered in bruises. Prisoner had several times been convicted on charges of assaulting police-constables. The Bench considered the charge proved, but took into consideration the fact that prisoner had been badly hurt. He was sent to gaol for three months with hard labour. Woodward, who had not previously been in custody, was discharged.

72 August 31 1892

CHARGE OF SHOOTING AT ATHERSTONE At the Atherstone Petty Sessions yesterday, **William Johnson**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with shooting Joseph Harding at Polesworth on the 17th. Mr Payne (Hanley) defended. It appeared from the evidence that complainant, together with others, was on a canal bridge at Polesworth, and while walking down he stopped to speak to a man, when he received several shots in his right hand. Complainant had no wish to press the case, and was of opinion that it was done unintentionally. Defendant said he was interfered with by several men, who continually shouted to his horse to stop, and after this had gone on for some time, he told the men that if they did not desist, he would "shift" them. As this injunction was unheeded, he fetched the gun from the cabin of the boat and fired at the bridge with the object of frightening them. He did not fire at the men. The Bench committed defendant to the quarter sessions, bail being accepted – himself in £20 and two sureties of £10 each.

73 September 14 1892 Old Hill

SINGULAR DEATH OF A BOATMAN On Monday, Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest concerning the death of **Joseph Wilson** (31), boatman, Wright's Lane, who died on Wednesday

night from the effects of internal injuries sustained through lifting a heavy weight, whilst in the employ of the Midland Railway Company. Mrs Wilson stated that on the 1st inst, when her husband returned home from work, he complained of a sore under his right arm, and on the following day he could hardly move his shoulder. On Saturday the 3rd, deceased had to take to his bed, and a doctor was sent for, who said deceased must have strained himself. Shortly before death, deceased told witness that he had “knocked” himself with a crane. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death”.

74 October 18 1892 Aston Police Court

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **Frederick Hadley**, boatman, 45 Railway Terrace, Birmingham, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Holborn Hill; and Lewis Hadley, prisoner's brother, was charged with obstructing Police-constable Paragreen, and further with assaulting Police-constables Shuttleworth and Robbins. The first-named officer took Frederick Hadley into custody on a charge of drunkenness, when the other prisoner came upon the scene and attempted to rescue his brother. Shuttleworth and Robbins went to the assistance of their fellow officer, and took Lewis into custody. When near Church Road, someone shouted, “You're not going like that, are you, Lewis?” whereupon the prisoner turned round and kicked Shuttleworth on the left leg, and subsequently struck him a violent blow. He also kicked Robbins while he was putting the handcuffs on. Frederick was fined 5s and costs, and Lewis 40s and costs in each of the two cases; in default, two months hard labour.

THEFT FROM A SHOP **Thomas Davenport**, boatman, Miller Street, Birmingham, was charged with stealing a roll of oilcloth of the value of 7s 6d from outside 90 Aston Road North. Prisoner was seen to take the property and run away with it, but Police-constable Jennings, who was near at hand, arrested him. A fine of 21s was imposed.

75 October 19 1892 Warwickshire Quarter Sessions

CHARGE AGAINST A BOATMAN **William Johnson**, a boatman, was indicted for unlawfully wounding Joseph Harding jun at Polesworth on the 17th August. Mr Soden prosecuted, and Mr Hugo Young defended. The defence was that the prisoner merely fired his gun to frighten the prosecutor, who had been teasing him, and had no intention of injuring anyone. The shots struck against the bridge, and glanced off and caught the prosecutor's hand. Mr Young admitted that he could not resist a conviction of some sort, and the prisoner would plead guilty. The Chairman cautioned the prisoner against the reckless use of firearms in future, and dealt with him under the First Offenders Act.

76 October 22 1892 Acock's Green Police Court

GROSS CRUELTY TO A CANAL HORSE **William Lloyd**, boatman of Station Road, Langley, near Oldbury, and **James Tolley**, boatman, Canal Side, Stone Street, Oldbury, were summoned at the instance of Inspector Ruane of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for cruelty to a horse. Mr Shakespeare jun appeared to prosecute. The defendants were in charge of a horse belonging to Messrs Showell of Oldbury on the 6th ult, and started with their boat to London. They travelled thither in company with a boatman in the employ of Messrs Hoskins and Sewell, and returned with him. On the return journey, their companion stopped at Brankston Bridge, about thirty miles from Hay Mills, to rest his horse, but the defendants pressed on, and said they should not stop until they got to Oldbury, fifty miles away. At Hay Mills, the horse was in an exhausted condition, but defendants beat it and compelled it to go on, although, as one witness stated, it was nearly falling. When the journey was finished, the horse was so bad that a veterinary surgeon was called in, and sent word to Inspector Ruane. The animal was kept in the stable a month to recover. It was very badly cut and whealed. Evidence was given that the defendants were provided with sufficient corn to feed the animal for thirteen days, whereas Mr Green, veterinary surgeon, said that the animal had been deprived of food for two or three days. Lloyd, who had charge of the boat, was fined 20s and costs, or a months imprisonment; and Tolley, his assistant, was fined 10s and costs,

or fourteen days.

77 November 23 1892 Bilston

A DESPAIRING TRAMP At the Police Court yesterday, James Harris, a tramp, was charged with attempting to commit suicide in the Birmingham Canal, near Deepfields, by drowning himself, on the 15th inst. **Richard Ricketts**, a boatman, stated that he was proceeding towards Whitehouses's furnaces when he saw the prisoner struggling in the canal. He rescued him with a boat hook, when the prisoner asked to be allowed to go in the water again, as he wished to die. The prisoner was committed to take his trial at the sessions.

78 December 2 1892

FOUND DROWNED Last night the body of **Edward Walters** (15), the son of a boatman, was found in the canal at the Crescent Wharf. He was missed about half past eight o'clock, and on a search being made about half an hour later, his father found him in the water. Police-constable Cartwright was called, and he commenced to use artificial means of respiration with a view to reviving the youth. In the meantime, Dr Mitchell of Ladywood, who was passing, saw the lad, and he pronounced life to be extinct. The body was removed to Kenion Street mortuary where it lies awaiting an inquest.

79 December 3 1892

A RORKE'S DRIFT SOLDIER IN TROUBLE At Lichfield yesterday, John McNulty, a corporal in the North Staffordshire Regiment, stationed at Whittington Barracks, was charged with stealing a purse and two sovereigns from the person of Margaret Cotterill, wife of **William Cotterill**, boatman, Wolverhampton; he was also charged with assaulting the woman. The parties were heard quarrelling in Backcester Lane about the purse and money. They were both under the influence of drink. Prisoner knocked the woman down and kicked her, and it was alleged that he was afterwards seen to throw the purse away. Lieutenant Scott gave the prisoner a good character, and said that he had been in the service for eighteen years. He formerly belonged to the 24th Regiment, and fought at Rorke's Drift. The Bench committed the prisoner for trial at the quarter sessions for the alleged theft, and imposed a fine of 5s and costs for the assault.

80 December 9 1892 Tunstall

CRUELTY TO HORSES At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **Benjamin Taylor**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state. The defendant was in charge of a horse attached to a boat at Kidsgrove, while the animal was suffering from a bad wound on the shoulder, which rendered it unfit for work. He stated that he had been ordered to work the animal by the superintendent of the Anderton Company, by whom he was employed, but this was denied. He was fined 5s and costs. **Thomas Cotton**, boatman, was charged with a similar offence. In this case the horse had a wound on the shoulder, which was pressed by the harness when the animal was at work. Inspector Finch stated that the same day he saw the defendant working the horse at Macclesfield, and observing that the animal was in pain, warned the defendant against continuing to work it, but the man continued his journey, and was stopped at Kidsgrove. Defendant was fined 40s and costs.

81 December 19 1892 Aston Police Court

WHOLESALE ROBBERY **Walter Jennings**, boatman, Bright Street, Aston and **Thomas Davenport**, boatman, Miller Street, Birmingham, were charged with stealing two tons of coal, of the value of 35s, belonging to Ira Prestige, coal merchant, Bright Street. The prisoners towed their boat to one belonging to prosecutor at midnight and took the coal away, passing it on to another boat which was close at hand. Detective-inspector Evans took the matter up, and managed to arrest not only the two prisoners, but two men who had been accomplices. These, however, were discharged, but Jennings and Davenport were sentenced to three months each.

82 December 14 1892

EXPLOSION ON A CANAL BOAT At the Longton County Court yesterday, before his Honour Judge Jordan, **John Grimes**, boatman, Wharf Street, Stoke on Trent, brought an action under the Employers' Liability Act, by which he sought to recover from the North Staffordshire Railway and Canal Company the sum of £15 damages for personal injuries caused by reason, as alleged, of defective machinery and the negligence of one of the company's servants. Mr C Walker appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr E A Paine for the defendant company. The case for the plaintiff was that a few months ago he entered the service of the defendants as captain of the canal boat *Motor*, which was propelled by one of Priestman's oil engines, and worked between Stoke and Runcorn. On the night of the 6th September, while the boat was passing through Broken Cross, near Middlewich, the driver of the engine told the plaintiff to fill the engine with oil from the reserve tank. While this was being done plaintiff went to examine the gauge of the engine, when the glass burst and liberated a quantity of oil which was ignited by a naked light near the engine. As the result of the explosion the engine was damaged, the woodwork of the engine room took fire, and the plaintiff was not only badly burned, but had to jump into the canal to save his life. It was contended, in the first place, that the explosion occurred through a defective gauge and, secondly, through the negligence of the engineman in leaving a naked light so near the engine while it was at work. His Honour suggested that it was no uncommon thing for a gauge glass to burst, and Mr Walker admitted that he had no evidence as to the condition of the glass before the explosion. Mr Paine said it was denied that the plaintiff had been asked to fill the engine with oil, or that he had any right to interfere with the machinery at all. Instead of the mishap occurring through a defective gauge, it was much more probable that in the absence of the engineman the plaintiff interfered with the machinery and turned the gauge tap the wrong way, which would cause the glass to break and release the oil. After some argument his Honour said it appeared to him that the accident was due to the breaking of the gauge. Without calling upon the defence he held that there was no evidence of negligence on the part of the company which entitled Grimes to compensation, and he accordingly non-suited the plaintiff, but without costs. It may be stated that **Edward Grimes**, brother of the plaintiff, was working on the boat at the time of the accident, by which he was slightly injured, and made his escape, like the plaintiff, by jumping into the canal and wading to the towing path. Since then Edward Grimes has met with his death by drowning, while working a boat on the River Weaver.

83 December 20 1892 Staffordshire Assizes

CRIMINAL ASSAULTS David Tapp (25), labourer, was charged with attempted rape on his sister, aged nine, and being found guilty was sent to gaol for eighteen months. **Joseph Langham** (39), boatman, was found guilty of the attempt on a girl, aged five, at West Bromwich, and was sent to prison for two years. **Alfred Hall**, boatman, who was convicted of a similar offence at West Bromwich, was also sent to gaol for two years with hard labour.

84 December 31 1892 Birmingham Police Court

A WARNING TO BOATMEN **William Godfrey**, canal boatman, was summoned for allowing a canal boat on the Birmingham and Wolverhampton Canal to be used as a dwelling without being registered, and was fined 5s and costs.

85 January 2 1893

ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER OF A WIFE AT WOLVERHAMPTON What is believed to have been a determined attempt to murder a wife took place at an early hour at Wolverhampton on Saturday morning. The offender is a boatman named **Henry Pemberton**, who has been living for some time in Alma Street, Wednesfield Road. He has been married nearly twenty years, and there have been eleven children the issue of the marriage, of whom nine are living. For some time past he had behaved in a very unkind manner towards his wife, and at last she was compelled, in order to

protect herself, to obtain a separation order. Since then she had been living with some friends, an agreement having been entered into by which the wife was to be allowed a certain sum of money weekly. The husband for several weeks has evinced a desire to obtain the return of his wife, and on a number of occasions he has been noticed to be loitering about the neighbourhood of the residence of his wife in Barley Street. Last week he secured an interview with her at her lodgings, where she was staying with Mr and Mrs Griffiths and, although it was rumoured that he had expressed his intention of murdering her and then destroying himself, he induced her to resume friendly relations with him on his promising to treat her in a more considerate manner than he did before she left him. On Friday the husband and wife met by appointment, and she went to live with him at his house. They had not been long in the house together before a quarrel took place, and matters grew no better during the evening. About two o'clock on Saturday morning a lodger named Swalman heard the husband and wife quarrelling, and it is alleged that Pemberton knocked his wife down, and then, drawing a knife, attempted to murder her. The wife, who is a strongly built woman, struggled desperately with her husband, and her screams attracted Swalman, who rushed into their room, but not before she had been seriously lacerated on the hands, and had received a cut in the throat and above the right eye. He succeeded in separating the couple, and the wife was enabled to escape out of the house before further harm was done to her. She ran to her former lodgings, and informed Mr Griffiths of what had happened. Police-constable David Powell was called to the scene, and seeing the condition of the woman, he conveyed her with all despatch to the hospital, where she was attended by Dr Graham. His examination showed that she had been very badly cut about the hands in her efforts to defend herself, but that the wounds in her forehead and throat were only of a superficial character. After dressing her injuries he did not deem it necessary to detain her at the institution, and she was taken away and placed in the care of her friends. Powell then went in search of the man Pemberton, whom he apprehended and charged him with unlawfully wounding his wife, and he replied, "All right". He was removed to the police station and brought before the sitting magistrates at eleven o'clock, when the charge was altered to one of attempted wife murder. The prisoner, who is a thick-set, burly looking man, made no reply to the charge. He is about forty five years of age, and appeared to recognise the seriousness of the position he occupied. His wife, with her face, neck and hands bandaged, was sworn, and allowed to be seated, as it was evident she was in a prostrate condition. She commenced to narrate the circumstances which had led up to the attack upon her, as detailed above, when Mr Newnham, one of the magistrates, interposed with the remark that she was too weak to give evidence, and suggested that she should be sent to the hospital as an in-patient for a week. Police-constable Powell then deposed to taking the woman to the hospital, and to arresting the prisoner; and Mr C H Graham, assistant house surgeon at the hospital, spoke to the injuries the woman had received. It was then decided to remand the prisoner for a week.

86 January 10 1893

Birmingham Quarter Sessions

VIOLENT ASSAULT ON THE POLICE **George Field** (37), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing 6cwt of coal, the property of A and F Parkes and Co (Limited), and also to assaulting Police-constable Oldham on the 5th November. Mr Cartland, who appeared for the prosecution, said the police officer was very severely injured, and still under medical treatment. The probability was that he would always suffer from his injuries. The case was precisely similar to one for which prisoner was sentenced to a term of penal servitude four years ago. On that occasion he assaulted Detective-sergeant Ashby with great violence. Prisoner declared that the officer struck him and knocked him senseless. Police-constable Oldham said he arrested the prisoner for the robbery of the coal, and he was very violent, kicking witness in the lower part of the abdomen, and also on the knee. Witness then struck him on the head with his staff. The Recorder said the prisoner had been convicted several times, and three times for assaults on the police; at the October sessions, 1888, he was convicted of stealing coal and assaulting a police officer under very similar circumstances. He then received five years penal servitude, and was now out on ticket-of-leave. The effect of this conviction would be that he would have to finish the unexpired term of his license, in addition to

the sentence now passed upon him. He would be now sentenced to six months hard labour and three years police supervision for stealing the coal, and twelve months hard labour, to commence at the expiration of the six months, for the assault on the police-constable. The Recorder hoped the sentence, combined with the fact that he would have to finish his sentence of penal servitude, would teach the prisoner that when he was found stealing anything, it would pay him better not to assault the police.

