

BERROWS WORCESTER JOURNAL
1881 to 1889

1 January 1 1881

BROMSGROVE POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

STEALING WHISKEY **William Allen** and **George Godwin**, boatmen, were charged with stealing eight bottles of whiskey and a padlock and key, the property of John Webb, Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, on the 28th December. Prisoners were suspected and watched, and being found at 9.30 at night crouched behind a case of whiskey outside the back door of the Boat Inn, were pounced upon by Mr Webb and PC Workman. Allen had one and Godwin two bottles of whiskey ; and four more bottles and the padlock and key were found in a locker under the bed in the cabin of their boat. They were both committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

2 January 29 1881

DIGLIS BETHEL ROOM On Saturday evening, a large deputation of watermen, kept here by the frost, waited upon Mr Bradley and requested the use of the above room during the severe weather, for Bible reading and religious services. Mr Bradley acceded to their desire, and the room has been filled each evening. The Rev J T L Maggs preached on Tuesday evening, and held another service on Wednesday.

3 February 5 1881

BETHEL ROOM SERVICES On Tuesday the watermen kept at Diglis by the frost met for their last special service, conducted by Mr I Williams, whom they requested to convey their thanks to the Revds J B James and J T L Maggs for organising the meetings and those who assisted. The name of Mr J R Dexter was particularly mentioned, as he had narrowly escaped drowning in one of the locks on Thursday last, and nevertheless preached the same evening. The men and their families desired Mr Bradley (who was on business down the river) to be thanked for kindly providing the room. The services are to be continued on Sunday afternoons.

4 February 12 1881

RELIEF FUNDS

TO THE EDITOR OF BERROW'S WORCESTER JOURNAL

Dear Sir – My attention has been called to an inquiry respecting the non distribution of “Relief Funds” in our parish of St Martin's. To remove a misapprehension, and to make it clear why we asked so small a portion of the fund at the second meeting of the Central Committee, will you allow me to explain what has already been done by the churchwardens and myself, aided by the good offices of district visitors, to diminish the distress caused by severe weather. From Christmas onwards to the present date, gifts have been distributed to the poorer members of our parish, as follows :– (a) 40 (?gowns) of the value of 7s to 8s each ; (b) 25 blankets ; (c) 25 clothing tickets worth 3s 6d each ; (d) 100 tickets for coal of 2 cwt each ; (e) 200 bread tickets of 2 qrs each. The foregoing have been supplied by funds under the regular control of the Churchwardens and Rector. In addition it has been our custom for some years past to invite the aid of our wealthier parishioners by sending us funds for extra needs. By this means, we had this year £21 at our disposal (subscribed, as I say, by parishioners), from which we have dispensed, up to this time, about 180 tickets for coal, meat, bread or grocery to the value of 2s each. Besides this, the liberality of the Old Bank and of a few other friends enabled us to open a free soup kitchen in the Boatmen's New Mission Room in Lowesmoor, where soup was given away to all applicants for the whole period of the late severe winter. By the kindness of Mr S S Forster also, a free breakfast was given to the boatmen every morning for about a fortnight. Moreover we have, in St Martin's parish, a regular staff of 22 district visitors, besides a lay assistant, each one of whom is provided with a relief cheque book for the more pressing necessities of the afflicted that come under their visitations. Then again, our parish has shared in the benefits of the Prince of Wales's coal fund, and of the

Mayor's soup kitchen in New Street. Under these circumstances I am sure it will be felt that ours was not one of the least cared for parishes in the city, and that it would have been unjust for us to cripple other parishes whose heart-rending poverty was too evident by demanding a larger grant than we asked for. The Central Committee, however, kindly voted us £15, and the greater part of that grant has already been disposed of by the acting Committee. You will allow me to assure you that this statement is not put forth with any ulterior object in view, but simply to render it understood that the rector and churchwardens are not indifferent to the wants of their poor whilst desiring to be as considerate of the wants of others as possible. I am, Sir, yours faithfully.

ROBERT HUGH BLAIR
Rector, St Martin's, Worcester.

5 March 5 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF ROBBERY IN HIGH STREET George Henry Chatterley, alias Duckett, alias Edward Henry Rowe, was charged with stealing £20 from Mrs Stevenson. Mr W Tree defended. Mrs Stevenson, of St George's Square, said that on 6th November last between 11 and 12 o'clock, she received £20 at the National Provincial Bank – three £5 Bank of England notes and £5 in gold – which she placed in the purse produced, and put the purse in her bag, which she carried on her left arm. After going to a shop, she went towards High Street, accompanied by her daughter. Near Mr Ponting's shop there was a crowd, and a man pushed against her daughter, and then, in a moment, put his hand in her bag, took the purse and darted away across the road. She called out, and several persons ran in pursuit. The man was short and dark, but she could not identify him. Charlotte Elizabeth Stevenson, daughter of the last witness, said she was with her mother on 6th November last. At the top of Broad Street they were stopped by a crowd. On crossing the road and when they were close to Mr Ponting's shop, a man pushed against her very rudely, and then she heard her mother call out, "I have lost my purse". She saw a man run across the street towards Mealcheapen Street. She believed the prisoner to be the man. He was dressed differently at that time, and looked stouter, but she recognised him by his face. Cross-examined : She had a momentary view of the prisoner, and did not see him take the purse. Was quite sure prisoner was the man who jostled against them and then ran away. Mr M Power, head constable, deposed to being near the Old Bank on the day mentioned by the prosecutrix. He saw a number of persons collected near the bank, and observed a man come from the crowd and run rapidly down St Swithin Street. Concluding that something was the matter, witness went in pursuit of the man but, being tripped up, lost sight of him. He did not see the face of the man, and could not identify prisoner. Cross-examined : Several persons who had seen prisoner at the station had declined to identify him. Witness received the purse produced on the day of the robbery from a man named Morgan. Oliver Morgan, shoe pressman, said he was standing, with two other men, opposite the Avenue on the 6th November. He saw the prosecutrix on the other side of the street. She was carrying a satchel. Three men were walking near her, and continued to pass and repass her until they reached the Bank, when witness noticed some confusion, and saw a man run down St Swithin Street, followed by Mr Power. The man was one of those witness had seen walking by prosecutrix. He believed prisoner was the man. Cross-examined : Witness had been four times convicted. He watched the three men and the prosecutrix walk from opposite the Avenue to Mr Ponting's shop. Almost immediately after, he saw a man rush out of the crowd and go down St Swithin Street. Two other men followed him, and one of them tripped Mr Power up. Prosecutrix crossed the street as soon as she was able, and told witness someone had stolen her purse. Witness followed the three men down St Swithin Street and into the Corn Market, where he lost sight of them. Albert Herbert gave corroborative evidence with respect to the three men following the prosecutrix near Mr Ponting's. Witness saw one of the three snatch at something the prosecutrix was carrying, and run across the street. He believed prisoner was the man, as he took particular notice of his features. James Morgan, formerly of James Street, saw the prisoner in Mr Sewell's yard about noon on November 6th. He remained there for a minute or two, and then went into an outbuilding in witness's yard. Subsequently he crossed the canal and

went towards Diglis. Witness, who was on the other side of the canal, crossed and went into the outbuilding to see whether prisoner had placed anything there, and found the purse produced, which he took to the police station. Prisoner had placed the purse under the tiles of the roof. He was positive prisoner was the man whom he saw go into the yard and cross the canal. **James Williams** identified the prisoner as the man whom he ferried across the canal on November 6th. **Arthur Hughes**, another boatman, and PS Sommers gave evidence, and prisoner was then committed for trial. The Bench were willing to take bail, prisoner in £200 and two sureties in £100 each.

6 March 12 1881

DISCOVERY OF THE BODY OF A CHILD IN THE SEVERN An inquest was held at the Boar's Head Inn, Severn Stoke, on Tuesday afternoon, before Mr Frederick Moore, the deputy coroner for the district, on the body of the newly born child found in the Severn. **James Smith** of Severn Stoke, waterman, deposed that he was in a boat at the tail of Stoke Hill on Sunday morning, and saw something in the water. He put his boat shovel under it, and something dropped out of a piece of rag. He then saw it was the body of a child. He placed it in the boat and afterwards handed it to PC Gordon at the Police Station. PC Gordon stated the last witness brought the body to the police station on Sunday morning last. It was wrapped up in the skirt of an alpaca dress, and there was no mark upon it. Witness brought it to the Boar's Head. Dr Marsh of Upton, deposed that he had examined the body, which was in an advanced state of decomposition. There were no marks of violence about it to account for death, and his opinion was that the child was not born alive. He had made a *post mortem* examination of the body. The lungs did not fill the cavity of the chest as usual. There was no air in the lungs, and when he put them into water they sank. He thought the body might have been in the water for three weeks. The Coroner briefly summed up, and the jury at once returned a verdict to the effect that the child was found in the Severn, but that there was no evidence to show how it came in the water.

7 April 9 1881

CITY QUARTER SESSIONS

DARING STREET ROBBERY George Henry Chatterly (22), carpenter, was indicted for stealing on the 6th November 1880 one leather purse containing 3 £5 notes and £5 in money, the property of Mrs Mary Stevenson. Mr Stallard prosecuted and Mr Amphlett defended. The facts of the case were as follows :- On the 6th of November, the time of the Autumn Races, the prosecutrix, in company with her daughter, went to the National Provincial Bank, and after leaving it proceeded in the direction of High Street. Opposite the Cross there was a crowd, and the prosecutrix was pushed near Mr Ponting's shop in High Street, when a man made a snatch at the satchel which Mrs Stevenson was carrying in her hand. He succeeded in abstracting the purse, and ran down St Swithin Street, being followed for a short distance by Mr Power. He got away however, and nothing more was heard of him until he was apprehended in Birmingham about the end of February. Miss Stevenson and Oliver Morgan saw a man whom they believed to be the prisoner run down St Swithin Street. Albert Herbert was called, but he did not answer, and his recognisances were estreated. James Morgan, James Street, said that about twelve o'clock on the day in question he saw a man running along the canal side. The man went into Mr Sewell's coal yard, and appeared to be hiding something. Witness suspected him, and after he was gone witness found the purse produced in a closet in which prisoner had been. Prisoner was the man he saw. **James Williams** and **Arthur Hughes**, boatmen, said they were requested by a man to ferry him across the canal. They refused him at first, but afterwards took him across. They identified the prisoner as the man. PS Sommers said he received the prisoner into custody from the Birmingham Police on the 25th of February. The defence was that it was a case of mistaken identity. A verdict of guilty was found, and prisoner was sentenced to 12 months' hard labour.

8 April 9 1881

FALSE PRETENCES AT OLDBURY Richard Bowen (29), bricklayer, was charged with

obtaining by false pretences four bushels of chaff, a peck and a half of bran and a peck of oats, from Thomas Morris at Oldbury on January 19th. Mr Godson prosecuted. The prisoner went to the prosecutor, who is a corn dealer, and said that he had come for **Frederick Brain**, a boatman. The value of the articles obtained was 3s 7d. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

9 May 14 1881

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Charles Langford**, boatman, Tewkesbury, was charged with working a horse whilst in an unfit condition on April 24th. Theophilus Williams, marble carver, Worcester, said that the horse was in low condition. It had a wound about two inches square on the shoulder. There was nothing to protect the wound from the collar. The horse could not pull. William Cottrill said that defendant had a coal boat. The horse had not strength to pull. The man on shore asked him to help. The defendant was in the boat. PC Gibbs said that the defendant's master told him that when the horse came home it was suffering from a sore shoulder. A fine of 8s and 13s 2d costs was imposed.

10 May 14 1881

KIDDERMINSTER

SERIOUS CHARGE A boatman, **James Blunt**, was on Wednesday brought up on remand before the magistrates on the charge of attempting to murder a married woman named Yarnold on Saturday last. Prosecutrix, in company with the prisoner, a woman and another man, went to a boat on the old wharf, drank some rum, and she declared that because she would not spend the night with prisoner he pushed her into the canal, leaving her to drown. The police stated that when prisoner was apprehended he acted with much bravado, and challenged the officer to fight. The Bench did not consider the evidence sufficient to commit the prisoner on such a grave charge, and he was dismissed.

11 May 21 1881

CRIME At Hanley on Monday, **William Bailey**, boatman, was sentenced to one month's hard labour for cruelty to a horse which was drawing a boat laden with sixteen tons, and was so lame that it could only use three legs.

12 May 28 1881

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

USING THREATS **George Pittaway**, bargeman, was summoned by **John Harris** of Westcroft Street, barge owner, for using violent threats towards him. Complainant said he was at the Golden Cross Inn, Friar Street, and defendant was also there. Without any provocation, defendant put his fist in his face many times and threatened him violently. The Bench ordered defendant to pay the costs, 11s, and be bound himself in £10 and one surety of £10 to keep the peace.

13 June 4 1881

WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon in aid of the expenses of the Watermen's Church was preached on Tuesday afternoon by the Rev E Whitmore Isaac, vicar of Hanley Castle. The collection amounted to £8 17s 6d. On Sunday, collections will also be made after the services. The church is entirely free, and in a poor neighbourhood. There is a Sunday school with 150 children in connection with it.

14 June 4 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

ILL TREATING DONKEYS **John Jones**, boatman, Hylton Road, was charged with cruelly ill-treating two donkeys by working them in an unfit state, and **John Coombs**, boatman, was charged with causing the same to be worked. The Bench sentenced Coombs to a month's imprisonment ; the

other defendant was fined £1.

15 June 1881

PERSHORE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

THEFT John Webb was charged with stealing a handcart at Pershore on the 23rd May. William Parkes said prisoner lodged at his house and, after having had the truck on hire for a week, took it out of the yard and sold it. **George Bennett**, boatman of Gloucester, said he heard the prisoner offer the truck for sale, and at last bought it from him for 7s 6d, he having declared that it was his own. Prisoner pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 21 days' hard labour. Superintendent Kemp produced a conviction registered against prisoner at Malvern on the 16th February, with sentence of 14 days, the Bench therefore directed that his present term should follow that one.

16 June 1881

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

THREATENING LANGUAGE **Thomas Anderson** of Gravel Walk, boatman, was summoned for using threatening language towards Solomon Rogers of the same place, painter. Caroline Hooper corroborated complainant's statement. For the defence, Charles Henry Underwood, defendant's brother-in-law, was called, and stated defendant was only quarrelling with the Hoopers. Ordered to enter into his own recognisance of £20 to keep the peace for six months and to pay the costs, 11s.

17 July 2 1881

CITY QUARTER SESSIONS

ALLEGED CRUELTY TO DONKEYS : A CONVICTION QUASHED At the City Police Court on May 28th, **John Jones**, boatman, Hylton Road, was fined £1 for cruelly ill-treating two donkeys by working them in an unfit state, and **John Coombes**, boatman, St Clement's Square, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment for causing them to be worked. Two days afterwards Coombes was released on bail pending an appeal to the Quarter Sessions.

The defendant Coombes appealed against the decision of the Bench, Mr Godson and Mr Stallard appearing on his behalf. The respondent, PC Wallace, was not represented by counsel. Mr Power explained that there was no city fund out of which to pay counsel's fees.

PC Wallace said that on the evening of Friday May 27th, in consequence of a complaint which had been made, he went on duty on the towing-path by the side of the Severn. He stopped a man named John Jones, who was working two donkeys with a boat. One of the donkeys was very lame in the forefoot, and had a small wound on the shoulder. On the side where the traces were, there was soreness under the skin, but no wound. The spreader being short, the donkeys pushed against each other. When he drew his hand along the side, the donkey shrunk from the touch. The other donkey had the same appearance where the traces worked. He told Jones that complaints had been received about the donkeys. He said, "The donkey is not lame. W had it shod at Stourport, and that must have caused it to go lame". John Coombes was steering, and afterwards came on the towing-path. Witness asked how he accounted for the lameness. He said that the donkey was not lame until it got to Stourport, where it was shod. Witness asked Coombes to bring the donkeys on the following day to be seen by the magistrates, as that would save him the expense of a summons.

In cross-examination witness said that he had seen donkeys with the hair rubbed off, but not to shrink when touched. He could not swear whether there was any gutta percha tubing to prevent the rubbing of the traces.

In reply to the Recorder, it was stated that the donkeys belonged to Coombes, the boat to Messrs Bourne and Groves.

PS Preece said that the donkeys were in good condition. On putting his hand to the side where the traces were, one of the donkeys kicked.

Mr R E Barnett said that on May 28th the two donkeys were brought to be examined by his brother magistrate, Alderman Wood, and himself. He carefully looked at the donkeys, and found that they had been very much abused. One donkey was very lame in the off forefoot. The donkey was

obliged to be pushed before it would move. It had a wound on the shoulder, which had been larger. The donkey appeared to be in great pain. The harness caused chafing of the side and great irritation of the skin.

Cross-examined : The lameness might have been caused by the shoeing.

Mr M Power said that one of the donkeys had a small wound upon the shoulder. The soreness seemed to have been caused by the spreader.

Cross-examined : He had received a complaint of the donkeys used in towing this boat.

Mr Godson testified to the good effected by Mr Power in the treatment of animals. It was unavoidable that donkeys which were worked should have the hair rubbed off. He believed this was the only case in the records of the city where a man with 49 years' good character had been committed to prison without the option of a fine.

The Recorder : It is a very heavy sentence no doubt. The question is whether it was deserved.

Mr H R Perrins, MRVCS, said that many times he had examined animals on behalf of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On May 28th he examined the two donkeys belonging to the appellant. There was no cruelty in working the animals in the condition in which they were. The hair was off each side of each donkey. Of necessity the two sides of donkeys, worked together, were rubbed. There was irritation of the skin from the friction of the traces. On the shoulder the head of a pimple had been knocked off. One of the shoes of the donkey had been put on a little too tight. Donkeys were helped in pulling by leaning together. On the following Monday he asked Mr Barnett and Mr Power to see the donkeys, but they declined. The spreaders were of the usual length, the donkeys unusually big.

Mr Herbert Caldicott said that he carefully looked at the donkeys. After a great deal of trouble, he found a little dry scab on one of the shoulders. The shaggy hair had been rubbed off. The short hair was there. It was no more than if the animal had been clipped.

The Recorder said he did not think the conviction could be sustained. The case was clearly one of suspicion upon the wound on the shoulder and the lameness. Though there was some soreness and tenderness, it was of such a nature that they were soon healed. He did not think there was evidence to show intentional cruelty, and therefore the conviction must be quashed.

Mr Godson said that as the respondent was a policeman, he supposed he could not ask for costs.

The Recorder said that the case was a proper one to bring before the magistrates. He hoped that owners of donkeys employed in towing would be careful.

18 July 16 1881

ACCIDENTS On Saturday evening, as some pony races were being brought off on Pitchcroft, a boatman named **John Dayus** was run over. He was removed in an unconscious condition to the Infirmary, where it was found that he had sustained a slight concussion to the brain.

19 July 16 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

SUSPECTED ROBBERY **Benjamin Sheppard** (35), boatman, Upton-on-Severn, was charged on suspicion with having stolen a double barrelled gun. PS Sommers said that this morning about nine o'clock, he found the prisoner attempting to pledge the gun. Prisoner said that he had brought it from Newport, Monmouthshire, that he left Newport yesterday afternoon, and had walked all night. Witness said that Newport was 70 miles distant, and he could not have walked so far. Since he was in custody, prisoner had said that a man gave him the gun to pawn, but that he never saw the man before. He was remanded for a week.

20 July 23 1881

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

DAMAGING A BRIDGE **William Smith, Alfred Smith** and **John Hodges**, boatmen, were charged with doing wilful damage to a bridge at Blackpole, the property of the Sharpness New Docks and Birmingham Canal Co. On the 9th ult, defendants were seen on the bridge, and were

observed by several people to push some of the coping stones into the canal. The damage was estimated at £4. It was stated that offences of this kind had been very numerous of late. Defendants admitted the offence. They were each committed to prison for one month, and ordered to pay the costs or suffer an additional month's imprisonment.

21 July 30 1881

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT **James Price** of the Inliberties, bargeman, and Alfred Barnett of the Holloway, saltmaker, for being drunk and disorderly on Saturday last, were each fined 5s and 9s 6d costs.

22 August 20 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **Benjamin Ballinger**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged with cruelly ill treating an ass in the Blockhouse on July 18th. Joseph Bevan said that the defendant's donkeys were drawing a boat. Defendant was excited and kicked the donkey in the side and then in the bowels. He used bad language. Another witness was called, who said that defendant kicked the donkeys. He spoke to defendant, who threatened to serve him the same. Defendant usually treated his donkeys well. Defendant said he was in a passion and did not know what he was doing. He had been up during the night, and taking brandy. Defendant was fined 20s including costs.

23 August 20 1881

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Walter Gardner**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse on the 2nd inst. Mr Harman, Humane Society Officer, who proved the case, said the horse was in a very bad state. The Bench ordered the horse to be brought to the Shire Hall, and after examining it, adjourned the case for a fortnight. In the meantime the defendant's employers, the Severn and Canal Carrying Co, will be summoned for causing the horse to be worked.

24 September 3 1881

DROITWICH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

CAUTION TO BOATMEN **Joseph Westwood**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Allen and Baylis of Worcester, was summoned at the instance of the Sharpness Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company for an offence against the bye laws of the company on Sunday the 14th inst at Astwood, Dodderhill. Mr Holyoake appeared to prosecute. He stated the circumstances of the case, from which it appeared that on the day in question defendant was in charge of a boat on the canal. He was proceeding in the direction of Worcester. Immediately in front of him was a boat in charge of a man named **Smith**, and while his boat was in the Astwood lock, and the water therein level with the lower pound, defendant wilfully lifted up the upper valves of the lock, causing a great flush of water, with the intention of forcing Smith's boat out of the lock, whereby the lock gates were in danger of being damaged, and a considerable quantity of water was wasted. Two witnesses named Mary Ann Jackson and William Heath deposed to the facts, and Mr Chubb, a clerk in the company's office at Birmingham, produced the bye laws. Defendant was fined £2 and 13s costs.

25 October 15 1881

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH QUARTER SESSIONS, TUESDAY

COUNTERFEIT COIN **Sophia Hawker**, wife of **Charles Hawker**, waterman, was charged with uttering a counterfeit coin representing a sovereign at Tewkesbury on the 11th September. Mr F Moore prosecuted on behalf of the Treasury, and Mr L M Brown (instructed by Mr J M Clarke) defended. The surgeon of the gaol had certified that the prisoner was too ill to be removed from Gloucester, but she had insisted upon taking her trial, and she was brought to the Court in a cab and carried in by three constables in a fainting condition. A medical man having certified that it would

be impossible for her to remain in Court during the trial. Mr Moore, at the suggestion of the Recorder, applied for a postponement till next Sessions, and the prisoner was admitted to bail. Eliza Hampton, wife of Charles Hampton, labourer, and sister to prisoner Hawker, was charged with a similar offence on the same date. Mr Brown, instructed by Messrs Moores and Romney, prosecuted on behalf of the Treasury. The prisoner presented a coin resembling a sovereign for some beer at the Brewers Arms, and it was taken by the landlady and the change given. Prisoner denied that she had any knowledge of the fraud, and said she received the coin from Hawker and gave her the change. The jury, after being locked up an hour and a half, found the prisoner guilty, but strongly recommended her to mercy. Sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour.

26 October 22 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF ASSAULT **William Groves**, boatman of no fixed abode, was charged with assaulting Herbert Harris by striking him in the face three times. Case dismissed, complainant not appearing.

