

**BERROWS WORCESTER JOURNAL**  
**1852 to 1859**

**1 January 1 1852**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT A boatman named **Frederick Williams** was summoned by William Holden, a boy ten years of age, for an assault committed on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant, it appeared, had met with the boy, who had ran away from his home at Crowle a fortnight previous, in Birmingham, and engaged him to assist him on his voyage from that town to Worcester. On arriving within a few miles of this city, a quibble arose between then respecting defendant's knife, which defendant charged the lad with stealing, in consequence of which he ran away from his employer. Defendant followed him, and having caught him, beat him three times with an ash stick in a most cruel manner. Fined 5s and 2s 6d expenses, in default of paying which he was sent to gaol for three weeks. The boy, on being asked why he ran away from home, said he had not enough victuals ; and the Bench impressed upon his mother, who is a widow and appears to have some difficulty in gaining a livelihood, which she does without parochial relief, the necessity of taking more care of her son, and cautioned the juvenile against again running away from home.

**2 January 1 1852**

BROMSGROVE, PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY DECEMBER 23

TRESPASSING IN PURSUIT OF GAME A boatman named **Michael Jones** was charged with trespassing for the above named purpose on land in the preserves of Colonel Clive ; accompanied by a dog of the lurcher kind. The offence was clearly proved by the evidence of Thomas Saunders. Colonel Clive's head keeper (Mr Blaydon) informed the Magistrate that if defendant would give up the dog, which he had heard was a first rater, he would withdraw the information against him ; but this defendant obstinately refused to do, and was accordingly fined 5s and costs, or one month's imprisonment.

**3 January 15 1852**

TEWKESBURY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY JANUARY 9

ASSAULTS A boatman named **Devereux** was adjudged to pay 7s 6d for assaulting a woman named Bachelor.

**4 January 22 1852**

ASSAULTING A POLICEMAN On Wednesday, **William Rushton**, a bargeman belonging to Bridgnorth, was apprehended in Bewdley by PC Roberts of this town, charged with attempting to strike PC Dovey with an axe. Rushton was conveyed back to Bridgnorth, from which place he will be doubtless committed for trial.

**5 February 12 1852**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN, PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5

AN OLD OFFENDER For the fifth time, **Thomas Steele** of Gloucester, boatman, was convicted to the penalty of £2 and costs for using a horse on the towing-path, in the parish of Severn Stoke, without first taking out a ticket. The complaint was preferred by **Mr Henry Bundy**, agent to the proprietors of the Gloucester and Worcester Towing-path Company.

**6 March 4 1852**

WORCESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**Sampson Brotherton**, 18, and **Charles Tombs**, 21, boatmen, were indicted for stealing 8 lbs of brasses on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, the property of George Baylis, at Bengeworth, Evesham. The brasses, which belonged to a clay mill on prosecutor's premises, were safe in a desk in the engine house on the day in question, but were not missed until some days after, when they were found by Sergeant

Pardoe at the shop of a marine store dealer named Trimlet, who had bought them of the prisoner Brotherton for 4d per pound. Tombs, who had formerly worked for Baylis, was in the engine house on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. Another count in the indictment charged them with receiving the property knowing it to have been stolen. The jury, having consulted, found Brotherton guilty, but acquitted Tombs. Prisoner pleaded guilty to a second indictment charging him with stealing 4 lbs of brass on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January at Evesham, the property of Sarah Smith. A former conviction was put in, and he was sentenced to six months' hard labour for each offence.

**George Hawker** and **David Simpson**, two boatmen in the employ of Mr Rice, carrier from Gloucester to Evesham, were charged with stealing three bushels of linseed belonging to Mr Brown of Gloucester, and another boatman named **William Reeves** was charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. Mr Selfe prosecuted, and Mr Powell defended Reeves. From the evidence of Joseph Collins, a porter in the service of Mr Brown of Gloucester, it appeared that on the 16<sup>th</sup> ultimo, he loaded a boat with linseed, 300 bushels of it were in 75 sacks, and the remainder was in bulk. The cargo was consigned to Messrs Foster and Co of Evesham, and was entrusted to the charge of Hawker and Simpson, who had the management of the boat in which it was placed, and which was called the *Victory*. The sacks were marked "Foster and Co". Thomas Baylis, a warehouseman in the employ of Messrs Foster, stated that the vessel arrived at Evesham on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> instant (*sic*). The linseed was delivered to him, and on measuring he found it wanted two bushels of the quantity set down in the invoice, on which he spoke to Hawker on the subject, who said that what he had delivered was all that had been put on board at Gloucester. Jacob Rice, son of Richard Rice, the carrier, whose vessel contained the cargo, said he was coming down the Avon on Thursday and met the *Victory* near Nafford's Mill, laden with linseed, in the charge of Hawker and Simpson. He went on to the mill, where he saw the prisoner Reeves with a waggon, in which was a sack marked "Rice and Co, Gloucester". There was a hole in the sack through which some linseed had escaped. The sack contained between two and three bushels ; he claimed it as his father's property, whereupon the waggoner, Phipps (in the employ of Mr Shepherd of Eckington), referred him to Reeves. On arriving at Gloucester he mentioned the circumstance to his father, but did not speak to Reeves, because having known him for some time, he considered it to be all right. Phipps, on being sworn, stated that he took a waggon load of beans to Nafford's Mill for Mr Sutton's barge, of which Reeves had the care, being in the employ of Mr Sutton. He left the waggon for a short time and on returning, found that a sack of linseed had been placed in it. He went back to his master's at Eckington, and Reeves accompanied him a part of the way, when they parted, Reeves asked him for the sack, which he said belonged to him. PC Aston deposed to apprehending Reeves at Tewkesbury on the 23<sup>rd</sup> ultimo, when he told him that the linseed was for owner Sutton, and that he had put it in his loft. On searching the loft, he discovered no linseed. Hawker and Simpson were apprehended by him on the following day, when Hawker said there was a sack of linseed on board their boat for Mr Sutton, which had been delivered at Nafford Mill by Simpson. Mr Sutton stated that Reeves was in his employ, and on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> ultimo, he met him and Phipps coming to Eckington with the waggon. He had never had any linseed from Reeves, nor had that individual ever brought any on his premises, for he did not use it, nor had he received a bill for any from any person. Richard Rice stated that he saw the boat laden with the linseed, and that there was no other lot on board except for Foster and Co of Evesham, and all these had Foster's name on. The cargo being complete, the men were ordered to proceed at once. On seeing Hawker on the following morning he did not say that he had any sack for Sutton, which it would have been his duty to have done if he had received anything in passing up the river. The prisoners Hawker and Simpson, in defence, stated that the sack of linseed was put on the barge at Gloucester, by a man whom they did not know, who told them it was to be delivered to Mr Shepherd of Eckington. Mr Powell addressed the Jury in behalf of Reeves ( who received a good character for previous honesty), labouring to show that the sack was deposited in the waggon by someone, and that Reeves placed it in his master's loft. As to what became of it afterwards, he could not fairly be held accountable. No evidence had been adduced to prove a guilty knowledge on his part. As to the

deficiency in the weight of the cargo, it might have been occasioned by waste in transshipment. The Chairman impartially summed up, and the Jury, after some deliberation, found all the prisoners guilty, but recommended Reeves to mercy on account of his previous good character. A previous conviction against Hawker was proved in 1848, for stealing earthenware jars from a wharf at Evesham, belonging to his master, Mr Rice, who had then been induced by the Court to employ him again, and had had his generosity thus repaid. In answer to questions from the Court, Mr Rice stated that he had many vessels upon the river, and was repeatedly suffering losses of articles entrusted to boatmen. About two years ago, he lost twenty bushels of linseed, sacks and all, forming part of a cargo of which Hawker had the charge. The Court sentenced Hawker to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour (informing him it was only his advanced age that prevented his being transported), Simpson to six months' and Reeves to three months' imprisonment.

**BILLS IGNORED** **John Hervey**, 20, boatman, stealing seven shillings belonging to John Dunn of Evesham.

### **7 April 1852**

#### **BEWDLEY**

**ACCIDENT** A waterman in the employ of Mr Barnes, named **James Danby**, was unfortunately drowned while moving a boat along the Severn towards Bewdley, on Saturday evening last. The accident occurred through the breaking of a shaft he was using. He has left a wife and six children to lament his loss.

### **8 April 8 1852**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER QUARTER SESSIONS**

**Frederick Parker**, 49, waterman, surrendered to his own recognisances from last Sessions, and was, after a lengthened trial, acquitted on a charge of stealing a cart load of coal, the property of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company on the 19<sup>th</sup> January last. Mr Streeten prosecuted and Mr Powell defended the prisoner.

### **9 April 8 1852**

#### **UPTON ON SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY APRIL 1**

**A BRUTAL HUSBAND** **John Payton**, a boatman belonging to the town, was brought up in custody of PC Baker, charged by his wife, **Ann Payton**, with using threatening language and otherwise ill-treating her on the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. On the evening in question, the prisoner came home and threatened to murder his wife, and she, apprehensive that he would put his threat into execution, took refuge at the police station. It also came out in evidence that for some time past the prisoner had behaved with great cruelty towards his wife, by abusing her and occasionally beating her. The Bench determined to bind him over in his own recognisances of £20, with two sureties of £10 each, to keep the peace for twelve months, but the required sureties not being forthcoming, he was committed to gaol for one calendar month.

### **10 May 6 1852**

#### **CITY POLICE**

**POCKET PICKING** A boatman named **Joseph Jones**, and James Turney were brought up on the charge of picking pockets. On Wednesday afternoon, while a Mrs Owens of the Droitwich Road was in the crowd listening to the speech of Mr Laslett, from the Hop Market Hotel, she felt the hand of some person in her pocket, and upon turning round she laid hold of the prisoner, who succeeded in eluding her grasp, but fell into that of Bellman Hale, to whom she formally gave him in charge for stealing a purse containing between £3 and £4. Today, however, she refused to appear against him, and he was therefore discharged. The evidence against Turney is purely circumstantial. As Police-constable Booth, WCP, was on duty in the Ombersley Road about one o'clock on Thursday morning, he saw Turney in the act of concealing himself behind a tree opposite the New Inn. The

officer, not receiving satisfactory replies to his questions, searched a bundle Turney had in his possession, which contained three silk handkerchiefs and a shirt. He also found £1 6s 8d in his pocket. He was taken into custody, and today Mr George Turner, 24 Britannia Square, identified one of the handkerchiefs as one he had lost from his pocket whilst in a crowd of persons in the Old Sheep Market on Tuesday last. He was remanded till Saturday when he was sent to gaol for three months as a rogue and vagabond.

## **11 May 20 1852**

TEWKESBURY

BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY MAY 14

SUSPECTED THIEVES **Thomas Baldwin** and **George Trotter**, dressed as watermen, were brought up on a remand from the previous day, and further remanded, on suspicion of having stolen a quantity of broken silver, which they sold to Mr White, watchmaker of this borough. When apprehended they gave different names and stated that they came from Pershore. It has since been ascertained that the names they gave were fictitious, and that they came from Upton, where they are well known bad characters, one of them having recently suffered 12 months' imprisonment for a most outrageous attack upon Sergeant Petford of the police force there.

## **12 June 3 1852**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

THE LATE FATAL FIGHT – COMMITTAL FOR MANSLAUGHTER On Thursday last, the two boatmen named **William Teale**, of Upton, and **James Huntley** of Tewkesbury, whose apprehension under a warrant for being concerned in the manslaughter of another boatman named **John Smith** in a street fight we noticed in last week's Journal, were brought before the Magistrates in Petty Sessions for examination. The following Magistrates were present :- Rev A B Lechmore (Chairman), William Dowdeswell Esq, M G Benson Esq, E G Stone Esq and the Rev G H Clinton. Mr Holland, solicitor, attended to watch the case for the prisoners. The following is a summary of the evidence of the witnesses examined :-

Ann Smith, widow of the deceased, deposed : My late husband died on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. I recollect the 13<sup>th</sup> of April last. I went to the Severn Trow for my husband about eleven o'clock. I stood at the window and heard words between him and William Teale. I then went into the house and tried to get my husband out and make peace. They then had words and came out to fight. There were many persons in the house who came out to see the fight. My husband pulled off some of his clothes and gave them to **William Embury**. They fought two rounds. I saw my husband upon the ground ; he was stunned ; his head was cut and it bled very much. I thought he was dead. William Embury and I led him home. I put him to bed, bathed his head with warm water, and poulticed it for nine or ten days. I thought it was going on well, but a substance formed below the place. I then sent for Mr Goodman, surgeon, and he attended him until he died. My husband went to the Severn Trow about half past ten o'clock. I think my husband was too drunk to fight. William Teale was also drunk. My husband did not know how it happened. On the following day, my husband was drunk again. The substance did not appear for about ten days after ; it was about two inches below the cut.

**Herbert Price** deposed : I live at Gloucester, and am a trowman. I was at Upton-on-Severn on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April last. I was at the Severn Trow. I saw a fight outside the house. I had heard Teale and Smith chaffing each other. I saw blows struck between Teale and Smith. I saw Smith fall ; he fell from a kick-up given by James Huntley. Huntley was backing Teale. I saw Huntley kick Smith, and it turned him round and he fell on his back. Smith did not fall from a blow given by Teale. Smith's head fell upon the curbstone. The kick was done for the purpose. I was close to them. Smith's head was cut, and he lay insensible three or four minutes. I thought he was dead. I was acting as second for Smith. They were quarrelling about ferrying over. I went to Huntley and said it was a nasty trick to serve the man so. Smith was drunk ; he could not stand – that is to say steady. I had been at the Severn Trow about an hour. Teale was not so drunk but he could stand upright. Teale was not so drunk as Smith. Huntley said a word or two to Smith in the Severn Trow. Smith

said he had said nothing to him, and he was to shut his mouth, and he did so. Huntley did not go to sleep again before the fight ; he was listening to what was going on for half an hour, but said nothing. Huntley was drunk. There had been no angry words between Huntley and Smith. Teale jumped up and challenged Smith to fight. Smith said, "You cannot kill me if I do fight". They sat down for a while, and then went out. Smith went out first, and Embury caught hold of him and tried to take him home. As he went out, he said to Smith, "Come along and let us have a round or two". Two or three went out of the house before Teale. As soon as Teale came out of the house, Smith said, "Come along, we will have it out now" ; he had just pulled his frock off. Teale said, "We will try", and pulled his frock off. Teale struck the first blow. The first round they both fell. Teale struck Smith, and they both fell to the ground. Huntley came out before the fight began. Huntley picked up Teale and I picked up Smith – it was fair enough. Smith went from me, and Teale advanced towards him. I was five or six yards from Huntley when Smith and Teale advanced towards each other. Smith was down before Teale's blow could reach him. I went up to Smith first, and then Embury came. Smith fell from the kick given by Huntley ; the men were squaring at each other half a minute ; they did not reach each other. Teale was not near enough to strike Smith at the time he fell. Huntley got on nearer to Smith than to Teale ; he was close on to Smith's heels ; he put his right foot between Smith's legs as he was advancing and tripped him up. Huntley did not use his hands. Samuel Cliffe saw Huntley kick up Smith's legs ; he told me so the same night. This was between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. There was no moon ; it must have been by the starlight I saw it. It was light enough to see a blow struck. No other persons were near enough to see besides Cliffe and myself. I saw the deceased before his death, some days after the fight. I was in Bristol when I heard of Smith's death. I did not hear of Smith's death until after the inquest, as I believe. A man whose name I believe to be Biddle told me of it. I heard nothing said by Biddle about Huntley kicking up the deceased's heels ; nobody asked me what I knew of the fight until last Saturday week, when I came to Upton-on-Severn again, when Benjamin Brick asked me if I had seen Huntley kick up Smith's heels, and I said I did. I told Superintendent Humphreys that I had seen it, and that Cliffe saw it as well as me.

Mr Gabriel Goodman, surgeon, Upton, deposed to having been called in to attend deceased, which he did from the 27<sup>th</sup> of April till his death. He found him in bed and in great pain. There was a swelling in the neck of a carbuncle nature, below a cut on the head, which kept increasing, notwithstanding all that could be done to prevent it. This swelling caused his death ; the primary cause of it being the injury on the head. Mr Goodman said : "If I had not seen the cut, I should not have ascribed the carbuncle to it. Carbuncles do occur without our being able to trace their origin, but more frequently to causes we can trace ; it is a rare occurrence that a carbuncle should ensue from an injury like the one received by the deceased. I am of opinion that the treatment received by deceased, as described by Mrs Smith, before I attended him, was proper. I made a *post mortem* examination of the head and found the brain perfectly healthy. I was confirmed in my opinion of the cause of death by the examination".

William Embury, a waterman living at Upton, gave evidence as to Huntley kicking Smith.

The prisoners, after the usual caution, were asked if they had anything to say but, acting on the advice of their solicitor, they reserved their defence.

They were then both fully committed to take their trial at the ensuing Assizes on a charge of manslaughter, but subsequently admitted to bail.

### **13      June 3 1852**

#### **BEWDLEY**

**COOKE'S ALMSHOUSES**    The almshouse vacated by the death of its recent occupant, widow Cooke, has been given by the trustees to the widow of **Richard Clarke**, waterman, one of several applicants.

**14 June 24 1852**

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY JUNE 18

**ASSAULTS Robert Rigby jun** was charged with assaulting **John Chancellor**. The parties, who are watermen, were drinking in a public house, when the defendant taunted the complainant with having been tried for some offence, and the defendant(*sic*) in consequence replied that he had not been convicted, but that the defendant had ; the latter thereupon struck him several times and knocked him down, and shortly afterwards, upon complainant going out, he was again attacked by the defendant and knocked down. Fined 1s and costs ; and in default of payment, committed to the House of Correction for fourteen days.

**15 June 24 1852**

**ACCIDENTS** At Dymock, a waterman named **Benjamin Thomas** was engaged rolling timber into a boat, when a piece of timber slipped and fell upon and broke his leg.

**16 July 1 1852**

MIDSUMMER QUARTER SESSIONS

**Charles Aston**, boatman, was found guilty of stealing a shoulder of veal, weighing 9 lbs, and also 6lbs of mutton, the property of James Woodward, butcher of Evesham. Mrs Woodward, who was sitting in a back room which commanded a view of the shop, saw prisoner come in, unhang the veal from a hook and go out, whereupon she followed, gave an alarm and he was secured. The mutton (a neck) was produced in Court and identified by prosecutor, as was also the veal ; the former having been traced to the possession of the prisoner. Two convictions for felony in the county of Gloucester in 1850 were proved against him, and he was sentenced to seven years' transportation.

**George Corbett**, 17, boatman, was likewise found guilty of stealing 4 lbs of yarn, from a package on board a boat belonging to Messrs Crowley and Co, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May last. The yarn was consigned for conveyance to Messrs Hoomans and Co, and prisoner abstracted the 4 lbs while the boat was on its passage between Wolverley and Kidderminster, and concealed it in an osier bed. Three months' imprisonment. Mr Byrne prosecuted.

**PLEADED GUILTY Thomas Baldwyn**, 21, boatman, to stealing a silver case belonging to Mr C H Strode of Upton. A previous conviction for felony was proved against him, and being a desperate character (having disabled one policeman for life and seriously injured another), the Court sentenced him to seven years' transportation.

**17 July 1 1852**

STOURBRIDGE PUBLIC OFFICE, WEDNESDAY JUNE 23

**COAL STEALING John Cook**, a boatman, was committed for trial at Stafford Quarter Sessions for stealing 2 1/2 cwt of coal, the property of Lord Ward. The coal was stolen from a boat moored at a wharf in Kingswinford, and placed by the prisoner on board another boat of which he had the charge ; but, while executing the manoeuvre, he was seen by a watchman named William Watkins, who caused him to be apprehended.

**18 July 1 1852**

CITY MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

**Henry Tovey**, 28, boatman, was placed at the bar on the charge of stealing a stopping rope from a canal boat called the *Valiant*, moored on the river Severn on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult, at the parish of St Clement, the property of Messrs William and John Firmstone. Mr Selfe prosecuted ; the prisoner was undefended. **Daniel Wassell**, captain of the *Valiant*, deposed that on Friday night last his boat was moored alongside the *Sarah*, belonging to the same owners, and the prisoner's boat, the *Patience*, opposite the Mug House. He went on shore about nine o'clock, and when he returned, about eleven, the rope with which the *Valiant* was fastened to the *Sarah* was gone. He went on board the

prisoner's boat and awoke him, but he denied knowing anything about the rope. He then gave information of the robbery to PC Knott, and the rope was found hanging from the stern of the prisoner's boat on the off side. The prisoner was also seen on board the *Valiant* shortly before the rope was missed. Prisoner, in defence, again denied all knowledge of the theft, and called the hostler of the Mug House, who gave him a good character, and said that he was searching for a child supposed to have been drowned about twelve o'clock, when the rope was safe. The Jury, having consulted, returned a verdict of acquittal.

**James Gough**, 18, and **John Jones**, 20, boatmen, were charged with stealing four lumps of coal from a boat moored on the canal at Lowesmoor, the property of John Groves, on the 16<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Richards prosecuted and Mr Huddleston defended the prisoners. The prisoners were seen by Sergeant Bateman (who lives near where Mr Groves's boat was moored) loose the vessel from its moorings and push it under the canal bridge, where Gough threw four pieces of coal into the canal while Jones kept watch. The prisoner Gough had been employed on board the boat. The coal was afterwards raked out of the canal. Mr Huddleston having made a long and humorous speech in behalf of the prisoners, the Deputy Recorder summed up the evidence, and the Jury shortly after returned a verdict of guilty. The prisoners have each been twice previously convicted, and Gough had also been in prison on many other occasions for petty offences. Gough was sentenced to seven years' transportation, and Jones to six months' hard labour.

## **19 July 1 1852**

CITY POLICE, THURSDAY JUNE 24

VAGRANCY Three boatmen named **George Hunt**, **Thomas Jones** and **Thomas Jones** were brought up for having been found concealed in the hay loft of a stable in the occupation of Messrs Allen and Bayliss, coal dealers, at the back of Lowesmoor Wharf, about three o'clock this morning. As Hunt and Jones (No 1) were spoken of as bad characters, they were sent to prison for fourteen days ; Jones (No 2) was discharged.

## **20 July 16 1853**

GREAT FLOODS AND THUNDERSTORMS

LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY For the third time within the last 12 months, Hereford and the adjoining counties have been visited with terrible disasters by the overflowing of the Wye and its tributary streams. Early on Friday morning, thunderstorms of an alarming nature, accompanied by torrents of rain, occurred in the neighbourhood of Ledbury, Ross and other parts of Herefordshire, where they raged for some hours with unabated violence. The Wye on Saturday rose with the most extraordinary rapidity. The oldest bargeman on the river could not remember it to have risen so high in so short a time, about 10 feet in less than three hours. The river remained bank full for little less than 24 hours. During the afternoon, sheep, pigs, trees, articles of furniture &c came floating down the stream, some of which were secured. The bridge at Hereford, on Saturday night, was crowded by spectators, amongst whom the most alarming speculations and rumours were rife, the Brecon mail having arrived with a statement that a house had been swept away during Friday night by the bursting of a thundercloud in the night amongst the Breconshire hills, and that the sleeping inmates had been drowned. Rumour for once told a less mournful tale than the facts justify. The scene of the catastrophe proved to be Doalvach, the residence of Mrs Lawrence, a lady of about 85 years of age, mother of a solicitor, now deceased, formerly of Brecon. The house was situated near the foot of the Epping mountain, in a valley or gorge, and was passed by a small stream called the Honddu which, after crossing the Brecon and Builth turnpike road lower down, forms a junction with the Wye at Aber-honddu, as the name signifies. In this house were Mrs Lawrence, her daughter, two orphan nieces (the other children being with their uncle, the Rev Mr Price of Eardesley), and two servants (male and female). Not one escaped. The house being swept away – a chimney stack now only remaining – they were all washed with it into the river, and Mrs Lawrence was found in her night clothes on Sunday at Fordvaur, two miles from Hay, through which town the

Wye runs. It is reported that the two servants were also picked up at Boughrood. A cottage near the same place was also swept away, one poor woman was found in the chimney, into which she had climbed for safety. At Howey village near Llandrisol, on the river Ithon, several cottages were carried off by the rushing torrent, and two lives were lost. To this chapter of calamities many additions might be made. One fact, at least, should be stated, as it is somewhat remarkable. The water from the same cloud which devastated the valley of the Honddu also flooded the town of Brecon, which lies at the foot of the mountain on the opposite side. One of the principal hotels (the Swan) had water in the house to the height of five feet ; eight horses were drowned in the stables ; wines and spirits were lost ; and the loss is estimated by the proprietor at £400 or £500. The bridge over the river (here also called the Honddu), at the confluence of which with the Usk the town is built, was blown up ; and cases of individual loss might be multiplied without end.

At Dymock in Gloucestershire, where the embankments of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal are higher than at any other point, the banks gave way, literally inundating the village and country for miles around, doing serious damage to the crops and bearing away various property in its course. The canal has been so much damaged that some months must elapse before the traffic can be again resumed. The valleys were literally deluged by the overflowing of the mountain streams, which were swollen by the heavy rains accompanying the thunderstorm. Cattle, horses, sheep and pigs were swept from its banks ; trees were torn up, and hay and other property carried along.

Shropshire also suffered much. At Shrewsbury, one of the heaviest storms occurred that has been witnessed for some time, the rain pouring in torrents. Considerable damage was sustained by the hay crops. At Wellington, the lower part of the town was completely inundated, and in some places much damage was done. The grain crops in the neighbourhood were much beaten down, and the hay injured. At Welshpool, a beautiful ash tree in Powis Castle Park was destroyed by the lightning. The electric fluid appears to have struck the centre of the tree, and in its passage down has literally shattered it into chips, and scattered the bark at various distances, from 30 to 40 yards from the base.

At Mr Smith's, of the Pentre, Churchstoke, Montgomeryshire, a cow was killed by the electric fluid ; and at Castlewright, a piece of outbuilding was entirely washed away by the force of water, to a field below the farmyard. A great portion of the soil was likewise washed off a turnip field in the holding of Mr Reece of the Lake, Churchstoke.

The storm also reached this city. The rain fell in torrents, the lightning was extremely vivid, and the accompanying peals of thunder were of appalling loudness. We have not however heard of serious injury having occurred in our own immediate neighbourhood ; but at Evesham the deluge of water carried away implements of husbandry, and much of the soil and gravel in the roads. The effects were most felt at Norton and Lenchwick, where four sheep belonging to Mr W Lunn were killed by lightning, and a large quantity of cucumbers, the property of Mr J Gladwin, were destroyed ; several trees were likewise shattered. At Pershore the storm was equally heavy. A young man named Thomas Coomb, while standing at a neighbour's door in Priest Lane, was struck by the lightning, and for upwards of an hour was deprived of sense and sight ; he is now recovering.

BRISTOL, JULY 8 Last night, between 11 and 12 o'clock, a tremendous thunderstorm, accompanied by a perfect deluge of rain, burst over this city. The storm was not of lengthened duration, but very violent while it lasted, the flashes of lightning being most incessant and very vivid. Information was received here this afternoon that a poor old man named James Hazell, 70 years of age and a stocking weaver by trade, residing at Bedminster near this city, had been struck dead by the electric fluid. He was picked up at his own door, quite dead. Some damage had been done in the neighbourhood to garden lights and frames ; but beyond the above, no intelligence of any other serious accident has reached us.

[We understand that several of the unfortunate inmates of the villa at Doalvach, which was swept away by the flood, were near relatives of Mrs Col Strode, of Ombersley, near this city].

## 21 July 22 1852

### WORCESTER CITY AND COUNTY SUMMER ASSIZES

**DROITWICH – ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON** **Thomas Hall**, 18, boatman, was charged with stealing a half crown and other silver monies from the person of **William Johnson** on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. Mr Hastings prosecuted ; the prisoner was undefended. Johnson, the prosecutor, deposed that he was a boatman in the employ of Mr Bourne, from whom he received on the day in question (the day of Droitwich Wake) 33s – a sovereign and 13s in silver – out of which he paid 4s 6d to two men who had helped him empty the boat, and spent 6d for himself. He had been about with the prisoner all day, and in the evening went with him to the Plough public house, where he (prosecutor) fell asleep. Prisoner afterwards took him to a hovel to sleep, and next morning he missed 8s from his purse. Amelia Young of Park Street, Birmingham, deposed to being at the Plough when Johnson fell asleep, and saw the prisoner take the purse from his pocket. He was playing with the money and said that it was his, and when his butty was sober he would give it him again. Another witness spoke to fetching the prisoner to the Plough on the following day at Johnson's request, when he admitted that he took the money from the prosecutor's pocket, and after paying for a pint of ale, put it back again. Guilty : Three months' hard labour.

**UPTON – MANSLAUGHTER** **James Huntley** and **William Tale**, boatmen, surrendered to their bail, charged with the manslaughter of John Smith. Mr Cooke prosecuted, and opened the case. Mr Skinner defended Tale ; Mr Selfe appeared for Huntley.

Anne Smith of Upton, sworn : Am the widow of John Smith. Remembers the flood which washed down Upton Bridge in April. My husband had a ferry boat, and after the falling of the bridge a new ferry boat started. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, he went to the Severn Trow public house, Upton, and I went to fetch him home. The two prisoners were there quarrelling with my husband, and I tried to make peace between them. They came out of the house and there was a fight. Saw my husband stripped and heard blows struck, and afterwards saw my husband on the ground, badly hurt and bleeding from the head. He went out again the next day, but ought not to have gone.

Cross-examined by Mr Skinner : He was challenged to fight next day, but would not. He got “fresh” in the morning.

--- **Price**, a trowman on the Severn, deposed to being at the Severn Trow, Upton, on the night in question. Some words took place there between the prisoners and Smith. Tale challenged Smith to fight ; Huntley acted as Tale's second. They had two or three rounds, and then saw Huntley trip up Smith's heels, and he fell with his head against the curb stone which cut his head open, and he was insensible for several minutes.

Cross-examined by Mr Skinner : Tale and Smith were chaffing each other. Afterwards Smith left the house, and as he went he said to Tale, “Come along, and we'll have it out now”, Tale followed him out of the house, when Smith again asked him to come and have it out, and they then fought.

Mr Selfe also cross-examined the witness, but without eliciting anything fresh.

**William Embury**, waterman, was present at the fight outside the Severn Trow. Saw Mrs Smith there, and at her request fetched her husband out of the house to take him home. Words passed, and I loosed his arm, and they then fell to fighting. Smith was knocked down, and Price picked him up. I put my hand under his head and found it covered with blood.

Mr Gabriel Goodman, surgeon, Upton, deposed that he was called in to see Smith on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. He was in bed, and complained much of dreadful pains to the back of his neck and head. There was much inflammation, and a carbuncular tumour. He attended him about nine days. He died on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, from the carbuncle on the back of his head caused by the cut.

Cross-examined by Mr Skinner : Carbuncle is a disease which may be produced by natural causes. Have seen similar cases, but never knew of more than two which resulted fatally – the present one, and another in a person seventy years of age. Don't know that carbuncular disease has increased in this country of late years.

By his Lordship : The wound was not healed when I saw it. It was a healthy cut, and about half an inch long. Death resulted from the mischief caused to the system by the tumour.

Mrs Smith recalled : Saw the tumour two days before I called in Mr Goodman. I regularly applied bread poultice to the cut by night, and plaister by day, which treatment the doctor approved of.

Mr Skinner made an able and lengthy speech on behalf of Tale, and Mr Selfe, having also addressed the Jury for Huntley, called two witnesses who gave him a good character. His Lordship then summed up, and the Jury, after a brief consultation, acquitted the prisoners.

## **22 August 5 1852**

**ROBBERY** At the County Magistrates' Office, Pierpoint Street, on Monday, before C Sidebottom Esq, two boatmen named **William Corbett** and **William Rowley** were committed to take their trial at the ensuing Sessions, charged with having, on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, at the parish of St Peter, feloniously stolen five calf skins, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Saunders, their employers.

## **23 August 12 1852**

**SHOCKING CASE OF STABBING** A boatman named **Rodway** was on Thursday examined before the Mayor and Magistrates of Gloucester, charged with stabbing another man named Davis in a brutal manner. It appeared from the evidence that Rodway, Davis and another man named Jones had been drinking at the New Inn beerhouse in Quay Lane, Gloucester, from eleven in the morning until five in the evening on Wednesday, and being excited with drink, Davis and Rodway quarrelled and fought. After the first fight Rodway went home and procured a clasp knife, telling one of the witnesses that he had been fighting with Davis, and that he “would go back and cut him up like pork” ; and this threat he almost literally fulfilled. When he returned to the beerhouse, he had the knife in his hand, and endeavoured to excite Davis to strike him, daring him to do so. Davis at length becoming exasperated, struck Rodway a blow with his fist, on which the latter immediately stabbed Davis in the face, inflicting a ghastly wound nearly four inches in length, and cutting to the bone of the right cheek and the lower jaw. A spout of blood followed the wound, and Davis's clothes were completely saturated. He was conveyed home, where his wounds were dressed, and he is going on as well as can be expected. Rodway was committed for trial at the Assizes.

## **24 August 26 1852**

**KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY AUGUST 20**

**ASSAULT** **John Bishop**, a boatman, was fined a shilling and costs for assaulting one William Jeavons, who is employed in Mr H Chellingworth's brickyard, on the previous day (Thursday). Defendant admitted that he was “in drink” at the time.

## **25 September 2 1852**

**KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, TUESDAY AUGUST 31**

**HOUSEBREAKING** David Corbett and Abel Millward were brought up, charged with having, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, broken open the dwelling house of **John Guest** of the Delph, in the parish of Kingswinford, boatman, and stolen therefrom three shawls, two silk handkerchiefs, one pair of trousers, half a dozen teaspoons and other articles. Mary, the wife of John Guest, stated that on the day in question she left her house at the Delph to go with her husband to Preston Brook with a boat, and locked up the house, taking the key with her, having first locked up the articles above mentioned in boxes ; but when she returned home last night she found the house had been broken open, when she missed all the things which were now produced, and also some knives and forks. She also stated that the prisoner Corbett was her landlord's son, and on the day before she left home he was at her house, and altered the lock of the front door. Elizabeth Hughes, pawnbroker, deposed that the prisoner Corbett came to her house on Wednesday morning last, and offered to pledge a pair of trousers, but she refused to take them. On the same day, Millward pledged two shawls in the name of Abraham Guest for 5s. Frederick Hughes, pawnbroker, also proved that the two prisoners came to his father's shop and pledged the pair of trousers and one silk handkerchief for 2s. The prisoners were both apprehended at the railway station on the same evening. On searching

Millward, six spoons, a pawn ticket and two railway tickets from Kidderminster to Stourbridge were found upon him. Corbett had also a pawn ticket. On being cautioned in the usual form, Corbett made a lengthened statement in denial of felonious intention. The other prisoner declined saying anything. Both prisoners were committed to take their trials at the next Assizes.

## 26 September 30 1852

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 21

BRUTAL CONDUCT A boatman in the employ of Messrs Clay and Newman of Droitwich, named **John West**, was fined £1 and 12s 2d costs for cruelly maltreating two donkeys, which he was driving on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. Allowed thirteen days to pay in, or in default a month's hard labour.

## 27 October 7 1852

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

MAN DROWNED On Wednesday afternoon last, as a boatman named **John West** was proceeding down the river with an empty canal boat, on the cabin of which he was standing, on arriving at a point about two miles below the town, the boat came in contact with a trow coming up the river to Droitwich, and the deceased was thrown overboard by the collision. Superintendent Humphries, hearing of the accident, immediately engaged two boats, with which he proceeded to the spot, but did not succeed in recovering the body until twenty minutes after, when life was quite extinct. The body was conveyed to the Black Swan public house in this town, where an inquest was held on Thursday before C Best Esq, and a verdict of "Accidental death" returned by the Jury. Deceased, who was 45 years of age, has left a widow and one child.

## 28 October 7 1852

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting the Watermen's Church was preached at St Clement's on Thursday afternoon by the Rev J B Marsden, Vicar of St Peter's, Birmingham. The collection amounted to £24 5s 6d. We are glad to find that the feelings of the public in favour of this most laudable effort to afford religious instruction to the watermen employed upon the river and canal, do not abate. Those who contribute either by subscription or donation towards the support of this church may feel assured that their bounty is well directed, and that, through the blessing of God, it is instrumental in effecting an amount of good which cannot but be truly gratifying to every Christian mind. Besides the watermen, many more attend the church who had never before been in the habit of attending any place of worship. The demeanour of the congregation is such as to afford a reasonable hope that they are rightly affected by the ministrations of the indefatigable Clergyman who officiates.

## 29 October 14 1852

EXTRAORDINARY OPERATION A poor man named **Brice**, a boatman living on the London Road, Spalding, underwent one of the most fearful surgical operations which it is possible to imagine. He had a large tumour on the lower part of his cheek, and his jaw bone was diseased. He was attended by Dr Morris, who found that unless the diseased jaw could be removed, the man must die ; he accordingly determined upon removing it ; one of the front teeth had first to be extracted to admit the saw, and the cheek was cut through nearly to the ear in order to get at the other end of the jaw, when by means of the saw it was taken out. The operation lasted thirty six minutes, and we are glad to say the poor fellow is doing well.

*Lincoln Chronicle*

## 30 October 14 1852

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY OCTOBER 8

HIGHWAY ROBBERY Two boatmen named **John Lock** and **William Hawthorn** were charged with committing an offence of this nature, under the following circumstances :- The prosecutor, John Ashcroft, a besom maker living at Welchgate, near Bewdley, stated that on the evening of the

5<sup>th</sup> instant he was at Stourbridge, and as he was returning home with a donkey about nine o'clock, he met the two prisoners with a cart at a public house in the vicinity of Stourbridge. Lock was playing at dominoes, and in return for his offering to bring him on the road, prosecutor paid for a "quart" he had lost at play. He then went away in company with both prisoners, and having travelled a long way and been up two nights, he asked then to allow him to get into the cart, which they did, and in return he treated them to "a pint" at a "public" at Iverley. After going some way in the direction of Kidderminster he fell asleep. He had in his pocket a purse containing nine shillings and two sixpences in silver, together with fourpence in copper and a knife. The purse was tied in a knot. On going through Broadwaters Gate, he was awoke by feeling someone's hand in his watch pocket, which he found was the prisoner, Hawthorn's, who had got into the cart, and upon his charging him with having taken his money, he knocked him out of the cart with a blow of his fist. He got up and went to his donkey, which he had tied behind the cart, on which Hawthorn threw him the empty purse, exclaiming, "D--- you, take care of your money, and not let it lie about the cart". He also said that he had paid three halfpence for the donkey at the turnpike, when prosecutor said he could not pay as he had lost all his money, on which Hawthorn felled him to the ground and kicked him. Both prisoners then went on to Kidderminster, and stopped at the Cock Inn, Horsefair, whither he followed and "denounced" them, when he was advised to apply to the police. Prosecutor admitted having been at "a many public houses" during the day, but said he had not had much to drink, only was "worn out with *fertague*, like". PC Haigh apprehended both the prisoners (under a warrant granted by a borough Magistrate) near Stourport, who both denied the charge and said they never touched the prosecutor's money. On searching Hawthorn, he found the knife, deposed to by prosecutor. Committed to the Assizes.

### **31      October 21 1852**

MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS      **William Corbett**, 45, and **William Rowley**, 30, watermen, were charged with stealing five Russian calves' skins, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Saunders, their masters, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July at the parish of St Peter the Great. Mr Richards prosecuted ; the prisoners were defended by Mr Huddleston. The evidence in this case was insufficient to clearly bring the charge home to the prisoners, and the Chairman ordered them to be discharged without troubling Mr Huddleston to address the Jury on their behalf.

### **32      October 21 1852**

#### CITY SESSIONS

**William Palmer**, 20, boatman, was charged with stealing 12s 4 1/2d and a handkerchief from the person of Elizabeth Knight on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Mr Selfe prosecuted. Mrs Knight on the evening of the above day returned home from hop picking, and went to the Lord Nelson, Birdport, to look for her husband. Having been up all the night previous she was very tired, and when she sat down she soon fell asleep, when the prisoner was seen by the servant at the Nelson to take the money wrapped in the handkerchief from her bosom. Guilty – three months' imprisonment, the first and last month in solitary confinement, and the remainder hard labour.

### **33      October 28 1852**

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS

**Isaac Henshall**, 23, boatman, was convicted of stealing from the person of Thomas Westwood 1s 11d in silver and copper, a knife and a tobacco box, at Dudley on the 19<sup>th</sup> September. Mr Chance prosecuted. The prisoner pleaded guilty to a second indictment, charging him with robbing Daniel Ward. One month's imprisonment for each offence.

### **34      November 4 1852**

#### CITY POLICE, THURSDAY

CHARGE OF STEALING WHEAT      Three boatmen named **Joseph Miller**, **George Hunt** and **Thomas Jones** were charged with stealing a sack of wheat from one of Mr Stalworth's boats

moored in the Severn opposite Mr Gardner's corn warehouse, from whence the vessel had been laden with sacks of corn on Wednesday. The only evidence at present implicating the accused is that of the missing sack of wheat being found in a boat moored a few hundred yards above the one from which the wheat was taken, where the prisoners were also. They were remanded till Thursday next for the production of other testimony.

**35 November 4 1852**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY OCTOBER 28

DISORDERLIES **Mary Tale**, wife of a waterman of Upton was convicted of being drunk and disorderly at Upton, and fined 15s including costs.

**36 November 11 1852**

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN A boatman in the employ of Mr Walters, coal dealer of this town, was brought up on a charge of having robbed his master of 30s. It appeared from the evidence that defendant had been sent with a boat to fetch coal from Green's Forge, and entrusted with the money to pay the tonnage. Not putting in an appearance with the return boat, after the lapse of a fortnight, Sergeant Lloyd captured him at the Dudley Tunnel, where he was at work. He told Lloyd that he had the money but lost it, with a bunch of keys. Committed to the Sessions.

**37 November 18 1852**

KIDDERMINSTER

WORTHY OF NOTICE A waterman named **Thomas Edwards**, aged 95 years, was recently admitted into the Union Workhouse, having attained this advanced age without having ever before been in such an establishment.

**38 December 16 1852**

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH The treasurer of the Worcester Watermen's Church has received £15, being a legacy bequeathed to that Church by Miss E Edwards of Wick. This is the first legacy received by the treasurer, but we hope it will prove the precursor of many more, knowing as we do that this humble church is the means of conferring invaluable benefit upon the watermen, as well as upon many others who, previously to its establishment, manifested no feeling on the subject of religion.

**39 January 6 1853**

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**Caleb Banks**, 27, boatman, was indicted for stealing 30s, the property of his master, **Joseph Walters**, on the 19<sup>th</sup> October at Kidderminster. Prosecutor gave the prisoner the money to pay the tonnage of a boat load of coal on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, since which time he absconded till the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, when he was taken into custody at Dudley Tunnel. His defence was that he had lost the money and did not like to come back to his master till he had got the money to return it to him. Guilty : Six weeks' hard labour.

William Barnsley, 30, Charles Peachy, 9, labourers, **John Venables**, 16, boatman, and Thomas Venables, 14, collier, were charged with breaking into the dwelling house of Mary Houston and stealing four watches, on the 15<sup>th</sup> November at Dudley. Barnsley and Thomas Venables pleaded guilty. John Venables and Peachy were acquitted. Barnsley and Peachy were also indicted for stealing a pair of boots on the same day and at the same place, the property of John Jones. Barnsley also pleaded guilty to this charge, and Peachy was again acquitted. Barnsley was sentenced to a month's hard labour for stealing the boots and six months for the burglary, and Thomas Venables to six months' hard labour.

**40 January 6 1853**

CITY SESSIONS **Thomas Jones**, 26, **George Hunt**, 34, and **Joseph Miller**, 37, boatmen, were charged with stealing four bushels of wheat and a sack from a boat called the *Prudence*, lying on the Severn at the Quay, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, the property of Thomas Stalworth. Not guilty.