87 January 23 1893

THE ALLEGED ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT WOLVERHAMPTON At the Wolverhampton Police Court on Saturday, **Henry Pemberton** (45), boatman of Alma Street, Wednesfield Road, Wolverhampton, was charged on remand with attempting to murder his wife, Mary Ann Pemberton, on the 31st December, under circumstances already reported in these columns. Mr R A Willcock prosecuted, and Mr T Dallow defended. According to Mr Willcock's opening statement, the prosecutrix and her husband had been married twenty years, and of eleven children born, nine were living. The marriage had been an unhappy one, and in July last the prisoner was bound over to keep the peace towards his wife, who went to live with friends. Since then, however, the prisoner had repeatedly endeavoured to induce his wife to return to him, but she had refused, and he had threatened to murder her. On the 27th December he said he would kill her if she did not live with him, and on the following day he saw her again and they spent some time together. In the evening, they stayed together at the house of a friend, and the prisoner committed a violent assault on his wife. On the succeeding evening, the woman accompanied her husband to his home in company of a man named Thomas Swalman. The prisoner and his wife had not been in the house long before a quarrel arose, and the prosecutrix endeavoured to leave, but the prisoner locked the door, knocked his wife down, and she felt a sharp instrument passing along her throat. She made a desperate resistance, and after receiving cuts on her face and hands, she succeeded in getting out of the house with the assistance of Swalman, who had rushed into the room and rescued the woman from the clutches of her husband. The prosecutrix then gave evidence, bearing out the statement of Mr Willcock. She said when she went to her husband's house he knocked her down, put his knees on her stomach, tore her bodice open, and her scarf from her neck, and after he had put his hand on her mouth she struggled with him, and was much cut on the hands and face with a knife. She cried out that her husband was murdering her, and Swalman rushed in and helped her to her feet. She then rushed out of the house to that of a friend in Bayley Street, and was afterwards taken to the hospital. On December 27th the prisoner said, when she refused to live with him, that she would have to die. Thomas Swalman stated that when the prisoner made the attack on his wife she cried out, "Don't murder me, Harry; I love yer; don't kill me". When he went into the room, he found it "smothered with blood". Evidence of the apprehension of the prisoner having been given, Mr Charles Graham, assistant house surgeon at the hospital, stated that when the prosecutrix was admitted to the hospital, stated that when the prosecutrix was admitted to the hospital he found a clean cut 2 1/2 in long and 1/2 in deep on the left hand, there were three wounds on the right hand, and wound on the temple an inch long and half an inch deep, and four wounds on the neck. The prisoner was committed for trial at the assizes, and bail was refused.

88 February 8 1893

Birmingham Police Court

SMASHING A LODGING HOUSE WINDOW **Thomas Webley**, an old boatman, was charged with breaking four panes of glass at Rooke's Lodging House in Chapel Street. He had a dispute at the lodging house on Monday evening, and was turned out. He then put his fist through four panes of glass. The prisoner, who said he had not a friend in the world, and only came out of the workhouse the other day, was ordered to pay 5s, the amount of the damage, and was fined 2s 6d and costs, in default fourteen days imprisonment with hard labour.

89 February 24 1893

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN Yesterday, **Enoch Evans** (19), boatman, of Blackhall

Street, Kidderminster, was drowned in the canal. Deceased and another man named **William Nicholls**, who were accompanied by the wife of the latter, had charge of an empty boat, which was being conveyed from Wolverhampton to Kidderminster. At one of the locks at Tipton Green, Evans got out to work the windlass, and while doing so, slipped into the water. Assistance was promptly rendered, but when his body was recovered from the water, life was extinct.

90 February 27 1893

Tipton

DROWNED IN THE CANAL On Saturday afternoon, Mr Hooper (district coroner) held an inquest at the Moulder's Arms, Toll End, on the body of **Enoch Evans** (19), boatman, Blackhall Street, Kidderminster. It transpired that on Thursday deceased was in charge of an empty boat, which was being conveyed from Wolverhampton to Kidderminster, and whilst manipulating the windlass at one of the locks on Tipton Green, he slipped into the water. His companion, a man named **William Nicholls**, and the latter's wife, who was also on board, rendered prompt assistance, but when his body was recovered, life was extinct. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

91 March 14 1893

Staffordshire Winter Assizes

WOUNDING Henry Pemberton (44), boatman, was charged with feloniously wounding his wife, Mary Ann Pemberton, on December 31st at Wolverhampton. Mr Plumtre appeared for the prosecution and Mr Kettle for the defence. The parties had been separated for about six months. On December 30th prosecutrix was sent for to the Mitre Inn, and on going she found the prisoner and two other men there. She stayed there until closing time, when she left in their company. When in Walsall Street, her husband asked her to go home with him, but she refused. He then threatened her and she screamed, and on policemen coming up, they adjourned to a friend's house, where they stayed the night. Next day they were drinking about together. In the evening she went with her husband and the other two men to his house. When in the house, prisoner locked the doors, and afterwards assaulted the prosecutrix in the back kitchen. Afterwards he followed her into the front kitchen, where he knocked her down, and she felt a knife against her throat. In the struggle which ensued her hands were badly cut. The medical evidence went to show that prosecutrix was suffering from wounds on both hands, the throat and over the temple. The wounds on the left hand were caused by a knife, as also were the wounds on the neck. The wounds on the right hand might have been caused by broken glass. The defence was that nothing of the kind of attempted murder was intended, and Mr Kettle asked the jury to reduce the charge to one of unlawfully wounding. The jury found the prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding, and he was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

92 March 15 1893

Oldbury

WASTING CANAL WATER At the Police Court yesterday, **Henry Pickerell**, boatman of Tat Bank, was ordered to pay 13s or go to gaol for fourteen days, for wasting a quantity of water belonging to the Birmingham Canal Company, whilst passing through the locks on the 24th of February.

93 March 15 1893

Staffordshire Assizes

PLEADED GUILTY Joseph Pedley (16), boatman, pleaded guilty to a criminal assault on a girl at Harborne on March 5 last, and was sent to gaol for four months with hard labour.

94 April 12 1893

Birmingham Quarter Sessions

THEFT OF A BRASS VALVE Edwin Hadley (27), boatman, and Thomas White (37), labourer, were indicted for stealing a brass valve of an engine, the goods of Clara Allday, on the 14th January. Mr Foster appeared to prosecute, and Mr Daly defended Hadley. Mr Foster explained that the premises were the same as those in the preceding case (Dartmouth Street), and considerable damage had been done to them. In consequence the police were communicated with, and Detective-sergeant Brown and Detective Long were put on the watch. On the night in question they examined

the premises, and the valve was safe. A watch was kept, and subsequently prisoners were found in the premises and were arrested. The valve, which had been safe before prisoners entered, was afterwards found to have been removed from its position. Evidence to this effect was given by several witnesses. Mr Daly submitted that there was no evidence to show that the prisoners touched the brass, and argued that they were merely committing a trespass, and were not on the premises for an unlawful purpose. The jury found the prisoners guilty, and they were each sentenced to nine months imprisonment with hard labour, and twelve months police supervision.

95 April 12 1893

Wolverhampton

DEATH BY DROWNING Yesterday morning Henry Arkinstall (53), of 9 Albion Street, was at work in Messrs Shelton's timber yard, Canal Street, when he accidentally fell into the canal. A boatman named **Linz** endeavoured to rescue him, but death ensued before he could be taken from the water.

96 April 19 1893

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN Yesterday afternoon an inquest was held before Mr E Hooper (coroner) at the Smethwick Police Court, respecting the death of **Edwin Green** (50), boatman, Sherborne Street, Birmingham, who died suddenly on Saturday. It appeared that deceased and another man were taking a boat from Birmingham to Brownhills. Deceased was driving the horse along the towing-path, and when he reached Spon Lane Bridge he suddenly fell down and expired immediately. The body was afterwards removed to Smethwick mortuary. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned by the jury.

97 April 21 1893

Tunstall

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **Sampson Clews**, boatman, was fined 40s and costs for working a horse while suffering from lameness of both fore legs.

98 May 26 1893

Tunstall

CRUELTY TO HORSES **John Marris**, boatman, Nantwich, was charged with cruelly ill-treating his horse. It was stated that the animal was suffering from sprained tendons, which rendered it unfit for work, but the defendant was found working the animal on the 10th inst. He was fined 10s and 9s costs.

99 June 12 1893

CANAL BOATMEN AND THEIR HORSES On Saturday at the Birmingham Police Court, before the Mayor (Alderman Lawley Parker) and Mr J St S Wilders, **Henry Chatwin** (33) of 97 Great Arthur Street, Smethwick and **Thomas Hadley** (35) of 6 Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, boatmen, were charged with stealing a quantity of corn, the property of Messrs Brooks and Co, Soho Wharf, West Bromwich; and **Alfred Taylor**, boatman, of no fixed address, was charged with receiving the property knowing it to be stolen. Mr Tyler prosecuted on behalf of the Birmingham Corn Merchants' and Consumers' Association. In opening the case Mr Tyler said that it was a somewhat uncommon one. The prisoners Chatwin and Hadley were in the employ of Messrs Brooks and were paid so much per voyage. They were supplied by their masters with corn sufficient for a voyage of three days. Taylor was the owner of a horse, and hauled boats along the canal when employed to do so. It was suggested by the prosecution that a portion of the corn had been sold by Chatwin and Hadley to Taylor for small sums of money. Messrs Brooks's horses had had to do their three days work on two days' food supply. As there had been robberies to a great extent, a look out had been kept, and on Friday about twelve o'clock, Mr Thomas Clayton (of Fellowes, Morton and Clayton) happened to be on the canal side. He saw the prisoners Chatwin and Hadley with a boat, the former on board and the other in charge of the horse. In passing another boat drawn by Taylor's horse, of which Taylor was in charge, Chatwin passed a bag containing something bulky into Taylor's boat. Taylor went on board, and was observed to empty the contents of the bag into some receptacle. The

empty bag was passed to Hadley, and then some coins fell from it, which were afterwards picked up by him. Prisoners' defence was that they had only been repaying some corn they had borrowed, but Taylor had told Inspector Williams that the other men were strangers to him. Hadley pleaded guilty. The Bench inflicted a penalty of £1 and costs, or in default a months imprisonment. The Mayor said they were indebted to Mr T Clayton for the steps he took, not only on public grounds, but on behalf of the dumb animals which he sought to protect.

100 June 27 1893

Willenhall

ALLEGED UNLAWFUL WOUNDING At the Police Court yesterday, Dennis Squire (18), a locksmith of New Invention, was again remanded for a week on a charge of unlawfully wounding **Samuel Stevens**, boatman of Monmer Lane, who was still too ill to attend.

101 June 28 1893

Staffordshire County Sessions

THEFT OF PIG IRON **William Cottom** (24), boatman, and **Reuben Shirley** (73), boatman, were indicted for stealing half a hundredweight of pig iron, the property of the Birmingham Canal Navigations at Tipton on April 28. Witnesses stated that they saw prisoners rake the iron from the canal, and afterwards try to remove the initials from the bar to avoid identification. Prisoners admitted taking the iron from the canal, but denied that they intended stealing it. They were found guilty, and were each sentenced to one months imprisonment. The record against Shirley showed that he had served thirty three years in penal servitude for various offences.

102 July 4 1893

Willenhall

SERIOUS ASSAULT At the Police Court yesterday, Joseph Smith, Isaiah Jones, Dennis Squires, John Squires and Henry Willetts, five men living at New Invention, were summoned for assaulting **Samuel Stevens**, boatman of Monmer Lane, on the 11th ult. Mr John Clark prosecuted, and the two Squires were defended by Mr R Tildesley, and Smith by Mr Turton. Originally Dennis Squires was charged with unlawfully wounding, and the case was adjourned, owing to the serious illness of Stevens. The complainant now stated that he was driving through New Invention, and whilst passing a crowd, a stone was thrown, striking him on the head. John Squires then pulled him out of the trap, and he lost consciousness, and was confined to his bed for ten days. George Pace, a labourer of New Invention, spoke to Joseph Smith throwing the stone, and said that after John Squires had pulled the complainant out of the cart, Isaiah Jones kicked him, and Dennis Squires struck him in the eye. Another witness named Mary Perry stated that someone called to the complainant to pull over, but he drove through the crowd, and knocked two children down. Smith was fined 40s and costs; Dennis Squires, Jones and Willetts were each fined 5s and the costs; and the case against John Squires was dismissed.

103 July 8 1893

Aston Police Court

ALLEGED BURGLARY James Clayton, labourer, of no fixed residence; Benjamin Trueman, carter, 10 Argyle Street; and **Arthur Wharton**, boatman, of no fixed residence, were charged with burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house and shop, 308 Lichfield Road, and stealing seven pots of jam of the value of 7s 8d. About a quarter past twelve on the morning of June 30, Frederick Davis, prosecutor's manager, while upstairs heard a crash of glass, and going into the shop he found that the window facing Sutherland Street had been broken and seven jars of jam stolen. Police-constable Upton said that while on Cuckoo Bridge he saw the three prisoners examining the door of a pawnbroker's shop. He followed them, and when near Sutherland Street he heard a crash of glass and saw the three men run away. He communicated with Police-constable Lewis, and they together chased the prisoners into Argyle Street, where Upton arrested Clayton and handed him over to Lewis. The other two men were arrested by Police-constable Lewis. The prisoners were committed for trial at the assizes.

104 July 11 1893

THEFT AT PERRY BARR At the Tipton Police Court yesterday, **Luke Dovey** (33), Richard Street, Aston, boatman, was charged with stealing a live turkey, value 12s 6d, the property of George Foden, farmer, Perry Barr. It was shown that the prisoner took the bird from prosecutor's farm on the morning of the 7th inst, and was shortly afterwards seen to drop it on the canal side. He pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to one months hard labour.

105 July 29 1893

Staffordshire Assizes

SENTENCES James Spencer (24), boatman, who pleaded guilty to committing a rape upon Sarah Ann Pegg, was sentenced to seven years penal servitude.

106 July 29 1893

SHOCKING CHARGE AGAINST A FATHER At Wolverhampton yesterday, **Edward Payne**, boatman, was charged with criminally assaulting his daughter Henrietta, who is stated to be under the age of sixteen years. A remand was granted on the application of the Chief Superintendent of Police, who stated that the girl had made a written statement of what had occurred. From this it appeared that whilst travelling from Ellesmere to Wolverhampton, his two daughters, one of whom was over the age of sixteen years, occupied one bunk and the prisoner another, and he entered their sleeping compartment and committed an offence with both of them.