27 October 22 1881

COUNTY QUARTER SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **Levi Cooke** (24) and **Henry Pickerill** (26), boatmen, pleaded guilty to stealing four cwt of coal at Oldbury on the 29th August, the property of the Tharsis Sulphur and Copper Company Limited. The police stated that each of them had been previously convicted. Cooke was committed for six and Pickerill for three months.

28 November 12 1881

ACCIDENT **George Harris**, a boatman living at Droitwich, has been admitted into the Infirmary suffering from a compound fracture of the left leg. He was engaged at the Quay in unloading deals, when a stack fell upon him, causing the injury. The fracture is very severe, but the unfortunate man is progressing as well as can be expected.

29 November 12 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

ILL USING A DONKEY **Thomas Bourne**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a donkey on the 16th September. The case was proved by Mr Daniel Harwood, officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who stated that defendant gave the donkey a violent kick in consequence of its starting off. He did not wish to press the charge against defendant, who bore a very good character and generally treated his donkeys well. He was ordered to pay half the costs of the court, 4s 3d.

30 December 17 1881

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Thomas Dearne** of the Holloway, boatman, was fined 2s 6d and 8s 6d costs for this offence, in Queen Street, on Saturday night last.

31 December 31 1881

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE AGAINST POLICE CONSTABLES PC George Farley was summoned for assaulting **John Weaver**, boatman, and PC George Bannister for aiding and abetting in the assault. There were cross summons against Weaver and his wife. Mr Beauchamp appeared for the Weavers, and Mr Warren Tree for the constables. **Annie Weaver** stated that on Christmas Eve she was on board a boat in Lowesmoor Wharf, talking to a Mrs Smith. Her husband was in the cabin. While they were talking, two constables came up, and one of them ordered witness and Mrs Smith to desist from talking, cursed at them, and said that if they did not go into the cabin they would be fetched off the

boat. Witness's husband dared the officer to come on board, on which he jumped on to the deck, and assaulted him and witness, knocking them down. Witness saw the number on the officer's coat, and also that of the second officer who was standing on the wharf, and who shouted out to the officer on the boat to come off. She could not identify them by their features as it was dark. John Weaver gave corroborative evidence as to the conversation and assault. His eye was discoloured by a blow given him by the officer, and the back of his head was injured. The officer knocked his wife down and rolled over with her on the floor, extinguishing the light. On the following morning he complained at the Police Station of the way in which he and his wife had been treated by the officer. He did not know until Monday morning that the police had reported that he was drunk. In answer to Mr Tree, complainant denied that he was drunk, or that he got the black eye in a fight outside the Turk's Head Inn. Mrs Smith deposed to hearing the officer use bad language towards Weaver and his wife. After he jumped on to the boat, witness who was standing in another boat close by, heard cries of "Murder" proceed from the cabin. When the officers came up, they did not accuse complainant of fighting. Witness believed that complainant had some drink at the Turk's Head, but he was not intoxicated. Confirmatory evidence was given by **Charles Whitehouse**, who was standing in a boat next to complainant's, and who said he saw all that took place. In defence, Mr Tree challenged the credit of the witnesses who had been examined, all of whom he should prove had been drinking previous to the alleged assault. He was instructed that they had all misrepresented, or at least greatly exaggerated, what really did take place. PC Harley deposed to going into Lowesmoor Wharf in company with PC Bannister early on Christmas morning, and to seeing Weaver and his wife fighting. A crowd of about fifty persons was assembled outside the Wharf gates. When witness went through the gate the fighting ceased. He asked Weaver for his name, but was refused. He attempted to go on board the boat, but was prevented by Mrs Weaver, who struck him and knocked his helmet into the canal. He denied *in toto* the statements of complainant and his wife, that they were assaulted by Bannister, who went on board the boat to get their names. PC Bannister corroborated, and said that when he entered the cabin Mrs Weaver struck him two blows in the face. John Weaver was intoxicated and shouted out "Murder" though witness did not touch him. PC Wright deposed to hearing the disturbance while on duty at Rainbow Hill ; and Sergeant Preece said that two hours before the alleged assault, Weaver was fighting outside the Turk's Head Inn. Both cases were dismissed.

32 January 28 1882

CITY POLICE COURT

DRUNK AND INCAPABLE **John Williams**, boatman, Diglis, was charged with being drunk and incapable in Park Street on Wednesday night. The case was proved by PC Troughton. This being prisoner's first offence of the kind, he was admonished and discharged.

33 February 11 1882

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

THE TOWING PATH BYE LAWS **Robert Pearce** of Chalford, boatowner, was charged by Mr Wright, secretary of the Gloucester and Worcester Towing-path Company, with using a horse on the towing-path at Bushley without having taken a ticket for the same, contrary to their bye laws. It appeared that defendant passed through Diglis Locks and paid the toll keeper there 4d, being the toll from Worcester Bridge. He left the locks attached to another boat drawn by a horse, and proceeded to the Mythe Bridge. When asked by **Mr Sykes**, the toll keeper there, for a ticket for his horse, he said he had paid Mr Bradley, but he did not give him a ticket. The boat to which he was attached was allowed a free passage on the return journey to Gloucester, having paid the up journey from there to Worcester. Defendant was fined the full penalty of £2 and expenses.

DRUNK **John Stuart**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d and costs for being drunk.

34 February 18 1882

THE DOUBLE MURDER AT TIPTON On Monday at the Tipton Police Court, Emil Charles Hindelang (18), picture frame maker, Wolverhampton Street, Dudley, was charged with the wilful murder of his two brothers, Louis Benjamin and Francis Adelbert, by throwing them into the canal. Prisoner said nothing in answer to the charge, and Superintendent Holland applied for an adjournment until after the inquest. Prisoner was remanded until next Monday.

In the afternoon, Mr Edwin Hooper, coroner, held an inquest at the Beehive Inn, Canal Side, Owen Street. The mother of the prisoner was the first witness. She was much affected, but the prisoner did not appear to be the least moved, and maintained a sullen demeanour throughout the enquiry. Mrs Hindelang identified the bodies, and stated that after tea on Thursday her eldest son Charles (the prisoner) followed the children, who had gone out to play. A little later, Alfred, another son, came in and said he had met Charles and the two little ones in the Market Place, Dudley. Charles had told him he was going to Tipton for some music. About 8.30 on the same evening, PS Moore (Dudley) called at her house, and after some delay told her that her younger children had been drowned. When they left home they all appeared to be on good terms. By Mr Tinsley : The prisoner had suffered from a severe blow on the nose received years ago. The effect was a serious stoppage, and what appeared to be a diseased bone. He had been low and depressed for a long time. Thomas Drudy, labourer, said he saw the prisoner and two little boys near the Guest Hospital. Prisoner was walking fast, and the boys had to trot to keep up with him. **Thomas Shaw**, boatman, Tipton, said he saw the prisoner and two children on the side of the canal. As witness passed, Hindelang called the children to him, saying, "Come back". A man named Price passed, and wished witness "Good Night". In a minute or two, Price returned with a young man, and said something was in the cut - "a child or a dog". Witness left Hindelang in charge of the boat and then went with Price and raked the canal a bit. Afterwards he recommended them to go to the police. Thomas Price, ironworker, said he was passing the reservoir about six o'clock, when he saw a fluttering on the surface of the water. Believing it was a bird, he stood and watched it for five or ten minutes. Prisoner came up and said, "It is a lad" or "Like a lad". Witness replied, "Good God, what shall we do? We can't reach it". Prisoner said, "No, we can't". Witness then ran off after the last witness for his boat hook. Hindelang followed and looked after the boat whilst they returned and dragged the canal. On the road the boatman said, "If it is anything, it must be a child which the man has thrown in ; he had two with him". The prisoner joined them, and then the boatman left to take charge of his boat. Hindelang moved off, saying, "I am going down Owen Street, and will send a policeman to you". Witness said, "No ; we will go to Sergeant Dutton's on the New Road", and the prisoner agreed. They went to the house and told the sergeant, and then witness went home. About 8.30 the police came to his house, and asked him to point out the place where the child was supposed to be. He went and did so. By the Jury : He could not swim. Did not see the "flapping" for ten minutes. He watched the water for that time. Police Sergeant Dutton repeated the evidence he had given in the police court in the morning, and added that the prisoner said, "I have been unsettled in my mind for some time through being out of work, and have thought of drowning my three brothers for the past two or three days. I asked Alfred to come with me, but he would not. I threw Louis in first and then Frank, and they are both drowned. I saw them struggle and sink. A boatman saw me with the two boys. The biggest was on the top for a long time when the man came up". Witness then got the drags, and with help searched the canal. Shortly after ten, the body of Louis was found and removed to the mortuary. He measured the water, which was 4 ft 8 in deep at 9 ft from the side. Inspector Harrison said he helped to drag the canal, and at 10.20 the other body was found. Witness returned to the prisoner and, having cautioned him, charged him with the murder of his two brothers. He replied that he did drown them, and then he signed the paper on which the confession was written, in the presence of Sergeant Dutton. Mr Thomas Edgar Underhill, surgeon, said there were no external marks of violence on either of the bodies, and death had been caused by suffocation by drowning. Mr Hooper summed up the evidence, and said the man Price might have used more diligence than he did. The verdict was one of "Wilful murder" against Emil Charles Hindelang. The prisoner was then cautioned by the coroner. He stated that he did not intend to say

anything, and had no witnesses to call.

35 February 25 1882

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF CRUELTY **John Coombes**, boatman, Upton-on-Severn, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state. That morning PC Tarrant saw defendant going along the canal side with a boat load of hay. The horse drawing the boat was in a very emaciated condition, and was totally unfit for work. It had lost one eye, and was very badly shod, and altogether was in a most pitiable state. Alderman Burnett said this was one of the worst cases of cruelty ever brought under his notice. Defendant pleaded that he was not aware that the horse was unfit for work. He consented to its being immediately destroyed, and on this condition the Bench refrained from sending him to prison, and inflicted a fine of £1 and costs.

36 March 4 1882

DROITWICH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

SCHOOL BOARD CASE **William Massey** of Dodderhill, boatman, was fined 5s for neglecting to send his child to school.

37 March 11 1882

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENT **Joseph White** of Upton-on-Severn, boatman, was charged with embezzling the sum of £5 10s, money of Joseph Griffin of the same place, hay and straw dealer, at Birmingham in February last. Mr F Moore of Tewkesbury appeared for defendant, and contended that the Bench had no power to deal with the case, inasmuch as the offence was committed out of their jurisdiction ; but his contention being overruled the case was gone into. After complainant's evidence had been heard, Mr Moore contended that it was not sufficient to prove a charge of embezzlement, and the Bench agreeing dismissed the case.

38 March 18 1882

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NEGLECTING PAYMENTS **James Price** of the Inliberties, bargeman, was summoned for neglecting to pay £11 for the maintenance of his son on board a training ship. An order was made for payment and costs.

39 March 18 1882

STOURPORT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DEFRAUDING THE SEVERN TOWING PATH COMPANY **Henry Dawley**, boatman of Worcester, was summoned for using two horses on the towing-path of the Severn, contrary to regulations, on December 15th. The case was proved by the Surveyor, William Barnett of Ombersley, and the Bench fined the defendant 10s and costs.

40 April 8 1882

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, SATURDAY **Eliza**, wife of **James Ewers**, boatman, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in Friar Street. Defendant, who is a very old offender, was fined 5s and 10s 6d costs, and in default went to prison for fourteen days.

41 April 22 1882

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNK **Maria**, wife of **James Price**, bargeman, a very old offender, for being drunk and disorderly in the Vines Lane, was sent to prison for 21 days with hard labour.

42 May 13 1882

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NEGLECTING TO PAY CONTRIBUTION **Thomas Pittaway** of the Inliberties, bargeman, was summoned for neglecting to pay £2 9s 6d, being arrears of contribution ordered to be paid by him towards the support of his son, who is detained on board HMS *Formidable*. PS Colley gave evidence as to defendant's ability to pay, and the case was adjourned for a fortnight to enable him to pay the sum and costs.

43 May 27 1882

COUNTY COURT, FRIDAY

HODGES v MARTIN This was an interpleader issue, referred by consent from the Queen's Bench Division to the County Court. Mr Morton Brown, instructed by Mr J M Clarke, appeared for the claimant, **George Hodges** of the Back of Avon, boat owner, and Mr Arthur H Smith for the execution creditor, Mr F Martin of Tewkesbury, hay and straw dealer. It appeared that two years ago Charles Hodges, the father of the claimant, was indebted to Mr Martin for a considerable amount, and a writ was issued against him for £25, part thereof due upon a promissory note. The writ was served, but it was found that Charles Hodges had given a bill of sale over and above the value of his goods, and no further steps were then taken under the writ. The bill of sale was put in force and the goods sold, when the claimant, who had previously been employed by his father as a boatman, purchased a boat &c and became the hay and coal dealer, and the father the boatman. In January last Mr Martin discovered that Charles Hodges, the father, had bought a rick of hay for £50, for which he had borrowed the money, and as soon as possible judgement was signed and the hay seized by the Sheriff's officer, but not until the greater portion had been taken by Hodges up the country. The Sheriff sold the hay seized and George Hodges, the son, then claimed the money, and an interpleader was issued. The claimant and his father were examined in support of the claim, but in cross-examination it was apparent that the purchase of the hay was the business of the father, although the son's name was used. Mr Henry Chandler, who sold the hay, was also called by claimant, but he stated he sold it to the father, and his Honour at once gave judgement for the execution creditor, without calling upon Mr Smith to reply.

44 May 27 1882

STOURPORT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

STEALING COAL Two boatmen belonging to Wolverhampton named **John Walker** and **William Foster** were charged with stealing 6 1/2 cwts of coal belonging to Messrs E P and W Baldwin of the Wilden Iron works, on Wednesday. The men had come to the works with a boat load of pig iron, and Foster was seen to carry from a boat belonging to the firm the coal and place it in the cabin of his boat. The other defendant was standing near. The Bench sent each defendant to prison for one month with hard labour.

45 June 3 1882

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

THE TOWING-PATH REGULATIONS **John Wood**, boatman of Bushley, was charged by Mr W Valentine Wright with using a horse on the Severn towing-path for the purpose of drawing a boat without having obtained a ticket. Case adjourned.

46 June 24 1882

CITY POLICE COURT

ASSAULTING A LITTLE BOY Elizabeth Price, Bell Founders' Yard, Silver Street, was charged with assaulting **George Weaver**, eight years of age, son of a boatman living in the same yard. Mr Warren Tree, who was for the complainant, said that the complainant and Mrs Price's little boy were playing together on Tuesday, when a dispute arose between them. Mrs Price came out and threw down the little boy Weaver, whose arm was broken. Defendant said she only pushed complainant to

keep him away. The Chairman said that the Bench considered the injury to have been accidental. Defendant was ordered to pay 6s 6d costs.

47 July 1 1882

WORCESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING AT HALESOWEN **Benjamin Smith** (47), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing two tame chickens, the property of George Williams, at Halesowen on May 10th. He had been previously convicted, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and three years' police supervision.

48 August 19 1882

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, FRIDAY

THE DRINK John Stephens, stocking maker, and **Thomas Hawker**, boatman, were summoned for being drunk and disorderly at the Wheatsheaf Inn. PC Jones stated that he was called to the Wheatsheaf about half past five on the 4th inst. Defendants were standing up in the bar bleeding. They had been fighting, and were both drunk. Catherine Parker, barmaid, denied that Hawker was drunk, and said she supplied him with gingerade only. Stephens was fined 5s and costs, and the summons against Hawker was dismissed.

49 September 16 1882

DROWNED **Thomas Grainger**, four years of age, son of **Henry Grainger**, Gloucester, boatman, whilst playing at the side of Diglis Basin, his father's boat being moored there, fell into the water and was drowned. The deceased was left by his father for a few minutes while he went into the stable, and on his return he missed him. A daughter of James Barnes, four years of age, saw the deceased fall into the water. Search was made, and the body was recovered by **Thomas Tunfield**, a boatman. The deputy county coroner held an inquest at the Anchor Inn on Wednesday. A verdict of accidental death was returned.

50 September 23 1882

Dr Danford Thomas held an inquest on Tuesday on the body of Mary Regan, who was found drowned in the canal at Paddington under circumstances leading to the belief that she had been murdered. The deceased, who was 26 years of age, had for some time been living with a boatman named **Franklin** as his wife. Of late the man seems to have made endeavours to keep the deceased from coming on to his boat or to see him at any time. He stated that she was continually annoying him, and had been bound over by the magistrates to keep the peace in consequence. An endeavour was made to connect Franklin with the death of the deceased, but in the end the jury returned an open verdict, and left the matter in the hands of the police for further investigation.

51 September 23 1882

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED CRUELTY **James Goddard**, boatman, Gloucester, was summoned for cruelty to a horse ; and **Isaac Jelf**, boatman, and **Thomas Shaw**, London Road, were summoned for causing it to be ill-treated. Daniel Harward, officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, deposed to seeing the horse drawing a boat along the canal on the 1st instant. It was in a shocking condition, and was thoroughly worn out and unfit for work. PC Andrews gave confirmatory evidence, and stated that defendant's Shaw's wife, when spoken to about the horse, accounted for its thin condition by the fact that it was nearly thoroughbred, and therefore never carried much flesh. Shaw pleaded in defence that the animal was in good condition. The other defendants, who hired it from Shaw, admitted it was unfit for work. Each defendant was fined 5s, Shaw being ordered to pay the costs in addition.

52 October 7 1882

THE SUICIDE OF A RELIEVING OFFICER Mr Miller Corbet, deputy coroner, held an inquest yesterday evening at the Cross Inn, Finstall, on the body of Walter Bladon, aged 56 years, relieving officer for the Redditch district of the Bromsgrove Union, who was drowned in the canal at Tardebigge on Tuesday morning. William Bladon, son of deceased, identified the body, and said he last saw his father alive about half past ten o'clock on Monday night, when they were going to bed. He heard him leave the house in Prospect Road, Redditch, about a quarter to eight the next morning. Deceased had been relieving officer for 25 years last March, and for the last four years he had been worried in his occupation. He had been much abused, and said he could not satisfy the paupers or the Guardians. He had threatened several times to leave his office. He had to appear before the Guardians on Tuesday, and he would have to go along the canal a little way to attend to some school attendance cases. It was his custom to walk from Redditch to Bromsgrove. In reply to Mr Fetherstone, foreman of the jury (a guardian for Stoke Prior), witness said his father complained very frequently of being worried by the guardians, not as a board, but certain persons whom he named. In reply to a juryman, witness said his father complained still more of worry in connection with his duties as School Attendance Officer ; he did not complain of all the members of the School Attendance Committee, but of certain members of it. Sarah Harrison, a little girl, deposed to seeing the deceased in the canal about a quarter to nine in the morning, and to calling her father, **Henry Harrison**, toll clerk at the New Wharf, who, with **William Vale**, boatman, got the body out, Vale jumping into the water for the purpose. They found a small parcel of books addressed to Mr Humphreys, clerk to the guardians, and deceased's hat on the bank, on the other side of the tow path nearly opposite to where the body was. There were no signs of a struggle on the path, and the clothes of deceased were not disarranged. Samuel Ganderton deposed to seeing the deceased on the road, about 300 yards from the canal. He did not go to the school. PC Dunn stated that he found £1 1s 7 1/2d and other articles in the deceased's pockets. Mr W Smith, surgeon, Redditch, said he had seen the body of deceased that day. It bore no marks of violence, but there were the ordinary signs of death by drowning. He had known deceased ever since he came to Redditch. He had attended him for several illnesses. Since the last – an attack of erysipelas – his brain had certainly been affected. Had observed in him at times great irritability of temper, and at times depression of spirit. He had very trying duties to perform, especially in connection with the school attendance, and in his weak state of health they worried. He complained of that to witness, when he called upon him on Monday night last. Witness thought deceased might have lost consciousness and his power of control at the moment when he got into the water. The Coroner remarked on the painful nature of the case, and pointed out the bearing of the evidence, and the jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst labouring under temporary insanity". Deceased leaves a widow and a large family, for whom there is much sympathy. His books were found in excellent order, and his accounts correct. There is not truth in a rumour which has been circulated that he left a note with the parcel of books at the canal side, addressed to Mr Humphreys.

53 October 14 1882

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

STEALING A TURKEY **Henry Kings**, boatman, Stoke Prior, on remand, was charged with stealing a cock turkey, value 15s, the property of Mr Thomas Gardner, Finstall, on the 1st instant. Mr Gardner deposed to the loss of the turkey and to its value. Joseph Thomas Price of the Cross Inn, Finstall, stated that prisoner was at his house on the night of Sunday the 1st instant, and when he left, went in the direction of Mr Gardner's. PC Prosser stated that he traced footsteps from the rick yard of Mr Gardner's to the New Wharf, and followed prisoner's boat to Oldbury and apprehended him there. At first he denied all knowledge of the turkey, but afterwards said he took it and sold it to a boatman for 2s 6d. Prisoner elected to be tried by the Bench, and pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to a month's hard labour.

54 October 14 1882

A boatman named **Maddox**, who beat his horse with a thick rope until it fell dead, was fined 20s and costs at Wolverhampton.

55 October 21 1882

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, FRIDAY

THE DRINK **Thomas Drinkwater**, waterman, for being drunk and disorderly, was sentenced to seven days' hard labour, in default of payment of 2s 6d and 9s costs.

56 October 21 1882

WORCESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THEFT OF POTATOES **Henry Goode** (34), waterman, was charged with stealing 227lbs of potatoes belonging to Philip Huffer at Hartlebury on the 27th September. The Hon A Lyttleton prosecuted prisoner, who was convicted and sentenced to one month's hard labour.

57 December 2 1882

BROMSGROVE

INQUEST An inquest was held at the Cross Inn, Finstall, on Wednesday evening, on the body of Joseph Marriss of 13 Court, High Street, Bromsgrove, aged 50 years, who was found dead in the canal at Tardebigge on Sunday morning last. Mr R Docker was coroner. Joseph Wardle of the Strand stated that he saw deceased on the morning of the 6th November. Deceased said he was going to dig potatoes on Mr Brooke's land, and he added that his back was bad. He could not dig that day, and he wished he was dead. A day or two after, Mrs Marriss asked witness if he had seen deceased. She had not seen him, and did not again see him alive. **William Miles**, toll collector on the canal, deposed to getting the body out of the canal on Sunday, in company with a boatman named **Hopkins**. Mr W S Batten, surgeon, gave it as his opinion that the body had been in the water from two to three weeks, and that the appearances showed death to have been the result of drowning. The left arm and the right hip joint were fractured, but the injuries occurred after death. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

58 December 9 1882

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

KILLING GAME WITHOUT A LICENCE **William Pugh**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged with killing a hare on land belonging to Sir Henry Allsopp, without having a game certificate. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was ordered to pay £1 8s 6d.

59 December 23 1882

TEWKESBURY

INQUEST Mr Frederick Moore, deputy coroner for Worcestershire, held an inquest at the Towing Path Toll House on the Bushley side of the Mythe Bridge, on Monday morning, on the body of **John Allen** aged four years, son of **William Allen**, boatman of Gloucester. It appeared that Allen (accompanied by his wife, deceased and two younger children) left Gloucester on Friday in charge of a long boat. Previously to leaving Gloucester, deceased complained of giddiness, and Mrs Allen purchased a powder from a chemist and gave it to the child. The boat was moored by the Mythe Bridge for the night ; and the parents were aroused after midnight by the cries of the deceased child, who was seized with convulsions and died in half an hour. A *post mortem* examination showed that death was caused by convulsions, and a verdict in accordance with this fact was returned.