**41 January 6 1853**

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

The only cases brought before the Bench today were an assault case, in which James Griffiths was defendant and Ann Willey complainant ; and one of felony, in which **Stephen Lownes**, a boatman, was the delinquent. The first was dismissed, parties not appearing, and the second adjourned till next day.

**42 January 13 1853**

STOURPORT

BOY DROWNED On Monday, a boy 11 years of age named **William Nelms**, son of a boatman living at Gloucester, was drowned in the Little Lock of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. He was working on board a boat laden with coal, and it is supposed that owing to the darkness of the night, he missed his footing and fell into the canal. An inquest was held on the body at the Tontine Inn this (Wednesday) afternoon, before W S P Hughes Esq, and a verdict of "Accidental death" returned.

**43 January 20 1853**

CITY POLICE

CAUTION TO DRUNKEN BOATMEN This morning a boatman named **George Davis** was brought before the Magistrates under the following circumstances :- Mr John Fleming, coal merchant, Bath Road, engaged with Davis on Tuesday to go to Tipton with a boat for a load of coal, and gave him £1 5s 6d to pay the expenses. On the following morning, seeing that his boat was still at the wharf, Mr Fleming went in search of the defendant, whom he found boozing in a public house, and when he ordered him to be off on his voyage, he only cursed and abused his employer. When Mr Fleming next went to him it was with a constable, and then they found him indeed on board, but dead drunk. He had him taken to the station house, and this morning he was sent to prison for three weeks' hard labour. If Mr Fleming's example was followed by owners of other vessels, such disgraceful conduct would soon be put a stop to.

**44 February 17 1853**

STRATFORD-ON-AVON BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FEBRUARY 8

STEALING WHEAT Two men named **Samuel Smith** and John Allcock were brought before the Magistrates, charged with being concerned in the recent robbery of sixteen bushels of wheat from a warehouse belonging to Mr Joseph Cowlshaw. A quantity of the grain was found concealed in a boat of which Smith had charge, and on being asked for some explanation, he said he bought it from a man at Hampton, and gave £3 for it. Mr Cowlshaw produced samples of wheat, which exactly corresponded with that found in the boat ; and the Bench, deeming this sufficient evidence, committed him to take his trial at the Assizes. Allcock was discharged.

**45 February 17 1853**

KIDDERMINSTER COUNTY POLICE COURT THURSDAY FEBRUARY 10

TRESPASS **Benjamin Ince** of Bewdley was fined 6d damage and 11s costs for trespassing with his horse across a meadow occupied by Mr John Norgrove, farmer, at Upper Aveley, and doing damage to the amount specified. Defendant was a boatman, and instead of following the bend of the river, took his horse across the meadow to shorten his journey. The result afforded a convincing truth of the aphorism - "Lazy folks have always the most trouble".

**46 February 24 1853**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22

WARNING TO BOATMEN **William Bishop** of Stoke Prior, boatman, was summoned for having, while navigating a boat on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, wilfully flushed out and wasted water at Lock No 31, situate in the abovenamed parish, contrary to the Company's Act 31<sup>st</sup> Geo III s75, by which he was subjected to a penalty of not exceeding 40s. As the defendant did not appear and was stated to have told the officer when served with a copy of the summons that he should not attend, the case was heard *ex parte*. The information was laid by the lock-keeper, **William Higgs**, and the committal of the offence was proved by a witness named **James Wareing**, who stated that the defendant had been in the habit of similarly offending, and that when he (witness) reproved him, he became very abusive. The Magistrates inflicted the full penalty, but remitted the costs.

**47 February 24 1853**

CANAL TRAFFIC ON THE SABBATH Messrs G B Thorneycroft and Co of Wolverhampton have prohibited the boatmen in their employ from running their boats upon the Sabbath, under a penalty of 10s for each offence.

**48 March 3 1853**

WORCESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**John Palmer**, 40, boatman, and **John Brace**, 18, boatman, were charged with stealing, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February last at the parish of St Peter the Great, 112 lbs of hay, the property of Abel Pointon. Mr Kerr prosecuted, and Mr Selfe appeared for the defence. The hay was discovered in a boat of which the two prisoners had the charge, and the bands were sworn to by Samuel Pardoe, who is in Mr Pointon's employ. He had cut nine trusses of hay and had left them down at Diglis basin, and when he went the next morning, two of them were gone. Sergeant Grubb took the prisoners into custody, and they said they had the hay from a Mr Clarke at Hanbury Wharf. Mr Selfe having made his appeal, the Chairman summed up in favour of the prisoners, and the Jury acquitted them.

**49 March 17 1853**

TRIALS OF CITY PRISONERS

**John Jones**, 17, boatman, was charged with having, on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of July about six o'clock in the morning, broken into the dwelling house of William Smith, at the parish of St Clements, and stolen therefrom a pair of boots, a pair of trousers, a work box and other articles, his property. Mr Streeten prosecuted, and Mr Cooke defended. Prosecutor stated that at the time of the robbery he was porter at Messrs Taplins in Hylton Street. On the morning after the robbery when he came downstairs about half past six, he discovered that a pane of glass had been taken from the window and the above articles were gone. George Taylor said he met the prisoner on the bridge on the above day, and asked Stockall, who was with him, if he wanted to buy a pair of trousers. He also asked if they had heard anything about Hylton Street, for he had "cracked a crib" there that morning. Saw him again four days afterwards, and he asked him to go and have some drink and look at the trousers. Went to the New Inn by the "Cut". Had been in Cold Bath Fields' Prison in London, for an offence which the prisoner had committed (Laughter). William Stockall corroborated this evidence. PC Bury saw the prisoner at Pitchcroft and tried to take him into custody, when he jumped into the Severn and swam across. He got a boat and followed him, and eventually secured him. The articles were produced, and sworn to by prosecutor. Prosecutor's wife also spoke to the articles. Mr Cooke made a short defence, his Lordship summed up, and the Jury found the prisoner guilty. In consequence of his having been already in gaol eight months, his Lordship sentenced him to ten months' further imprisonment.

**50 March 17 1853**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY MARCH 15

ASSAULT **William Jeffs** of Stoke Prior, boatman, charged one Ralph Potter, blacksmith, with

unlawfully assaulting him on the canal towing-path, early on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> of January last. The case was fully proved, notwithstanding a stout denial from the defendant, who called a witness to support his averment. The witness, however, failed to aid him, and the Magistrates inflicted a fine of 2s 6d and £1 costs, refusing to allow any time for payment. Penalty of default, 21 days imprisonment.

### **51 March 24 1853**

**BURGLARY AT KINGSWINFORD** On Thursday last, two young men named David Corbett and Abel Millward were indicted for breaking and entering the house of **John Guest** of Kingswinford on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August last, and stealing therefrom a variety of wearing apparel, six teaspoons &c, his property. Mr Byrne prosecuted, and Mr R Kettle defended the prisoner Corbett. It appeared that Corbett was the son of the landlord of the prosecutor, and a person of respectable family. The prosecutor, who is a boatman, left home, together with his wife, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, leaving all secure in the house. They were absent ten days, having gone for a voyage on the canal. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, a police-constable's attention was drawn to the state of the prosecutor's premises, which he found had been entered by the removal of a window at the back of the house. The prisoners were subsequently apprehended at the Kidderminster Railway Station, and duplicates for a portion of the stolen property, which they had pawned, were found upon them. Several witnesses were examined, amongst whom were two pawnbrokers, to prove that the prisoners acted in concert. The Jury returned a verdict of guilty. The prisoners, who received excellent characters, were each sentenced to eight months' imprisonment.

### **52 April 7 1853**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER SESSIONS**

**James Johnson**, 17, boatman, and **William Smith**, 16, boatman, were charged with having, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March last, at Halesowen, stolen a wheelbarrow and a bag, the property of Joseph Jesson. A second count charged them with stealing on the same day 185 lbs of lead, the property of William Brettell. Mr Chance prosecuted. Two men were seen by a man named Neal, on the above morning, wheeling a barrow with something heavy in it, but he could not swear to their being the prisoners ; and by another witness the prisoners were seen in an old lime kiln with the barrow, the lead being about fifty yards distant in a bag. On the first charge, a verdict of not guilty was returned ; but on the second count, the evidence being more conclusive, the Jury returned a verdict of guilty against both prisoners. Six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **53 April 14 1853**

#### **BROMSGROVE**

**BEEF STEALING** **Thomas Freeman**, boatman of Stoke, was committed for trial on Friday last by F Watt Esq, but admitted to bail, for stealing 7 lbs of beef from a boat lying at Stoke, the property of his master.

### **54 April 28 1853**

#### **KIDDERMINSTER**

**A WIT AND HIS MONEY** Caroline Green, a denizen of Little Ireland, was charged with stealing £11 2s 6d from the person of **John Thompson**, boatman of Stourport. It seemed that the complainant had been "visiting" the frail fair at the house where she lived, and on leaving he missed his money. He mentioned his loss, but of course no one had got the money ; as, however, he was loud in his talk about the police, and their interference would have been decidedly unpleasant, someone in the dark put £7 into his hand by way of compensation. He gave information to the police, and the girl was apprehended. On being brought up this morning, no prosecutor appeared, and she was consequently discharged. It is said that the prosecutor's absence was occasioned by an attempt at compromise, set on foot by him with some "pals" of the defendant, but from which the latter derived no benefit, being ejected by summary process on the reappearance of the girl.

**55 May 26 1853**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT A boatman named **Dalloway** pleaded guilty to a charge of having assaulted the son of Mr John Hood, coal merchant &c, on Saturday night last. In consequence of the contrition he expressed, Mr Hood did not press for a fine, but consented to the case being dismissed on payment of costs by defendant, who was admonished to be more careful in his mode of deporting himself in future.

**56 June 9 1853**

SUDDEN DEATH On Friday morning last, a waterman named **Thomas Waldron**, about 50 years of age, was found dead in one of Mr Stalworth's boats, moored at the back of Hylton Street. J B Hyde Esq held an inquest on the remains on Saturday at the Mug House. From the evidence of **Charles Dowling**, a boatman in Mr Stalworth's employ, it appeared that on the previous evening he saw the deceased drunk in a public house in Quay Street. Very early next morning, he came into witness's boat and lay down to sleep, but shortly afterwards Dowling was aroused by some kicks in the stomach, and getting up found deceased in a fit. He partially recovered, but the fit was succeeded by two others, the last proving fatal. Dowling ran off to procure assistance, but it was found useless. Mr Walter Cooksey, surgeon, Tything, reported as the result of a post mortem examination that death had been occasioned by serious apoplexy, originating in the intemperate habits of the deceased. Verdict : "Died by the visitation of God".

**57 June 9 1853**

FATAL OCCURRENCE A boatman named **William Barton**, about 21 years of age, left the Navigation Inn, Lowesmoor, in a state of intoxication on Monday night, and was conducted to Lowesmoor Wharf by one Edward Atkins and given in charge to the watchman on the wharf, who conveyed him on board a boat and left him. Shortly after, it was ascertained that he had fallen overboard. By dint of exertion he was got out again in about ten minutes, and Mr J D Jefferys, surgeon, being sent for, attended, and ordered him to be removed home from the boat where he was lying. He recovered consciousness sufficient to answer questions, but though carefully attended to, died between seven and eight on the following morning. At the inquest, held at the Crown and Anchor, Lowesmoor, this (Wednesday) afternoon, Mr Jefferys stated it as his opinion that death had resulted from congestion on the brain – there being no marks of violence on any parts of the body. The Jury accordingly returned a verdict of "Natural death".

**58 June 9 1853**

EVESHAM

DUCK SHOOTING Three boatmen, named respectively **Edward and John Spragg**, and **John Spragg the younger**, were on Thursday last committed for trial at the Sessions by B Workman Esq, but admitted to bail, for shooting ducks belonging to Mr R Taylor of Cleeve, as they were going up the river in their boat on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult.

**59 June 16 1853**

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

CAPTURE OF THE BOROUGH TREASURER A few weeks ago we stated that this functionary (Mr John Manly Ashwin) had absconded, and that the Council had issued a warrant for his apprehension on a charge of wilful neglect of duty. A description of his person was also printed and circulated, and he was traced to Worcester and thence to Cheltenham, where all clue to him was lost until the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, when information was forwarded to Police Superintendent Thomas Taylor that he had been seen with a boat near Oldbury. That officer went over to Wolverhampton, set the police on the alert, and on the following day Inspector Bennett and PC Horseley apprehended the runaway in a boat near Bradshaw's Mill in that town, dressed as a boatman. When he saw the officers approaching he attempted to make his escape, but was unsuccessful. He gave his name as John

Williams, his residence as Tenby in South Wales, and stoutly denied any knowledge of Stratford ; but when brought to the station he was fully identified by Taylor. He was employed as assistant to the captain of the boat, a man named **Moore**, the vessel being the property of Mr Platt, a carrier of Stratford, and it is stated he has been thus engaged ever since he absconded. He was brought to this town on the Monday evening, and on Tuesday taken before one of the county Magistrates on a charge of dereliction of duty, but a remand until Friday was applied for, and on that day he was again remanded until Monday, pending the decision of the Council at their meeting on Saturday, as to what steps should be taken in the matter. The deficiency in the corporation accounts is said to be rather over £105 ; but the defendant confidently asserts that he can give a satisfactory explanation of the whole affair, and that the apparent defalcation has arisen out of the confused state into which he got the accounts by not keeping each separate and distinct.

## **60 June 23 1853**

**NARROW ESCAPES FROM DROWNING** On Saturday evening last, a boy named Wainwright, aged about 13, fell into the Severn near the bottom of the China Slip, and would in all probability have been drowned had it not been for the intrepidity of a young man named Harrison, who lunged in after him, after throwing off merely his coat and hat, and brought him to the shore. About seven o'clock yesterday (Tuesday) morning, another boy was rescued from drowning in the canal, near the Blockhouse Bridge, by **Henry Hemus**, a boatman.

## **61 June 23 1853**

**UPTON-ON-SEVERN, PETTY SESSIONS**

**ANOTHER ASSAULT CASE** **Ann Sidley**, wife of a waterman, living in Dunn's Lane, Upton, charged a married man named Stephen Payton with assaulting her on the 11<sup>th</sup> instant, by shaking his fist in her face. This case disclosed a shocking state of affairs in the above locality, particularly among the women, who seem to hold themselves up to notoriety by trying which can make use of the most filthy and disgusting language, a specimen of which the parties gave in Court. The Magistrates considered the case proved, and fined the defendant 1s with costs 11s 6d, and intimated their determination to put down such disgraceful proceedings by finding the next party convicted in the full amount, £5.

## **62 July 2 1853**

**OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH** We have perused with much pleasure a letter addressed to canal carriers and the trading class in general by the Rev John Davies, Rector of St Clement's in this city, in furtherance of those efforts (so becoming a Christian Minister) which he has been making for several years, with a view to the spiritual welfare of the men employed on our inland navigation. In this letter he presses earnestly the duty of suspending traffic upon Sundays, to afford these poor fellows those advantages which other classes possess on that day. "It is indeed", (he observes), "a most serious consideration that, in a land professing Christianity, a commercial system should be allowed to exist, which is the means of keeping in a state of ignorance and immorality so large a number of British subjects". And he proceeds to adduce many most striking instances of the effect produced upon the minds of some of this class to whom the benefits of the Sabbath have been extended, and who have been regular attendants at the Watermen's Church established in this city. "Few persons", (says the writer), "could have made a more appropriate reply to the arguments of a Mormonite than did a boatman some time ago. When he expressed his wish to have nothing to say to his tempter, he quoted these words of the Apostle Paul :- "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed". In another part of his letter, Mr Davies says, "It is a gratifying sight to behold the man who, as a husband, a father and a member of society, was wont to be the curse of his family and the bane of his fellow men, enabled to throw off his destructive habits, and proving himself a blessing to others, by leading a life suitable to his profession, as a servant of the Divine Redeemer. *One* such instance is an ample reward for any labour, expense or trouble incurred in promoting the welfare of our fellow men, for

“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth”. But the efforts made to benefit this class are much impeded by the commercial system at present prevalent. When a boatman accosts a Clergyman (as has happened to myself) and says he “wished to have attended public worship on the Sunday, but if he had *he should have lost his situation*”, it is evident that many of these poor men have difficulties to encounter, which call for sympathy and relief”. We commend the Rev Gentleman's letter to the attention of the trading classes generally, for in such a case, each one can do something.

### 63 July 2 1853

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

BOAT ROBBERY AT UPTON **John Savage, Henry King, and Benjamin Handy**, boatmen, were charged with robbing a boat, of which they had the charge, at Upton, and stealing therefrom ten pecks of wheat and a sack, the property of Mr William Rice, boat owner of Upton. Mr Huddleston prosecuted and Mr Selfe defended the prisoners.

Mr Rice having proved the loss of the wheat and identified the sack, Superintendent Humphries deposed to the apprehension of Handy about half past eleven on the night of the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, having in his possession a sack containing the wheat in question. Two other men were in his company when witness first saw him, who he believed were Savage and King.

Mrs Susannah Griffin, landlady at the Barley Mow Inn, gave evidence as to the prisoners drinking together at her house on the night mentioned.

Mr Selfe addressed the Jury in behalf of the prisoners Savage and King, contending, in respect to them, the evidence was not sufficiently conclusive to prove complicity with Handy.

The Chairman summed up, and the Jury, after some deliberation, found all the prisoners guilty, but recommended Savage and King to mercy.

The foreman of the Jury at first gave the verdict as guilty against Handy and not guilty against the other two prisoners ; but on hearing this, a Juryman rose and informed the Court it was a mistake, as the Jury had found all the prisoners guilty, but recommending to mercy Savage and King.

The Chairman sentenced Handy to twelve months, Savage to six months, and King four months' imprisonment.

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN **Thomas Rainbow**, 20, boatman, was found guilty of stealing a bacon ham from the dwelling house of John Smith at Halesowen, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Mr Hean prosecuted ; Mr Huddleston defended.

PLEADED GUILTY **Thomas Freeman**, 23, boatman, to stealing 7 lbs of wheat, the property of John Bennett of Stoke Prior. Two months' imprisonment.

### 64 July 2 1853

#### WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **John Tyler**, 26, boatman, to stealing on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of April last at the parish of St Peter, 5 cwt and 18 lbs of coals, the property of John Hood. The Recorder allowed two witnesses to speak as to his good character, and he then sentenced him to one day's imprisonment in solitary confinement.

### 65 July 2 1853

#### CITY POLICE

ASSAULTING A POLICEMAN A desperado named **George Hunt**, a boatman, was brought up, charged with violently assaulting and resisting PC John Doughty in the execution of his duty on the previous night. Defendant was using some very bad language in Queen Street, about half past nine o'clock, and being reprovved by Doughty he became so abusive as rendered it necessary for the officer to take him into custody. He resisted and kicked Doughty, who was obliged to obtain the

assistance of Sergeant Evans and PCs Hooper, Workman and Pitt to lodge him in the station house. Fined £1 and 5s costs, or in default fourteen days' hard labour.

**66 July 9 1853**

STOURBRIDGE PUBLIC OFFICE, FRIDAY JULY 1

ASSAULTING A POLICEMAN **William Rollins**, a boatman, charged with an assault on PC Smith while in the execution of his duty, was convicted and fined £6 and costs, or two months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**67 July 16 1853**

WORCESTER CITY AND COUNTY SUMMER ASSIZES

STEALING IRON AT DUDLEY **Robert Featherstone**, 41, boatman, and William Sutton were indicted for having stolen, on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult, 10 cwt of iron, the property of Lord Ward. Six months' imprisonment to hard labour.

**68 July 23 1853**

CITY POLICE

HOUSEBREAKING Two youths named John Darke and John Bownell were brought up on suspicion of having broken and entered the dwelling house of **Charles Allen**, boatman, in Group Lane in this city. Mrs Allen stated that on Tuesday night last about ten o'clock, she went to bed with her husband, and a lodger went at the same time. Her husband got up at six o'clock the next morning, when he found a window had been unfastened by the removal of a pane of glass, and on looking round, a timepiece was missed from the mantelpiece. The suspicion against the two prisoners was founded upon the facts of their living near to Allen's, and to Darke being known to Superintendent Chipp as a convicted juvenile thief. Remanded until Saturday.

**69 August 6 1853**

CITY POLICE

ANOTHER STREET DISTURBER **John Jones**, who described himself as a boatman, was brought up, charged with being drunk in the vicinity of Quay Street about a quarter before one o'clock on Sunday morning. When desired to "move on" by PC Williams (who, with other policemen, was endeavouring to clear the street of a number of persons congregated together with the prisoner, and creating a disturbance), he became very abusive, calling after the officers and daring them to take him to the station. He was now very penitent for his misconduct, but the Magistrates deeming such practices highly reprehensible, fined him 5s and 3s 6d costs, or in default five days' imprisonment, which latter alternative he preferred.

**70 August 6 1853**

A BRUTE A boatman named **John Crump**, living in Lowesmoor, on the 26<sup>th</sup> ult beat his child, a boy between seven and eight years of age, so brutally with a whalebone whip that the child's breast was quite livid with weals and bruises. The scoundrel has since absconded, but we understand a warrant has been issued for his apprehension.

**71 August 6 1853**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

HEARTLESS ROBBERY A boatman named **Enoch Payton** was last week committed for trial at the next Sessions, on a charge of stealing, at the parish of Forthampton, a handkerchief containing victuals and a knife, belonging to a labourer named William Farren, who had placed his provisions under a hedge in a field while he was mowing, whence they were taken by the prisoner as he was hauling his barge up the river.

## 72 August 27 1853

### CITY POLICE

CHARGE OF FRAUD A boatman named **James Price** was brought up and remanded till Friday, charged with having defrauded Mr Winnall, chemist of Friar Street, of the sum of 3s. It appeared that the prisoner buys coal to sell again, and that having bought a load off another man, it was weighed on the machine as 19 cwt. He afterwards sold the coal to Mr Winnall as 1 ton 2 cwt 3 qrs. The Magistrates said that the case was a serious one, and accordingly adjourned it, ordering that summonses should issue for the appearance of the keepers of the machines where the coal was weighed.

## 73 September 3 1853

EXTRAORDINARY WATER WEED The remarkable water plant, the *Anacharis Alsinastrum*, which is now making such progress in the British fresh waters, and has become so notorious in the botanical world, was discovered by Mr Baxter, on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult in a small pool, the remains of a clay pit near Bevere Island, about three miles up the river Severn ; and as it has now made its way into this neighbourhood, a short description of it, and an account of its history in this island, may not be uninteresting. The plant grows submerged in the water in large tangled masses, and is so specifically heavy that when a piece is broken off, it sinks to the bottom. The stalks are long, slender and stringy, with numbers of small leaves growing round the stem in *threes*, which at once distinguishes it from other water plants. It was first found in this island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1842 by Dr George Johnson of Berwick-on-Tweed, in the lake of Dunse Castle, which is on a tributary of the Whiteadder. It was, however, not much noticed till the autumn of 1847, when it was again discovered by Miss Kirby in some reservoirs adjoining Foxton Locks, near Market Harborough in Leicestershire. This rediscovery awakened attention, and Mr Babington published a description of the plant in the "Annals of Natural History" for February 1848 ; and Dr Johnson, on reading the account, at once recognised the plant he had found in 1842. In the same season, but later, Mr James Mitchel found it in great profusion in the Lene, near Nottingham, and in November it was found by Mr Kirk at Watford Locks in Northamptonshire. In August 1849, it was discovered in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, growing abundantly in the Trent and in the canal, near Burton, by Mr Edwin Brown. At Christmas 1850, Mr Kirk found it at Rugby, and in July 1850, in the Oxford Canal near Wyken Colliery. In 1851, Mr W Marshall noticed it in the Ouse at Ely, and last year it had made its way to Stratford-on-Avon, where it was discovered by Mr W Cheshire junior of that town, who also found it in June this year in the same river at Evesham, which was the first time it had been noticed in Worcestershire. Now all these midland counties stations are connected, and are, in fact, part of the same water system, and the plant therefore, once established at Rugby or Watford, might be expected to reach any of the other places, especially as it grows with such surprising rapidity ; and indeed, in an account of this plant by Mr W Marshall, published in 1852 (to which we are indebted for many of the facts related here), he says, while speaking of its probable extension, "a few detached sprigs "travelling" would enter the Severn via Rugby or Warwick". But the mystery is how it got up the Severn to the pool where it was discovered on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult ; for the same gentleman observes "that the plant is *only now descending* these rivers is evident". The way in which the Can came to be infested by it is supposed to be this. In 1848 a piece was placed in the conduit stream in the Cambridge Botanic Gardens by the late Mr Murray, the curator, and a portion doubtless escaped through the water pipe and down the brook in the river. The plant in question is dioecious ie it has its stamens on one plant and the pistils on another. The nature of plants of this order is that, unless by some means the stigma of one class is fertilised by the pollen of the other, no seed can arrive at maturity. It is singular that all the specimens found in this country are females, that is having pistils only, and we are led to believe from this that the plant is a foreigner that has by some chance been introduced, very likely with timber from Canada. The most remarkable circumstance connected with the *Anacharis* is the rapidity of its growth ; for, although for the reason above stated, it cannot here propagate itself by seed, its powers of increase are prodigious, and every fragment is capable of becoming an independent plant, producing roots and stems, and extending itself indefinitely in all

directions. "Most of our water plants", says Mr Marshall, "require, in order to their increase, to be rooted to the bottoms or sides of the river or drain in which they are found ; but this is independent altogether of that condition, and actually grows as it travels slowly down the stream after having been cut". As an instance of its wonderful increase, we may take the manner in which it spread in Cambridgeshire, where the small piece, supposed to have escaped from the Cambridge Botanical Gardens, in *four* years only multiplied to such an extent as to impede both navigation and drainage. The plant is now found everywhere in the Cam from Cambridge downwards, choking up the mouths of docks, sluices and watercourses. Universal complaints have been made by the watermen of the obstructed state of the Cam. Mr Marshall says, "I am told that the river at the back of the Colleges has been so blocked that extra horses had to be yoked on before barges could be got up to Foster's Mills". The Railway Dock at Ely became so choked with the weed that boats could not enter it until several tons of it had been lifted out. Rowers and swimmers find that it much interferes with their recreations, and a correspondent of the *Cambridge Chronicle* remarks "that the weed will upset a "funny" first, and then prevent the rower swimming to land". Fishermen complain that they cannot ply their nets as easily as they used, and that they have been obliged to discontinue setting their hook lines, because the "new weed" either carries them away, or strips them of their baits and fish. The Rev A Bloxam also says that the increase of the weed in the Trent, between Repton and Castle Donnington, within the last few years has been such as entirely to prevent the use of nets. Mr Human sen, an experienced gentleman in the Cambridge district, says "that although the waters this season (1852) has been run off at Denver sluice a foot lower than in previous years, the average height of the water below Cambridge has been a foot higher than in ordinary seasons", and he refers at least half of this difference to the obstruction occasioned by the *Anacharis*. As the weed has now reached us, it is to be hoped that all persons will be very careful about making any attempts to propagate it, for if it once gets into any water, it will not easily, perhaps never, be eradicated, and all that can be done will be to try to keep it under by raking it out on the banks. But we trust that it will long confine itself to its present locality, and will not extend itself either into the river or the canals, where it would prove a very disagreeable intruder.

#### **74 September 17 1853**

CHILD DROWNED Thomas Hyde Esq DC held an inquest on Wednesday last on the body of a little boy named **John Bradley**, aged about three years, the son of a boatman, who was drowned on the preceding day by falling into the canal near the Blockhouse, while lading water out with a can. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

#### **75 September 17 1853**

##### COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

SUSPICIOUS A boatman named **Luke Packwood** was charged by **John Withy**, another of the same fraternity and captain of a boat that plies between Worcester and Birmingham, with having insisted on coming on board his boat on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> September inst, and making use of such expressions as, "You had better look out, for I shall take something worth having, if I take anything at all", &c, which said remarks, together with the fact of prisoner's reluctance to leave the boat when ordered, and then following it up the canal side ; as well as the captain's knowledge of the prisoner having been previously convicted, made him suspect that he contemplated a felony, and hence the present charge. Prosecutor wishing, however, not to press any serious charge, but only to have him warned by the Bench, Packwood was discharged with a severe reprimand.

#### **76 September 24 1853**

##### CITY POLICE

OBTAINING MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES (*areas of this very faded and difficult to read*)

**Charles Rendall**, a boatman, was brought up on a charge of (.....) the sum of £7 9s from Mr Thomas Harrington, (.....) Broad Street, under false pretences, on the previous Wednesday. Mr

Richard Hill prosecuted and Mr W (.....) attended on behalf of the defendant. It appeared from the evidence of Mr (.....) Harrington, managing clerk to prosecutor, that on the abovenamed day defendant, who was Captain of a boat called the (?Anna?), belonging to Mr Joseph Roberts, coal dealer of Gloucester, called at the office and applied for the amount of freightage on 39 tons 10 cwt of coal supplied to them at (?Dripshill?), being part of a large contract entered into with Mr Roberts. Defendant brought a ticket with him specifying the weight &c. Witness said to him, "Mr Roberts agreed to pay the carriage of the coal to our yard, and how is it that you (.....) the money for it". He replied, "I don't know – Mr Roberts has nothing to do with it". Witness again said that he thought it strange that Mr Roberts should not have paid all charges as agreed, and told defendant to call again. He went away, but returned in about three quarters of an hour, when witness paid him the money (which, at the rate of 3s 0d per ton, amounted to (.....) (.....) the impression that he had come by Mr Roberts's authority, and defendant gave him a receipt. Mr Hill (.....) a remand until Monday, to allow of the attendance of Mr Roberts, who was detained by business engagements. Mr (.....) submitted that Rendall, as Captain of the boat, was authorised to receive freight monies for Mr Roberts. Mr Hill intimated that this would be disproved. Remanded.

#### MONDAY

THE COAL FREIGHTAGE CASE The boatman **Rendall** was brought up on remand from Saturday, his employer, Mr Roberts of Gloucester, being in attendance. Mr Roberts stated that the defendant was to have brought a voucher of the weight from Mr Harrington, but was not to ask for or receive any money, there having been enough to defray the expense of the voyage advanced to him previous to his leaving Gloucester. He saw the prisoner on Thursday, by appointment, at Worcester, but nothing was said by him as to having received money from Mr Harrington, and he (witness) knew nothing of the transaction until Mr Harrington mentioned it. The prisoner had never been authorised to receive freight money. He was entitled to a sum equivalent to two thirds of the amount of freight of a load, but this was always settled with him on his return. Committed for trial at the Sessions.

#### 77 October 1 1853

##### COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT **Cecilia Cottrill**, wife of a boatman living at Upton-on-Severn, preferred a charge of violent assault against another boatman named **James Pumphrey**, committed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September. Mr Clutterbuck appeared for the complainant, and Mr Finch for the defendant. After hearing the complainant's statement and two witnesses in support of the defence, the Bench adjourned the case for a fortnight, to allow Mr Clutterbuck to bring further evidence in support of the charge.

#### 78 October 22 1853

##### WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

TIMBER STEALING AT KIDDERMINSTER William Beaman was found not guilty of stealing from a boat at Kidderminster three oak poles, the property of William Shale. Mr Huddleston prosecuted, and Mr Streeten defended.

ROBBING AN EMPLOYER **Adam Copeland**, 22, boatman, charged with stealing a smock frock on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August at Alvechurch, the property of Benjamin Jeffs, his master. Verdict : Not guilty.

STEALING A BED John Walters, 24, carpet weaver, and **Joseph Meadows**, 19, boatman, charged with stealing a flock bed, the property of William Wilkes, Kidderminster, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August. Walters pleaded guilty, but Meadows pleaded not guilty. Mr Powell conducted the prosecution. Verdict against Meadows : Guilty. A previous conviction was proved against him, and he was sentenced to penal servitude for four years.

**79      October 22 1853**

MICHAELMAS CITY QUARTER SESSIONS

OBTAINING MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES    **Charles Rendall**, 40, boatman, was charged with having obtained from G Harrington £7 9s under false pretences, the monies of Thomas Harrington, builder, Broad Street, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September. Mr Selfe prosecuted, and Mr Richards defended the prisoner. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner was in the employ of Mr Jos Roberts of Gloucester, and that on the above day he was sent with a boat load of coal to the wharf of Mr Thomas Harrington at Dripshill. His master gave him £3 to pay expenses, and on delivering the coal to Mr George Harrington, who is managing clerk to Mr Thomas Harrington, he said he was directed by his master to ask for the freight, and Mr George Harrington, paying him the money above stated, the prisoner committed the offence for which he was charged. Mr Richards said in his defence that the prisoner was labouring under a misapprehension in the way he was employed by his master, and hence made a mistake. The Recorder then summed up the evidence and the Jury returned a verdict of guilty. Two months' hard labour, first and last fortnight in solitary confinement.

PLEADED GUILTY    **William Brookes**, 21, boatman, to stealing on the 17<sup>th</sup> September last at the parish of St Peter, a silver watch and chain, the property of Edwin Lee. One month's imprisonment with hard labour.

**80      November 12 1853**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN COUNTY COURT, MONDAY NOVEMBER 7

**THORN v GRIFFIN** Plaintiff, a boat owner, sought to recover from the defendant, a boatman in his employ, the sum of 13s 10d for damage done to the mast of plaintiff's boat. Defendant agreed to pay one half of the claim and one half of the costs in a month.

**81      December 3 1853**

ACCIDENT ON THE RIVER    A barge belonging to Messrs Rowlands and Son of this city was accidentally sunk in the river near Bevere Island on Sunday morning last, on its way from their Broseley Tile Works, heavily laden with goods. It seems that on heaving to shore for the purpose of landing one of the men to haul the vessel into the cutting at Camp Lock, the vessel struck against a stone or pile and almost immediately went down in deep water ; the men, however, escaped by leaping on shore, but were unable to do anything towards saving the vessel. As the casualty occurred on a Sunday, we have been requested by Messrs Rowlands to state that so far from sanctioning Sunday labour they strictly prohibit all watermen in their employ from working on that day on any pretence whatever, and the captain of the barge in question violated an express order in loosing her from her moorings on the day in question.

**82      December 10 1853**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

BOATMEN'S OFFENCES    Three boatmen named **Henry Hawker**, **William Rawlins** and **Edward Beard**, all of Gloucester, were severally convicted of using horses on the Severn Towing-path between Gloucester and Worcester on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, without tickets for that purpose. They were each fined £2, with £1 2s 2d costs each, or three months' imprisonment.

**83      December 17 1853**

CITY POLICE

THE LATE CASE OF SMASHING    The boatman **Thomas Lowe**, who, it will be recollected, was remanded on the charge of passing spurious coin to Mr Jones, butcher of Lowesmoor, and Miss Whitmarsh of the same street, was brought up again today and committed for trial, the authorities of the Mint having replied in the affirmative with regard to the question of prosecution.

**84 January 7 1854**

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN **William Martin** was charged with stealing a horsecloth belonging to William Barton and another of Dudley on the 13<sup>th</sup> November.

*(Rest unreadable)*

**85 January 7 1854**

CITY EPIPHANY QUARTER SESSIONS

PASSING COUNTERFEIT COIN **Thomas Lowe**, 22, boatman, was indicted for having uttered, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December last, a counterfeit half crown to Mr Thomas Jones, butcher of Lowesmoor. Mr Streeten prosecuted. The case was fully reported in the *Journal* at the time. The prisoner went to the prosecutor's shop about half past eleven on the night in question and tendered the piece of money in payment for some meat, which came to 3 1/2d. The prosecutor, finding it was a bad coin, detained him and sent for a policeman. The prisoner said he had it from the Wharf. When Vaughan the officer arrived, the door was opened, and the prisoner threw something amongst the crowd outside, exclaiming, "Are my boots done?" Some of the parties outside tried to rescue him, but a witness named Blossom assisted Mr Jones and his wife to secure him. Blossom also saw him put some coins out of his mouth and tie them up in a handkerchief, and afterwards put them into his purse, which he threw out when the door was opened, as described. He was then taken into custody. A second count in the indictment charged the prisoner with passing a counterfeit half crown on the same night to Miss Catherine Whitmarsh, whose father keeps a pork butcher's shop next door but one to Mr Jones's. Miss Whitmarsh proved the prisoner being the same man as passed the money, and Mr Mason, silversmith, proved the coins being counterfeit. On being searched at the Station House, some smaller silver was found upon him. He denied to Jones having anything but the half crown piece. The Jury returned a verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced to six weeks' hard labour, the last week in solitary confinement. Mr Binnall of Lowesmoor and Mr Bromley gave the prisoner a good character.

NO BILLS **James Weaver**, 45, boatman, charged with having stolen two trusses of hay, the property of William Hay, his master, on the 15<sup>th</sup> November.

**86 January 21 1854**

CITY POLICE

SUSPICIOUS CASE A boatman named **George Matthews** was brought up on suspicion of having stolen about 10 lbs weight of hair seating warp, a material used by hair cloth manufacturers as the foundation for the hair to be worked upon. Mr Tilsley, manager of Mr Edward Webb's manufactory in this city, stated that the prisoner came to him yesterday about two o'clock, and offered the material for sale. On being asked where he obtained it, he said he bought it from a public house called the Vauxhall Branch in Gloucester. Mr Tilsley, suspecting that the prisoner had come by it dishonestly, sent for Superintendent Chipp, who took the prisoner into custody. Mr Webb also stated to the Magistrate that he had no doubt the material had been stolen from some boat. Before it was cut, it would have been worth 10s, but now its value was about half a crown. He also intimated his intention of writing to some manufacturers he knew to enquire as to any loss they might have sustained. The prisoner was remanded until Monday.

**87 January 21 1854**

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

CHILD DROWNED An inquest was held on Friday last at the Red Horse Hotel in this town, on the body of a child about five years of age named **Thomas Alcock**, son of **George Alcock**, boatman, who was accidentally drowned in the canal adjoining the town on the previous Wednesday. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**88 January 28 1854**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY JANUARY 24

**CRUELTY TO AN ASS** **George Goodwin** of Stoke Prior, boatman, was summoned for brutally ill-treating a donkey, by turning it adrift in the lanes near Stoke, and as, in consequence of the roads being covered with snow, it could procure no food, the poor animal was literally starved to death. It appeared that the donkey was glandered and, refusing to eat, was turned out and abandoned by the defendant, who was fined 5s and 13s 6d expenses, or in default fourteen days' hard labour. Allowed a week to pay.

**89 January 28 1854**

CITY POLICE

A BRUTE **Henry Emuss**, a boatman, was brought up on a charge of having brutally assaulted his wife Eliza this morning. The apparel of the defendant was of a most filthy description, and taking him "for all in all" it is to be hoped for the credit of human nature that it will be very long ere the Court doth "look upon his like again". The facts of the case as detailed in evidence by the wife (who appeared in Court in an extremely weak condition, and was accommodated with a seat) were these :- They had been married nearly twelve months, and on Saturday morning last she was confined at her husband's house in Birdport. About ten o'clock this (Monday) morning he came home and, she being in bed, began to abuse her because she was not able to get up and prepare him his breakfast! He ordered her out of the house with most opprobrious epithets, and while she was putting her gown on to go, he pushed her violently downstairs, and also a young woman who was attending to her. She went out of the house with the intention of going to her mother's, but being unable to go so far, went into the house of a neighbour named Creese, whither he followed, and said he would murder her, striking her twice with his fists. He probably might have kept his word had it not been for the interference of the neighbours and the Rev Mr Hodson. This evidence was confirmed by the testimony of the woman, Mary Ann Porter, who was in the house attending to complainant. The fellow in his defence alleged that he did not strike his wife, nor even abuse her, but she got up out of bed and said she would not stop in the house with him, and dressing herself, went out and he followed her. He averred that he took "every care" of her, and "went a'most naked" himself to clothe her. The Mayor asked him if he thought his story would find credence with the Bench! Defendant intimated his opinion that he ought to be believed – as for his wife, he said, "Her 'ud swear black was white and white no colour at all" to suit her purpose, and so would those her belonged to. The fact was that he was very sorry to have connected himself with such a low lived set. (Laughter). He continued unremittingly to talk *at* the Bench while deliberating, until his remarks were terminated by the Mayor, who said the Magistrates were perfectly satisfied that a most gross assault had been committed by him under circumstances of a very aggravated nature, and his conduct had been most reprehensible. The Magistrates felt they should not be exceeding their duty if they awarded him the full term of imprisonment allowed by law, but they should content themselves with committing him for six weeks to hard labour.

**SUSPECTED FELONY** **George Matthews**, the boatman remanded from Thursday on suspicion of having stolen about 10 lbs of hair seating warp, was again brought up. Since his first remand, the landlady of the Vauxhall Branch public house at Gloucester, at which place he had alleged that he bought the stuff, waited on the Magistrate, and stated that she had given it to the prisoner to sell for her in Worcester, and that she herself had received it from two men, with whom she was unacquainted, in payment for beer. Superintendent Chipp having communicated with Mr Estcourt, Superintendent of Police at Gloucester, the latter had replied that he believed the Great Western Railway Company had lost a great deal of hair seat stuffing lately, but from enquiries made, he did not think the prisoner Matthews knew anything more about the stuff found in his possession than merely being employed to sell it. He was accordingly discharged.

**90 February 4 1854**

CITY POLICE

DISORDERLIES Three boatmen named **John Ford, Stephen Chetwin** and **Joseph Seymour** were brought up for being drunk and fighting in Bank Street. A squabble had ensued regarding the loss of some money, and not being able to unravel the mystery of how it had been lost, or who had taken it, Ford and Chetwin had a "set to", the better to clear up their ideas on the subject ; and when found by PC No 11 they were, as he remarked, "bleeding like pigs". He "ticed" them down to the Station House, whither they followed him to "have the matter put straight", when they were all detained. On being searched, the money lost, 22s, was found in the possession of Seymour. Discharged on promising not to offend again in a similar manner.

**91 February 11 1854**

BROMSGROVE

SAD OCCURRENCE A melancholy accident occurred on the evening of Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant in the vicinity of the Halfway House, Stoke Prior. A little boy named **William Brace**, the son of a boatman in the employ of Mr John Lurcott, coal dealer, Worcester, was crossing the gate of a lock on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, about six o'clock, having in his hand a horse net. It is thought that the net must have caught against some portion of the ironwork of the gate, and jerked him into the water. His father was some fifteen yards behind at the time, but unfortunately did not see the boy fall in ; but missing him, he after a while became alarmed and, together with another man named **Wareing**, dragged the canal and succeeded in recovering the body. More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and the poor boy was quite dead. The body was removed to the Halfway beerhouse, where an inquest was held on Monday afternoon, before Ralph Docker Esq. After hearing the evidence, the Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death". The deceased was the eldest of a family of seven children, and we are sorry to state that the father is in very distressed circumstances, owing to the severity of the winter, having during its continuance deprived him of the means of employment.

**92 February 18 1854**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

BEWARE OF THE BRIDGE Two boatmen from Droitwich, named **John Harris** and **Thomas Bourn**, were severally fined 1s each and 12s 6d costs, for hauling a line that was attached to a vessel over the new bridge at Upton on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant. Money paid.

**93 February 18 1854**

CITY POLICE

A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE **John Stokes**, a boatman, was charged by **Mr John Waldron**, collector of tolls on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, with having on the 28<sup>th</sup> December last, being then in charge of a boat, refused to produce a bill of lading as required by the Act of Parliament, and was fined 10s and 12s costs. He had made himself scarce since the occurrence.