107 August 3 1893

SHOCKING CHARGE AGAINST A FATHER At Wolverhampton, yesterday, **Edward Payne**, a middle aged boatman, was committed for trial on a charge of having criminally assaulted his daughter, Henrietta Payne. It was alleged that whilst travelling from Ellesmere to Wolverhampton, the prisoner slept with two of his daughters, the girl Henrietta and an elder sister, and that he assaulted both of them. They, however, made no complaint until their mother took proceedings against their father for non-payment of arrears of maintenance. The evidence disclosed a shocking state of immorality. The defence was a total denial of the allegations.

108 August 5 1893

West Bromwich

ASSAULTING A COUNTY COURT BAILIFF Yesterday at the County Court, **William Whitehouse**, boatman of Sheepwash Lane, Great Bridge, was fined £1 for assaulting Enoch Arblaster, a bailiff of the court, on the 21st of June. The complainant went to defendant's house to serve a judgement summons upon him, when defendant struck him twice in the face.

109 August 7 1893

Walsall

A BOATMAN DROWNED On Friday, **George Johnson** (21), a boatman in the service of Mr Arthur Jones, Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, by some means fell into the canal at Goscote with the tiller, and was drowned before his fellow boatman, who was with the horses, had missed him.

110 August 14 1893

West Bromwich

SWINGBOAT ACCIDENT On Saturday night, **Isaac Bishop**, boatman, residing in Wood Lane, was admitted into the District Hospital suffering from a compound depressed fracture of the skull caused by falling out of a swingboat in Wood Lane.

111 August 15 1893

DROWNING CASES Yesterday the body of **Daniel Jones** (71), boatman, was found in the Gloucester Docks. Deceased was employed on board the longboat *Wellbourne*, and on Saturday night went ashore to purchase provisions and did not return. Yesterday morning a loaf of bread was seen floating near the longboat, and this led to dragging operations and the recovery of the body.

112 August 18 1893

AUDACIOUS ASSAULTS At the Brierley Hill Police Court yesterday, **John Simpson**, boatman, Moor Lane, was charged with assaulting William John Jordan, glasscutter, Wordsley, and John Husselbee, publican, Wordsley, on the 5th inst. Jordan said he was with Husselbee at Commonside on the 5th inst, and some bother was going on between Simpson and some young men. Defendant said that he was a nose-breaker, and came up to witness and gave him a terrible blow, which broke his nose. Witness said he should summon him, and defendant said with an oath he would give him something to go to Brierley Hill for. Afterwards defendant, in trying to get at witness, knocked Husselbee down, rendering him insensible. Defendant threw Husselbee's hat and stick in the canal, and tried to throw Husselbee in. Witness interfered, and defendant gave him a "socker" and threw him over the railings into a field, injuring him so much that he could not work. Husselbee also detailed defendant's violent conduct. The Stipendiary said the assaults were most serious and unprovoked ones. He committed the defendant to hard labour for six weeks in each case, the terms to run concurrently.

113 August 23 1893

Oldbury

EXTENSIVE THEFT OF LEAD At the Police Court yesterday, before Messrs J E Wilson, G Henton and J W Wilson, **Charles Houghton** (52), boatman of Windmill End, near Old Mill, was charged with stealing 25lb of lead, the property of Tharsis Sulphur and Copper Company. Late on the night of the 18th inst, the prisoner was met by the watchman on the works, James Allcock, in the yard with two pieces of lead in his possession. When he saw the watchman he dropped the lead, and ran away to his boat. Sergeant Cooper searched the boat, which was lying near the prosecutor's works, and found the lead mentioned in the charge concealed in a box. Prisoner was sentenced to twenty eight days hard labour.

114 August 30 1893

Birmingham Police Court

ON PREMISES FOR AN UNLAWFUL PURPOSE **Edward Pilkington** (44), boatman, 2 Court 3 house, Adam Street; and James McLoughlin (25), bricklayer, Mill Street were charged with being on the premises of Mr Bishop, Brewery Street Wharf, with intent to commit a felony. Mr Tyler prosecuted on behalf of the Coal Owners' Association, and Mr Hooper defended McLoughlin. On the night of the 21st inst, the prisoners were found in the loft of a stable on the wharf, which had been previously locked up. A crowbar was found inside the loft, and this had evidently been used to break open the door. A bag of oats was also found to have been removed from a bin. The prisoners, who were arrested by Police-constable Bonell, were sent to gaol for three months with hard labour. Both of them bore very bad characters.

115 August 30 1893

SUICIDE The body of a man named William Vickers, lately living in a court off Osler Street, was discovered in the Worcester Canal near Church Road, Edgbaston, on Monday night. During the day, a boatman named **Benjamin Ball** discovered a coat and hat on the towing-path near to where the body was afterwards found. Inside the hat was affixed a note addressed to the deceased man's brother, asking him to go to the box in Osler Street, where he would find a letter. It was also hinted that the canal should be dragged, and on the canal being dragged the body was recovered. Deceased had been in great trouble lately, and on Saturday night he told a friend that he should do one of three things, go on the road and look for work, go to the workhouse, or drown himself.

116 September 21 1893

SMETHWICK POLICE COURT **John Pearsall**, boatman, of Stone Street, Tat Bank, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a pony by working it in an unfit state on the 9th inst. Detective Robinson proved the case, and a fine of £1 1s, including costs, was imposed.

117 September 30 1893

ACCIDENT Last evening, **John Bryan**, boatman, Lapworth, was thrown from a horse, with the result that his face was injured and one of his legs broken. He was taken to the Birmingham General Hospital and detained.

118 October 13 1893 Tunstall

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Cotton**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state. It was stated that on the 10th inst, Inspector Finch saw the defendant's horse on the towing-path of the canal in Tunstall attached to a barge. The animal was very lame and had one of its hind legs bandaged. When the bandage was removed it was found that the fetlock had been badly sprained. The leg had been unskilfully blistered, and the removal of the bandage brought away part of the skin and some of the flesh with it. Mr (Fox?), veterinary surgeon, testified that the horse was in great pain and totally unfit for work. After seeing the animal the Stipendiary said the defendant must have known it was suffering great pain, and fined him £5 with £1 costs.

119 October 30 1893 Dudley

SENT TO GAOL FOR CRUELTY At the County Petty Sessions on Saturday, **William Henry Slater**, boatman, Alrewas, and **William Bryan** (16), boatman, Rugeley, were summoned, the former for causing a horse to be worked while in an unfit condition, and the latter for working it. Both defendants were also charged with stealing portions of a fence belonging to the North Staffordshire Canal Company, on October 25th. Slater was in charge of a boat, and Bryan was driving the horse. Police-sergeant Potto saw Bryan pulling the fence to pieces and throwing the wood on to the boat, and Slater was putting it into the cabin. The horse appeared to be very lame, and on examination he found it to be lame on both hind feet and the off fore foot. He had the animal taken out, and put in a stable. Next day Inspector Hamar saw it, and found it to be utterly useless for any work, as it was suffering from diseased bones, besides having badly strained tendons, and on his advice defendant had it shot. Slater had been convicted before of a similar offence, and was now sent to gaol for a month without the option of a fine. He was also fined 5s and costs, or seven days, for the theft of the fence. Bryan, who stated that he simply acted under Slater's instructions, was let off with a caution.

120 November 16 1893 Dudley

CRUELTY TO A PONY At the Police Court yesterday, **Edward Jones**, boatman, Smethwick, was summoned for ill-treating a pony by working it while suffering from lameness. Mr J Clarke (West Bromwich) defended. Inspector Baker of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, gave evidence, which was supported by Mr A Green, veterinary surgeon. A fine of 10s and costs, including the veterinary surgeon's fee, was imposed.

121 November 17 1893 Tunstall

HEAVY FINES FOR CRUELTY TO HORSES At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **James Copestake**, boatman and a lad named **Thomas Taylor** were summoned for a similar offence. (Working a horse in an unfit state). In this case, the horse, which was used for hauling a boat on the canal, was very old, in poor condition, and lame from an injury to the fetlock. Taylor was discharged and Copestake was fined £2 and costs.

122 December 9 1893 Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions

THEFT AT TIPTON **William Blackham** (23), boatman, was convicted of stealing a wheelbarrow &c at Tipton, belonging to William Roberts and Co, and was sent to gaol for three months.

123 December 12 1893 Dudley

CRUELTY TO A GELDING At the Police Court yesterday, **William Round**, boatman, Netherton, was fined 20s and costs for allowing a man in his employ to work a gelding whilst suffering from

lameness.

124 January 23 1894 Birmingham Police Court

EXTENSIVE THEFT OF BEER **Henry Murphy** (29), Blews Street, boatman, was charged with stealing three firkins of beer from the stores of Walter Showell and Sons (Limited) on the 9th inst. Henry Wild, the manager, said that the premises were locked up on the evening named, and the following morning he found that a door opening on to the canal had been unfastened from the outside, and that someone had been in the place. The desk had been forced open in the office, but nothing was taken from there. From the cellar, however, three firkins of beer were missing. About a week later he identified two of the casks in Newtown Row, and the third one was found empty in the canal near the stores. Joseph Blower, Oddfellows' Arms, Manchester Street, said that on the night of the 10th, prisoner brought two barrels of beer into witness's father's yard, and asked witness to purchase them. Witness said, "No, I won't; take them away as soon as you can," and prisoner replied, "Oh, if it's like that I'll fetch my mate". About eleven o'clock prisoner and another man tried to remove the barrels on a handcart, but were unsuccessful. Witness informed the police. Detective-sergeant Davies stated that he arrested prisoner, who replied, "You have got to prove this against me". Prisoner denied stealing the beer. He said he first saw the barrels in the yard of the Oddfellows' Arms, and was asked by a man to sell them. He was committed to the sessions for trial.

125 January 23 1894 Birmingham Police Court

MORE STABBING CASES **Henry Robbins** (27), fitter, 5 Court 4 house, Essington Street, was charged with having stabbed **William Smith**, boatman, 3 Court, George Street Parade. On the 13th, prisoner and prosecutor fought in Gas Street, and in the course of the second round prosecutor cried out that he was stabbed. Prisoner was held down by several men until a policeman arrived. He then said, "Let me get up. I know I have done it. I was only getting my own back." A blood stained knife was found in one of the prisoner's pockets. Prosecutor was detained in the Queen's Hospital for some time. Prisoner was committed to the sessions for trial.

126 January 31 1894 Bilston

ALLEGED CRUELTY TO CHILDREN At the Police Court yesterday, **Sarah Cox**, wife of **Joseph Cox**, boatman, of Millfield Road, Bilston was summoned for cruelly ill-treating her four children. Mr Rowland Tildesley prosecuted. The evidence showed that, although her husband was in receipt of good wages, the mother allowed the house to get in a most filthy condition, and the children were correspondingly dirty and insufficiently clad. The woman was accustomed to have "drinking bouts", and on one occasion fell down in the yard upon the baby. The defendant was sentenced to six weeks hard labour.

127 February 2 1894

A BOATMAN DROWNED The body of **George Wilkins** (22), a boatman of Miles Street, Camp Hill, Birmingham, has been found in the canal at Ryder's Green, West Bromwich. Deceased and another man were sleeping in a cabin boat on Tuesday night, which was lying in the canal at Ryder's Green. On Wednesday morning, deceased's companion missed him when he got up, and upon searching the canal, he found the body of the deceased in the water. It is supposed deceased rose early in the morning, and accidentally fell into the canal. Deceased leaves a widow and one child.

128 February 3 1894

A BOATMAN DROWNED Yesterday Mr E Hooper held an inquest at West Bromwich respecting the death of **George Wilkins** (20), boatman, who resided at Camp Hill, Birmingham, and who was drowned in the canal at Ryder's Green on Wednesday. Mrs Wilkins said her husband, who was in the employ of Messrs Fellowes, Morton and Clayton, left home on Tuesday morning in company with a man named Beresford to go to West Bromwich. Deceased was a very heavy sleeper, and it

generally took her two hours to wake him. **T Beresford**, a boatman, said that on Tuesday morning at 6.30 witness and deceased started from Saltley to go to Wednesbury with a quantity of pit timber. After unloading it they went to Ryder's Green, West Bromwich and, it being wet, they stayed there for the night. They had their supper all right, and then went to sleep in the cabin. When witness woke about 4.45 the next morning, deceased was missing. The canal was dragged, and deceased's body was discovered about four yards from the boat. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

129 February 10 1894

Aston Police Court

CLEVER CAPTURE OF FOWL STEALERS William Hutchinson, labourer, Brearley Street; **Ralph Higgins**, boatman, 52 Large Street, Birmingham; and **Thomas Devonport**, boatman, Blews Street, were charged with stealing thirty fowls from Brownhills, Staffordshire. Superintendent Walker said that that morning he received a telegram from the police at Brownhills announcing that thirty fowls had been stolen, and asking that the canal should be watched. Accordingly, Detective-sergeant Whitcroft and Police-constable Dawson went on to the canal side, and about eleven o'clock saw a boat approaching in charge of the prisoners. When near a lock, one of them handed a bag to another of the prisoners who was on the towing-path, and he threw it down an embankment near the canal side. The officers followed the men, and when they arrived at the Deykin's Avenue lock they were arrested. On making an examination of the bag it was found to contain the missing fowls. The magistrates remanded the accused, who pleaded not guilty, to Brownhills.

130 February 15 1894

CHARGE OF FOWL STEALING At the Brownhills Police Court yesterday, before Mr A E Manley, Colonel W G Webb, and Messrs G Brown and G R Dycott, William Hutchinson, labourer, Brearley Street; **Ralph Higgins**, boatman, 52 Large Street; and **Thomas Devonport**, boatman, Blews Street, Birmingham, were charged with breaking into a building at Swingbridge Farm, Brownhills, on February 8, and stealing therefrom twenty four fowls, valued at £3, the property of George Howdell, farmer. Mr Addison of Walsall defended. On Friday morning, prosecutor found that his fowl pen, which was near the canal side, had been broken into, and twenty four fowls stolen. It was suspected that the theft had been committed by boatmen. A telegram was sent to the Aston police, and Detective-sergeant Whitcroft and Police-constable Dawson went to the canal side at Witton, and arrested prisoners with a bag in their possession containing twenty four fowls, which were afterwards identified by prosecutor. Prisoners were committed for trial at the Stafford Adjudged Quarter Sessions, bail being refused.