60 January 6 1883

WORCESTER SCHOOL BOARD At the monthly meeting of the School Board held on Thursday, there were present :- Mr G W Hastings MP (chairman), Mr T R Hill MP, the Rev W Wright, Mr J Rutland, Mr J W Scott, Mr J F Airey and Miss Westcombe.

THE WORK OF THE BOARD The Chairman said this was the last meeting of the present Board and, as it was in all probability the last time he should have the pleasure of meeting them, he would like to say a few words as to what the work of the Board had been during the last twelve years. The work of the Board had no doubt been in some cases misunderstood, but it would, he believed, when thoroughly known be highly appreciated. When the Board was elected twelve years ago, their first duty was to make a careful educational census of the city. From a statement supplied by the clerk (Mr Marcus) it appeared that in 1873 there were in the city 4,418 children of school age, and of these the names of 1,306 of them did not appear on the books of any of the schools. It then became the duty of the Board to provide accommodation, and the now existing schools were erected. It was, he thought, a fact worthy of notice that only ten years ago there were running about the streets of the city, uncared and unprovided for, 1,306 children of proper school age. In 1874 there were in the schools provided by the Board 553 children, and the compulsory powers possessed by the Board were the means of filling the other voluntary schools of the city. From the report of 1882, he found that there were only 43 children not attending any school, and of these several were children of boatmen, who from the nature of their calling could not be very effectually dealt with. In 1873 30 per cent of the children of school age did not attend school at all, whereas at the present the number was only 1 per cent. The Board was originally formed to provide adequate school accommodation, and to get the children into the schools. This had been done, and if any testimony to the efficacy of the Board were needed it would be found in the report of Mr Brodie, school inspector for the district. Mr Brodie reported that in the year 1873 there were presented for examination 1045 children, whilst in 1882 their number had risen to 2352, and the improvement had not been in numbers only. It was an opinion only too common that the children only obtained a little knowledge of the three Rs, and that they gained but little real knowledge. Mr Brodie stated that the number of children presented for examination in standards 4, 5 and 6 in 1873 was 208, and in 1882 the number had risen to 587, so that the Board had not only been the means of bringing the children into the schools, but the standard of instruction had been materially improved. For the efficiency with which the work had been carried out, the Board was indebted in the first place to the fidelity, zeal and ability of their clerk, and secondly to the head teachers. He would also like to refer to the unanimity which had always existed at the meetings of the Board. If they had wasted their time in wrangling over controversial matters and opinions of their own, the record of work done would have been a very different one. He and his colleagues had always endeavoured to carry out the work which they were specially elected to do, and he hoped that the new Board would proceed in the same spirit.

61 January 13 1883

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **Joseph Strain**, Diglis, boatman, was charged with cruelty, by working a donkey, lame and in low condition. Mr Harwood, the officer for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, proved the case. Defendant was fined 13s 6d, including costs.

62 January 20 1883

A BOATMAN DROWNED On Monday afternoon, a boatman named **James Taylor**, living at Stourport, whilst engaged in steering a boat at Diglis Locks, accidentally fell overboard, and was drowned before assistance could be rendered him. The current carried the body towards the weir, and it has not yet been recovered.

63 January 27 1883

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, FRIDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Charles Hedges**, waterman, was charged with being drunk in High Street on the 30th ult. PC Trigg stated that he was on duty on the day named, about eleven o'clock, when he saw defendant come out of the Black Bear. Fined 2s 6d and 9s costs.

64 January 27 1883

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

STEALING HAY John George Coomb, hay and straw dealer of Upton-on-Severn, was summoned for stealing two trusses of hay on the 19th inst, the property of **William Oakley**, boatman, of the same place. The evidence was to the effect that complainant missed the hay from his boat, and it was subsequently found in defendant's mother's yard. Defendant pleaded guilty, and the magistrates imposed a fine of 10s and costs.

65 February 10 1883

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ILL-TREATING A DONKEY **Edwin Matthews**, boatman of Gloucester, was charged with ill-treating a donkey at Stoke Prior on January 29th. PC Workman stated that he was on the bridge in plain clothes. Prisoner was with two donkeys drawing a boat. Witness saw him kick one of the donkeys eleven times. Defendant denied that he was the man who kicked the donkey, but the constable was positive. Fined 2s 6d and 10s 8d costs.

66 March 17 1883

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DRUNK **Thomas Goodey**, boatman, for being drunk in Worcester Street on the 27th February, was fined 2s 6d and 8s costs, or seven days' hard labour. PC Grinnell proved the case.

67 April 7 1883

WORCESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING FOWLS AT KIDDERMINSTER **James Blunt** (28), boatman, was charged with stealing four tame fowls, the property of James Gittins, at Kidderminster on the 22nd February. Mr Godson prosecuted. Prosecutor and his daughter deposed to being awakened on this night by the cackling of the fowls, which were kept at the back of the house. On looking out of a window, prosecutor saw a man resembling the prisoner standing in front of the fowl house. There were several circumstances which connected the prisoner with the robbery. He protested his innocence, but the jury convicted him, and he was sentenced to nine months' hard labour, having been previously convicted of a similar offence.

THEFT AT HALESOWEN **Benjamin Smith** (49) and **William Neath** (35), boatmen, were charged with stealing a single barrelled gun, a cotton cord waistcoat and three tonnage tickets, the property of William Edkins, at Halesowen on the 3rd March last. Mr Stallard prosecuted ; the prisoners were undefended. Smith was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and three years' police supervision, as he had been convicted before ; Neath was sentenced to hard labour for four months.

68 April 14 1883

CITY POLICE COURT

ASSAULTING A POLICEMAN **John Corbett**, waterman, Sidbury, was brought up for being drunk and disorderly and assaulting PC Pritchard on the 7th inst. Defendant was walking by the canal side drunk. He fell down. Pritchard went to help him up, but defendant became obstreperous. He was taken into custody, and on the way to the lock up he kicked the officer. Corbett indignantly repudiated the charges against him, and protested against being interfered with by a "boy" like Pritchard. The Bench fined him 40s or a month.

69 April 28 1883

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF STEALING **Thomas Fisher**, boatman of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, was charged with stealing a dish cover belonging to Thomas Collins on Monday. On Monday prisoner went to the

police station, and demanded a ticket for the workhouse. PS Thomas found that he was carrying a dish cover under his jacket. He supposed that it was stolen, and locked the prisoner up. On Tuesday PS Thomas ascertained that the cover had been stolen from the Union Inn, Carden Street, of which prosecutor is landlord. Prisoner had been there, and tried to get drink on trust by making false representations as to his means. Mr Power said there were several complaints against the prisoner of having obtained drink by false pretences, and of breaking windows. The Bench remanded prisoner for eight days.

70 May 5 1883

CITY POLICE COURT

FELONY **Thomas Fisher** of Derbyshire, boatman, was charged on remand with stealing a dish cover, the property of Thomas Collins of the Union Inn, Union Street. No further evidence was forthcoming against the prisoner who, it was stated, while under remand informed the police that he had been in Nottingham gaol for three months. It was ascertained that this was a fabrication, but he had been in Worcester gaol for obtaining goods by false pretences. Sent to prison for two months' hard labour.

71 May 5 1883

DROITWICH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

SCHOOL CASE **Thomas Bourne**, bargeman, was charged with neglecting to send his children to school, and fined 6d and 4s 6d costs.

72 May 5 1883

THE DROWNING OF A BARGEMAN AT DIGLIS Mr W P Hughes, deputy coroner for the county, held an inquest at the Anchor Inn, Diglis, on Saturday, on **James Slater**, bargeman about fifty years of age, whose body was found in the river on Thursday week. **George Harris** of Droitwich, bargeman, said the deceased, who lived in that town, was employed by Mr Harris as a bargeman on board the *Success*, trading between Droitwich and Gloucester. Witness last saw him alive on the afternoon of Wednesday week when he left the boat, which was moored at Diglis, and strolled along the river bank towards the city. He seemed to be in excellent spirits. Witness missed him on the following morning, and suspected that he must have been drowned from the circumstance of his cap being taken out of the water close to the boat. The river was afterwards dragged. Witness went to the police station, and on his return was informed that the body had been found in the cutting. Witness examined the board which was used to get on to the boat, and found that nothing was the matter with it. Deceased was a sober, steady man ; witness had known him make a three week trip without having a pint of beer. Thomas Darke, fisherman, Hylton Road, who dragged the river for three quarters of an hour, deposed to recovering the body from the water about two hundred yards from where the boat was moored. He was not perfectly dressed. Heel marks were visible on the edge of the sloping bank near where the body was found, appearing to indicate that deceased had slipped into the water. George Allen of Diglis, brick maker, stated that while walking along the towing-path towards Diglis at eleven o'clock on the night of Wednesday week, he saw deceased lying on the river bank. Witness said to him, "You will get no good lying there". He replied, "Go on", and witness did not say anything more. The witness Darke, recalled, said there were no marks upon the body. The jury found that the deceased was accidentally drowned.

73 May 19 1883

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DRUNK **John Ashton**, boatman, was charged with being drunk in the New Road on the 23rd of April. PC Dunn proved the charge. Fined 2s 6d and 8s costs.

74 June 23 1883

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NON PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS **James Price**, bargeman, was summoned for neglecting to pay arrears of contribution, amounting to £15, towards the support of his son now on board a training ship. He was ordered to pay the amount and costs.

75 July 14 1883

CITY POLICE COURT

DAMAGE TO CORPORATION PROPERTY **Henry Smith**, boatman, Dolday, was charged with doing damage to some piping in the Corporation Yard wall by breaking it. The Bench fined him 6s, damage 6s and the costs 9s, or one month's hard labour.

76 July 14 1883

KIDDERMINSTER COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Henry Thomas Horton** and **John Nixon**, boatmen, were charged with being drunk and disorderly at Cookley on the 29th ult. Horton, who did not answer to the summons, was fined 7s 6d and costs, and Nixon 5s and costs. The Bench drew the attention of the police authorities to the fact that these men must have been supplied with drink when in an intoxicated condition.

77 August 11 1883

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DRUNK **Thomas Wright**, boatman, Stoke Prior, charged with being drunk at Needle Bull Lane, Stoke Prior, on the 28th July, was fined 2s 6d and 8s costs, or seven days' hard labour.

78 September 8 1883

RECOVERY OF A MISSING BODY A boatman named **James Taylor**, belonging to Stourport, was drowned in the Severn in January last by falling from a trow on which he worked. A body found some time ago was believed to be that of the deceased, but as Taylor had lost one of his fingers, the supposed identity was disproved simply by that fact. A telegram received by Sergeant Oliver on Tuesday night from Upton now states that the body so long missing has at last been found in the river there. The flush of water, owing to the recent rain, is supposed to have brought the body to the surface.

79 September 8 1883

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NON PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTION ORDERS **James Price**, bargeman, and Thomas Bourne, saltmaker, were each sent to prison for 21 days for refusing to pay arrears of contribution towards the support of their sons, now on board a training ship.

80 September 22 1883

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ALLEGED CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Henry Grainger**, a boatman, was charged with working a horse in an unfit state on the 15th inst. Mr Harwood, officer for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, proved the case, saying that the horse while dragging a boat was very lame and could hardly crawl. As the horse belonged to the Severn Navigation Company, the case was adjourned for a week, in order that the company might be represented.

81 September 22 1883

INQUEST An adjourned inquest was held at the Barley Mow, Upton-on-Severn, on Friday, before Mr Martin, coroner, on the body of **James Taylor**, who was drowned at Diglis Locks in January. **Charles Townshend**, boatman, said he was engaged by Messrs Butt and Sons, Stroud, to work with their boat, *The Lily*, and deceased was engaged to pilot them on their homeward journey in consequence of the high flood at the time. The body was identified by George Taylor as that of his

brother James Taylor at the opening inquest. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

82 September 29 1883

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CANAL BOATMEN AND THEIR HORSES **William Bowen**, horse-keeper in the service of the Severn River and Canal Carrying Company, was charged with having, on the 15th September at Claines, unlawfully caused a mule to be worked whilst in an unfit state. Mr Warren Tree conducted the prosecution on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ; Mr Halford (from the office of Messrs F and H Corbett) appeared for the defence. Mr Tree stated that the defendant had charge of his employer's horses and mules at Diglis, and on the 15th inst Mr Harwood, the officer of the society, was watching some boats at Gregory's Lock on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. Among them was a vessel in charge of a man named **Thomas Hook**, employed by the company, and which was being drawn by the mule in question. Mr Harwood examined the animal and found on the left hind fetlock a severe wound, the effect of which was that the mule could not put its foot to the ground without opening the wound. It was evidently in great pain, the wound was an old one, and the defendant having charge of the horses and mules at Diglis must have known the condition in which it was. Evidence having been given proving these facts, Mr Halford, for the defence, contended that the mule was in good condition when it left the defendant's hands at the stable. He was not responsible for what might happen to it afterwards. The defendant was then further charged with having on the 13th inst cruelly ill-treated a horse, by causing it to be worked whilst in an unfit state. Mr Tree explained that at the last Session a charge against a man named **Henry Grainger**, one of the Canal Company's boatmen, of working the horse in an unfit state was adjourned until now, in order that the defendant Bowers might answer a charge of having caused the horse to be worked. The evidence adduced was substantially the same as that given on the hearing of Grainger's case last week and already reported, an additional fact elicited being that defendant was responsible for the horse being sent out. For the defence, Mr Halford called Mr F H Pinkett, veterinary surgeon, and other witnesses, to show that the horse was in fair condition, and that its inability to work had been exaggerated. In the first case, the Bench fined defendant £2 and costs. The second case, as well as that against Grainger, they dismissed.

Henry Hewlett, another boatman, was charged with having, on the 15th inst, cruelly ill-treated a horse by working it in an unfit state. Mr Tree said the animal was working near those referred to in the other cases, and he called Mr Harwood, who stated that the horse was old and suffering from a sore shoulder, aggravated by the friction of the collar. It was in a very low and weak state, and little better than a skeleton. The Bench inflicted a fine of 10s and costs 9s 6d.

83 October 20 1883

TEWKESBURY COUNTY COURT

RICE v SHAKESPEARE This was an action for ejectment brought by Mr Thomas Rice of the Happy Return, Tewkesbury, against **William Shakespeare**, boatman, to recover possession of a cottage in Bishop's Alley in his occupation. Mr Arthur H Smith appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr J M Clarke on behalf of George Mann of Nottingham, who claimed the cottage. Mr Rice stated that he purchased the premises from Charles Hodges, a brother-in-law of Mann, in 1880, and produced the conveyance. Charles Hodges stated that his wife's father owned the house for 40 years, and on his death 10 years ago, he and his wife and his brothers lived in it. The brothers left, and he resided there for some years, and afterwards let it and received the rents up until 1880. His wife died last year and her brother, George Mann, then claimed the house under an arrangement made 17 years ago, that he should have it at her death. Hodges denied having sold the cottage and said he only mortgaged it. It having transpired that no formal notice to quit had been given to defendant, judgement was given in his favour, but without costs.

84 October 27 1883

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNK **Maria Price**, wife of **James Price**, bargeman, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in the Vines on the 13th inst. Defendant, who is a very old offender, was sent to prison for one month with hard labour.

85 November 3 1883

CITY POLICE

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **John Jenkins**, boatman in the employ of Mr Edgar Knight, coal merchant, Diglis, was fined 5s 6d and costs for having cruelly ill-treated a donkey at Diglis between the 18th and 31st ult.

86 January 5 1884

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

EDUCATION Several persons were summoned for neglecting to send their children regularly to school, and the following convictions ensued, which included costs :- **Edwin Hodgetts**, Upton, boatman, 5s each in two cases.

87 January 5 1884

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF STEALING MISTLETOE **William Smith** and **Frederick Smith**, young men, boatmen, were charged with stealing 2 cwt of mistletoe, value 15s, the property of Thomas Davis of Tybridge Street and Hylton Road. Mr Beauchamp defended. Prosecutor said that on the 17th inst he had a quantity of mistletoe in his yard. The two defendants worked their father's boat, which at the time was lying in the river opposite prosecutor's yard. He missed about 2 cwt mistletoe, and traced it from the yard to the towing-path. Joseph Cox, in the employ of the prosecutor, said that between seven and eight o'clock on the 17th inst, he looked into defendants' father's boat and could not see any mistletoe in it. Next morning the mistletoe was missed, and he traced it along the towing-path until they got to Mr Smith's yard. PC Hancocks stated that he found about two hundredweight of mistletoe in the prisoners' father's boat at Stourport. It was admitted by the prosecution that there was no evidence against Frederick, and he was discharged. William, on whose behalf Mr Beauchamp argued that the case was merely one of suspicion, was fined £3 including costs, or a month's imprisonment.

88 February 23 1884

REDDITCH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

CHARGE OF GAME TRESPASS **William Walker**, a boatman on the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, was charged with trespassing in pursuit of game at Alvechurch on the 1st December. William Caley, under keeper to Lord Windsor, said he saw defendant inciting a dog to run after a rabbit. Defendant said the dog was only four months old, and followed him ashore. He had travelled on the canal for 30 years, and had never before had anything brought against him. He also produced an excellent testimonial from his employers as to character. The Bench said there was a doubt, and defendant would have the benefit of it. They dismissed the case.

89 March 1 1884

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY BY CANAL BOATMEN **William Biddle**, canal boatman of Greet's Green, West Bromwich, was summoned, on adjournment, by Mr D Harwood, the officer of the Worcester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for cruelly ill-treating a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state on the 14th ult. Mr Harwood said he was near the Bilford Locks, near Worcester, when he saw the defendant with a horse which was drawing a boat. Witness noticed a large substance on the animal's near fore foot between the hoof and the joint, and it appeared to be in great pain. In reply to the magistrates, defendant declared that the horse had been in the same state 3 1/2 years ; that it was not in pain, and though it had been worked a great deal in Staffordshire no

complaint had been made against him in respect of it. The Chairman said he was sorry to say these poor animals were not as well looked after in Staffordshire as in Worcestershire. A fine would not ensure the future comfort of the poor brute, but as defendant had come to that Court from West Bromwich once before, the penalty would only be 2s 6d and costs 9s 6d.

Joseph Greenaway, canal boatman of Worcester, was also summoned by Mr Harwood for working a donkey whilst in an unfit state on the 14th ult. Mr Harwood said defendant was employing two donkeys to draw a boat at Bilford Locks. One of the animals was so poor and emaciated in condition that it could scarcely walk. Defendant was fined 1s 6d and 8s 6d costs.

90 March 15 1884

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NON PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTION **James Price** of the Inliberties, bargeman, was summoned for neglecting to pay the sum of £3 16s, arrears of contribution due from him towards the maintenance of his son, now detained on board the training ship *Formidable*. An order was made for payment of the amount and costs.

91 March 29 1884

CITY POLICE COURT

A BOATMAN AND HIS BOY **Walter Smith**, 17, boatman's labourer, was summoned by **Richard Harmond**, canal boatman, for £1 5s damage incurred by defendant leaving his service on the 8th inst without notice, in contravention of an agreement. Plaintiff said defendant agreed to serve him five weeks ago, and to give a voyage's notice, as was customary, before leaving. On the date named defendant refused to go on the boat, and witness had to get his wife to assist in managing it. The defence was that there was no agreement as to notice. The Bench found for the defendant, thinking there was only an engagement for a voyage.

92 March 29 1884

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO DONKEYS **Charles Andrews**, canal boatman, Pheasant Street, Worcester, was charged by Mr D Harwood, officer of the Worcester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with cruelly ill-treating two donkeys by working them whilst in an unfit state, on the canal at Blackpole on the 5th inst. A fine of 2s 6d and costs was imposed.

93 March 29 1884

PERSHORE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

CURIOS CASE OF THEFT **William Pugh**, Gloucester, was charged with stealing a tame duck, the property of Mr F D Holland, at Crophorne on March 14th. It appeared from the evidence of Alfred Haynes and Ellen Davies that defendant, who is captain of Mr J Hodgett's steamer, on going up the river Avon, saw the duck by itself, and on his return journey shot it and took it away. Defendant pleaded guilty, and said he was fully under the impression it was a wild one. Having received an excellent character, the Bench, advising the defendant to sell his gun, let him off on paying costs, 16s 6d. Mr Holland (who did not adjudicate) and did not press it, said he brought the case forward on public grounds, just to show that boatmen on the river were not to consider themselves owners of all that they might happen to see there, and stated that it was somewhat remarkable that several ducks belonging to different people had suddenly disappeared just about the time boats had passed up and down the river.

94 April 12 1884

WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER QUARTER SESSIONS

ROBBING A CANAL BOAT William Henry Lloyd (18), labourer, was indicted for having stolen 8 lbs of bread, 1/2 lb of lard and a bugle, the property of **Richard Hooper**, canal boatman, Clay House, Codsall, near Cookley, on the 10th February. Mr P Sewell Hickey appeared for the

prosecution. The articles were missed from the cabin of the prosecutor's boat whilst lying at Goodwin's Wharf, Kidderminster, and the prisoner was afterwards found dealing with the bugle, having, it was supposed, consumed the bread and lard. The prisoner was convicted, and acknowledged a conviction for burglary at the Gloucester Assizes last year. The Chairman said there were other convictions against the prisoner, and sentenced him to twelve months' hard labour.

95 May 24 1884

UPTON-ON-SEVERN

THE DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE SEVERN An inquest was held on Saturday at the White Swan Inn, before Mr J Martin, coroner, concerning the death of a male person, unknown, whose body was picked up in the Severn on Wednesday week. **Samuel Walkney** said he was a waterman, and was coming up the river about 6.30 on Wednesday week, when his attention was directed to something floating near the railway bridge. He made fast the body to the shore and gave information to the police. The body had in his opinion been in the water some months. PC Cooper said that he took charge of the body. Deceased was dressed in a black cloth overcoat, with tweed trousers and vest. He had on a black silk tie and wore Oxford shoes. He appeared to have been about 45 years of age, and was bald. Dr J Montford said he had examined the body and believed it had been in the water four months at least. Identification of the features was impossible. At this stage the inquest was adjourned till the 30th inst to give the police an opportunity of getting the body identified. Several persons have been to view the body, but up to the present time it has not been identified. The remains were buried on Saturday at the Upton Cemetery.

96 June 21 1884

TEWKESBURY COUNTY POLICE, THURSDAY

ASSAULT **Alfred Chamberlain** of Tirley, waterman, was summoned for assaulting Rufus Niblett of the same place, labourer. Complainant stated he was at a tea party at the Prince's Plume on the 5th instant. They were dancing in a barn during the evening, and shortly before ten o'clock defendant came there intoxicated and was very abusive. The landlord put him out, and when complainant afterwards went into the road, defendant went up to him and struck him several times. William Jarman, yeoman, corroborated. Defendant said complainant struck him first, and called Joseph Dudfield to corroborate, but the witness did not see the commencement of the squabble. Fined 5s and 16s costs.