**94 March 4 1854**

ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

STEALING MONEY AT ALVECHURCH **Henry Gwynne**, 23, boatman, was charged with having, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January last at the above place, stolen £2 4s, the property of Edward Tustin. Mr Chance prosecuted. The prosecutor, who is a youth about sixteen years of age, is ostler at the Crown Inn, Alvechurch, and on the above night the prisoner slept in the same room with him, wherein was his box containing the money, namely 30s in silver and 14s in copper, some of which was marked. He got up the following morning, leaving the prisoner in bed, and left the house. When he returned about two o'clock he found his box broken open, and the money gone. He could swear the prisoner was the man by noticing that he had lost one of his fingers. The prisoner went the following morning to the house of a witness named Redding, a butcher at Alvechurch, and asked

him to give him some silver for some coppers, which he did to the amount of 12s. Some of the coppers were marked. PC Martin took the prisoner into custody in Norton Tunnel, and produced 5 1/2d which he had received from Mr Redding, and which were identified by the prosecutor by the marks upon them. The prisoner in defence said he never was at Alvechurch in his life. The Jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**THE GUN ROBBERY AT MR WOOD'S IN THIS CITY** **William Jones**, 20, boatman, and **Philip Langley**, 18, boatman, were charged with having, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January last, stolen a gun, the property of Mr William Wood. Mr Selfe prosecuted, and Mr Powell defended the prisoners. On the morning in question about nine o'clock, Mr Joshua Wood had occasion to go up to the upper portion of the house to fetch some powder, and left the gun (which belonged to Mr Hulm of Kenswick, and was there to be repaired, and on which there was a crest), on the counter. When he returned a few minutes after, the gun was gone. On Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month, the prisoner Jones tried to pawn the gun at Mr Wood's, pawnbroker of Dudley, for 15s. Mr Timmins, the shop man, having received prior information of the robbery, refused to receive it, and Jones said that he had won the gun at a raffle at the Navigation Inn, Worcester, a fortnight before. Langley was seen looking through the shop window at the same time, by PC Stone. Langley was afterwards apprehended at Oldbury, when he, in answer to the charge, said he bought the gun from two "navvies" in Tardebigg tunnel for 32s. Mr Powell, after a clever address, called a boy named **Watkins**, who had been in the habit of working for Langley on board the boat some days before the "justicing", who stated that some men threw some stones at the boat and called out, "boatman"; the former then took some money out of the cabin and said he was going to buy a gun. He also saw the heads of two men near a hedge, and the muzzle of a gun. When he returned, Langley had the gun now produced with him. When they got to Oldbury he took the gun to pledge, to obtain some food. (The deposition of a man named Fletcher, taken before the Magistrates, was put in and read, wherein he stated that the gun bought by Langley was a flint gun). Watkins acknowledged having been in "trouble" along with Langley regarding a 5s piece, but they were dismissed. Mr Seymour, coal merchant of this city, and Benjamin Pope, watchman on Lowesmoor Wharf, gave the prisoner Langley a good character. Mr Selfe having replied on behalf of the prosecution, the Chairman summed up the evidence, and the Jury returned a verdict of guilty against both the prisoners, and they were sentenced, Jones to four and Langley to three months' imprisonment.

## **95**     **March 25 1854**

**THE LATE MR LAMB OF OMBERSLEY**     C Best Esq held an inquest on the body of this unfortunate gentleman at Ripple on Saturday last. The finding of the body and other attendant circumstances having been deposed to by a waterman named **Henry Williams**, residing at Upton-on-Severn, Mr Charles Gardner, solicitor of Ombersley, identified the body, and deposed as follows :- I dined with deceased at the Saracen's Head in Worcester at the ordinary on Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of last month. He then appeared in his usual health and spirits. He left after dinner, after taking a glass of grog, and I did not see more of him. He said he had come to Worcester by the omnibus and should return the same way. He left the Saracen's Head alone. On the Monday evening following I heard that he had not returned, but his family received a letter from him on the morning of that day, I am informed, bearing the Worcester postmark, which postmark was dated the 19<sup>th</sup> of February. That letter I have enquired after, and was informed by his daughter that it was destroyed. She told me what the contents were. He intimated that it was probable they would not see him again, or that he should not return again. He said that he had left his watch at Mason's, the watchmaker, at Worcester, where they might have it. I have since applied to Mr Mason to know whether the deceased had been with him and when. Mason told me that deceased called on him on Saturday afternoon, the 18<sup>th</sup> February, and that he gave deceased his watch, a silver one. He then referred to his book, in which there was an entry of his having so returned the watch. Deceased further said in the letter that he had very little money. His daughter told me it was a very rambling sort of letter. I have heard what property was found on his person, and I have not any suspicion of

his having been robbed or foully treated. He was in the 76<sup>th</sup> year of his age. I have latterly observed deceased to be very irritable. PC Henry Merefield of Ripple deposed that he took possession of the body after it was found, and searched it. He found the pockets of deceased's clothes in proper order ; they were all buttoned up, and so was his coat. In his pockets he found several memoranda, a knife, keys and a purse containing nine shillings, but did not find any watch, nor did one appear to have been recently in the watch pocket. Mr H B Marsh, surgeon of Upton, who made an examination of the body of deceased, stated that on examining it externally he discovered a contused scalp wound on the left side of the head, above the ear. On removing the scalp he found that there was not any fracture or injury to the skull. The wound was not sufficient to cause death, and had the appearance of having been made after death. He did not find any other marks of violence. The Jury returned a verdict of "Found dead". With respect to the watch, the mystery we may state has been cleared up by Mr Mason having discovered it to be still in his possession. He communicated the fact by special messenger to Mr Gardner on Sunday evening, and that gentleman wrote respecting it to the Coroner. Mr Mason states that Mr Lamb did call on the day in question, and that he handed the watch to him, receiving 2s 6d for repairs ; but deceased left it, stating that he would call again for it.

**96 March 25 1854**

WORDSLEY PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY MARCH 20

FLUSHING WATER **Robert Evans**, boatman, was fined 40s and costs for wasting water at a lock on the canal at Kingswinford parish on the 18<sup>th</sup> instant.

**97 March 25 1854**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT **Henry Marshall**, a boatman, appeared to prefer a charge of assault and battery against Mr Beasley, landlord of the Boat beerhouse, situate near the canal in Lowesmoor. It seemed that on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, complainant was at defendant's house, when a "row" began between some women, and Cook, the defendant's partner, picked up one of them in his arms and threatened to throw her into "the cut". Complainant *gallantly* interfered, on which Beasley declared he would "have a cut" at him, knocked him down, striking him several times after he was on the ground. In defence, it was shown that the disturbance made was so great, complainant and his nieces sharing in it, that defendant and his partner were obliged to make use of extraordinary exertion to "clare de kitchen". Case dismissed, defendant being admonished to keep a more orderly house.

**98 April 1 1854**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY MARCH 28

WANTON BRUTALITY A boy of 14 named **James Baker**, living at Tardebigg, was charged with committing the following piece of brutality on Sunday afternoon last. He and another lad, younger than himself, amused themselves by catching some young lambs belonging to Mr Harris, farmer of Honey Lane near this town, and tying their tails together, the exertions made by the poor animals to free themselves affording the two juveniles much "sport". The consequence was that the tail of one of the lambs was actually torn off! Baker acknowledged his guilt, and it appeared that he had run away from his parent's home some six months ago and engaged himself to a boatman, with whom he at present worked. He had no fault to find with the treatment he had experienced at his father's, but he wanted more money weekly than was there allowed him. His father was described as being a respectable man, and much grieved at his son's misconduct. The youngster was fined 5s and 7s 6d costs, and allowed thirteen days to find the money. The Bench recommended him to go home to his father.

**99 April 1 1854**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING LEAD **Joseph Jones**, a boatman, and a young woman named Emma Wheeler were

charged with stealing a quantity of lead from an outbuilding at Diglis on the 27<sup>th</sup> March last, the property of Mr Edward Kite. On the application of Superintendent Freeman, the prisoners were remanded until Thursday, when they were brought before C Sidebottom Esq to answer the charge. The prosecutor not appearing, after waiting for some time, the Magistrates remanded the prisoners until Saturday next.

**100 April 1 1854**

CITY POLICE

NON SUPPORT OF CHILDREN An elderly boatman named **James Smith**, a widower, was charged by Mr Wetmore, relieving officer, with having allowed two of his children to become chargeable to the parish of All Saints since the 13<sup>th</sup> of January last. It appeared that this was the second time the children have become chargeable, and the parish has been put to an expense of between £3 or £4 by keeping them. Defendant said that the children were only at the Workhouse until he could "turn himself round". Defendant's eldest son agreed to pay the costs, 9s, and on the former promising that the children should not again become chargeable, the case was dismissed.

**101 April 8 1854**

LEAD STEALING AT DIGLIS **Joseph Jones**, 18, boatman, was charged with having, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult, stolen 88 1/2 lbs of lead, the property of Mr Edward Kite of this city. Mr Richards prosecuted, Mr Streeten defended the prisoner. The prosecutor deposed to missing the lead from his warehouse at Diglis on the 27<sup>th</sup> March. PC Jones deposed that from information he received, he went to a boat in Diglis basin and found the prisoner on board with a female named Wheeler (against whom the bill was ignored). He searched the boat and found an iron pot, with portions of dross sticking to the side as if lead had been recently melted in it, and at the bottom of the cabin discovered some small pieces of sheet lead, and in another part of the boat, underneath some timber, about 80 lbs of lead melted. When the prisoner was taken into custody, he said, "Ah, I know all about it". A small crowbar which was found in the boat corresponded with some marks on the sheet lead. The prisoner made a rambling defence, and the Jury found him guilty. PC Workman of the city force proved that he assisted in apprehending him on one occasion for breaking into the cabin of a boat. Four months' hard labour.

**102 April 8 1854**

CITY POLICE

DRUNKENNESS Two dingy looking boatmen, giving their names as **Thomas Marshall** and **William Jones**, were charged by Superintendent Chipp with being drunk and extremely noisy from the bottom of the Palace Yard to the China Slip, on the preceding evening. Discharged.

**103 April 15 1854**

GLOUCESTER AND BERKELEY CANAL COMPANY The half yearly meeting of this Company was held at the Company's office in Gloucester on Wednesday afternoon, W H Barrow Esq, MP, in the chair. The report was of unusual importance. The trade had been rather depressed, owing to the excessive increase in the rate of freights, but the export trade to Australia (through the enterprise of Mr Humphrey Brown MP) was increasing. The Committee have made arrangements with the Midland Railway Company for a considerable extension of their railway on the east bank of the Canal extending from Gloucester to Himpstead Bridge, and it was proposed to construct a double line of railway along that side of the canal in connection with the narrow gauge. This would give great accommodation to the extensive timber and preserving yards of Messrs Price and Tredwell and Co, and also take salt direct to the salt warehouses for export. The Committee also had reason to believe that the Great Western Company intended extending their rails to the warehouses and docks on the east end of the canal. The branch line to the west side was already opened, and when the new Dean Forest line was opened to the Forest minerals, which it was expected would be at the end of autumn, there would be a direct railway communication to the dock

from the Forest and the export of coal would commence. An arrangement has been entered into with the European and Submarine Electric Telegraph Company for laying down a telegraph between Gloucester and the entrance of the canal at Sharpness Point. This is to be done without cost to the Canal Company. The new Graving Dock is now in full operation, and netting about £440 per annum. The report referred to the steps which had been taken in the question of the Bristol Channel pilotage ; and assurance had been received from the Board of Trade that an (?offer) should be sent down to enquire into the circumstances. The receipts showed a surplus of £3,894, and it was proposed to pay £4 7s 6d per share for the half year on the 10 per cent shares, on account of the arrears of dividend, and 13s 4d per share on the consolidated shares. In the course of discussion which followed, Mr Fryer suggested that further outlay should be postponed until the result of the Chancery suit instituted by Mr Sturtin was made known. It was proposed that the Company should borrow £2,000 on debentures to make the railway to Himpstead – or rather to make wharves all along the canal banks, the Midland Company agreeing to spend £4,000 on the construction of the railway. Mr H Brown MP spoke of the value of the Company's property on the canal banks, and of the necessity of making these wharves for the convenience of the extending trade. Mr Sturge also dwelt on his old theme – his project for bringing the brine from the salt springs at Droitwich and manufacturing it at Gloucester for export to foreign parts. When this was done, Gloucester would successfully compete with Liverpool in the salt export trade. Ultimately the report with its recommendations were adopted.

**104 April 15 1854**

WORCESTER COUNTY COURT

WATSON v **STEPHENS** Plaintiff is a coal dealer in Lowesmoor, and the defendant, a boatman who was in his employ. The action was to recover £(?) 19s money lent. His Honour to defendant : Do you owe the money? Defendant : No, sir, in course not, I rejects it. (Laughter). His Honour : I dare say you do. Plaintiff proved his case, and his Honour made an order for 4s a month.

**105 April 22 1854**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY APRIL 18

KILLING GAME **James Whethers** of Alvechurch, boatman, who did not appear, was fined 14s and 26s costs for unlawfully shooting a cock pheasant from the preserves of Hewell, he not having a licence to kill game. In default of payment, one month's imprisonment.

**106 April 22 1854**

STOURBRIDGE

WORDSLEY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY APRIL 18 **John Perkins**, boatman, for taking his boat up to a lock of the Stourbridge Canal while there was a boat in the lock above passing down, was fined 20s and costs.

**107 May 6 1854**

DUDLEY PUBLIC OFFICE, MONDAY MAY 4

ROBBERY **Isaac Henshall**, a boatman, was charged with robbing James Jackson of 17s 6d and a knife. Both parties were drinking at the Three Crowns, High Street, on Friday last, and the money and a knife was taken out of Jackson's pocket. Subsequently the knife and five half crowns were found upon the prisoner ; the other half crown he had just changed. Committed for trial.

**108 May 6 1854**

CITY POLICE, THURSDAY

SUSPECTED FELONY A boatman named **John Ford** was brought up on suspicion of having stolen a quantity of wearing apparel and provisions from a boat lying on the Canal in the Blockhouse, in the vicinity of the Lame Dog beerhouse, and belonging to **John Weaver**. The articles were missed on Tuesday morning. The prisoner was remanded till Saturday, in consequence

of Weaver having started on his "voyage".

**109 May 13 1854**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

BOATMAN'S OFFENCE At the Petty Sessions on Thursday, **John Harris**, boatman of Gloucester, was fined £2 and costs, under an information of **Mr Henry Bundy**, for using his horse on the Gloucester and Worcester Horse Towing-path without first taking out a ticket.

**110 May 13 1854**

DROITWICH

ESCAPE AND CLEVER CAPTURE On Monday last, PS Thompson of this town brought a boatman named **William Young alias Handy** before Sir Astley Cooper at Hemel Hempstead in the county of Herts, charged with having, in conjunction with others, brutally assaulted one **Thomas Cooper** on the public highway near the last named town, and robbed him of upwards of £11. From the evidence adduced, it appeared that Cooper, who is the master of a boat which plies between Hemel Hempstead and London, had his boat lying in the Junction Canal near the former town, and on the day in question had occasion to go into Hempstead to endeavour to buy a horse. As night came on he went into the Boot beerhouse, when he found the prisoner and two others known by the nicknames of "Fatty" and "Compton", and having some previous knowledge of them, he treated them to some beer. About half past eleven o'clock he left the house in company with them, intending to return to his boat, but when about a mile out of the town, in a secluded spot, he was attacked by the villains, who attempted by every means in their power to strangle him ; "Fatty" having hold of his neck and compressing it with all his might. By a violent effort, the poor man contrived to release himself from the grasp of "Fatty", when he received a violent blow on the head from what he conceived to be a life preserver, which laid him senseless. When he recovered his senses, he found his pockets rifled of the £11 stated above, and his head bleeding profusely. He was for upwards of a fortnight confined to his bed. Compton was arrested on the following day and committed for trial, but the other two absconded, and it was not until Thursday last that anything more was heard of them when, from some information received by Sergeant Thompson, he was induced to make inquiry, and succeeded, after a chase of upwards of three miles, in capturing the prisoner Young at Stoke. When arrested he denied all knowledge of the matter, but, on being conveyed by the officer into Hertfordshire, he said he hoped they would not transport him for it. Evidence detailing the above facts having been given, he was committed for trial at the next Assizes for the county of Herts. Great satisfaction was felt in the neighbourhood of Hemel Hempstead at the capture of the prisoner, as he is a most notorious character, there being no less than three charges of a serious nature against him at the present time. "Fatty" is still at large.

**111 May 13 1854**

CITY POLICE

SUSPECTED FELONY **John Ford**, the boatman, whose apprehension and remand on a charge of stealing a quantity of wearing apparel and provisions from a boat lying on the canal in the Blockhouse, we noticed in last week's Journal, was again brought up today, but the criminatory evidence being insufficient, he was discharged.

ASSAULT **Mark Pritchard**, boatman, was fined £1 and 8s 6d costs, or in default 14 days' imprisonment, for assaulting John Protheroe, bootmaker of St Martin's, on the 26<sup>th</sup> September last.

**112 June 3 1854**

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN At the County Magistrates' Office on Monday, a boatman named **Thomas Spalding** was committed for trial at the Sessions on a charge of stealing a deal plank 22 feet long, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, carriers of this city.

**113 June 17 1854**

COUNTY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE On Saturday last, a boatman named **Richard Brick** was brought before C Sidebottom and J W Willis Esqs, charged with stealing a pair of trousers, the property of **Charles Anderson**, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April last. It appeared that prosecutor's boat was moored alongside that of prisoner's in the Diglis lower basin, and during a short period of absence the trousers were abstracted. Prosecutor met Brick near Tewkesbury, wearing the trousers, and deeming him anything but a *good brick*, he gave information to the police, and the prisoner was apprehended. He was committed to the Sessions.

**114 June 17 1854**

CITY POLICE, MONDAY

BOATMEN'S BREACH OF CONTRACT Three boatmen named **William Griffiths**, **Charles Williams** and **John Gummall** were cited for having refused to complete their voyage with a trow belonging to Mr James Wall, which they were bringing up the river from Bristol to this city with a cargo of stone. Instead of coming the whole distance, they left the vessel at Gloucester, thereby occasioning much inconvenience. Remanded till Friday.

THIS DAY (FRIDAY)

BREACH OF CONTRACT The boatmen remanded from Tuesday on a charge of breach of contract with Mr James Wall were again brought up. Mr Clutterbuck appeared on their behalf, and submitted that they were the servants of the captain of the boat, and not Mr Wall, and the Captain himself was not a servant within the meaning of the Act, and consequently the case did not come within the jurisdiction of the Magistrates. The Magistrates seemed to incline to this opinion, and recommended the parties to settle their differences out of Court.

**115 June 17 1854**

DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE SEVERN The body of a waterman named **James Fowler** was found in the river near the Ketch public house, about two miles from this city, by two fishermen, on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> instant. The deceased was ascertained to be from Upton, and had been missing from the previous Thursday, on which day he left home in charge of a horse drawing a boat to Worcester, and was returning the same night with the horse, as he had frequently done before, when it is supposed he must have slipped from the horse's back into the water, while trying to open a gate. His hat was found near a gate, and there were marks as if a heavy body had rolled down the bank close by, at the bottom of which the water was eight feet deep. The horse was also found near the spot. Two or three shillings and a tobacco box were found upon him. An inquest was held on Friday last before Mr H Hill DC at the Ketch, when a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. Deceased was 44 years of age and married.

**116 June 24 1854**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY JUNE 20

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN **Daniel Bayliss**, alias **Daniel Dufty**, captain of a boat belonging to Mr Bill of Worcester, was charged with stealing a quantity of iron, weighing from two to three tons, the property of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company. It seems that about two o'clock on the morning of Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> inst, the prisoner, together with two other men, in charge of an apparently unladen canal boat, made his appearance at Stoke Prior Dock, but on being asked to produce the usual ticket, he refused to do so. This exciting the lock-keeper, **Mr Randall's**, suspicion, he searched the boat, and therein, concealed beneath some loose hay, he found the iron in question. The prisoner and his companions immediately made off and effected their escape. Meanwhile information was conveyed to the police, and Police-sergeant Radford instituted a search after the missing "gemmen", which, with commendable perseverance, he prosecuted during the past fortnight. His exertions were at length crowned with success, the "captain" being apprehended at a public house at Tipton and brought to Bromsgrove station. His companions, it is hoped, will not

long elude pursuit. The iron was stolen from Dunhampstead. PS Radford applied to the Bench to remand the prisoner until Thursday at Droitwich, as he expected by that time to have additional evidence against him. He was remanded accordingly.

### **117 July 1 1854**

#### WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS

**EMBEZZLEMENT** **Thomas Hinett**, 48, boatman, was indicted for having embezzled certain monies belonging to his master, Mr John Fleming, corn, straw and coal dealer of this city, on the 19<sup>th</sup> April last. Mr Byrne prosecuted. Mr Fleming stated that the prisoner was "steerer" for him, and had been in his employ for four or five years. On the 14<sup>th</sup> April he started him on a "voyage" with a boat having on board two tons of straw and 15 cwt of clover. The straw was valued at £7, at the then selling price of £3 10s per ton. The instructions given to him were to sell at the market price, but for ready money only. Prisoner returned on the 19<sup>th</sup> April intoxicated, and gave prosecutor £2 7s 6d, stating that he had sold the rest of the straw on credit. Prosecutor told him he had better go and fetch the money for it. Prisoner left but never returned. Subsequently it was ascertained that he had sold the straw to Mr Ault of Spon Lane, near West Bromwich, and Mr Silk. My Byrne elected to prosecute in connection with the dealing with Mr Ault. Mr Ault was called, and stated that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April he purchased 16 cwt 3 qrs of straw from the prisoner, for which he paid him £2 18s 10 1/2d. Of this sum Mr Fleming stated that he only received £2 7s 6d. The prisoner had little to say in defence, and was sentenced to six calendar months' hard labour. The prosecutor stated that he had often offended similarly, but had been forgiven.

### **118 July 1 1854**

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

**ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN AT HIMBLETON** **Daniel Baylis**, 36, boatman, indicted for stealing a quantity of iron rails and sleepers, the property of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company, on 11<sup>th</sup> June, was found guilty on the clearest evidence. Mr Huddleston prosecuted, and the prisoner was undefended. Six months' imprisonment to hard labour.

**POCKET PICKING AND ROBBERIES AT DUDLEY** **Isaac Henshall**, 23, boatman, was convicted of stealing a knife and sixteen shillings from the pocket of James Jackson, while sleeping in a beerhouse at Dudley on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April last. Two former convictions of felony were proved against him, and he was sentenced to four years' penal servitude.

**FELONY BY A BOATMAN** **Richard Brick**, 18, boatman of Tewkesbury, was convicted of stealing a pair of trousers, the property of **Charles Andrews**, from a boat lying at Diglis basin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April last, and sentenced to one month's hard labour. Mr Huddleston prosecuted.

**PLEADED GUILTY** **Thomas Spalding**, 28, boatman, to stealing 28 feet of deal, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, at the parish of St Peter the Great. One month's imprisonment.

### **119 July 8 1854**

**COUNTY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE** On Monday last, **John Ford**, a boatman in the employ of Mr Wood, builder of Blackfriars, was charged with having stolen about 3 cwt of coal, the property of his master, from Diglis brick works. It was discovered that he sold the coal to a man named Price for 1s 9d. PC Hunting of the city force apprehended the prisoner, who was also committed for trial.

### **120 July 8 1854**

**THE DEATHS BY DROWNING** The inhabitants of this city were painfully excited towards the close of last week by the reported suicide of a young woman in the Severn near Mr Knapp's brickyard, and the death of a man with whom she cohabited in the attempt to save her life. The

rumour subsequently received painful confirmation from the body of the unfortunate man being found near to the spot where he got into the water. The names of the hapless pair are Charles Hawker and Margaret Everett. The former was a labourer, twenty two years of age, employed at the Britannia Brewery ; the woman was of the like age, and supported herself by working at gloving. He had formerly been a “navvy” in the neighbourhood of Gloucester, and afterwards at the Shrub's Hill Station ; having been engaged at the Britannia Brewery only about the last six or eight weeks. It seems he began (as it is termed) to “keep company” with the woman about two years ago, and the acquaintance continued with varying degrees of affection until the awful occurrence of Thursday evening. The result of the attachment was that the young woman proved to be pregnant, and much unhappiness ensued between them, in consequence of Hawker neglecting to marry her. About a month back, however, he yielded to the representations of a woman named Hooper, with whom they lodged, to make Margaret an “honest woman”, and the banns were put up at Hallow Church and published on three successive Sundays, the wedding being fixed to take place on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant. On the day which so tragically terminated, she appeared to be in particularly high spirits, and anticipated her approaching wedding with much pleasure. The drunken habits of Hawker were excessively annoying to her, she being, as is represented, tidy and industrious. They were frequently having quarrels in consequence, and the closing scene appears to have been hastened on by his continued indulgence in this disgraceful vice. The authentic particulars of the sad occurrence are detailed in the evidence given at the inquest on the body of Hawker, which was held at ten o'clock on Monday morning last at the Crown Inn, Hallow, before WSP Hughes Esq, Coroner, and the following Jury :-

Mr Frederick Marks, Foreman	
Mr John Woodward	Mr Thomas Palmer
Mr Thomas Lamb	Mr James Bishop
Mr George Smith	Mr Edward Jones
Mr John Price	Mr John Hill
Mr Thomas Price	Mr Thomas Taylor
Mr William Leyland	Mr George Brewin

The Jury, having viewed the body, returned to the inquest room, where the following evidence was adduced :-

The first witness was Thomas Nott, who deposed : I am ten years old, and live with my mother near the river Severn. I saw the deceased and a woman near our house on Thursday evening last, about half past eight o'clock. I first saw the woman, who appeared to be waiting for someone, and she was joined by the deceased. When he got to her, he “jawed” her, and they had words together. The man was drunk. The female tried to pass by the deceased, but he tried to prevent her, and then she jumped into the river. I did not hear her say anything. They were quarrelling. When she went towards the river, deceased tried to follow her, and he scrambled towards the river, as I thought to assist the female out of the water, but he fell in. The deceased had cried out to the female as she was running to the river, “Oh, don't”. I called to my mother, and she came out and got the boat and tried to assist them, but we saw nothing of either of them, as they had both sunk. I afterwards went to the weir and got a drag.

Eliza Nott, wife of Edward Nott of the brick yard, labourer, deposed : I saw a woman waiting some time before the man came up, but I did not see them meet. When the deceased came to her, he used very bad language and appeared quite drunk. I saw no more of them until my little boy came to me, and said, “Mother, the woman is going into Severn to drown herself, and so is the man”. I went out, and they were both out of sight. I got the boat and tried to save them, but without success. I saw the woman's bonnet, cap and shawl on the towing-path, and the man's flannel coat near. These things had been taken off previously to the woman jumping into the water.

**Edward Jenkins** of Frog Lane, waterman, stated that while dragging the river on Saturday last, he found the body of the deceased about thirty or forty yards from the place where it was stated the man had got into the river. He had found no trace of the woman, though he had been searching up to the present time.

Mary, wife of William Hooper, labourer of Hallow, deposed : The deceased woman, Margaret Everett, lodged with us. She and the deceased kept company together. They were to have been married yesterday. She left home soon after eight on Thursday evening, and I have not seen her since. They frequently quarrelled, on account of the deceased getting drunk ; and the woman said to me that if he continued to do so, it would cause her to do something wrong, and to jump into the Severn. Except when they quarrelled they were very affectionate.

This was the whole of the evidence, and the Coroner having summed up, the Jury returned the following verdict :- “That the deceased was drowned while in a state of intoxication in attempting to save the life of Margaret Evans(*sic*), with whom he was keeping company”.

On Tuesday afternoon, many of the visitors to the race course were much excited by the report that George Jenkins, one of our city fishermen, had found the body of the unfortunate Margaret Everett in the Severn, a short distance below the Grand Stand. This proved to be correct, and in a few minutes the remains of the poor girl (much disfigured by being so long in the water) were seen being carried on a hand barrow along the river side to the Mug House Inn. An inquest was held on the body yesterday (Thursday) before J B Hyde Esq and a respectable Jury. The evidence adduced disclosed facts similar to those reported above at the inquest on the body of Hawker. The boy Nott gave his testimony very clearly, and recapitulated some bad expressions which he heard Hawker utter to the deceased. Mrs Eliza Nott also spoke to hearing the deceased make use of very bad language, and Mrs Mary Hooper of Hallow, at whose house the deceased lodged, deposed to having heard deceased say that if Hawker continued to “come home in drink” and exasperate her, it would cause her to commit suicide.

The Jury returned the following verdict :- “That the deceased was exasperated and driven to madness by the continued drunkenness and bad conduct of one Charles Hawker towards her. And that while so exasperated, and during a fit of temporary insanity, she threw herself into the river Severn, and was drowned in the waters thereof”.

### **121 July 15 1854**

ANOTHER CASE OF DONKEY STEALING A boatman named **Henry Young** was charged yesterday (Thursday), before J M Gutch Esq at the County Magistrates' Office, with stealing a donkey belonging to Joseph Williams, a labourer living at Powick, in the month of April last. The nedly had been turned loose in a lane and had been impounded ; but was stolen from the pound, and was found on Wednesday in the prisoner's possession. He stated that he had bought it at Wolverhampton. The prisoner was remanded till tomorrow (Saturday).

### **122 July 22 1854**

THE DONKEY STEALING CASE **Henry Young**, the boatman, who was brought before J M Gutch Esq at the County Magistrates' Office on the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, charged with stealing a donkey, the property of Joseph Williams, a labourer of Powick, and remanded (as mentioned in our last Journal), was brought up again yesterday (Thursday) before the same Magistrate, and the evidence against him not being conclusive, he was discharged.

### **123 July 22 1854**

TRIALS OF THE CITY PRISONERS

THE BURGLARY AT MR WILSON'S **George Hunt**, 37, **John Jones**, 19, boatmen, and John Croucher, 22, labourer, were indicted for having burgled the dwelling house of Mr William Henry Wilson at Rainbow Hill, on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1854, and stolen two tortoiseshell boxes, a miniature portrait (set in gold), a gold seal, three silver spoons, a pair of Wellington boots, three hams and various other articles, his property. A second count in the indictment charged them with receiving the same, knowing them to be stolen. Hunt and Jones were also charged with having been previously convicted of felony. Mr Selfe prosecuted ; the prisoners were undefended.

Mr Wilson deposed that he lived at Rainbow Hill, and went to bed on the night in question between eleven and twelve. The doors and windows were all safe. He was called up before six the next

morning, and found that the house had been broken open, and a variety of articles stolen. The thieves had gained an entrance by the pantry window, the bars being wide apart.

**Joseph Woodyatt**, lock-keeper at Gregory's Mill, deposed that he was up about half past three o'clock in the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> May, and saw three men on the canal bridge. It is about half a mile from Mr Wilson's. He went up to them, and found two of them were Hunt and Jones, but he could not tell who the other man was. Jones was on his knees, drinking something out of a ginger beer bottle. They had got some bundles or bags with them, full of something. There were two bags and two small bundles. He asked them what they were doing, and Jones said they were waiting for a boat to take them to Birmingham. In about ten minutes afterwards, he saw them go towards Worcester. Witness heard of the robbery at Mr Wilson's the same morning. About twelve o'clock, he found in a drain near to where the prisoners had been standing, the bags, which contained some boots, shoes and other articles, which he gave to PC Hunting.

Susan Gardner (the girl who was detained by the Magistrate to give evidence in default of finding bail) deposed that she lived in Quay Street, and went to the Hen and Chickens, Merryvale, between four and five o'clock on the Monday after the robbery. Jones and Croucher were there. Jones asked her to go to Mr Gwynne's and pledge a piece of silver. She did so, and brought the money (1s 10d) back, and gave it to Jones. It was the bowl of a spoon, part of a handle, and some silver wire. Did not see the other man at all that afternoon.

Jones cross-examined this witness, but all the girl's answers made his case worse. Turning to Croucher in the dock, he said to him, amidst a roar of laughter, "Why don't you speak, and not see a feller sold by such a witness as that".

Mr Gwynne, pawnbroker, deposed to giving the last witness the money for the articles, as stated. About half an hour after the girl had left, the prisoner Hunt brought part of a gold seal, and offered to pledge it. Witness told him it was too small to purchase. He then left the shop, and afterwards returned with another piece. Witness gave him 10d for the two.

Superintendent Chipp proved going on Monday night, in company with Doughty, a little after ten o'clock, to the King's Head in Sidbury, where they found Jones and Croucher, and took them into custody, after a violent resistance. A number of trinkets (now produced) were found on Croucher. They were taken to the station house and charged with the robbery. Croucher said he found the articles in a hedge at Diglis. [They were identified as Mr Wilson's property].

Jones cross-examined Superintendent Chipp, but he only got "out of the mud into the mire".

Sergeant Doughty corroborated Superintendent Chipp's testimony as to the apprehension. As the prisoners were going before the Magistrates, Hunt said he had never seen Croucher before. Witness apprehended Hunt at the Glovers' Arms in Birdport.

PC George Williams deposed to having been on duty in Broad Street on Sunday afternoon, 14<sup>th</sup> May, when he saw all three prisoners talking together.

Croucher : "I can't call you no man. Mr Williams, how can you stand there and take a false oath? Before a Judge too", springing up in the dock, his eyes inflamed with passion. "Oh! Yaugh – yaugh!" (striking the dock). (Great laughter).

PC John Hunting produced the bags which he received from Woodyatt, containing the boots and shoes ; and they were identified by Mr Wilson, with the contents, as being his property.

Hunt said in his defence that he had met with an accident and hurt his arm, and had slept at home on the nights of Saturday and Sunday.

Croucher said he did not come into the town until Monday, and found the articles in a hedge.

Jones said he had slept at his sister's on the night in question, and told a long story, which frequently caused much laughter.

His Lordship then summed up the evidence, and the Jury returned a verdict of guilty against all three prisoners. The previous convictions against Hunt and Jones were proved ; Hunt having been sentenced to transportation for seven years at the City Sessions of 1846, and Jones was sentenced to ten months' imprisonment at the March Assizes last year.

Hunt and Jones were sentenced to 15 years' transportation each, and Croucher to five years' penal servitude.

Croucher, on leaving the dock ; “I'm as innocent as a child. Thank you Mr Judge. Thank you Mr Chipp. I don't care a ----”.

**ROBBERY IN BIRDPOR** **Luke Packwood**, 23, boatman, was charged with having, early on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> of June last, violently assaulted one William Crump in Birdport, and stolen from his person a silk handkerchief. Mr Powell prosecuted ; the prisoner was undefended.

The prosecutor being sworn, deposed : I am a tailor living in Birdport. On the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> of June last, I was at a club in Powick, near this city, and remained there till past twelve o'clock. When I left I came direct home, and saw no one on the road at all until I came into Worcester. As I was coming up Merryvale by the Nelson public house, I saw two men standing there, and on approaching them (as I had to pass them to go to my house), both of them came across the street and asked me if I had got any money. I replied that I had none. One of them replied, “If you have got no money, we'll have your life”. Upon that they threw me down on the pavement, and while one held me down, the other kicked me and rifled my pockets. I knew one of the men to be the prisoner. I had known the prisoner from a child, and I knew well his family also. I had no money in the pocket they searched, but they cut the bottom of the pocket off. I am certain that Packwood held me down on my back. I was very much hurt with kicks and blows, and bled a good deal. I called out as loud as I could, but no one came to my assistance. They took from me a silk handkerchief. Someone opened the bedroom window of a house near, and called out, “Don't murder the man”. The two men then ran off. I lost my senses for a time from the violence of the kicks ; but on recovering consciousness, I got up as well as I could and went home. I was attended by Mr Woodward, surgeon, for some time. I was very ill, and feel the effects of the violence even now. I have been unable to work. I was perfectly sober. The night was a light one, and there was a lamp near the spot. I will swear positively that Packwood was one of the two men. I have not seen the other man that I know of since.

By the Prisoner : I know you to have been one of the men, by noticing you particularly at the time. I was never in your company before. You had not both on dark dresses, but you had a dirty sleeved waistcoat. You are the man who demanded my money, and that held me down. I cannot say which of you kicked me – both did so.

Frederick Hale sworn : I keep the Glovers' Arms, Merryvale, situate near the Nelson. I was awakened on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> of June by a great noise in the street. I got up and opened the window and saw three men running in the direction of All Saints'. I saw at some distance up the street a man lying. Soon after, I saw two men named Veale and Taylor come up to the man, who was lying down. I heard Veale speak to him. The three men I had first seen came back again – went up to the man lying in the street, and one of them kicked him severely, demanded his money, and rifled his pockets. I called out, “What are you doing? Are you going to murder the man? I know you, and will have you taken in the morning”. I did not know the prisoners, but I said this to frighten them. As soon as I spoke they ran off up Powick Lane. One of the men had on a dark jacket, and one a sleeved waistcoat. The man who kicked him was about 5 ft 4 in in height.

By the Prisoner : I cannot swear to you as being one of the men who was ill-treating the man in the street, but from your appearance, height and size, you appeared to be the man who was abusing the man. Your back was towards me at the time.

By the Court : I did not see a handkerchief taken from the man that was lying on the ground. It might have been taken and I not have seen it, as the men were very quick in their actions.

Thomas Taylor, chimney sweep, deposed : I was walking down Merryvale about two o'clock with my uncle, and in turning the corner by Mr Price's tallow chandlery warehouse, heard a great noise. When as far as the Nelson, I saw three men come out of an entry in the street and go towards another who was lying down as if dead. One of them kicked the man, and then they all went away.

John Veale, uncle of the last witness, corroborated his nephew's testimony.

**Charles Crowder**, boatman, deposed : I was at the Gloucester Arms on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> June. Packwood and others were there. He was not of our company. I left the Gloucester Arms about one o'clock, and left the prisoner there. I went to my sister's house and afterwards into Merryvale. I

cannot say what time it was when I went into Merryvale. I there met Taylor and Veale. Taylor said something to me confidentially. I afterwards saw the prisoner Packwood and two other men in the street. I went up to Packwood and said to him, "Taylor tells me there is a man lying down in the street". He said, "Let us go and see". The other two men who were with Packwood went away. I don't know where. We did not do anything to the man who was lying in the street. We heard him groaning, and went away and left him.

By the Prisoner : I left your company first at the corner of Birdport. I was not drinking with you at the Gloucester Arms. Did not see the man before I saw you. You did not kick him. After leaving the man in the street, we went up Bank Street together, and slept on a pile of straw belonging to Allen and Bayliss. I don't know what time it was when we went away. You were with me next morning when we waked.

Eliza Walker deposed : I was at the Hen and Chickens public house, Merryvale, with Packwood, late on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> June. I left the house about one o'clock on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Packwood left about a quarter of an hour before I left the Hen and Chickens.

The prisoner declined making any statement.

The Learned Judge perspicuously summed up, and the Jury returned a verdict of "Guilty of an assault with intent to rob".

A previous conviction for burglary at the March Assizes in 1850, for which he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, was proved against him.

His Lordship suitably addressed the prisoner, pointing out the enormity of his guilt, and in consequence of having been previously convicted of so serious a crime as burglary, sentenced him to fifteen years' transportation.

#### **124 July 29 1854**

##### ASSIZE INTELLIGENCE

WHOLESALE ROBBERY OF WHEAT **James Hogg**, 28, and **Charles Kendall**, 20, watermen, stood indicted for stealing four sacks of wheat, one sack of linseed and other articles, the property of Thomas Holloway, at North Hamlet on the 1<sup>st</sup> April last. Mr Cooke and Mr Cripps appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Powell defended the prisoners. This case arose out of one which was tried at the recent Gloucester Sessions, in which several parties were convicted and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. It appeared on the trial that a wholesale system of plundering vessels had been going on for some time, in which several parties were concerned, some of whom were farmers in a respectable sphere of life. The Jury returned a verdict of guilty against both prisoners. On his Lordship being informed that all the parties who were convicted at the Sessions received nine months' imprisonment, he expressed the greatest astonishment, and said that, had he tried the case, he certainly should have passed a much heavier sentence, which was richly merited. The prisoners were then called on for judgement, and his Lordship sentenced them to nine months' hard labour each.

#### **125 August 5 1854**

##### CITY POLICE, FRIDAY

BRUTAL HUSBAND **Joseph Brathwaite**, a boatman living in Frog Lane, was brought up, charged with having most brutally assaulted and maltreated his wife, as far back as the 23<sup>rd</sup> June. In consequence of the poor woman declining to appear against him, he was discharged.

#### **126 August 5 1854**

SUPPOSED SUICIDE Yesterday (Thursday) morning about a quarter past seven o'clock, the body of a young woman, apparently about 30 years of age, was discovered in the river Severn by a boatman named **Joseph Brathwaite**, in the vicinity of the Cathedral Ferry. The body had been raised by a boat line having caught it under the arms. On being got out of the water by Brathwaite and Jenkins, under the direction of the water bailiff, Mr Bishop, it was identified as that of Eliza Loveland, a gloveress formerly residing in Merryvale. It was conveyed to the Hare and Hounds

Inn, Sidbury, to await a Coroner's inquest, which has been fixed for five o'clock this (Friday) evening. The unfortunate girl has, we hear, been living with the young man, Harris, committed by the city Magistrates on Monday last for assaulting PC Vaughan. The Coroner's Jury met at the time previously mentioned, and after hearing the evidence adduced, and some pertinent remarks from the Coroner, returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**127 August 12 1854**

CITY POLICE

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN **William Matthew Dukes**, boatman, was remanded on a charge of having sold a quantity of hay which had been entrusted to his care as captain of a boat belonging to Mr Charles Smith, hay and corn dealer of Hylton Street in this city (the hay being also the property of Mr Smith) and fraudulently appropriating to his own use the money received for the same.

**128 August 19 1854**

DUDLEY PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

OFFENCE AGAINST THE CANAL COMPANY'S ACT Two boatmen named **John Corbett** and **James Layland** were charged by **John Duffy**, a servant in the employ of the Dudley and Tipton Canal Company, with having left a boat untied in the canal at the mouth of the tunnel at six o'clock on the previous morning. He told them to tie it up, but they said they had done enough for their money, and would not do any more ; they accordingly left her untied, and consequently caused an obstruction. The defendants said it was Duffy's work to tie the boat up, and all they had to do with her was to bring her through the tunnel for 1s 6d each. Duffy denied it was his duty to tie the boats up. It appeared from the Act that the parties in charge of the boat ought to see that it was properly secured. The defendants were therefore fined 10s, to be paid between them, and 7s 6d each expenses, or fourteen days' imprisonment. Not having the money, they were committed.

**129 August 19 1854**

CITY POLICE

CHARGE OF PASSING BAD COIN A married woman named **Withers**, the wife of a boatman living in Hylton Street, was charged by Mr Stockall, huckster of St Clement Street, with having passed a certain coin as a half sovereign, a few days before, in exchange for grocery. The case was remanded until tomorrow.

**130 August 26 1854**

ROBBING CANAL BOATS – A NEW "DODGE" Two men named **Robert Coates** and **James Amphlett** were brought before the Bilston Magistrates last week, under the following circumstances. The prisoners were in charge of a boat containing a cargo of iron belonging to Messrs Turley of Coseley, and were observed by a woman to throw a piece of pig iron from the boat into the canal. She gave information to the police, and the prisoners were apprehended by Sub-Inspector Costello, who found the iron at the place indicated by her. This appears to be a new mode of operation. The plan is this :- The boatmen heave the iron overboard, and their confederates, under the pretence (if caught) of bathing, grope in the water and convey it away. The accused were bound over to answer the charge at the Sessions.

**131 August 26 1854**

STOURBRIDGE PUBLIC OFFICE, WEDNESDAY

FEROCIOUS ASSAULT Three boatmen named **James Colcroft** and **George and Thomas Davenport** were charged with having committed a violent assault upon **George Salt**, also a boatman, at Amblecote on Monday night. The prosecutor deposed that on the above night about eleven o'clock he was taking some ale to the boat with him, when the prisoners, with whom he had previously been drinking, came up, and one of them took the bottle from him. He followed them to their boat and asked for it, when all three set upon and beat and kicked him on all parts of his body

in such a savage manner as to render him insensible. One of the ruffians was heard by the poor fellow to say, "He's dead, pitch the ---- into the canal". They were however, it is supposed, disturbed, so they left complainant bleeding and senseless in the road. He was taken into the ironworks by the side of the canal, and Mr Freer, surgeon, was sent for, who at first thought he was dying as he was quite insensible. However, under that gentleman's judicious treatment, he was enabled to appear to give evidence, and presented a pitiable appearance. The case was made out very clearly, and each of the brutal defendants was fined £5, with the alternative of two months' imprisonment. The money was paid for Thomas Davenport, and the other two were sent to Stafford Gaol.