131 February 22 1894

ALLEGED ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT OLD HILL At the Old Hill Police Court yesterday, before Messrs W Bassano, J Walker and W H Holcroft, **William Neate** (43), boatman of Reddall Hill, Old Hill, was charged with attempting to murder his wife, **Olive Neate**, on the 1st inst. Mr Plant (Dudley) defended. Prosecutrix said she asked for money to buy food, and her husband told her to get it where she could, as she would not have another halfpenny of his. He then struck her several violent blows about the face and body. She complained to the police, and immediately she returned, prisoner picked up a jug and threw it at her, the missile just missing her. He declared he would take her life. Some hours afterwards, when she again asked for money, prisoner struck her a violent blow on the head with a hammer. The blow rendered her unconscious, and when she was recovering prisoner kicked her several times about the body. She ran into the wash house and hid herself, but he found her, took her back to the house, threw her down and locked the door, remarking that he was going to finish her. Whilst she lay on the stairs he beat her unmercifully with his fist. Witness got to the window and shouted for help. Prisoner then threatened to dash her brains out against the wall. She shrieked, "Murder", and managed to get to the bottom of the stairs, when the police burst open the door and rescued her. Further evidence of the assaults and threats was given, and the prisoner was committed to Stafford Assizes.

132 February 23 1894

Tunstall

CRUELTY ON THE CANAL At the Stipendiary's Court yesterday, **Thomas Clutton**, boatman, was fined 20s and 12s 6d costs, for cruelty to a horse, by working it on the canal at Kidsgrove while lame from a sprain of the fetlock joint.

133 March 2 1894

West Bromwich

A LENIENT PUNISHMENT At the Police Court, yesterday, **James Chater** (50), boatman of Hall Green, Foleshill, near Coventry, was charged with shooting at Alfred Smith (31), Union Street, West Bromwich, on Wednesday night, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm. Smith went to defendant's cabin boat at Spon Lane, and asked for 2s, which he said defendant owed him. Defendant refused to pay the money. A quarrel ensued, and the two men struggled together. Smith struck defendant in the mouth. The latter then seized his gun and threatened to blow Smith's brains out. He pointed the gun at prosecutor and fired, the contents just missing his head. He also reloaded the gun and again threatened to shoot prosecutor. Police-constable Heatherly subsequently went to the boat and found the gun produced, loaded and capped. Prisoner made an admission, upon which he took him into custody. Defendant, who pleaded that the prosecutor threatened him, was bound over to keep the peace for six months, himself in £20, or in default fourteen days hard labour.

134 March 6 1894

A MAN KILLED ON THE RAILWAY Yesterday afternoon, a shocking accident occurred at Albion Station on the London and North Western Railway. It appears that **Luke Leek** (35), boatman, was passing over the level crossing when he was knocked down by the 2.40 express train from Birmingham to Wolverhampton, and killed. The body, which was badly mutilated, was removed to the West Bromwich mortuary.

135 March 7 1894

Birmingham Police Court

ALLEGED DISHONESTY BY AN EMPLOYEE **William Godfrey**, a boatman living at Monument Road, was charged with breaking into a stable at Morville Street, in the occupation of Mr G J Eveson, coal merchant, and stealing therefrom a quantity of hay and about 3cwt of coal. It appeared that some suspicions were entertained as to robberies from prosecutor's premises, and on Monday night Detectives Tingle and Kilby secreted themselves there, and kept watch through the small hours of the morning. Tingle stated that about four o'clock he saw prisoner and his son enter the loft – where the officer had concealed himself – and fill a bag with Canadian hay. An hour later prisoner, in pursuance of his duty, left the wharf with one of his employer's boats, and was subsequently seen by the detective to stop at his dwelling, which is on the canal side. There, according to the evidence, he threw out about 3cwt of coal, and the hay referred to in the charge was afterwards found in his kitchen. There was no evidence as to how the prisoner became possessed of the coal, but it was proved that the boat was empty overnight, and that the only wharf from which the coal could have been taken was Mr Eveson's. Joseph Kendrick Fellows, who has charge of the prosecutor's wharf, deposed that prisoner had no right to enter the loft, and that if he removed either coal or hay under the circumstances imputed, he was guilty of felony. Prisoner elected to be tried by a jury, and was committed to take his trial at the Quarter Sessions.

136 March 30 1894

Birmingham Police Court

ASSAULTING A CONSTABLE **William Lodge** (21), boatman, 25 Bartholomew Street, was charged with being drunk and assaulting a police constable. He was drunk on Wednesday, and was warned by Police-constable Crump that if he persisted in interfering with passers by he would be locked up. The words were scarcely uttered when prisoner struck the officer in the mouth, and afterwards kicked him. The constable said that prisoner was the most violent man he had ever seen in custody. He was sent to gaol for two months with hard labour.

137 April 10 1894

Birmingham Sessions

STEALING THREE BARRELS OF BEER **Henry Murphy** (27), boatman, was indicted for breaking and entering the warehouse of Walter Showell and Sons (Limited) on January 10, and stealing three nine gallon barrels of beer. Mr Turton prosecuted; prisoner was undefended. The beer was stolen from premises known as The Stores, situate in the Crescent, and it was proved that on the following evening, prisoner endeavoured to sell one of the barrels at the Oddfellows' Arms, Manchester Street. Prisoner was found guilty of receiving the stolen goods, and was sentenced to eight months imprisonment with hard labour.

138 April 11 1894

Bilston

CRUELTY At the Police Court yesterday, **Henry Preston**, boatman of 83 Alma Street, Wolverhampton, was fined 20s and the costs for working a mule while in an unfit condition. It was stated that the animal could only walk on three legs.

139 April 12 1894

Birmingham Sessions

ANOTHER STABBING CASE Henry Robbins (26), striker, was indicted for maliciously wounding **William Smith**, a boatman, on January 13 last. Mr Symonds was for the prosecution; prisoner was undefended. The evidence was that on the night of the date in question, Smith and the prisoner fought outside an inn in Gas Street, both being the worse for liquor at the time. After a round or two of fighting, Smith felt himself stabbed in the temple. No one actually saw the blow delivered, but a young man named Isaac William Forest heard prisoner say prior to the fight that he would put a knife into Smith, and saw him pass something like a knife from the right hand to the left, and then into his pocket, immediately after Smith had shouted that he was stabbed. Prisoner was arrested a few minutes later by Police-constable Birmingham, and he then said, "I know I have done it; I was only getting my own back". The officer searched him, and found a blood stained penknife in his left hand trousers pocket. Prisoner read a written defence to the jury, in which he said the knife must have been put in his pocket by some of the crowd, as it was not his, and had not been used by him. Two lads were called for the defence, but their evidence did not assist prisoner's case. The jury found prisoner guilty, and it transpired that there were twenty two previous convictions against him. He was sentenced to fifteen months hard labour.

140 April 14 1894

Birmingham Sessions

THEFT OF HAY AND COAL **William Godfrey** (42), boatman, was charged with stealing 3cwt of coal and 56lb of hay, the property of his master, George James Eveson. Mr Noble prosecuted. On the night of the 6th of March the prosecutor had his loft watched. Prisoner was seen to enter it and take away a bag of hay. He was arrested at his house, where the hay was found, together with some coal which had been removed from the boat of which he had charge. A previous conviction for stealing hay ten years ago was proved, and prisoner was sent to gaol for six months with hard labour.

141 April 25 1894

Newport (Salop)

STARVED TO DEATH An inquest was held yesterday at the Workhouse on the body of a boatman named **Joseph Boden** aged sixty two years. On Friday morning Mr Crickmer, the relieving officer, had his attention called to the deceased, who was lying ill in a boat at Norbury Junction, and by the doctor's order he was carefully removed to the workhouse, where he died soon after his admission. The man's wife was also removed at the same time, but she appears to be recovering her strength. Both were in a shockingly filthy condition. The *post mortem* examination showed that whilst the various organs of the body were healthy, there were no traces of the reception of food for some days. Evidence was put in to prove that the man had received about 30s in wages on or about the 4th inst, and it was further elicited that some bread was in the cabin and about 6s, when the couple were removed. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence, "That the man had

died from failure of the heart's action, produced by insufficient food". The Coroner pointed out there were proofs that they did not seem to be without means to buy food, but that they were without the ability to procure it. Several officials of the Shropshire Union Canal Company were present, and the jury expressed a wish that their attention should be called to the want of periodical inspection of the cabins.

142 May 9 1894

Wolverhampton

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE At the Borough Police Court yesterday, Annie Tamms (26) of North Street, was brought up under remand charged with attempting to commit suicide by jumping into the canal. The evidence showed that the woman was seen in Canal Street, apparently in a very excited condition, and a little later was found struggling in the canal. A boatman named **John Penrose**, who saw her, pulled off his coat to save her, but was held back by some of his friends, and he then got a boat hook and rescued the woman. As she threatened to jump into the water again, a policeman was called, and she was given into custody. Penrose further stated that just previously he had saved a man who had fallen into the canal. The woman was bound over to be of good behaviour for three months, and Penrose was awarded 15s for his gallant conduct.

143 June 13 1894

West Bromwich

ALLEGED MURDEROUS AFFRAY ON A CANAL BOAT Yesterday **James Chater** (46), boatman of Hall Green, Coventry, was admitted into West Bromwich District Hospital suffering from terrible injuries, alleged to have been inflicted upon him by a man in his employ. Early in the morning a quarrel arose, and it is alleged that Chater was beaten and kicked in a most brutal manner, and the cabin of the boat in which the assault took place presented a shocking appearance. Police-sergeant Howell procured a cart, and conveyed the injured man to the hospital. Dr Helme, the house surgeon, found that he was suffering from concussion of the brain, a scalp wound eight inches long on the right side, and another wound on the left temple, and that he had sustained other injuries about the face and head. He lies in a precarious condition. Subsequently, **Enoch Franks** (40), boatman of no fixed abode, and **James Smith** (37), boatman of Brentford, Middlesex, were arrested by Police-sergeant Howell and Police-constable Horton, and they will be brought before the magistrates tomorrow.

144 June 15 1894

Birmingham Police Court

THEFT OF CORN **Herbert Bradley** and **Harry Hobbs**, boatmen of no fixed abode, were charged with stealing ten bags of corn, of the value of £10, belonging to the Corporation. Hobbs was in the employ of the Corporation at the Interception Department, Shadwell Street, and on the 20th April the corn was taken away by the two men and offered for sale to a person named Hadley, who refused to purchase it. Information was given to the police, and the prisoners were arrested by Detectives Hefferman and Cartwright, the latter of whom traced Bradley to Clay Mills near Burton, Hobbs being taken into custody from Montague Street. The Stipendiary sentenced the prisoners to six weeks hard labour each.

145 July 3 1894

Birmingham Police Court

STREET RUFFIANISM Joseph Osbourne, 3 Vandy Terrace, Green Lane, was charged with assaulting William Brooks on the 23rd ult. Prosecutor stated that about eleven o'clock on the night named he was walking along Coventry Road, Small Heath, when four or five men came up to him. One of the number kicked him in the back, without saying a word, causing him to fall in the gutter. Whilst he was down he received several kicks, and amongst those who kicked him was prisoner. In consequence of his injuries he had been compelled to attend the hospital. A fine of 40s and costs was imposed, or one months imprisonment in default. **Francis Coley**, a boatman of no fixed residence, was charged with assaulting John Miller. According to prosecutor's statement, on Saturday night he was in the Shepherd and Shepherdess, Heneage Street, and quarrelled with a man. The upshot of this was that he and his opponent went into the street to fight. After two or three

rounds he fell, and he remembered nothing else until he found himself at the hospital. Prosecutor admitted that at the time “he was not drunk or sober”. A woman who witnessed the fight stated that she saw prisoner kick prosecutor on the head while he was on the ground. A sentence of fourteen days imprisonment was imposed.

146 July 4 1894

Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

STEALING IRON **Samuel Simpson** (28), boatman; **John Simpson**, on bail; and **Joseph Hickman**, on bail; were charged with stealing 12 1/2cwt of iron at Brierley Hill, the property of Messrs Hill and Smith. Prisoners were engaged as boatmen, and it was alleged that early on the morning of the 4th of May they took the iron from prosecutors' premises, which adjoin the canal. They were subsequently found dealing with the iron. They endeavoured to show that they had “recovered” the iron from the canal. Prisoners were found guilty, and each sentenced to one months imprisonment with hard labour.

147 July 5 1894

ROUGHS AT ASTON At the Aston Police Court yesterday, before Messrs Cooper and Willis and Dr Malins, **John Murphy**, boatman, Plume Street, was charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and with assaulting Police-constable Wright and John Mills (16), also of Plume Street. The boy Mills threw a soft ball at prisoner's son, and Murphy thumped him on the head for doing so. The officer Wright went to his house in order to get his correct name, as the lad was desirous of summoning him. Prisoner answered the constable's enquiry by throwing a brick at his head, and in the course of a struggle which ensued, the two fell to the ground. While in this position Murphy kicked Wright in the ribs, and it was only with the assistance of Police-constable Spencer that the prisoner could be got to the lock up. For the drunkenness prisoner was fined 5s, a like sum for the assault upon the boy, and fourteen days for the assault upon the constable.

148 July 11 1894

WEST BROMWICH QUARTER SESSIONS **Enoch Franks** (42), boatman, was indicted for unlawfully wounding **James Chater**, boatman, Hall Green, on the 12th of June. Mr R E C Kettle (instructed by Mr J Clarke) prosecuted. It was alleged by prosecutor that whilst in the cabin of his boat, prisoner struck him with a drawplate, inflicting serious wounds upon his head, for which he had to be treated at the hospital. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and he was sentenced to nine months hard labour.

149 July 27 1894

Staffordshire Assizes

CRIMINAL ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN **George Boffey** (29), boatman, was indicted for having criminally assaulted Mary Parkes, aged fifteen years and five months, at Rowley Regis on the 5th and 6th of April. Mr Disturnal appeared to prosecute. The jury found the prisoner guilty, but his Lordship deferred passing sentence.

150 July 30 1894

Staffordshire Assizes

SENTENCES **Henry Rogers** (42), boatman, for stealing two bags of bones, the property of Thomas Foley, at Tipton on 1st July 1894, was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

151 SENTENCES George Boffey (29), boatman, for like offences (assault) on Martha Parkes (15) at Rowley Regis on 5th and 6th April, was sentenced to eight calendar months with hard labour.

[[Mary or Martha?](#)]

152 July 31 1894

Birmingham Assizes

STEALING IRON Edward Pilkington (41), gun finisher, and **David Kerwin** (36), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing, at Birmingham on July 3rd, 5cwt of iron, the property of the Birmingham Canal Navigations. Pilkington, who, his Lordship said, had lived a life of depredation, was sentenced to three years penal servitude. Having reason to believe that Kerwin, though he had been

convicted previously, had during the past few years been trying to live honestly, his Lordship passed upon this prisoner a sentence of only three months hard labour. These prisoners had been originally committed to the sessions.

153 August 7 1894

STREET ACCIDENT **Thomas Bate** (66), a boatman living at the back of 2 Pickford Street, Bordesley Street, was knocked down by a horse and trap in Colmore Row last evening. He sustained a serious wound of the left knee, and was conveyed to the General Hospital, where he was detained.