97 July 5 1884

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, FRIDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Emily P Mew**, wife of **Charles Mew**, waterman, was summoned by Harriet Hodgkins for being drunk and refusing to quit the Oddfellows' Arms on the 24th ult, and also for an assault. Complainant stated the defendant went to the Oddfellows' Arms on Tuesday week drunk, and called for 3d worth of beer and porter. Complainant told her she had had quite enough and refused to serve her, when defendant commenced using very bad language and struck her in the face. Eliza Fletcher and Louisa Hayling corroborated. Defendant denied being drunk, and called her daughter, Jemima Mew, who also said her mother was not drunk. The Bench considered both cases proved, and fined defendant 1s and 13s expenses for being drunk, and 1s and 18s 6d expenses for the assault.

98 July 5 1884

WATERMEN'S CHURCH The annual sermon in aid of this church was preached on Wednesday by the Rev Maurice Day MA, vicar of Wichenford. Prayers were said by the Rev F H Richings MA, rector of St Clement's. The collection amounted to £8 17s. This church, which is entirely free, is supported by voluntary contributions, and any further donations would be gladly received by the rector of St Clement's or the Rev J R Broughton, curate.

MR GEORGE SMITH OF COALVILLE ON CANALS The Select Committee appointed to enquire into the Canal Boats Amendment Act 1877, resumed its sittings on Friday, under the presidency of the Right Hon W E Forster.

Mr George Smith of Coalville, the first witness called and examined by the Chairman, said that he had given evidence on the committee which sat last year. Witness had said that he thought there were between 80,000 and 90,000 men, women and children employed on canals. Notwithstanding all that had been said against these figures, he still believed them to be near the mark. He had seen large numbers of boats tied up for weeks together at Wolverhampton. Then again, the parents deceived the toll clerks. They knew very well that the law only allowed three children in the cabin, and you would hardly expect a boatman to say that he had six children.

Mr Forster : What reason have you for thinking that the boat which has finished its journey is not a registered boat more than any other?

Witness : Sometimes they are tied up for three weeks.

Mr Forster : Can you give me some instances of boats with families on board waiting more than a fortnight?

Witness : I cannot give you any instance.

Mr Forster : Now let us come to the question of overwork by children. You mention that a boy stated to you that he had driven between Birmingham and Worcester many a time. What is the distance?

Witness : It is about 30 miles.

Mr Forster : How long does it take?

Witness : A boat will go about from two to two and a half miles an hour.

Mr Forster : You really think this boy had walked the thirty miles?

Witness : Yes.

Mr Forster : What is the name of the boy?

Witness : I did not take the name of the boat or the boy. It was near to my home.

Mr Forster : Was his father on the boat?

Witness : Yes ; but I don't know his name.

Mr Forster : The reason I ask you this question is that one or two ascertained cases of this kind would be more reason for stringent legislation than any amount of general statements. Can you give us a case of overwork which you have tested, and which we can test?

Witness : I could tell you a case where little children have been unloading stones. About a year ago, I saw two little girls, who could neither read nor write, unloading granite stones the whole day. I asked the father and mother, and they told me they could neither of them write. The family earned over £4 a week.

Mr Forster : We have had it in evidence that a man and family will earn 35s a week.

Witness : Much more in some cases, and in others less. For the journey from Staffordshire to London they get ten guineas, and for the return journey six. They do it in three weeks, and out of the sixteen guineas they have to pay for the feed of the horse, and the boat load. I have within the last year seen a little boy steering a boat through a tunnel. I saw a little girl steering a boat not three days ago. With regard to the question of overcrowding, the only steps that I have taken have been to draw general attention to it.

Relying to Mr J Corbett, the witness said that it took about sixteen days to take a boat from the Potteries to London and back, and he had known that work to be done by two girls without a male on board. He had excellent data for this, and, if necessary, he could show it, the fact being that at the time the father of the girls was laid up with sickness. He gave the number of 40,000 illegitimate children from the statements he had received from the boatmen themselves, particularly those who were on the Grand Junction Canal. He sent these statements to the public papers, and he was aware that it was a serious charge to make. In his statements he gave the names of some of the boatmen who gave him the information, and he was supported by his own observation. He had to some extent modified his views as to what was going on on the canals. There were certainly signs of

improvement, and lawful marriages were more frequent than formerly. He had written to that effect, but he could not say that it was intended as a contradiction of what he had previously asserted. He saw no reason why the canals should not be open for an hour or two on Sundays, which would enable the boats to get nearer their destinations and prevent a good deal of the abuses which now arose. In some of the canals boats were now worked to some extent on Sundays, and he had seen those of the hon member doing so, notwithstanding orders to the contrary. That was within the last month, and he jokingly said to the master that he would report him, and received a reply asking him not to do that and offering to share the 10s for the day's work with him. He could hardly regard the canals as competing with the railways.

Bt Sir E Lechmere : By putting the master's name on the back of a certificate, and compelling an alteration to be made whenever a change occurred, they would be able to identify the man as connected and responsible for a certain boat. The subject of overcrowding demanded immediate attention, for the sanitary officers, knowing the boats were here today and gone tomorrow, often looked over cases and left them to be dealt with in the next district. It should be also borne in mind that these people paid no rates or taxes, and if they were injured or taken ill the workhouse or the infirmary of the particular district had to afford them shelter. He therefore did not see why they should object to pay an annual registration fee of 5s. Although he had seen the overcrowding himself, he had not given notice of it to the local authority in order to test the existing powers under Acts of Parliament.

100 July 19 1884

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ASSAULTING A POLICE CONSTABLE **Robert Cotterell**, boatman, in custody, was charged with assaulting PC Prosser whilst in the execution of his duty at Tardebigge, on the 11th instant. The constable stated that he was on duty at the New Wharf, where prisoner and his companion arrived with their boat. They were quarrelsome drunk. Prisoner's companion struck him, and he retaliated with the windlass, and when witness got between them, prisoner struck him with it. Prisoner at first denied striking the officer, but afterwards said he was sorry and hoped it would not occur again. He was fined 10s and costs 6s, and committed for fourteen days' hard labour in default.

101 August 2 1884

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, FRIDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Thomas Anderson**, waterman, was summoned, on the information of PC Prigg, for being drunk and disorderly in High Street on the 19th inst. He admitted being drunk and was fined 2s 6d and costs 9s.

102 August 9 1884

WORCESTER SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS A show in connection with this society was held on Friday in a field at White Ladies, lent by the Rev F J Eld. The arrangements for the show were carried out under the direction of a sub committee consisting of the honorary secretaries, Mrs Eld and the Rev S L Malone, Mr Summers and Mr T R C Cattley. The judges were Mr E Woodhouse and Mr F T Ashton.

The following were the awards of the judges :- Cab horses : Joseph Tain 1, James Turner 2, William Pratt 3. Carrier's horse : Joseph Dimley 1. Boat horses : **George Weaver** 1, **William Bowers** 2, **William Hopkins** 3. The last two are the property of the Severn and Canal Carrying Company. Boat mules : **William Holland** 1 (the property of the same company), **William Potter** 2. Boatmen's donkeys : **Isaac Small** 1, **James Linton** 2, **George Young** 3. Coal hawkers' horse : James Seymour 1. Coal hawkers' ponies : Alfred Bryan 1, Ernest Mason 2. Boys' ponies : Master Gwynne Smith 1, Robert Rofe 2, Herbert Smith. Hawkers' donkeys : Edward Wills 1. Costermongers' and milkmen's horses : F Barnard 1, R Goddard 2, John Cock 3. Costermongers' and milkmen's ponies : James Taylor 1, Charles Hundley 2, William Barnard 3.

The prizes were presented to the winners by the Countess of Coventry, who was accompanied by

the Earl. The Dean and Lady Alwyne Compton were also present.

The Dean proposed a vote of thanks to the Countess of Coventry for distributing the prizes. He remarked that he must first of all, in the name of the society, thank those who had shown horses, mules and donkeys for prizes, and acknowledge the excellent condition in which they had shown the animals. They were very glad to have had such a good show. He was told the quality and number of the entries were better than on the occasion of the last show five years ago. He trusted another show of a similar character would be held next year when the same gratifying features would be observed. He regretted the absence of the Mayor (Mr W B Williamson), as to his exertions they owed many of the prizes. The society wished every horse, donkey or mule in the city to be kindly and well tended. This kind treatment would conduce to the advantage of the owners as well as to the benefit of the animals, because a well tended animal would work better than one which was ill used. Lady Coventry had shown that she cared not only for hunters, but took an interest in the working man's horses, donkeys and mules.

The vote was carried by acclamation.

The Earl of Coventry, in acknowledging the vote, said he was desired by the Countess to acknowledge the compliment paid her. She was delighted to accept Mrs Eld's invitation to be present to give away the prizes. Lady Coventry and himself were both, as they were probably aware, great admirers of horses, and he was fond of all kinds of animals. Therefore it was all the more interesting to them to attend there to witness a show of a somewhat novel character to them. He had often been called upon to adjudicate upon the merits of horses, perhaps in a superior equine position to those they had seen that day, but he had seen the exhibits with great pleasure. He noticed them all looking uncommonly well, and it was a much better show than he should have expected to witness. He hoped the undertaking would go on and prosper. Such a show must be a great encouragement to the owners and drivers of horses to use them well, and to see that they were kindly treated.

103 August 16 1884

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, MONDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Thomas Priddy**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. PC Harrison said on Saturday night he found defendant in Friar Street, drunk. He was very violent and riotous, and witness had to procure assistance to get him to the police station. Fined 10s and 6s costs, or 14 days' hard labour.

104 October 4 1884

CITY POLICE COURT

RELEASING AN IMPOUNDED HORSE **William Walker**, a boatman, Lowesmoor, was charged with releasing a horse impounded on the 19th ult, and **George Mills**, boatman, Lowesmoor, was charged with aiding and abetting William Walker to release the horse. James Kite said he found the horse straying on Kempsey meadows. He called to the defendants, and they came and drove the horse away. Witness tried to detain the horse. Walker did not appear. The magistrates fined both men 10s and costs 9s 6d each, or fourteen days' imprisonment.

105 October 11 1884

CITY POLICE COURT

A VIOLENT BOATMAN **Charles Houghton**, captain of the boat *Perseverance*, travelling on the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, was charged with having on the 28th ult wantonly opened the Blockhouse lock on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal to the prejudice of Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company. Defendant pleaded guilty. Mr G W Bentley, who appeared for the company, the complainants, stated that defendant had rendered himself liable to a penalty not exceeding £5. It was the custom to close and fasten the Blockhouse lock every Sunday afternoon at 2.30 until Monday morning. Defendant came to the lock on the afternoon of the date named and forced his way through with his boat. Defendant was fined £1 1s.

106 October 11 1884

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

CHARGE OF ASSAULT Sarah, the wife of William Pittaway, was summoned by her sister-in-law, **Jane**, the wife of **John Pittaway**, waterman, for assaulting her in the Vines on the 2nd inst. There was also a cross summons against Sarah(*sic*) Pittaway at the same time and place. From the evidence, it appeared that the parties quarrelled over some family affairs which ended in a fight, the faces of both the parties being much bruised and scratched. The Bench suggested that as there appeared to be faults on both sides, the summons should be withdrawn, each party paying her own costs. This course was adopted.

107 October 11 1884

WATERMEN'S CHURCH Last Monday, the second anniversary of the Temperance Society in connection with this Church was celebrated by a tea party and social gathering held in the school room. The members of the society, to the number of nearly 80, sat down to an excellent tea at seven o'clock. After tea the Rector and teachers gave suitable addresses on temperance principles, and several amusing dialogues and recitations were given by the choir boys of the Church, which were highly appreciated by the audience. During the short time the society has been in existence, its work has been most successful. The weekly meetings are well attended, and a very good proportion of the members have kept their pledges.

108 October 18 1884

WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS

FALSE PRETENCES AT OLDBURY **Joseph Howard** (19), boatman, pleaded guilty to obtaining a loaf by false pretences from Cumfill Bird on the 25th January. Prisoner had been previously convicted, and was sentenced to six months' hard labour and three years' police supervision.

THEFT AT HALESOWEN **Benjamin Smith**, boatman, and Abel Harris (53), labourer, were indicted for stealing 3 cwt of coal, the property of Messrs Dunn and Co, Manor Colliery, Halesowen, on the 3rd inst. The Hon A Lyttleton prosecuted. Harris was sentenced to three months' hard labour, and Smith, against whom was a number of previous convictions, five years' penal servitude to be followed by three years' police supervision.

109 November 8 1884

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

TRESPASS IN PURSUIT OF GAME **William Price** of Gloucester and **Joseph Owen**, boatman, Stourport, were charged by William Morgan – the former with trespassing in pursuit of game, and the latter with aiding and abetting – at Holt on the 21st of October. Defendants, who did not appear, were represented by Mr Warren Tree. Henry Smith, labourer in the employ of Mr Best, Holt Castle, stated that on the day named he heard the report of a gun, and saw defendants running up and down by the side of the Severn. They were not on the towing-path side. Witness was 200 yards off, and saw smoke, but did not see the gun. A boat was made fast to the side of the river, and one of the men got into the boat, and witness met the other man, who was carrying a cock pheasant by the neck. Mr Tree stated that the defendants were at present on a journey to Bristol, and could not attend the Court without great inconvenience. They heard a gun fired, and seeing a pheasant fall, went to pick it up. He was instructed to say defendants had no gun. The Bench fined defendants 10s each and costs, 7s 9d.

110 November 15 1884

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH BENCH, WEDNESDAY

CHARGES OF FELONY Fanny Brown was charged with stealing 6d belonging to **Henry Rudd**, a boatman. The defendant is a relative of the prosecutor, and in the absence of Mrs Rudd she went into the house and took the money out of the purse, and left her own child stark naked with the

sister of Mrs Rudd. The Bench imposed a fine of 10s.

111 December 13 1884

KIDDERMINSTER

DROWNED On Tuesday morning last the body of an unknown man was recovered from the Worcestershire and Staffordshire Canal at the lock near the Pheasant Hotel, Kidderminster. During the morning the boatmen complained that they were unable to open the locks near the Pheasant Hotel, and traffic was consequently brought to a standstill. Some drags were obtained and the bed of the canal dragged, resulting in the discovery of the body. The deceased was about 60 years of age, having grey hair and whiskers. He had been seen about the borough for some days, and some persons had heard him say that he had come from Wolverhampton. He had been visiting various public houses, picking up stray coppers by his vocal prowess. He was singing at the Pheasant on Monday night, and made an endeavour to realise a few pence by the sale of his pocket knife. Whether he accidentally fell into the canal or death was due to a deliberate act is unknown.

112 December 20 1884

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

NEGLECTING TO PAY CONTRIBUTIONS **James Price** of the Inliberties, waterman, was summoned for neglecting to pay £2 12s, arrears of contribution towards the support of his son, now detained on board a training ship. He was ordered to pay the amount, with 7s 6d costs, on the 15th proximo.

113 January 3 1885

DROITWICH

INQUEST An inquest was held at the Barley Mow Inn on Monday, before Mr G F S Brown, deputy coroner, on the body of **Elizabeth**, the daughter of **Henry Harrison** of Hanbury Terrace, boatman, who was found dead in bed on the morning of the 25th December.

114 February 14 1885

A BOATMAN DROWNED AT STOURPORT On Monday, Mr W S P Hughes, coroner, held an inquest at the Angel Inn, Severn side, Lower Mitton, touching the death of **John Lloyd** (46) of Coalport, a boatman in the employ of Mr Boraston of Ironbridge. **Benjamin Jones**, bargeman, Ironbridge, in the same employ, stated that deceased was at Stourport with his boat on Wednesday week, and it was moored by the side of the Severn, near the boat lock. Deceased went on shore on Friday morning, and on the following morning witness saw his body in the river near the mouth of the lock. **Charles Southam**, waterman of Bewdley, who first discovered the body in the water, said it was recovered by means of a rope. Samuel Morris, labourer, Stourport, deposed to seeing the deceased in the Angel Inn, Lower Mitton, on Friday night at 8 o'clock. He was then sober. It was a rough dark night. There was no quarrel on the part of deceased in the house. PS Oliver, Stourport, said there were marks on the river bank near the water's edge, which appeared to have been produced by deceased kneeling down with the corduroy trousers he was wearing. He had known deceased for some years as a sober, steady man. Dr Masterman of Stourport, who examined the body after its removal from the water, said it bore no marks of violence. All the appearances were consistent with death by drowning. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

115 February 28 1885

CITY POLICE COURT

THE ALLEGED CRUELTY TO A HORSE **William Hinett** (51), canal boatman, Lowesmoor, was charged on adjournment with cruelly ill-treating a horse by neglecting to provide it with proper food, on the 5th August 1883. Mr Beauchamp appeared for the defence and submitted that, according to the statute, defendant had been improperly charged. He called **William Parnum**, boatman, Worcester, to show that on the voyage on which it was alleged the ill-treatment took place,

the animal was well supplied with food but declined to eat it. The witness did not see defendant ill use the horse. The case was dismissed, but Alderman Barnett said he had no doubt defendant was guilty of grossly ill-treating the horse, but he got out of it through some mistake in the law.

116 February 28 1885

COUNTY POLICE

ALLEGED THEFT W Bowers, Diglis, and J Perkes, Naunton Beauchamp, were charged with stealing six bushels of corn and chaff at Diglis on Saturday, the property of Messrs Danks, Venn and Sanders ; and **George Walker**, a boatman, was charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. Prisoners were remanded.

117 February 28 1885

COUNTY POLICE

ALLEGED ROBBERY FROM AN EMPLOYER William Bowers, a stableman, and John Perks, assistant stableman, in the employ of the Severn and Canal Carrying Company at Diglis, Worcester, were charged with stealing a bag of horse provender belonging to their employers, on the 21st instant, and **George Walker**, a boatman working his own boat, was charged with receiving the stolen property. Mr Bentley prosecuted. On the night in question, PS Berry and PC Hanley watched and saw Perks passing between prosecutor's premises and Walker's boat, which was lying at Diglis. They went to Walker's boat and found the sack of horse provender produced, which Mr Weaver identified as belonging to the company. When arrested, Perks made a statement implicating Bowers, and which led to his arrest. All three prisoners were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

Thomas Rigby, boatman, Tewkesbury, was then charged with stealing from the same prosecutors seven bushels of horse provender on the 18th inst. Mr Warren Tree defended. Prisoner was committed for trial.

118 March 14 1885

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Maria**, the wife of **James Price**, bargeman, was fined 2s 6d and 8s 6d costs for being drunk in High Street on the 5th inst.

119 March 21 1885

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH POLICE, MONDAY

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **Thomas Drinkwater**, Tewkesbury, waterman, was charged with assaulting the police on Friday last. PC Parker said that he received a warrant on the 13th inst to apprehend the prisoner for threatening his wife, and from information received he visited the Barrel Inn, leaving PC Witts outside. He found prisoner in the skittle alley, and beckoned to him to come on one side. Prisoner said, "Let me know what you want. I'm not afraid". Witness told him he had a warrant for his apprehension. Prisoner asked him to allow him to throw the three balls he had in his hand ; and he would come. To this witness agreed ; but instead of throwing the balls he rushed out of the skittle alley and tried to lock the door, and ran down the passage towards the Avon, and when near the bottom of the alley, stopped, and they both fell down together. Prisoner struck him a blow on the face which made his nose bleed. PC Witts came to his assistance ; but prisoner commenced biting and kicking. He was obliged to call a man named Harrington to their assistance. PC Witts corroborated. Prisoner, who pleaded that he had had too much to drink and did not know what he was doing, was committed to prison for two months.

120 March 21 1885

KIDDERMINSTER BOARD OF GUARDIANS What was characterised as a case of kidnapping a boy came before the Board. The clerk of the Guardians at Stoke wrote concerning a boy at the Workhouse, who had been found wandering about the streets at Stoke. He was feeble in

constitution and of rather weak intellect. It seemed that without the knowledge of his parents the lad had been inveigled away by a Kidderminster boatman from his home at Wolverley, with a promise to feed him and a payment of 1s per week, and that the man had deserted him when in North Staffordshire. The clerk was directed to have the boy sent to Kidderminster, and to make inquiries with the view of prosecuting the man.

121 March 21 1885

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH BENCH, WEDNESDAY

STEALING HORSE CORN **Thomas Harris**, a boatman, and William Knight, a waggoner in the employ of Messrs Harvey and Co, millers, were charged with stealing a quantity of horse corn belonging to Messrs Harvey. On Monday evening, Harris was seen to carry a bag containing corn from Messrs Harvey's premises to the Pheasant Inn, immediately followed by Knight. They were interrogated about the corn, and Harris said Knight had given it to him. When taken into custody, he adhered to the statement, and the Bench, giving him the benefit of a doubt, dismissed Harris, but fined Knight 20s, or 14 days.

122 April 11 1885

WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER QUARTER SESSIONS

CHARGE OF ROBBERY AT DIGLIS William Bowers (54), groom, John Perks (19), groom, **George Walker** (60), boatman, all on bail, were charged with stealing six bushels of horse food, the property of their employers, the Severn and Canal Carrying Company ; and George Walker was also charged with receiving the same, well knowing it to have been stolen, on the 21st February at the parish of St Peter. Mr R H Amphlett appeared for the prosecution. Mr Marshall Todd defended Bowers. PS Derry said that on the 21st February he went to Diglis Basin and saw a boat moored there belonging to prisoner Walker. The boat was about 15 yards from the stable whence the corn was stolen. Walker and Perks were seen to go to and from the boat and stable, and on witness looking in Walker's boat, he found the sack of horse food produced. Walker said he had bought the corn up country, and had brought it down on his boat. The corn found in Walker's boat was similar to the corn in the stable. From a statement made by Perks, Bowers was arrested. PC Handley corroborated, and said that there were traces of corn from the stable to Walker's boat. John Perks said that Bowers told him to fill the bag, which he did. Walker held the bag open while witness put the corn into it and also carried it to the boat. Bowers was close at hand. Witness did not see Walker pay for the corn. In answer to the prisoner Walker, Perks said that he would not swear that Walker carried the bag to the boat. Perks was employed by Bowers, and had to do whatever he told him. Evidence was given as to previous cases of loss of corn by the Company, and also to the effect that the three prisoners were seen together on the night of the alleged robbery. The jury gave Bowers the benefit of a doubt, and acquitted him. Walker was convicted of feloniously receiving the stolen goods, and was sentenced to six months' hard labour ; and Perks, who pleaded guilty, to three months' hard labour.

CHARGE OF RECEIVING STOLEN PROVENDER **Thomas Rigby** (50), boatman, on bail, was charged with feloniously receiving a mixture of oats, beans, maize, bran, straw and hay, and a sack, the property of the Severn and Canal Carrying Company, knowing it to have been stolen, on the 18th February at St Peter's. Mr R H Amphlett appeared to prosecute on behalf of the Company, and prisoner was defended by Mr Cranstoun. PC Hanley said from information received he searched the prisoner's boat at Stoke Works and found a box of horse feed. Prisoner said he bought the horse feed at Birmingham. He denied having it from Bowers, defendant in another case. Mr Weaver, the company's agent, was examined by the defending counsel, and admitted that, although the mixture was a somewhat peculiar one as horse feed, yet it was possible that other persons might use the same kind of feed as well as the Canal Company ; also that sacks similar to the one found in the prisoner's boat might be in use by other people. The jury found the prisoner not guilty, and he was discharged.

123 May 2 1885

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

BAD LANGUAGE **John Harrison** of Hanbury Terrace, bargeman, was summoned for using bad language. PC Wagstaff proved the case, and defendant was fined 1s and 10s 6d costs.