### 132 September 16 1854

**A MISCHIEVOUS WEED** The *Nottingham Journal* says, about two years ago an aquatic weed, previously unknown to the boatmen, began to spring up on a part of the Chesterfield Canal, the water some time previously having become of a deep green colour. The weed spread from its starting point with amazing rapidity, and has now reached all the way between Worksop and Retford, and unless something be soon done to stop its growth, the consequences to traffic must be serious. The length of time to navigate a boat between the two towns just mentioned is nearly double what it was a few years ago ; and near to Osberton it frequently requires the assistance of two or three horses to get a boat over the worst portions. Besides being of such rapid growth, the plant, with pressure, rolls up into great heaps the size of haycocks, so that boats are frequently brought to a complete standstill. In addition, its lengthened stem, thickly set with small leaves, produces an immense quantity of flax like fibres.

### 133 September 23 1854

**REMOVAL OF CONVICTS – A CATALOGUE OF CRIMES** The three men, Croucher, **Jones** and **Packwood**, convicted at our last Assizes and sentenced – Croucher to five years' penal servitude and Jones to 15 years transportation for committing the daring burglary at Mr Wilson's, Rainbow Hill, in this city ; and Packwood to a like term of transportation for highway robbery with violence on an old man called Crump at Birdport ; were, on Saturday morning last, removed from our City Gaol. They will be confined in Wakefield Gaol for the first eighteen months. They are all three desperate ruffians, and it has been necessary from their violence to keep them heavily ironed. **Hunt**, the other prisoner concerned in the burglary at Mr Wilson's will, we hear, not be removed at present. He has been transported once previously, and convicted fifteen times for various offences. The prisoners were accompanied to the Railway Station and to Wakefield by the Governor (Mr Griffiths), Superintendent Chipp and PC Richardson. When the train came up, Croucher (who has been an engine driver) said, "I wish I was on the ----, I would send the ---- Governor, and you ---- policemen, to h--- in five minutes", and uttered other sentences of a like horrifying character. The other parties on the platform were literally terrified at his vehemence. Jones and Packwood also uttered expressions of a fearful nature before getting into the train. After the train had started, Jones said, "If it had not been for Hunt, we should have gone upstairs at Mr Wilson's, and got £100 or £150". Chipp replied, "Mrs Wilson is rather a light sleeper, and there would have been a scream, and you may have been detected". Jones replied, "They would not have cried out more than once. We went well prepared for them". The journey then proceeded, and Jones became more communicative at intervals. He stated that himself and Croucher had formerly been in the Government service, (we believe in the Marines). When in the Service, he was punished for fighting on a Sunday. That "crabbed" himself, Croucher and another party, and they deserted, and broke open a baker's shop in the town (not named) the same night. They then proceeded to London. The third party left them. In going into London they were stopped by three or four different officers, when *they became indignant*, and threw down their bundles for examination. The officers having searched them, and finding nothing but commonplace articles, let them go on. They stayed in London, at a brothel, three or four days, and on leaving they went away in prostitutes' clothes over their own, the girls carrying their property and meeting them outside the town. He then came

back to their proceedings in Worcester. He said they came "to do" Mr ---- in Britannia Square, and they would have got something there. They also intended to break into the office at the Gas Works. Jones also acknowledged that he (by himself) broke open a back window in the rear of a house in Bank Street, occupied by a poor old woman named Jones, and stole from under her pillow a sovereign and some coins. He also acknowledged having committed a robbery at Mr Summerfield's counting house in Bridge Street last winter. To do so, he had to break into a plumber and glazier's shop in Newport Street, go upstairs, and then break down part of a partition wall and take a "light out". He then stripped the slates off the roof of the counting house, and got in through the aperture. He broke open the desk, and was much disappointed at only finding about £1 worth of postage stamps. It has appeared since that Mr Summerfield had only taken his money to the Bank on the previous day. He said he had been in about fifty cases of housebreaking, besides highway robbery, in this county, Staffordshire, Oxfordshire, &c. Croucher had been his companion ever since they deserted. They committed three cases of housebreaking, besides highway robberies, at Whitney and Charlbury. He gave Chipp credit for "nailing" them at the time he did, or he would not have found any of the property on them, as they began to "nose" it. As the train was passing Burton-on-Trent, Superintendent Chipp said, "I should like to have a glass of what they brew here". Packwood (who was a boatman) replied, "I have had many a bottle of it. I have helped to draw half a hogshead in a night from different casks, when we have had two or three ton on board. We used to fill it up with water to make the weight good". He also said to Governor Griffiths, "Haven't you a garden on the top of Rainbow Hill?" The Governor said, "I had one there". Packwood : "There were devilish nice peaches and apricots there – beautiful". The Governor : "They were not mine ; they belonged to Mr Hill, the Town Clerk". The officers left them safely ensconced in Wakefield Gaol, which is described by Superintendent Chipp as being one of the finest prisons in England. Besides the regular prisoners, there are about 400 Government convicts in durance there.

### **134 September 30 1854**

MALVERN PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 22

ASSAULT **Thomas Lowe** and **Joseph Jones**, boatmen of Worcester, Jane Jones the elder and Jane Jones the younger and Mary Ann Jones of Leigh were charged with assaulting Richard Hemming of the same place on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant. Thomas Lowe and Joseph Jones, who did not appear, were fined 5s each and expenses, or 21 days' imprisonment ; Jane Jones the elder and Jane Jones the younger 2s 6d each and expenses, or fourteen days ; and Mary Ann Jones 1s and expenses, or seven days.

### **135 September 30 1854**

CITY POLICE

THE SMASHING CASE **Joseph Jones**, a boatman who was remanded from Monday last on a charge of uttering a counterfeit half crown to Mrs Bowers, wife of a provision dealer in Pump Street, was brought up again today, and no further evidence being adduced against him, he was discharged with a caution.

FELONY John Kensey, a returned convict, who had been remanded from Tuesday on a charge of stealing a block from a boat, the property of **Samuel Hodgetts**, boat owner of Pheasant Street, on the 27<sup>th</sup> August, was today fully committed for trial.

### **136 October 14 1854**

CITY POLICE

A SUPPOSED DONKEY STEALER An old man named John Eades was remanded until Saturday on a charge of stealing a donkey, the property of **George Price**, a boatman.

### **137 October 21 1854**

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting this church was preached at St Clement's Church on Wednesday afternoon by the Rev James Eagles, Incumbent

of St Bartholomew's, Birmingham. The collection amounted to £17 13s 1d.

**138    October 21 1854**

MICHAELMAS CITY SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY

**John Kinsey**, 35, boatman, to stealing an iron pulley block from a boat lying on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, belonging to **Samuel Hodgetts** of this city. Three previous convictions for felony were proved against him, and for one of them he had been transported. Four years' penal servitude. (See also 135 above)

**William Matthew Dukes**, 23, boatman, to embezzling £2 5s, the monies of his master, **Charles Smith** of this city, on the 12<sup>th</sup> July last. Six weeks' hard labour.

**139    October 28 1854**

THE CHOLERA We regret to record the continuance of this formidable disease in this city, and that several additional victims have fallen. The Cholera Committee of the Board of Guardians, who have certainly displayed no lack of activity in making preparations for repelling the advances of the insidious destroyer, determined on Saturday evening to construct a temporary hospital for the reception of cholera patients in a field at Shrub Hill, near the railway. It was commenced on the following day, but was not completed until Tuesday evening, when three patients were removed to it. Mr G A Sheppard has kindly offered his services as the medical superintendent of the hospital. The place of refuge at Diglis (a warehouse in the occupation of Mr Alderman Lucy), designed for the reception of the families of infected persons, was got ready on Sunday, and on that day several persons were removed there, not without experiencing much opposition from the owner of the warehouse and the owners of the adjoining property. The assistance of the police had to be obtained to protect the workmen erecting beds &c, and the conversion of the warehouse to the purposes of a place of refuge is threatened to be made a subject of attention by the gentlemen of the long robe. Mr Woodward and Mr Hilary Hill, the medical attendants, still continue their indefatigable exertions on behalf of the unfortunate sufferers from the malady, but notwithstanding the prompt measures taken, there has been fourteen deaths since last week. Mr Hill has attended 33 patients since the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant. We subjoin the names and places of abode of the sufferers during the present week :- Sarah Ann Taylor, a child three weeks old, Doldy, from diarrhoea ; Mr George Locke of St John's, aged 55, malignant cholera ; Mary Mumford, wife of William Mumford, tailor, Doldy ; Morris Earle, one year, and Ann Burton, nine years old, Doldy ; Fred Bunn, 55 years, Doldy ; Jane Oldenham, 65, Doldy ; **Sarah Allen**, wife of a boatman, aged 30, Doldy ; Virginia Brooke, 15 months, Doldy ; Agnes Coombs, diarrhoea, infant daughter of J Coombs, labourer, Henwick Road ; George Evans, 40, Doldy ; John Smith, Doldy ; Mary Langford, 31, cholera nurse. The last of four nurses, Harriet Davis, 35, engaged to attend to the patients, died this (Friday) morning at her house in Hound's Lane. She was taken ill yesterday afternoon at four o'clock. William Mumford, tailor of Doldy, whose wife died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant, also expired this morning. We are gratified to learn that the patients who have been removed to the hospital have been greatly benefited thereby. There are now about twenty inmates at the place of refuge. The Cholera Committee of the Board of Guardians have had four meetings during the week, and at the meeting of the Board yesterday (Thursday), the Rev R Sarjeant presiding, their proceedings were confirmed by the Board, and the removal of a stank in the ditch adjoining the Workhouse was ordered immediately. The Relieving Officer was also ordered not to admit into the Workhouse any person who had any symptom of diarrhoea or of the prevailing epidemic. It was also ordered that upon the certificates of Mr R Hill, medical officer, medicines be supplied by Mr Hunt, chemist of Sidbury, to necessitous persons suffering from diarrhoea.

**140    November 25 1854**

DUDLEY

DEATH FROM DROWNING On Tuesday morning last, a young boatman named **John Godby**,

who was in his father's employ, was pushing a boat off at the Five Locks, Parkhead, it lurched, and he having his back against the side, fell backwards into the water. Before he could recover himself, the boat returned, and the swell of the water drawing him under, he was drowned.

**141 November 25 1854**

STOURBRIDGE PUBLIC OFFICE, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17

**THEFT AND ASSAULT** A boatman named **Joseph Hamlet** was charged with stealing a nose can belonging to Isaac Jones, and then cruelly beating the prosecutor, who is an old man. The charge was proved, and the coward and thief was sent to gaol for 21 days.

**142 November 25 1854**

BROMSGROVE

**THE CHOLERA** This disease has made its appearance at Stoke Prior, where the wife of a boatman named **Thomas Mansell** was seized about a fortnight since, but we are glad to say under the able treatment of Mr Fletcher, surgeon of Bromsgrove, she is now recovering. It appears she had been on a "voyage" with her husband to Birmingham, and on their return home she was taken ill, and her husband consequently started on a second voyage without her. When he again reached Birmingham, though apparently in perfect health at the time he set out, he too was seized with cholera, was taken to the hospital there, and on Thursday last died, leaving a family of three small children almost destitute. Such a case as this, it is hoped, will meet with the sympathy of the benevolent.

**143 December 2 1854**

DUDLEY PETTY SESSIONS WEDNESDAY

**STEALING CLOTHING** **Edward Greenfield**, a lad in the employ of **William Faulkner**, boatman, was charged with having stolen a waistcoat, trousers and shirt, the property of his master, on the 5<sup>th</sup> instant. Prisoner was left in charge of the boat during his master's absence, and it is supposed took the articles out of a cupboard in the cabin, he breaking the lock off to get them out. The prisoner decamped, and was not apprehended until Monday, when Constable Perry took him into custody at Withemore. He denied the charge, and said that he left prosecutor's employ nine weeks ago, since which time he had been at work in the Forest of Dean. The Magistrates thought it was a case of very strong suspicion and committed the prisoner for trial, he having been previously committed for felony.

**144 December 16 1854**

CITY POLICE WEDNESDAY

**EMBEZZLEMENT BY A BOATMAN** **John Lloyd** was brought up under a warrant, charged with having by means of false pretences obtained certain sums of money, amounting in the whole to 7s 6d, from his master Mr William Rowlands, timber merchant &c, of Bridge Place in this city. Mr J Stallard conducted the prosecution. It appears that the prisoner, who has been in the prosecutor's employ about three years, was the captain of a barge, and was in the habit of making voyages to Broseley for tiles. He brought his vessel home loaded on the 13<sup>th</sup> October and charged, as he had frequently done before, the sum of 1s 6d, that being the amount which he said he had paid a man to assist in the voyage by hauling the barge up the rocks above Bewdley. **Thomas Taylor**, who is also employed on the same barge, on being examined, distinctly proved that the prisoner had never employed an extra man to haul the barge up the rocks ; and the latter was committed to the Sessions for trial.

**145 December 23 1854**

DUDLEY PUBLIC OFFICE, MONDAY

**ROBBING AN EMPLOYER** **Thomas Rhodes**, a boatman, was charged with having stolen £1 5s, the property of his former master, Mr William Bishton of Dudley Wood. On the 8<sup>th</sup> March, the

prosecutor gave him a £5 note, out of which he was to pay Mr Whitehouse of Deepfields £3 15s and return the change. He paid the account and decamped with the surplus, and was not seen until within the last few days. Committed for trial.

**146 December 30 1854**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY DECEMBER 26

AN ARTFUL DODGER **Thomas Freeman**, a boatman, was brought up, charged with stealing 10s in silver, the property of Mr Griffin, landlord of the Dragoon Inn, on the evening of Saturday last. It appeared that the defendant had been drinking with others at the inn on the abovenamed evening ; and about nine o'clock went to the landlady and asked her if she would give him change for a half sovereign. She said she could do so, and counted out 10s in her hand. The defendant placed in her hand something partially wrapt up in a piece of paper about the size of a half sovereign. She, however, detected the counterfeit resemblance at a glance, and remarked, "Why, this is not a half sovereign", whereupon defendant snatched the silver out of her hand and ran out of the house. Mr Griffin pursued him for some distance, but he contrived to make his escape. (The "piece of coin" was produced and handed to the Magistrates for inspection. It was about the size of a half sovereign, having on the obverse a badly executed profile of her Majesty, with the inscription "Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1854", and on the reverse, "The Prince of Wales's model half sovereign"). The defendant was apprehended by PS Radford at Stoke, about two o'clock on Monday afternoon. He denied all knowledge of the robbery, and said he had not been at the Dragoon Inn on the Saturday night. Having been previously convicted, and being stated to lead a lewd and disorderly life in the town, he was committed for trial at the Sessions.

**147 January 6 1855**

DROITWICH

DEATH BY DROWNING **Margaret Harris**, a little girl about 5 1/2 years of age, daughter of **John Harris** of the Vines in this borough, boatman, was missed from her home last (Thursday) night, and although every enquiry was made by her parents and the canal dragged, she could not be discovered. They commenced dragging the canal again this (Friday) morning, when they found her body about half past twelve. She was taken out of the water by her father, and removed to his house to await a Coroner's inquest.

**148 January 6 1855**

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN AT STOURPORT **George Massey**, 30, boatman, was charged with having, on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult, stolen 30 lbs of pig iron, the property of **Mr Benjamin Danks**, wharfinger to the Madeley Court Iron Company. Mr Huddleston prosecuted, and Mr Powell defended the prisoner. Mr Danks deposed that his wharf adjoined the dock of Mr Baldwin, at which the prisoner worked, and that he had repeatedly missed iron pigs from his wharf. The three pieces of pig iron produced were his property, which had the words "Madeley Court Iron Company" impressed upon it. It appeared from the evidence adduced that the prisoner disposed of the iron, after it had been broken into three pieces, to a man named Martin Eddles (who said he bought it from the prisoner and two others on the wharf), the money he received for it being spent in drink. Eddles subsequently sold the iron with others to a marine store dealer named Williams, residing at Stourport, where it was found by the police. Mr Powell made an able speech for the defence, and called a witness who gave the prisoner a good character for honesty, having known him for fifteen years. The Jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

**149 January 6 1855**

CITY EPIPHANY SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **John Lloyd**, 44, boatman, to obtaining from his master, Mr William Rowlands, by false pretences, at various times, the sum of 9s, with intent to defraud him of the

same. The prosecutor having recommended him to mercy, he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

### 150 January 13 1855

#### CITY POLICE

**A BRUTE JUSTLY PUNISHED** **John Jones alias Curly**, a young scampish looking boatman, was charged with having brutally ill-treated a young woman named Eliza Walker alias "Canary" on Saturday night. The woman did not appear. Mr Samuel Hall, landlord of the Rising Sun, Bank Street, stated that about a quarter past twelve o'clock he saw the prisoner dragging a girl by the hair of the head, and at the same time striking her violently with his right hand. He desisted for a moment, and when by the gates of the chapel adjacent, he recommenced his brutal treatment. A party standing by cried out, "Don't – don't do that", and witness ran up and said, "You brute, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to serve a woman like that". The girl then ran into a brothel hard by, and the prisoner followed her. Witness heard him ill-treating her in the house afterwards. A policeman was then sent for, and PC Banner went into the brothel and took the prisoner into custody. The girl, he said, presented a dreadful appearance, her face being covered with blood, while there were lumps and bruises on her forehead as large as hen's eggs. Sergeant Doughty deposed to the prisoner threatening "to kick a hole" in the girl's body. Prisoner in his defence admitted striking the girl, but said she "aggravated him to do it". The Bench complimented Mr Hall for the way in which he had acted in the matter, and informed the prisoner that they would stop him from indulging in his vicious propensities for the next six months, and sentenced him to that term of imprisonment with hard labour.

### 151 February 3 1855

**THE WEATHER** The frost which commenced last week has continued in increased intensity during the present, accompanied by biting "Nor' Easters". The surface of old Sabrina's stream was covered over with a crust of ice above and below bridge on Wednesday night, and today (Friday) some boys have been bold enough to "try its strength". Skaters have had a rare time of it during the week on the frozen surface of pools in the neighbourhood. "Morris dancing" has been resorted to by select parties of "frozen out watermen", who have endeavoured by their grotesque movements to excite the sympathy of the kind hearted and compassionate.

### 152 February 10 1855

#### DROITWICH COUNTY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE, FEBRUARY 5

**FELONY** **Richard Alford**, a boatman belonging to Newent, Gloucestershire, was brought up in the custody of Sergeant Aston on a charge of stealing a timber bar, about 40 lbs weight, the property of Mr John Wright, timber merchant, of the Worcester Wharf, Birmingham. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner worked with a boat called the *Henry*, belonging to Evans and Sons, Birmingham, and while passing Droitwich the navigation was obstructed by frost, and during the time the prisoner and another man in charge of the boat waited, they quarrelled, and the latter (**Thomas**) accused the prisoner of being dishonest, and afterwards told Aston about the bar being in the boat, who forthwith apprehended Alford. The policeman, on searching the boat, found the bar, and from information he received proceeded to Birmingham and found Mr J Knight, who at once identified it as his property, and as having been stolen about three weeks before from a saw pit on the Wharf. Committed to the adjourned Sessions.

### 153 February 10 1855

#### CITY POLICE, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3

**ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON IN SILVER STREET** A young boatman named **Henry Ford**, whose parents reside in Park Street, was charged by John Ganby, a gardener of Henwick, with having used violence towards him on the previous night, and robbed him of ten shillings. The prosecutor stated that about eleven o'clock last night he went into the White Horse public house and

had something to drink. He pulled out two shillings and fourpence in coppers, which he felt sure that the prisoner, who was in the house, perceived. He then left and went to the house of a person named Smith in Lowesmoor, where he partook of some eatables. On his return into Silver Street, he called at Hoyles's beer shop and had a pint of cider. He then left to go home, and proceeded down Watercourse Alley. On turning the corner of the street, he met the prisoner, who at once ran up to him, laid hold of him by the throat, and exclaimed, "Deliver up", put his hand in complainant's left trousers' pocket, took out one shilling and ran away, saying he would go and have a quart of ale. Prosecutor thereupon went to the Police Station, and obtained the services of PC Hooper. They went to the White Horse, and Ganby at once pointed out the prisoner as being the man who robbed him. The prisoner, who was in company with three prostitutes, then said, "Do you charge me with robbing you?" Prosecutor answered in the affirmative, and the officer took the prisoner into custody. On the way to the Station House, the prisoner said, "There are others who wear the same sort of jacket as I do". The officer today stated that both the prosecutor and the prisoner were sober. In his defence, Ford said the prosecutor was drunk, and had been at the house of a prostitute, whom he charged with having robbed him. Ganby partially denied this being true. The prisoner was remanded until Monday.

#### WEDNESDAY

THE ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON IN SILVER STREET The young boatman, **Henry Ford**, who was remanded from Monday on the charge of stealing 1s from the person of John Ganby on Friday night last, was brought up again today. On Monday, the prisoner produced witnesses who exculpated him in a great measure, and today the prosecutor admitted most of the evidence given on the former's behalf. He was therefore at once discharged.

#### 154 February 17 1855

##### CITY POLICE, SATURDAY

EMBEZZLEMENT A boatman named **Williams** was remanded on a charge of having embezzled £1 10s, the monies of his master, Mr William Probert. Mr Clutterbuck appeared for the prisoner.

#### MONDAY

THE CHARGE OF EMBEZZLEMENT The boatman **William Williams** appeared to his bail from Saturday, charged by his late master, Mr William Probert, with embezzlement, under the following circumstances :- From the statement of the prosecutor, it seems that on the 28<sup>th</sup> January he sent the prisoner to Netherton, a short distance from Dudley, with 15 cwt of hay, which he was to sell at the rate of £5 per ton. When he returned home he only accounted for 9 1/2 cwt at £4 15s per ton, stating that that was all he had sold. Prosecutor went up to Netherton last week and discovered that the prisoner had disposed of the whole 15 cwt. From the prisoner's statement, it appeared that the prosecutor had seized a horse which was his property, bought with money which he had from an uncle, and a suspicion crossed the mind of the worthy Magistrate that the prisoner had withheld certain monies to repay himself for the said seizure. The prosecutor denied that he had ever so seized the horse, but on the contrary, he had had to send £3 more "up the country" to discharge liabilities which had been incurred by the prisoner, and who had no means of discharging them in consequence of having bought the horse with a portion of his (prosecutor's) money. Mr Probert also stated that the horse had never been in the prisoner's possession at all, but was left in his (Probert's) possession for its keep. This the prisoner denied, and said that he always kept the animal at the New Inn stables, Tallow Hill. The Magistrate deemed that there was a sufficient case made out against the prisoner to justify a remand, and the case was accordingly adjourned until Friday.

#### FRIDAY

THE EMBEZZLEMENT CASE The boatman **William Williams**, who was remanded from Monday on a charge of embezzling money, the property of his master, Mr William Probert, coal dealer, Tallow Hill, was, after a lengthy examination, committed for trial at the Assizes. Mr W

Corles appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Clutterbuck for the prisoner.

### **155 February 24 1855**

THE WEATHER, THE SEVERN, ACCIDENTS &c Another week of most severe weather is nearly closed, and although a spirit of charity has characterised the conduct of the more opulent in raising a coal fund, and in other ways alleviating the sufferings of the poor, still nearly all classes of society earnestly hope that a genial change will take place. The frost has almost deprived the city of gas at night, stopped the water pipes of public and private establishments, and made fuel very dear and scarce. We heard of one spirited individual bringing a couple of spring vans, used for moving pianos &c, full of coal, and the frozen out boatmen have dragged some cart loads from Bilston. Fair Sabrina's ice bound stream has furnished an untiring pleasure ground. Thousands of persons have been tempted to indulge in a walk on the ice, and frequently their movements were anything but graceful on account of treading on some treacherous slide, probably twenty or thirty yards in length. Crowds of pedestrians lined the river's banks, and the scene on the river itself has been altogether a most animated one – the red jackets of the Militiamen harmonising well with the wearers of more sombre clothing. Numberless amusements have been in vogue, viz, sliding, skating, sledge driving, hockey and bowling, and all have had their admirers. A booth wherein the “noble art of self defence” was taught was also erected and, as usual with such peculiar exhibitions, was well patronised. Mr Sefton, printer, also erected a printing press on the ice, by the side of the Quay, which has been kept in constant operation. Although there have been several immersions and narrow escapes, we are glad to say that not a single fatal accident has occurred. On Thursday last Mr J L Bozward of Henwick had the gratification of saving the life of a young man, at the evident risk of his own. On Friday evening a young girl named Nicholls, in attempting to go on the ice where the hot waste water from the water works always keeps it unsound, fell in, and occasionally nothing but the tips of her fingers clinging to the ice could be seen. Assistance was endeavoured to be rendered by some, but one or two got immersed themselves, and the case seemed to be getting hopeless, when the Rev Walter Thursby, Curate of St John's, who had skates on, laid himself on the ice and rolled to the spot, but discovering that he could not thus rescue her, he without hesitation jumped into the water, and seizing the girl held her up until a rope was thrown to him. After a second attempt, Mr Thursby with his burden under his arm got safe to land, and a hearty cheer was given by the crowd in appreciation of the Rev Gentleman's courageous conduct. Too much commendation cannot be passed upon Mr Thursby's noble conduct, and we can only hope that such an instance of heroism and philanthropic daring will not fail in obtaining its due acknowledgement from that quarter where such deeds of high souled gallantry are especially noticed, viz the Humane Society. The same evening, another immersion took place, when Mr G Yates of High Street, with others, was successful in saving the life of a young tradesman in this city. Throughout the whole of Monday, there were indications of a change, which have slightly continued. Yesterday (Thursday), though somewhat raw and cold, a partial thaw took place, but during the night there was another fall of snow to the depth of four inches. This (Friday) morning, the flakes descended somewhat lazily until about nine o'clock, and up to the time of going to press there are evident indications of a thaw taking place. Among the varied and clever performances of our expert local skaters, we may mention the following as of very unusual occurrence :- R R Tuthill Esq, CE, left this city on Monday, for York, via the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, and the first forty miles of the distance he accomplished in seven hours and a half, including his walk round thirty locks and three long tunnels, one two miles in length. He started on Tuesday for Burton-on-Trent, via the Birmingham and Burton Canal, about thirty eight miles, which he did in five hours on his long Dutch skates. The further particulars of the route we have not yet received. The distance between Worcester and Stourport, and Tewkesbury and Worcester has also been traversed by skaters.

### **156 March 3 1855**

DROITWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20

AN UNNATURAL FATHER A boatman named **James Knight** was charged by the Overseer of

Stoke Prior with having left his six children chargeable to that parish since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October last. Mr Hornblower, the relieving officer for the district, having shown his authority to obtain a warrant to apprehend the prisoner, and Mr Clarke, the master of the Union, having proved that the children had received indoor relief from that time, the prisoner was called on for his defence. He said that he formerly worked for Messrs Price of Brierley Hill, and went a voyage to London. On his return, he lost his wife and eldest son from cholera, and had met with a variety of other misfortunes, having been ill himself &c. He left the other children with his sister, and she delivered them up to the Union. PS Radford apprehended the prisoner a day or two ago under warrant in Birmingham, and the officer stated that he had been rambling about Wales. It appeared from the statement of Mr Hornblower that the expense incurred by the parish for the maintenance of the children since November was £15. Knight could neither refund any portion of the money nor hold out any prospect of being able to pay it off, and he was therefore sent to gaol for one calendar month with hard labour.

**157 March 3 1855**

WORCESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

ROBBERY AT BIRMINGHAM **Edward Hulford**, 27, boatman, was found guilty of stealing an iron bar, the property of Mr John Knight of Birmingham, on the 12<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Talfourd prosecuted. The prisoner as usual had "found" the article in question, but unfortunately the time at which he alleged he found the bar was actually previous to its loss. The Jury recommended him to mercy. One month's hard labour.

**158 March 17 1855**

CITY POLICE

ANOTHER BOATMAN IN TROUBLE **William Ricketts**, a boatman, was charged under the following circumstances :- Mr William Hay, landlord of the Red Cow Inn, Birdport, and also a dealer in coal &c, stated that the prisoner was captain of one of his boats. Last week he sent him on a voyage with the boat, and a horse to tow it, to bring back coal, giving him sufficient hay and corn for the horse. The prisoner returned on Friday, and brought the horse with him. The animal was in a most exhausted state, and had since died. He had reason to believe that the prisoner had sold the hay and corn entrusted to him for the support of the horse, and that the animal died from starvation. The prisoner was remanded.

**159 March 31 1855**

CITY POLICE **James Dilling** and **George Morgan**, boatmen, were also charged by PC Richardson with having been drunk and creating a disturbance in the Corn Market about one o'clock on Sunday morning. The case was clearly proved, but the fellows, whose behaviour was shown to have been extremely bad, were discharged.

**160 April 7 1855**

WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER SESSIONS

WHEAT STEALING AT HANLEY CASTLE **Matthew White**, 42, boatman, was charged with stealing four bushels of wheat on the 20<sup>th</sup> February last, belonging to Thomas Gee of Hanley Castle. Mr Chance prosecuted, and Mr Selfe defended the prisoner. It appeared the wheat (which was identified from a peculiarity in its having sprouted in the sheaf after reaping) was stolen from a waggon standing near Mr Gee's house. Superintendent Checketts, on searching the residence of the prisoner, found a quantity of wheat exactly corresponding in quality to that lost by Mr Gee. Truck marks were found on the morning that the wheat was missed leading from the waggon in the direction of the prisoner's house, which is three quarters of a mile from that of the prosecutor. Mr Selfe ably addressed the Jury for the defence, and the Right Hon Chairman told them that the question they would chiefly have to regard was the identity of the wheat. After some deliberation, and carefully comparing the specimens of wheat produced, the Jury found the prisoner guilty. Six

months' hard labour.

**STEALING IRON AT HALESOWEN** In the case of **Henry Bustin**, 33, boatman, charged with stealing 705 lbs of pig iron at Halesowen, the property of the London and North Western Railway Company, Mr Selfe, who appeared for the prosecution, declined to adduce any evidence, and the prisoner was accordingly discharged.

**ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN** **William Ricketts**, 27, boatman, was indicted for having in the month of February last, at the parish of Stoke Prior, stolen a bushel of split peas and a bushel of bran, the property of William Hay. Mr Richards prosecuted, and Mr Selfe defended the prisoner. The evidence was by no means conclusive against the prisoner, who was consequently acquitted.

**161 April 21 1855**

**DROITWICH SALT COMPANY v BIRMINGHAM CANAL COMPANY** This action partly tried at our last Assizes, it will be remembered, was, at the suggestion of Mr Baron Martin, by consent, referred to Mr Dowdeswell, barrister, of the Oxford Circuit, for arbitration, together with an action attendant. Mr Dowdeswell sat at the Star Hotel three days last week, to hear evidence in the case. Mr Gray appeared on behalf of the Droitwich Salt Company (attorney, Tombs, Droitwich), and Mr Hayes for the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company (attorneys, Chaplin, Richards and Stubbin, Birmingham). The Droitwich Salt Company sued defendants for £2,274 15s 6d, thus made up :- £1050 to enable them to put in a proper state of repairs certain works the Canal Company had removed in the course of making the new canal from Hanbury Wharf, and which the Salt Company alleged had been replaced by very bad and insecure work ; secondly £300 for loss incurred by stoppage of the works at Mopp's Wharf during three months from July to October 1853, when the canal ought to have been completed and opened, but was not ; thirdly £512 15s 6d for carriage of coals from Hanbury Wharf during the same period ; and lastly £112, the estimate of loss that would probably be incurred from the stoppage of works during the time of rebuilding the bad work aforesaid. On the one matter of cartage of coals, it was agreed that the Canal Company should pay £400. All the other points were left to the arbitration. A number of witnesses were examined for the Salt Company, whose evidence went to show that the works were badly executed, and the foundations were defective ; and for the defendants, witnesses were called who deposed to the exact reverse being the case. Mr Dowdeswell was expected to give his award today (Friday).

**162 April 21 1855**

**FORTUNATE ESCAPE FROM DROWNING** Between twelve and one o'clock on Saturday night last, a man named Richard Munn, a public house musician, left the "gay and festive scene", where doubtless his inspiring strains had given much satisfaction, in a state of intoxication. His vision most likely being somewhat impaired, he passed the house in Carden Street where he lives, and eventually reached the canal side and staggered into the water. Luckily for the patroniser of "airs and graces", a man named Boddendam was walking over the canal bridge at the moment, and heard the splash. Perceiving the situation of the unfortunate musician, whose "notes" were now anything but melodious, he went to the rescue, and together with a boatman named **Price**, succeeded in extricating him. He was at once conveyed home, where the usual restoratives were applied, and he eventually recovered from the effects of his immersion, declaring to PC Berridge, who was present, that "he knew as much about drowning now as anyone".

**163 April 21 1855**

**CITY POLICE**

**ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN** **Isaac Jones**, whose demeanour showed the violence of his disposition, was charged by another boatman named **James Charles** with a violent assault. It will be remembered that at the last County Sessions a man named **Ricketts**, who was in the service of Mr Hay of the Red Cow Inn, Birdport, as the captain of a boat, was tried for having stolen a

quantity of corn, the property of his master, and acquitted. Charles gave evidence on the trial on behalf of the prosecution, and hence has become a “marked man” amongst the class to which he belongs. The complainant said he went into the Black Horse Inn, Lowesmoor, on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, when he saw Ricketts and the defendant. The former said that it was he (complainant) that had been the cause of his (Ricketts's) things being sold (referring to the prosecution). Charles denied it, when Jones pushed him against the screen, saying, “It was you, and no one else”. He then proceeded to strike complainant in the face and otherwise assaulted him, saying that he did not care if he had to pay for it. Charles then sent for a policeman, but PC Holmes did not feel justified in taking Jones into custody as he did not see the assault. Complainant said that while Holmes was there, defendant followed him into the yard and again assaulted him. Charles had not caused the attendance of his witnesses today, as he did not know the summons was served until eleven o'clock this morning, and the case was therefore adjourned for a week.

**STEALING GUANO** **Joseph Billington**, a boatman, was charged with stealing two bags of guano, the property of Mr Edward Kite, hallier of St Peter's parish. The case was made out to the satisfaction of the Magistrates, and the prisoner was committed for trial, but admitted to bail.

**164 May 5 1855**

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE, MONDAY

**JUVENILE OFFENDER** **Samuel Gough**, a youth about 16, was committed to gaol for two months to hard labour, for absconding with £2 10s belonging to his master, Mr Joseph Walters of this town, coal merchant. Prosecutor stated that the prisoner had been employed by him as a weekly servant to fetch boats down the canal, and to do other work in general. On the 26<sup>th</sup> March last, he sent the prisoner to Brockmoor for a boat of coals, and gave him £2 10s to pay the tonnage ; the prisoner started with the money and his pony between seven and eight in the morning, but never returned with money or coal, since which time he had not seen the prisoner. Witness said the pony was brought back by another person the same night. Prisoner made a rambling statement as to a half sovereign he lent to a boatman which was expended in drink – from the effects of which, prisoner became tipsy – and alleged that while in that state he was robbed of the remainder of the money by the man alluded to. Prosecutor has been repeatedly subjected to losses of this nature, therefore he proceeded against prisoner in this instance, with a view of making an example.

**165 May 19 1855**

OLDBURY PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY MAY 15

**FELONY** **Richard Kean**, a boatman, was committed for trial for stealing, on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, 200 lbs of blasting gunpowder, the property of Thomas Lines Turner.

**166 May 19 1855**

WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS

**ALLEGED ROBBERY BY A MILITIAMAN** James Wright, 24, labourer, a member of the County Militia, was acquitted on a charge of stealing a silk handkerchief belonging to **John Wood**, a boatman staying at the Bear Inn, Hylton Street, on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant. Mr Byrne prosecuted. The prisoner's defence was, that having a sore neck from wearing his military stock, the regimental surgeon told him to wear a neckerchief. A comrade of his, whom he used to call “Joe” told him he would lend him a neckerchief, and that he would find one upstairs. He (prisoner) went, found the neckerchief, and wore it, but did not know that it was the property of Wood, or he should not have taken it.

**167 May 26 1855**

STOURPORT

**DEATH BY DROWNING** The body of a child named **Frederick Taylor**, the infant son of a waterman of this place, was found in the Severn on Wednesday evening by a man who was standing

on the Quay. The body was taken to the Angel Inn, where an inquest was held this (Friday) afternoon.

**168 June 2 1855**

CITY POLICE

A SUSPECTED HOUSEBREAKER – THE ROBBERY IN ST JOHN'S William Watkins, who some years ago followed the occupation of a sweep, but who for a length of time has been known to the police as a notorious thief and housebreaker, was brought up on suspicion of being concerned in the late robbery of Mr Hollington's, draper, St John's. He was remanded for a week.

**William Jones**, a boatman, but now also a professed thief and housebreaker, was taken into custody at the same time, charged with being an accomplice, but contrived to escape from the custody of PC Richardson, leaving £1 3s 1d in the officer's possession. Watkins, who was taken by Sergeant Evans and PCs Richardson and Berridge, in company with Jones at a brothel, has been identified since he has been in custody as being the thief who stole the till containing some silver from Mr Bradstock's liquor shop in Lowesmoor on the 12<sup>th</sup> April.

**169 July 7 1855**

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

STEALING IRON AT RIBBESFORD **John Baker**, 61, waterman, was indicted for stealing 60 lbs of pig iron at the parish of Ribbesford, the property of Mr Charles Lloyd. The piece of iron was found on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May by PC Baker, among some other iron in the cart of a dealer ; which was proved to be the property of the prosecutor. A witness named Plevey saw the prisoner fish up the piece of iron with a rope, having a hook attached to it. Guilty. One month's imprisonment.

STEALING WEARING APPAREL AT DROITWICH **Thomas Dearne**, boatman, was charged with stealing several articles of wearing apparel on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, belonging to **John Parrott**. Mr Best prosecuted. Prosecutor is also a boatman and plys on the Droitwich Canal. On the evening of the above day, he left the boat for some hours near Mr Bradley's works, and during his absence the prisoner committed the robbery. He was taken into custody by Sergeant Hill and PC Watt with the clothes in his possession, when he gave a false name. Defence : I found them by the canal side. Mr Thomas Bourne gave the prisoner a 15 years' good character. Guilty. Two months' hard labour.

**170 July 14 1855**

MANSLAUGHTER IN THIS CITY Some excitement was caused on Saturday by a rumour that a girl of loose character named Elizabeth Ball, whose parents live in St John's, had committed suicide by throwing herself into the river. The excitement greatly increased during the day, on account of a young man named Alfred Hopkins, who cohabited with the deceased, and well known to the police, being taken into custody on the charge of having caused the death of the unfortunate girl, who was enceinte. He was at once taken before C Sidebottom Esq and remanded to await the result of the inquest on the body of the deceased, which was held on Monday at the Wherry Inn, Quay Street, before J Tymbs Esq DC and the following Jury :-

Mr John Hiam, Foreman

Mr Thomas Maybury

Mr Edward Nott

Mr Henry Davis

Mr William Perks

Mr George Bennett

Mr Edward Close

Mr Thomas Price

Mr John Narne

Mr Edward Griffiths

Mr William Harrison

Mr William Pumphrey

Mr William Humphries

Mr Clutterbuck attended on behalf of the prisoner.

The following evidence was taken, and will be read with interest :-

Mary Ann Ball, sister of the deceased, living in St Clement's Street, deposed : My sister was 20 years old on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June last. I saw her last alive between two and three o'clock on Saturday

morning in a dancing booth at Pitchcroft. She was with Alfred Hopkins, a butcher, also living in St Clement's Street. I left them in the booth about the time named, and never saw her afterwards alive. Deceased and Alfred Hopkins had been quarrelling in the dancing booth, about his not paying for some meat she had had. Between eleven and twelve, Hopkins first struck the deceased. They were then in Simmonds's refreshment booth, where Hopkins was acting as waiter. The blow knocked her against a militiaman. Deceased said, "You have not hurt me", and Hopkins then kicked her, and threw some beer over her. Witness and her sister then went to the dancing booth, where Hopkins followed them about one o'clock, and was about to dance with another girl, when deceased threatened to beat the girl if he did. Deceased and Hopkins kept company for nearly two years. I did not know of any improper intimacy between them. While I was dancing, I saw Hopkins knock deceased down, and kick her while on the ground. When I left the booth they were not quite good friends, nor were they much the worse for liquor. Witness had frequently heard Hopkins say that he should be hung for deceased.

By Mr Clutterbuck : Hopkins had always appeared very fond of my sister. She was very excited in the dancing booth. When I left to go home, I asked her to come with me. She would not, and said, "No, I won't, where Hopkins goes I'll go too". Hopkins assaulted deceased by striking her, and then walked away from her. The people did not interfere. I have in my possession the bonnet and cap worn by deceased on the night in question. I had them from a Mrs Nott between seven and eight o'clock on Saturday morning. Deceased was a jealous, passionate young woman.

Mr George Skinner, corn dealer, living next door to the Wherry in Quay Street, was examined, and said : Standing at my door at ten minutes past four on Saturday morning last, I saw the deceased, who was carrying her bonnet in her hand, and Alfred Hopkins, coming across the Lower Quay towards Copenhagen Street. They were talking with each other, not quarrelling ; and I heard the deceased trying to persuade Hopkins to go home. I saw them pass the Wherry Inn, and I then went into my own house and lost sight of them. Hopkins appeared quite intoxicated and staggered in his walk, the deceased walked more steady and firm than Hopkins, and as far as I could observe nothing was the matter of any account with her. I remained in the house about four minutes, and then went out. I was going up Quay Street when I heard some screams and noise. It was a woman's voice, and seemed to come from the Severn. I immediately made my way back to the river, and directly opposite the middle flight of steps, before Crathorne's house, I saw both the deceased and Hopkins in the water. Hopkins was nearest the shore, the water being nearly up to his chin. He was endeavouring to make his way out. He was about six or eight feet from the side. The woman was close behind him, and seemed to be floating, and trying to take hold of the man. Not being able to swim, and no one else being near the spot, I went home to my house close by and fetched a clothes prop, and when I returned Hopkins was on shore, and commenced abusing me with dreadful language, and accused me of misconduct in not getting the girl out. The deceased was then under water. I saw her got out, to all appearance dead. The water was about six feet deep where the girl was floating when I first saw her. Hopkins was about a foot nearer the shore, and standing erect on his legs. Hopkins assisted in getting the girl out after she was dead. The bottom of the river deepens very suddenly at the spot. I do not know whether Hopkins called for assistance ; it was the woman's voice I heard. Had there been any loud quarrelling between the time I first saw them on the Quay till I saw them in the water, I think I must have heard it. The time did not exceed five minutes.

By the Jury : In my opinion Hopkins could have rendered the girl assistance when I was there, had he chosen. The girl was within reach of him. I should think the girl was three yards from the wall when I first saw her, and Hopkins about a foot from her. He was making every exertion to get out ; and afterwards seemed much distressed at what had occurred.

**Mary Ann Allen**, wife of **Thomas Allen** of St Andrew's, boatman, deposed : My bedroom window looks out upon the steps opposite Crathorne's. About a quarter past four on Saturday morning last I heard voices under my window, which was open. The first voice was that of a man, who said, "Now then". A woman replied, "Oh, you infernal rogue, you b--- scoundrel, you murdering scoundrel". I went to the window, and on the Quay I saw a man and woman, neither of whom I

know ; the man was pulling her about, and the woman was trying to get away from him. She had no bonnet on – it was near the wall under my window. The man did not seem to be pulling her in any particular direction. Deceased succeeded in getting away, and ran down the steps. The man ran after her, and caught hold of her at the bottom of the steps. He put both his hands on her shoulders just as she was turning towards the top of the steps. Both the man and the woman were at the bottom of the steps at this time. Both of them fell into the water together. I did not observe when the man took hold of the woman whether he was pushing her forward or pulling her back, but they both fell into the river from off the bottom step together. I did not observe the man attempt to pull deceased back from the water. They were on the bottom step. I cannot say whether they fell in accidentally or otherwise. I saw them both rise again in the water, but they were then three or four yards lower down the river, and five or six yards out in the stream. The man's head was above the water, but not the woman's. They were plunging about, and the man did not attempt to get the woman out of the water. They drew nearer under the wall, and then I could not see them. She went sideways in the water, and I saw nothing more of either until the man was coming out. When the woman was out of her depth, the man put his hand on her one shoulder, and took hold of her also by the hip. Deceased's head was then under water, and the man seemed to be merely holding her. The woman screamed dreadfully, but the man made no call for help.