154 September 20 1894

Birmingham Police Court

WASTING CANAL WATER The Birmingham Canal Navigation prosecuted a boatman named **William Smith** for wasting canal water, by raising the paddles of the locks before the gates were closed. Defendant admitted the offence, but said he did not think he was doing much harm. He was fined 20s and costs.

155 September 29 1894

Stoke on Trent

A BOATWOMAN DROWNED Yesterday Mr John Booth (coroner) held an inquest on the body of **Mary Price** (54), the wife of a boatman, which had been found in the Newcastle branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal a few hours previously. The evidence showed that the deceased went with her husband's boat to Newcastle for a load of iron. On Thursday afternoon she left the boat to go to Stoke, stating that she should return along the canal side. As she did not do so, her husband and son went in search of her, but without result, and the next morning her body was found in the canal at Trent Vale. It was a dark and foggy night on Thursday, and it was supposed that the deceased had accidentally fallen into the canal and been drowned. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

156 October 2 1894

Birmingham Police Court

"NO DISGRACE" **Charles Hardell**, boatman, and John Mills, carter, Moland Street, were charged with gambling in Staniforth Street on Sunday afternoon. Constables H Jones and Hunt said they watched a group of quite fifty men and youths playing pitch and toss. A dozen coins were flying in the air at the same time, and the prisoners were standing amongst the crowd looking on. They ran away when the officers made themselves known. When arrested, Mills said they were "waiting for a fight". [Laughter] Mills (to the magistrates) : Now really, gentlemen, I hope you don't think two married men would stand with boys playing pitch and toss? Police-constable Jones : They were most of them men. Mills : Now, gentlemen, there was going to be a fight. It's no disgrace, no serious crime. Mr Bunce reminded the prisoners that it was an offence against the law to be with people who were playing pitch and toss in a public thoroughfare. As that was their first conviction for such an offence, they would be fined 2s 6d each without costs.

157 October 5 1894

West Bromwich

AN UNFOUNDED BELIEF An inquest was held yesterday by Mr E Hooper (coroner) concerning the death of **Joseph Kempson** (40), boatman, who died in the District Hospital on Tuesday. John Kempson, brother of deceased, said that on Monday afternoon he was informed of his brother's illness. He removed him to the hospital. Deceased had no means of subsistence, and witness was of the opinion that he was "clemmed" to death. Dr Helme deposed to making a *post mortem* examination of the body, and to finding that death was due to heart disease. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned by the jury.

158 October 15 1894

A BOATMAN DROWNED Early yesterday morning **John Stokes** (40), a boatman who lives in a court in Irving Street, was loading a boat near one of the canal locks in the neighbourhood of Aston

Road, when he slipped into the water. Owing to the suction from the lock, he was drawn under the boat, and before his mate could get him out, death had taken place.

159 October 17 1894 Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **John Hodgkins** (63), boatman, criminally assaulting Ruth Carter at Harborne, twelve months hard labour. He was also ordered to be bound over, himself in £20 and to find two sureties of £10 each, to be of good behaviour for six months after the expiration of his sentence. In the event of prisoner failing to find the sureties, he was to undergo a further three months hard labour.

160 October 18 1894

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM Mr Oliver Pemberton (city coroner) held an inquest at the Victoria Courts yesterday upon the body of **John Stokes** (42), who lived at 30 Court, 3 house, Irving Street. The deceased was a boatman in the employ of Mr Law of Bordesley Street Wharf, and was described as a skilful and experienced man. On Saturday, he and a companion named **Randle** fetched a boatload of coals from Cannock. They stopped at Witton all night, and started early the following morning towards town. The deceased went on in front of the boat in order to prepare the locks for its reception. On reaching a lock near Mill Street, Randle missed deceased, and on looking into the lock saw him in the water in an upright position. The body was quickly recovered from the canal, and Police-sergeant Vanderkist tried to induce respiration by artificial means, but failed. Death was due to drowning. There was no evidence to show how deceased got into the water, but it is supposed that he slipped off the gates of the lock whilst crossing from one side to the other. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

161 October 23 1894 Brierley Hill

BOATMEN AND THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT At the Police Court yesterday, **Noah Webb**, boatman, was summoned for not sending his child to school, and a school attendance order was asked for. It was stated that the defendant was in the habit of taking the child on his trips on the canal, and the child's schooling was thus much neglected. The magistrates fined defendant 5s and made the school attendance order asked for by Mr Allden, one of the Board's visiting officers.

162 October 23 1894

NEWS OF THE DAY **George Shaw**, boatman of Kidsgrove, was remanded yesterday, at Hanley, on a charge of having attempted to murder his wife by throwing her into the canal.

163 October 24 1894

A MEDICAL MAN AND SUNDAY WORK At an inquest held yesterday, at Alpraham, Cheshire, on the body of a canal boatman named **Thomas Bricknell**, who was fatally kicked by his horse, it transpired that the deceased lay in great pain all day on Sunday. Dr Munro's assistant was sent for, but refused to attend "because it was Sunday". The jury, in returning a verdict of "Accidental death", commented on this, and expressed regret that the doctor had not seen deceased before death.

164 October 29 1894

A HAMSTEAD BOATMAN DROWNED An inquest was held at the Beaufort Arms, Hamstead, on Saturday, by Mr E Hooper (coroner for South Staffordshire), relative to the death of a boatman named **John Teasdale** (19), who resided at 19 Union Road, Aston. On Friday morning at an early hour, deceased was called up by his mate, **Joe Bolton**, to go to work. They went to the canal together, and Teasdale went on to get the lock ready for the passage of a boat. Whilst doing so, he fell into the water, where his mate discovered the body shortly afterwards. **James William Cope**, lock-keeper, said that in all probability Teasdale slipped, the toe of one foot caught in the heel of the other, and he was pitched into the water. Witness had himself narrowly escaped a similar accident, and he thought that there was hardly any boatman who at one time or another had not been tripped

up in that way. A juryman suggested that a rail should be erected on the lock side, but witness considered the idea impracticable. He thought anyone used to canal work would, in the event of a slip, catch hold of the balancing beam used to push the gates of the lock open. But as a rule the men thought nothing about the matter; if there was danger, they were used to it, and did not notice it. The Coroner said that something ought to be done to prevent the recurrence of such an accident. The Birmingham Canal Company had splendid talent in the way of engineering at its service, and it seemed to him a marvel that something had not been done to ensure greater safety. In summing up, the Coroner said the best thing which could be done would be to recommend to the canal company that ambulance classes should be started. No attempt at artificial respiration seemed to have been made in the present case. Members of an ambulance association would have made the attempt at once. A juryman remarked that after a body had been in the water as long as half an hour it had been resuscitated by the means stated. Several members of the jury spoke to the same effect, and asked the coroner to bring the matter before the notice of the canal company. This the coroner promised to do. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

165 **October 30 1894**

THE ALLEGED ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT HANLEY Yesterday at Hanley, before the borough justices, **George Shaw**, boatman, was charged on remand with having attempted to murder his wife, **Sarah Shaw**. Mr Ashmall appeared for the defence. The Chief Constable (Mr H Windle) stated that the prisoner and his wife had lived together rather unhappily for some time past, and for about eight weeks Mrs Shaw was away from her husband. At the beginning of the month, prisoner sent to his wife, and asked her to come back to him, and she returned to his boat on the 4th inst, whilst it was lying at Etruria. Prisoner left the boat almost as soon as his wife returned, and was away all day. At night she went in search of him, and found him drinking at the Foaming Quart. She persuaded him to return to the boat, and while they were walking by the side of the canal, prisoner deliberately pushed his wife into the water. **John Hulse** (who was the prisoner's assistant) came up at the time, and succeeded in getting Mrs Shaw out of the canal. While she was in the water the prisoner called out to Hulse, and told him to "let the ----- drown". They subsequently returned to the boat, and nothing further occurred until the following night when the prisoner, having sent Hulse away to attend to the horse, went into the cabin where his wife was, taking with him a rope with a noose at one end of it. He put the noose over his wife's head and pulled it tight round her neck, threatening to murder her. He struck her in the face, banged her head against the side of the cabin, and kicked her. She screamed, but no one came to her assistance, and prisoner continued to beat her until he was tired. He then took the rope from round his wife's neck, but refused to allow her to leave the boat until the next evening, when he gave her threepence to buy something to put on her eyes, which were swollen and discoloured. After she had been out, prisoner refused to allow her to return to the boat. The Magistrates' Clerk said it would be necessary to have Hulse before the Court. The Chief Constable said that a witness summons had been used, but the police had not been able to serve it on him, or ascertain his whereabouts. As it was necessary in the interests of justice that he should be present, a further remand was asked for. Mr Ashmall said he was anxious to have Hulse present, as his evidence would put a very different complexion on the affair. The accused was further remanded for a week, and admitted to bail, himself in £100, and two sureties in £50 each.

166 **November 5 1894**

Stoke on Trent

DISORDERLY BOAT PEOPLE At the County Magistrates Court at Burslem on Saturday, **William Poxon**, boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and assaulting the police; and his wife **Emma Poxon** was likewise charged with assaulting the police. **John Higgins**, boatman, was charged with disorderly conduct, and **Mary Ann Higgins**, his wife, with obstructing the police. It was stated that the previous night the two male defendants quarrelled in Copeland Street, and on Police-constable Wilson interfering to quell the disturbance, Poxon assaulted him. Poxon was arrested, whereupon the women tried to prevent his being locked up, and during the

struggle the officer got his thumb badly twisted by one of the females. Ultimately all the defendants were locked up. William Poxon was fined 5s and costs for being drunk, and 10s and costs for assault; John Higgins was fined 2s 6d and costs, and the two women 10s and costs each.

167 November 6 1894

West Bromwich

A BOATMAN DROWNED Yesterday Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Law Courts respecting the death of **Samuel Cutler** (17), boatman, who formerly lived with his parents in Bromford Road, Oldbury. Cutler and a man named **Samuel Stokes** were taking a loaded boat through the Eight Locks at Greet's Green, when Cutler suddenly disappeared. A rake was obtained, and Stokes shortly afterwards found the body of deceased in the water about three yards from the mouth of the lock. He supposed that deceased was stepping on the side of the lock for the purpose of closing the gate when he fell into the water. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

168 November 19 1894

Tipton

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN On Saturday Mr Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Moulder's Arms, Toll End, on the body of **Thomas Hamblett** (22), boatman, Coneygre, Dudley Port, who was found drowned in the canal. **Abraham Taylor** stated that on Monday he and deceased were engaged to convey a loaded boat from Rowley Hall Colliery to Bradley, witness being in charge of the horse, and Hamblett acting as steerer. When near Tipton Furnaces, they met a boat steered by a man named **James Downing**, and witness shouted some instructions to deceased, who replied, "All right". After the boats had passed each other a short distance, Downing called to him informing him that something had splashed in the water, and witness found that deceased was missing, and the helm and tiller were floating in the water. Witness got on another boat, and with a boat hook searched for deceased until the arrival of the police, whom he sent for immediately he missed his mate. Witness was of opinion that the helm must have become released in some way, and that the deceased, in attempting to recover it, fell into the water. It was nearly dark at the time the splash was heard. Witness had known a helm to come out when the tiller was pushed over the side of the boat too far. James Downing said that as the boats passed he spoke to deceased, who was then sitting by the fire bucket, with one hand on the tiller and the other in his pocket. The rope of the boat of which witness had charge did not pass over the other boat. Witness assisted Taylor to search for deceased. Police-constable Taylor stated that dragging operations were commenced shortly after information of the occurrence had been received, and they were continued nearly the whole of the following day, but the body was not recovered until Wednesday morning. They found the body in 6ft 6in depth of water near the Summerhill bridge, only a few yards from where the splash was heard. On the night deceased was missed, it was very windy. The jury were of opinion that deceased must have fallen into the water whilst endeavouring to recover the helm, and returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

169 November 24 1894

Aston Police Court

KICKING A WIFE **Enoch Wood**, canal boatman, Aston, was summoned for assaulting his wife **Rosina Wood** on the 15th inst. The case was before the Court on Monday, but was adjourned in order to allow complainant to call witnesses. Mr F Hooper appeared for Mrs Wood, and Mr B Baker defended. The complainant stated that on the date named she went to a public house to speak to her husband, when he struck her a violent blow in the face, knocking her down and discolouring her eye. While she was on the ground, he kicked her, at the same time saying, "It's a shame to use a fist upon a woman as long as you have got good hobnail boots on". He then went home, and complainant subsequently visited the house in company with four other woman, and on going upstairs saw her husband in bed. He got up, and again struck and kicked her, and later repeated the assault. He told the women to leave the house or he would treat them in the same manner. She visited Dr Hoar's surgery, and he examined her, and found several marks of violence on her body. In answer to Mr Baker, witness admitted that she did not go to see Dr Hoar until Tuesday last, the day after the adjournment. Dr Hoar gave evidence as to the injuries, and several witnesses spoke to

the assault. For the defence, Mr Baker denied that any offence was committed until after Mrs Wood found her husband in bed when, seeing that she had brought the women to assist her in assaulting him, he struck her in self defence. The magistrates convicted the defendant of a common assault, and fined him £5 without costs.

170 December 6 1894

STRANGE DEATH AT OLTON A singular death occurred on the canal side near Olton at about six o'clock yesterday morning. The fog was then very dense, and a boatman named **Abel Mucklow**, who was travelling in the direction of the city with his boat, was accosted by a respectably dressed man, who enquired the time. Mucklow informed the enquirer, who then dropped behind. A moment or two later, Mucklow heard a splash and, fearing that the man had fallen into the water, retraced his steps in the direction from which the splash had proceeded. He searched the canal side by the aid of his lantern, and after going a few yards, discovered the man who had previously enquired the time, lying face downwards on the towing-path. His clothes were wet through, showing that he had been in the water. Although only a minute or so had elapsed from the time he had heard the splash to the discovery of the body, the boatman could not perceive any signs of life. He therefore at once went in search of assistance, and Dr Freer, Mr Turner and Police-constable Wall returned with him to the spot. Endeavours were made to induce artificial respiration, but without avail, and the body was therefore moved to the Barley Mow licensed house at Solihull, where the inquest will take place today. It is supposed that the deceased lost his way in the fog and stepped into the canal, which bends just at that spot. The boatman, of course, was aware of the bend, and had the assistance of a light. Whether the death was due to drowning has not transpired, but it seems more probable that the shock or fright caused death, as such a short time intervened between deceased's fall into the canal and the discovery of his body by the boatman. In his pockets were found a wedding ring and three other rings, a number of religious papers, and a copy of a magazine, bearing the name of Annie Vincent. An envelope with the address of Mrs Wright, North Villiers Street, Leamington, was also discovered upon him. A Leamington correspondent telegraphs that the man's name was Wright, and that his mother declares that he had been in a peculiar state of mind for some time past, owing to want of employment.