124 May 30 1885

WHITSUNTIDE SCHOOL TREATS

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH In accordance with time honoured custom, the usual treat to the children of this school was held last Monday. Shortly before one the party began to assemble, and soon afterwards all sat down to the excellent meal provided for them. After dinner, the state of the weather rendering it impossible to proceed to a neighbouring field, kindly lent by Mr Tomlinson, the children were amused as well as circumstances would allow in the school room. Games of various kinds were indulged in until nearly five, when the children dispersed to their homes having, in spite of the weather, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It is no small tribute to the energy and enterprise of the teachers of the school that each year we have to chronicle an advance in their work. We may mention that the school is taught entirely by teachers drawn from the congregation of the church. There are now 183 children in the Sunday School. The teachers number 16 ; and a large Band of Hope and also an adult temperance society are carried on by the same band of workers.

125 June 20 1885

DROITWICH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

BREACH OF THE PEACE **William Cartwright** and **George Day**, boatmen, were summoned for causing a breach of the peace at Rashwood on the 24th ult. Day pleaded guilty, and was bound over in one surety of £5 and to pay the costs, 18s 6d. The case against Cartwright, who did not appear, was adjourned for a fortnight.

126 August 22 1885

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

DAMAGE **George Pearce**, Dodderhill, boatman, pleaded guilty to damaging a chain upon a lock gate at Hawford on the 22nd ult. Mr Holyoake (Droitwich) appeared for the Sharpness New Docks Company to prosecute, and said they did not wish a heavy penalty, but they desired that damage such as had been done in this instance should be prevented. Defendant was fined 17s 2d, including costs.

127 September 5 1885

DROITWICH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

ILLEGAL BATHING **George Merrell** of Stoke Works, boatman, was summoned for bathing in the canal at Stoke on August 26, in sight of dwelling houses. The Chairman said he hoped they had heard the last of these cases. He promised to write to Mr Corbett and ask him to provide proper bathing accommodation, as he understood the Canal Company did not object to persons bathing in the canal within certain limits. Defendant was fined 6s and 8s costs.

128 September 12 1885

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

WILFUL DAMAGE **George Bourne**, **John Smith** and **Edward Harris**, boatmen, were summoned for wilfully damaging certain articles belonging to the trow *Hastings*, the property of the Droitwich Salt Company, on the 5th inst. Defendants pleaded guilty. Mr Warren Tree appeared for the prosecution, and said the Company did not press for a conviction. The defendants were therefore severely admonished by the Bench, and the case was allowed to be withdrawn on payment of the costs, 5s 6d each.

129 October 3 1885

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

FRAUD **Thomas Bourne**, boatman, Droitwich, was charged with defrauding the Severn Towing-path Company to the amount of 4d on September 17th. A fine of 2s and costs, 14s 6d, was imposed.

130 October 10 1885

CHARGE OF ASSAULT A murderous assault was committed on Wednesday at Birmingham upon a canal boatman named **William Kibler** by another man named **Frederick Firkins**. The latter until recently had been employed by his father as boatman, but owing to alleged neglect of work he was discharged a few days ago, and Kibler was engaged in his place. On Wednesday morning Kibler was about to start his boat, when he was met on the towing path by Firkins, who dealt him a terrible blow on the head with a lock key, knocking him into the canal. While Kibler was in the water, Firkins took hold of the tiller of the boat and thrust it several times at Kibler's head and body, jamming him against the boat. Firkins then ran away, and Kibler, in an exhausted condition, got out of the water. On removal to the hospital he was found to be suffering from severe bruises on the body and serious scalp wounds. Firkins was arrested and brought before the magistrates, who remanded him until the prosecutor was able to attend.

131 November 14 1885

BROMSGROVE

INQUEST Mr R Docker, coroner, held an inquest at the Navigation Inn, Stoke Prior, on Saturday, on the body of James Duffill of Bromsgrove, gardener, an old man, who was drowned in a lock on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Stoke on Wednesday week. The evidence showed that the deceased lived with his son, James Duffill, who said his father was accustomed to get too much to drink when unable to work from bad weather or other causes. He left home on Wednesday week without saying where he was going, and called at the Halfway House on the canal side. He spoke to the landlady, Mrs Saunders, who said he was sober and apparently in his right mind. Soon after he was seen in the lock by **John Wright**, boatman, and he and his mate, named (?Cuise), got deceased out and tried to restore him, but without effect. There being no evidence to show how deceased got into the water, the jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned".

132 November 21 1885

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Maria**, the wife of **James Price**, bargeman, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly in High Street on the 7th inst. Fined 2s 6d and 8s 6d costs.

133 December 26 1885

PRESENTATION A few friends and well wishers met together at the Boatman's Mission Room, Lowesmoor Wharf, to present Mr F Turner with a handsome marble timepiece. The presentation was made by Mr H Grainger, together with a suitable address as to Mr Turner's valuable work at the Mission Room.

134 January 9 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

DRUNKENNESS **Herbert Cotterill** (26), boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Lowesmoor on Tuesday, and was fined 10s 6d, or 14 days.

135 January 9 1886

THE WATERMEN'S CHURCH On January 1st, a tea party was given to the adult members of the Watermen's Church Temperance Society. Addresses were delivered by numerous friends, and there were recitations. The chair was taken by the Rev F H Richings, rector of St Clement's. On January 5th, through the kindness of the Misses Groves, a Christmas tree was given to the children attending

the Watermen's Church Sunday School. After a plentiful supply of tea and plum cake, the different articles on the tree were distributed to the scholars. The Rev F H Richings, rector of St Clement's, spoke to the children, and thanked the Misses Groves for their kindness in providing the tree.

136 February 20 1886

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, WEDNESDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Zephaniah Hidge** of Oddingley, boatman, was charged with being drunk in the Holloway Road on the previous night. Fined 2s 6d and costs, Paid.

137 March 6 1886

KIDDERMINSTER

FATAL ACCIDENT On Monday evening an inquest was held before Mr Miller Corbet, on the body of **John Silcox**, aged 63, who died on Sunday last at the Infirmary from injuries sustained while at work on 29th January. The deceased was engaged as boatman at Messrs Barton and Sons carpet manufactory. His duty was to superintend the hoist used to raise and lower materials required by the weavers. On the day named he was just stepping into the hoist from the basement when it started. He was caught by it, and then thrown down, his legs becoming jammed between the hoist and the framework. His legs were terribly crushed, and at length mortification set in. Two witnesses were very closely examined by the Coroner and jury as to the custom of the workpeople in using the hoist, from which it appeared that it was the custom of a certain number of persons to work the hoist if the man was temporarily absent. On this occasion a young fellow named Ayers in an upper storey started the hoist, not knowing that Silcox was below, which led to the fatality. The Coroner said a somewhat loose system appeared to prevail as to the use of the hoist. Clearly if a man was appointed to look after the hoist, no one else should be allowed to use it. The jury found that the man was accidentally injured, which led to his death, and expressed an opinion that the loose system of using the hoist was dangerous. It was stated that since the accident some alteration had been made in the management of the hoist.

138 March 13 1886

UPTON-ON-SEVERN PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ASSAULT John Scarratt, hawker, Upton, was charged by **James Crump**, waterman, Upton, with assaulting him on the 13th ult. Mr Powell prosecuted, and said that the assault was of a very unprovoked and serious nature. Complainant said he went to the Bell Inn for some cider, when words arose between Scarratt and a man named Clinton. He (Clinton) sat down by complainant, when defendant came across the room and pushed Clinton on to Crump. Complainant pushed him off, saying he would not be pushed about like that. Scarratt then struck complainant on the head several times. His collar bone was broken. Fined £1 and costs.

139 May 15 1886

THE HEAVY RAINS

EXTRAORDINARY FLOOD

WORCESTER, NOON

The almost incessant downpour of rain during the last three days has resulted in one of the most sudden and heavy floods of recent years ; for the season indeed it is nearly unprecedented. The rain began on Tuesday, and has continued with only brief pauses ever since. Throughout last night the fall was especially heavy and continuous, and during the same period the rise of the Severn and its tributaries was surprisingly rapid. It is estimated that the water rose from three to four feet in perpendicular height. It is now higher at Worcester than it has been in any flood during the last six years, and is still rising. All the streets abutting on the river are flooded.

Hylton Road is under water from the Bear to Holywell Hill, and in many of the houses the ground floors are flooded to the depth of three or four feet. The water in this neighbourhood rose very rapidly during the early part of this morning, and men were at work in boats removing pigs and

horses and some part of their goods, and rendering assistance to their neighbours. In most cases people have taken to the second storeys of their houses, and are dependent upon boats both to get to and from their homes and for a supply of food. In many cases their supply of drinking water is cut off, the water taps being submerged. The North and South Parades are under water, and the people living there also are communicated with by boat.

The navigation of the river is suspended, boats or barges being unable to pass below the bridge. As seen from the bridge the country presents the appearance of a vast lake. Only the tops of hedges and fences are visible as far as the eye can reach, and the water is pouring over the flooded area like a tide.

A singular incident in connection with the flood is the destruction of a nest of swan's eggs which were about to be hatched. The nest was on the island at Diglis, and when the water rose it was removed to a higher position to be out of harm's way. The female bird, however, would not take to it in its new place, and when again the water reached it she hovered over the spot where it lay submerged, until the nest was totally destroyed and the eggs scattered.

The rise of the Teme has been still more rapid than the rise of the Severn. At Powick, the road over the old bridge is completely submerged, and the water is flowing through the ground floors of many of the houses adjoining the common. The road is not passable to pedestrians. The water has nearly reached the second floor of Powick Mill, and Mr Russell, the proprietor, this morning came into Worcester for the assistance of a boatman to remove his grain to a place of safety.

At Knightsford Bridge the road is impassable, though the bridge was recently raised in order to carry the road out of flood's way. The mail cart, which left Worcester for Bromyard this morning, could not get beyond Knightsford Bridge, and had to return. The line to Bromyard is flooded at Leigh Court and, though two trains of excursionists to Bromyard races succeeded in getting through this morning, it is improbable that they will be able to return, as the water is still rising.

At Bromyard the road between the station and the racecourse is flooded to a considerable depth, and to reach the Downs a circuitous route had to be adopted.

The road at Stamford Bridge on the Teme is also impassable, and the mail from Stamford Bridge to Worcester had last night to make a detour through Witley in order to reach its destination.

At Tenbury, the Teme had overflowed its banks, and Market Street is completely flooded and part of Teme Street, business being thereby suspended. The road between Worcester and Tenbury is not passable even for wheel traffic.

At Upton, the rainfall has been very great.

4 PM

Since writing the above at midday, the Severn at Worcester has risen six inches, and is now as high as during the great flood of 1852, and is still rising. The New Road beyond the bridge is inundated, and cannot be passed on foot. The tramway line is flooded, the water being almost up to the floor of the trams. The cars, however, still run, and are crowded by persons who would not otherwise be able to pass between Worcester and St John's.

A waggon loaded with coal and drawn by three horses was going to Powick this afternoon, and when near the village the ground gave way and the front horse fell in. It was got out, but the waggon could not proceed.

At Ludlow, the floods are more serious than any experienced for twenty years. Some railway bridges have been swept away, and a number of cattle drowned.

At Hereford, the Midland Station is inundated, the water reaching the platforms, and in the case of an isolated house, the inhabitants had to be rescued from the bedroom windows.

TRAFFIC TO MALVERN AND HEREFORD STOPPED Either the railway bridge over the Teme at Bransford has given way, or the line has been otherwise broken owing to the overflow of the Teme. The traffic between Worcester and Malvern is consequently interrupted.

BRANSFORD BRIDGE BROKEN DOWN We hear that owing to the force of the Teme flood, Bransford Bridge has given way, and the line at that point is therefore broken.

BY TELEGRAPH The floods at Kidderminster have done enormous damage. All the main streets are under water, in places 5 ft deep. Business is entirely suspended, and eight of the largest carpet

works are flooded. Machinery, plant and stock are seriously injured. Two thousand persons are temporarily thrown out of employment. At midday the water was still rising rapidly, and the worst fears are entertained. No such flood has been experienced for over forty years.

The Bewdley and Tenbury line is blocked owing to the floods, and passengers are unable to get beyond Newnham Bridge. Near the Craven Arms there is a railway bridge down, adding to the interruption of traffic on that side the country.

140 May 22 1886

ARREST OF AN ABSCONDING BANKRUPT AT MALTA Information of an important arrest at Malta has been received by the Birmingham police authorities. The person arrested is Mr A W Johnson, who until lately carried on business as a draper in Aston Road, and who absconded about a fortnight ago, taking with him the wife of a boatman named **Jones**. He obtained a passage for himself and Mrs Jones on the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Shannon* for Australia. The warrant for Johnson's arrest was forwarded to the authorities at Malta through the Home and Colonial Office, and upon the arrival of the steamship *Shannon* he was arrested. He had in his possession about £15 in money, and goods amounting in value to between £50 and £80. The extradition papers have already been dispatched, but it will be some time before Johnson will be brought to England. The woman Jones declined to proceed to Australia, but elected to stay in Malta.

141 May 22 1886

THE GREAT FLOOD

LOSS OF LIFE AND TERRIBLE DEVASTATION

THE HIGHEST POINT REACHED IN WORCESTER FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY The waters of the Severn and Teme continued to rise until 12 on Friday night, when they reached a point higher than any flood since 1770, and two inches higher than the flood of 1795. Thus the inundation has been greater than any similar visitation for 116 years. No one now living remembers anything like such a deluge in Worcester, either for the unexpectedness with which it came upon us or the alarming height to which the water rose. There is no record of such a summer flood, all previous great floods having been in winter. That of 1770, which was only 2 1/2 inches higher than the present one, occurred in November. That of 1795 was in February, when the river below the bridge was blocked with ice ; and there is a tradition that this held back the water above the bridge and made the flood some 12 inches higher above than it was below the bridge. The great flood of 1852 happened in November, and was five inches below the point now recorded.

During the 12 hours between midday and midnight on Friday, the Severn rose 20 inches, and at its highest point was only a few inches below the crown of the arches in the bridge. Whole streets on both sides of the river were flooded. Along Hylton Road the water poured like another river, and into Tybridge Street ; and in the course of the night, boundary walls of coal yards in the occupation of Mr Small and Mr Smith were washed down, and carts and barrows carried away with the torrent. The distress among the people in this poor neighbourhood was acute, for living as they are mostly compelled to do, from hand to mouth, they had no store of provisions against such a calamity, and could not get out of their houses to obtain fresh supplies. The men whose employment was not suspended by the flood got away in boats, while some fishermen, among whom Thomas Darke and Charles Webb should be mentioned, were indefatigable in carrying food and coals to those who remained behind.

Hylton Road was only one example of many. A great part of Newport Street and the lines of houses running north and south on the two quays, the lower part of Copenhagen Street and Quay Street were all inundated, and the inhabitants could only be reached by boats. To these, however, the experience of a flood was not altogether new ; but further north, in the district known as the Moors, the calamity was greater as it was quite unprecedented. A flood has often been known to invade the Croft Road, but seldom to such an extent as to render it quite impassable. On this occasion, however, not only did this happen, but the water rising to the bottom of Castle Street, cut off communication thence along Severn Terrace. Along the Moors, the gardens run down with a slope

towards Pitchcroft, and during Friday the water poured rapidly over these and into the lower part of some of the houses. There are two rows of cottages known as Lightwood's Buildings and the Cottages of Content, which lie lower than the rest, and which suffered severely. Some people living in the latter left home on Friday morning, not thinking of the coming disaster and, when they returned at dinner time, they found their living rooms flooded, the furniture floating about and ingress cut off. These houses are in such a position that a boat could not reach them, and it was not until a raft was improvised that the unfortunate people who remained at home could be communicated with, or that those who left home could regain their dwellings. In numerous instances, fowls, rabbits or pigs were overtaken by the rapidly advancing deluge before assistance could reach them, and were drowned. At night a remarkable scene was witnessed in the Moors. Mr Moseley, a baker, was surprised in his bakehouse by the flood, which rapidly rose until it almost reached the fire in his oven, and forced him to abandon two sacks of flour which he was converting to dough. Leaving this to its fate, he took a kneading trough into the open street, and pouring another two sacks of flour into it, recommenced his task and surrounded by a crowd of sympathising neighbours got out his batch, which was baked in the oven of a generous confrere.

About midday on Friday, the railway bridge over the Teme between Bransford and Henwick gave way in consequence of the flooding of the river. The centre pier collapsed, and although the railway metals remained they sank down with the structure, and the line became impassable. The 1.32 pm for London was consequently stopped at Malvern, and the passengers were sent on via Ashchurch with the mails. The traffic between Worcester and Malvern had also to be conducted by the same route. On Saturday, a temporary footbridge was constructed over the fallen bridge, and passengers from Malvern to Worcester are now brought to Bransford, where they cross the temporary bridge on foot, and are taken on from the other side in another train. The ordinary train service between Worcester and Malvern has been suspended, and a special service organised.

The Corporation Waterworks, for the first time in their history, were flooded to such a degree as to suspend operations. On Friday the whole area was deluged. The flood water poured into the tanks and filtering beds, and at length found its way into the boiler house and, reaching the flues, caused the stoppage of the engines by which the water is pumped to the reservoir whence the city is supplied. Two engines were procured and an attempt was made to pump the water out of the boiler house ; but the continued rising of the flood soon made it evident that the attempt was futile.

The present flood will be remembered not only for its severity but for its prolonged duration. The hope which many people cherished that the waters, when once they had reached their height, would subside almost as rapidly as they had risen, was disappointed. The subsidence indeed from the first was remarkably slow, and during the whole of Saturday could be reckoned only by inches. Fortunately by Saturday evening something like adequate efforts were made to cope with the distress of those who were suffering most keenly from the effects of the prolonged inundation. The whole of the low lying part of St Clement's parish, Worcester, the population of which is distinctly poor, was under water to a depth varying from one foot to five feet. In this neighbourhood alone, three separate services of boats had to be maintained to enable the inhabitants to reach dry land, and by the kindness of some of the more fortunate parishioners, their poorer neighbours were provided with means of communication gratuitously. Aid in the more substantial form of necessary provisions was also extended to the poor people by the Rector of the parish (Rev F H Richings), Mr Bozward, Mr C Cock, Mr Wright of the Chequers Row skin yard, and others. These gentlemen distributed milk, groceries, bread, meat and other food, candles &c, to tide the recipients over the wants of the moment. As the evening passed, the boatmen were in great request. People who had money to spend were anxious to accomplish what they call their "marketings", and from window and doorway came the frequent cry of "boat", or more frequently still the amateur ferrymen were accosted by their Christian names, for most of them were men of the neighbourhood, not to the manner born but who, being flooded out of their ordinary avocations, had taken to the water under stress of circumstances, and with the hope of a little gain. Later in the evening, and in fact until near midnight, their services were in request by those who from the margin of the flood sought to return to those desolated dwellings which were still their homes. Like the throng which swarmed

the shore of Styx, awaiting the favour of Charon,

Huo omnis turba ad ripus effusa ruebat,
Matres atque viri.

To some of them, unluckily, an accident happened such as is not recorded to have befallen the immaterial freight of Charon. A punt, laden with men, women and children, was returning from the bridge over the flooded portion of the road towards Tybridge Street, when some of the passengers lurched suddenly to one side, and several of them, including two or three women, were upset. The water was not deep enough to drown them, but they received a complete drenching and were taken to a public house near at hand, where, as the writer was informed, they were revived with "hot beer". On the All Saints side of the river, the poor people who suffered by the flood were aided with food and coal distributed by Mr Hulland, Mr E D Davies and Mr Veal.

Among the more gratifying incidents of Saturday was the resumption of the water supply to the city. By four o'clock on Saturday afternoon the water had so far receded as to make it practicable to relieve the works by pumping. The steam fire engine and a hand engine of the Norwich Fire Office were set to work accordingly, and by constant working kept down the water in the boiler house, and enabled the water supply to be maintained without further interruption. But what water it was for some hours after the engines resumed operations! The tanks at the waterworks had all been flooded with the mud charged overflow from the river, and this had to be disposed of with very slight filtration before any purer water could be secured. The consequence was that the first instalment of the resumed supply on Saturday night was of the colour and consistency of a puddle in a ploughed field ; but it was not long before the taps yielded liquid of a less forbidding appearance.

SUNDAY IN THE FLOODED DISTRICTS Sunday broke cheerlessly for those who, living in the midst of the waters, had closed their eyes on the previous night in the hope that the morrow would bring better things. The sky was lowering and sunless, rain was falling, and the wind blew over the waters in cold gusts. But for the general verdure of those parts of the landscape which peeped above the deluge, the scene was more fitting for November than May. As the morning wore on, however, the rain ceased, and sun broke through with inconsistent and watery gleams, making the air less cold and ungenial. Anyone living at a distance from the river and coming suddenly in view of it from such elevated positions as the terrace at the west end of the Cathedral or the slope of Holywell Hill noticed little difference in the height of the flood. Seen from the first point, the waters still stretched north and south and west, as far as the eye could reach, surrounding solid buildings as a lake, and extending over the meadow lands to the west and south west in an expanse above which only the tops of the highest hedgerows and trees appeared as bright green islets. If approached from Holywell Hill, the waters were still found washing its foot, sweeping along the Hylton Road, and on in an unbroken course to where the swift flowing current indicated the line of the Severn ; and still on, in one great lake-like mass over Pitchcroft to the railway viaduct and the walls of the Infirmary.

Even such a general view as that just referred to afforded evidence that the waters had fallen, and the exact record showed that the extent of the subsidence from midnight on Friday until midday on Sunday was only 20 inches. In other words, in 38 hours the waters had fallen only as much as they had risen in the twelve hours between midday and midnight on Friday, and at noon on Sunday they stood at as nearly as possible the same level as they had stood at noon on Friday. During the greater part of Sunday the flood remained nearly stationary at this level, though it was clear that the subsidence continued from the constant flow of water from the more distant parts of the submerged area towards the river.

The most accessible and obvious proof of this was to be obtained in the New Road, St John's. The roadway was still submerged, though not for so great a part of its length nor to so great a depth as on the previous day. The water was rushing off with great velocity, as if from a weir, down the south side of the road into Payne's meadows, and as the land on the north side of the road was flooded to a great depth, this current continued all day long. The appearance of those parts of the road from which the flood had receded told what havoc it had played. By the violence by which the waters had rushed over it, the metalling of the road was torn up and strewn about in its constituent

parts of loose Macadam and sand. During the day labourers were at work keeping the tram lines which run along the road clear of the grit which was continually washed into them, and which if allowed to collect would have thrown the cars from the track. The road was of course impassable to pedestrians, and as there was no other route into St John's which was not flooded to a greater extent, numbers of cabs established themselves on the spot, and carried persons over the flooded part of the roadway at a charge of a penny per head. All day long, and especially during the afternoon and evening, the bridge and lower part of the New Road were thronged with people, who came from all parts of the city to see the flood from these points. The cabmen drove a brisk trade, carrying as many as six, eight, even ten fares through the water in one four wheeler. For them, consciously or unconsciously, Shakespeare's lines, concerning that tide in the affairs of men, which when taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, was not without significance, though it were somewhat distorted.