By Mr Clutterbuck : I do not know who took the deceased's cape off. When the man had hold of her by the hip in the water, they seemed to be drawing nearer to the wall. The deceased did not scream till she was in the water.

By the Jury : It was about three quarters of an hour before the body was picked up. I didn't know whether the man could swim. If he had tried, he could have brought her to the steps.

Re-examined : When he was coming up the steps, the man exclaimed, “Oh dear, my dear girl will be drowned!” I said to him, “You dirty scamp, you have drowned her”. He replied to my observation, “Why, you won't tell a lie ; I haven't been near her”. I saw the man hang the body across the side of a boat, but he made no remark. I heard him abuse Mr Skinner when he came out of the water.

**Thomas Smith**, examined : I live at Henwick, and am a boatman. On Saturday morning a little after four, I was sleeping on board a boat moored just below Worcester Bridge, when I was awoke by a woman screaming. I looked out and I saw Hopkins going up the stairs out of the water. He cried, “Murder!”, and then said, “My sweetheart's drowning”. I got up, went to the spot with a boat, and got deceased out of the water. The body was lying three or four yards below the steps in five feet of water, and from five to six feet from the shore. Hopkins helped to get deceased out, and seemed much distressed. He put his head down and said, “It is my dear Betsey”. A militiaman and a girl were standing a short distance off, and must have seen the whole transaction. I do not know them. The militiaman told me that he saw them in the water, but thought they were “two large dogs”. Hopkins did not appear to be drunk when he got out of the water.

Emily Riffin of Little Fish Street : I was dancing in Howse's booth on Saturday morning. Hopkins asked me to dance with him. The deceased came up and made him go down the booth with her. I saw no more of her till she was dead.

Mary Ann Ball, being recalled, in answer to a question from a Juror, said she had heard Hopkins say to deceased when they had been quarrelling that he should be hung for her. I did not hear him say that on either of the race days.

PC Ledgley deposed : About two o'clock on Saturday morning, I saw the deceased and Hopkins come out of Howse's dancing booth. Deceased came up to me and said, “Oh, No 18, is that you? He's a brute, isn't he?”, pointing to Hopkins, who was following about ten or twelve yards behind. She then complained that Hopkins had ill-used her. I replied, “You've had plenty of drink ; I'd go home if I were you”. She replied, “I'll not go till this devil is out of me”. The prisoner then returned towards the dancing booth, at the door of which was another young girl, whose veil Hopkins attempted to lift up, so that he might kiss her. Deceased said, “I'll not stand that”, and she then commenced quarrelling with the other woman. Both Hopkins and deceased were drunk. The deceased seemed to be in a passion.

The inquest was then adjourned till nine o'clock on the following morning.

TUESDAY The adjourned inquiry was held this morning at nine o'clock. Mr Shakespeare, for Mr Garland, watched the case on behalf of the deceased's father, and Mr Clutterbuck for the prisoner.

Thomas Pearce, a militiaman, deposed : I am a private in No 8 Company. At a quarter to four o'clock on the morning named, I saw the deceased in company with Hopkins. I knew her by sight better than him. They were coming off Pitchcroft. He told her to go home by herself as he did not wish to go with her. He wanted to sit down, but deceased would not let him. Hopkins said, "So help me God don't you come with me. I don't want you – go home by yourself". He also told her to go to ----. I did not hear any more till I saw them in the water. They passed me at the gate and I stayed in the wicket. I followed along Severn side in a few minutes, and when I came to the end of the bridge, I saw them both in the water. There was a young woman with me. I thought at first they were two men bathing, and made that remark to the young woman who was with me, whose name I do not know. I heard a cry, and I said, "Oh, dear, there is something the matter". I could not say whether it was a man or a woman's cry. I ran down to the spot, and then I saw Hopkins just coming out of the water. The deceased was just under the water and appeared to be rising to the top. She was about four yards from the shore. When she rose, she gave another scream. No one was on the spot except Hopkins, myself and the young girl who was with me. There was a woman at the window above. When Hopkins came up the steps, I asked him what was the matter, and he said that his sweetheart, or Bess, had been throwing herself in and he could not get her out. He tried to undo a boat to get to save her, but he could not do so as it was tied. The deceased sank and did not rise again. I saw her taken out of the water dead. I did not see either of them go into the water. They appeared to be struggling, and were "batting" the water with their hands. When I saw them at Pitchcroft, Hopkins was fresh, and the girl was not drunk.

By the Jury : The boat was ten yards off. He could not reach her from the steps with a pole. When I first saw him, he was near enough to have laid hold of her if he had liked. I cannot swim.

Isaac Payne : I am a nightman, and live in Doldy. I saw the deceased and Hopkins standing by the warehouses on the Quay about a quarter to four o'clock on Saturday morning. I was on the South Parade. Nothing called my attention to them. I was waiting for a team to come. I saw the deceased go from the wall towards the river, and Hopkins followed her. They were three or four feet apart. I am not sure whether she had her bonnet on or not. All on a sudden I lost sight of them. They were making as I thought to the steps, but I did not see them go down as my sight was impeded by a large heap of stone. I thought it was Hopkins, but I would not swear to him. That was all I saw. I did not hear any screams.

Mrs Allen recalled : There was no one with me at my window, but there were some men at an upper window, who saw the deceased and Hopkins in the water, but did not see them go in. I have not given any other version of the circumstances except in my evidence.

Mr Clutterbuck here said he should, in his opinion, be performing a discreet duty in suggesting that Hopkins should be called as a witness.

There being no objection raised, the prisoner was sworn.

Alfred Hopkins : I am a butcher by trade, living in St Clement's Street. All I have to say is she tried to drown herself on Pitchcroft, and I saved her. She ran away from me and I fetched her back. She ran halfway across Pitchcroft. I asked her to come home, and she said she would not go home that night. I said, "Won't you?", and she said, "No". I said, "Well, we'll go somewhere and stay till morning till the booths open". We went from there to Mrs Broad's in Doldy. I rapped there and Mrs Broad said she was full and could not fit us in. We then went to Mrs Jones's, round the corner here, and she said she was full. Then we returned from there going along the Quay, and she said you ----- I will not go any further. She was walking by my right hand side by Crathorne's house, when she said, "That's it", and went out towards the bridge, and in a moment after I heard her plunge into the water. I at once plunged in and I tried to save her, but I could not swim. I called out for help, and Mr Skinner was the first man who came to me. I asked him to give me something to catch hold of to pull her out and myself too. Upon that, Mr Skinner ran home to fetch a clothes prop or something, and when he came back she was drowned, and I was got out. That's all I've got

to say.

By Mr Clutterbuck : I was out of my depth, and I was in danger myself of being drowned. She got hold of the back of my collar and pushed me under. She said, "Oh, Alf", and that was all she said, and then she loosed me, and I struggled out.

This was the whole of the evidence taken, and the Coroner, after asking the Jury to dismiss all prejudice from their minds on account of Hopkins being a prisoner, proceeded very clearly to comment upon the evidence.

After consultation for about a quarter of an hour, the Jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter against Alfred Hopkins", who was forthwith committed under the Coroner's warrant to take his trial at the next Assizes.

### **171 July 14 1855**

#### CITY POLICE

**FEROCIOUS ASSAULT ON A GIRL** **John Monk**, a boatman, and Sarah Bradley, were charged with having assaulted a girl named Caroline Jackson last night. Complainant stated that she received a message from Monk (by whom she had a child six years ago) to meet him at his house in the China Slip. She went towards the place, when she met the male defendant with the woman charged (with whom he now lives), and they both commenced beating her violently, pulling her hair, &c. She was "up and down" at least a dozen times, and was badly kicked about the body. She also received a severe cut behind the ear, and the female defendant swore she would have her life. Corroborative evidence of the assault was given, which also showed that Monk struck other parties who blamed him for his conduct, and PC Newall was sent for, who saw the complainant bleeding. Monk was sent to gaol for three months' hard labour, and the woman was fined £1 and costs, or one month. The latter was accepted. When her term of imprisonment expires, she will be bound over to keep the peace towards Jackson.

### **172 July 21 1855**

#### CITY POLICE

**FALSE PRETENCES** Elizabeth Taylor, a young girl, was committed for trial on a charge of receiving 2s and a loaf from the Union, by using the name of **John Dowling**, a boatman.

### **173 July 21 1855**

#### WORCESTER SUMMER ASSIZES

**BEATING AND WOUNDING AT TARDEBIGG** Matthias Poole, coal dealer, was indicted for having beat and wounded **Joseph Greenway**, at this place, on the 5<sup>th</sup> instant. Mr Byrne prosecuted ; Mr Cooke defended.

Greenway stated that he was a boatman living at Kingsnorton. About two o'clock on the above day he was at the Plymouth Arms drinking with the prisoner. Between five and six o'clock in the evening, the prisoner struck him, and said he would make him fight. Witness asked him not to do so, and went into the yard. There he saw Poole again, who struck him again and knocked him down. Poole dragged witness up again and said he would make him fight. They then fought two rounds, and while he was down Poole kicked him. Witness and the prisoner had had some beer. Mr Cooke cross-examined the prosecutor, who admitted at last being very drunk, and also that he had a pint of ale after the row was over.

Charles Bevan, servant at the Plymouth Arms, deposed to being there when Poole struck the prosecutor first. There was no row before the blow was struck, nor did Greenway give any provocation. Prosecutor wished to go out, when Poole knocked his hands from the door latch, and several times dragged him into the kitchen. The parties then went out, and witness remained in the house. Soon after he was called upon to carry Greenway into the house. He asked to lie down, and seemed hurt.

Dr Charles Hutton of Bromsgrove stated that he saw Greenway between six and seven on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> of July. He examined him and found a large abrasion and bruise on the chest. It

might have been caused by a kick or a fall on gravel. Cross-examined : Did not order him a pint of ale, but witness ordered the landlord to give him a little stimulant, as a man would require it after such a shock.

Mr Cooke made a humorous speech in defence, the pith of the argument being that the whole affair arose out of a common public house row, and that the prosecutor's injury was caused by accident. He also much amused the Court by stating how exceedingly improbable it was for the prisoner, who was also drunk, to carry a weighty man like the prosecutor up some steps and into a field to fight him.

His Lordship in summing up pointed out to the Jury the fact that there were three counts in the indictment, the third being for common assault, and it would be for them to say on which count, or any, they would say the prisoner was guilty. He also pointed out the absurdity of a doctor being brought thirteen miles to speak to a common abrasion of the skin. He also strongly remarked that it was a case that ought to have been settled before the Magistrates, and not brought to that Court for trial at an enormous expense – incurring as it did the costs of six witnesses.

The Jury immediately returned a verdict of not guilty on either count, and the foreman said they quite agreed with his Lordship's remarks with respect to the Bromsgrove Magistrates. [The committal took place at Redditch, not Bromsgrove].

#### **174 July 21 1855**

**THE MANSLAUGHTER CASE** Alfred Hopkins, 26, butcher, was indicted for the manslaughter of Elizabeth Ball, by drowning her in the Severn on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> instant. Mr Powell prosecuted, and Mr Kettle defended the prisoner.

Mr Powell, having briefly stated the case against the prisoner, called Mary Ann Ball, who deposed : I live at St Clement's in this city. Deceased was my sister, and was 20 years of age. I last saw her alive on Saturday morning, the 7<sup>th</sup> July, in a dancing booth on Pitchcroft. She was in company with the prisoner. I last saw her alive between two and three o'clock, and left them both in the booth. She and the prisoner quarrelled between eleven and twelve o'clock in Simmonds's refreshment booth, where he was acting as waiter, and where he struck deceased, knocking her down, and kicked her. She fell against a militiaman. The prisoner was keeping company with my sister.

Cross-examined : My sister, when I left her between two and three o'clock on Saturday morning, was not quite sober, neither was the prisoner. She was of a very jealous and passionate disposition. I did not see one Joseph Parker with her on the previous night. At eight o'clock she was in Mr Simmonds's booth. About that time she went out.

PC George Ledgley deposed : At two o'clock in the morning after the races, I was on Pitchcroft outside Howse's dancing booth, and saw the prisoner and deceased come out of the booth. Deceased came out first, and coming up to me said, "He's a brute, isn't he?", pointing to the prisoner, who was some distance behind. I said to her, "You've had plenty of drink ; I'd go home if I were you". There was a young girl stood near a booth, and Hopkins went up to her, lifted up her veil, and tried to kiss her. Deceased said, "I'll never stand that". The prisoner then went into the booth, and deceased followed him. She said to the girl, "He is my man ; if you want him, have him". I know a house kept by a Mrs Jones in Copenhagen Street. Do not know that it is disorderly. Thomas Pearce, a private in the County Militia, said : I was at the wicket gate leading off Pitchcroft, about a quarter to four o'clock on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, and saw the prisoner and deceased pass by me. She was asking him to come home with her, but he said he would not, that she might go home by herself, for he did not want her. They passed on and went out of sight. Some time afterwards I was passing up the Quay side, when I heard a screaming, and saw some persons in the water. I at first thought it was two men bathing, but on coming near the crane, below the bridge, I saw a woman in the water and Hopkins just coming up the steps from the river. The deceased was just under the water, about three or four yards from the shore. When she rose to the surface, she gave another scream. I asked Hopkins when he came up the steps what was the matter, and he said that Betsey had jumped in, and he went to try to save her, but she pulled him under water. I could not swim, and could render no assistance. The prisoner tried to undo a boat, but could not do so, as

it was tied. The deceased sank and did not rise again. I afterwards saw her taken out of the water dead.

Isaac Payne deposed : I am a nightman, living in Doldy. About a quarter to four o'clock on Saturday morning, the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, I saw the deceased and Hopkins standing by the warehouses on the Quay. I was at the South Parade waiting for a team to come. I saw the deceased go from the wall towards the river, and Hopkins followed her. They were three or four feet apart. I suddenly lost sight of them. They were, as I thought, making for the steps, but my sight was impeded by a heap of stones. I did not hear any screams.

Cross-examined : I know where they were standing. It was near to the place where her dead body was found. I saw her walk towards the water, and he went after her.

George Skinner, corn dealer living in Quay Street, deposed : Standing at my door on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, I saw the deceased and Hopkins coming across the Lower Quay towards Copenhagen Street. They were talking with each other, not quarrelling ; and I heard the deceased persuading Hopkins to go home. I saw them pass the Wherry Inn, and I then went into my own house and lost sight of them. Hopkins appeared quite intoxicated and staggered in his walk ; the deceased walked more steady and firm than Hopkins. I remained in the house about four minutes, and then went out. I was going up Quay Street when I heard some screams and noise. It was a woman's voice, and seemed to come from the Severn. I went back to the river, and directly opposite the middle flight of steps, before Crathorne's house, I saw both the deceased and Hopkins in the water. Hopkins was nearest the shore, the water being nearly up to his chin. He was endeavouring to make his way out. He was about six or eight feet from the side. The woman was close behind him and seemed to be floating, and trying to take hold of the man. Not being able to swim and no one else being near the spot, I went home to my house close by and fetched a clothes prop, and when I returned Hopkins was on shore and commenced abusing me, and accused me of misconduct in not getting the girl out. The deceased was then under water. I saw her got out to all appearance dead. Hopkins was about a foot nearer the shore, and standing erect on his legs. Hopkins assisted in getting the girl out after she was dead. The bottom of the river deepens very suddenly at the spot. I do not know whether Hopkins called for assistance ; it was the woman's voice I heard. In my opinion Hopkins could have rendered the girl assistance when I was there, had he chosen. The girl was within reach of him. I should think the girl was three yards from the wall when I first saw her, and Hopkins about a foot from her. He was making every exertion to get out.

Cross-examined : That part of the river where they were has been dredged, and shelves down suddenly. The prisoner's head was above water.

**Mary Ann Allen**, wife of **Thomas Allen** of the parish of St Andrew, boatman, deposed : My bedroom window looks out upon the steps opposite Crathorne's. About a quarter past four on Saturday morning, the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, I heard voices under my window, which was open. The first voice was that of a man, who said, "Now, then". A woman replied, "Oh, you infernal rogue, you b---scoundrel, you murdering scoundrel". I went to the window, and on the Quay I saw a man and a woman, neither of whom I knew. She had no bonnet on – it was near the wall, under my window. They were pulling one another about. The man had hold of her, and she appeared uneasy in his hands. She ran to the top of the steps, and overbalancing herself, went to the bottom, where she rested her hand against the stonework. The prisoner followed her, and taking her by the shoulders, said, "Now, ---- your eyes", and they both fell into the water. I saw him as they rose put his hands on her and push her under again, repeating this twice, and the third time they got under the wall, where I could not see them. The girl screamed, but he did not cry out. I saw Hopkins come up the steps, and as soon as he saw me, he began to pull off his coat and said, "Oh, my dear girl will be drowned". I said, "You dirty scoundrel, you have been drowning her". He said, "Why, I have not been near her". I heard him abuse Mr Skinner.

Cross-examined : I did not give this evidence the first time I was before the Coroner, for I forgot. I was confused. Did not Mr Tymbs, the Deputy Coroner, ask you whether the statement you had made on the day before was true? I said what I had said was true. Did he not tell you that he had heard you had made another statement to someone else? I do not know that he did.

Mr Kettle here submitted that he thought it would be furthering the ends of justice if the depositions of the witnesses taken at the Coroner's inquest were put in.

The learned Judge expressed a wish to peruse them, and they were accordingly put in. After perusing the evidence of the woman Allen, his Lordship said long experience had taught him to look with great caution at these second editions of evidence. The testimony now given by her varied so much from that given before the Coroner that he thought it would be but proper for the latter to be read to the Jury.

The Clerk of the arraigns accordingly read the evidence. The portion which differed so materially was the following :- "The man was pulling her about, but did not seem to be pulling her in any particular direction. Deceased succeeded in getting away, and ran down the steps. The man ran after her, and caught hold of her at the bottom of the steps. He put both his hands on her shoulders just as she was turning towards the top of the steps. Both the man and the woman were at the bottom of the steps at this time. Both of them fell into the water together. I did not observe when the man took hold of the woman whether he was pushing her forward or pulling her back, but they both fell into the river from off the bottom step together. I did not observe the man attempt to pull deceased back from the water. They were on the bottom step. I cannot say whether they fell in accidentally or otherwise. I saw them both rise again in the water, but they were then three or four yards lower down the stream, and five or six yards out in the stream. The man's head was above the water, but not the woman's. They were plunging about and the man did not attempt to get the woman out of the water. They drew nearer under the wall, and then I could not see them. She went sideways in the water, and I saw nothing more of either until the man was coming out. When the woman was out of her depth, the man put his hand on her one shoulder, and took hold of her also by the hip. Deceased's head was then under water, and the man seemed to be merely holding her. The woman screamed dreadfully, but the man made no call for help".

Cross-examined : I live at Crathorne's house, which is situate about five or six yards from the steps. The last statement I made regarding this matter was made last Saturday. I had never been a witness before. Both the prisoner and the deceased were strangers to me.

Mr Kettle, in addressing the Jury, said there had been disclosed by the evidence a scene of profligacy such as was seldom displayed in a Court of Justice. He could not but think that the prisoner was placed in a very strange position on the fatal morning in question. Accompanied by a jealous passionate young woman, whose conduct and expressions had been coarse in the extreme, the testimony of the witnesses would seem to show that he had attempted to prevent the deceased from committing suicide. He should appeal to his Lordship whether the Court considered the evidence already given sufficient to sustain the charge against the prisoner, and if the reply was negative, he should proceed to call witnesses, who would prove that the deceased had previously on the Friday night contemplated self destruction.

His Lordship addressed some pertinent observations to the Jury on the evidence tendered, and remarked that that given by the woman Allen brought the case to the point of wilful murder ; but it must be received and viewed with great caution. The question he wished to put to the Jury was – whether they were satisfied that the evidence already adduced was sufficient to warrant an acquittal, or whether they wished to hear further evidence.

The Jury after deliberation said they should like to hear additional evidence.

Mr Kettle accordingly called Mr Joseph Parker, coal and timber merchant of this city, living near Gregory's Mill, who stated that between nine and ten o'clock on the evening of Friday July 6<sup>th</sup>, he was stood on the canal bridge, when he saw the deceased coming along the towing-path at a great rate. He asked her where she was going at that time of night and so far from home. She replied that she was going to drown herself. He told her to get in there then, and he should see of she could swim. She went higher up the river and he sent some boys to watch her movements. She soon after came back and went away.

Cross-examined : He knew it was a girl from St John's who thus came up the canal side ; but did not know the deceased personally, nor had he seen her dead body.

Mary Ann Allen, being recalled, said she did not remember seeing or speaking to two men named

Joseph Andrews and John William Street at about a quarter to five o'clock on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, and certainly did not tell them that the woman deliberately ran down the steps and drowned herself. Mrs Crathorne asked her that morning how the deceased had got in, and if she was pushed in. She told her she knew who had done it. Mr Skinner also asked her, and she told him that deceased had died with a dreadful word in her mouth.

Michael Charles, a brick maker living in Copenhagen Street, deposed to a man and a woman, the latter of whom he knew, and the former he supposed to be the prisoner, coming to Mrs Jones's, whose house was next to that where he lodged, about four o'clock on the morning in question, and applying for admittance, which was refused. The girl seemed very angry at this, and saying she would soon settle it, ran off down the street towards the river.

Joseph Andrews and John William Street were called, who swore that the witness Allen had told them at the Wherry public house, shortly before five o'clock on the same morning, that the deceased ran down the steps and jumped or threw herself into the water, and died with very bad language in her mouth. Allen made quite a laugh at it. A man was in company with her at the Wherry.

On being confronted with Henry Hemus, who stated that he lodged at Crathorne's and was with Allen at the Wherry on the above morning, they partially recognised him. He, on being sworn, denied that Mrs Allen had made any such statement at the Wherry.

Mary Ann Ball, being called by request of the Jury, stated that she had been misunderstood in giving her evidence. She and her sister were in Simmonds's booth on the race course from three o'clock in the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup> to eleven the same night, and during that time she was never out of her sight.

Mr Powell replied upon the evidence, and remarked that the only object sought for by the prosecution was the eliciting of the truth, and furthering the ends of justice.

The Learned Judge then summed up the evidence carefully and impartially, reading over the whole of it and commenting upon and explaining its bearings both for and against the prisoner. He viewed with much suspicion the new evidence given by Allen, on which he felt disposed to place little reliance, seeing that the testimony of all the other witnesses went rather to prove that the prisoner was endeavouring to prevent the deceased from committing a desperate act against her own life. He exhorted the Jury to weigh all the evidence and form their judgement calmly and dispassionately, and return such a verdict as they might hereafter look upon with heartfelt satisfaction.

The Jury deliberated about a quarter of an hour, and then being unable to agree, expressed a wish to retire. They were accordingly locked up, and after a lapse of about a quarter of an hour they returned into Court with a verdict of guilty. Fifteen months' imprisonment.

## **175 August 4 1855**

### **DROITWICH**

**INQUEST** An inquest was held yesterday at the White Hart Inn on the body of **William Henry Price**, aged seven years and six months, son of **Richard Price**, a waterman of this borough. The boy left home as usual between one and two o'clock in the afternoon of the 31<sup>st</sup> ult to attend the National School, and must have left there some time between three and four, as a cap was picked up out of the canal about four o'clock. His parents began to be uneasy at his not coming home at his usual time, and sent an elder brother to look after him, but nothing could be heard of him until between eight and nine, when his father heard of the finding of a cap in the canal near the lock. This he recognised, and had the canal searched near where it was found, and the body of the unfortunate boy was discovered. Verdict : "Found drowned".

## **176 August 25 1855**

### **CITY POLICE**

**BREACH OF CONTRACT** **John French**, boatman, was brought up under a warrant, charged with having neglected to fulfil a contract entered into by his employer, Mr F H Needham, coal merchant &c of this city. Mr Needham stated that the defendant had been in his employ as steersman of canal boats for the last two years or so. On Thursday morning last, his Clerk ordered

French to get a boat (the *Annie*) ready immediately to start to Dudley to fetch a load of iron. A sum of money (£2) on account of the expenses of the voyage were paid to him, and he went away. It was his duty after receiving the orders and money to have started on his voyage as quickly as possible. Had he set out in proper time, instead of getting drunk, he might have completed his voyage on Saturday, whereas complainant had to send another man to look after the boat, and she did not come back with the cargo of iron until yesterday (Sunday). There was no written contract of agreement between them. Mr Needham's clerk (Mr C S Walker) deposed to giving orders to the defendant on Thursday morning, at ten o'clock, to go directly with his master's boat to Dixon's Green, near Dudley, and bring a load of iron from thence to Worcester, and at the same time, he advanced him £2 on account of expenses. About three o'clock, finding the boat was still in the canal basin, he sent a man after the defendant, and at four o'clock he had a personal interview with him. French was at that time sober ; and in reply to inquiries as to why he had not started on his voyage, said that he had been unable to get his men together, but that he would at once see about them. Shortly after, witness saw defendant's men get the hay and fodder on board, and the boat set off. Defendant, it was said, did not go in charge of the boat himself, but sent two of his men. He had no right, however, to appoint a substitute without Mr Needham's sanction. Mr Clutterbuck, who appeared for the defence, took exception to the jurisdiction of the Magistrates, contending that the relation between the parties was not that of master and servant, the contract having been between them for a sum certain ; and he held that if the defendant fulfilled the contract, either by himself or by others, it would be sufficient. It was shown by the evidence of **Thomas Mott**, the man employed by Mr Needham to look after the boat and take charge of her on hearing of French's default, that the two men and a boy whom he found in care of her would have been sufficient to have taken her on the voyage to and fro without his assistance ; but Mr Needham informed the Bench that, as he did not know anything of them, he could not trust his boat and valuable cargo to them without some person to look after it. Mr Clutterbuck cited several cases to sustain his view of the parties not standing to each other in the relation of master and servant, and referred to a case in which Mr Wall had been somewhat similarly concerned with the captain of a boat, and in which this view of the case was entertained. After retiring to deliberate, the Magistrates decided that the defendant was, in their opinion, acting as the servant of the complainant, in whose regular employment he was stated to be, and accordingly committed him for seven days' imprisonment for breach of contract.

### **177 September 1 1855**

DROITWICH COUNTY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE, MONDAY AUGUST 27

DESERTING A FAMILY **James Knight**, boatman, was committed for 14 days with hard labour for having left his family chargeable to the parish of Upper Warren.

### **178 September 8 1855**

DROITWICH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS YESTERDAY

POUND RESCUE **George Bunn** and **John Tolley** of this town, boatmen, were charged by Mr Anderson, farmer of Hadsor, with rescuing two asses from his custody while on the way to the pound for being found in a field of barley belonging to him, on Sunday last. Bunn was fined £1 and 7s 6d costs, or 21 days' imprisonment. The other 10s and 7s 6d costs or 14 days' imprisonment. Allowed a fortnight to pay.

### **179 September 22 1855**

CITY POLICE

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Leonard Darke**, waterman, was charged with being drunk and assaulting Superintendent Chipp while in the execution of his duty in High Street on the previous evening. Mr Chipp stated that he was called in to the Lion, High Street, to quell a disturbance which the defendant was making, and turned the latter out, who then became very abusive and he took him into custody. When near the Pack Horse, Nicholas Street, defendant kicked the officer

severely on the leg. Fined 10s and 6s costs, or seven days' imprisonment. Money paid.

**180 September 29 1855**

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon in aid of the funds of this church is announced to be preached at St Clement's by the Rev John Davies on Thursday next.

**181 September 29 1855**

PERSHORE PETTY SESSIONS TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 25

ASSAULTS **Benjamin Roberts**, boatman, summoned William Turvey, labourer of this town, for assaulting him on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst in the Weir Meadow. Defendant admitted the offence, but said Roberts first challenged him to fight. Fined 9s 6d including costs.

**182 October 6 1855**

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon on behalf of this place of worship was preached at St Clement's yesterday (Thursday) by the Rev John Davies. The collection amounted to £14 8s 5d. The Rev Gentleman took his text from Psalm 142 v4 - "No man cared for my soul". After referring to the demoralised condition of this neglected class of our countrymen, resulting from Sunday traffic, he mentioned several interesting facts which proved that boatmen, when afforded advantages for moral and religious culture, manifest a marked improvement of character. Several encouraging instances of reformation were brought forward, showing that much good has resulted from opening this little church.

**183 October 13 1855**

CITY POLICE

BEATING A WIFE **Isaac Jones**, boatman, was charged with assaulting his wife on the previous day. The woman stated that the defendant allowed her from five shillings to six shillings per voyage, which occupies about three weeks, to keep herself and child, and not being content with that had beaten her severely. She, however, did not wish to press the charge, and defendant was let off on paying expenses.

DAMAGE AND ASSAULT **Francis Morris**, described by Inspector Chipp as "a poacher and kind of boatman" was charged by a widow named Todd, residing in Charles Street, Blockhouse, with having broken two panels of the door of her house and struck at her twice on the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Morris, according to his own statement, fancied his wife was at Mrs Todd's house, and being somewhat enraged thereat, he committed the offence with which he was charged. Fined £1 including damage and costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment. In the absence of the "needful", defendant was sent to "durance vile".

**184 October 27 1855**

LAMENTABLE ACCIDENT ON THE RIVER WYE A boat accident, by which the lives of three persons, two men and a woman, were imperilled, took place on the River Wye at Hunderton near Hereford on Monday evening last. The parties were **Edmund Crompton**, boatman, and his wife and nephew. It seems they had been up the river to Belmont, the seat of Mr F R Wegg-Prosser, High Sheriff of the county. On returning, Crompton stood up in the skiff for some purpose, when it suddenly turned over. The two men saved themselves by swimming, but despite every effort on their part to save her, the woman was drowned.

**185 October 27 1855**

CITY POLICE

ANOTHER WIFE BEATER **James Price**, boatman, was brought up under a warrant to answer the complaint of his wife for having brutally assaulted her in Birdport on Saturday last. She stated that as he was going out with another man to drink at a public house, she followed him and offered him

the house key, when he struck at her “right and left”, cutting her nose and discolouring her face. She had frequently suffered from his brutality, and had been compelled to live separate from him. She was living in a good place of service when he fetched her away. The defendant said he was “in beer” when he committed the assault. The Magistrates, after deliberation, committed him for three months' hard labour, the Mayor telling him he was a disgrace to humanity.

**186 November 3 1855**

DUDLEY POLICE COURT, MONDAY OCTOBER 29

ASSAULT **Isaiah Wright**, a boatman, was charged by **Josiah Hingley**, also a boatman, with assaulting him on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant. Prisoner, in defence, said that complainant had given him the first offence by not stopping his (defendant's) horse when requested to do so, and the consequence was that the horse fell into the canal, doing it serious injury. Fined 20s with costs.

**187 December 1 1855**

CITY POLICE, MONDAY

BARLEY STEALING A man named **Thomas Mills**, boatman, was remanded till Friday on a charge of stealing a bag of barley, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, Severn carriers.

FRIDAY

STEALING BARLEY **Thomas Millard** and **John Tudor** were charged with having stolen a bag of barley, the property of their masters, Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders. Mr Clutterbuck prosecuted and Mr Rea defended. On the 4<sup>th</sup> September, 327 sacks of barley were put on board the trow *Queen*, consigned for the distillery at Worcester. Part of the cargo (135 sacks), however, was put in a warehouse at Gloucester, and the remaining portion sent on to its destination in the barge *Trusty*. The two prisoners worked on board the barge ; and, on going through Lipscombe Lock, Tudor asked the lock-keeper to buy a sack of barley, at the same time saying, “It's all right, it's one we had over”. Millard was present at the time. The lock-keeper, however, refused to purchase. On arriving at Worcester, one bag of barley was missing. Both prisoners were committed for trial, but admitted to bail.

**188 January 5 1856**

WORCESTER CITY EPIPHANY SESSIONS

ROBBERY BY BOATMEN **Thomas Millard**, 27, and **John Tudor**, 49, watermen, were indicted for stealing a sack of barley, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September last. Mr Selfe and Mr Byrne were for the prosecution, and Mr Huddleston defended. The facts of the case were briefly these :- A cargo of 320 sacks of barley was shipped at Bristol for Gloucester in the barque *Queen* ; at the latter city, a portion of this (185 sacks) was transhipped on board another vessel, the *Trusty*, of which the prisoners had charge, for conveyance to Stourport. On the unloading of the vessel at Messrs Danks and Co's warehouses, only 184 sacks were found. It was proved that the prisoners had asked the lock-keeper at Lipscombe to purchase a sack of barley for his pigs, but he declined to have anything to do with it. It could not be clearly proved that the sack had been taken by the prisoners, although the case was a very suspicious one, and under the direction of the Court, the Jury acquitted them.

**189 January 5 1856**

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

FELONY AT HARTLEBURY **Isaac Tyler** was indicted for stealing a silver watch and a silk watch guard belonging to **Alfred Millington**, boatman, at Hartlebury on the 11<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Selfe prosecuted, Mr Huddleston defended. The parties had been working a boat at Hartlebury, and the watch was taken from the bed's head of the cabin wherein they slept. It was subsequently found in the possession of the prisoner, whose wife stated that she had found it between the boards of the flooring, under the berth. In addressing the Jury for the defence, Mr Huddleston cited the following

distich, which he attributed to his learned friend Mr Selfe, from his frequent citations of it :-

“He who a watch would keep, two things should do,  
Pocket his watch, and watch his pocket too”.

He argued that the mere possession of the watch did not imply felonious intention to the prisoner, whose wife might have found the watch as described, although the prosecutor had been unable to find it, and the prisoner had stated that he intended to return the article to Millington. The Right Hon Chairman left the Jury to draw their own inferences, calling their attention to the fact that the prisoner's statement was made after his apprehension. The Jury, after consulting, returned a verdict of not guilty.

### **190 January 19 1856**

#### CITY POLICE

SCANDALOUS AFFAIR **Samuel Mortimer**, a sort of epicenic specimen of a “navvie” and a boatman, was charged with assaulting and threatening Mr John Morris, landlord of the Old Red Lion beerhouse, Newport Street, on Friday night last. Complainant stated that about a quarter or half past ten o'clock, the defendant, who was a stranger to him, came into his house. After wiping a hand across his face, he asked complainant if he did not look “a likely fellow”. He then called for a pint of ale, but did not pay for it, and having obtained leave to cook “a bit of meat”, he pulled out of his pocket between three and four pounds of beef fat, a piece from which he cut off and cooked, but after a while asked to have it taken away as he thought “it would make him sick”. He then unlaced his shoes or boots, and said he would go to bed. Complainant told him he must pay for the ale and the bed, whereupon defendant commenced abusing him very much and tried to get out of the house. Complainant, however, held the door, and a struggle ensued between them, defendant trying to get his hand between the door and the post and break his wrist. Finding he could not succeed, he loosed his hold and, exclaiming, “You ---, I'll spoil you”, took a running kick at complainant, whose daughter, with much presence of mind, caught up a poker and threatened to knock him down with it if he did not desist. Some persons came into the house and interfered, and the defendant was eventually given into custody. This statement was corroborated by Ann Morris, complainant's daughter. Defendant had nothing to say in extenuation but that he was drunk. He was a stranger in these parts, and belonged to Westmorland. The Bench fined him £1 and 7s costs, or in default seven days' imprisonment.

### **191 January 26 1856**

SUPPOSED MURDER OF A WOMAN AND CHILD AT HAM A Coroner's inquiry has commenced at the Crooked Billet Tavern, Ham, Surrey, respecting the death of Mary Ann Peacock, who it was alleged had been murdered, together with an infant, by two men named **Ford** and **Jackson**, bargemen in the employ of Mr Stiles of Long Ditton, and who are at present in custody in Horsemonger Lane Gaol. The evidence has not yet elicited positive information upon the matter, and the inquest is adjourned.

### **192 January 26 1856**

#### CITY POLICE

STEALING HAY **William Rathbone**, a waterman, was remanded until Monday on a charge of stealing hay, the property of the Duke of Bridgewater. The robbery took place in Staffordshire some months ago, and he then absconded. Information of his capture has been forwarded by Superintendent Chipp to the Stafford police.

### **193 January 26 1856**

COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTES A case of some interest came before the Magistrates at Birmingham on Monday last. A boatman living at Kingsnorton, who gave his name as **John Cox**, was charged with having uttered several £5 notes purporting to be drawn on the Old Bank in this city, but which were all forgeries. Mr John Hill, Town Clerk, conducted the prosecution. It

transpired in the course of the enquiry that defendant had visited the shops of various tradesmen in Birmingham, where he purchased articles and tendered a £5 note as payment in each place. At the establishment of Mr John Smith, tailor, Broad Street, in that town, on the 16<sup>th</sup> instant, he purchased a coat and a pair of trousers, which he paid for with a "note". This, on showing it to a neighbour, was ascertained by Mr Smith to be a forgery, on which he informed Cox that such was the case, and gave him into custody, marking the note and giving it to a police officer. Defendant went on the 12<sup>th</sup> instant to the shop of Mr Thomas Acre, butcher, residing in Barr Street, and purchased some sticking pieces of beef, to pay for which he tendered and passed off a counterfeit £5 note ; and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December he succeeded in palming off another to Mr Coxon of Dale End, where he bought some meat. Sir E H Lechmere proved that the signature on the notes was not in his handwriting, nor in that of any member of his banking firm, and that all of them were forgeries. Cox, who denied all knowledge of the notes except the one tendered to Mr Smith, was committed for trial at the next Assizes. It may be remembered that a forgery of notes was perpetrated on the Old Bank in the summer of 1849, but in consequence of the measures then taken, the circulation of them was prevented. The forged notes now attempted to be put in circulation are, it appears, the remains of the old forgery. They are all dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 1848. Since that period the genuine issue of Messrs Berwick and Co's notes has contained the words, "Worcester Old Bank" and the word naming the amount of the note, printed in colours on the back by a patent process.

#### **194 February 2 1856**

CITY POLICE

HAY STEALING **William Rathbone**, boatman, was brought up on remand on a charge of stealing a quantity of hay, the property of the Duke of Bridgewater, but no one appearing to prosecute, he was discharged.

#### **195 February 9 1856**

CITY POLICE

A WIFE BEATER A boatman named **Hobson** was charged with having brutally assaulted his wife, and knocked out two of her teeth. He was brought up under a warrant and his wife called by the crier of the court. No answer was returned, and after waiting some time the fellow was remanded until Monday. He was afterwards liberated on promising to pay 2s 6d and a like sum on Monday.

#### **196 February 9 1856**

DROITWICH

A SAD OCCURRENCE On Monday last Mr Hughes held an inquest at the Barley Mow Inn in this town on the bodies of a woman named **Harriet Dearne**, wife of **Thomas Dearne**, a boatman of this place, and her infant child, three months old, who were accidentally drowned on the previous Saturday night. The deceased, it seems, had been in town making some purchases, and in proceeding to the boat in which her husband and three children lived, which was lying opposite Mr Wilson's of Impney, she accidentally walked into the basin with her child, and was drowned. A person named Carter, while walking by the side of the canal on Sunday morning, saw a basket with some bread in it partly under the water in the basin, frozen in. On looking more closely into the water, he discovered some clothes under the ice. He procured assistance and got the woman out, with her child in her right arm. When found, she was in a perpendicular position, with her clothes over her head, so that her bonnet could not be seen. No one heard any alarm given, although there are a number of houses near and there were many persons about. She was in her 29<sup>th</sup> year, and has left two other children, one about six and the other four years old. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

#### **197 February 9 1856**

BROMSGROVE

ACCIDENT – CAUTION TO BOATMEN About two pm on Wednesday last, as Mr Samuel

Hannell, tailor, was walking by the canal side near Stoke Works, his foot accidentally came in contact with a boat line, which threw him down and broke his leg. The line was laid across the footpath, being very imperfectly fastened to the hedge. With a view of preventing accidents, the Canal Company have had large rings put near the water's edge on purpose for the boatmen to tie their boats to, but strange to say they prefer the hedge, though it occasions them more trouble, besides being dangerous to the public, especially at night. Mr W Blado, miller of Stoke, obtained assistance, and Mr Hannell was conveyed home and quickly attended to by Mr Davenport, surgeon of Bromsgrove. Mr Hannell remains very ill. It is hoped this will be a caution to boatmen.

### **198 February 16 1856**

#### UPTON-ON-SEVERN

A SAD END On Friday last the body of one John Harrison, an old pensioner of the 94<sup>th</sup> regiment, was found in the river Severn, opposite Uckington Meadow in the parish of Ripple, by **Richard Fereday**, a boatman living in this town. The last time deceased was seen alive was on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> December. He had received his pension on the previous Saturday, and had been drinking much in the interval. No marks of violence were found on the body, and it was supposed he accidentally fell in. At an inquest held before Mr C Best on Monday, a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

### **199 February 16 1856**

#### CITY POLICE

A WARNING TO THE DISORDERLY Two young men named **Frederick Smith** and **Isaac Small**, boatmen, appeared to answer a complaint preferred against them by Mr Thomas Farr, coal dealer, residing at the Upper Quay, of being disorderly characters and disturbers of the public peace, causing him thereby great annoyance. The Court was densely crowded, a large portion of the audience, who appeared to evince a more than usual amount of interest in the case, being from the neighbourhood of the Quay and Doldy. Mr Clutterbuck appeared for complainant, Mr Pullen for Smith and Mr Woof for Small. Mr Clutterbuck, in stating the charge to the Bench, said that under the 78<sup>th</sup> sec of the Municipal Act, the police had authority to take all such persons as in their opinion had created a disturbance of the public peace, and if these men could not be proved to the satisfaction of the Bench to have committed the offence described, he hoped it would have the effect of inducing the Corporation of this city to amend the by laws in such a manner as would put a stop to such annoyances in future. Mr Farr stated that he had for a long time past been subjected to great annoyance from boatmen and others calling after him, and using language of a highly disgusting nature. On Thursday morning last about half past ten o'clock, he was coming out of his house when, on being discerned by the defendants, who were unloading a boat on the opposite side of the river, they called out in the usual offensive manner. He "stood it" for about twenty minutes, and then went in quest of Superintendent Chipp, with whom he returned, and who heard the scandalous manner in which the prisoners behaved. The same night they went drunk to his (complainant's) boat, and made use of such threats that his captain had to watch the vessel all night for fear they should sink her. He had received anonymous letters threatening to "put a bullet through his head" ; and whenever he went out of doors he was sure to get a "salute" from some of the defendants' companions who frequently got into a slaughterhouse near the water and shouted a variety of disgusting expressions. He went in such bodily fear that he dared not venture above a stone's throw from his house at night. In the course of cross-examination, complainant said he had never given the defendants or their companions any cause of complaint or had ever quarrelled with any of them. He was in the habit of going to the Green Dragon Inn, nightly, three or four times a week ; but never stayed there later than half past eight o'clock or so. That public house was within a stone's throw of his own residence. Superintendent Chipp deposed to having been called in by the complainant and accompanying him to his house on Thursday. He saw two men resembling the defendants, and heard the filthy noise described. There was a mob of persons of their character. The conduct of the men was very bad, and of a kind calculated to produce a breach of the peace.