171 December 19 1894

Acock's Green Police Court

INTIMIDATING A WITNESS Thomas Caldicott (13), Alfred Manders (14) and Francis Henry Leadham (12), all of Hay Mills, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of James Jackson, coal merchant, of Tanyard Lane, Hay Mills. For some time past the prosecutor had missed coal from the boats at the wharf, and on the 15th inst, a boy named Edward Fletcher saw the prisoners take some coal from one of the boats. A boatman in the prosecutor's employ named **Alfred Lane** saw Manders and Caldicott on the same day, coming from the direction of the wharf with about 3/4cwt of coal on a handcart. He (the boatman) afterwards saw them trying to sell it. The Bench ordered the lads to receive six strokes each with the birch rod. Superintendent Curtis then said that the mothers of Manders and Caldicott had intimidated the witness Lane by threatening to throw him into the canal, and if it had not been for the timely assistance of the police, he had not the least doubt that they would have carried their threat into effect. The magistrates said that that was a far worse charge than the one against the boys, and decided to hear the case at once. Lane corroborated the superintendent's statements, and added that the women made use of other threats. Mr Jackson said he heard defendants threatening Lane. The women denied the charge, but were bound over in £5 each to keep the peace for six months.

172 December 27 1894

SINGULAR DEATH OF A BIRMINGHAM BOATMAN On Christmas Day a boatman named **William Bates** met his death at Tyburn, near Erdington, in a somewhat extraordinary manner. With other men, Bates went from Birmingham in the morning to fetch a boat which was on the canal near Tyburn. In the course of their progress along the towing-path, the horse of which they were in

charge, from some at present unexplained cause, fell into the canal, and in attempting to rescue the animal, it was so injured that it had to be destroyed. So far as can at present be ascertained, the men then went to the public house known as Tyburn House, where they spent some time, and later in the day Bates left for the purpose of fetching some food from the boat, which was close at hand. Almost immediately afterwards, some men who were passing the canal saw him in the water, and although he was promptly got out, life was found to be extinct.

173 December 29 1894 Wolverhampton

ALLEGED FRAUD BY A BOATMAN At the Police Court yesterday, **William Brown**, boatman, Bilston Road, was charged with falsifying receipts given for toll. The prisoner was a servant in the employ of Mr H T James, agricultural produce merchant, Wednesfield Road, and when going on journeys, he was given money to pay for toll and other expenses. It was alleged that he had altered the figures on the toll tickets, and had thus been able to defraud his employer. He was committed for trial.

174 January 2 1895 Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **Michael Naughton** (34), boatman, to stealing coal at Darlaston in June 1894. Twelve months hard labour.

175 January 5 1895

BOYS DROWNED AT WEST BROMWICH Yesterday Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Law Courts, West Bromwich, respecting the death of Arthur J Coley (5), whose parents reside in Oak Road, West Bromwich. The evidence showed that about two o'clock on Wednesday, the boy was sliding on a pool at the rear of the Oak House, when the ice broke and he fell into the water. He was pulled out by a boatman named **William Cresswell**, and whilst Mr H E Spencer was endeavouring to restore animation, a woman named Fanny Cooksey snatched the child from him, and took it into a neighbouring house. The pool is very deep, and only partially fenced. The Coroner said that under the new Act, the duty to look after such pools would fall upon the Inspector of Mines; and in the present instance, he should be compelled to call his attention to its dangerous condition. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death". An inquest was held yesterday, at the same place, relative to the death of Thomas Edwards (8), whose parents reside in Spon Lane. About eleven o'clock on Thursday the boy, whilst crossing the Birmingham Canal by means of a lock gate, accidentally fell into the water, and before assistance could be procured he was drowned. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned by the jury.

176 January 5 1895 Quarter Sessions

QUARTER SESSIONS **George Shaw**, boatman, was indicted for having inflicted grievous bodily harm on his wife, **Sarah Shaw**, on the 5th October last; and there was a second count charging him with unlawfully wounding her. Mr H T Boddam prosecuted. It was alleged that while the prisoner's boat was lying at Etruria, he threw his wife into the canal as they were returning from a public house where they had been drinking. She was rescued from the water by a man named **Hulse**, the prisoner's assistant. It was further alleged that the prisoner subsequently put a rope round his wife's neck and attempted to strangle her, and that he beat her about the face with his fists, blackening both her eyes. The defence was simply a denial of the allegations, and a contention that the woman was drunk and fell into the canal. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and the Recorder sentenced him to fifteen months imprisonment with hard labour. The Recorder told Hulse, who was a witness in the case, that he had committed a series of perjuries in the witness box for the purpose of shielding the prisoner. Whether or not he would be prosecuted for his perjury depended upon someone else, but if he was so prosecuted and found guilty, he would probably get a long term of imprisonment.

177 January 18 1895

Birmingham Police Court

A BRUTAL FELLOW **Joseph Parker** (24), boatman, of 25 Witton Street, was charged with assaulting Annie Elizabeth Heath and, further, with assaulting Police-constable Smith, and also for failing to comply with a maintenance order which was made against him for the payment of 2s 6d a week for the maintenance of a child of which he was the father. On the 8th January, prosecutrix met prisoner in Garrison Lane, and asked him to give her some money to buy food for the child.

178 January 23 1895

Wolverhampton

THE DROWNING MYSTERY Yesterday Mr G M Martin (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Town Hall relative to the death of a man unknown, whose body was found in the canal at Tettenhall on Monday morning, under circumstances already reported. **Thomas Whale**, a boatman, and his assistant, deposed to finding the body floating in the water; and Police-sergeant Johnson stated that when he searched the body, he found upon it a silver watch with the name "J Morgan" scratched inside the case, a gold guard and padlock locket, a gold dress pin with blue stones, together with two handkerchiefs and other articles. There was no letter or other document on the clothing and no one had identified the body. A verdict of "Found dead" was returned.

179 January 29 1895

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF A COSELEY TRADESMAN Yesterday Mr A B Smith (coroner) held an inquest at the Fox Inn, Prince's End, relative to the death of Edwin Thomas Roberts (24), butcher, Church Road, Coseley. The widow stated that her husband left home on the morning of the 16th inst with the intention of going to Wolverhampton cattle market, stating that he would return in the afternoon. He took with him £13 or £14 in a leather bag. She sat up till about three o'clock the next morning, and as her husband did not return, she told his father, who said that he expected that "he had gone off". She was not aware that her husband had been in any trouble, or that he had been involved in financial difficulties, either prior to or since their marriage, which took place only a few months ago. She had not heard of anyone having seen her husband from the time he left home until his body was found in the canal, neither had she heard that he had been threatened with legal proceedings with respect to the removal of a pig from the Wolverhampton market. She removed the furniture from her home on the 18th inst. The Coroner said it seemed strange that the deceased's wife should have removed the furniture two days following the mysterious disappearance of her husband. **Jabez Flavell**, a boatman, deposed to finding deceased's body on Saturday morning in the canal at Wednesbury Oak, Prince's End. Police-constable Brown stated that he examined the body, and found two boxes of matches, and one of deceased's invoice forms, by means of which the body was identified; but there was no money in the pockets. There were no marks of violence on the body. On Saturday night, an overcoat, which he identified as having belonged to the deceased, was brought to him. Witness had ascertained that on the morning of the 16th inst, deceased was in a public house at Bradley, when he said that he was going to Moseley, and that he also went to Wolverhampton. He had heard that the deceased had been in financial difficulties. **John Smith**, boatman, Bradley, deposed to finding an overcoat in the canal on the 19th inst, near to where the deceased's body was subsequently discovered. In the pockets of the coat were a new pair of lady's stockings, a newspaper, and two handkerchiefs. He took the garment home, and kept it until he heard of the finding of the body, when he handed it over to the police. Police-sergeant Ward stated that the disappearance of deceased was not reported to the police. He was aware that enquiries respecting deceased had recently been made by County Court officials. Joseph Roberts, father of deceased, said his son had lately been very ill tempered; but he was not aware that he was in debt, or in trouble about anything else. When his daughter-in-law told him that deceased had not returned, he said that he thought he had gone to America; but he had no particular reason for thinking that he had done so. Mrs Roberts, recalled, said she and deceased had lived very amicably together. She could not account for the money he had with him being missing. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

180 February 12 1895**Walsall**

DRUNK WHILST IN CHARGE OF A HORSE AND TRAP For an offence of this description, **William Purcell**, boatman, Charles Street, West Bromwich, was fined 5s including costs.

181 February 26 1895**Dudley**

RECEIVING STOLEN GOODS At the Police Court yesterday, **William Woodall** (25), boatman, Hadley's Fold, Darby End, and **Thomas Woodall**, boatman, Rock's Row, Windmill End, were charged with stealing a truss of hay and a sack of corn, the property of Mr J H Pearson, ironmaster. Mr S Ward defended. George Roberts, in the employ of Mr Pearson, said that on Saturday morning he missed some corn and hay from the stores at the works, and by the droppings he traced it to the stables occupied by the prisoners in Hadley's Fold. He identified the corn as being his master's property, in consequence of a certain peculiarity in the mixture, and the hay from the manner of trussing. Police-sergeant Wimblett stated that, in company with the last witness, he traced the hay from Mr Pearson's stable to the premises occupied by the prisoners. The corn and hay identified by Roberts were different to the other provender in prisoners' stable. When William Woodall came to the stable, witness interrogated him as to the corn and hay. He admitted that the bag was his, but he did not know where the corn and hay had come from, stating that they were there when he went to the stable that morning. Witness afterwards arrested Thomas Woodall who, in reply to the charge, made a similar statement. Edward Pearson, carter employed by William Woodall, stated that on going to the stable at about a quarter to six o'clock on Saturday morning, he found both prisoners there, and nothing was said about any corn having been put into the stable. Thomas Woodall who, it was stated, was employed by the other defendant, was discharged, the magistrates considering there was no evidence against him. William Woodall pleaded not guilty, and Mr Ward argued that the prisoner was not bound to account for how he became possessed of the hay and corn. Prisoner was fined 40s and costs, or a months hard labour, for feloniously receiving the goods.

182 March 22 1895

A KNOWLE MYSTERY As a boatman named **Sydney Harris**, of 7 Court, 4 house, Deritend, in the employ of the Birmingham Corporation, was yesterday afternoon passing along the Birmingham and Warwick Canal, he discovered the body of a child floating near Waterfall Bridge, Knowle. The child was fully dressed, and after he had got the body out of the water Harris communicated with Sergeant Court who, on going to the spot, ascertained that the body was that of Violet Iris Greaves, aged two years, daughter of Mr Joseph Greaves of Waterfall Farm. In the employ of Mr Greaves was a servant named Bridget Gavin of Stourbridge, who had been with the family for a period of two years, and about three o'clock yesterday afternoon she took the baby out, but before doing so, it is alleged, she spoke to a little son of her master, saying, "Good bye; we shan't come back again". Between three and four o'clock Mr Samuel Cattell saw Gavin, who is between eighteen and nineteen years of age, going with the child towards the canal, and her hat was found floating on the water about twenty yards from the spot where the body was discovered. The canal was dragged until eight o'clock last night, but Gavin's body was not found, and search will be renewed this morning.

183 March 23 1895

THE KNOWLE MYSTERY – SUPPOSED MURDER AND SUICIDE It was reported in yesterday's *Post* that a Birmingham boatman had discovered in the canal near Knowle the body of Violet Iris Greaves, the two year old daughter of Mr Joseph Greaves of Waterfall Farm. The child had been taken out for a walk on the previous day by a servant named Bridget Gavin, who had not returned, and whose disappearance gave a sinister interpretation to a remark she made to another child of Mr Greaves just before she took the baby out : "Good bye, we shan't come back again". When the child's body was found, it was surmised that Gavin had either thrown it into the water and decamped, or that she had committed suicide by leaping into the water with it in her arms. The canal was therefore dragged by the police during Thursday evening without result, but search was

resumed yesterday morning by Police-constables Constable and Court, under the direction of Inspector Carbis, and after three hours dragging, Gavin's body was brought to the surface not very far distant from where the child's body had been found floating. Bridget Gavin was about seventeen years of age, and was taken into the service of Mr and Mrs Greaves about two years ago from Stourbridge Workhouse. She had lost her mother, and her father, finding himself in straitened circumstances, had to place his family in the workhouse. Bridget Gavin, a rather burly looking Irish girl, took up her residence with the Greaveses, but she was somewhat stupid and slovenly. Mrs Greaves desired to get rid of her, but on being pressed by the matron, and reminded of the girl's forlorn position, she consented to keep her. She was treated with every consideration by her employers, who enjoy the reputation of being exceedingly kind hearted. Gavin did plenty of bustling about, but she was not as industrious as she might have been, and added to this failing, had a weakness for pilfering money. On one or two occasions money was missing from the pockets of the children. Gavin stoutly denied all knowledge of the matter, but subsequently it transpired that she had been appropriating the money to send to her sister, who is also an inmate of the Stourbridge Workhouse. On Wednesday night one of Mr Greaves's sons lost a purse containing 6s 6d. Gavin was accused of having stolen the purse, and she again pleaded innocence. Mr Greaves, feeling annoyed, told the girl that unless the money was returned, he should send for Police-constable Court. This threat evidently struck terror into the girl's mind, for shortly afterwards she produced the purse and its contents. The ingratitude shown by Gavin greatly hurt the family, but even this latest act of unthankfulness did not bring about her dismissal; and Mr and Mrs Greaves expressed their readiness to overlook the affair, if it was not repeated. On Thursday she appeared to go about her work as usual. During the morning, Mrs Greaves went to Birmingham, and was absent throughout the afternoon. After dinner, Gavin left the house in company with the youngest child, Violet Iris, and left Percy, aged four, behind. Prior to leaving, she wished the lad "goodbye", and told him she and Violet were going to drown themselves. When this intimation was given there was no one else in the house, and the boy was too young to realise the terrible import of the threat. Gavin, leading the infant by the hand, was seen making her way across the farm in the direction of the Birmingham and Warwick Canal, which skirts the bottom end of the field. It was a customary thing for the servant to take the child out for a walk, and frequently they have gone to the canal side. The baby toddled off cheerfully enough, apparently glad to be out with Gavin, who had shown much affection for the child. An hour later, the body of the infant was seen in the water by a boatman named **Sydney Harris** of 7 Court, Deritend. He raised an alarm, and the child's identity was quickly established. Floating on the water was the hat usually worn by the servant, giving rise to a strong presumption that she was in the canal as well, a supposition confirmed yesterday by the discovery of her body. The deceased's arms were folded as though she had clasped the child in her arms while she leaped into the water. A passing boat probably separated the pair or, at any rate, carried the body of Gavin from the place where she jumped in to the spot where she was found. About a couple of hundred yards divided the situations of the bodies when they were found, but both places are within view of the canal bridge. The tragedy has created the profoundest sensation in the village, and much sympathy is expressed for the Greaves family.

184 April 9 1895

Aston Police Court

DESERTING HIS CHILDREN **Joseph Mortiboys**, a boatman, was charged with deserting his two children, whereby they became chargeable to the Aston Union. Mr H Windeatt, who appeared for the Guardians, stated that the prisoner's two children became chargeable on the 8th October 1892, and the prisoner, who is a boatman, had been travelling up and down the country, but he had never once made any enquiries concerning the welfare of his children. The cost to the ratepayers had been £65. Prisoner was apprehended at Watford, by Police-constable Drakeley. He was sent to prison for two months with hard labour.