This was a trivial aspect of the matter, but there was a more serious aspect close at hand. The subsidence that had taken place in the water had made little difference to the condition in which the houses in the streets off the river banks were placed. On the east side of the river, boats could be seen going from door to door, gliding into alleyways and courts to which access was difficult, and the constructors of which never thought they would have to be navigated. In a yard near the arches of the railway viaduct, a number of the caravans which took up a temporary station there after the races were hemmed in by the flood, and on Sunday the water was rushing with such violence through the confined area that a boatman who went to the assistance of the people occupying the caravans stated that it was surprising they were not dashed to pieces. On the St Clement's side, the whole length of Hylton Road from Tybridge Street to beyond Holywell Hill was converted into a canal three feet deep, into which the water from every passage and opening on the west rushed with the force of a mill race. As one passed along the road in a boat, it was possible to note some of the effects of the flood. At one house it was apparent that the occupants had tried to keep out the water by caulking the crevices of the doorway with clay ; but the device was as ineffectual as Mrs Partington's broom against the tide. In every house it could be seen that the water lay two or three feet deep on the ground floor, and that furniture had been piled up hurriedly on tables and sofas before the unfortunate occupants fled for safety to the upper storeys. Men and women were leaning from the upper windows taking in provisions and water, which had to be brought to them in boats, or chatting one with another on the novelty and inconveniences of the situation. Those inconveniences and the plight in which their dwellings will be left when the flood has completely receded may be better imagined than described. Many of their humble household goods will be irreparably damaged, and their houses must be damp and unwholesome for months. When the people want to leave or enter their houses, they get over the flooded floors by stepping from chair to chair, or on planks laid on barrels, and so into the boats. Tybridge Street, as far as School Walk and Russell Terrace, and the Pinch were in the same condition as Hylton Road.

In the Moors there was an appreciable improvement in the condition of some of the houses which were flooded on Saturday, but the appearance of the area from which the deluge had receded was pitiable. Flower beds and fruit gardens were battered down and overstrewn with the mudstained refuse deposited by the flood. Fences had been forced down or bulged out so that reconstruction will be necessary. Domestic pets, rabbits, fowls and birds of various kinds were cooped up in far away corners, where they looked more desolate and wretched than their human owners. Rafts, which in the moment of emergency had been improvised with doors nailed upon wooden palings, lay sodden and stranded, and covered with a dark deposit of weeds and mud.

Pitchcroft having been converted by the flood into a lake, navigable all over and in many places several feet deep, was on Sunday largely used for boating. A score or more of pleasure boats were stationed for hire in the Croft Road at the bottom of Castle Street, and during the afternoon boating parties were rowing or sailing on all parts of the croft. Two or three accidents happened, in the most serious of which Messrs Jos Maybury, F Pinkett, A Pinkett and E Skyrme were concerned, and had a rather narrow escape of drowning. They were in a sailing boat and were near Benton's field, when a sudden gust of wind struck the boat and overturned it, the occupants being thrown into the water. Mr W Skyrme, who was in a small boat near where the accident happened, at once went to their

assistance, and at considerable risk to himself conveyed them safely to *terra firma*.

At Bransford the road was on Sunday still flooded and impassable except to vehicles ; but the Teme and the brooks in the neighbourhood were much less swollen than on Saturday. The abatement of the flood has revealed evidence of the force which it exerted at the point where the railway bridge over the Teme was destroyed. The bridge was one of two brick arches springing from a pier in the midst of the river. This pier has been completely carried away, and some of the courses of the bricks remaining in the side walls from which the arches sprung were snapped short in the middle. Now the water has receded, it can be seen that quantities of the bricks were carried by the rush of the water in an oblique direction right and left for a distance of 100 yards ; while the capstone of a retaining wall near the same place, weighing perhaps 2 cwt, was dislodged and carried for some distance before it fell to earth.

The total fall of the Severn at Worcester on Sunday between 4 in the morning and 9 at night was only three inches. From nine o'clock on Sunday night till midday on Monday it fell a further 15 inches.

THE DAMAGE AND DISTRESS IN WORCESTER During Monday and Tuesday, the flood receded rapidly and left the streets near the river clear. So great is the damage and loss of property to persons of all classes residing in close proximity to the river that it is difficult to estimate it. Several walls of wharves abutting the river have been thrown down, and the greater part of a wall about 40 yards long and between 8 and 10 feet high in the Hylton Road, belonging to Mr Yeates of the Chequers Inn, has been razed to the ground. Some tons of coal and slack in the wharf of Mr F Smith have been swept away. Mr Cook of the Severn Bank Tannery believes the damage caused on his premises is upwards of £1,500 ; Messrs Bourne and Grove, timber merchants, and Mr Griffiths, rope manufacturer, estimate their loss respectively at £100. There are several smaller tradesmen and shopkeepers who have lost to the extent of from £10 to £50, while among the poor cottagers the damage is not indicated so much by its pecuniary value as by the fact that they have no means of making good their losses.

Messrs Bourne and Grove gave on Tuesday 10 tons of coal to the sufferers from the late flood in the Pinch, Hylton Road and Tybridge Street.

At the Guildhall on Wednesday, a committee appointed in connection with the Corporation, some years ago, for the relief of the distressed poor, met to consider how best to relieve the poor persons who have suffered by the recent heavy floods in Worcester. The Mayor (Mr Knott) presided. The meeting was private, and there having been some discussion of the matter, it was adjourned for a week.

142 June 5 1886

DROWNING OF A BOY AT HINDLIP An inquest was held at the White Hart Inn, Fernhill Heath, before Mr Brown, deputy coroner, on the body of **Henry Williams** aged 11 years, son of **William Williams**, boatman, Gloucester. The deceased went to shut the lock gates, and in stepping from one to the other, slipped and fell into the lock. The father of deceased, who was some hundred yards away, at once ran to the lock, but he could then see only the hat of deceased floating. The lock-keeper, who lived about half a mile from the lock, was sent for, and got the deceased out of the water. He was then quite dead. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

143 June 26 1886

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

EVADING TOLL **Walter Whitehouse**, boatman, Lowesmoor, charged with using a horse without paying toll on the canal towing-path at Ombersley on May 24th, was fined £1 3s 2d, including costs.

144 June 26 1886

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Thomas Dearne** of the Holloway, boatman, pleaded guilty to being drunk and disorderly in the Holloway Road on the 14th instant. Fined 7s 6d and 8s 6d costs,

or 14 days' hard labour.

145 August 21 1886

BROMSGROVE PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

STEALING MUSHROOMS **William Timbrell**, boatman, Gloucester, was charged with stealing mushrooms, value 3d, at Tutnal and Cobley, the property of Mr Thomas Dixon, on the 1st July. PC Prosser proved the case. Thomas Such, bailiff to Mr Dixon, proved the value, and that Mr Dixon cultivated the mushrooms. Defendant said he thought it was no harm to gather the mushrooms. In his country they were allowed to do so. Fined 2s, 3d value, and 11s costs.

146 September 18 1886

DROITWICH BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

DRUNKENNESS **John Pittaway**, bargeman, for being drunk in Friar Street, was fined 1s and 8s 6d costs. He was also charged with assaulting **James Price** and fined 2s 6d and 12s 6d costs.

147 October 16 1886

SUDDEN DEATH IN WORCESTER An inquest was held yesterday at the Guildhall before Mr Carleton Rea, deputy coroner, touching the death of George Lessimore (37), labourer, 3 Lower Road, Cherry Orchard. Deceased was employed at Messrs Wood and Sons yard in the Moors on Monday last, and about 4.30 in the afternoon was seen by Edward Rigbey, timekeeper, standing in the centre of the yard. He then appeared in his usual health. About fifteen minutes afterwards, **John Smith**, boatman, Dolday, going into the yard for some lime, saw the deceased lying down with blood flowing from his mouth. He at once informed the foreman, and Dr Crowe was sent for. Dr Crowe, Foregate Street, stated that he was called to see the deceased about five o'clock on Monday afternoon. He was then quite dead, lying on his back, and blood was flowing from his mouth. He had since made a post mortem examination, and found that the deceased had been suffering from consumption. A large blood vessel in the cavity of the left lung had burst, producing haemorrhage, which caused the sudden death of the deceased. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

148 November 6 1886

REPORT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD The report of the Local Government Board for 1885 has just been issued and contains, as usual, matter of local interest.

The Canal Boats Act 1884 called a new system of inspection into operation. The length of the waterways may be roughly estimated at 3,600 miles. **Mr J Brydone**, the chief inspector, says he made a specially important series of inspections, and acknowledges his indebtedness to, amongst others, **Mr Hobrough** of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company, for the facilities he offered him. An inspector, speaking of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, says, "I can certify to the willingness of the boatmen and owners to comply, as far as possible, with my cautions and the general provisions of the Acts and regulations of the Local Government Board made thereunder".

149 November 13 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

A VIOLENT DEFENDANT **Henry Brace** (21), boatman, Mayfield Road, Rainbow Hill, was charged with being drunk and riotous, with using obscene language, and with assaulting PC Fennell at Rainbow Hill on Saturday night. PC Fennell stated that about 11.45 on Saturday he was on duty at Rainbow Hill, when he heard the defendant making use of obscene language. He went up to him, and immediately defendant said to a man who was with him, "See me cut his (meaning witness's) head off", and at once took off his belt and struck at witness, knocking the top of his helmet off. Witness closed with defendant, and they both fell to the ground. Defendant bit three pieces out of witness's finger, and also hit him in the eye. PC Baynham came to witness's assistance in

Lowesmoor, and defendant was taken to the police station. Defendant throughout the case was crying like a child, and said it would never have happened but for the drink. The magistrates sentenced defendant to 28 days' hard labour.

150 November 20 1886

CRIMINAL ASSAULT AT DROITWICH **William Goddard** (19), boatman, was found guilty of criminally assaulting Sarah Price, aged 11, at Droitwich. The evidence showed conclusively that the full offence had been committed. The Judge, in passing sentence, concurred in the verdict. Everything had been urged in the prisoner's favour, but the jury had only done their duty. As a lesson to others in the locality, and for the protection of little girls, he passed sentence of ten years' penal servitude.

151 November 27 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED DRUNKENNESS **George Cook** (35), waterman, Gloucester, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Foregate Street on Sunday night. PC Pittey said the defendant was drunk and insulting passengers. Defendant was discharged with a caution.

152 November 27 1886

WORCESTER COUNTY COURT

CLAIM FOR DAMAGES FOR PERSONAL INJURIES

JOHN WEAVER v THE SHARPNESS NEW DOCKS AND GLOUCESTER AND BIRMINGHAM CANAL COMPANY Plaintiff, a boatman, claimed £50 damages for personal injuries caused by the defendant's alleged negligence. Mr Marshall Todd appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Morton Browne defended. The case for the plaintiff was that the defendants did not take reasonable care to provide proper machinery – machinery that would not endanger the lives and property of persons using their docks. The plaintiff was 52 years of age, and was a man of considerable experience. He was employed by Messrs Wood and Co, and previously had been 19 years in the employment of another master. On the 25th August, he had occasion to take a boat into the Diglis lock. Another boatman went into the lock at the same time with his boat. Plaintiff proceeded to wind up the right hand paddle, and put the catch in where it remained, to allow water to come into the lock. He went to the other paddle, and when he moved it up the paddle fell, and the windlass which was attached to the paddle revolved with great rapidity, and struck the plaintiff on the arm and broke it. He had to go to the Infirmary, where he remained for a considerable period, and had not been able to do any work since. The paddle had fallen at different times without anyone touching it, owing, it was alleged, to its defective and rotten state, and many of the teeth being broken off. The plaintiff previous to the accident complained to the lock-keeper, a man named **Wilmott**, of the bad state of the paddle. He had been in receipt of 25s per week and sometimes 30s. Plaintiff was called to give evidence in support of the claim, and stated that when he raised the paddle at Diglis Lock on the day in question he "scotched" it in the ordinary way ; but the machinery was so worn that the action was uncertain, and on that occasion the scotch slipped and set the windlass in motion. Mr Powell, house surgeon at the Infirmary, stated that it would be a month before plaintiff would be able to resume his usual occupation. **Edwin Rice**, a boatman, who was with plaintiff at the time the accident happened and was standing within three feet of him, said plaintiff put on the scotch in the usual way, so that if the machinery had been in proper order it ought to have held the windlass in check. Mr C Barnsley, engineer, said he had examined the paddle in question, and pronounced it very much the worse for wear and dangerous. Mr Evans, engineer, corroborated. Mr Browne, for the defendants, argued that the accident occurred through negligence on the part of plaintiff, and called Mr Lloyd, manager of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal, and also the engineer to the defendants, both of whom admitted that the machinery was worn, but said that if the paddle referred to had been "scotched" with due care, the windlass must have remained fixed. His Honour said before giving judgement he would view the machinery

himself with an expert from each side.

153 December 4 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

REMANDED **John Burnett** (43), boatman, Gloucester, was charged with stealing a jacket, the property of George Bright, on September 27th, and also on suspicion with having stolen a black and white plaid shawl found in his possession on November 28th. Mr Sommers said, on the 27th September the defendant was lodging at a house in Dolday, and when he left, a jacket, which belonged to a man who was lodging in the same room with the defendant, also disappeared. When he was arrested, the jacket was found upon him, and he had also in his possession a shawl, which he said belonged to his wife, who was in Charles Street. Mr Sommers asked for the man to be remanded for a week, which was granted.

154 December 11 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

REMANDED **John Burnett** (43), boatman, Gloucester, was charged with stealing a jacket, the property of George Bright, from Brundish's lodging house, Dolday, on September 27th, and also on suspicion with stealing a shawl. On the application of Mr Sommers, prisoner was remanded for a week.

155 December 18 1886

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED THEFT **John Burnett** (43), boatman, Gloucester, was charged with stealing a shawl, which was found in his possession on November 28th. Mr Sommers said he had received information from the Bromyard police that the shawl had been identified by a person there. Prisoner was handed over to the Bromyard police.

156 December 25 1886

A MAN DROWNED NEAR WORCESTER On Saturday afternoon, a man named **James Cheston**, a boatman aged sixty years, married, a native of Droitwich, was drowned just above Camp Lock. Deceased was steering the barge *Westcroft* of Droitwich, in company with two other men named **John Harris** and **James Harris**, when it is supposed the current, which was very strong at the time, caught the tiller and knocked Cheston overboard. The deceased was afterwards seen to go over the weir.

157 January 15 1886

STOKE PRIOR

SUDDEN DEATH **Philip Langford**, boatman, died rather suddenly on Monday at the Navigation Inn. He went into the house at about 8.30 am, and soon after was taken ill and, becoming worse, Dr Carey was sent for, but did not see him until after his death, which took place at about 11.10. Deceased was about 60 years old.

158 January 22 1887

WORCESTER SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

A letter was read from Mrs Kingsmill of Tibberton Vicarage, calling attention to the cruelty of boatmen to their draught animals, which were often shamefully beaten. The boatmen wasted their time in public houses and then overdrove their animals to make up for lost time.

159 February 12 1887

A WARNING TO BOATMEN At the Birmingham Police Court, **Joseph Clifton**, belonging to the boat *Eliza* of Upton-on-Severn, and **William Smith**, Blucher Street, were summoned for not having their boats marked and numbered as required by the 7th section of the Canal Boats Act. Mr Parker,

Inspector of Nuisances, asked that the summons might be dismissed on defendants paying the costs, as they had promised to comply with the requirements of the Act. He had issued the summons as a warning to other offenders. The magistrates ordered the defendants to pay costs only.

160 February 19 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **George Smith** (19), boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Bridge Street on Monday night. PC Parry stated that at 7.30 he was at the top of Dolday in company with PC Booth, when defendant was there and wanted to fight. In consequence of his disorderly conduct he had to be locked up. Defendant was fined 5s, or seven days' hard labour.

161 February 19 1887

The question of the right of bargemen of the River Lea to navigate on the Thames without licences from the Watermen's Company came on Monday before the magistrate at West Ham for decision. The evidence of custom included a statement by two old men from Ware that the privilege of immunity from the Thames licences was, as they understood, conferred upon their forefathers for bringing provisions to London at the time of the Great Plague. Mr Phillips decided that a licence was required ; but he consented to grant a case if it should be determined to argue the matter in a higher Court.

162 February 26 1887

FAILURES **Edward Hodgetts**, coal dealer and boatman of Upton-on-Severn, has filed his petition in the Worcester County Court, and a receiving order has been made.

163 March 12 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

CASE DISMISSED **Henry Wiggetts**, waterman, was charged with being on licensed premises, the Severn Trow Inn, Quay Street, during prohibited hours, at 11.30 on the morning of Sunday, the 27th February. Defendant said he heard a disturbance in the house, and the door being open he walked in to see what was going on. He had nothing to drink. Case dismissed.

164 March 12 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE

DRUNKENNESS **William Hooper**, boatman, was charged with being drunk in Worcester Street on the 1st inst. PC Burford proved the charge. Defendant was fined at this Court on that day for being drunk, and he immediately went and repeated the offence. He was fined 5s and 8s costs, or 14 days' hard labour.

165 April 30 1887

KIDDERMINSTER

THE DROWNING CASE IN THE CANAL On Monday evening an inquest was held in the Town Hall before Mr E Docker, Deputy Coroner, on the body of Eli Whittall of Orchard Street, aged 42, who was found drowned in the canal at Clensmore on Saturday evening. Miss Whittall, of the Fish Inn, said that on Saturday evening about six o'clock, her brother came to her and asked for some money, adding that he was going to have a short walk. He had the money and left home. Shortly after eight o'clock, she was informed that he had been found drowned in the canal at Clensmore. **Benjamin Rowley**, a boatman living in Mill Street, said he was walking along the canal side when he saw the body in the water, the head being downward. He jumped into the water, held up the head, called for assistance, and got the body out. He tried to restore animation, but did not succeed, and the man was dead. Dr Preston was sent for, but his services were of no avail. PC Hardwick came up, and the body was at once removed to Orchard Street. The jury returned a verdict of

"Accidentally drowned".

166 May 7 1887

JOTTINGS

"Still harping on my daughter". Still complaining of the water. It appears that Worcester babies don't thrive as they ought. Too many of them die of lung diseases and other complaints. The great mortality is among the children in arms. When the infants struggle through the first year, they don't afterwards succumb at an excessive rate. It was suggested at the last Town Council meeting that impurity of Severn water has something to do with the slaughter of the sucklings. Babies do suffer from hydrocephalus, as some adults do ; and even among persons who aspire to public office, there is not absolute immunity from water on the brain. In a sense which is not employed in medical statistics, some of our municipal rulers seem to be suffering from this complaint ; and whenever a chance is presented, they exclaim against that dreadful Severn water. But about the babies – how are they affected? They don't imbibe from the cold glass filled at the tap ; and if there is contamination, how is it that their brothers and sisters, under and over five years of age, remain so healthy? No, that suggestion about the Severn impurity won't hold water ; and those who are in favour of going to the Warwick Hall Estate, near Bromsgrove, for a fresh supply only damage their case by such absurdity, as they prejudiced it in the first place by their peculiar method of bringing it publicly forward. If the Severn supply causes disease, why was medical science and municipal wisdom silent for so many years – till the outcry followed a discovery as to the wondrous abundance and splendid quality of the subterranean lake of which the Council have heard picturesque descriptions? If the Severn is so polluted that the causes of disease enter the water pipes, it will not be so much longer. Worcester is to be compelled to keep back the contaminating flow at Diglis ; and the same law will of course be applicable higher up the river. If, then, the river is to be purified throughout its course, why refuse to use it after it has been used by so many generations? I admit that the mortality among infants is a very serious matter ; but the Bromsgrove business need not be mixed up with consideration of the brevity of baby life.

167 May 7 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, PERSHORE, TUESDAY

ASSAULTING A MAGISTRATE **Henry Bennett**, miller, was charged with an assault upon Mr A J Taylor at Birlingham on 16th April. Complainant said he lived at Strensham Court, and on the day named was returning from Pershore in a pleasure boat, accompanied by the Rev F W Knox. They passed a loaded barge before getting to the lock by Nafford Mill, and having entered the lock, there was a dispute between himself and the bargemen about letting their boat in before closing the lock gates. Defendant, who was employed at the mill, came rushing out, and said he should insist upon the boat going in, and came to remove witness from the paddle. On reaching to get hold of it, he struck witness a blow in the face with his fist. Witness returned the blow, and a scuffle ensued until Mr Knox held him back. Witness claimed a perfect right to the use of the lock. In reply to defendant, witness said he did not strike defendant first. The Rev F W Knox corroborated, and said defendant was very rude and violent both in speech and manner. Defendant pleaded justification, and said that being short of water for their work in the mill, he simply asked complainant to allow the two boats to go through together, and as he refused, pulled him from a paddle upon which, receiving a blow in the face, the same was returned. Defendant said that as lock-keeper he claimed a right to interfere with the opening and shutting any time. Defendant called three witnesses to prove that he was not the first aggressor, but the Bench considered the case fully proved, and fined defendant 30s including costs, or 21 days' hard labour.

LOCK RIGHTS **Thomas Cooper** and **Charles Longford**, the bargemen mentioned in the last case, were then charged with hindering the opening and shutting of the lock at the said time and place. Both defendants pleaded ignorance of any wrongdoing, and thought they were merely claiming their right in accordance with the regulations of the river as practised among themselves,

and under these circumstances Mr Taylor asked to withdraw from the prosecution.

168 June 4 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGES OF DRUNKENNESS Frederick Meacham (28), hawker, Dolday, and **George Patrick** (27), boatman, Gloucester, charged with being drunk in High Street on Sunday night, were discharged.

169 June 18 1887

SUICIDE OF A GIRL AT PERRY BARR An inquest was held on Wednesday morning at the Boar's Head, Perry Barr, by Mr E Hooper (district coroner for South Staffordshire), on the body of Marion Lily Whatton (18), machinist, who resided with her parents at Aston. For about five weeks deceased kept company with a young man named Charles Turner of Guildford Street, Aston, and a strong affection grew between them. A week ago, however, the girl was informed that Turner had been seen walking out with another young woman. He denied that there was any truth in the statement, but told her that their acquaintance must be broken off. This seemed to grieve her greatly, and she reached home directly afterwards crying bitterly. She was seen by her mother writing a letter, and afterwards was observed walking by the side of the canal. **Henry Shuter**, a boatman, said that at three o'clock on Monday morning he found a black cloth jacket and a brown felt hat on the towing-path of the Tame Valley Canal at Perry Barr. To the jacket was pinned a note, on which was roughly pencilled, "Mrs Whatton, 2 Court, 13 house, Clifton Road, Aston. Dear mother and father - I leave this note letting you know where I have drowned myself. Give my love to Charlie, Guildford Street, corner of Geach Street. Goodbye and God bless you. Tell the girls where I work about it. Don't blame Charlie ; he was too good to me". The canal was at once dragged, and the body of deceased was brought to the surface exactly opposite the place where the clothing was picked up. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane", and the Coroner as well as the jury were of opinion that it was an extremely distressing case, and that the parents deserved their sympathy,

170 July 2 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, SATURDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Edwin Phillips**, boatman of Gloucester, was charged with being drunk at the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, on June 11th. PC Workman proved the case. Fined 2s 6d and 8s costs.

171 July 16 1887

THE BODY OF A MAN FOUND IN THE SEVERN

THE INQUEST An inquest was held at the Guildhall on Tuesday before Mr Hulme, Deputy Coroner, touching the death of an Army reserve man whose name appeared on the discharge certificate as Thomas White of 17 Bridge Street, Leominster, whose body was found in the Severn on Monday morning, near the Railway Bridge.