Complaints were being repeatedly made to the police by persons residing in the neighbourhood of the disgraceful proceedings of the boatmen. He had no moral doubt of the defendants being the two men whom he had seen, but he could not swear to their identity. In answer to a question from the Bench, witness said he had remonstrated with the two men charged on several occasions for misconduct of this kind. **Henry Smith**, captain of one of complainant's boats, deposed to the defendants coming down to the boat in which he was on Thursday night, and using some filthy language, but never heard them say anything threatening. Jas Freeman, labourer, stated that as he was walking down Broad Street behind defendants on Friday last, after they had been brought before the Magistrates at the Guildhall, he heard one say to the other that, in making use of the filthy expressions used by one of them, they must not mention names, because if they did "Tommy Farr" would have "a pull" on them. Mr Pullen, in his address for the defence, contended that no offence had been proved ; and that a portion of the offensive sentence was regularly used by boatmen in their daily work, in lifting heavy weights. He broadly hinted that the present proceeding was "a piece of spite and spleen" on the part of the complainant, against a rival coal dealer. Mr Woolf read the clause of the act giving power to the police to apprehend disorderly characters and held that the defendants had not been shown to have committed any offence at all. The Magistrates retired to deliberate, and after some time returned into Court, when the Mayor stated that they had determined to require the defendants to severally enter into their own recognisances in £10, and two sureties in £5 each, to keep the peace for twelve months. Bail was eventually given, and the parties left the Court. In the course of the proceedings, a not very edifying or regular "confab" took place between Mr Prosser, who occupied a seat at the table as an "observer", and the complainant as to propriety of motive, which occasioned some merriment in Court, but was eventually stopped by the Bench.

#### **200 March 1 1856**

MALVERN PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY FEBRUARY 26

FELONY BY A BOATMAN **Joseph Wheeler** of Worcester, the captain of the coal boat which was sunk on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst at the weir at Holt, was apprehended by PC Jones at Worcester on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst under a warrant, charged with stealing £1 7s 6d, the monies of his master, Mr Thomas Bradley of Malvern. He was today brought up on a remand from Saturday last, and was committed for trial at the next Stafford Assizes, but admitted to bail.

#### **201 March 1 1856**

SUNDAY OUTDOOR PREACHING The Rev Ellis Palmer of the Watermen's Church has announced his intention of commencing outdoor preaching on Sunday next. The reverend gentleman has chosen the Blockhouse as the locality for his first sermon, and the time fixed is half past eight in the morning.

#### **202 March 15 1856**

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY MARCH 7

DOG STEALING **John Lee**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a setter bitch, the property of T Thursfield Esq, on the 18<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr H Saunders jun appeared for the prisoner. John Edwards stated that on the day in question he saw the animal tied up in Mr Austen's stable at Clensmore, near to which the prisoner had a boat on the canal. Between five and six in the evening, he saw one of the prisoner's little boys untie the dog and lead him away by the chain ; the prisoner then being in the town. Sergeant Lloyd apprehended the prisoner at Stratford-on-Avon, when he said "the dog was safe. I never stole the dog but he followed my two little boys along the canal side. I would have given it away several times but no one would have it. I gave it to a man at Brierley Hill named **Hollis**, a boatman, who asked me what he should give me for it. I said nothing, but you can give my boys a penny apiece, and Hollis said to me I'll keep this dog ; there'll be some handbills out offering a reward, and then I'll give you part of it". Mr Thursfield stated that the animal was generally kept at his garden at Clensmore, but had got loose. She was worth ten guineas. Mr

Saunders, for defence, called Samuel Hollis, who said he received the setter bitch from prisoner at Brierley Hill, and did not give him anything for it, that the prisoner said it came to his lads at break of day, and that he did not want her, nor would he have her, upon which he offered her to him. Witness took her, saying if any owner should enquire after her, they should have her. He afterwards took her to the constable and ultimately gave her to Mr Joseph King at Walsall Grove. Mr Saunders contended there was no felonious intent or concealment on the part of the prisoner, and produced several testimonials as to his good character. The Bench dismissed the case, giving the prisoner the advantage of the doubts, at the same time warning him, as the circumstances were very suspicious.

**203 March 29 1856**

UTTERING FORGED NOTES AT BIRMINGHAM **John Cox**, 47, boatman, also pleaded guilty on Saturday to feloniously uttering a forged £5 note of the Worcester Old Bank, at Birmingham on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, well knowing the same to be forged, and not guilty to two other indictments for the same offence. He was sentenced to fifteen calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**204 March 29 1856**

CITY POLICE

BALL PLAYING ON SUNDAY **John Smith**, a young boatman, was charged with having been playing at ball against the wall of Park Street Chapel about half past six on Sunday evening, during service time. The youth's master gave him a good character for being "honest and tidy", and on promising not to repeat the indiscretion, he was discharged.

**205 April 19 1856**

DROITWICH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS YESTERDAY

BREACH OF THE PEACE **George Hepwood** of Gloucester, boatman, and John Harris of Droitwich, salt maker, were charged by Sergeant Aston with fighting in the High Street on Saturday night last, and were bound over to keep the peace for six months, and pay the costs, 11s 6d.

**206 May 3 1856**

BANKRUPTS &c

**John Styles**, Putney, waterman, lighterman and coal merchant, May 5, June 3, at the Bankrupt's Court, London.

**207 May 3 1856**

DUDLEY

ANOTHER BOILER EXPLOSION About seven o'clock on Tuesday night last, a frightful boiler explosion happened at the works at Bilston of Messrs Rose, Higgins and Rose, malleable iron makers, causing the death of four persons. The works in question are situate on the bank of the Birmingham Canal, and comprise some 20 puddling furnaces and two rolling mills, which afforded employment for about 70 or 80 persons. To keep in motion one forge hammer and one set of rollers there are two engines, one of 25 and another of 35 horse power, fed by four egg shaped boilers, three of which were side by side, with one of their ends a few yards from the canal. The centre one of the three last named boilers exploded with a report that was heard for miles around. The boiler, which was 5ft 6in in diameter by 36 ft long, and made of 7-16ths iron, while one end was blown into the canal, was propelled with terrific force into the works, bringing down a chimney stalk 60 ft high, tearing a neighbouring boiler from its bed, and ripping up the rolls and their bedding. The roofing of the works and the surrounding brickwork were cast to an almost incredible distance. The canal was nearly dammed up with the ruins which fell into it, sinking beneath them a long boat that lay near the works, and endangering the lives of the boatmen. Search being made for the missing men, Benjamin Plant, the engineer, Thomas Court, boiler maker and Joseph Hill, another engineer, were found dead. A youth named William Harris, an underhand puddler, was the fourth person killed. In addition to these a few have been also injured. The one most severely so was John

Johnson, who had sustained a compound fracture of the arm. The deceased Court was not employed by Messrs Rose, Higgins and Co, but had come to the works to ask permission to heat a boiler plate, and he is supposed to have been engaged with Plant in testing if the plate could be admitted into the fire which was beneath the exploded boiler when they were killed. The accident is supposed to have originated in water having been turned by Court into the boiler while it was in a state of excessive heat.

## 208 May 10 1856

### CITY POLICE

**ASSAULTING THE POLICE** A boatman named **James Morgan** was charged with being drunk and assaulting police-constables Vaughan and Knott on the previous afternoon. PC Vaughan stated that, as he was proceeding along Friar Street about half past one o'clock, on arriving near the Old Oak Tavern, hearing a disturbance, he went in and found the defendant drunk and quarrelling with his brother-in-law, whom he accused of robbing him. At the request of the landlady, Vaughan put him out and, after some persuasion, induced him to go towards his boat. He went part of the way along New Street, but returned to the corner of the gaol, and offered to fight his brother-in-law and the man who was with him. Vaughan threatened to take him into custody if he attempted to fight. Defendant proceeded to strip himself, and Vaughan then took him into custody, when he struck the officer in the face. Defendant was thrown down, and PC Knott coming up, succeeded in handcuffing him. When going along Friar Street, defendant kicked Vaughan twice in the stomach and attempted to do him great injury, saying, "You ----, I'll ruin you for life". He kicked Knott on the head and stunned him. There were numerous persons around who declined to assist the officers ; but a reinforcement of police eventually arrived, and defendant was conveyed to the station house. Mr Alfred Baylis, printer of Friar Street, witnessed the affair, and described the defendant's conduct as brutal in the extreme. Defendant, in extenuation, said he was very drunk at the time, and Vaughan had been drinking with him. He paid for some rum for the officer, and on receiving change he complained of an attempt to cheat him of a shilling, and thus caused the disturbance. He was very sorry, he said, and if he did kick the policeman, it must have been done in the scuffle. He requested the Bench to deal leniently with him, as he had a boat and horse under his care, and a wife and three children dependent upon him. Vaughan denied having any liquors at all at defendant's expense ; he had one glass of ale which he (himself) paid for. The Bench fined defendant £1 with 7s expenses, or one month's hard labour.

**DISORDERLY** **Thomas Jones**, a boatman, was charged by PC Holmes with being drunk and disorderly at half past twelve o'clock on Tuesday night, near the Severn Bridge. The defendant, who was discovered by the policeman lying near the end of the bridge in a state of intoxication, had nearly fallen into the river. Upon being assisted by the policeman, he became so abusive that he was taken into custody. Fined 5s.

**FELONY** **Richard Strickland**, a boatman, and Ann Bottwood, who had been apprehended in consequence of information received from the Birmingham police, were charged, the former with having stolen, from a boat at Birmingham, one sovereign, a watch, a chain, two keys, a cap and a waistcoat, and the latter with receiving the watch, which was pledged by her for 10s. The ticket of the latter was found on the male prisoner. Remanded until Monday to afford time for corresponding with the Birmingham police.

## 209 May 31 1856

**FORTUNATE ESCAPE – INTREPIDITY OF A WATERMAN** A fortunate escape from drowning occurred in this city on Tuesday evening last. As a lad named Gillham, living in Frog Lane, was playing on the banks of the Severn, he accidentally fell into the water at a place nine feet in depth near the end of the lane. He was observed by persons who were at a distance (who were unable to reach the spot in time) to rise to the surface thrice and struggle violently. Providentially, the

attention of a waterman named **William Overton** of Hylton Street was directed to the floating of Gillham's cap. He instantaneously plunged into the river, although unable to see the least trace of the drowning lad, when he was grasped round the thigh by Gillham, who clung to him so tenaciously as to almost prevent him swimming. By dint of great exertion, however, he succeeded in rescuing the lad from his peril when, being conveyed home and placed under judicious treatment, he speedily recovered. Overton, for his hardihood, certainly deserves some pecuniary acknowledgement.

### 210 June 7 1856

**ACCIDENTAL DROWNING** An inquest was held on Saturday last at the lock house, Hindlip, by the deputy coroner, Mr H Hill, on the body of the lad **John Hodgetts**. The deceased, who lived in the parish of Claines, was about eleven years old, and on Thursday last was sent with his brother up the canal with his father's boat for the first time. He proceeded forward to open the locks, and it is supposed that while doing so he fell into the canal. His body was afterwards discovered by the lock-keeper near the place where he fell in. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

### 211 June 28 1856

#### CITY POLICE

**SUSPICIOUS CASE** Two boatmen named **Joseph Billington** and **Thomas Smith** (the former in the employ of Mr T Maybury of Quay Street, and the latter of Mr Stalworth) were brought up on suspicion of having stolen a bag of oats on Saturday last. Mr Clutterbuck appeared for Smith. PC Vaughan stated that a little before one o'clock on Sunday morning, he was on duty in Quay Street, when he saw Billington, with a sack on his back, coming up Wood Street, leading from the river into Quay Street. Witness, not liking his appearance, followed him, and saw him go up an entry near where the Old Black Swan used to be. He went towards a wash house in the yard, into which he threw it, and walked across the yard to the prisoner Smith, who was standing three or four yards from him. Upon this he took hold of Billington, telling him that he should take him into custody ; and went with him to the spot where the sack had been thrown, when he found it to contain oats. Billington said, "I did not steal it ; that man (pointing to Smith) gave me a pint of ale for carrying it". He called up Mr Stalworth. On returning, he found that the sack had been removed, and Smith said he had only put it upright. There were about four bushels in the sack, which was marked " G and W Blizzard, Hired Sack No 53 – Wilson, Worcester and Gloucester". Smith lived in the yard, and the door of his house was open. His wife was dressed and at the door. No conversation took place between the prisoners. Witness and PC Holmes conveyed them to the station. Mr Clutterbuck submitted that there was no case against Smith ; and Mr Stalworth having looked over his cargoes had discovered that he had not at present missed anything. The magistrates considered that there were strong grounds of suspicion, and remanded the prisoners till Friday. In the case of Smith, bail was however accepted ; himself in £20 and two sureties in £10 each.

### 212 July 5 1856

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

**COAL STEALING AT CLEVELOAD** **Francis Morris**, 30, and **Thomas Jones**, 30, boatmen, were charged with stealing 270 lbs of coal at the above place on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, the property of James Wilson and James Shipway. Mr Chance prosecuted ; prisoners were undefended. William Newell, in the employ of prosecutors, brickmakers, Malvern, had charge of the coal placed on an open wharf. Having missed a quantity of coal at various times, the premises were watched, and PC Harding saw the prisoners take a quantity of coal from the stack and place it on a boat about twenty five yards off. The officer went up to them, and on charging them with the robbery, Morris said he was going to take it back. Prisoners denied the robbery, and stated that it was impossible for anyone to see from the shed in which the policeman said he was watching to the heap of coals near the water's edge. Guilty. Morris having pleaded guilty to a prior conviction, they were each sentenced to twelve months' hard labour.

### 213 August 16 1856

#### CITY POLICE

A NEIGHBOURLY SCRIMMAGE Elizabeth Gardner, married, appeared to answer the complaint of Elizabeth Smith, wife of James Smith, of having assaulted her on the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant. The parties live in Quay Street, and complainant stated that the defendant came to her house on the day in question and told her that she had heard from the neighbours that she (complainant) had been saying something about her not at all to her credit. She denied having done so, and was going out of her house to ask one of the neighbours about it, when defendant pushed her. "I pushed again", said complainant, "and then she struck me with her fist on my forehead. I struck at her again, and then she knocked me down and kicked me in the eye". Her husband was standing by, and said, "Pitch into her". The evidence of Mrs Smith was corroborated by **Elizabeth Phillips**, wife of **John Phillips**, waterman. Defendant alleged that complainant commenced the assault, and pulled her down by the hair of the head. Two female witnesses were equally ready to avouch the truth of this allegation. It was admitted in the course of the enquiry that a party of five women had had three pints of ale among them, and though each and all disclaimed being "the worse for liquor", the Bench considered that they had no help for it but to dismiss the case. Complainant and her witness immediately declared their lives in danger, and Mr Pullen, on their behalf, applied to have the defendant and her witnesses bound over to keep the peace. Information was ordered to be made in proper form ; meanwhile the parties were cautioned and the police instructed to keep an eye over the proceedings of the district.

### 214 August 23 1856

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH This church having been recently closed for the purpose of repairs and painting, the poor people who attend it took the opportunity of providing purple cloth cushions for the pulpit and reading desk, and a carpet for the pulpit stairs. Such instances of consideration on the part of those who give not "of their abundance" but "of their deep poverty" are very gratifying.

### 215 September 6 1856

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY AUGUST 29

OBSTRUCTIONS **James Walker** and **James Collins**, watermen, were summoned by Sergeant Tanner for obstructing the footway, contrary to the bye laws. Fined 6d each and costs.

### 216 September 6 1856

#### STRATFORD-ON-AVON

ASSAULTS At the Magistrates' Clerk's Office on Friday last, **Jane Ward**, wife of **George Ward**, boatman, residing in a court in Sheep Street, was charged with violently assaulting a girl of the name of Reading, aged 14, by beating her in a shameful manner and pulling one of her teeth out, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August last. She was fined £2 and costs 15s 6d, or in default two months' imprisonment with hard labour.

### 217 September 13 1856

#### CITY POLICE

STEALING MONEY Eliza Lane was brought up on a charge of stealing a florin from the person of **Thomas Jones**, a boatman ; but as the prosecutor did not appear, the prisoner was discharged.

### 218 October 4 1856

DEATH FROM DROWNING **George Meredith**, a boatman of Over near Gloucester, lost his life on Saturday night last in the canal at Hindlip, under the following distressing circumstances :- Deceased was in the employ of Mr James Murrall, and on Thursday left with a boat for Birmingham. They proceeded as far as Hindlip Lock on Saturday evening, when at eight o'clock the horses were placed in a stable, and deceased went with others to supper at a public house in the neighbourhood. He and a lad named **Morefield** returned to the boat shortly afterwards, and in

passing over the lock gates, from some cause unexplained, he slipped into the water. Morefield instantly shouted for assistance, but deceased was not seen to rise again ; and when extricated, twenty minutes afterwards, was of course quite dead. There were no marks of violence upon him, and it is supposed that deceased's foot must have tripped against something on the lock as he passed. An inquest was held on the body by Mr Hughes at the Lock House, Offerton, on Tuesday last, when a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **219    October 11 1856**

**THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH** The annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting this church are announced to be preached on Thursday next at St Clement's by the Rev G Fisk, vicar of Malvern.

### **220    October 11 1856**

**ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN** **George Andrews**, a boatman, was brought before C Sidebottom Esq at the County Public Office on Saturday last, on a charge of stealing five sovereigns, the property of **James Griffin**. The prosecutor and the prisoner were engaged to navigate a boat from Stoke Works to Worcester, and upon reaching Diglis Lock the prisoner was left in charge of the boat for a time. The five sovereigns had been placed by Griffin's wife, who accompanied the boat, in a cupboard in the cabin, and when they returned the cupboard had been opened and the money stolen. Mr William Draycott, an assistant to Mr Spriggs, clothier of Broad Street, deposed to the prisoner tendering two sovereigns in payment for several articles of apparel which he had purchased at the shop, amounting to £1 13s 6d, and as he was leaving he was apprehended by PC Vaughan of the city police, when two more sovereigns, £1 5s 6d in silver and some coppers were found in his possession, together with a tin box, which was identified as belonging to the prosecutor. Committed for trial at the Sessions.

### **221    October 11 1856**

**GLOUCESTER AND BERKELEY CANAL** The half yearly meeting of this company was held at Gloucester on Wednesday, Mr Charles Sturge in the chair. The report stated that the trade of the port of Gloucester had again revived, and that during the last three months very considerable importations of corn and timber have taken place, showing itself in the improved condition of the company's revenue. With this revival of trade, the committee's attention had again been directed to the improvement of the entrance to the canal, to adapt it to the large class of vessels and steamers now so generally employed in the merchant service, but they are not at present in a position to submit any proposition thereon to the shareholders. The report then referred to what had taken place with respect to the channel pilotage, representing that the corporation of Bristol, whilst it expressed its willingness to make over its pilotage powers to the Trinity Board, if that board were disposed to exercise them in the management of the channel pilotage, objected to do so to a board constituted as the one proposed by the Board of Trade. The subject remained at present unsettled. A bill was brought before the last session of Parliament by the Severn Navigation Commissioners, by which it was sought to authorise this company, in conjunction with other companies interested in the navigation of the Severn, to advance money for the further improvement of the navigation ; and a special general meeting of the shareholders was convened and held in Gloucester on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June last, to assent or otherwise to such bill. The assent of the shareholders was however withheld, not because they were unmindful of the advantage to their canal of an improved condition of the navigation in the Severn, but because it was strongly felt that all their available resources might be required to improve their own navigation ; and that an assent given would have raised fallacious hopes of assistance. The committee however are glad to report that funds required for the works contemplated by the Severn Commissioners they believe to be forthcoming, and that tenders for the execution of their works are now advertised for, and that some of the works are already in progress. After the lapse of twelve months, and upon the revival of the trade, the committee have resumed the allowance made to them by the shareholders. The statement of accounts shows the

balance of the revenue account for the half year to amount to £2,409 18s 2d. Of this amount, £174 4s 10d will be applied in payment of the arrears of dividend due on the 65 unconverted 10 per cent shares and the remainder (£2235 13s 4d) will be carried to the consolidated share fund which, with the balance remaining in that fund, will pay a dividend of 10s a share on the consolidated shares, and leave £69 11s 9d in hand. Mr A Boyds was appointed one of the committee of management, in the room of Mr Humphrey Brown MP. The report was unanimously adopted.

**222 October 18 1856**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT **Henry Barber**, boatman, was brought up under a warrant, charged with assaulting his father-in-law, but the latter declining to press the charge on defendant promising to pay all expenses, he was admonished and discharged.

**223 October 18 1856**

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH Yesterday (Thursday), the annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting the above church, which is devoted to the service of the watermen employed on the river Severn and the canal, was preached by the Rev George Fisk LLB, vicar of Great Malvern and prebendary of Lichfield. Collections amounting to £27 19s 3 1/2d were made.

**224 October 25 1856**

DROITWICH COUNTY COURT, TUESDAY OCTOBER 21

**WILLIS v SHEPPEY** The plaintiff, a boatman, claimed in this case the sum of £9 3s for boating a quantity of timber to Birmingham for the defendant, a farmer living at Sale Green. Mr Bentley appeared for plaintiff ; Mr Corles for defendant. There was a disagreement as to the terms of the contract, and his Honour gave judgement for £6 14s.

**225 October 25 1856**

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH POLICE, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 22

RAPE **William Spiers** was committed for trial at the assizes for committing a rape upon Elizabeth Good, a young girl, servant at the Pheasant Inn, Mill Street. The house adjoins the lock upon the canal, and the landlord being from home, it was the prosecutrix's duty to supply boatmen with hay and straw, for which purpose she was sent on the previous Monday evening by her mistress to the stable loft about half past eight o'clock, with the prisoner and another man. The latter was supplied with some straw and left, on which prisoner blew out the candle, caught hold of Good, threw her down and perpetrated the offence. The girl immediately went and told her mistress. Information was given to the police, and the prisoner was afterwards taken into custody by PC Drew.

**226 October 25 1856**

CITY POLICE

A DRUNKEN BOATMAN **Thomas Spalding**, a boatman, was charged by PC Vaughan with being drunk and disorderly near the Music Hall yesterday (Thursday) evening. There was a disturbance about half past nine o'clock between the defendant and a female named Morris, and upon the officer persuading him to go away he refused, and was taken into custody. The man denied being drunk and said the officer pushed him, which was the reason why he determined not to leave. Cautioned and discharged.

**227 October 25 1856**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY OCTOBER 21

A DESTRUCTIVE **John Birch**, a boatman, was charged by Ann Frances, wife of George Frances of the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, with a most violent and unprovoked assault on the 11th instant. Birch went to the Boat about half past ten o'clock and commenced knocking the things about and kicked the top off a table, pretending that he had the cholera. Mrs Frances remonstrated with him and

advised him to be merry and wise ; upon which he asked her what he owed her, she replied two shillings, whereupon he became very abusive and struck her, and pulled her down upon the floor by the hair of her head, and brutally kicked her. His defence was that Mrs Frances struck him first, which was denied by a witness named Freeman. Fined £1, costs 14s 6d, or one month's imprisonment. Money paid.

### **228    October 25 1856**

#### UPTON-ON-SEVERN

**DISCOVERY OF A BODY** On Monday the body of a labouring man, apparently about 55 years of age, was discovered in the river near this town by a waterman named **James Stokes**, and conveyed to the Old Barley House to await an inquest, which took place on Wednesday last before Charles Best Esq. The deceased, on examination of Mr Fletcher of the firm of Marsh and Fletcher, surgeons, was found to have sustained some severe injuries, his arm being broken and elbow dislocated. In the absence of any evidence as to how this had been caused, and owing to the length of time the body must have been in the water from its decomposed state, the Jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned". He has been since identified by two friends from Hallow, by a knife that was found in his pocket, as Samuel Smith of that place, who was lost at or near Grimley on the 6<sup>th</sup> instant.

### **229    November 15 1856**

#### STRATFORD-ON-AVON

**COUNTERFEIT COIN** **William Barnett**, boatman, was on Saturday last committed for trial by the borough magistrates, on a charge of passing a counterfeit shilling at the Mulberry Tree public house about a fortnight ago.

### **230    November 22 1856**

**SUPPOSED MURDER IN THIS CITY** On Saturday morning last, as a man named Brooks was proceeding along the towing-path of the canal between the Blockhouse and Sidbury Locks, he saw something floating in the water which, upon examination, proved to be the dead body of a young woman named Lucy Treadwell, who had been missing for nearly three weeks, and whose disappearance had caused the greatest uneasiness to her friends. The deceased was a daughter of a fellmonger at Evesham, and had latterly been in service at the Unicorn Hotel in Broad Street as a scullery maid. She was a cheerful and good servant, and there is no reason for believing that she ever at any time contemplated self destruction. The circumstances under which she disappeared are as follows :-

On Monday evening, the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, she asked permission of the cook at the Unicorn to go out for the purpose of taking some boots to be repaired and some clothes to be washed in the Blockhouse. Permission was granted, as she was told to make haste back again. She was subsequently traced to the washerwoman's, and had left her shoes at the shoemaker's, and was afterwards seen by an acquaintance named Jane Brace looking into a shop at the corner of Broad Street. Brace spoke to her, and the two walked together up High Street to Lich Street and back to St Swithin Street, where they parted ; Brace going down St Swithin Street. It was suppose by Brace that the deceased then went back to the Unicorn, but she never arrived there, and she has not been satisfactorily traced afterwards. One evening about a month before the body was found, the girl was seen walking rapidly up High Street, and being accosted by a youth of her acquaintance named Mapp, she told him that her "young man" was following her, and that she did not wish him to see her talking with him (Mapp). Immediately afterwards the "young man" accosted Mapp and threatened to "warm him a bit" if he talked with the girl. Mapp had never seen him before, but at the inquest expressed his belief that the party who so accosted him was William Thomas, a reputed "follower" of the deceased girl. Whether this was the fact or not we have no means of ascertaining from the evidence on the inquest. The witness Mapp, however, cannot fix the evening of this occurrence nearer than "about a months ago". But one fact transpired at the adjourned inquest on

Tuesday night, which may have been connected with the mysterious disappearance of the ill fated girl. It seems that in the course of that eventful night, or rather towards morning, Mr Stevens of George Street was awoke by the screams of a woman apparently in distress proceeding from the direction of the canal, and at a spot which would be about 200 or 300 yards from the place where the body was picked up eighteen days afterwards. He got up, struck a light, and listening at the window heard a faint cry of "help" in the direction of the canal, after which all was still, but he heard dogs barking and running up and down the side of the canal nearly all night. Mrs Stevens's impression was that someone had fallen into the water, but the less impressible husband attributed the alarm to a marital quarrel, though he went next morning to the canal bridge to see if he could discover anything to account for the noises. There could be little doubt from the state of the body when picked up that it had been in the water from the night when the girl was first missed, and the marks of injury upon the face and head were in the opinion of Mr Everett, the surgeon who made an examination by direction of the coroner, undoubtedly inflicted before death. They were not the immediate cause of death, but might have produced insensibility, and the girl then falling, or being pushed, into the canal, drowning completed the work.

Fifteen years ago, a case very similar in its circumstances occurred at Wichbold in this county. A respectably connected female who had been visiting her friends in that neighbourhood went out one morning in January for a walk, and nothing was heard of her for a week, when some firemen returning with their engine from a fire in the neighbourhood discovered the body floating in the Salwarpe brook. As in the case of Lucy Treadwell, this body was much cut and bruised about the face and head, but the surgeon was of opinion that the wounds had been inflicted after death – that in fact the deceased died of apoplexy, produced it was believed by tight lacing, and the supposition was that she was seized with a fit while walking by the stream, and that falling into the water, the injuries to her person were caused by the body being carried against some floodgates, through which it is supposed it passed.

The cause of death of Lucy Treadwell cannot be as satisfactorily accounted for ; and the matter is altogether shrouded in mystery. The inquest was opened at the Royal Oak Inn, Carden Street, on Saturday evening, before Mr R T Rea, city coroner, and a respectable Jury, when the following evidence was adduced :-

**John Brooks**, boatman, living in King Street, St Peter's, deposed : I was coming along the canal side about half past seven o'clock this morning from the King's Head lock towards the Blockhouse lock, when near to the latter I saw something in the water which, upon getting close to it, I discovered was the body of a woman. I immediately applied to **Mr Waldron**, the lock-keeper, for a drag, and obtaining it, went for Hanbury, the summoning officer, and returned to the place where I had seen the body. With the assistance of **Richard Dayus**, I then pulled it on to the towing-path, and conveyed it as soon as possible to a public house called "The Lame Dog", but Hanbury ordered us to bring it here, as there was no fitting place, I believe, for a body to be there laid with safety. We then conveyed the body to the place where it is now lying.

Jane Brace of St Paul's Street, single woman : I knew the person who is now lying dead downstairs. She was in service as a scullery girl at the Unicorn Hotel, Broad Street. I last saw her alive on the evening of Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, about a quarter past nine o'clock. She was looking into the shop window of Mr Wood's, the tobacconist's, at the top of Broad Street. I gave her a tap on the back, when she said, "Oh! How you made me jump". I asked her where she had been. She replied, "I've been down to your house to take my washing, and I left it at Mrs Russell's across the road, for you were not at home". I then said, "Where else have you been?", to which the deceased answered, "I've been taking my boots to be mended". I reiterated the question, when she further replied, "I've been to Mrs Surman's in the Tything". I said, "Whatever brought you there?" She answered, "I thought I'd go and see how they were getting on, and she (Mrs Surman) asked me to have a drop of beer and a bit of bread and cheese, and I had it, and they seemed to make more of me tonight than ever, and said they should be glad to see me at any time". [The deceased had previously lived in the service of Mr Surman]. I told her to make haste home, for the cook had said she had been out an hour and a quarter. Deceased said, "Well, I shall come along the town with you", and we

accordingly walked together to the top of Lich Street, when I told her, as she had accompanied me so far, I should return to the corner of Broad Street with her. We walked back as far as St Swithin Street, where we bid each other good night and parted. I never saw her alive afterwards. The deceased, I believe, would be nineteen years of age next birthday. There was nothing that evening in any way different from her ordinary manner, and she made no complaint to me of any kind. I knew she went (or kept company) with a young man by the name of Thomas, living in Clap Gate, as I had heard her say she had walked out with him several times. She said this about three or four weeks before the 27<sup>th</sup> of October.

By a juror : She made no reference to her young man that evening. She appeared as cheerful as usual.

Mr David Everett, surgeon of Foregate Street : I have today made a *post mortem* examination of the deceased by direction of the coroner. Externally, the body presented an appearance as though it had been submerged in water for some weeks. On the face, between the eyes, extending downwards to the bone of the nose, the skin was red, as if bruised and slightly indented. The face was swollen and the cheeks very much discoloured. There were no considerable marks of violence on any part of the body besides the head. On the outside of each thigh, about the centre, there was a slightly bruised appearance – the left being more distinct of the two. These marks appeared as if they were made before death. Below the chin there was a horizontal incised wound about two inches in length, which exposed the bone of the chin. That, in my judgement, did not cause death. Over the occiput at the back of the head, and underneath a knot of hair, there was, superficially, a bruise about two inches square ; and, as I had the body lying on its face, I commenced the internal examination by making a cranial incision through this bruise. The cellular tissue beneath the skin contained effused blood. That was a bruise which, in my opinion, arose from injury in the life, or about the death of the deceased. I do not think it was a *post mortem* appearance. The skull was not fractured.

By a juror : A blow in that place would have produced insensibility, and would probably have caused the deceased to stagger and fall.

Re-examined : I divided the integument of the nose, when I found effused blood in the cellular tissue over the nasal bone. There was no fracture of the bones beneath. I think the wound on the chin was an incised one, because the edges of it were very cleanly cut, but whether it was done during life I cannot say. It was decidedly an old wound, and I cannot conceive that a boat could have done it. I am of opinion that the wound over the nose was given during lifetime, and that it was quite sufficient to have caused insensibility. I opened the chest and abdomen and examined the bronchial tubes. I found no frothy mucus in them as is usual in persons who have died from drowning when conscious, but decomposition might have obliterated all traces of that. The lungs were of a very dark colour, and much decomposed. The other internal parts of the body presented the usual appearances. The uterus was unimpregnated. I did not examine the brain. In my opinion, the death of the deceased was caused by injuries to the head, and that those injuries were occasioned by blows. A blow from a human fist or any hard substance would have produced that appearance over the nose, and a fall or a blow might have produced the bruise at the back of the head. It did not follow that the blow (or blows) was the immediate cause of death. I believe they caused insensibility. In my opinion, the deceased might have died in the water. The blows, however, of themselves were sufficient to cause death ; but as far as can be ascertained from the *post mortem* examination, the supposition is that she was insensible when in the water, as there was an absence of all marks of struggling on the hands, which is generally the case when persons have fallen into the water and attempted to clutch at anything to save themselves.

John Brookes was recalled, at the request of the jury : When I first saw the deceased, she had on a black bonnet and gown, but no shawl or scarf. The bonnet was tied under the chin.

The coroner said, at this stage of the proceedings, in order to give time to the police to prosecute their inquiries, the inquest should be adjourned, as but so brief a period had elapsed since the body had been discovered.

The jury coincided, and appointed Tuesday evening for their reassembling.

TUESDAY The jury met again this evening at seven o'clock, when Mr Everett, surgeon, was

further examined. He deposed : On Sunday night, I made another examination of the body. I opened the skull, but the brain presented no unnatural appearance whatever. As to the cause of death, I am still of the same opinion as I was on Saturday evening. I wish to state, however, that the deceased may have been alive when she was first immersed in the water. On my first examination, I forgot to mention that I found neither beer nor bread and cheese in the stomach, as it was perfectly empty, and if the statement made by the deceased as to her having had bread and cheese that evening was correct, I should imagine that three hours at least must have elapsed before she met her death. The proofs of drowning could not be distinctly ascertained.

Mr George Stevens, collector of George Street, deposed : On Tuesday morning, the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, as I was lying in bed in my house, I heard screams of a woman apparently in distress, for two or three minutes, in the direction of the canal. It was simply screaming as if somebody was beating her. I got up to the window, drew the curtains aside, and looked out in the direction from whence the screams proceeded. Whilst so doing, I heard a faint cry of "Help", and all was still afterwards. I then, at my wife's request, struck a light, looked at my watch and found it was a quarter to four o'clock, went to the window again and waited for about ten minutes, but heard nothing more. My wife said she thought there was someone in the water, but I concluded it was a man beating his wife, so got into bed again. The dogs in the opposite garden were barking nearly all night, and running backwards and forwards by the canal side, the opposite side to the towing-path. I live about twenty yards from the canal, and about 200 yards from the Blockhouse lock. I got up at six o'clock that morning, not feeling satisfied, and went to the canal bridge to look if I could see anything of a bonnet or shawl on the path, but could see nothing, and this impressed me still further that it was a man beating his wife.

Henry Mapp, a lad in the employ of Mr Surman, baker of Little Angel Street : I knew the deceased, as she formerly lived in my master's service. She had lived before this at Mr Surman's at the Lamb and Flag in the Tything. About a month ago – but I cannot recollect the precise day – I met her in High Street between nine and a quarter past nine in the evening, as she was going towards the Guildhall. When I came up to her, I said, "Well, Lucy, where are you going?" She replied, "I'm going the furthest way round to get home – for my young man is following me, and I want to get home without having any concerns with him". She then said to me, "You go on, and don't stop talking to me, for my young man will give me something if he sees me a-talking to you". I asked her to come back along with me, and I would see that no one touched her ; but she ran on in the direction of the Cathedral, and I proceeded on my business towards the Cross. Directly she had left me, and when I had got near to Mr Everill's, the cutler's, a young man came up to me, and said, "What have you been talking to her about – cause if you talks to her, I shall warm you a bit". I told him he could have a handful if he liked, and almost immediately he left me. I did not know him, nor have I seen him since. He followed in the direction of the deceased. I cannot say whether I ever saw the deceased alive since that evening.

The coroner requested the witness to look round the room, and see if any person present resembled the young man he referred to. (The room was only partially filled).

Witness, after the lapse of about half a minute, requested a young man to stand forward – and from his height and appearance, he said he believed he was the individual, though he should not like to swear it, it being dark when the interview spoken of took place, and he could not distinctly see his features. The person selected gave his name as William Thomas and, smiling, observed that the witness must positively be mistaken.

Hannah Woodhouse, waitress at the Unicorn Hotel, Broad Street, in this city, deposed : Deceased was my fellow servant, and had lived at the hotel little better than two months. Three weeks last Monday night, she was missed from her service. She went out about five minutes before eight, and did not return. I had not observed anything different in her manner from that on ordinary occasions ; she was always cheerful and "a good little girl". I had never heard her utter anything about destroying herself, but she was always apparently happy and comfortable. I was not aware previously that she had any sweetheart or follower, as I never saw her in company with any man. Deceased had no shawl on when she left the kitchen, but she might have put one on in the hall.

Previously to her going out, she asked cook if she might go out to take her boots to be mended, and the cook gave her permission. I saw her pick up her dirty clothes for washing, and take them with her. I remember Jane Brace enquiring for the deceased about nine o'clock the same evening.

Charles Hill, a lad, son of William Hill of Lock Street, stated that three weeks ago on Monday evening, he was standing waiting for his brother about a quarter past nine, near the King's Head Inn, Sidbury, when a woman inquired the way to the King's Head lock. He pointed it out to her, but whether she went to the canal he was unable to say. Presently afterwards a man attired in a fustian jacket ran in the same direction, and witness continued waiting for his brother, until nearly ten o'clock, but saw nothing further.

This was all the evidence at present forthcoming, and the coroner recommended the jury to return as their verdict, "that the deceased was found in the canal in the parish of St Peter the Great, but how or by what means she came into the water, there was no evidence to show". By recording this verdict, they would not prejudice any further investigation, but would in point of fact assist, rather than retard, the administration of justice. There was not a shadow of evidence or any imputation against the young man Thomas, because the time mentioned by Mapp could not be the same evening as that stated by the witness Brace, who distinctly asserted that it was a quarter past nine when she first saw her look into the tobacconist's window at the top of Broad Street. They were in company together for about half an hour and, therefore, that would carry them on until about twenty minutes to ten. From that time afterwards, there was no evidence to prove where she was. He wished to leave the facts open for the reason that if anything further should transpire, it could be dealt with by the magistrates, but at present he was bound to admit that there did not appear anything of a criminal charge hinging upon anybody.

The foreman asked if a verdict of "Wilful murder" would not be the most fitting one to return.

The coroner said that depended upon their own views of the facts. He should recommend them to return the verdict as he had stated, for if they recorded one of murder they must be perfectly satisfied from the evidence given before them that she was actually murdered. The evidence did not clearly point out that such was the fact, although there could not be the least question that the deceased met her death by foul and unfair means.

The jury agreed with the coroner, and adopted his suggestion by returning a verdict as above.

It is but just to state that Thomas, against whom rumours have been extensively promulgated in the city, voluntarily appeared this morning to give evidence, if required, but was not examined by the coroner.

The remains of the unfortunate young woman were interred on Monday afternoon in the churchyard of St Peter's. Superintendent Chipp, who gave evidence as to the parish in which the body was found, stated that he had examined the pocket of the deceased's dress. The bottom was worn out, and not cut off as rumour had asserted. It is also known that when the deceased left the hotel, she had no money in her possession. The non appearance of the body for so lengthy a period as nineteen days is accounted for by the fact that a large hole has been sunk near the lock, and the body might have lain therein, probably floated thither by the stream. The water had been "flushed" through the lock on the morning on which the body was found.

### **231 December 6 1856**

BEWDLEY

STEALING A HORSE LINE **Benjamin Oakes**, a waterman, was charged before J W T Lea (Mayor) and James Cole Esqs on Monday last with stealing a horse line of the value of 15s, the property of Mr G Southam, coal dealer. The evidence proved that the rope had been sold by the prisoner to a marine store dealer named Baker, of Kidderminster, for 3s 1 1/2d. Committed for trial.

### **232 December 6 1856**

CITY POLICE

DESERTION **William Allen**, waterman of Bristol, was charged with deserting his son, a boy of 15, whereby he had become chargeable to the parish of All Saints in this city. Elizabeth Gardener,

wife of a glover of Copenhagen Street, stated that the prisoner married her sister about 18 years ago, by whom he had two sons, one now living in Ireland and the other the boy now present. During his wife's lifetime he deserted his children, leaving them destitute. His wife died about two years ago, and the boy was in the workhouse seven months after her death, until his father fetched him out and took him to his grandmother's house where, for a short time, he allowed 2s 6d per week for his maintenance. The father then deserted him and has not since contributed anything to his support. The boy added that after he had been at his grandmother's house about a month, he got employment at Henwick, and his father paid his washing and mending. About eight months since, defendant told his son that he would do no more for him, and the boy went up to London, where he was employed at Billingsgate Market, but being taken ill, he went into St Thomas's Hospital, and was subsequently removed by order of the Worship Street Magistrate to this city, and became chargeable to the parish of All Saints. The defence was that the boy had misbehaved himself, and had been discharged from two situations in consequence ; the father denied having deserted the boy at all, and was willing to pay for his support. Mr Bird, one of the guardians, attended, and stated the defendant was in regular employment, and earning good wages. Mr Sidebottom severely lectured the defendant for his unparental conduct, but rather than send the man to prison, allowed him to arrange the matter out of court, which was eventually done, defendant promising to pay all expenses and provide for the boy in future.

### **233 December 20 1856**

#### CITY POLICE

MAINTENANCE OF PRISONERS IN REFORMATORIES **Thomas Turner**, a boatman, was also summoned at the instance of Mr Morgan, to show cause why he should not pay a weekly sum of 5s towards the maintenance of Ann Bennett (convicted for the late robbery of velvet at Messrs Laughner and Pearman's), now confined at Allesley Reformatory near Coventry. Turner's earnings do not exceed 12s a week, and he has a wife and five children to maintain. Mr Clutterbuck, who had been engaged by a friend of Turner's, appeared in his behalf. He was excused owing to his inability.

### **234 December 27 1856**

#### CITY POLICE

A PUGNACIOUS WATERMAN Edward Maughan and **David Knight**, alias "Bonny", the well known waterman, were charged with being disorderly and fighting in Doldy about one o'clock on Sunday morning. PS Doughty, while on his beat, hearing a noise in the above direction, proceeded there, found the parties fighting, and apprehended them. Maughan being called on for his defence said that as he was walking down Doldy, he saw Knight and another man fighting, when he said to the latter, "Do not fight with him (Knight) he is so little". "Upon this", continued Maughan, "Knight leaves him and sets about me". (Laughter). "Bonny" being asked to account for his misdoings, said "he was sorry that his name would be in the papers, but they could not say any harm of him". Discharged with a caution.

### **235 January 17 1857**

#### CITY POLICE

CHARGE OF STEALING HAY William Lemm, waggoner to Mr Thomas Farr, hay and coal dealer of the Butts, was charged with stealing a truss of hay from his warehouse in Doldy yesterday (Thursday) evening. The prisoner, who had been in the employ of Mr Farr for five or six weeks, was entrusted with the key of the loft to procure some hay for the horses, when a truss was placed by some person in an entry close by. A woman coming down the passage stumbled over the hay, and information was given to the prosecutor. Procuring the assistance of Sergeant Doughty, they watched the passage from both ends, when the prisoner was observed peeping down as if for some object. The wife of the prisoner was also observed watching the hay. Lemm was found about an hour afterwards, but he denied stealing the hay and said that a man named **Vale** must have placed it there at the time he was helping him. Several trusses had been missed since the prisoner was

employed on the premises. When apprehended by Sergeant Doughty, Lemm swore that Vale was the thief, but this morning he reversed his statement and said that he left him in the warehouse at the time he went to feed the horses. Vale, a boatman, was called, but his evidence was not of a kind to criminate the prisoner. Remanded until tomorrow for further information.

**236 January 24 1857**

PERSHORE

COMMITTAL OF TWO BOATMEN FOR FELONY On Friday last, **John Jones** and **Thomas Taylor**, boatmen from Broseley, Staffordshire, were taken before H Hudson Esq, and committed for trial on a charge of having stolen on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst a sheet, petticoat and scarf, the property of John Mince of Birlingham. Another charge of stealing wearing apparel from the premises of Thomas Hodgetts of Twynning on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst was also preferred, and it is suspected that the prisoners have carried on their depredations to a great extent for, on PC Merrifield searching their boat, various articles were found which have since been owned by persons residing in the different villages near which the prisoners were in the habit of passing while in the pursuit of their calling as boatmen.