185 April 20 1895

JANE GRIFFIN, Deceased.—Pursuant to the Statute 22nd and 23rd Vic., cap. 35.—Notice is hereby given, that all Persons having any Claims against the Estate of **JANE GRIFFIN**, late of Arden Road, Salfley, Birmingham, Widow, who died on the 9th March, 1895, are hereby required to SEND Written PARTICULARS of such Claims to me, the undersigned, before the 27th April next, after which date the Deceased's Estate will be distributed, having regard only to the Claims of which they shall then have had notice.—Dated this 20th day of April, 1895.
HOWARD CANT,
41, Temple Street, Birmingham,
Solicitor for the Executors.

1105

WILLIAM GRIFFIN, Deceased.—Pursuant to the Statute 22nd and 23rd Vic., cap. 35.—Notice is hereby given, that all Persons having any Claims against the Estate of **WILLIAM GRIFFIN**, late of Arden Road, Salfley, Birmingham, Boatman, who died on the 13th February, 1894, are hereby required to SEND written PARTICULARS of such Claims to me, the undersigned, before the 27th April next, after which date the Deceased's Estate will be distributed, having regard only to the Claims of which they shall then have had notice.—Dated this 20th day of April, 1895.
HOWARD CANT,
41, Temple Street, Birmingham,
Solicitor for the Executors.

1106

186 September 11 1895

Oldbury

SERIOUS AFFRAY Yesterday at the Police Court, **Thomas Edwards**, boatman of Portway Road, was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm upon **Alfred Warwick**, of Canal Side, under circumstances reported yesterday. Dr Buttery deposed to attending to the prosecutor's injuries, which included a slight fracture of the skull. The man was not yet out of danger. Prisoner said he never intended to hurt him, but Warwick made him fight. He was remanded for a week, bail being allowed.

187 September 18 1895

THE ALLEGED ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT OLDBURY Yesterday at Oldbury Police Court, **David White** (63), boatman, Birmingham Road, was charged with attempting to murder his wife on September 7. Prosecutrix stated that she and prisoner had been married forty one years, and had nine children. The accused came home shortly before eleven o'clock, drunk and in a very excited state. He ran into the house, shouting, "I've come". Witness replied, "I see you have come, David; let us be comfortable or you will kill me". Prisoner then said, "Now for your life", and springing upon her, knocked her down and commenced to hack at her throat with a razor. She screamed, and a man entered and pulled him off, and held him until a police-constable arrived. **Mary Ann Evitts**, Pope's Lane, said prisoner had told her that his wife's "days were short". She had frequently heard him threaten to take his wife's life. Dr Pitt said the wound in the throat was not dangerous. Police-constable **Emms** deposed to arresting the prisoner, who pleaded that he had been drinking for a fortnight. He was committed to the assizes for trial.

188 September 30 1895

Great Bridge

INQUEST On Saturday morning Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest on the body of **Sarah Jane Jepson**, a child eleven weeks old, the daughter of **Thomas Jepson**, boatman, New Road, Great Bridge. The mother stated that the child was born prematurely, and a month ago it was ailing, and was taken to a doctor. Afterwards it seemed to go on very well until Wednesday night. About three o'clock next morning, she woke, and found the baby dead and cold. Witness was thirty four years of age, had been married ten years, and had had nine children, only two of whom were now living. The child previous to deceased was born about twelve months ago, and died in a few hours. The Coroner said the child appeared to have been wasting away since it had been born, and the mother ought to have seen a doctor. If she had summoned medical aid, there would have been no necessity for that inquest. The mother must pay greater attention to her children; if she came before him again, she might find herself in a different position. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned.

189 October 2 1895

Oldbury

SERIOUS RESULT OF A FIGHT At the Police Court yesterday, **Thomas Edwardes** (33),

boatman, Portway Road, was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm upon **Alfred Warwick**, also a boatman, of the canal side, Whimsey Bridge. On Sunday the 8th September the parties, who had previously been good friends, were in a local public house when a dispute arose, followed by a fight outside when the parties were returning home. Complainant alleged that after the fight had ceased, defendant struck him, knocking him down and rendering him unconscious. For fourteen days, complainant was confined to the house with a severe fracture of the skull, and at one time his life was despaired of. The charge was reduced to common assault. The case was ultimately adjourned for a fortnight to enable the defendant to pay the medical and other expenses.

190 October 3 1895

Aston Police Court

SWEARING IN HIS OWN HOUSE **Luke Dovey**, boatman, 14 Wharf Street, Aston, was charged with using obscene language in his own house after being cautioned by the police on the 14th. Police-constable William Harrison said that the door of defendant's house was open, and he told the defendant to desist using the language complained of, but he did not. A fine of 10s was imposed.

191 October 16 1895

Staffordshire County Quarter Sessions

PLEADED GUILTY **Albert Andrews** (23), boatman, housebreaking and theft at Sandon on October 8th, six months.

192 November 12 1895

INQUESTS IN BIRMINGHAM Mr Pemberton (coroner) held an inquest yesterday at the Victoria Courts, respecting the death of **Henry Newton** (46), boatman of Alrewas. **John Newton**, nephew of the deceased, said that he and his uncle occupied a cabin boat, which was lying at Park Wharf, Adderley Road, on Thursday night last. Deceased came to the boat on that night about half past ten, and witness retired to rest about midnight. Early the next morning, witness found that deceased was not in the cabin, and on a search being made, his body was found in the canal. Deceased was partially dressed, and witness thought he must have fallen into the water accidentally. Police-constable Jones, who was called to the canal side after the body had been recovered from the water, said that he searched deceased's clothes, and found in his trousers pocket £44 in gold. Dr Craig deposed that death was due to drowning. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

193 November 16 1895

Worcestershire Assizes

MURDEROUS ATTACK ON A WIFE AT OLDBURY **David White** (63), boatman, was charged with maliciously wounding his wife **Mary Ann White**, with intent to murder her, on September 7 at Oldbury. Mr Shakespeare prosecuted, and Mr Vachell defended. The prisoner went home the worse for drink on a Saturday night and, having some words with the prosecutrix, attacked her with his pocket knife. He knocked her down and, in attempting to cut her throat, cut through a handkerchief and inflicted a wound in her throat three inches long and half an inch deep. A passer-by, named Clarke, hearing the woman's cries, went to her assistance, and pulled the prisoner away. Prisoner had previously threatened his wife. Mr Vachell asked the jury to return a verdict of unlawful wounding, but the judge told them they would not be justified in finding that verdict. Prisoner was found guilty of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and was sentenced to twelve years penal servitude. His Lordship commended the conduct of Clarke, and directed the Sheriff to give him £1 as a reward.

194 November 19 1895

Tipton

A BRUTAL HUSBAND Yesterday at the Police Court, before Messrs R Williams and T Underhill, **Thomas Green**, boatman, was charged with assaulting his wife, **Betsy Green**, on the 13th inst. The case had been remitted from Brierley Hill Court by the Stipendiary. Complainant stated that the defendant kicked her in the abdomen three times. He was sent to gaol for a month.

195 November 26 1895

Oldbury

THREE MONTHS FOR VAGRANCY Yesterday at the Police Court, before Messrs H Heaton and A M Chance, **Job Flavell** (46), boatman, was charged with sleeping out. Superintendent Chare said prisoner had been convicted thirty four times, and twice as an incorrigible rogue. The magistrates sentenced prisoner to three months hard labour.

196 November 28 1895

A RAID ON BASE COINERS At the Birmingham Police Court yesterday, before Messrs J Lowe and H Chamberlain, George Thompson (35), Bath Cottages, Clevedon Road, Balsall Heath, shoemaker; John Hemming (25), Malt Shovel Yard, Sun Street, chandelier burnisher; Rose Hemming (25), 53 William Edward Street, married; **George Stevens** (46), 55 William Edward Street, boatman; and James Morgan (61), 55 William Edward Street, no occupation, were charged on suspicion of being concerned in the manufacture and distribution of base coins. The circumstances of the arrest were related to the Bench by Detective-inspector Baker. It appears that on Saturday evening, three base florins were tendered and accepted by a publican in Macdonald Street. Luckily, an impression of the man and woman who were responsible for the swindle remained in the proprietor's mind, and thus the work of the police was greatly facilitated. Detective-inspector Baker and Police-constable Dawson decided to keep their eye on No 55 William Edward Street. At half past ten on Tuesday night the officers knocked on the door, and were admitted by the man James Morgan, and in the kitchen was the woman Rose Hemming. In reply to the question, "Who is the tenant of this house?" Morgan replied, "I am". He produced a rent book to establish the right of his claim, and Inspector Baker then said, "Well I have got a warrant to search the place". Morgan looked somewhat embarrassed on finding that his visitors were police officers, and then explained that he was only the lodger. The place was overhauled, and everything pointed to the presence of an exceedingly active coin factory. There were seven or eight pounds of spelter and tin, plaster of paris, wire, acids, chemicals and gilding solution. Upstairs the officers found five half crowns, one florin and two shillings, which Morgan said he knew nothing about. Both the man and the woman were told that they would have to go to Moseley Street Police Station, and their removal was effected with as little commotion as possible. While Baker and Dawson were away, the house was left in charge of Detective Squires and Police-constable Pim. Presently a knock was heard, and the constable was let out the back to see who was at the entrance. "Do you live here?" asked the constable. "Yes", replied the man, who turned out to be John Hemming, husband of the woman whose arrest had just taken place. The door was opened by Squires, who said, "Come in". The man hesitated and muttered, "I'm done". He wished to withdraw, but Squires caught him by the coat collar and dragged him into the house. "I want to see Mr Jones," said Hemming, "he's my employer, and I particularly want to see him, but I find I have made a mistake, and come to the wrong house". "You had better sit down, then, for a while", answered Squires, "Mr Jones will be here presently". The man was not comforted by this assurance, and laid stress on the point that his wife was waiting for him at home. While he was still trying to show that there was no reason to detain him, Inspector Baker and Police-constable Dawson returned. The inspector ordered him to sit down, and he concluded that it was advisable to obey. A few minutes later, George Stevens opened the door and walked in. Baker was stationed behind the door, and directly Stevens was inside, the officer pinned him against the wall and overhauled his pockets. "What's the meaning of all this, and what are you doing?" he asked. "Do you live here?" said the detective, and Stevens replied, "No. I don't know the people. I came here to see a friend, and as he isn't here, I'm going out". The detectives had just persuaded him he had better sit down and be quiet, when a voice at the door said, "Why don't you open the ----- door?" The request was quickly complied with, and George Thompson entered. He wanted to make a retreat but this was cut off, and he then enquired, "What's up? What brings you here?" He was searched, and in his pocket was found a gilt sixpence, made to represent a half sovereign, and a double cased silver lever watch numbered 2,731,931 and bearing the maker's name, "Broadway, Waltham, Mass". Hemming then turning to Stevens said, "I came here to see you, uncle, and I got pinched first pop". The

whole of the men were then removed. As Thompson was being taken away, Inspector Baker heard something drop in the entry. A constable was placed in charge of the entry, and subsequently a packet containing eight base coins was found. The capture, it will be seen, was carried out in an exceedingly clever manner, and the greatest importance is attached to it by the police. Prisoners were remanded till Monday.

197 December 19 1895

Tipton

ALLEGED THEFT OF A HORSE At the Police Court yesterday, **Joseph Perry**, boatman, London Street, Smethwick, and **Bernard Worsey**, boatman, Spring Hill, Birmingham, were charged with stealing a horse, value £6 16s, the property of Percy Higges, butcher, Peel Street, Winson Green. Prosecutor stated that on the 4th inst he employed the prisoners and a man named Hobbs to go to Brownhills and Hednesford with a boat, for which purpose he supplied them with two horses, tackle and a sufficient quantity of corn, their wages to be 10s each for the journey. Worsey returned the same day, and in consequence of his statement that they could not get along owing to the high wind, he allowed him to take another horse away on the day following. On the 5th inst, in consequence of something that was told him, he went to the Seven Stars Inn, Great Bridge, and there found one of the horses in a stable. Henry Whitehouse, horse dealer, Seven Stars Inn, stated that on the 5th inst prisoners and Hobbs called at his house with a horse, which they offered to sell for 30s. Ultimately they agreed to take 25s, and witness purchased the animal. Hobbs, who received the money, spent 1s 2d in the house, and divided the remainder with Perry, and then left. Shortly afterwards Worsey, he alleged, said, "It's a nice thing to be in partnership and receive nothing, but I shall find them out". Police-constable Hipkiss stated that he received Perry and Worsey from the custody of the Birmingham Police. In reply to the charge, Perry said, "**Alfred Hobbs** received the money and went away"; and Worsey denied having anything to do with the affair. Prisoners were committed to the sessions.

198 December 18 1895

Tipton

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE At the Wednesbury Police Court yesterday, James Watts was charged with having attempted suicide. At about eight o'clock on the previous night a boatman named **Edward William Bowen**, of Tividale, heard a noise, and saw the accused struggling in the water, and with the aid of a rope, got him out; but in an incoherent way, which seemed to show that he was not in his right mind, he declared that he would take his life at the first opportunity. He also made similar declarations to Police-constable Hubbard, into whose care he was given. He behaved in a very strange manner in court, and when remanded for a week for enquiries, repeated that he would certainly take his life, and was removed mimicking the movements of a man hanging himself.

199 December 21 1895

Dudley

THE ALLEGED THEFT OF COPPER At the Police Court, yesterday, **Charles Crump** (56), boatman, Woodside, was charged on remand with stealing two ingots of copper, value £1, the property of Messrs Harris Bros, Brierley Hill, general carriers. Mr Waldron represented the prosecutors, and Mr F Deeley appeared on behalf of the defendant. It was alleged that the copper found in defendant's possession formed part of a cargo of 2,662 ingots which he conveyed in his canal barge from London Docks to Birmingham, on behalf of the prosecutors. Inspector Hyde stated that the ingots alleged to have been stolen were handed to him by defendant's wife. In reply to the charge, defendant said, "I can't see how they can charge me with stealing them; they are an overcount. They would charge me 10s for each one I was short. I only took them last night to replace any I might be short". Witness enquired if he had ever been charged when he had been short in his cargoes, and defendant answered, "No, but others have". After a long hearing, the magistrates expressed the opinion that defendant had no felonious intent, and dismissed the case.