Thomas Price, boatman, Lower Henwick Road, stated that about eight o'clock on Monday morning he was sculling about 150 yards above the Railway Bridge, when he noticed something in the water. He went as far as Worcester Bridge and, not being satisfied, returned and then discovered it was the body of a man. Witness at once gave information at the police station.

Frederick Smith, Hylton Road, stated that shortly before nine o'clock he saw the body floating near the Railway Bridge and he went to it in a boat, tied a cord round it, and drew it to the side. Sergeant Grosvenor and the last witness then made their appearance, and the body was got out of the water. Sergeant Grosvenor said he was present when the body was taken out of the water and went with it to the mortuary. On searching the body he found the certificate produced, which showed that the deceased was a first class Army Reserve man, and was in receipt of 6d per day. Witness also found a silver watch and chain, a purse, and 1 1/4d in coppers, and a tract entitled "Good tiding, alive or dead". The watch had stopped at 20 minutes to three. The certificate showed that the deceased had

last received his pay on the 4th July 1887.

Elizabeth Plummer, domestic servant in the employ of Mr John Williams, Bridge Street, Leominster, identified the body as that of William Blake, an army pensioner, who had lodged with her master. Witness handed to the Coroner a parchment discharge certificate which the deceased had given her to keep for him, and which corresponded in every particular with the certificate found on the deceased. Witness saw the deceased alive on the last day he received his pension. Deceased often got drunk, and when he was drunk he was very quarrelsome, almost like mad. He was fond of racing. Deceased had a father alive. Deceased's real name was Blake.

Dr Crowe stated that he had examined the body and found that no bones were broken nor were there any wounds on the body. The cause of death was drowning. Witness could not say how long the body had been in the water, but deceased might have been in the water only a few days, as the state of the weather would account for the decomposed state of certain parts of the body.

The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

172 July 23 1887

DROWNING CASES On Tuesday evening about dusk, a boy named Thomas Jewkes (13), the son of a widow at Woolside, Dudley, was drowned in the canal. The boy was bathing with a number of others, when a cry of "Police" was raised among them, and the boys, with the exception of Jewkes, swam and scrambled to the banks. Jewkes, in his excitement, went under the water, and finding himself exhausted when he came up, asked for help. Such however was the panic among the lads that they all ran away, leaving Jewkes to his fate.

On Wednesday afternoon, two brothers named Ernest and Berty Deeley of Hawkins Street, Holloway Bank, near Wednesbury, were drowned in the Birmingham Canal at Holloway Bank. The two boys, when in company with a schoolfellow named Aston, noticed some corks floating on the water. Upon Ernest Deeley attempting to reach the corks he fell into the canal, and his brother, in attempting to rescue him, was pulled into the water. Aston, who is about seven years of age, raised an alarm, and a boatman named **Robinson** was speedily at the scene of the occurrence, jumped into the canal and recovered the boys, each of whom was found to be dead. The ages of the lads were eight and five respectively.

173 August 13 1887

PAINFUL BATHING FATALITY NEAR WORCESTER

A WORCESTER BANK CASHIER DROWNED A most painful sensation was caused in Worcester by the announcement that the head cashier, Mr Edward C Richards, at the Birmingham Bank, Broad Street, had been drowned while bathing at Hallow Ford.

The deceased was about 29 years of age, and lived at The Cottage, Whittingham. He had been in the bank at Worcester for about seven years and was highly respected by those in the bank and all who knew him. He leaves a widow and two children.

THE INQUEST The inquest was held at the Crown Inn, Hallow, before W P Hughes, county coroner.

Mr David Laing, Gravelly Hill, Aston, Birmingham, bank clerk, stated that he knew the deceased, who was clerk in the Birmingham Banking Company at Worcester. On Wednesday afternoon about half past four, witness, in company with the deceased and Mr A E Bonberry, Mr A Coulson and Mr J West, started in two rowing boats from Worcester to row up the river, with the intention of going as far as Camp. The deceased, Mr Bonberry and Mr West were in the one boat, Mr West and the deceased rowing. Mr Bonberry was steering. Witness and Mr Coulson were in the other boat. They rowed as far as Hallow Ford, where they arrived about twenty minutes past four. They did not stop anywhere on the way. When they arrived at Hallow Ford they agreed to bathe. Witness had only bathed at the spot once before. Mr West's boat was more on the Hallow side of the river, and the other boat to the other side. Mr West and witness remained on the Hallow side, and the deceased went over in the boat with Mr Coulson to the other side. Witness and Mr West got into the water on that side, and they saw the deceased and Mr Coulson got into the river on the other side.

The water was deeper on the other side, and the deceased and Coulson crossed over, because it was shallower and they could not swim so well. Witness swam across the river, and saw the deceased and Coulson in the water swimming about. They were not out of their depth. Witness swam back to the Hallow side, dived in again and returned to where the deceased and Mr Coulson still were. Witness asked deceased if he was going to swim across. Deceased said he did not know, and someone in the water said it was only ten yards across the deep water. The deceased then commenced to swim across. When about the middle of the stream he called out, "I am done", and sank immediately. Witness, who was about five or six yards off, swam at once to the spot, and when he rose, witness caught him by the arm and struck out for the shallow side. Deceased pulled witness under, and he (witness) was forced to let go. Witness called for assistance, but no one came. Mr West was on the bank on the Hallow side, and Mr Coulson was in the water, but he could not swim sufficiently well to render any assistance. Witness dived and felt the deceased's body, but could not get it to the surface. The water was about eight feet deep where the body was. The deceased appeared struggling on the bottom on his hands and knees. There was one young man who could swim, for he dived several times afterwards. Witness swam about, expecting the body to rise, but it did not. Witness got into a boat and kept it in the middle of the stream for a short time, to be prepared if the body came up. Witness then dressed and went with Mr Bonberry to break the news to the widow of the deceased. Witness was not present when the body was recovered. Witness had heard that the deceased had a weak heart, and he supposed its action failed when he was trying to swim across.

Mr John West, Lansdowne Crescent, bank clerk, corroborated the evidence given by the last witness. Witness had been diving, and had swum across twice, so that he felt he would have been no use in rendering any assistance. Witness was present when the body was recovered about six o'clock, which was about an hour and a half from the time deceased first sank.

Samuel Sidley, waterman, Hanley Castle, stated that on Wednesday afternoon he was engaged lower down the river when he heard a man had been drowned. He took a boat and a boat hook to the spot, and after searching for about half an hour recovered the body about the middle of the river. Life was quite extinct.

The Coroner said this was one of those unhappy bathing fatalities that generally occurred at this time of the year. No blame was attached to anyone, and Mr Laing had done everything he possibly could do to try and save his friend from being drowned.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

174 August 20 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED ASSAULT ON A WIFE **Thomas Harris** (60), waterman, Anchor Inn, Diglis, was charged on a warrant with assaulting his wife, **Sarah Harris**, on Sunday. Mr Tree appeared for the complainant ; Mr Beauchamp for the defendant. The complainant was called, and stated that she was the holder of the licence of the inn. On Sunday afternoon she went out for a drive, and returned home between eight and nine o'clock at night. Defendant returned home about half an hour afterwards, and followed witness along the passage. On turning round, defendant struck witness three times in the face, on the nose, ear and temple. Witness became unconscious, and when she came to her senses she found herself under the kitchen table. Witness had been attended by Mr Budd, surgeon. Witness had been married about 18 months, during which time her husband had left her six times. She asked that a separation order might be made. In cross-examination complainant said she went for a drive with a Mr Cotterill, who was a widower. Her husband owned a barge. Mr Beauchamp addressed the Bench, and said the assault had been very much exaggerated by the complainant. He alluded to the conduct of the complainant. If a man was justified in striking a woman, it was under such circumstances. PC Tarrant stated that he was outside the inn about a quarter to ten o'clock, when the defendant spoke to him. At ten o'clock witness heard screams, and on returning to the inn found the defendant in the house, but his wife had slipped out of the back door. He afterwards saw the complainant, who wanted to have the defendant locked up. There was

no cut on her face, but there was a little blood. The magistrates said, considering the provocation the defendant had received, he would be bound over in the sum of £10 to keep the peace for six months, and he was ordered to pay 12s costs.

175 August 20 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, REDDITCH, WEDNESDAY

A KICKING BOATMAN **David Brace**, boatman of Worcester, was brought up in custody charged with assaulting Mr Thomas Southan, the Wharf Hotel, Hopwood, Alvechurch, on the 13th inst ; also with damaging a door belonging to complainant, and doing damage to the extent of £1. Defendant pleaded guilty to both charges. He said he had had some beer and remembered nothing of the circumstances. Complainant said defendant was drunk and he refused to let him into the house. He however ultimately succeeded in getting in and broke several jugs. Witness got him out, but defendant kicked him seriously on his leg. He afterwards kicked in the panels of the vestibule door, the damage to which a carpenter had estimated at £1. He had no animus against defendant, but he wished to put a stop to such rowdyism. Defendant's brother-in-law said he was struck on the head with an axe some time back, and when he had drink, was not responsible for his actions. Those who gave defendant drink were as bad as he was. Defendant was fined 6d, damage £1 and costs 9s 6d. His wife paid the money.

176 August 27 1887

FATAL ACCIDENT ON THE THAMES A sad fatality occurred on the river Thames on Monday evening off Ray's Wharf, Bermondsey. It is the custom for the watermen and waterside labourers of this locality to hold every year what is known as the St John's, Horselydown, Regatta, and it was in connection with this annual sport on Monday that the accident took place. The publicans and shopkeepers throughout the neighbourhood subscribe for the purchase of a boat to be competed for in four heats by oarsmen, the winner becoming the owner of the craft. The competition is dignified by the title of a regatta. With fine weather prevailing, it is not surprising that a large crowd of sightseers assembled on the banks to witness the racing, every advantageous position, whether ashore or afloat, being eagerly taken up. The first three heats were rowed without mishap, and as the fourth was nearly finished a good deal of excitement was aroused. Just opposite the winning buoy was moored the barge *Maria*, laden heavily with hay and belonging to Mr T Scott of Fobbing, near Stamford-leigh Oak (*Stanford-le-Hope*), Essex. It occurred to a number of young men to mount this barge in order to get a good view and witness the contest from the top of the cargo. As the contest was at its height, the barge, released by the outgoing tide, and probably overweighted by the crowd as well, canted over on her side. Immediately upwards of a hundred trusses of hay were precipitated into the water, carrying with them about a score of the spectators, all of whom were men. Strenuous efforts were at once made to rescue the young fellows as they struggled desperately in the water, and with some difficulty several were saved. PC Martin, 276, who witnessed the occurrence, stated that the master of the barge warned the men as they clambered on to the hay of the danger they were incurring, but no heed was paid to this caution. The body of one man was afterwards recovered, and another man was missing.

177 September 17 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

CASE ADJOURNED **William Hopkins** (26), boatman, Tewkesbury, was charged with ill-treating a horse by walking it whilst in an unfit state from Stourport to Worcester. PC Hughes stated that the horse was very lame, and the defendant said the lameness was the result of a fall. The case was adjourned.

178 September 17 1887

The report of the Local Government Board for 1886-87 has just been issued, and gives us information touching the administration of local affairs which is not otherwise accessible.

Mr John Brydone reports the results of his inspection of canal boats, and of his conference with the authorities in regard to the carrying out of the Acts. He says :-

"One of the worst of the cases prosecuted last year was before the Borough Bench at Kidderminster. An owner was summoned for allowing a canal boat to be used as a dwelling and not having the same registered. The defendant stated that he never intended the cabin to be used as a dwelling, and he pleaded that he was wholly ignorant of the fact that it was being used as such by the boatman. A fine however was imposed of 10s and costs (including solicitor's fees), amounting in all to £2 7s. Not only was the boat unregistered, but the cabin was very dirty and totally unfit for use in its then condition, while by far the most serious feature of the case was the occupation of the cabin as a dwelling by the boatman, his daughter 22 years of age, and his son 20 years of age ; the son and daughter actually sleeping together in the same bed. The absence of decency in such a case is truly deplorable and merited a severe punishment. The regulations prohibit any person of the female sex over 12 years of age from occupying a cabin as a sleeping place at the same time as any male person unless she is his wife. There are many cases where girls just over the age of 12 accompany father and mother and probably younger children, but in most of these instances as much decency is observed as the limited space at command will afford. The case which formed the subject of proceedings, however, is of a very different class from these".

Mr Brydone says the improvement in the condition of the boats and their occupants, noticed in the previous report, still continues.

179 September 24 1887

NOTICES OF DIVIDENDS **Edwin Hodgetts**, Upton-on-Severn, formerly coal dealer, now boatman. First and final dividend of 1s 9d in the pound, payable September 30th at the Official Receiver's, Worcester.

180 October 6 1887

INQUEST An inquest was held at the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, by Mr E Docker, deputy coroner, on Saturday, on the body of **Georgina Westwood**, aged 44 years, wife of **Thomas Westwood**, boatman, which was discovered in the canal on Friday by Thomas Mason. Deceased had a quarrel with her husband, from whom she was living apart, on Thursday week, and tried to stab him with a pair of scissors, and he struck her. There was no evidence to show how she got into the water, and the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

181 October 8 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, TUESDAY

CHARGES OF DRUNKENNESS **William Hooper**, boatman, who did not appear, was fined 10s and costs 9s, for being drunk in High Street on September 24th. PC Wainwright stated the case.

182 November 12 1887

DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN THE SEVERN At the Guildhall on Wednesday, Mr W B Hulme, Deputy City Coroner, held an inquest on the body found in the Severn on Monday.

Charles Webb, waterman, Hylton Road, said his attention was drawn to the body floating in the river above the railway bridge. He towed it to the Upper Slip, near the Butts. It was quite naked except for a pair of worsted stockings and a pair of boots. There was a truss on it. Witness had had great experience in the recovery of bodies, and he judged that this one had been in the water 10 or 11 months. Witness knew **James Chesterton**, a boatman who was drowned at Camp a week before last Christmas. He could not swear that the body was that of Chesterton, but Chesterton when drowned was wearing stockings, garters and boots similar to those on the body, and he had prominent teeth, the teeth of the body being also prominent.

John Harris, boat owner, Westcroft Street, Droitwich, who was with Chesterton when he was drowned, was unable to identify the body. The boots, stockings and garters were, however, similar, and witness had also heard that Chesterton wore a truss. Chesterton sometimes wore a black silk

handkerchief. There was also one on the body.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was found drowned, but there was no evidence to show how he came by his death.

James Chesterton was a boatman who lived at Droitwich and was, a week before Christmas last, knocked overboard by the tiller of a barge he was helping to navigate at Camp weir. The river was at that time in flood, and it is surmised that Chesterton's body was held to the bottom by the flood deposit with which it was overlaid, until the present freshet on the river washed it clear again, and it floated to the top. He was 60 years of age.

183 November 12 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED CRUELTY **William Wakeman** (20), boatman, Lower Westgate Street, Gloucester, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it when in an unfit condition on the previous day. PC Darley stated that the animal was drawing along the canal a boat load of coal. It seemed to be in a very weak state. Mr Perrins, veterinary surgeon, said the horse was a very old one and was in very poor condition, and both the fore legs were diseased. The magistrates said that if the defendant consented to have the animal destroyed they would inflict no fine, but defendant would have to pay the costs, 12s 6d. Defendant's father consented and paid the costs.

184 November 19 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, TUESDAY

A CAUTION TO BOATMEN **John Hopkins**, boatman of Gloucester, was charged with infringing the bye laws of the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Canal Company, on the 15th October, by passing a boat through a tunnel on the canal which was not in tow of a steam tug. Mr F Holyoake appeared for the company, and remarked upon the liability to collision, and consequent danger to life and property, if the boatmen acted as defendant had done. **Frank Rolls**, who works the steam tug, stated that on the 15th October he met defendant shafting his boat through the Shortwood Tunnel, not in tow of the tug. He had previously passed through the Tardebigge Tunnel. Defendant said he was sorry. Mr Hobrough (the agent of the company) said they did not wish for a heavy penalty. Defendant was let off with a caution on paying costs, 9s.

185 November 19 1887

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON Jane Partridge (21), Dolday, was charged with stealing 30s from the person of **William Preedy**, waterman of Westgate Street, Gloucester. Mr Dreaper defended. Complainant accompanied defendant to a house in Dolday and remained there the night. Next morning he missed 30s in gold from his pocket. The Bench, in the absence of corroboration, dismissed the case.

186 December 10 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, TUESDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Joseph Cole**, boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Shaw Lane, Stoke Prior, on the 4th inst. Fined 5s 8d and costs.

DARING ROBBERY **Alfred Whorrall** and **John Grove**, in custody, boatmen from Gloucester, were charged with stealing a basket of fish, value £1, the property of John Ruddy Waddams, fishmonger and poultreer, Droitwich, at Stoke Prior on the 3rd inst. Prosecutor stated that on Saturday night he was at the Boat Inn, Stoke Prior, and left a boy outside minding his horse and trap while he was inside selling oysters. When he came out, he missed the basket of fish from the trap, and the boy made a complaint. Thomas James, the boy alluded to, stated that while he was minding the horse and trap, Whorrall came out of the Boat Inn and pulled him away from the trap across the road, while Grove took the basket of fish and ran off with it. Witness pursued, but Whorrall pushed

him back. He ran on to the canal bridge, and saw the paper which he had previously put on the basket of fish on the canal side, in the direction the prisoners had run. Oliver Thomas, waiter at the Boat Inn, stated that prisoners were in the house on Saturday night. PC Workman stated that Grove said, while on the road to Bromsgrove, "If it had not been for the drink, we should not have got into this mess". Prisoners consented to be tried by the Bench, and pleaded guilty to the charge. They were sentenced to a month's hard labour each.

187 December 10 1887

PRESENTATION TO THE REV H G S MATHEWS Last night a presentation of a marble clock was made by the congregation of the Watermen's Church to the Rev H G S Mathews, Curate, on his leaving the parish of St Clement's for Nuneaton. The Rev F H Richings said he was deputed by the members of the church to make the presentation, and he did so with mixed feelings of joy and sorrow. During the time Mr Mathews had worked in the parish, he had gained their love and esteem, and they were all sorry to part with him. Mr Mathews was leaving them to go and work in a large and populous district. He would be within three or four miles of his own home, and Mr Mathews's brother hoped to go and be curate at the same place. They all wished Mr Mathews every success in his new sphere of work, and hoped that God's blessing would rest upon him. (Applause). Mr Richings then asked Mr Mathews to accept the clock as a small token of the esteem, love and affection in which he was held by the congregation of the Watermen's Church, and by the children attending the Ragged School. (Applause). Mr Mathews suitably acknowledged the gift. Mr Brand (teacher in the Ragged School) then presented Mr Mathews with an inkstand on behalf of the girls of the Sunday School.

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188 January 12 1889

WORCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

THE SEWAGE DISPOSAL QUESTION A report was received from Mr Henry J Martin, the engineer to the Severn Commission, as to the proposal to dispose of the sewage of the city of Worcester by precipitation works at Diglis, and to discharge the effluent water into the Severn at some point above Diglis weir. Although, as compared with the existing effluent, that which would be discharged from the proposed works would be much improved, he could not but regard the proposal to discharge the effluent into the river above the Diglis weir objectionable. An imperfect effluent, especially if partially stagnating in hot weather in a channel such as the Diglis lock cutting, would be apt to set up what was termed "secondary fermentation", and as that secondary fermentation caused the production of considerable quantities of disagreeable and unwholesome gases, it would be deleterious to the health of the lock-keepers and their families, and more particularly to the boatmen and their families who might be detained in the lock cutting. He suggested that the effluent should be discharged into the river below the Diglis weir, and if possible on the side of the river away from the towing-path, on which side of the river the currents were better adapted for rapidly and completely effecting the dilution of these gases.

189 February 9 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

DRUNK Charles Tonks (36), boatman, Gloucester, was charged with being drunk at, and with refusing to quit, the Lame Dog Inn, and with being riotous on the 5th February on the canal side. PS James stated that he found the defendant drunk in the Lame Dog Inn in the Blockhouse. He was disorderly and fought with his wife. Witness put him out of the house and advised him to get on his boat. When witness afterwards asked him for his name, defendant said he would not give it ; he would fight for it. Witness had then to take him in charge. Defendant admitted having had beer, but denied that he refused his name. This was defendant's first offence, and he was fined 5s, or seven days.

190 March 9 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

FRAUDULENTLY REMOVING GOODS **David Brace**, boatman, Lion Row, was charged on an adjourned summons with fraudulently removing furniture from his residence on February 7th. Mr Dresper defended. It was stated on the previous day for the prosecution that defendant removed his furniture whilst indebted to his landlady, a Mrs Cookes, to the extent of 15s. For the defence it was stated that Mrs Cookes had been offered and had refused the money owing. Mrs Cookes now attended, and stated that on the 6th of February the defendant's wife met her, and offered her 10s on account. Cross-examined : Witness said defendant owed £1 12s on an old rent account. Defendant's wife did not say, "Here's 5s on the old account, and 5s on the new account". Samuel Bennett, bailiff, said he went to the defendant's house on the 7th February. He found the house locked up and the furniture cleared out. In the stable was a horse, which was in a low, diseased condition – so bad that he thought it was unfit to remove to any other stable. Witness saw the defendant in a boat on the river. The furniture was in the boat. Defendant said he would not pay a farthing. While talking to the defendant his wife led the horse by. Mr Dresper submitted that there was no fraudulent pretence on the part of the defendant ; but the Bench eventually ordered the rent to be paid, and costs.

191 April 13 1889

THE DROWNING OF A WORCESTER MAN

INQUEST AND VERDICT An inquest was held on Friday at the Boar's Head, Severn Stoke, by Mr Joseph Martin, Coroner, on the body of John William Nunny, Parkfield Villas, Littleton Road, Worcester. Mr John Hill was foreman of the jury.

The first witness was Albert Henry Nunny, who said that the body of the deceased was that of his father. Witness lived with him. He was in the employ of Messrs McNaught and Co, and was 40 years of age. The household consisted of himself, wife and six children. Witness was the eldest son, and saw him last on the 14th March at five minutes past two, at home. Deceased had been to work in the morning, but did not go after. Mr Corder, surgeon, who had been attending deceased, said he was suffering from softening of the brain. He advised him not to go to work, as he did not seem fit. Mr Corder had attended him about eight weeks. He left home directly after witness saw him last. He said he could not stay in the house, as his head was so bad. Witness returned home at 5.30. Witness's mother asked him if he had seen him. Witness told her he had not. She said he had gone for a walk, and told her she would catch him up on Pitchcroft. She said she followed in a few minutes, but could not see him. Witness hunted about that evening and informed the police about eight, and on the following morning had the river dragged. They found his hat on the river bank. The water was very flush but had gone down. The hat had not been in the river. The river was dragged down to Diglis Weir, about two miles. Deceased had no watch. Witness did not hear anything further until the body was found in the river Severn at Severn Stoke. Deceased was insured in the Prudential for seven years for £8 16s, which was affected by his wife. He knew she had done so. He had been in failing health for two or three years. Some weeks before he ceased work, he was taken home from the works ill. Mr Corder was then consulted. For seven weeks he was unable to work, and went to Weston for a change to a Sanatorium there. He said at dinner time on the day he was missing that he could not do his work, and was afraid he should get notice to leave. He was in the Foresters' Society. He had been very low spirited for some time. He had nothing for dinner on the 13th. He said he could not eat.