**237 February 7 1857**

STOURPORT PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 4

BREACH OF FAITH **James Turner**, boatman, was brought up charged with neglect to fulfil a contract with Mr Thomas Hill of Dunley near Stourport to take up the canal a boat laden with timber. Turner reached Kidderminster on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, and there left the boat and spent 30s, which Mr Hill had given him to pay tonnage &c. His defence was that he could not get along without more strength, but it did not appear that he had represented this to Mr Hill. In consequence of his age (upwards of 70 years) complainant and the Bench were unwilling to send him to gaol, and he was liberated on his own recognisance upon an understanding that he completed the voyage on the breaking up of the frost.

**238 February 28 1857**

DUDLEY POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25

CAUTION TO BOATMEN **John Randle**, a boatman, was fined 40s and costs, or in default one month's imprisonment, for exceeding the allotted time by three quarters of an hour in working his boat through the Park Lane Tunnel.

**239 February 28 1857**

WORCESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

STEALING PIG IRON AT OLDBURY **John Ashley** was charged with having on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January at Oldbury stolen 1,120 lbs of iron, the property of James Hunt and another. Mr Powell prosecuted. The prisoner was undefended. The evidence of William Croker, warehouseman to Mr Hunt, proved that on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> January he was making up his master's warehouse when he saw the prisoner with **John Key** (who was also arraigned and pleaded guilty) examining the different stocks of iron on the Braides Wharf. He watched them for about half an hour, when he saw them carry off 15 pieces of the iron to a boat which was lying on the canal. He immediately communicated with the cashier, and the prisoners, who were boatmen in the employ of Messrs Crowley, were apprehended. A witness was called to the character of Key. The jury found them guilty, but recommended Key to mercy. Six months' hard labour each.

FELONY AT HALESOWEN **William Day**, 33, boatman, was indicted for stealing, on the 31<sup>st</sup> December at Halesowen, a tarpaulin cloth, the property of **Henry Jelfs**. Mr Cresswell prosecuted. The prisoner was met in Carter's Lane by a policeman, carrying a tarpaulin on his shoulder. In answer to questions, he stated that he had borrowed it of Mr Heath, but he refused to go to that person and was at once apprehended. It subsequently transpired that the tarpaulin had been stolen from a boat belonging to the prosecutor. Six weeks' hard labour.

ROBBERIES AT BIRLINGHAM **John Jones**, 38, and **Thomas Taylor**, 40, boatmen, were charged with having, on the 9<sup>th</sup> January, stolen a sheet and other articles, the property of John Mince. Mr Byrne prosecuted. There were two cases against the prisoners, which were clearly proved, and they were sentenced to two months' hard labour for each offence.

**240 March 21 1857**

ASSIZE INTELLIGENCE On Tuesday, **Joseph Embury**, boatman, was found guilty of stealing, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, at the parish of Tipton, one ton of iron, the property of Benjamin Gibbons, and sentenced to four years' penal servitude. Joseph Edmonds, charged as an accomplice, was acquitted.

**241 March 21 1857**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

INQUEST An inquest was held by Mr Best on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst, on the body of a man named **George Taylor**, a waterman, who was drowned in the Severn as long ago as the early part of December last, but which was discovered floating in the water on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. Verdict : "Accidental death".

**242 April 11 1857**

DEATH BY DROWNING **Joseph Billington**, a bargeman of this city, was, a few days ago, drowned in the canal near Gloucester under the following circumstances, as detailed at the inquest. Billington traded in the trow *Fanny*, and on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> ult, he was drinking at the Globe public house, Gloucester, and left about a quarter past eleven, drunk and unable to walk properly. Outside the basin, he was met by **Joseph Latimer**, a dock constable, who however stated that he did not appear to be the worse for liquor. Deceased said he was going to Hempstead to join his barge, that was discharging salt there. He went in that direction, but was not seen alive after. Between eleven and twelve, a man named **George Folly**, on board a barge, the *Elizabeth*, heard cries of "Murder" which were continued for half an hour. He awoke up three other bargemen who were asleep. It was raining and blowing hard at the time, and the cries seemed to come from the Hempstead side of the canal. Folly said, "Surely that isn't a man in the water", but another man replied, "Oh, never fear", and neither of the men went on deck, or halloed out. The body of deceased was recovered on the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, and identified. The deceased was married and has left five children. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned", but considered that the conduct of Folly and **Knight** was disgraceful, and wanting in the common feelings of humanity.

**243 May 9 1857**

CITY POLICE

A "DROP" AND ITS CONSEQUENCES **Jane Ford**, wife of a boatman, was summoned for having been drunk and disorderly in Lowesmoor on Sunday morning. PC Knott deposed to finding her "hooting, singing and hollering" and ordered her home, but she refused to go, and was accordingly taken into custody. Defendant explained that she went into a public house after her husband on Saturday night, and being asked to take "a drop", did so, and that had "quite overcome her". Being a first offence, she was reprimanded and discharged.

**244 May 16 1857**

CITY POLICE

SUSPICIOUS CASE **George Harrison, George Harris** and **Thomas Williams**, boatmen, were charged with being on premises in Salt Lane with intent to commit a felony. Some boys saw three persons resembling the prisoners get over a wall and jump into a garden belonging to Mr Price of the Three Tuns, on the previous night. Fowls were kept in the garden, and the boys gave information of what they had seen, and from the description given to the police the prisoners were

apprehended. A boy, however, was called, who said he did not believe the prisoners were the parties. They were discharged.

**245 May 30 1857**

**CAUGHT AT LAST** On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May last year, Superintendent Chipp apprehended a man named Joshua Bates alias Redman, a notorious boat robber, on suspicion of having stolen a silver watch which he had at the time in his possession. After a desperate struggle, however, Bates succeeded in liberating himself from the Superintendent's grasp, but left behind the watch, which ultimately proved to belong to **James Goring**, a boatman of Maisemore, near Gloucester. This week Bates has been apprehended at Wolverhampton on another charge, and today (Friday), being precisely twelve months after the escape, Chipp has appeared to recognise him, with a view to prosecuting the previous charge for stealing the watch belonging to Goring.

**246 June 13 1857**

**DROITWICH**

**DEATH BY DROWNING** An inquest was held by Mr W S P Hughes at the Barley Mow Inn in this town on Friday last, on the body of a little girl named **Elizabeth Harris**, the daughter of a boatman, who was accidentally drowned in the lock of the junction canal in this borough on the Wednesday afternoon previous. Deceased was in the act of passing over the lock when she stooped down to tie her shoe, overbalanced herself and fell into the water. She was got out shortly afterwards, but life was extinct. Verdict : "Accidental death".

**247 June 20 1857**

**STOURPORT**

**DEATH BY DROWNING** On Tuesday last, an inquest was held by Mr W S P Hughes at the Bell Inn in this town, on the body of a child named **William Blount**, aged six years, the son of a boatman, who was accidentally drowned in the canal while endeavouring to enter a boat which was moored by the side. The body of the child was discovered beneath the stern of the boat shortly after the accident. Verdict : "Accidentally drowned".

**248 June 27 1857**

**COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS**

**BOAT ROBBERY** James Smith, a boy of 16, was charged with stealing a black velvet jacket and four handkerchiefs, the property of **Joseph Hale**, boatman of Upton. Prosecutor left his jacket hanging up in the cabin of his boat at Kempsey on Friday last. He locked up the cabin in the morning, but on returning at night found the staple had been drawn and the jacket and other things taken away. It was worth 10s. The prisoner had sold it to Elijah Hedges, a marine store dealer at Upton, for 3s. Prisoner told him he had bought the jacket to wear over other clothes from a man working in a tunnel up Bilston way. The thief pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two months' hard labour.

**249 July 18 1857**

**DROITWICH**

**CHARGE AGAINST A BARGEMAN** **John Harrison**, a bargeman, was committed to prison a few days ago for leaving the service of Mr John Everton, barge owner, without giving the necessary notice.

**250 July 18 1857**

**CITY POLICE**

**MISCHIEVOUS JUVENILE** **Thomas Blower**, a boy about fourteen, was brought up, charged with having so driven a valuable horse, depastured in one of Payne's Meadows, as to force it to leap over a five barred gate, in doing which the animal staked itself and much injured its shoulder. A

boy named Archibald Norcott swore positively to seeing him do the deed between six and seven o'clock on Sunday morning, and Gregg, another boy, deposed to defendant having told him about eleven o'clock that he had hurt a horse that morning. Mr Marsden, veterinary surgeon, deposed to the injuries which the horse had sustained. For the defence, an alibi was set up, defendant's master, a boatman, stating that he called him up in Group Lane, where he lived, about half past six o'clock on Sunday morning, and that he was never out of his sight afterwards till half past nine. The defendant was represented as being notoriously fond of wanton mischief. On investigation, it being found that the offence was committed a few yards beyond the city boundary, the Magistrates had no jurisdiction, and the case was accordingly referred to the consideration of the County Bench. He was next day taken before Mr J M Gutch and discharged.

### **251 September 5 1857**

DUDLEY PUBLIC OFFICE, MONDAY AUGUST 31

EXTENSIVE GUNPOWDER ROBBERY In addition to the two men named Perry and Gennoe, who were brought before the Magistrates on the previous Wednesday, three other persons named Edward Pratt, saddler of Dudley Port, **Samuel Thompson**, a boatman, and a female named Hannah Parks, were brought before the sitting Magistrate this day. On the application of Superintendent Burton, the prisoner Perry was discharged, it having been proved that he was acting under the direction of his master, Gennoe. Richard Howes, foreman to Messrs Fisher, from whom the powder was stolen, said that since his previous appearance at the court on Wednesday, they had taken stock and found the exact quantity of powder missing to be 11 cwt. In addition to the evidence given on Wednesday, witnesses were called to prove that the prisoners were seen together near the spot (at Netherton) where the robbery was effected, on the Monday evening. The prisoner Pratt made a statement to the Bench in which he confessed his guilt. The prisoners were committed for trial at the sessions.

### **252 September 26 1857**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT **William Jones**, a boatman, was charged with violently beating his wife on the previous night. She being unable to appear from the injuries he had inflicted, he was remanded till Friday.

### **253 September 26 1857**

DROITWICH

DEATH BY DROWNING Henry Collins, a labourer living in St Peter's in this borough, was accidentally drowned in the new canal on Monday night last. Deceased had accompanied **Robert Tandy**, a boatman, to his boat, and as he was returning home alone, it is supposed he stumbled against a post and fell into the water. A boy who was following him by order of Tandy heard the splash, and cried out for assistance, but upon a line being taken to the spot, the deceased could not be discovered, and his body was not rescued until an hour afterwards. He was partially intoxicated at the time. At the inquest on the body, held at the Barley Mow on Wednesday last, by Mr W S P Hughes, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **254 October 17 1857**

CITY POLICE

VIOLENT ASSAULT ON A WIFE **William Jones**, a boatman, was brought up on remand, charged with brutally assaulting his wife on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Mr W Corles appeared for the defendant. **Mary Ann Jones**, the wife, who appeared in a very weak state, deposed that she had been married to the prisoner two years. About three o'clock in the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult, she went to Green's bowling alley at the Elephant and Castle, Lowesmoor Wharf, to fetch her husband, who was bowling there. He gave her a glass of ale, which she threw in his face. He then pushed her against the wall, and on getting up again she struck him on the nose, and made it bleed, upon

which he struck her a hard blow on the nose, and she fell against the board. Superintendent Chipp and two policemen then came in, but she said she would not give him in charge ; it was her fault, as she was in drink. In consequence of loss of blood, she had been unable to attend up to the present time. In cross-examination, she stated that she had suffered from spasms for a considerable time, and before she was married it had caused bleeding. She had been to several places drinking rum on that day, and had some after the assault took place. She fell across some poles going home and hurt her nose. The blow she received from her husband on the nose blackened her eyes. Mr Hilary Hill, surgeon, stated that about ten o'clock in the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult, he was called to the woman at a house near Lowesmoor Wharf. She was excessively faint from loss of blood ; there were marks of blows upon her nose, and her eyes were nearly closed. Witness stopped the bleeding. He considered her life in danger, and she continued in a dangerous state for some time. Witness was called up one night to the woman, and he then found her bleeding from the nose. He had to perform an operation, and whilst doing so found that the bones of the nose were fractured. **William Sutton**, a boatman, was next called, who said that he was at the Elephant and Castle with the defendant on the day in question, when complainant came in drunk. Her husband told her he had been waiting for her for four or five hours, and she had been off getting drunk. He saw Jones strike her on the nose a heavy blow, which made her nose bleed. Jones was also drunk. Superintendent Chipp deposed to apprehending the prisoner, and to the shocking condition in which he found the woman. Mr Corles, in defence, said he could not deny that the assault had been committed, but stated that great provocation had been given, and hoped the Bench would take all the circumstances into consideration. The Bench, after a short consultation, committed him for six months with hard labour.

**255    October 17 1857**

**WATERMEN'S CHURCH** The annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting the religious services in this place of worship is announced to be preached on Thursday next by the Rev G Lea, minister of Christ Church, Birmingham.

**256    November 7 1857**

**DUDLEY**

**OBSTRUCTING THE CANAL** Two boatmen named **Thomas Shaw** and **Charles Chew** were brought before the Borough Magistrates on Wednesday, charged with depositing rubbish in the Birmingham Canal at Bumble Hole. In defence it was alleged that the rubbish had been thrown on land of Mr William Washington of Netherton, which bordered on the canal, and the land having sunk in consequence of mining operations, the water from the canal had overflowed it. The magistrates considering that as a right of boundary was involved they could not interfere in the case, but at the same time they advised both parties to have the land properly adjudged, and the question of boundary settled.

**257    December 26 1857**

**DUDLEY PUBLIC OFFICE, TUESDAY DECEMBER 22**

**ROBBERY AND ASSAULT** John Fellows, John Holt and Hannah Vendon, three residents of Brandy Row, were remanded till Monday on a charge of robbing **John Fargill**, a boatman of Springs Mire, of 7s 6d, and also with severely cutting and wounding the prosecutor.

**258    January 9 1858**

**WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS**

**FELONY AT DUDLEY** **Robert Commander**, 22, boatman, was found not guilty of stealing a chain, the property of William Henry Dawes of Dudley on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult.

**ATTEMPTED BURGLARY AT MOSELEY** **Thomas Smith**, 38, and **James Pettipher**, 34, boatmen, were indicted for having attempted to break and enter the dwelling house of the Misses

Anderton at Moseley on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult. There was a second count charging them with breaking out of the house. Mr Chance prosecuted, the prisoners were undefended. PC Hawkes deposed that while on duty in Moseley Lane on the above night, he heard a noise at the garden door of the Misses Anderton's house ; and after a while saw the door forced open. A man came out, stepped a little forward, and then retired, saying, "Come on". This was addressed to a companion. Witness went towards the door, and turned on his light full on the face of the prisoner Smith.

*(Remainder of article unreadable)*

## **259 January 16 1858**

### CITY POLICE

**EMBEZZLEMENT** **William Goodyear**, a boatman, was brought up on remand on a charge of embezzling £3, the property of Charles Dovey, his master. Mr W Corles appeared for the prosecution. Prisoner had been in Dovey's employ 16 or 17 years, was sent with a boat to Birmingham, his master entrusting him with £5 to defray expenses. Instead of proceeding on his voyage, he had spent a portion of the money and, as he alleged to Detective Richardson, was eased of £2 by some card sharpers at the Falcon Liquor Vaults, Broad Street. About £2 was found upon him. He was remanded to the following day, when his master took him back on condition that he would amend his conduct and work the money out.

## **260 January 16 1858**

### COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

**CHARGE OF HORSE STEALING** A case of stealing a horse was brought against a boatman named **John Featherstone**. Prisoner was apprehended in this city, and taken before Mr Sidebottom, Police Magistrate, who, finding the case belonged to the county, transferred it to this Court. It was then stated to have occurred in the county of Stafford. The prisoner had been in the employ of Messrs W and G Firmstone, iron and coal merchants of Dudley, of whom he had hired a horse, but had sold it to another man. The purchaser, it was stated, finding he had got the worst of the bargain, refused to pay the full amount of the purchase money. Prisoner brought an action in the County Court to recover the balance, and then the horse was claimed by the above firm. The Bench ordered the case to be transferred to the Dudley police court.

## **261 January 16 1858**

### WORCESTER COUNTY COURT

**SINGULAR CASE – FEATHERSTONE v BRACE** Mr Clutterbuck applied to the Court for this case to be taken out of the ordinary course, in consequence of the singularity of the circumstances attending it. The plaintiff, who was a boatman living in Silver Street, was in custody on a charge of stealing a horse which he alleged he had sold to plaintiff (*sic*). On being sworn, plaintiff stated that in September last he bought a mare from one Henry Hughes for £7 10s. He paid this amount in the following manner :- Two donkeys were given in part payment, and the remainder of the money was found for him by his employers, Messrs Firmstone, whom he was to repay by *extalments*. This animal he subsequently sold to defendant for £7 10s, defendant agreeing to give him £4 and two donkeys and gears. £3 was paid down, and the remaining £1 with the donkeys and gearing was to be forthcoming at the turn of Christmas. On applying for these, however, the defendant refused to give them, and cursed and abused him. On the contrary part, the defendant alleged that he bought the mare of plaintiff on a Sunday, and on the following Tuesday she was taken from him on the ground that the plaintiff had not the right to sell her, not being his property. His Honour (addressing the plaintiff) : Are you in custody for stealing a horse? Plaintiff : Yes. His Honour : Well then, go away, and when the Magistrates have adjudicated, I will proceed to adjudicate. For that purpose I shall adjourn the case until next Court day. (It was in the course of the morning mentioned that the case had been found out of the jurisdiction of the City Magistrates, and had been remanded for the disposal of those of the "black country").

**262 January 16 1858**

KIDDERMINSTER

ROBBERY BY BARGEMEN A marine store dealer of Bridgnorth named John Bradley, on Friday night offered about 16 cwt of pig iron for sale at Mr Turton's foundry in this town, but as it appeared to be of the best quality and bore the mark of the Madeley Wood Company, Mr Turton at once consulted with the police, who suspected it was stolen, and Superintendent Gifford took the man into custody on the charge of feloniously receiving it. Bradley gave the names of two bargemen living at Bridgnorth, from whom he said he had obtained it, and on the Superintendent proceeding there, he traced out and took into custody a man named **George Grosvenor** on the charge of having committed the felony. He was brought to Kidderminster, and shortly afterwards was taken before the Mayor (J Batham Esq), H Talbot and W Nicholls Esqs, who remanded him until yesterday (Thursday). **George Brown**, the other bargeman, has since been apprehended, and the examination of the three prisoners has ultimately been transferred to the Bench at Bridgnorth. It appears that Grosvenor and Brown worked the boat between Ironbridge and Stourport, used by the Madeley Wood Company in conveying their iron to the latter place for the purpose of being forwarded from thence to its destination.

**263 January 16 1858**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

VERDICT OF FELO DE SE On Monday last, Mr C Best held an inquest at Ripple, on the body of a young woman named Esther Barnes, the daughter of Thomas Barnes, a labourer of the same parish, who met her death under the following circumstances. The deceased was nineteen years of age, and on Friday afternoon last complained of a pain in her head and a bad cold. She left home in the afternoon for the purpose of going to Uckinghall, where she was accompanied by **Sarah Smith**, the wife of **George Smith**, a waterman. While on the road there, she reeled against Mrs Smith, and appeared very giddy ; and, on arriving at Uckinghall, she went into the shop of Mrs Welsh. A young man, the deceased's sweetheart, had previously joined them, and on her coming out of the shop, Mrs Smith wished her good night, and they went off together towards Ripple. Between five and six o'clock, it appears that she was carried by him to a house occupied by James Hay, a shoemaker, by the roadside, and when placed in a chair was in a helpless condition, and appeared to be dying. Her mother was sent for, but on her arrival the deceased was unable to speak, and expired shortly afterwards. She complained of being giddy, and of having cramps in her legs, and had vomited. A post mortem examination of the body was afterwards made by Mr J W Fletcher of Upton-on-Severn, who discovered signs of previous inflammation of the lungs, and in the stomach about two ounces of thick grainous matter and a large quantity of the leaves of the Yew tree, which had evidently been taken to produce abortion, the deceased being in the family way at the time. From the symptoms related by the various witnesses, he had no doubt that the deceased died from the effects of poisoning from the Yew leaves. A verdict of "Felo de se" was returned by the Jury.

**264 January 30 1858**

KIDDERMINSTER

ROBBERY BY BARGEMEN The two bargemen, **George Grosvenor** and **George Brown**, and John Bradley, a marine store dealer, of Bridgnorth, were, at the petty sessions held at that town on Monday last, committed for trial for stealing a large quantity of pig iron (about 16 cwt), the property of the Madeley Wood Company, the particulars of which were reported in the *Journal* of the 16<sup>th</sup> instant.

**265 January 30 1858**

DROITWICH

RATHER SUSPICIOUS On Wednesday night, or rather yesterday morning about half past one o'clock, the inmates at Mr Goodwin's, the Town Mill, were disturbed by a noise at the back of the premises. Mr Goodwin junior and the miller immediately got up and went downstairs, but could

not discover any person. On examining the doors, there was no trace of any party attempting to break into the house, but a black “billycock” hat was found lying near. Information was given to the police, who apprehended a boatman known by the name of **Sandstone**. He owned the hat, but said he must have rambled there while in a drunken state, in a mistake. The mill house adjoins the junction canal.

## **266 February 13 1858**

### WORCESTER COUNTY COURT

**FEATHERSTONE v BRACE** Plaintiff and defendant are boatmen, and the action was brought to recover £4 10s, balance of an account arising out of the sale of a horse in November last. The horse, stated to be worth £7 10s, was sold for £4 in money, two donkeys and gears. The case was adjourned, after partial hearing, until the following day, when it was again gone into. The facts of the “swop” were somewhat intricate, and under all the circumstances his Honour felt bound to give judgement for plaintiff for the full amount. Although such judgement was ordered to be recorded, yet the plaintiff, in consideration of defendant being actually the loser and a poor man, expressed his willingness not to compel payment, if a sum owing by him to Messrs Firmstone of Tipton, his employers, was not enforced against him.

## **267 March 6 1858**

### WORCESTERSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

**ASSAULT AND ROBBERY AT DUDLEY** Thomas Holt, 23, collier, John Fellows, 49, miner, and Hannah Vender, 20, labourer, were indicted for having assaulted **John Argill** at Dudley, and robbing him of 7s 6d, his property. They were also charged with unlawfully wounding him.

Mr Cresswell prosecuted ; the prisoners were undefended.

The facts of the case, as stated by Argill, were exceedingly simple. Prosecutor, an uncouth boatman, on the night of the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, entered the prisoner Fellows's house, a disreputable one, and “stood” a shilling for drink. The female prisoner took his cap from his head, and in a manner not at all polite, he told her to bring it back or he would give her a “clout”. She immediately took a shovel full of fire from the grate, threw it into his face and blinded him ; at the same time belabouring him with the shovel over his head and shoulders. He was then pulled on the floor, robbed of his money by the two male prisoners, and forcibly ejected “neck and crop” from the house.

Prosecutor was examined at considerable length by Vender.

John Evans, a miner, who ran to assist the prosecutor upon hearing cries of murder, corroborated his evidence. He saw him pushed out of the house and kicked several times by the two male prisoners. He was bleeding on the face, and was at once conveyed to Mr Johnson's surgery.

When apprehended by Police-sergeant Watts, the female prisoner said what she had done she had done in her own defence. The male prisoners denied the charge.

Mr William Eagles Johnson, surgeon, proved the nature of the prosecutor's injuries. His face was severely burnt, he was bleeding from a wound in the face and had marks of blows on his head. The principal injury, however, arose from the burning embers being thrown on him.

His Lordship held there was no evidence against the female for robbery, and ordered her to be discharged. The vicious habits of the prosecutor were then strongly commented on, and the learned judge remarked that a person who conducted himself and associated with prostitutes at all hours of the night deserved to be robbed and plundered in the manner he had been. He summed up in favour of the prisoners, and asked the jury to consider whether they could place implicit reliance upon the evidence given by Argill against them.

The jury at once returned a verdict of not guilty, and they were discharged, the learned Judge observing that he never heard a worse state of things in any town than that described by the prosecutor and the prisoners.

**268 March 20 1858**

ASSIZE INTELLIGENCE

STABBING AT TIPTON **Joseph Green** aged 23, boatman, was charged with cutting and wounding Isaac Bird with intent to do grievous bodily harm, on the 26<sup>th</sup> December 1857, at Tipton. According to the evidence, the prisoner, without any provocation, made a rush at prosecutor and struck him a violent blow on the left jaw. The blow stunned him for a few minutes, but when he recovered himself he found he was bleeding in the neck, and he took his neckcloth off to stop the bleeding. The prisoner was at once stopped and given into custody. He was found guilty of unlawful wounding, and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

**269 April 10 1858**

DEATH BY DROWNING At an early hour on Wednesday morning last, the body of Mr George Green, for many years clerk in the office of Messrs Clifton and Hooper, Registrar's Office, Edgar Tower, was discovered in the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, at Jones's lock near this city. It was immediately removed to the Crown Inn, Droitwich Road, where an inquest was held the same evening by Mr W S P Hughes, coroner, when, from the evidence then given, it appeared that deceased, who was 42 years of age, proceeded to Mr Miles's, farmer of Astwood, on Tuesday morning, and remained there until the afternoon. Mr Miles then accompanied him to his house on Rainbow Hill to tea, and as deceased said he had some business to transact at the New Inn, Ombersley Road, the landlord of which was a fellow clerk, they went there and during the evening partook, in company with some friends, of several glasses of grog. When they left the New Inn between ten and eleven o'clock, deceased was merry but not intoxicated. The deceased, Mr Miles, Mr Viney and a commercial traveller named Macmalin rode in a fly as far as Mr Viney's house in the Ombersley Road, and Mr Miles and deceased then walked as far as Barbourne toll gate, where they separated and deceased took the road towards Worcester intending, as Mr Miles believed, to make the nearest way to Mr Hooper's residence, where he had of late been sleeping at night to take care of the house. It is supposed that he proceeded up St George's Lane, and on coming to the canal he fell in and drowned. The night was a remarkably dark one, and there is no light near the canal. Next morning, his hat was found floating in the lock by a boatman, and **Thomas Jones**, who lives at the lockhouse near Gregory's Mill, dragged the lock and discovered the body, which was quite dead and cold. There were no marks of violence, and in his pocket was £1 13s 6d, a knife, a bunch of keys and other articles. He was a married man, and has left a family of seven or eight children. There was no evidence to prove any further facts, and the jury at once returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**270 April 10 1858**

CITY POLICE

PUGILISTIC CHARACTERS Two boatman named **Henry Ford** and **Richard Dayus** were brought up by PC Ledgley, who found them fighting in Broad Street at twelve o'clock last night. Dayus was very much in drink and bleeding at the nose. The other defendant was not very drunk, but complained of having been struck on the cheek. Defendants are working together, and promising not to similarly offend again, they were discharged.

**271 April 24 1858**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY APRIL 20

STEALING COAL **George Bennett, John Bennett, William Merrell** and **James Merrell** were charged by Messrs Dixon with stealing about 5 or 6 cwt of coal from their wharf at Tardebigg on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. The accused were boatmen in the employ of Mr Corbett of Stoke Prior. On the night in question, PC Wilmore saw two of Mr Corbett's boats moored against Messrs Dixon's wharf. On the following morning, in consequence of hearing of coal being lost, he followed the boats down the canal, and on searching them found a quantity of coals of three different descriptions corresponding with the sorts lost, concealed in each boat. Having elected to

have the case go to jury, they were committed to the Sessions but admitted to bail, themselves in £20 each, and one surety each in £20. Mr Walford of Birmingham appeared for the prosecution, and Mr R T Rea of Worcester for defendants.

**272 May 1 1858**

**JONES, THE TICKET OF LEAVE MAN** The committee of the City Prisoners' Aid Society and the visiting justices of the city gaol are exerting themselves to induce the Secretary of State to reconsider the case of the boatman, **William Jones**, whose ticket of leave was lately revoked in consequence of his having been committed to the city gaol for brutality towards his wife. A number of boat builders in a memorial have signified their willingness to employ him if he were set at liberty.

**273 May 8 1858**

**CITY POLICE**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** **Charles Anderson**, a boatman, was charged on the information of Mr J Yewens, superintendent of the Animals' Friend Society, with working a horse with a sore shoulder on the towing-path of the river Severn that morning. The horse, which belonged to Mr White of Tewkesbury, was employed in drawing a coal boat. Mr Maybury of this city spoke to the good character of the defendant, and promised that the animal should be sent back to its owner. It was stated that horses frequently left home quite sound, but on terminating their journey from the strain of the boat were injured by the pressure of the harness on the shoulder. The charge was not pressed, and Anderson was discharged. It is not generally known that a fine of £5, or three months' imprisonment to hard labour, can be inflicted in such cases.

**274 May 29 1858**

**CHILD MURDER IN THIS CITY** A shocking case of this description has transpired this week in our own city. On Tuesday, as a boatman was raking the bottom of the canal near Sidbury Bridge for a windlass which he had dropped into the water, he pulled up a bundle which, on opening, was found to contain the body of a newly born child and a heavy stone (about 14 lbs weight). The whole was wrapped up in a flannel petticoat and chemise, and the child, on examination, was found to have had its throat cut during life, and the mother had evidently not had proper medical attendance during her confinement. The enquiries of the police soon led to suspicion falling upon a young Irish girl named Mary Ann O'Connor, a boot binder, who had been living for some time in King Street, St Peter's. The neighbours had suspected her for some time of being *enceinte*, and had told her of their suspicions, but she stoutly denied the fact. A girl who lived with her found a dead child in O'Connor's box on Saturday morning, and missed it at night. When she was informed on Wednesday that a child had been found in the canal, she appeared to be much excited, and in a few hours afterwards left the city, purposing, as she said, to go to Birmingham Fair. The girl is about nineteen years of age ; her father at present lives in London, and her mother died some time ago in the Workhouse.

On Wednesday afternoon an inquest was opened on the body at the King's Head, Sidbury, before Mr Rea, city coroner, when the following jury was empanelled :- Messrs Thomas Cullis, foreman ; Joseph Lewis, John Dovey, George Bennett, Henry Hope, William Turner, William Hale, John Haines, Samuel Birbeck, Robert Hulls, Henry William Thomas, William Barnett and Benjamin Johnson.

Evidence was first given by the boatman, **George Piercy**, as to the discovery of the body in the canal, as mentioned above. When he got the bundle out of the water it was covered with flannel, and enclosed the stone and the body of the child. He left it on the towing-path while he went to look for a policeman, and met one, and accompanied him back to the spot. He then conveyed the body and its coverings to the King's Head.

Mr R Griffiths, surgeon, deposed : I have this morning made a post mortem examination of the body of a male child, by direction of the coroner. The child was full grown, and had not been in the

water many days ; the skin was not shrivelled ; it was very white. The afterbirth was attached. There was no mark of any bruise or discolouration of the skin. I found a large gash on the left hand side of the neck, about two inches long, which went through the muscles of the neck to the depth of nearly an inch, about midway between neck and shoulders. About half an inch below was a slight cut about half an inch long. These were the external appearances the body presented. I am of opinion that the large gash and slight cut were occasioned by some cutting instrument, though not a very sharp one, during the child's lifetime. On opening the chest, I found the lungs spongy and healthy, air having entered all portions of them ; they floated in water, and were not at all decomposed. The heart was healthy. The stomach contained a kind of greenish mucus, but no food. The bowels were perfectly healthy. From the appearances presented, it is my opinion that the child was born alive, within the last four days, and it had lived long enough to perfectly inflate the lungs. In my opinion the wound on the neck was the cause of the child's death. I formed that opinion from the blanched condition of the skin, the freshness of the body, and the proximity of the wound to important blood vessels. Mr Griffiths further stated, in answer to the coroner, that if the rake had penetrated through the flannel, it could not have inflicted the wound on the neck, as it would have been a punctured and not a cut wound.

To satisfy themselves on this point, the jury again visited the body, and saw that it was a cut wound. James Goodwin, son of the landlady, was next called to trace the body from his receipt of it from the boatman Piercy. He had kept it locked up, and had only allowed the surgeon and the summoning officer to inspect it.

Sarah Penn, King Street, 17, single woman, deposed : I live at my mother's, and keep house for her. Mary Ann O'Connor lodged with my mother. She has lodged with her about four months. She is a single woman. Last Tuesday week Mary Ann O'Connor was at home, and about four o'clock in the afternoon she was taken poorly and went upstairs to bed. She remained upstairs until near nine o'clock. I went upstairs to bed about that time. I had to pass through her room to my mother's room. (Witness described certain appearances she saw, and stated she cleaned the room at O'Connor's request). I told her it was the first job I had ever done for her, and it should be the last. I usually slept with her, and did so that night. I had not noticed that she appeared to be in the family way, but I had heard many persons tell her that she was. On the Saturday before this, I told her myself that she was in the family way. She then denied it, and said it was a wrong thing of those who said so. The next day (Wednesday) she came downstairs about eleven o'clock, and followed her work as a shoe binder as usual. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, she got up about middle day and sat by the fire in the kitchen, but did not work. She did not go out of the house until Saturday night, when she told me to go out for an hour or two. I did so about eight o'clock, and returned about eleven o'clock. She was then at home. About eleven o'clock that Saturday morning I went into our top room ; there was a trunk there belonging to Mary Ann O'Connor. It was unlocked. I opened it and saw a dead child's legs. The body and head were wrapped up in white rag. I left it there. I went and said something to Mary Ann Teague. After I had returned that night, I went upstairs, looked in the box, and the child was gone. The flannel shift and petticoat now produced by Police-sergeant Doughty belonged to Mary Ann O'Connor's mother. She died in the House of Industry. I saw both flannels in our top room where the box was. I asked Mary Ann O'Connor about a month ago whose flannels they were. She said, "It was my mother's". I have not seen them since. I noticed that the flannel shift was torn under the arm and patched on the bosom. The flannel petticoat appeared to me to be the same I saw in the top room. I have not seen that petticoat since I spoke to O'Connor as before mentioned until today. On Sunday morning last Mary Ann O'Connor went out about seven o'clock, and said, "I'm going to chapel". I replied, "You are going to pray for your wicked sins". She came back again about nine o'clock, and remained in until about six or half past. She then went out, as she said, to chapel, and returned about eight o'clock. She then went to bed. On the Monday she got up at six o'clock, and went out about seven. She returned about ten. When she went out she said she was going to chapel. She stayed in the rest of the day, and went to bed about nine o'clock. She did not go out of the house yesterday. This morning (Wednesday) I got up about six o'clock, leaving her in bed. Shortly afterwards Mr Quince came to our house, and

Mary Ann O'Connor was at that time in the kitchen. I heard Mr Quince say to her, "There is a child found near the King's Head Lock". O'Connor seemed very much put about at it. She trembled, and her face went as red as fire. About seven o'clock she went out, and returned about ten. She stayed in the house about five minutes and then left, and I have not seen her since. She said on going away that she was going to Birmingham Fair. She had no breakfast at our house this morning.

As the whole of the evidence could not be taken that evening, and to allow the police an opportunity of making further enquiries and searching for the suspected mother, the coroner adjourned the enquiry until three o'clock this (Friday) afternoon.

The enquiry was resumed shortly after three o'clock this (Friday) afternoon.

Esther Grantham, wife of a labourer living in King Street, next door to Mrs Penn, deposed that the woman O'Connor had lodged at her house until within the last few months. She suspected her to be in the family way before she left, and had told her so many times. The stone (a large boulder) produced by Sergeant Doughty was lying in the corner of her garden for some time up to last Saturday morning. It had been dug up by her husband out of the garden, and the children in the yard used to play with it.

Mary Ann Teague, sister to Mrs Fenn, stated that on Tuesday evening week she was requested to see O'Connor at her lodgings. She was then in bed, and had to all appearance been confined. She denied it, and attributed her condition to other causes. She was at work next day.

Mrs Mary Quincey, another neighbour, and the mother of thirteen children, spoke to her belief of O'Connor being *enceinte*.

Police-sergeant Doughty produced the flannel petticoat in which the body was wrapped when found in the canal, and which he received from John Goodwin of the King's Head Inn.

This being the whole of the evidence to be adduced, the Coroner briefly summed up the facts, and the jury, without the slightest hesitation, returned a verdict of WILFUL MURDER against Mary Ann O'Connor, and a warrant was at once issued for her apprehension.

## 275 June 12 1858

DEATH BY DROWNING Mr W S P Hughes held an inquest on Tuesday at the Camp public house, Grimley, on the body of a boatman named **James Taylor**, who unfortunately met his death by drowning in the Severn on Saturday last. It appears that the deceased was in the employ of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, general carriers, and in the afternoon of the above day, was engaged in steering a boat towards Stourport. On arriving about half a mile above the Droitwich Canal, where it falls into the Severn, the deceased by some means fell overboard, and although every effort was made to rescue him by means of diving, his companions were unable to do so, and the poor fellow was drowned. The Rev Charles Richard Didham of Hallow assisted in the search for the body, which was found the same evening by dragging. His death appeared to be purely accidental, and a verdict to that effect was returned by the jury. Taylor lived at Stourport, and has left a wife and ten children to mourn his loss.

## 276 July 3 1858

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

ALLEGED COAL STEALING AT TARDEBIGG **George and John Bennett** and **William and James Merrell**, boatmen, on bail, were indicted for having stolen 5 cwt of coal at Tardebigg, the property of Mr Thomas Dixon. Mr Powell prosecuted, and Mr Richards defended the prisoners. Prosecutor is the occupier of the Old Wharf, Tardebigg, and had three small heaps of coal of the sorts known as Wedgebury, brooch lumps and Lord Ward's coal, on his premises on the 14<sup>th</sup> April. Next morning about 5 cwt was discovered to have been stolen from the three heaps and, as there were marks of a rope leading towards the canal, information was given to the police. PC Wilmore was on duty during the night, and observed two boats belonging to Mr Corbett of Stoke Prior lying near the wharf, and in charge of the four prisoners at the bar, the two Bennetts being the captain of either boat. He followed them next morning, overtook them at a distance of about two miles, searched the boats and found a quantity of coal, which was at once identified by the prosecutor as

his property. On cross-examination, the witnesses admitted the above descriptions of coal were common in that neighbourhood, and Mr Richards commented on the improbability of the prisoners, who were men of good character, committing a felony of so trifling an amount. Three or four witnesses were called to character. Acquitted.

**STEALING A TARPAULIN AT UPTON**     **John Mann**, boatman, and William Halford, his brother-in-law, were indicted – Mann for stealing a tarpaulin, the property of the Midland Railway Company, and Halford for feloniously receiving the same. Mr Byrne prosecuted ; prisoners were defended by Mr Powell and Mr Richards. **Mr Knight**, boat owner of Tewkesbury, deposed that the prisoner Mann was in his employ. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May he was in his boat on the Severn at Bushley Bay near Upton, when he said he had picked up a cloth out of the river. He asked for a mop in order to cleanse it from the mud. Witness lent him one, and he and the prisoner then started with the boat as far as Sandy Point, when he borrowed a sack, wherein he placed the cloth and walked in the direction of the police station at Upton. The cloth, it appeared, was the property of the Midland Railway Company, and had their mark upon it. Information had been received by the police of the loss of the cloth, when Superintendent Checketts visited the house of the prisoner Halford at Upton on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May and, in an upstairs room found the cloth, which had been recently painted black. Halford denied all knowledge of the cloth being there, but he and the other prisoner were consequently taken into custody. A man named Embury (who during the morning had been sentenced to four years' penal servitude) was called into the witness box and examined as to a conversation which took place between him and Mann on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. Mann told him that the cloth belonged to the railway company, that he was going to take it to Halford for him to mend it, and that he had another stowed away similar to it. Frederick Potter, foreman of the sheet department of the Midland Railway Company at Derby, identified the sheet from the number painted on it, 4326. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March the cloth was at Worcester station en route to Bristol. Mr Powell and Mr Richards forcibly called several witnesses to the character of the prisoners, Halford was acquitted, but Mann was found guilty and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

### **277     July 17 1858**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER ASSIZES**

**STEALING SHOES AT OLDBURY** Charles Turner, 25, shoemaker, was charged with stealing a pair of shoes at Oldbury on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Cresswell prosecuted ; the prisoner was undefended. The prosecutor, a boatman, left his shoes under his bed on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> while he went to sleep. Someone came into the cabin for a light about two o'clock in the morning. He missed his shoes next day. The boots were traced to the possession of the prisoner, who said he bought them of a man at Spon Lane on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> June for 2s. Prisoner today reiterated his statement made before the magistrates, and said he bought them the day before he was to be married. The jury acquitted the prisoner.

### **278     July 17 1858**

**THE LATE REV JOHN DAVIES** Our obituary announces the decease of the Rev John Davies, rector of St Clement's in this city, to which living he was presented in 1816 through the instrumentality of the Rev James Stillingfleet, one of the Prebendaries of Worcester, the Dean and Chapter being the patrons. The venerable deceased was eminently “a servant of God” ; in that service it was his delight to labour “instant in season – out of season”. His earnest zeal and affection as a Christian minister was not displayed in his public ministrations only, but pervaded his whole life. To promote the Glory of God and the welfare of his fellow men was the absorbing feeling, and all other subjects were comparatively insignificant in his estimation.

When Mr Davies succeeded to the rectory of St Clement's, the parish church was an old edifice (probably Saxon), very inconvenient in its interior arrangements – exposed to the floods of the Severn – and placed on the east side of the river, while (with a very trifling exception) the parishioners resided on the west side. Through the rector's exertions, funds were raised (the parish

contributing very liberally) for the erection of a new church on Henwick Hill, in the midst of the population ; the consecration took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1823, and we believe that the cost was little short of £6,000, including the purchase of the land. School rooms were also provided by Mr Davies, who purchased from his own resources a building for the purpose ; but in after years these schools being found inadequate, Mr Davies directed his attention to the erection of a building better adapted to the purpose ; he was warmly seconded by his parishioners, and the result was that about two years ago the present spacious and convenient schools were opened. In 1842, Mr Davies's Christian sympathy was excited towards the watermen employed on the river Severn and Worcester and Birmingham Canal, who (with very few exceptions) never attended any place of worship, and who were emphatically "living without God in the world". Through his efforts, a floating church was provided and placed on the Severn. The results from year to year were most satisfactory – so much so that no part of Mr Davies's labours appeared to give him more comfort than this effort to rescue from spiritual darkness a long neglected class. He did not confine his attention to the watermen in our own locality, but advocated the cause in other parts of the kingdom, especially during his sojourn at Runcorn in Cheshire, in which neighbourhood the effects of his exertions are still beneficially felt. In justice to the memory of a deceased nobleman, we should mention the late Earl of Ellesmere (as an extensive canal proprietor) helped forward this good work. For more than forty years, Mr Davies's name has been associated with every institution established among us for promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of man. Though fervently attached to the church of which he was minister, his Christian charity extended (like that of the Apostle) to "all that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity".

It is almost superfluous to speak of Mr Davies's deep solicitude for the welfare of his parishioners. Though ready at all times to further measures calculated to benefit any of his fellow men, he felt, and acted upon the feeling, that his flock had the strongest claim upon his regard ; and that they stood first in his affection none of them could doubt. They therefore loved him in life, and in death his memory will be embalmed in their hearts.

**279 August 21 1858**

WARNING TO BOATMEN **Richard Goddard**, a boatman, was, at the Shire Hall, Gloucester, on Monday last, fined 40s and costs £2 14s 6d, for having had his boat taken in tow by another vessel, not having obtained a ticket.

**280 September 4 1858**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

DEFRAUDING THE TOWING PATH COMPANY **William Sandiland** of Upton was fined 40s and costs for using the Worcester and Gloucester Towing-path without taking a ticket. **William Webb**, a boatman in the service of Messrs Rice at Tewkesbury, was also fined 40s and costs for the like offence.

**281 September 4 1858**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT Emma Lemm charged **John Brace**, a boatman, with assaulting her. He was committed for a month's imprisonment.

**282 September 4 1858**

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY AUGUST 31

FELONY **James Withers**, boatman, charged with stealing a casting net, the property of Sidney Cooper of the Swan Inn, Upton Warren, on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult, value 4s 6d, was summarily convicted, and sentenced to three calendar months' hard labour.