200 December 21 1895

SINGULAR CASE AT BRIERLEY HILL Yesterday at Brierley Hill Police Court, before Messrs W G Webb and J Fisher, **Samuel Timmins**, boatman, Potter Street, was charged with stealing twelve letters and three cheques, the property of Mr James Wright, glass bottle manufacturer, on December 4. Mr Wright deposed that he posted a letter in Lombard Street, London, to his private address, South Street, Brierley Hill, and that it contained a cheque for £25. On his return to Brierley Hill, on the 5th inst, his clerk handed him that and other letters, with the cheque for £25 and a cheque for £4 10s from Dawley, Salop. The letters were open. They were clean, and did not appear to have been dropped in the dirt. (This evidence was with respect to a statement by the prisoner that he had picked them up in the road). George Haynes, postman, said he placed from eleven to fourteen letters in Mr Wright's letterbox at ten minutes to seven o'clock on December 4. The letter box was on the yard door at the rear of the house, and it was a box which anyone could get their hand into. The Clerk said without reflecting on the witness he had to ask him whether he lost any of Mr Wright's letters on that particular morning. Witness said he did not. Miss Wright deposed to the box having been cleared of letters when she went to examine it on the morning of December 4. Prisoner afterwards came to the house and said he had found the letters just past the gasworks. Joseph Allinder, foreman at Mr Wright's works, said the prisoner came to the works on the 4th and said he had found some letters. Prisoner said if he went with him to his house he could have them. He went with him, and received thirteen letters addressed either to Mr Wright or to the firm. Two letters contained cheques; they had been opened. Albert Cartwright, horse driver, living at the rear of Mr Wright's house, said that at seven o'clock on the morning of December 4, he saw a man walking lame near Mr Wright's letterbox. He thought the prisoner was the man, and he believed that he had the same coat on that he was wearing in the dock. The man turned his face from him as witness went by. Arthur Fox said he saw the prisoner ninety yards from the same spot. Police-constable Smedley said that when he served prisoner with the summons he made no remark. Prisoner, asked if he had anything to say, said he went to Mr Wright's works on the morning of the charge after a job, and afterwards found these letters near the gasworks, and gave them up. If they were stolen, he was innocent of stealing them. He did not open them. Police-sergeant Connolly was called to depose to a conversation with prisoner. The officer said he asked the prisoner where he found the letters, and he said by the gasworks, and that he took them home and opened them in the house. He afterwards said the envelopes were torn open; I only took the cheques out. The magistrates said they found prisoner guilty, and committed him for three months hard labour. Prisoner : Gentlemen, I am innocent, and I hope Mr Wright will not have a wink of sleep till I have done the time.

201 January 9 1900

SHOCKING CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the County Petty Sessions yesterday, a boatman named **John Cox** of Kinver was sentenced to twenty one days hard labour for cruelty to a horse. Defendant was seen to kick the horse six times, and strike it on the head with a steel windlass handle.

202 January 10 1900

Atherstone

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **James Danley**, a Banbury boatman, was summoned for cruelty to a horse at Atherstone on December 23. The canal was frozen, and defendant was getting his boat from the ice. It was stated that he thrashed the horse unmercifully about the head, and succeeded in pulling the boat a very small distance in seventy minutes. He was fined £2 and £1 2s costs.

203 January 11 1900

Smethwick

A DELUSIVE BOATMAN'S CUSTOM Yesterday at the Police Court, **Henry Walker** (40) and **John Selby** (43), boatmen, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal, of the value of 6s, belonging to the Tubes Company (Limited) of the Credends Works, Bridge Street, on the 4th inst. Detective Collier, who was set to watch the coal wharf at the prosecutors' works, saw the defendants

take about 3 cwt of coal from a boat they had brought in loaded from the colliery, and place it in an empty boat which had to be taken back to the pit. He spoke to the defendants, and they said it was a custom for boatmen to have allowance coal to go back to the colliery with. Mr A J Glover, who defended, urged that there was a custom for boatmen to have coal to burn on the way to the colliery. Mr J H Pearson said from his experience he could say that the case was a bad one. Men in their capacity must have known they were doing wrong, and they took the coal presumably to sell on the way. Defendants were each fined £1 10s, including costs.

204 January 22 1900

BODY FOUND IN THE CANAL Shortly after ten o'clock on Saturday night, the body of Henry Simpkins (37), of 11, back of 96 Monument Road, was found in the canal near his house. A boatman named **John Chester** made the discovery, and he having communicated with the police, the body was removed to the Kenyon Street mortuary by Police-constable Davies.

205 January 25 1900 Wolverhampton

A CANAL MYSTERY Mr R A Willcock (coroner) opened an inquest at the Town Hall yesterday, touching the death of Beatrice Holmes (14), a domestic servant, who was found drowned in the Birmingham Canal at the back of Union Mill Street, yesterday morning. The police information was to the effect that the deceased was employed at 8 King Street, and was the daughter of **Thomas Holmes**, a boatman. On Sunday she was missed. Evidence of the identification was given by Elizabeth Dorham, a widow, of 7 Court, Pheasant Yard, Horseley Fields. She said the girl's mother died about twelve months ago, and that the father was not very kind to his children. The enquiry was adjourned until today.

206 March 22 1890

BREAKING A WOMAN'S ARM At Wolverhampton yesterday, **Michael Keaton**, boatman of Kidderminster, was sent to gaol for a month for assaulting Betsy Green of Albion Street, Wolverhampton, and breaking her arm; and for failing to answer his bail, he was ordered to pay 40s and costs, or be imprisoned for another month.

207 April 9 1900

HOSPITAL CASES A two year old boy named **Charles Fosbrook**, son of a boatman, died yesterday in the General Hospital from the effects of burns received on the previous day in the boat cabin.

208 June 12 1900

DAMAGES UNDER THE EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT At Stoke on Trent County Court yesterday, before his Honour Judge Mulholland QC, Arthur Walker, wagoner, Newcastle under Lyme, sued the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company under the Employers Liability Act 1880 for £170 compensation for injury sustained while in the employ of the defendant company. Mr B C Brough (instructed by Mr A E Ball) appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr S E Waters of Euston for the defendants. It was stated in support of the claim that on the 31st January, plaintiff received orders from the defendants' foreman to load up some china stone from a boat lying at their wharf at Stoke into his wagon. This work had to be done by means of a large crane, which it was customary for two men to work. Plaintiff asked for a man to assist him, and pointed out to the foreman that the work was rendered more difficult from the fact that there were a number of large pieces of wood lying under the crane. The foreman said the boatman would help him, but if not he must do the job himself. Plaintiff thereupon proceeded to draw stone from the boat without assistance at the crane. In working the crane, he had to walk over the pieces of timber, and while doing so his feet slipped, the handle of the crane came off, and his left hand was caught between the cog wheels and crushed. As a result of the injury he had lost the tops of two fingers, and was unable to do work for fifteen weeks, and he was now earning 4s a week less than when employed by the defendants. For the

defence, it was denied that it was usual for the crane to be worked by two men, and it was contended that if the timber referred to interfered with the working of the crane on the one side, the plaintiff could have worked it from the other side, if he had been so minded. His Honour held that defendants were liable, but was of opinion that plaintiff was able to do his work now just as well as he was before the accident, and gave judgement for the plaintiff for £75 with costs.

209 June 16 1900

SAD DEATH OF A SOCIALIST The second enquiry had reference to the death of Walter Finch (19), 2 back 255, Watery Lane, a paper merchant's porter, whose body was found in the canal near Landon Street Bridge. The deceased was employed by Mr Nash, a paper merchant, and on Wednesday last he was sent to Messrs Smith, Stone and Knight's warehouse, Landor Street, to fetch some patterns. He arrived at the warehouse, and was given a parcel to take to his employer, but shortly afterwards he was found by **James White**, a boatman, in the canal. The mother of the deceased said that he had suffered lately from pneumonia, but he appeared to be all right on Wednesday, and he had never threatened to commit suicide. The Coroner pointed out that there was no evidence to show how the man got into the water. He was a strong Socialist, and had charge of a quantity of Socialistic literature – pamphlets, leaflets, and things of that sort. He was also in correspondence with a young lady, but there was apparently no reason why he should terminate his life. The jury returned a verdict of “Found drowned”.

210 June 19 1900

Worcestershire Quarter Sessions

AN ENCUMBRANCE **Thomas Beresford** (49), boatman, was charged with stealing a shoulder of mutton, the property of Mary Bird, at Langley. Mr Shakespeare prosecuted. Prisoner denied the theft. He bought the mutton, tried to sell it, but failed, and tried to give it away, but also failed in that, and now wanted to see the last of it. Prisoner had a bad record, having thirty summary convictions in three years. Sentenced to nine months hard labour.

211 June 22 1900

DROWNED WHILE PLAYING TRUANT It was while playing truant from school that a seven year old lad (Alfred Durose) whose parents live at 10 Court, 3 house, Brearley Street, met with his death by being drowned in the canal, near the Lancaster Street Bridge. He went with a brother ten years old and other boys who had absented themselves from school, and several of them commenced bathing in the canal. The lads were larking on the bank, and one of them pushed the deceased into the water. He got out of his depth, and his brother went in to try and rescue him, but was unsuccessful. Life was extinct when a boatman named **George Edwin Neal**, of Prescott Street, who was passing, recovered the body from the bottom of the canal in 5ft of water, and tried to induce artificial respiration. The Coroner remarked that he did not think it could be suggested that the other lad, in pushing the deceased into the water for fun, committed any criminal offence. He expressed appreciation of Neal's efforts to save the child's life. The verdict was one of “Accidental death”.

212 July 3 1900

ASSAULT ON THE POLICE AT DUDLEY At Dudley yesterday, **Bert Reed**, boatman, Cross Street, Woodside, was charged with being drunk in charge of a horse, and with assaulting Police-constable Bayliss. Samuel Bytheway, Park Lane, Tipton, was charged with assaulting Bayliss and Inspector Sherriff. When Reed was arrested, Bytheway, who was a complete stranger to him, incited the crowd to liberate the prisoner. Reed kicked and struck Bayliss, and Bytheway assaulted Inspector Sherriff, who went to the constable's assistance. Defendants were fined 20s and costs in each case.

213 July 5 1900

Staffordshire Quarter Sessions

STEALING FROM THE PERSON **William Purcell** (17), boatman, was indicted for stealing

money from the person of Bertha Pugh, at Tipton on June 4. Mr Vachell prosecuted. Prisoner was found guilty and committed for three months imprisonment.

214 July 6 1900

NEWS OF THE DAY An inquest was opened by the West Ham coroner yesterday concerning the death, under suspicious circumstances, of **Harry Smith**, a Birmingham boatman. Deceased was one of a party of men engaged in Birmingham to take the place of dock workers on strike. Evidence was given that threats were uttered against the imported labourers, and a few days after he commenced work, Smith's body was found in the Royal Albert Docks.

215 July 10 1900

A POLICEMAN'S DIFFICULTIES At Walsall yesterday, **James William Green** (24), boatman, James Street, was sentenced to twenty one days hard labour for assaulting Police-constable Breese in Stafford Street on Saturday night. The constable was quelling a disturbance, when the prisoner set upon him from behind, and kicked him violently on the thigh. The man was arrested, but was rescued by the crowd, and the policeman was subjected to further rough usage.

216 July 10 1900

RECOVERED FROM THE CANAL The body of a woman was recovered from the Birmingham and Warwick Canal, near Sandy Lane, early yesterday morning, by a boatman named **Benjamin Taylor** of Lower Cape, Warwick. The deceased was apparently about thirty years of age. She had dark brown hair, and was wearing a black sailor hat, brown cloth cape with brown velvet collar, brown fur boa, black dress, grey underskirt, black stockings and lace up boots. Police-constable Wasley had the body removed to the mortuary at Moseley Street to await identification.

217 July 19 1900

RELATIVES WANTED The Walsall police are endeavouring to establish the identity of a boatman, who died suddenly on the side of the Birmingham Canal at Walsall on Tuesday night. It is thought probable that deceased came from Birmingham, and the boat he had charge of was marked "H Jackson No 6" but there was no address.

218 July 23 1900

Staffordshire Summer Assizes

ADJOURNED SINE DIE In the case of **Henry Bateman** (27), boatman, who was indicted for having attempted to murder his brother, at Burslem, by drowning him, on April 19, Mr Wilkinson, who had been instructed for the prosecution, said that since the event the accused had become insane and had been removed to the asylum. His Lordship adjourned the case *sine die*.

219 July 26 1900

Warwickshire Summer Assizes

ALLEGED DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT **Albert Bourne**, canal boatman, was charged with certain disgraceful conduct. Mr Parfitt prosecuted, and Mr McCardie defended. Prisoner was acquitted, as the identification was not made out to the satisfaction of the Court.

220 July 30 1900

HOSPITAL CASES **William Lindon**, boatman, believed to be resident in Gloucester, was taken to the Queen's Hospital last evening. He was unable to speak, and had an injury to the side which was believed to indicate fractured ribs. He was found in a helpless condition in his boat at the canal wharf, Gas Street. In the absence of his own explanation, he is believed to have fallen into the boat. He was detained.

221 July 31 1900

FATAL ACCIDENT AT OLDBURY Last night, Mr A H Hibbert (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the Court House, Oldbury, respecting the death of **Thomas Sands** (36), boatman, Whimsey

Bridge, Oldbury, who was killed late on Sunday night by being knocked down by a horse and cab driven by Alfred Safe, in Halesowen Street, Oldbury. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death" and exonerated the driver from all blame.

222 August 14 1900

A CRUEL BOATMAN At Wolverhampton yesterday, **William Bourne**, a boatman, was fined 20s and costs, or a months hard labour, for cruelty to a mule. It was stated that he struck the animal on the head five times with a windlass handle, and then struck it on the body.

223 August 24 1900

Birmingham Police Court

A BRUTAL SON A ruffianly brute is **William Print**, a powerful looking boatman, who was convicted of a cruel assault upon his mother, and who received the well merited punishment of six months hard labour. Print had previously been sent to prison for assaulting his mother, and on Wednesday night he struck her over the head with a poker, and in the face with his fists, in the presence of a police officer. He had committed frequent assaults on members of his family, one of whom he had stabbed.

224 August 24 1900

NEWS OF THE DAY **John Proctor**, boatman of Chilvers Coton, was charged at Nuneaton yesterday with the manslaughter of William Nixon, and there was a second summons for furious driving, and causing bodily harm to Nixon and two other persons. The defendant, it was stated, was driving so furiously that the trap was overturned, and Nixon and the others thrown into the road. His explanation was that the horse took fright. The charge of manslaughter was dismissed, and for furious driving defendant was fined £10 and costs.

225 August 30 1900

ANOTHER CANAL VICTIM The City Coroner (Mr I Bradley) yesterday afternoon held an enquiry touching the death of **Frederick Woolley** (18), a boatman's assistant, whose body was found in the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal near Mill Street on Monday morning. The deceased had been employed on the canal for the past six or seven months, under the name of Henry Levi, and prior to last Christmas had slept for some time in a stable. The boatman by whom he was employed, a man named **Goldengay**, said the deceased set out with him early on Sunday morning for Cannock, it being the lad's business to go ahead and open the locks. When Mill Street was reached, however, he could not be found, and Goldengay, concluding that he had run away, continued on his journey. Next morning the body was recovered from the lock, and nearby was found the windlass with which apparently he had been in the act of crossing the canal. A verdict was returned to the effect that the deceased accidentally fell into the canal.