By Mr Hill : I never heard him threaten to put an end to himself.

By the Coroner : There is a footpath where his hat was found. It was about half a mile from his house. It was a favourite walk of deceased. The hat was on a part of the bank that had given way.

James Smith, a waterman of Upton, said he was on the Severn on the previous Wednesday, and saw the body. He had previously heard a body had been seen by those on a "tug". After finding it, witness secured it.

PC Edwards said that he went with the last witness and saw the deceased in the water, and with

assistance got the body out. Witness searched the body and found a purse with 9 1/2d, a knife, pair of spectacles and white pocket handkerchief. All his clothing was on except the hat.

Mr F B Marsh, surgeon of Kempsey, deposed to examining the body.

Leonard Henry Bibbs, Arboretum Road, Worcester, a fellow workman of deceased for 14 years, said he and other shipmates had noted deceased had been strange for about two years. He had suffered from pains in his head so acutely that he had been off work for a day or two occasionally. On the day he left, witness found him in a "moody" sort of way, and advised him to shake it off. He said he could not. He was very strange on the day he left, and while talking with him, someone approached by the stairs and he said, "He's coming after me". Witness informed his employer, and was requested to see him home. Witness took him to the doctor, and was much alarmed. He appeared very childish. Witness took him home in a brougham from the works. The doctor said he was in a very bad state. He said he was suffering from paralysis of the brain. Deceased had a most comfortable home, a good wife, and was much liked by his fellow workmen.

The Coroner explained that had he known Mr Corder had been in attendance on deceased he should have asked him to have been present, but not having that information he deemed it necessary to have some medical testimony, hence his calling in Dr Marsh.

A verdict of "Suicide by drowning while of unsound mind" was returned.

192 April 20 1889

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, TUESDAY

CHARGE OF DRUNKENNESS **Richard Bull**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d and 8s costs for being drunk on the Stoke Road on the 18th March. PC Workman stated the charge.

193 April 20 1889

CRIMINAL At the Wednesbury Police Court on Tuesday, **Edward Bowdler**, a boatman, was charged with embezzling £3, the moneys of George Griffiths, licensed victualler and canal carrier, Ocker Hill. Mr W S Smith, who appeared for the prosecution, said the prisoner was engaged to take a boat to London, and was paid his wages at the time, but after all he did not go. It was a most peculiar case ; the man could not be charged with a larceny, and he (Mr Smith) feared it was a case for which the law gave no criminal remedy. Under these circumstances, the prisoner was discharged.

194 April 20 1889

TWO BARGEMEN KILLED On Saturday Mr Wynne E Baxter held an enquiry into the circumstances attending the deaths of **Samuel Franks** (30) and **Joseph Franks** (21), who were drowned by the capsizing of the monkey barge *Caroline* in St Katherine's Dock, London. **Mary Ann Franks**, the widow of Samuel, stated that the boat *Caroline* belonged to her husband, and regularly plied between Tipton, near Dudley, and London. They lived on board the boat, and had no other home. The boat on the previous Monday was lying in the St Katherine's Docks, and Joseph Franks had come up from Brentford to assist in loading the cargo for his brother. They were taking in a cargo of marble slabs. She suddenly heard a scream. She rushed on deck ; and, seeing the boat give a violent lurch, she seized her baby to protect it, as the boat appeared to be rapidly filling. The boat capsized, and she and her baby were taken down with it, but were fortunately rescued by someone throwing a sling to her. Her husband and his brother disappeared, and were drowned. She did not know exactly what happened at the time of the capsizing, but was afterwards informed that certain of the larger slabs slipped, thereby overturning the boat. A dock labourer named William Sadd gave it as his opinion that at least four or five tons of marble fell on the men, and it was very unusual for such large slabs to be loaded into such frail craft. A missionary engaged in the Canal Boat Mission stated that it was extremely dangerous for such boats as the one in question to go into the Thames at all, because the wash from one of the river steamers might easily overbalance them. Certain firms, however, encouraged such craft to come into the Thames and, in the race of competition, when one firm did so, others were sure to follow the example. The Coroner said there

was legislation now being directed to the overloading of ordinary vessels under Mr Plimsoll's Act, and this seemed to come very close to it. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death". A painful feature of the case was that Joseph Franks was shortly to have been married to his brother's wife's sister.

195 May 25 1889

A BOATMAN'S IDEA OF PATERNAL PUNISHMENT At the Worcester City Police Court, on Monday, **Thomas Brown** (36), a boatman, of 11 Clare Street, Gloucester, was charged with assaulting his son, aged 5 years, at Diglis Lock, on Sunday afternoon. William Rofe said he saw defendant on a boat lying in the lock. He was beating his child with a strap on the back. He afterwards put the boy into the water up to his neck, and then drew him out again, and pitched him into the cabin. The strap with which the defendant beat the boy had a buckle on it, and when he had done with it, he fastened it round his own waist. Defendant said he did not intend any harm to the boy. It was his way of correcting him, to teach him not to go near the water. He did not consider that he was punishing the boy severely. John Goad, glover, Willow Street, said he was with Mr Rofe at the time in question. Their attention was drawn to the boat on which defendant was working by the cries of the boy and the blows of the strap. They were severe blows. Witness shouted to defendant, and asked him what he was doing. Defendant said he was correcting the lad properly, and if he did not do it, he would very likely be drowned. He added that if witness did not shift, he would give him "one under the ear hole". Whereon witness, having seen enough of defendant's quality, "shifted", and went to inform the police. P S Wallace said that at half past three o'clock on Sunday afternoon a warrant was placed in his hands for defendant's arrest. He found him on his boat at Diglis Lock and took him into custody. Defendant remarked that he did not hurt the child, that he only gave him four good cuts with his belt, and dipped him into the water "but not above his head". Defendant's wife was present, and shouted, "If it had been me, I should have given him as much more. He did not give him half enough". Witness also took the boy to the station and had him stripped, when he found two or three red marks on his back. Defendant's answer to the charge was that the boy had fallen into the water several times. He did so yesterday afternoon just before the occurrence, and what he did was merely as warning to the boy. The strap made more noise than anything else. "When you catch hold of the buckle end, there is not much left to punish anybody with". The magistrates retired to see the condition of the boy's back themselves, and, on returning, the Mayor said that they did not find much evidence of a severe thrashing. They considered, however, that defendant had adopted an improper means of correcting a boy of such tender years, and ordered him to pay costs 13s 6d or seven days.

196 June 1 1889

SAD CASE OF DROWNING AT KEMPSEY An inquest was held on Friday at the Pixham Ferry Inn, Powick, by Mr G F S Brown, deputy coroner, touching the death of Thomas Davis, aged 54, of Birmingham, lately residing at Kempsey. Deceased's wife, Mary Ann Davis of Birmingham, identified the body of the deceased, and stated that her husband had been living at Kempsey for about two months for the benefit of his health. He was a builder and carpenter, and had had trouble with his work which had upset his nerves, so much so that he had been treated medically. She last saw the deceased alive on the previous Monday week when he started out for a walk from which he did not return. He was in a desponding state of mind. William Bullock, a carpenter of Windmill Cottage, Kempsey, saw the deceased proceeding near the river side towards the stile on the footpath leading from the Worcester Road towards his residence. **William Drinkwater**, a boatman of Pixham Ferry, said he was crossing the Severn on the previous morning and saw something floating down the stream. He found it was the body of a man, and he got it out of the river. He then identified the body as that of the deceased. There was a slight mark on the face. The body was fully dressed. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

197 July 6 1889

STRANGE TREATMENT OF A DROWNED MAN NEAR BROMSGROVE An inquest was held at the Public Office, Bromsgrove, on Saturday, by Mr A T Hibbert, Deputy Coroner, on the body of George Henry Albutt, aged 55 years, who was found drowned in the canal at Stoke Prior on Friday morning. The body, which presented a very shocking appearance owing to immersion in the water and exposure to the sun, lay at the home of deceased in Windsor Square. Mrs Albutt, the widow, stated that her husband left home between 7 and 8 o'clock the previous Thursday evening, and she did not again see him alive. He did not say anything, and they had had no quarrel. He had had no work for two months, and had said he was tired of hanging about and sick of his life, as he could not get any work, but had never said he would destroy himself. **John Chance**, lock-keeper on the canal, Stoke Prior, stated that he saw deceased sitting on the bank by the side of the canal about 10.30 on the Wednesday morning. On Friday morning witness helped to pull deceased out about five yards from the place where he saw him on the bank. **Edward Crumpton**, lock-keeper, stated that about six o'clock on Friday morning he saw the body of deceased rise by the side of a boat which had just come through the lock. He got a paddle and hitched it to the side, tied a rope to it, and hitched the rope to a bush and went for the police. To the foreman of the jury : I did not attempt to get the body out of the water, or ask the boatman to help me to do it, as I thought I ought not to do so. Was sure the man was dead. It was about an hour before I got back with the policeman. PC Prosser stated that he found the body in the water with a rope tied to the belt round the waist and to a bush on the bank. Witness removed the body to the New Wharf, Tardebigge, and tried to get a place to put it in, but no one would let him have a place, and he could not get a conveyance and horse to take deceased to his home. Witness found a pocket knife on deceased, a half penny, and a piece of a postal wrapper with his name and address on it. There were plenty of buildings about. Witness had to go to Bromsgrove to the friends of deceased to get a conveyance, and the body lay on the wharf until one o'clock. Dr Elliott stated that there were no marks of violence on the body, and death was probably caused by drowning. The Coroner summed up the evidence. With respect to sheltering the body, he said the only persons liable were the churchwardens of the parish in which it was found, and if they neglected to provide a place they were liable to have a body brought to their own houses. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

198 July 13 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF A BOATMAN **James Hardman** (25), boatman, Spring Gardens, George Street, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in George Street on July 10th, with assaulting the police while in the execution of their duty, and with assaulting his wife, **Sarah Hardman**. The wife told a story of the unfeeling conduct of her husband. Defendant, being a boatman, was away from home a great part of his time, and came home about 12 o'clock last evening and unmercifully beat her. She had been ill-treated by the defendant on previous occasions. A neighbour of the defendant's named George Smith corroborated the wife's evidence. PC Lowe said he was attracted to Spring Gardens by the cry of "murder". He there saw the complainant on the ground outside the house, and the defendant standing over her, kicking her. On going to the complainant's assistance, the defendant commenced fighting and kicking him. PC Hughes and Thomas Davis also gave evidence as to the defendant's violent conduct while being taken to the police station. The defendant was sent to prison for six weeks on each charge of assault.

199 July 27 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGES OF DRUNKENNESS **Henry Cooper** (69), boatman, Baker Street, Gloucester, was charged with being drunk and incapable on the 23rd at Pump Street. PC Hughes said prisoner was too drunk to speak. Prisoner said he was on the way from Stourport to Gloucester. Discharged on promising to leave the city.

200 August 3 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

DRUNK **George Patrick**, a boatman of Gloucester, was charged with being drunk at All Hallows on the 26th. PC Bayham proved the case, and he was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment.

201 September 14 1889

A CHILD'S BODY ATTACKED BY RATS On Monday afternoon a boatman, when passing in his boat under the canal bridge near to the Globe Ironworks, Tividale, Rowley Regis, noticed a brown paper parcel on a small embankment near to the canal. He reached the parcel, and upon opening it was horrified to find the dead body of a fully developed female child. The body was wrapped in an old shirt, and the feet had been gnawed by rats. Upon the wrapper being examined, it was found that a portion of the paper had also been eaten by rats. Police-constable Winfield was apprised of the discovery, and he caused the body to be removed to the Boat Inn to await the Coroner's inquiry. Several boatmen assert that the parcel must have been put on the embankment during the day. With the exception of the feet, the body does not appear to be injured.

202 September 28 1889

BROMSGROVE

DRUNKARD At the Public Office on Wednesday, before Mr F White, **Thomas Goode**, boatman, was charged with being drunk in High Street on the 24th inst. PC Beesley proved the case. Defendant, who pleaded guilty to a previous conviction during the year, was fined 5s and 6s costs.

203 October 5 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF EMBEZZLEMENT **James Harman**, boatman, Spring Gardens, was charged with embezzling £1 17s, the moneys of his employer, John Cullis, Bath Road. Mr Cullis said prisoner had sold some hay and told him that he had not received the money. He, however, was in a position to prove that prisoner's statement was false. Mr Sommers said that the prisoner was only arrested that morning, and Mr Beauchamp, who had been instructed for the prosecution, was unable to appear. He therefore asked for a remand for a week. Prisoner was accordingly remanded.

204 October 12 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF EMBEZZLEMENT **James Harman** (25), boatman, Spring Gardens, was charged on a warrant with embezzling £1 17s belonging to his master, John Cullis, Bath Road on July 9th. Mr Beauchamp prosecuted. It appeared that the prisoner was employed on May 28th last to take a load of hay into the Staffordshire district. He was commissioned to sell the hay and receive money, and to account for all hay sold on credit. Under ordinary circumstances he should have returned in a fortnight, but he did not return till July. About the middle of June, the prosecutor went to West Bromwich and saw the prisoner, who had then sold about one half of the hay. Prosecutor went on to the Potteries district and made a sale of the whole of the hay, and on returning asked the prisoner to deliver it. Prosecutor received several sums of money at different times from the prisoner, but there was a sum of £1 17s which had not been accounted for. The prisoner told prosecutor that a Mr Barnsley, who had bought hay, had not paid for it, but that had been proved to be untrue. The prosecutor, Mr Barnsley, haulier, West Bromwich, and Detective Sergeant Wallace gave evidence. The prisoner told the detective that he had handed over to the prosecutor all the money he had received. A statement drawn up by the prisoner, showing that all the money he had received had been accounted for, was handed up to the Bench and, on the suggestion of the Chairman, the case was adjourned for a week, to give the prosecutor an opportunity to test it. An application for bail was acceded to.

205 October 19 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

THE ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENT BY A BOATMAN **James Harman** (25), boatman, Spring Gardens, was charged on remand with embezzling £1 17s, the monies of his employer, John Cullis, on July 9th. The case was again adjourned for a week to enable further enquiries to be made.

206 October 19 1889

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, BROMSGROVE, TUESDAY

DRUNKENNESS **Thomas Wright**, boatman, who did not appear, was fined 5s and 9s costs for being drunk in High Street on the 5th inst, being the second offence in a year. PC Rivers stated the case.

207 October 26 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

THE ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENT BY A BOATMAN **James Harman** (25), boatman, Spring Gardens, was charged with embezzling £1 17s, the moneys of his master, John Cullis, Bath Road. Mr Beauchamp, who appeared for the prosecution, stated that on going into the matter it was found that there were discrepancies amounting to a few shillings, but the prosecution thought the matter was not sufficiently serious to press against defendant. He therefore asked permission to withdraw the case. This was agreed to and defendant was discharged.

208 November 2 1889

GENERAL NEWS

TRADE Some of the Bristol strikes were settled on Friday. In the morning, work was generally resumed at the docks, but the dispute with the lightermen and bargemen was not settled until the evening, when the masters conceded the men's terms – 27s weekly, or 5s per day.

209 November 16 1889

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, STOURPORT, TUESDAY

DISMISSED **Edward Davies**, boatman, Kinver, was charged with being the fraudulent bailee of the sum of 1s 10 1/2d, belonging to John Edward Whitmore. The men had been drinking together in a public house, and it was alleged that defendant picked up 1s 10 1/2d in change belonging to complainant, and appropriated it. The case was dismissed.

210 November 16 1889

COUNTY COURTS, KIDDERMINSTER, TUESDAY

DISPUTE AMONG BOATMEN **William Lyon**, boatman, Bewdley, sued **John Crump** of the same place, to recover 13s. Mr Dawes appeared for defendant. Plaintiff alleged that he agreed to go with defendant's boat to Wolverhampton and back, but when they were at Wolverhampton defendant ordered him to leave the boat, and he had to walk home. In cross-examination, defendant admitted that the horse he was driving fell into the canal. His Honour gave a verdict for the defendant.

211 November 23 1889

BROMSGROVE

SAD CASE OF DROWNING Mr A H Hibbert, Deputy Coroner, held an inquest on Saturday at the Navigation Inn, Stoke Prior, on the body of George Halfpenny, aged 49 years, potato dealer and fruiterer of Worcester Street, Bromsgrove, who was drowned in the canal lock at Stoke Pound on the previous Thursday night. John Halfpenny, aged 13, son of deceased, stated that he went with his father, who was a pig killer, to Henry Thompson's, shopkeeper, Stoke Pound. His father cut up a pig which he had previously killed, and they left Thompson's about 7.30. It was very dark, and witness had hold of his father's coat tails as they went along. They were crossing the lock to go to

the bridge, and his father slipped and fell in the lock. The lower gates were open, and he fell 15 feet to the water. Witness went and informed Mr Thompson, who brought a lantern and drag, and got deceased to the bank of the canal. He was dead. Henry Thompson corroborated part of the boy's statement, and said it was so dark he could not see, but thought he heard deceased plunge about in the water. Witness got him out with the assistance of William Walker, saltmaker, who went for PC Workman. There had been three fatal accidents in the lock since witness had lived there. PC Workman stated that he was called by Walker about 8.30. He found the body of deceased on the canal bank. He was dead and cold. There were no marks of violence on the body. The Coroner summed up, and pointed out that there was no obligation on the canal company to fence in the path by the canal, as it was not a public road. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned". Deceased was the father of 19 children, 15 of whom are living, and the greater part of them were dependent upon him for support.

212 November 23 1889

KINVER

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

213 November 30 1889

TEWKESBURY

SAD CASE OF DROWNING A distressing case of drowning occurred at Tewkesbury on Wednesday night. About a quarter past ten o'clock, **Mrs Halling**, the wife of a bargeman living in Lock Court, was alarmed by cries of help coming from the opposite side of the Avon, near the Avon lock. As quickly as possible her husband, in company with a neighbour named Frances, rowed across in a boat which lay at the bottom of the court to the spot whence the cries had come. There they found a man in the river close by the bank. They at once got him out and, although only about ten minutes had elapsed since the alarm was given, he was dead. It transpired to be the bargeman in charge of the trow *Venus*, belonging to Mr Jacob Rice of Gloucester, who had recently left a public house in the town and was making his way down to the Pit bank, where a boat was tied which he had to use to get aboard the trow. It is feared he was not sober at the time, and, staggering as he approached the point where he should have turned off to get to his boat, he slipped down the bank into the river.

214 December 7 1889

TEWKESBURY

INQUEST An inquest was held before Mr Coren, Coroner, at the George Inn, on the body of a waterman whose name was unknown, and who was drowned in the river Avon. A verdict of "Death by accidental drowning" was returned.

215 December 14 1889

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, TEWKESBURY, THURSDAY

STEALING A FOWL **George Taylor**, boatman, was charged with having on the night of the 8th inst stolen a tame fowl, the property of Mr J L Wood of Twynning Fleet. On the 9th inst, the prosecutor saw some men trying to get something out of the river, and on going to the place saw a parcel. He got it out, and found it contained the skin of a fowl, which he at once recognised. He went back and counted his fowls and missed that one and another. He accused defendant and another boatman, but they denied it. Sergeant Lane apprehended the prisoner, who said it was not prosecutor's fowl but one he killed with a stone and took on board and skinned, cooked and eat it. Defendant admitted the offence. Sentenced to 14 days' hard labour in default of payment of £1 7s.

216 December 14 1889

THE LABOUR DISPUTES The masters have conceded a substantial advance to the boatmen in Birmingham and the Black Country.

After 49 hours strike the bankmen and boat loaders employed by the Dukinfield Coal and Canal Company received advances of 3d and 4d per day. The men wanted 6d all round.

The whole of the gas stokers and labourers employed at the Corporation Gas Works, Longton, gave seven days' notice to leave work, failing an advance of wages, shorter hours and the abolition of Sunday labour. The Gas Works Committee met and, after a conference with the men's representatives, agreed to abolish Sunday work, and pay the same wages as have heretofore been paid for the seven days' week, viz 29s to stokers and 21s to labourers. The men accepted this offer and withdrew their notices.

The members of the National Society of Amalgamated Brassworkers in Birmingham, numbering about six thousand, have made a claim for the restoration of the 5 per cent which was in 1879 taken off by arbitration from the bonus of 15 per cent previously paid. The reason for the reduction was the bad state of the trade, which the operatives now claim has improved to an extent which justifies the restoration. The dispute in the tin plate trade is practically settled.

The strike of workpeople at the India Rubber Works at Silvertown virtually ended on Monday, when the majority of strikers were compelled to capitulate and return to work. The men struck for an advance of a halfpenny and three farthings per hour, and during the struggle many families have been on the verge of starvation.

The Birkenhead Corporation have conceded the demands of their gas workers, eight hours a day and time and a half for Sunday and night work.

The South and West Yorkshire miners have refused the coal owners' offer of 10 per cent advance with a further advance for six months.

The strike at Gloucester Docks, by which between 600 and 700 men were affected, was on Tuesday closed, and work is quietly proceeding in the corn and timber yards. The strike originated as an act of sympathy by the men employed in the timber trade at Gloucester for their fellows engaged at Bristol, who refused to work because foreign crews assisted in the discharge of vessels. Out of sympathy with the timber carriers, the corn porters struck, and when the question of discharge by foreign crews was put aside, the men engaged in the timber and corn trades met and formulated demands which were submitted to, and considered by the merchants, with the result that an agreement was arrived at. There still, however remained a difficulty, the union men insisting upon the withdrawal of non union men, but this was settled by the latter voluntarily withdrawing.

217 December 14 1889

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, STOURPORT, TUESDAY

STEALING A DOG **Albert Lea** and **Henry Stokes**, boatmen, were charged with stealing a dog, value £1, belonging to George Potter, brewer of Stourport, on November 8th, and pleaded not guilty. Prosecutor stated that he last saw his dog on November 8th about 8 am in front of the Angel Inn on the Severn side. He missed the dog on the same day, and gave information to Sergeant Bell the following day. On the 27th ult Lea came to him, and said he would pay the costs if witness would withdraw the case. He also said something about Stokes. Frederick King jun, gardener of Lincombe Lock, said he saw a dog on board the boat of which Lea was in charge on November 8th. The dog was lying on some hay and corn, and the boat was going down the river. Lea was captain of the boat, and Stokes was driving a pair of donkeys which were drawing the boat. Sergeant Bell stated that on the evening of the 9th ult he received information of the loss of the dog. He communicated with the Gloucester police, and summonses were taken out against defendants. He served Lea with the summons, when he said, "I don't see how they could charge me with stealing the dog. I only had it on my boat. It wasn't me that got her aboard, it was my mate Stokes". Witness asked Stokes what he had to say to that, and he replied, "Well, I bought a pennyworth of biscuits at a shop near the Bell, and chucked the dog a bit or two, but did not know it was on board till I got down opposite 'Tommy Stiff's', which was a quarter of a mile down the river", and he

added that they intended to bring her back next time they came up the river. Witness received the dog from the Gloucester police. The defendants were fined 2s 6d and 12s 3d costs each.

218 December 28 1889

CITY POLICE COURT

ALLEGED DISORDERLY CONDUCT **H Dowley** (60), a boatman of Hylton Road, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in the Hylton Road on December 21st. PC Petty spoke to defendant's conduct, but he was discharged with a caution.

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