**283 September 4 1858**

THE LATE REV JOHN DAVIES MA A meeting of the inhabitants of St Clement's Church,

convened by the churchwardens, was held in the vestry of the parish church on Friday last, Mr John Stallard, churchwarden, in the chair. It was moved by Mr Joseph Bennett, churchwarden, seconded by Mr Tearne, and unanimously resolved :- "That this meeting desire to record their unfeigned regret at the loss which has been sustained by the death of the late Rev John Davies, who for upwards of forty two years was the faithful, zealous and indefatigable rector of this parish. Determined not to know anything amongst us save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he fed the flock over which he was appointed, instant in season and out of season, himself setting a singularly eminent example of a life governed by the principles of that Gospel which he so faithfully preached. He was ever ready to promote and support every work which had for its object the glory of God or the good of man, and especially may be noticed the church and schools for this parish and the watermen's church, all which were provided in a great measure through his exertions and liberality, yet in humbleness of mind he gave God the glory. Beloved, respected, and deeply lamented, he entered into his rest on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> July last, and was buried in the crypt of this church amidst the general mourning, not only of his relatives and parishioners, but of the clergy and his fellow citizens of all denominations. That copies of this resolution be forwarded by the churchwardens to the widow and brothers of the deceased". It was moved by Mr Rowlands, seconded by Mr Binns, and unanimously resolved :- "That a suitable memorial of the late Rev John Davies be erected, and that a committee be now appointed for carrying out this object and collecting subscriptions for it, consisting of the following persons, with power to add to their number :- Mr John Stallard and Mr Joseph Bennett, churchwardens ; Mr James Reynolds, Mr T H Lewis, Mr Tearne, Mr Padmore, Mr Rowlands, Mr Binns, Mr Griffiths, Mr Taplin, Mr Danks, Mr John Turley and Rev Charles Evans". It is the intention of the committee, we believe, to invite several of their fellow citizens *not* resident in the parish to join with them in carrying out this latter resolution. A meeting of the general committee was held this (Friday) morning in the Guildhall, the Mayor in the chair. It was resolved that a tablet should be erected in the parish church, and that subscription lists for sums not above 5s be opened at the booksellers' shops ; that to embrace the general feeling of interest which the long and faithful services of the late lamented rector of St Clement's had called forth, and to further an object of which he was the first promoter, and which he had ever much at heart, a memorial in the form of a new Watermen's Church, with the sittings entirely free, to be erected. [This resolution is rendered necessary by the inadequacy and age of the present floating chapel]. A sub committee for collecting subscriptions, obtaining designs and a site, were appointed as follows :- The Mayor, Revs W H Havergal, C Evans, Messrs Tymbs, Allies, J W Lea, C Pidcock, H D Carden, Binns, Rowlands, Bennett and Stallard.

#### **284 September 11 1858**

##### **CITY POLICE**

A WET SUBJECT **William New**, a waterman, was charged with being drunk and assaulting **Jeremiah Jones**, who did not appear. Defendant had been quarrelling with Jones, the captain of the barge, and after assaulting him, fell into the water. Both were drunk, and as Jones did not appear against him, he was discharged.

#### **285 September 11 1858**

RAILWAY ROBBERY **James Baldwin** of Stoke Prior, boatman, was on Wednesday charged with stealing 6 1/2 cwt of coupling irons and chains belonging to railway trucks at Stoke Prior, the property of the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway Company, and Joseph Hobbis of Westheath, Alvechurch, beerhouse keeper, with feloniously receiving the same. Hobbis, it is alleged, disposed of the iron at Mr Fallow's iron forge, Northfield, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August last. It is further alleged that the iron was brought by Baldwin to Hobbis's house in a boat which he was taking to Birmingham loaded with salt. Hobbis's house is situate on the side of the canal, at Tunnel End.

**286 September 18 1858**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

TOWING-PATH OFFENCES Mr W V Wright, clerk to the Gloucester and Worcester Horse Towing-path Company, summoned five watermen for offences against the Company's act. Mr Bentley appeared in support. **William Lea** of Gloucester was charged with using his boat on the Severn at Kempsey on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, not having his name and place of abode thereon. There was another boat lashed to Lea's, the captain of which (**Francis Hodges**) had no ticket. Mr Wright stated that in Lea's case he would only ask for a nominal fine to be imposed, but in the latter he was instructed to press for the full penalty, as such frauds upon the company were carried on to a great extent. This was the first case of the kind he had brought before the Bench, and he was requested to state that all cases in future would be pressed for punishment. According to the by laws of the company, Lea had rendered himself liable to a penalty not exceeding £5, the penalty in the latter case being 40s to be paid to the company. The Bench fined Lea 5s with 10s costs, and as they had no power to mitigate the penalty in Hodges's case, they must fine him 40s with 10s 1d expenses. Hodges was allowed a month to pay. **Thomas Hemming** and **Samuel Baylis** were severally summoned for using horses to draw boats without having tickets, on the towing-path, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July and the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant. They were each fined £2 and 9s 1d costs. **John Hetheridge** was summoned for a similar offence, but service of the summons failing to be proved, a fresh summons was taken out, and the case adjourned.

**287 September 25 1858**

DROITWICH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 22

PEACE DISTURBANCE **Thomas Hodgkins**, a boatman, was brought up in custody of PC Martin, charged with committing a breach of the peace by fighting on the Hill End early that morning. These cases being of common occurrence latterly, the magistrate determined to bind defendant over for six months, and to pay costs, 7s 6d.

**288 October 9 1858**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT **Thomas Gardiner**, a powerful waterman, was fined 5s with 10s costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment, for assaulting a woman named Mary Jones in Quay Street early on Sunday morning.

**289 October 16 1858**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CAUTION TO BOATMEN A boatman named **Etheridge** was charged by **Mr Wright**, clerk to the Gloucester and Worcester Towing-path Company, with allowing his boat to be towed along the river Severn a few days ago without having previously taken out a ticket. It appeared that two boats were noticed passing down the river, drawn by one horse. The horse and first boat was properly supplied with a ticket, but for the second boat, belonging to Messrs Coleman and Mayo, and of which the defendant was captain, there had been no ticket taken out. The defendant was not with the boat at the time, but it was being steered by his wife, who said her husband had gone to Worcester for a ticket, which was not the case. After some discussion and consideration of the by laws, the Bench thought the better way would have been to have summoned the owners of the boat rather than the defendant. Mr Wright consequently withdrew the charge.

**290 October 16 1858**

ROBBERY FROM A BOAT At the Magistrates' Clerk's Office yesterday (Thursday), a boatman named **Thomas Blake** was committed for trial by Captain Hastings for stealing 14 lb of beef and pork from a boat in Diglis basin belonging to Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, general carriers of this city.

### 291 October 16 1858

**WATERMEN'S CHURCH** The annual sermon in aid of the funds for supporting this church, which is for the use of the men employed on the river Severn and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, will be preached at the parish church of St Clement's on Thursday next by the Rev Charles Evans, curate.

### 292 October 23 1858

#### CITY POLICE

**AN AWKWARD POSITION** Daniel Court, a fierce looking fellow, was brought up under the following circumstances :- **Joseph Matthews**, a boatman, stated that between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning he returned from a voyage to his house in Dolday, and after knocking several times, his wife, who was inside, told him the key was at the next door neighbour's and requested him to fetch it. Joey, however, did not feel so disposed, doubtless suspecting something wrong, and told her to open the shutters, which she did, and he got through the window, proceeded to the top of the house, and there saw defendant lying on a bedstead. He came down again and his wife struck at him, but her brother, who accompanied Matthews, interfered. Complainant struck her again, when she called the defendant, picked up a hatchet, and threatened to strike her husband with it. He threw the leg of a chair at her (which had been broken in the fray). Complainant shortly afterwards left, but returned to his domicile in the evening, where he found defendant secreted in the coal hole, who said he had paid for lodgings in the house and had a right to stay there, but complainant placed him in the custody of a policeman. The Bench said it was a very disreputable case, and there could be little doubt of defendant's intentions in going to the house, but if he would not allow Matthews to live peaceably, they would bind him over to keep the peace. With a further reprimand, he was discharged.

### 293 October 23 1858

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

**STEALING A RAILWAY CLOTH** **William Hallings** (on bail), a boat owner, was indicted for having on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1857 at Upton-on-Severn, stolen a tarpauling cloth, the property of the Midland Railway Company. Mr Powell prosecuted ; Mr Richards defended the prisoner. The tarpauling was sold by the prisoner to a Mr Thomas, some time after which it came into the possession of Superintendent Checketts, who apprehended the prisoner on the charge of stealing it. Prisoner accounted for having the tarpauling by stating before the Magistrates that he had purchased it of a relative at Tewkesbury. Mr Richards commented strongly upon the extremely weak nature of the case, and called witnesses who spoke to the character of the prisoner being hitherto unexceptionable. The jury retired, and after a brief consultation, returned a verdict of guilty. Six months' hard labour.

**STEALING FROM A VESSEL AT DIGLIS** **Thomas Blake**, 22, boatman, was indicted for stealing 10 lbs of beef, 4 lbs of pork and a loaf of bread at Diglis, Worcester, the property of Thomas Stiff. Prosecutor is cook on board the "*Severn*" trow belonging to Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, which on the night in question was lying in Diglis basin. All hands left to have a pint of beer about ten o'clock, and when they returned about half past twelve witness missed the provisions from the cupboard, and afterwards gave information to PC Martin of the Worcester police, who found the articles in a boat on board which the prisoner was sleeping. The officer charged him with stealing them, when he replied he knew nothing about it. Martin saw prisoner in the neighbourhood of the trow that night. Guilty. Four months' hard labour.

### 294 October 23 1858

#### OLDBURY

**TWO MEN DROWNED IN THE CANAL** On Wednesday evening, an inquest was held before Mr Ralph Docker, on the bodies of **Thomas Weobley** and **Charles Thomas**, two boatmen who were

found drowned on Tuesday morning at the Flash Arm of the Low Level Canal, near the Railway Carriage Works, Oldbury. As John Morris, a sawyer working at the carriage establishment, was following his employment looking for some timber by the canal side about seven o'clock, he perceived a body partly doubled up in the water, the head and feet being down and the back visible above the surface. He called for a boat hook, and the body, on being pulled out, proved to be that of Charles Thomas, who was connected with a boat belonging to Mr Smith of Ledbury, which was lying near. As Weobley, who was also employed with Thomas on board the same barge, was not seen anywhere about, a search was made, and his body was also found about ten feet from the place. The night of Monday was very stormy. The deceased were in the Cross Guns public house, Oldbury, about nine o'clock, and left in the direction of the canal ; and it is thought that as the path to the boat was slippery and dangerous, they must have slipped into the canal and been drowned. A verdict of "Found drowned" in both cases was returned. Weobley has left a wife and four or five children.

**295 October 30 1858**

CITY POLICE

ANOTHER ASSAULT ON A FEMALE **Richard Dayus**, a boatman, was charged under a warrant with assaulting an unfortunate female named Poole in Watercourse Alley in July last. Prisoner since that time has absconded. The case was not pressed, and he was discharged on payment of the expenses.

**296 October 30 1858**

STRATFORD-ON-AVON COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY OCTOBER 22

CAUTION TO BOATMEN **John Hughes**, a boatman of this town, was charged with wasting water on the Birmingham Canal. The case was proved against him by one of the lockmen in the employ of the company, and he was fined 1s and costs.

**297 November 6 1858**

CITY POLICE

ALLEGED INDECENT ASSAULT Thomas Inett, a middle aged married man described as a skinner, living in St Clement Street, was charged with indecently assaulting a little girl named **Brace**, aged 11 years and 10 months, daughter of a waterman of St Clement Square, between eight and nine o'clock on Monday evening. The child described the nature of the assault, which she said was committed in Bush Lane as she was returning from her work at the horse hair manufactory. Mrs Mary Smith, a neighbour, saw the man in company with the child, but gave no alarm beyond telling the child's stepmother, who sent out her eldest daughter to fetch her in. The child then came in crying, and told all that had occurred. The prisoner said he had no recollection whatever of anything having taken place as had been stated. He was intoxicated at the time. When apprehended he was very violent, and bit PC Fielders severely on his hand. Remanded for a week ; bail was refused.

**298 November 20 1858**

DUDLEY

STEALING WEARING APPAREL On Wednesday, **James Gibson**, a boatman, was committed for trial for stealing a pair of trousers, the property of William Dance. The prisoner was apprehended on Saturday morning with a bundle of new clothes in his possession, for which he could not satisfactorily account. Amongst the articles was a pair of breeches, which Mr Dance identified as his property, and which, it appeared, had been stolen from his premises.

**299 November 27 1858**

DUDLEY

STEALING MALT AND HOPS On Monday, William Round of the Boat Inn, Netherton, was

brought up on remand before Captain Bennitt at the New Town Hall on a charge of stealing two bags of malt and half a pocket of hops, the property of Mrs Morgan of the Crown public house, Darby Hand. An additional witness named **Brookes**, a boatman living at Primrose Hill, deposed to seeing three men early in the morning of Friday week near Rishton's Bridge (about a hundred yards from the prosecutrix's premises), one of whom had two full sacks on his back and the other two one sack each with them. He however was unable to identify them. Pritchard, a collier living next door to Round at Netherton, said that on the same morning between three and four o'clock, he heard some men outside his house talking, and got up and looked through the window. He then saw something like a bag resting on the top of the wall adjoining, in the charge of four men. It was so dark that he could not tell who they were. The prisoner asked him how it was that knowing his voice he could not tell whether he (Round) was there or not. Witness replied that he could have done so, but he never heard him speak. The prisoner was further remanded till Monday next.

### **300 November 27 1858**

CITY POLICE

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE **Ann Matthews**, the wife of a boatman, was charged with attempting to commit suicide by jumping into the canal, near the King's Head lock, Sidbury. From the prisoner's dissolute habits, her husband had refused to live with her. Early that morning, as he was lying in his boat a little below the lock, she came and insisted upon staying with him, but he refused to allow her and turned her out of the boat. She immediately afterwards jumped into the canal and said she would drown herself. He succeeded in rescuing her, and soon after gave her into the custody of the police. Remanded for a week.

### **301 December 4 1858**

CITY POLICE

THE RECENT ATTEMPT AT SUICIDE **Sarah Matthews**, the wife of a boatman, remanded for a week for having attempted self destruction by throwing herself into the canal near the King's Head lock, was discharged, upon promising to amend her conduct in future.

### **302 January 1 1859**

CITY POLICE

CHRISTMAS REVELRY John Williams, a powerful looking navvie, was charged with being drunk and assaulting Detective Richardson on Friday night last. At about nine o'clock on the evening in question, Superintendent Chipp and Richardson found the defendant staggering up Broad Street, and as he narrowly escaped falling against Mr Curtis's shop window, the officers laid hold of him and put him in the way for home. He, however, became very violent, and notwithstanding he smothered Chipp in mud, a feeling of commiseration was shown to him and he was taken home. When they arrived there, Richardson said that he must thank Mr Chipp that he was not locked up, whereupon he turned round, struck the officer a blow and tore his coat. Eventually he was secured and taken to the station house. The charge of assault was withdrawn, and he was let off on paying a fine of 5s for being drunk.

**Benjamin Lea**, a boatman found by PC Banner in a "state of beer" in Lowesmoor on Christmas morning, was also fined 5s.

### **303 January 15 1859**

BONE ROBBERY Two boatmen from Tipton named **Thomas Wood** and **Samuel Shaw** were convicted at the West Bromwich Magistrates on Saturday last of stealing 150 lbs weight of bones, the property of Mr Thomas Vickers, bone merchant, Manchester. The prisoners were in charge of a boat belonging to Messrs King Brothers of Stourbridge, and whilst lying alongside, on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant, they contrived to purloin the bones from the boat of Mr Vickers, being observed doing so by the captain of the latter vessel. Shaw having previously borne a good character, was sentenced to three months, and Wood, having been two or three times convicted, to six months'

imprisonment.

### **304 January 15 1859**

#### UPTON-ON-SEVERN

MAN FOUND IN THE SEVERN The body of a man, about 60 years of age and 5ft 1 in in height, was found in the Severn this (Friday) morning near the Pool House close to this town, by a waterman named **Wood**. Superintendent Checketts caused it to be removed to Hanley Quay public house, to await an inquest. The body was respectably attired in black, with a red plush plaid waistcoat, and is supposed to have been in the water for at least three months.

### **305 January 22 1859**

#### CITY POLICE

STEALING COAL **John Hadley**, boatman, was charged with having stolen 10 lbs of coal, the property of Messrs Allen and Baylis, from their stack on Lowesmoor Wharf, on Saturday last. Benjamin Pope, a watcher on Lowesmoor Wharf, saw prisoner come from a boat moored at the wharf and take coal. Prisoner said he had "got a drop of drink in him, having been drinking all day, and he daint know what he was a-doing on". Electing to have the matter "settled at once", and the present being his first offence, he was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment with hard labour.

ASSAULT **Sarah Stephens**, the wife of a boatman, charged Sarah Cotterell with assaulting her. Complainant stated that on Saturday last, about eight o'clock at night, she went to the Swan public house, Lowesmoor, where she found her husband quarrelling with defendant. While sitting in the kitchen, Cotterell came up to her and struck her several blows, causing a black eye, and from the effects of which she was stunned. Her sight had been imperfect before, but since that treatment it had been worse. Defendant denied the assault, and called a witness who actually proved the case for complainant. The Magistrate fined defendant 10s with 11s costs. Not being prepared with the "needful", she took the alternative of a month's incarceration.

### **306 February 12 1859**

WRECK IN THE SEVERN – A MAN DROWNED On Friday last, a man named **William Good**, living at Stourport, a bargeman in the employ of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, carriers, was accidentally drowned, and the barge was also lost. It appeared that the vessel was homeward bound, laden with iron, and when a short distance from Sharpness Point, went down. The man was washed off the deck, and the sands at that place being very dangerous, there is little doubt that he is buried under the vessel, as he has not since been seen. There is little chance of recovering the vessel. The rest of the crew escaped. The estuary of the Severn at the place where the wreck occurred is very wide, and the channel uncertain, rendering it difficult to navigate. At certain times of the tide, and with rough winds, this portion of the river (ie below Sharpness Point – the lower end of the Berkeley Canal and the mouth of the Bristol Avon) is unmanageable for such vessels as are used in the carrying trade on the upper and middle tracts of the river.

### **307 March 26 1859**

FREAKS OF A COW On Wednesday last, shortly after two o'clock, two cows belonging to Mrs Smith, butcher, of the Tything, were being driven over the bridge into this city, when one of them became ungovernable and tossed a bargeman named **William Parry** of Gloucester, who was standing on the bridge at the time. His clothes were torn, but he otherwise was not much injured. Mr Charles Williams, from the academy of Mr Barnard in the Infirmary Walk, who was attending some of the scholars in an excursion, was also attacked by the infuriated animal and tossed, being gored in the left cheek and having his clothes torn almost to tatters. The wound was a severe one, but surgical aid was promptly procured. Both cows then set off at full speed along the Upper Quay, when a little boy, who tried to stop them, had a narrow escape. One beast made at him, but being shouted to and warned of his danger, he eluded it and got under a waggon. Continuing their mad

career along the road at the bottom of the Cattle Market, up Salt Lane and Lovegrove, where the same cow that had done the previous mischief attacked a little girl named Mary Ann Bayliss, aged about fourteen or fifteen, daughter of one of the turnkeys at the County Gaol, whose clothes were torn and her hand and shoulder injured. She was removed to the Infirmary, and received every needful attention. The animals were ultimately secured and conveyed to the slaughterhouse without doing further damage.

**308 April 2 1859**

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

FATAL ACCIDENT **James Knight**, a boatman of Tewkesbury, accidentally fell off a boat near the bridge over the Severn a few evenings ago, and was drowned.

**309 April 9 1859**

CITY POLICE

MONDAY APRIL 4 The only police case heard by the Bench this morning was that of a boatman named **Thomas Goode**, clad in a soldier's jacket, who was charged with being drunk and assaulting PC Berridge, in the execution of his duty, near the Rein Deer on the previous night. Another man also struck the officer while endeavouring to take defendant into custody ; but when PC Fowkes approached the scene of action, the man made off. As defendant put on a penitent appearance, Berridge did not press the charge, and after a suitable warning, he was discharged.

**310 April 16 1859**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT **John Brace**, boatman, Ombersley, was charged with assaulting **Henry William Bond** on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. The parties had been with others engaged in loading a boat, and a quarrel ensued between the two of them, when complainant, on taking a lantern to the spot, was struck severely on the head by the defendant, to whom he had never given the slightest provocation. Fined 10s and 14s 8d costs, and in default of payment committed for three weeks to hard labour.

**311 April 16 1859**

CITY POLICE

ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENT **John Tonks**, a boatman, employed by Mr Thomas Farr, coal merchant, was remanded until Thursday on suspicion of having embezzled about £4, money which had been entrusted to him to discharge the tonnage and expenses of a voyage to Stafford.

**312 April 23 1859**

STOURBRIDGE COUNTY COURT, MONDAY APRIL 18

CASTERY v DALLOWAY This was an action to recover the sum of £16, the value of a horse. The plaintiff is a boatman in the employ of Messrs Bradley and Co. Defendant is a publican living in High Street. Mr Homfray for plaintiff, Mr C Collis for defendant. Complainant stated that he took the horse to Mrs Dalloway's stables on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, when her son brought him a candle and he supped the animal up. The next morning he was informed that the flooring had given way and that his horse was partly buried. He accordingly went to defendant's house, where he saw the horse lying on his side with a quantity of brick, rubbish &c upon him, and was obliged to be got up by blocks and pulleys. The horse was so injured that it had been killed. Cross-examined : He gave but £10 for the horse ; the reason he valued it at £16 was because he was offered that sum for it a short time ago. George Cashey Weaver corroborated the above evidence. For the defence, Mr Collis said that the stable at his client's house was but a three horse stall, and that there was a fourth stall, but it had never been used as a stable, it was raised two feet above the others, and there was a quantity of timber shavings &c which had to be removed by the plaintiff before he could put his horse in. He did not consider the stall safe, and said that plaintiff took the horse in of his own accord, as he had during the same evening refused the horse a stable, on account of his premises

being full. Judgement deferred.

**313 May 14 1859**

**WORCESTER INSOLVENCY COURT**

Re **BENJAMIN MULLETT**, late of Bromley Lane, Kingswinford, boatman, detained at the suit of Mr John Yardley, tailor of Brierley Hill, applied for his discharge, supported by Mr Ellis of the Oxford Circuit, for Mr William Corles of this city. Amount of debts, £101 2s 5d ; credits £7. He was opposed by several creditors, and it appeared that the insolvent, in conjunction with a man named William Batham, who was also before the Court, and another man named Lowe, whose whereabouts cannot at present be ascertained, had for the last two years been in the habit of borrowing from various money lending societies about Birmingham and Dudley, sums of money on each other's security. Insolvent admitted that they had thus obtained loans to a considerable amount. He described himself as a boatman with a wife and two children, earning £1 a week, and had no idea as to the amount of the sums for which he had become liable for himself and the other parties who had connected themselves with him. He underwent a searching examination, and at its close his Honour said he could not believe his testimony, and should consequently dismiss his petition.

**314 May 14 1859**

**CITY POLICE**

**ASSAULT John Brace**, boatman, for brutally assaulting Emma Lemm in Dolday, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

**315 May 21 1859**

The old "Mug House" in Hylton Street, by the bank of the river, in its changed internal aspect is a sign of the times not to be passed by. At this ancient public house it was formerly the custom for the owners of barges to engage crews to drag their vessels up the river to Bewdley, and the bargain was sealed by a mug of ale – hence the name. But change is ever progressing, and the long files from ten to fourteen men that in our youthful days we have often seen towing heavy laden trows up "Sivurn" are now seen no longer. The "Severn Towing-path Company" displaced the men with their horses, by degrees lessening the tumultuous scenes at the "Mug House", and now steam tugs on the improved navigation of the river, pulling behind them a processional train of from four to eight barges and coal boats at a time cry "hold hard" to the horses ; who will not, however, perhaps be quite so soon displaced as the men, unless improvement goes a step further. No doubt the old "Mug House" could produce a volume of adventures on its way, and bargemen may not perhaps trouble themselves with such regrets as our reminiscent friend sighs forth as to his favourite bowling green, yet even the "Mug House" we may be sure will hardly be passed without its calling up some past scene of fighting and revelry – or in good hands something more poetical may be got out of it.

**316 May 28 1859**

**STOURBRIDGE COUNTY COURT** The monthly sitting of this Court was held on Monday last in the Corn Exchange before J E Davies Esq, deputy judge. There were 432 causes, but none possessed any public interest. In the case of **Castree v Dalloway**, which was adjourned for his Honour's decision from last court day, plaintiff, a boatman, sued defendant, landlord of the Wool Pack Inn, for damages sustained by the loss of his horse, which he alleged was caused through the dilapidated state of defendant's stable, and there was a cellar underneath, the arch of which gave way, causing such injuries to the animal that it had to be killed. His Honour gave judgement for defendant. Mr Homfrey, then, on behalf of Castree, applied for a new trial. His Honour said he would look through his notes, and next court day would state if there were grounds for granting the application.

### 317 June 4 1859

#### CITY POLICE

**ASSAULTING THE POLICE** **Richard Weaver**, a boatman, was charged with assaulting PC Fowkes at a late hour on Monday night. The officer when on duty in Lowesmoor heard a cry of "Murder!", and on proceeding to the wharf found that it arose from the wife of the defendant, who was saving herself from being thrown overboard from a boat. Fowkes asked him if he knew what he was about, when the defendant replied, "Oh you ----, it's a policeman, is it? Stay a minute and I'll do for you". He thereupon loosed the woman and called out, "Where's my stick?", and added to the officer, "If you are not out of this in a minute, I'll knock your brains out". The prisoner then ran along the boat, got a "stretcher", and leaped to the shore. He made a blow at the officer, who warded it off with a stick which was, however, broken by the blow ; then he made a second, which was aimed at the officer's head, but the latter held up his arm to save his head, and his arm was disabled by the blow which then came upon it. The officer seized him, and they struggled together for upwards of twenty minutes, when two other policemen arrived, and the brute was conveyed to the station house. Fined £3 and 7s costs, or one month's imprisonment in default.

### 318 June 11 1859

#### CITY POLICE

**DISORDERLIES** The only business this morning was the disposal of some half a dozen drunk and disorderly persons, all of whom were discharged. The offenders were Charles Smith, glover of Queen Street ; Thomas Butcher, Barbourne, **Alex Jelf**, boatman, Park Street ; Matthew Dowling, John Walker and another.

### 319 June 11 1859

#### STOURPORT

**BURGLARY AND DEATH OF THE BURGLAR** Last night (Thursday), a burglary was committed at the offices of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders, the well known carriers, which are in close proximity to the canal basin in this town. It seems that as a person was passing the office at midnight, he overheard the noise of some person inside and gave information to Mr Danks who, having obtained assistance of Police Inspector Stanton, proceeded at once to the premises. The burglar had not had time to make his escape, and as Mr Danks and the officer entered, he was heard to throw up a window, ten or twelve feet high, and jump from it into the basin. The night was dark and the man could not be distinctly seen, and consequently no assistance could be rendered him, for he appeared to be an expert swimmer and to be using every means to avoid detection by swimming into the middle of the basin. Several persons had by this time arrived, so that the man had no chance of landing without being secured, and it is thought that he became exhausted, sank, and was drowned. On examining the office, it was found that the desks had been ransacked, that 3s 11d in money and 44 postage stamps had been stolen, and that an entrance had been gained by forcing the bars and shutters of one of the bottom office windows. Drags were procured this morning, when the body of a boatman named **Isaiah Godfrey**, a native of Gloucester, was discovered in the centre of the basin, and in the pockets was the money, as also were the stamps which had been stolen. He was a single man, but of indifferent character. Considering himself an expert swimmer, and dreading being apprehended (he having been previously transported), he seems to have fearlessly plunged into the water with the hope of gaining his boat, which was lying on the opposite side ; but was thwarted in his endeavours to do so, and so met an untimely fate. He had been in the employ of the firm about ten weeks.

### 320 July 9 1859

#### BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY JULY 5

**DAMAGE** **John Arnold** and **Henry Dunn**, boatmen, were charged by Mr George Frames of the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, with committing wilful damage to the amount of 5s by breaking his door on Sunday night the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. The accused was discharged. There is a warrant out against a man named

John Wright, who has absconded, and is supposed to be the guilty party.

**321 July 9 1859**

CITY POLICE

POCKET PICKING Susan Denson, apprehended by Sergeant Doughty on suspicion of picking the pocket of a boatman named **Holland**, while in her company in a house in Stonemason's Yard this morning, was remanded until tomorrow.

**322 July 16 1859**

CITY POLICE

ASSAULT **Henry Dunn**, boatman, was brought up under a warrant for assaulting another boatman named **Benjamin Ballinger**, but the parties were allowed to settle their differences out of court.

**323 July 16 1859**

SUMMER ASSIZE – SUMMARY OF THE CALENDAR

**Henry Bagnall**, 30, boatman, and **William Wimblett**, 24, boatman, three charges of burglary at Oldbury on the 21<sup>st</sup> April.

**324 July 23 1859**

WORCESTERSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

BURGLARY AT OLDBURY **Henry Bagnell**, 30, **William Wimblett**, 24, boatmen, George Allen and Thomas Freeth, were charged with burglariously breaking and entering the counting house of Mr R W Johnson, and the offices of the Railway Carriage Company, at Oldbury on the 8<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Cooke and Mr Hill prosecuted ; Mr Motteram defended. Mr Cooke stated the case, and called as first witness,

Henry Manning, a watchman at the Railway Company's Works, who deposed that he saw the counting house and everything secure at two o'clock on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June. At four o'clock, found the counting house full of smoke from gunpowder. Went to the money safe in the office. Went into the counting house and found a piece cut out of the flooring about two inches wide, and six or seven inches long. Saw that cupboards and desks had been opened by a crowbar. Found the manager's mackintosh near the window which had been "prized" up.

The prisoners asked no questions.

PC Samuel Simmons stated that on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, he went to the house of a man named John Long at Greet's Green near Oldbury, and there found a great number of articles on the floor, among which were a brush, several cigars, a cruet stand, a pair of scissors, some pickle jars and a piece of cloth. He then went to Bagnell's house, distant about two miles from the prosecutor's premises. After searching the house and finding the three bottles now produced, he charged Bagnell, Wimblett and his wife with stealing various articles from Mr Johnson's. Mrs Wimblett said that her husband gave her the articles found at Long's to take there. He then visited the house of the prisoner Allen at Smethwick. He there found a label answering to the description of the pickles found at Bagnell's ; he also found another bottle of pickles under the grate. He was told by Allen that he had bought the pickle jars in New Street, Birmingham ; but on subsequently enquiring at the place, he ascertained that none such had been sold there.

Police Inspector William Farr deposed to finding, on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 140 postage stamps under the floor in a top room of Allen's house. He received a "jemmy" (produced) from PC Langton. On inspecting the railway carriage works, he found marks corresponding with the jemmy. The prisoner Allen, on being brought to Mr Johnson on the 13<sup>th</sup>, gave his name as Waterhouse, stating that he lived at Wolverhampton. Some broken bottles were found at the back of Allen's house. When apprehended, the prisoner Freeth gave the name of Hemms.

Herbert Wheeler, secretary, stated that he left the Works safe on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> ult. He next morning found that several of the drawers had been broken open and five boxes of cigars (regalias)

had been taken away. These cigars were of unusual size, and were divided into colours. Some pickle jars labelled "Waters, Lewis and Co, Worcester" were also missing.

John Rawlings, another clerk at the Works, deposed to missing some mathematical instruments from the Railway Works, which on the previous night he had seen safe. Marks corresponding with the jemmy were visible on the drawers.

Caroline Stapleford, wife of the under manager, identified the cruet produced as being Mr Johnson's property, and Thomas Eaton, a time keeper at the Works, spoke to the identity of some knives and forks produced, from seeing them daily.

Caroline Long deposed to Wimblett's wife bringing some things to her house, which were found there, and taking some pickle jars away with her.

John Jones was present at the search of Allen's house, and saw there a glass jar of pickles.

PC Willcox assisted in the apprehension of the prisoners Allen and Freeth. Allen threw away something, which was found to be the jemmy which had been produced. Freeth had in his possession a turnscrew, a dark lantern and a pair of "portable whiskers", which the witness caused much amusement by trying on his own frontispiece.

Joseph Thompson, an intelligent boy, deposed to seeing the prisoners Allen and Freeth standing together near the house of a man named Grise, distant about a mile and a quarter from the works. He was closely cross-examined by Freeth and Allen, and much amused the Court by the pertinacity with which he affirmed that he saw them near Grise's "between a waggon and a window", and that though it was "between light and dark" he knew them both very well.

His Lordship asked what was the case against Wimblett.

Mr Cooke said some of the stolen articles were found at his house, and his wife stated that several others of them had been given to her by her husband.

The prisoners severally addressed the jury, and protested their innocence.

His Lordship elaborately summed up, and remarked that there was no evidence against Bagnell as to the burglary.

The jury found Allen and Freeth guilty of the burglary, and Wimblett of receiving the goods knowing them to be stolen. The Judge directed the jury to acquit Bagnell. Previous convictions were proved against Allen and Freeth. Allen being at present under a sentence of penal servitude for eight years, was further sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, and Freeth, now undergoing six years, was increased by four. Wimblett's name also appearing in the calendar in two other cases, he was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

### **325 August 13 1859**

#### **CITY POLICE**

**ASSAULTS** **John Ballinger**, a boatman, was charged with assaulting **Mr Waldron**, keeper of the Blockhouse Lock of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, on Monday. It appeared that in consequence of the low state of the water in the canal, the lock was fastened up by the complainant for an hour or so, before any boats were allowed to go through. The defendant and **Thomas Weightman**, the captain of a boat lying near, were drinking at the time in a public house, when Weightman ordered the defendant to fetch an axe to break off the lock of the paddle, as he said he was determined to go through. Defendant procured a piece of hooping iron, and at once began picking the lock, when the complainant interfered, and was rather roughly used. His coat and trousers were torn, and a wound was inflicted in his leg by being forced against a piece of iron belonging to the lock. The magistrates thought that as the defendant had acted under the orders of his master, an arrangement had better be come to between them. Mr Waldron did not wish to press the charge, and acceded to the terms offered by the defendant. He expressed his intention, however, of taking out a summons for Weightman to appear on a charge of illegally detaining his boat in the lock for upwards of three hours after the above assault had been committed.

[Note : Name of the captain shown as Wakeman in article dated October 8 1859]

### 326 August 20 1859

ACCIDENTS On Wednesday a boatman named **Samuel Hodgetts** had several of his ribs fractured by falling between a waggon of hay and a boat which he and others were loading in Lowesmoor Wharf.

### 327 August 20 1859

#### CITY POLICE

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **Charles Spragg**, a boatman, charged by PC Fielders with being drunk and assaulting him in Union Street, at an early hour this morning, was fined £2 and expenses, or 14 days' imprisonment in default.

### 328 September 3 1859

#### BROMSGROVE

INQUEST On Saturday last, an inquest was held before R Docker Esq at the house of William Yates, the Queen's Head Inn, Stoke Prior, on the body of **Charles Taylor**, a boatman aged about 20, who was found drowned in No 24 lock on the 16<sup>th</sup> ult. Thomas Crump deposed that he saw deceased a short time previously to three o'clock in the afternoon of the above day going up the canal very tipsy. Mr Fletcher, surgeon, examined the body, and found no external marks of violence. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

### 329 October 8 1859

MEMORIAL WATERMEN'S CHURCH A special meeting of the committee, which nearly a year ago was called together to consider what just tribute could be paid to the memory of the lamented Rev John Davies, late Rector of St Clement's (whereat it was resolved that it would be desirable to erect an enlarged Watermen's Chapel of more durable materials than the present floating one, and if possible on the site of old St Clement's Church), was summoned on Monday last to hear the report of what had been done by the sub committee, and to act upon that report. The plan of an iron church by Messrs Hemming, Moorgate Street, London, to contain 300 sittings at an estimated cost of £660 was produced and, after many questions put and satisfactorily answered, a resolution was proposed by Mr Alderman Lea, and seconded by Mr Rowlands, that the plan produced be adopted. It may be observed that this plan had previously been laid before the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, who had most kindly expressed his readiness to license the building for Divine Worship when it should be erected. A second resolution, moved by the Rev B Davis and seconded by the Rev D Wheeler, that Messrs R Allies, R W Binns, Alderman Lea and W Rowlands, together with the Rector of St Clements, do form a sub committee for the purpose of carrying out the first resolution and taking steps for the erection of the building, was then proposed. It will be satisfactory to the friends of the undertaking to know that more than £600 have already been subscribed ; but as it is estimated that the whole cost of the church, including foundations, fittings and fencing, will amount to £800, it is hoped that those who have not yet contributed will take an early opportunity of relieving the committee from any feeling of uncertainty as to the supply of needful funds. The site of the Memorial Church will be the Burial ground of old St Clement's, which has been undisturbed these thirty years, and being higher than the site of the old church will, with little trouble, be secured from the approach of the highest floods.

### 330 October 8 1859

#### CITY POLICE

OBSTRUCTING THE CANAL **Thomas Wakeman sen**, who did not appear, was charged by the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company with wilfully causing an obstruction in the Blockhouse Lock of the said canal for four hours in the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, whereby he had incurred heavy pains and penalties under their bye laws. Mr G Bentley appeared for the company, who were represented in the person of **Mr W Hodgkinson**, their clerk. **Mr Waldron**, the lock-keeper, said that on the above day the defendant came down the canal with three boats, and on arriving at the

lock, one of his men was given into custody for assault. The defendant then intercepted the passage of the canal by his boat, and on his turn coming for going through the lock, he and his men wilfully interfered with the paddle, and placed it in such a position that the lock would but partially empty itself, and with his boat in the lock obstinately remained from half past two until half past six o'clock, causing an obstruction and necessitating nearly a dozen other boats to wait during that time, one of which, bound to Gloucester with salt, was liable to demurrage for the detention. Mr Hodgkinson said this practice was becoming common amongst boatmen, and therefore the company, with a desire to suppress it, wished to press the charge in this instance as a warning. The Bench said it was a serious case, and they should fine defendant under the bye laws £6 and 11s costs, or in default one month's imprisonment.

### **331    October 15 1859**

#### **UPTON-ON-SEVERN**

**ATTEMPTED SUICIDE** **Sarah White**, the wife of a boatman living in this town, attempted self destruction on Saturday last by cutting her throat with a knife, while labouring under a fit of temporary insanity. She was removed to the Infirmary at Worcester where, under skilful medical treatment, she is now going on favourably.

### **332    November 12 1859**

#### **CITY POLICE**

**INEBRIATES** **Joseph Coopey**, a waterman from Tewkesbury, (who admitted to the Bench that he was one of the "Gloucester Coopeys", but that he was not called before the Election Commissioners as he did not vote, not having taken up his freedom) was charged by PC Berridge with being drunk and assaulting him between twelve and one o'clock on Saturday night last. It appeared that the defendant being compelled to leave his boat, owing to the flooded state of the river, had entered some person's house near the Quay and requested lodgings for the night, for which he offered payment. As it was not convenient to accommodate him, he was requested to leave, which he refused to do ; a policeman was accordingly sent for and forcibly removed him, in consequence of which the assault was committed. Expressing sorrow, and the charge not being pressed, he was discharged with a caution.

### **333    December 17 1859**

#### **WORCESTER CITY AND COUNTY WINTER ASSIZES**

**HIGHWAY ROBBERY AT OLDBURY** **Enoch Allen**, 33, and **David Allen**, 18, boatmen, were charged with having, on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> September last in a road leading across some fields to Oldbury, assaulted Samuel Osborne, nailor, and stolen from his person a half sovereign and two half crowns, his property. Mr Cresswell prosecuted ; Mr Kenealy defended. The facts of the case were briefly these :- The prosecutor had been at Oldbury market on the above named night, and left there to return to his residence at Wood End near Oldbury shortly after eight o'clock, and crossed over some fields at the back of the Malt Shovel Inn by a footpath communicating with the main road, and affording a shorter cut. Whilst walking along, he was encountered by two men, who assaulted and threw him down, and while one of them held him, the other rifled his pockets. He shouted, "Murder" and one placed his hand over his mouth to prevent him crying out. Some persons approaching, both men ran off, and on getting up he found he had been robbed of half a sovereign and two half crowns which had been safe in his pocket on leaving Oldbury. Two men were seen running away by several witnesses, whose attention had been attracted by hearing a cry of "murder", three of whom positively identified the prisoners as being the men whom they saw attempting to escape, the night being pretty clear though somewhat dark ; two women named Hipkiss stated that they particularly noticed them as they jumped over a hedge into the road, being close to them at the time. David Allen had his jacket round his neck and his cap off. They were apprehended by PC Hyde the next day (Sunday) for duck stealing.

*(Remainder of article unreadable)*

### 334 December 24 1859

#### SHERRIFF'S COURTS

WHITEHOUSE v WHITEHOUSE There was an action tried before J Gillam Esq, Under Sherriff for the county, at the Shirehall yesterday (Thursday), and was brought by plaintiff Richard Whitehouse of Brockmoor, Staffordshire, to recover of his brother Noah Whitehouse of Hereford, the sum of £15, balance of an account of £35 for a boat, planking, stoves &c, which he had sold him. Mr Rea appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr G B Lowe of Dudley for the defendant. The case was devoid of interest to the public. It appeared that on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May last, an agreement was entered into in writing between the parties, whereby the defendant agreed to purchase the boat, planking &c for £35, and to pay down £20 of that sum at the time. This was accordingly done, and it was stipulated in the agreement that the balance of £15 should be paid in nine months. Strange to say, from some misconception or another, an action was brought against the defendant in a superior Court in London, from whence it was transferred to this Court. The question appeared to be whether the balance was to be paid by instalments, or simply within the time as the agreement stipulated. Mr Evans of Hereford, who drew up the agreement and witnessed its signature, deposed to nothing being said about the money being paid by instalments at that time. **John Hodgetts**, a boatman of Steeple, near Ledbury, who was present at a public house where the agreement was signed by both parties, said, however, that a conversation arose between them afterwards, in which it was agreed that £5 per quarter should be paid until the £15 was discharged. There was, nevertheless, no disputing the agreement, and Mr Rea consequently elected to be non suited. Plaintiff was non suited accordingly.

### 335 December 24 1859

#### COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

RECEIVING STOLEN PROPERTY A boatman named **William Bishop** was brought up on bail, on suspicion of receiving a bag of guano on the 16<sup>th</sup> instant, knowing the same to have been stolen. It appeared that the guano had been purloined from the stores of Mr Webb of this city, and was found in Bishop's boat at Holt Fleet. He satisfactorily accounted for its possession, alleging that he had given its full value for it, and that the party from whom he purchased it solemnly affirmed it to be his own. He called a witness who proved his statement, and he accounted for having sold the manure for 13s by stating that his boat was frozen up on the Severn, and he was desirous not to lose more than he could help. The case was accordingly dismissed.

### 336 December 24 1859

ALLEGED ATTEMPT AT ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE A labourer named Charles Harris of Castlemorton had well nigh lost his life in the Severn, in this city, on Saturday night. According to his own story, it appears that he was returning home late at night from Fearnall Heath, when he was molested by two men on the bridge, who took him on the Upper Quay and there attempted to rob him. He struggled with them, during which he was pushed off the Quay on to the ice, a depth of nine or ten feet. His body became partly immersed in the water, and he received some severe bruises about the head and face which bled badly. His cries for assistance awoke a bargeman named **Richard Bennett** who, rushing from his bed, succeeded in rescuing Harris from his perilous position by means of a boat hook. The unfortunate man was unable to stand, and his life was for some time despaired of. Detective Richardson and PC Berridge, however, were soon on the spot, and conveyed him to the Infirmary, where his injuries were promptly attended to. They are of a serious nature, but happily he is going on favourably.